

The Question Formulation Technique: A Simple Process Every Child and Adult can use to Generate More Questions at your 2017 Seder

Question Focus: (see page 2 for ideas on how to create a Question Focus)

1. Ask as many questions as you can about the Question Focus:

- Do not stop to try to answer or judge the questions
- Write each question exactly as it comes to mind
- Change any thoughts or statements into questions

2. Find different types of questions:

- *Closed-ended questions* – can be answered with “yes” or “no” or with one word.
- *Open-ended questions* – require an explanation.

3. Practice changing questions to get different information. Change one of each:



Closed to Open



Open to Closed

4. Choose the three most important questions for you. Mark them with an X.

5. Reflection

What did you learn?

How can you use it?

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More information on the Question Formulation Technique at rightquestion.org

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Design your own Question Focus. Only one rule. It should NOT be a question. You are trying to stimulate your Seder participants to ask their own questions. The Question Formulation Technique (QFT) helps them do that quickly. The QFT will allow more people around your Seder table to think deeply and creatively about the Seder, Passover, the Haggada and our world today.

Question Focus Examples:

Pictures:

- Moses striking the Egyptian Overseer
- Miriam standing watch over baby Moses
- Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea
- Nachshon entering the Red Sea
- The Plague of Darkness

Statements (for various purposes: to intrigue, to challenge, to provoke)

- *We were slaves. Now we are free*
- *Slavery and Freedom*
- *We already know this story!*
- *The Children of Israel's role in their own liberation*
- *God's role in their liberation*
- *The Egyptians and our slavery*
- *We were strangers in the land of Egypt*

Example of a complex idea that can be presented in just a few sentences:

Three conclusions from the Exodus story

- 1. *Wherever you live, it is probably Egypt***
- 2. *There is a better place, a promised land***
- 3. *The way to go to this promised land is through the wilderness...***

Michael Walzer, Exodus and Revolution

A Lesson from Abraham Joshua Heschel: "Teachers complain about...the lack of intellectual excitement of their students. Is it the fault of the students? If I understand correctly what goes on in our schools the sequence seems to call for information to be digested by the student, questions presented by the teacher, and answers to be supplied by the student. We evaluate the student by his ability to answer questions rather than to understand problems...The truth, however, is that the valid test of a student is the ability to ask the right questions. I would suggest we evolve a new type of examination...in which the answers are given - the questions to be supplied by the student." Children and Youth, a paper presented to the White House Conference on Children and Youth, March 28, 1960."

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