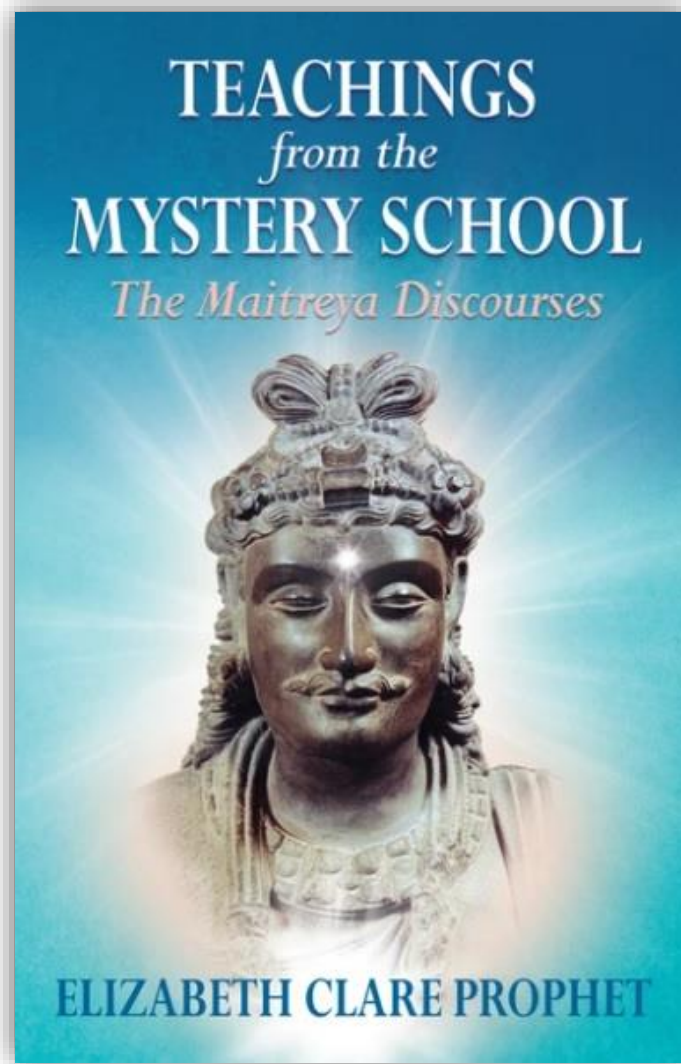




The Maitreya Discourses

Facilitators' Guide



Pilot Version (February 2021 v.2)

Welcome

Welcome to this inspiring journey to study Lord Maitreya’s discourses on how to pass the initiations of Maitreya’s Mystery School. We are grateful that you are helping to facilitate a Maitreya Book Discussion Group (MBDG). We hope that this guide will provide the support you need to help get you started.

In this guide you’ll find:

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We welcome your feedback to improve our material for the next group of facilitators. Please e-mail us anytime at maitreyabookstudy@TSL.org.



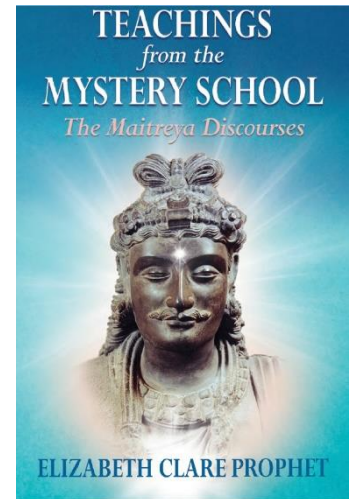
The Purpose of Maitreya Book Discussion Groups

- Take a giant leap towards personal Christhood and be the instrument for world salvation!
- Experience joyful community in the flame of Maitreya, learn from each other’s victories on the path and share yours!
- Join The Summit Lighthouse efforts to help El Morya procure a new 33-year dispensation for our organization!

Maitreya Book Discussion Groups Resources

All the resources for Maitreya Book Discussion Groups can be found on The Summit Lighthouse website here:

<https://www.summitlighthouse.org/MaitreyaResources>



Things to Consider when Starting a Group

Meeting Place Ideas

- **Virtual Meeting Places:** There are many virtual meeting platforms available. Zoom is the option we will expound on in this manual and in the Participant's Handout. Of course, your group may decide to use another platform. It is important to choose a virtual platform that your group members feel comfortable using and you feel comfortable helping them use. *If you decide to use something other than Zoom for your virtual meetings, please let us know! We would love to learn about other options that could be recommended to groups.*
- **Teaching Center / Study Group:** Meeting at your local center can help to maintain an atmosphere of sanctity in your discussions. Check your local regulations to determine if your local center is large enough to hold your discussion group.
- **Someone's Home:** Depending on the pandemic situation in your area, meeting in someone's home might be a suitable option. Make sure that the home space will be the right environment for the group to meet in. Even in someone's home, it is important to be undisturbed and maintain an atmosphere of sanctity during the discussion.

Encouraging People to Join Your Group

- On the Maitreya Book Discussions Group resources website, you will find a flyer template that you can use to promote your discussion group. Simply **download the flyer** at the website, then **fill in your group's information on page 2** (meeting time/place, how to sign up, etc.) and **share it with others**.
- One way to encourage others to join your group is to send out the flyer in an energizing e-mail to your local group.

