

Listening Exercise for Leader Applicants

At the Series Meetings, the Applicant and the Leader observe (preferably another Leader is responsible for the meeting). If there is only one Leader in the Group, you may prefer to jot down notes afterward or to attend another Group's meeting. The Leader and Applicant meet the next day (or soon) for discussion.

1. Note what a few mothers say during the meeting; questions they ask, concerns they express, and/or some reactions to what others say.

Consider:

- what the Applicant "heard" and what the Leader "heard."
- what was the mother saying, or asking, or worried about?

2. How was the statement, question, or concern received by the other people: Leader(s), experienced LLL members, other mothers? How did the Applicant react, both inside and verbally?

Consider:

- the different responses of the Leader(s), and others in attendance.
- why the Leader reacted in a particular manner.
- how this tied in with the meeting goals and with LLL philosophy of helping.
- the different responsibilities of the Leader, the Group helper, the Leader Applicant, other mothers at the meeting.
- if the Applicant is concerned about her inner reaction, this might be a good time to look at those feelings; if she can't come to terms with them, she may place herself in a stressful position as a Leader, or she may find that at the time she explores her feelings, she clears away some misunderstandings about La Leche League or the Leader's role.

3. Discuss:

- how particular responses or reactions may or may not be helpful to a mother and why.
- how some statements or reactions can be modified to become more effective.

4. Include, if relevant, discussion of vocabulary, body language, how Leaders can set the tone of the responses and reactions of a group.

During your discussions, you may find it helpful to refer to the LEADER'S HANDBOOK and to the Communication Skills (CS) exercises.