



How to Organize an Educational Demonstration

for the Master Floral Designer



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There are two common types of floral design programs: demonstrations and workshops. Demonstrations involve showing the audience how to make something. A workshop is where learners see how to make something and then create it under your guidance. Read on to learn how to organize a floral design demonstration.



Before You Speak

If you have not done so already, consult MSU Extension Publication 4070 *How to Book a Floral Design Program for the Master Floral Designer* online at extension.msstate.edu. This publication will help you ask the right questions to find the necessary information to coordinate a demonstration with your contact.

Demonstrations: A Good Way to Start

Demonstrations are often more streamlined to coordinate and deliver and are less costly than hands-on workshops. They are the best method to use when you begin to deliver public speaking programs because flowers as visual aids are interesting and captivating.

Demonstrations also allow you to gain preliminary information about your learners' educational needs. This can give you topic ideas for future programs.

You will meet new people, hear their comments, and gain valuable insights from a post-program evaluation. We have added an example evaluation at the end of this publication.

Parts of a Demonstration Speech

Organize your program with these three main components:

- an **introduction**
- the **body**
- a **conclusion**

In the introduction, tell the audience what you are going to present to them. The body of the program is where you conduct the demonstration. In the conclusion, reiterate what you have taught. Tell the audience that you value their input on your program, and ask them to complete the evaluation before they leave. Read on for more details.

INTRODUCTION

Begin the **introduction** by greeting attendees with sincere enthusiasm and eye contact. This is the part of the program where you draw in the audience's interest. Tell them *why* your demonstration is important. Explain what they are going to see.

BODY

In the **body** of the demonstration, teach your audience how to do something using flowers, foliage, and the components of floral designs. Work toward the goal of a finished project such as a completed floral arrangement.

It takes practice to balance speaking and designing while keeping within a reasonable time frame. Less is often more, and sometimes it is best to show a club how to make a single floral arrangement, start to finish, than to try to complete several designs.

Another common pitfall is to lose track of time, resulting in a program that is too long. On the other hand, some people fall short of information to share and have speech gaps. One thing you will always be able to do is tell others about the Master Floral Designer program!



CONCLUSION

At the program's **conclusion**, review what you have accomplished. Provide your audience with ways they can change the design so that it fits their needs in different seasons or for special occasions.

At this time, open the floor by asking, "Does anyone have any questions or comments?" You can take about three questions if time permits. If your talk has gone over time, there may not be any opportunities for questions and answers.

Wrap up the formal program by urging the group to consider enrollment in the Master Floral Designer certification program. Thank your sponsor by name as well as the audience for their kind attention. Ask them to complete their evaluations.

At this time, the program organizer will approach the staging area to thank you. This is also the time when the arrangement you created will be awarded as a door prize or otherwise distributed. You can also dispose of any extra, loose-cut flowers and foliage as a door prize.

Considerations for Better Programs

EDUCATION

The most important thing when planning and implementing a floral design demonstration is to keep it educational. Focus on helping your audience understand the materials needed, how to properly use them, and how to create a successful design.

Avoid focusing on what people may think about your design or delivery. Such thoughts get in the way of your objective—to communicate educational information that helps people learn about, and appreciate, flowers.

COSTS

Floral design programs have costs. Program planners may hesitate to discuss a monetary budget, but it must be negotiated when the program is booked. A helpful technique is to provide the program planner with three price points. For example, "The demonstration will include flowers, containers, and mechanics. Clubs often budget \$X, \$XX, or \$XXX, depending on the depth of designs demonstrated and the types of materials used. What is the proposed budget for this program?" By discussing the program's finances in the planning stages, MFDs can concentrate their work on educational content.

PLAN

Plan the form of the design to be demonstrated and where it fits in the line-mass continuum. This will help you to prepare the mechanics for the arrangement. Think about the placement of the floral materials in the design, using line, mass, and filler categories and their proper placement order.

TIMING

Floral design demonstrations for public groups are usually one hour long, including questions and answers. If necessary, ask a trusted attendee to provide you with visible cues at the 15-, 30-, 45-, and 60-minute points within your program.

