



Content Inspiration for DC Sessions

Suggestions from convenors for convenors

Bring a Problem / Brick wall sessions

Invite a few members to bring a research problem to the group for everyone to problem solve.

Research Update

Focus the conversation on previous Discussion Circle presentation topics and how people have applied their learning in their research, e.g. 3 or 6 months after the topic was presented.

- In proceeding sessions take note of members' research foci or questions and use them to prompt an attendee's participation. E.g.
 - "Marg, have you made any progress with finding other sources for tracing movements between....?"
 - "Lin, did you find more information about your great-great grandmother from Bristol?"
 - "Frank, how did you find the FranceGenWeb page?"
- Open ended questions are best to prompt discussion, but a closed ended question might help you gauge the member's willingness to share before you put them on the spot too much.

Resource or how to research Session

Focus on "How you researched the topic" rather than on telling stories of what your research found (though stories are good).

Ask participants to mention a resource they have been working with recently. Ask them to share:

- where they found it,
- what information they have drawn from it,
- how easy the source is to use,
- a tip they have on how to use it successfully.

Local Nuggets Sessions

It can be easy to assume that others know what we know. Build communal knowledge by sharing snippets of local knowledge. 15 people sharing for one minute each and one person responding to them can fill 45 minutes. e.g.

- Vancouver was the production centre for pine wood in the 1800s. They estimate 25% of the population was involved in pine related work. Does anyone have ancestors who would have been involved in the industry?
- There are more Smiths in Vancouver than anywhere else in Canada

(All these examples are utter rubbish by the way, totally figments of imagination).

Recent research by participants

Go round the group (always ensuring people know they have the right to pass) and ask:

"What have you done / achieved / struggled with in the last month?"

Librarian Presentation

Ask Meg or Trena for a presentation (but not too often):

- new relevant resources in the Library
- a research skill that your group members would like to learn
- effectively using a resource relevant to your focus topic etc.

Pool Your Questions Session

Quiz the members for inspiration for future sessions, to prompt solutions from other participants or to provide fodder for a librarian visit for a future session. Maybe giving notification in the Noticeboard post prior to the meeting, prompt participation by asking questions like:

- What is something that has puzzled you about your family members? *E.g. why did they move from their ancestral village to the big city?*
- What is something you have wondered about the area? *E.g. when did Sicily unite with the rest of Italy?*
- What source would you like to learn how to use? *E.g. Irish Griffiths Valuation*
- What local topic would you like to learn about? *E.g. When did steel-making start in Wales?*
- What can't you find an answer to? *E.g. how many German Jews moved to London in C19th?*
- What would you like to know or understand about [Tasmania/London/Victorian England]? *E.g. how did property transactions happen?*
- Where do you learn the meanings of abbreviations or medical/legal terms? *E.g. phthisis*

A shared walk through a website

If members commonly use a particular website for information (e.g. The National Archives, Library Tasmania's website, etc) invite an IT confident person to log on and share screen and then wander it together. Together look up a name or locate a page someone has found useful. Along the way, note tools that others might find helpful, answer questions about navigation, results interpretation, saving, printing, citing, shortcuts etc.

Webcast as a springboard

Search the GSV webcast collection for stimulus material for a session. A snippet of a webcast could be used to initiate a discussion on a topic, in place of having to organise a presenter.

Book Club

Both the Writers and Vic-Tas use this idea. Can be formal – a person presenting about a particular book that members were invited to read a month earlier. Or can be informal – any member tells about a book they have enjoyed and/or found valuable.

Show and tell

Invite members to bring a document, a heritage item, a memento and tell the story, and especially how they obtained it and what it means for revealing their family story.

“A little optional exercise” alias homework

Attach an extra page in Word to a Noticeboard post, inviting readers to do a little preparation before the next session. The various outcomes or answers can be discussed together, making our DC more collaborative. The AI DC does this. Make sure you give sufficient notice (at least 2 weeks).

Use a Legacy Webinar as a starter (in part or full)

These are free for a week after going live on <https://familytreewebinars.com/> (some GSV members subscribe) and can be used to start discussion (from Maureen Trotter).

Quiz

Several DCs have a quiz as an end of year activity.