

DATE

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MEMMO NO.

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DISTRIBUTE TO: All Chapter-Level and Above Leaders

FROM: SGI-USA Study Department Leader Shin Yatomi

SUBJECT: Facilitator's Guide for the 2005 Buddhist Learning Review

Facilitators' Guide for the 2005 Buddhist Learning Review

To all facilitators of the 2005 Buddhist Learning Review, the SGI-USA Study Department extends our utmost appreciation for your support to deepen each member's understanding of Nichiren Buddhism.

All facilitators are encouraged to read "Introduction: What Is the Buddhist Learning Review?" in the *2005 Buddhist Learning Review Study Guide* in preparation for the Review activities. The 2005 Study Guide is available for \$3.00 at the SGI-USA bookstores or the SGI-USA Online Store at www.sgi-usa.org. You can also contact the SGI-USA Mail Order Center by calling 800-626-1313 or sending an e-mail to mailorder@sgi-usa.org. The 2005 Study Guide can be downloaded free at the SGI-USA Study Department Web site: www.sgi-usa-study.org.

The following are suggested guidelines for facilitating the Review activities.

§ Your Role as a Facilitator:

— Your role as a facilitator is to make the Review enjoyable for all participants by making everyone feel comfortable and by helping to conduct a meaningful discussion. Although you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the study materials, you don't need to have all the answers for questions members may raise during the Review.

— Facilitators are also participants. Please take the Review with everyone else and share the joy of Buddhist learning together. (Please do not take the Review beforehand.)

§ Preparing for the Review:

— Nichiren Daishonin writes, “Employ the strategy of the Lotus Sutra before any other” (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 1001). Nichiren teaches that the key to our successful efforts lies in our strong prayer to the Gohonzon. Let’s chant abundant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo so that each person will experience the joy of Buddhist learning through this activity.

— Nichiren also writes: “Exert yourself in the two ways of practice and study. Without practice and study, there can be no Buddhism. You must not only persevere yourself; you must also teach others. Both practice and study arise from faith” (WND, 386). As he teaches in this passage, all our efforts in Buddhist learning are to deepen our faith and inspire our practice. With this understanding, please familiarize yourself with the Review materials, focusing on the “Study Points” in the Study Guide.

§ Facilitating the Review:

—Before the Review

- The Review will replace regularly scheduled October study meetings. It is recommended that the Review activity be conducted at the district level and facilitated by chapter-level or higher leaders, where feasible. For those unable to participate in the Review activity, SGI-USA leaders may administer the Review through other means, such as a visit to a member’s home or other convenient location.
- Please give the Review booklets to the members at the Review location.
- Please remind the members to bring pencils and erasers and, if necessary, clipboards or something that can be used as a writing board.

—Facilitating the Review

- Gongyo is optional.
- Allow 40 minutes to take the Review. (The Review will be closed book.)
- Allow 40 minutes for the self-grading and discussion session.
- After taking the Review, ask the participants to remove the “Answer Key” from the back of the Review booklet.
- Go over all the answers first so that participants may finish grading. You may choose to discuss questions raised while grading, but please allow enough time to finish grading and for discussion afterward.
- Use the “Discussion Guide” in the Review booklet to begin discussion.

- Each participant may keep the Review booklet as a record of his or her progress in Buddhist learning.
- Please ask the participants not to share their Review booklets with those who have not yet taken the Review.

—Tips for facilitating discussion

- Allow as many members as possible to join the discussion by encouraging them to share their thoughts or ask questions.
- Let the participants answer each other's questions, but be ready to clarify points and correct misconceptions.
- You may ask leading questions such as: *Could you please add your comments to what so-and-so just said? Does anyone share a similar experience? Does anyone have a different opinion?*
- You may ask the members to share a brief experience related to the Review materials. If the experience doesn't relate or becomes lengthy, politely ask the person to share the rest of their experience after the meeting.
- Politely remind anyone starting to dominate the discussion to keep their comments brief to allow others to participate.

§ Reporting:

- Report the number of participants by language according to your Zone's reporting procedure.
- The number of participants includes all those who take the Review during October—whether at the district or other locations.
- If anyone has comments or suggestions regarding the Review, they can send an e-mail to study@sgi-usa.org.