



Using Parliamentary Procedure

Objectives:

After completing this lesson plan, you should be able to:

- ✓ Define parliamentary procedure and identify the reasons for using it
- ✓ Identify and describe the steps in presenting and disposing of a motion
- ✓ Identify and describe the methods of voting
- ✓ Identify when the presiding officer can vote
- ✓ Classify motions into classes of privileged, incidental, subsidiary, unclassified, and main
- ✓ Describe the purpose of the most often used procedures such as: main motion, amend, refer to a committee, point of order, adjourn, lay on the table, nominations and elections, leave to withdraw or modify a motion, reconsider, rescind, recess, object to the consideration of a question, postpone definitely, and others
- ✓ Identify whether certain motions require a second, whether they are debatable and/or amendable, the vote necessary for passage, whether the motion may be reconsidered and/or rescinded, and other significant information.

Advance Preparation:

- ✓ Order Parliamentary Procedure video by emailing your request to csv@mail.ifas.ufl.edu (a minimal fee for postage and handling may apply.)
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with "**Using Parliamentary Procedure**" by J. Cheek, et al., a more detailed explanation, to lead group discussions noted in the Lesson section below.
- ✓ Review web site information listed in Reference section below to familiarize yourself with Parliamentary Procedure. You may also wish to use these in your lesson.
- ✓ Copy handouts for each participant.
- ✓ Prepare "Parliamentary Procedure - Mock Meeting #1" by cutting apart character parts

Materials Needed:

- ✓ [One copy of "5 Classifications of Motions" per participant](#)
- ✓ [One copy of "Steps in Making a Main Motion" per participant](#)
- ✓ [One copy of "How to Amend a Motion" per participant](#)
- ✓ [One copy of "Table of Common Motions in Parliamentary Procedure" per participant](#)
- ✓ [One copy of "Important Points of Parliamentary Procedure" per participant](#)
- ✓ [PowerPoint: "Parliamentary Procedure In Action"](#)
- ✓ LCD projector and laptop for the PowerPoint (see Advance Preparation)
- ✓ [Copies of "Parliamentary Procedure - Mock Meeting #1" for five volunteers](#) (previously separated in Advance Preparation)

Time Needed: 1 hour, 45 minutes

BACKGROUND

The following information is provided for the instructor to set the stage for the parliamentary procedure discussion. (5 - 10 minutes.)

What is Parliamentary Procedure?

It is a set of rules for conducting a meeting that allows everyone to be heard and operates under four basic principles:

*Justice and courtesy for all.
One thing at a time.
The rule of the majority.
The rights of the minority.*

Parliamentary Procedure provides the group with a structured, logical, consistent format under which to make decisions and therefore should be used to help groups achieve their goals and objectives through a democratic process.

Why is Parliamentary Procedure Important?

It is important that every group has certain basic operating rules. Parliamentary Procedure is a time tested method that insures the smooth functioning of business at meetings and public gatherings, and it can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization.

Historically

Although parliamentary procedure is centuries old, Thomas Jefferson wrote the first manual for America. Today, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations and other groups. A version of Robert's Rules is available on the web at <http://www.constitution.org/rror/rror--00.htm>

Important Point

How you apply the rules of Parliamentary Procedure is entirely up to your membership. Large groups (state legislatures, county commissions, etc.) are better suited to Parliamentary Procedure in the strictest sense as they simply require a greater variety of rules of order. Smaller groups (Extension Advisory Committees, subcommittees, etc.) may be more flexible in their application of Parliamentary Procedure perhaps using only such procedures as nomination and election procedures, making a motion, amending a motion, tabling a motion, referring to a committee, point of order, adjourning, etc. Use what works for your organization for a smooth flowing meeting, but remember, if a procedural problem arises, there is a rule of order to address it!

INTEREST APPROACH

- Select five volunteers to role play the "Parliamentary Procedure - Mock Meeting #1" for an unstructured meeting.
- Hand each of the volunteers a character role and ask them to act accordingly in the mock meeting. Keep each role a secret from the other volunteers and from the audience.
- Conduct the role play. Once the meeting begins (Chairperson will make opening statements) let it seek its own course.
- Let the meeting run 5 - 7 minutes. Then stop the proceedings and state the obvious ("one can see how getting things done without some kind of structure can be very difficult ...").
- Discuss what occurred during the role play.

LESSON (1 hour)

- Distribute and Introduce the Handout "**5 Classifications of Motions**". The motions described will become clearer as you work through the other steps in this lesson.
- Distribute and Discuss the Handout "**Steps in Making a Main Motion**". Practice making motions on topics of your choice.
- Introduce and Discuss the Handout "**How to Amend a Motion**". Practice making amendments on motions you chose previously.
- Review the methods of voting, the definitions of various votes, and when the Chair can vote on page 3 of "**Using Parliamentary Procedure**" by Cheek, et al.
- Distribute and Introduce the University of Wisconsin Handout "**Table of Common Motions in Parliamentary**

Procedure" (see References below) document.

- Ask group to recall the five classifications of motions handout and, in the blank column at the end of the table, write in the classification type (Privileged, Incidental, etc.) of each motion. Also compare the formal classification motion titles used in the 5 Classifications document with the less formal motion titles used in the Table of Motions (e.g. 5 Classifications says "Division of the Assembly" vs. "Verify" Table of Motions)
- Watch **Parliamentary Procedure Video** (17 mins.)
- Distribute and Discuss the Handout "**Important Points of Parliamentary Procedure**" to wrap up

APPLICATION

- Mock Meeting #2 (15 - 20 mins)
- Return to the setting of Mock Meeting #1 and reopen the discussion of a nature/recreation trail using the same volunteers.
- Using the University of Wisconsin at Madison Teaching Assistants' Association, "Table of Common Motions in Parliamentary Procedure" work through the following aspects:
 - Introduce business (developing the trail)
 - Make motions (file with EPA to do a wildlife inventory of the area)
 - Amend motions (add map to inventory)
 - End debate on the motion
 - Refer to a committee (address the issue of funding the overall project)
 - Point of order (to curb Ms./Mr. Tangent)
 - Lay on the table (postpone the education/newsletter issue until next meeting)
 - Adjourn.

REFERENCES

- **Using Parliamentary Procedure** by J. Cheek, L. Arrington, R. Rudd, M. McGhee
- **Roberts Rules** - <http://www.constitution.org/rror/rror--00.htm>
- **Nebraska Extension** (Understanding and Using Parliamentary Procedure) - <http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/consumered/nf434.htm>

- **American Federation of Government Employees** (Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order) - <http://www.afge.org/>
 - **University of Wisconsin at Madison Teaching Assistants' Association** (Table of Motions) - <http://www.taa-madison.org/>
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