Pace the demonstration so that interesting activity is accomplished rather than repetitive work. For example, if you are wiring small bunches of dried flowers to a wooden pick, show the audience how to properly mount one or two bunches, but have the remainder already prepared. Keep track of the time so that each planned design is completed within 10 to 30 minutes.

TRANSPORTATION

A wagon or cart helps transport floral design materials from the vehicle to the demonstration site. There are collapsible wagons for such purposes that can be folded and stored when not in use.

Use a wooden crate to lift your demonstration arrangement to a height where the design action can be seen by everyone in the room. The added height will help keep your back straight, lessening physical strain. The crate doubles as a sturdy transportation container.

INTRODUCTION

Write an introduction to be read by a club leader or member. The words used by the person who introduces you are important because they inform the audience of your stature as a knowledgeable floral designer.

Keep the intro to about 100 words (1 to 2 minutes). In it, list the important details of your educational objective. Bring three copies of the introduction with you—club members often have other duties to perform and may misplace the first copy you have given them.

HAVE CONFIDENCE

Confident speakers are knowledgeable and well-prepared. Steer clear of telling the audience what you should have done or what you have forgotten.

A few practice rounds, especially with the materials you plan to use or similar ones, will help you to be fully prepared. You will need materials for your practice sessions; build them into the cost of consumable materials paid for by the sponsoring organization.

DESIGNING WITH FRESH FOLIAGE

Gardening groups often want to learn how to arrange flowers from their home gardens. Club members agree to harvest and deliver cut plant materials from their yards and gardens. The members bring jars of flowers in bloom, buckets of cut foliage, and handfuls of delicate vines and ornamental grasses, all of it the best that their well-tended gardens have produced.



Take care when planning this type of demonstration because it can become complicated for everyone. While it saves sponsors from needing to buy commercial cut flowers, it may be difficult to deliver a program with a clear, educational focus. Sometimes the variety of foliage and flowers is overwhelming and not everything can be used in the demonstration designs. Attendees may be disheartened that you could not use their prized flowers or foliage.

If you want to try this method, consider “designing with fresh foliage” as a topic. Ask your contact to have the club members gather and deliver two or three lawn leaf bags full of cut ornamental foliage, with some repetition. For example, you can ask for

- small-leaved magnolia, three 24-inch-long branches
- 10–20 aspidistra leaves
- assorted cut ornamental foliage, branches, and grasses

Then you will be able to create greenery arrangements that adhere to the design principles. If desired, the club can spring for a few market bunches of cut flowers—all-foliage arrangements are beautiful, but the addition of flowers is, too!

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Wear clothing that highlights your floral design. Avoid clothing or shoes that get in the way of your design activity or become unsafe.

Arrive at the meeting location before the audience to give yourself time to unload, unpack, and arrange your demonstration workspace.

It is not always good to allow others to help you unpack and prepare because they do not know the nuances of your materials

or mechanics. They may accidentally damage your flowers or containers, and there will be little if any time for repairs or replacements. MFDs make good floral design assistants for each other because they understand the technical aspects of floral design and can communicate clearly and candidly with each other.

Be a Floral Rising Star!

If anything within your program does not go well, do not take it to heart. We in the Master Floral Designer program have a few sayings that help us get over mistakes.

“When you are green, you grow. When you are ripe, you rot.”

If you perfect a process or a product, you can no longer improve it—then, there is no other direction to go but down. Isn't it better to be on the climb, learning new information and sharing it in an exciting way?

It is possible that you may encounter a bit of jealousy from others. That is OK because distrust and protectiveness are natural human traits. Remember, your goal is to provide best practices and science-based information to help people “think flowers” and enjoy their beauty. If you receive any negative criticism, think to yourself: “It's not a hit or a kick. It's a boost!”

References

[4-H Public Presentation Guide Method and Demonstration \[PDF\]](#).

Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

[Giving a 4-H Presentation and Demonstration](#). University of Maine Cooperative Extension.



Program Evaluation

Thank you for attending this program. Please complete the following information and turn in this survey before you leave.

Top 3 things I learned:

I would like to learn more about:

Comments:

Program Evaluation

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