

TIPS FOR PRESENTERS

Samples

Introductions

- ❖ Introduce yourself and your relationship to the program.
- ❖ Welcome audience to Festival and all of the Festival programs:
 - Colombia: The Nature of Culture*
 - The Peace Corps*
 - Rhythm and Blues: Tell It Like It Is*
- ❖ Announce that the Festival is produced by Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage & co-sponsored by the National Park Service.
- ❖ Recognize Smithsonian Folklife Festival sponsors.

Introduction to the Colombian Program

(elaborate according to your experience)

Major Themes

What we want the public to take away with them

- ❖ Colombia is culturally and geographically diverse.
- ❖ Colombia is deeply traditional and modern at the same time.
- ❖ Colombia's cultural communities are creative, persistent, and resistant.

Organizing themes

- ❖ Ecosystems – six ecosystems and three urban environments:
 - Ecosystems: Andean Highlands, Coffee Triangle, Momposino Depression, Pacific Rainforest, Southeastern Plains, Amazonian Tropical Rainforest
 - Urban landscapes: Bogotá, Medellín, Cali – centers of social, cultural and economic life.
- ❖ Interplay of nature and culture

Music Performances: The Basics

You are more than an emcee. Take advantage of pauses and breaks between songs to offer explanations and interpretation; engage musicians in discussion when possible.

- ❖ Introduce the individual or group by name; the public comes and goes so introduce the group and the tradition several times.
- ❖ Ask where they are from.
- ❖ Describe the genre of music they will play.
- ❖ Identify and explain musical instruments and concepts that are likely to be unfamiliar to the audience.
- ❖ Translate titles of pieces and explain their significance during breaks in performance
- ❖ Discuss with musicians significance within the larger musical and cultural traditions of the community.
- ❖ Describe the setting in which this would commonly occur.
- ❖ Provide the general meaning of songs, occasionally offering a literal translation of a section of lyrics, to convey the richness of text that would otherwise be lost.

Dance Performances: The Basics

You can help the audience understand the background and context for dance performances that are not visually obvious by adding information while dancers perform. Encourage the group leader to discuss the dance in brief discursive exchanges if he or she is comfortable in so doing.

- ❖ Introduce the individual or group by name.
- ❖ Ask where they are from.
- ❖ Inquire about the type of dance, its regional importance, how the dance interacts with the music.
- ❖ Ask dancers to demonstrate steps.
- ❖ Discuss the significance of dress.
- ❖ Describe the setting: explain the location of the performance in its home context.
- ❖ Ask about the general meaning of the performances.
- ❖ Find out if there are culturally appropriate opportunities for audience participation and encourage such participation.

Craft Demonstrations

Remind participants that the process is more important than the finished product. Nevertheless, most artisans need to concentrate on their work and cannot talk all the time.

You can enhance informal craft presentations by modeling for the audience how to ask questions and engage participants informally.

- ❖ Introduce each participant and place of origin.
- ❖ Add background information on craft and on how it relates to the program's themes.
- ❖ Fill in about process when the artist needs to concentrate on their work.
- ❖ Ask about the names and origins of materials or processes.
- ❖ Informally translate when necessary.
- ❖ If appropriate, invite the public to touch or smell.
- ❖ Preempt questions on the price of a craft item, the time it takes to make it, how much it costs.
- ❖ Ask the public if they are familiar with similar traditions, materials, or occupations.

Occupational Traditions

The objective of the presentation is to help the Festival visitors “put themselves in the shoes of the workers” to appreciate what is involved in the particular occupation demonstrated.

Use either an ongoing interview (with lots of questions) or a commentary (participant explains and presenter elaborates on cultural elements).

- ❖ Introduce the participants.
- ❖ Describe where they are from.
- ❖ Explain a little about their tradition.
- ❖ Emphasize the specialized knowledge, skills, and social relationships found among workers on the job.
- ❖ Talk about the materials they use.
- ❖ Ask participants about how they get their materials, the tools they use, whether they have apprentices/the learning process.

Ceremonies in Open Spaces

Ceremonies are usually celebrated in public spaces and have different functions and meanings. They help reaffirm relationships and social responsibilities.

Before the performance, make sure you discuss the stages of the ceremony to be presented and if, when, and how, it is appropriate for the public to participate. Discuss possibilities for “breaking-frame” to insert explanations.

- ❖ Describe the purpose of the ceremony.
- ❖ Describe the role and function of the performers.
- ❖ Describe the cultural significance of the event to the community.
- ❖ Describe the codes of behavior expected of the public.
- ❖ Describe the different stages of the ceremony.
- ❖ Ask more general questions on the group's beliefs – these are best answered by participants themselves.

Foodways

Cooks will want to finish preparing a dish, but your role is to emphasize the processes, utensils, ingredients, and most importantly, the story behind the food prepared.

Look for the balance to allow participant both to cook and respond to your questions. Fill in with background information when the participant needs to concentrate.

- ❖ Ask if dish is part of a family tradition or a regional tradition?
- ❖ Follow up with questions on ingredients and if they are obtained locally.
- ❖ Inquire about how the Festival presentation differs from preparing the dish at home, how are the ingredients different.
- ❖ Ask if there are dish variants back home, how cook has adapted at the Festival.
- ❖ Inquire when participants usually eat the dish they are preparing, how it is served, if it is served with another dish, what are the occasions for serving this dish.
- ❖ Ask the cook when he learned to cook.
- ❖ Ask about process.
- ❖ Invite the public to ask questions.
- ❖ Show the ingredients and let the public touch when appropriate.
- ❖ Ask the public if they prepare or know about similar dishes.

Bilingual Presentations

- ❖ Do not translate literally.
- ❖ Remember that the participant also needs to know what the public is asking.
- ❖ Think of translation as a double conversation.
- ❖ Include the participant in all the translations – translate for and to the participant.
- ❖ Let the public know that you can help translate – interpret as closely as possible.
- ❖ Invite the public that speaks the participant's language to approach and talk to participant (if you are on stage, do this after the presentation).
- ❖ Before a session, teach the public one or two words to welcome participants. You may ask the participants to say a few words themselves.
- ❖ On the music stage, translate one or two verses, or offer a summary of a song.
- ❖ Before a presentation, inform the participant how you will translate – it is best to translate in short sections.