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- You could also email your friends who are Keepers of the Flame. Adding a personal note on why you believe it is a good idea for them to participate might go a long way to encouraging them to join your group. You could write something like this:

Dear [insert friend's name],

*You are cordially invited to participate in this exciting book discussion group on the new book **Teachings from the Mystery School—The Maitreya Discourses**. This is a great opportunity to reacquaint yourself with Lord Maitreya's teachings on personal Christhood in a community setting. It will be a great opportunity to share experiences with your fellow chelas and learn from each other. We will have a lot of fun too. And God knows that more Christhood is needed in these dire times!*



The group will start on [insert date and time]. We will meet every [other] week at the same time via [insert location]. If you are interested, please sign up as soon as you can, because we have limited space. Please review the attached flyer for more information.

*Sincerely,
[Your name]*

- One way to encourage people to sign up quickly is to send out three or four e-mails in one week and give people only seven days to respond.
- If more than 10 people want to sign up, you might want to find another facilitator to start a second group.
- Once people sign up for your group, be sure to send them a note of confirmation. You can include the link to the resources page on the TSL website and any additional information you need to share with them.

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Where to Purchase the Book

- **The Summit Lighthouse Store or Amazon.com:**
 - Physical book: <https://www.summitlighthouse.org/MaitreyaDiscourses>
 - Kindle ebook (best way to buy internationally):
<https://www.summitlighthouse.org/MaitreyaDiscourses-Kindle>
- **Your local group:** Teaching Centers and Chartered Study Groups may purchase the book with a discount. Call +1-800-245-5445 or +1-406-848-9500 or send an online message: <https://spiritualbooks.summitlighthouse.org/pages/contact>



Suggestions for Meeting Size, Length and Frequency

- We recommend meeting in groups of 8–10 people. Smaller groups may work well for small communities. However, having more than 10 people in a group may make the discussions unmanageable and unenjoyable for participants.
- We suggest holding a two-hour meeting weekly or biweekly to allow for sufficient time to go through the discussion questions together. However, if a different format works for your group, please follow that.

Practical Points for Meetings

- Take time to prepare your environment, even if the meeting will be virtual. Create a chalice for the flow of the Holy Spirit.
- Ask all participants to read the chapter and download the study questions from the resources page in advance.
- Start and end on time.
- Begin each meeting with an invocation to Lord Maitreya and the masters of your choice.
- You may want to give one or more of Lord Maitreya's mantras (Song 626) to attune with the heart of Lord Maitreya. The audio and words of Song 626 are available on the MBDG Resources Page.

Questions or Feedback?

- Contact the TSL Office of the President by e-mailing maitreyabookstudy@TSL.org.

Being a Good Facilitator

Facilitate means
“to make easy”



Your job is simply to make it easy for everyone to participate in the book discussion group. That will make the group comfortable so that everyone can have an enjoyable experience—including yourself.

Facilitation Tips

- Create a relaxed atmosphere for the people who come.
- Treat everyone with respect, regardless of their background or experience.
- Consider having a co-facilitator assist you.
- Extend your heart.
- Ask Lord Maitreya to overshadow you and work through you.
- Invoke the Holy Spirit.
- Ask that the entire group be taken to Lord Maitreya’s retreat at night.

Welcoming People and Keeping in Touch

- Greet people as they arrive at the meeting. Extending your heart is a large part of facilitating. As one facilitator said, “The importance of the heart-to-heart connection and making people feel welcome cannot be overstated.” It also sets the stage for sharing ideas and lively discussions.
- Use a group app for sharing and questions (WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.) in between sessions.
- Provide them with a contact person for more personal questions. This could be your local minister.
- Use your Christ inventiveness to strengthen community through your MBDG.

Working with the Discussion Questions

- Participants will receive the most benefit from the group discussions if they come to the meetings having already read the chapter that will be discussed.
- Summit University has created discussion questions for each chapter. These questions can be downloaded from the MBDG Resources Page on the TSL website. The discussion questions form a great guide for internalizing key teachings from each chapter.
- Included with the discussion questions is a short dictation summary and core concept from the dictation.
- Most chapters only have three or four group discussion questions so that there is ample time to discuss the concepts that each question addresses.
- As a facilitator, you must balance between getting through all the questions and allowing the group to explore a key topic that generates meaningful dialog. It is important to keep the group from straying from the key concepts of the discussion questions. However, you might want to take two sessions to complete all the questions if a certain chapter holds significance for your group. It is up to you and your group to decide the pace.
- Try to involve everyone and spend time on questions that are relevant to daily life. Let the conversation flow naturally.
- You will find a personal reflection exercise at the end of each set of discussion questions. Participants should complete this exercise on their own, preferably after the group completes the discussion questions together. These exercises are not intended to be shared with others.



Suggested Meeting Agenda

- Start your meeting with an invocation to Lord Maitreya. People may want to take turns giving the opening invocation and leading mantras or affirmations.
- One way to start is to take turns reading the questions and the accompanying texts. (See “Working with the Discussion Questions” above.)
- Reading a related quote is a good way to emphasize or clarify a point. It also engages people if things seem to be getting off track.
- Allow space and time for FUN (Fohatic Union)!

Tips for Good Meetings

- Ask people to turn on their cameras (but respect those who prefer not) and ask everyone to mute their microphones when they are not talking.
- Try to involve everyone in the discussion. If someone dominates the conversation, or steers things away from the topic, refocus the group on the discussion questions.
- If you can't answer a question that comes up, feel free to e-mail maitreyabookstudy@TSL.org.
- MBDGs are not a place for group counseling. If someone has severe problems that come up in the group discussion, refer them to a professional counselor or therapist.
- Refer group members to a minister when they want spiritual counseling on the topic at hand.

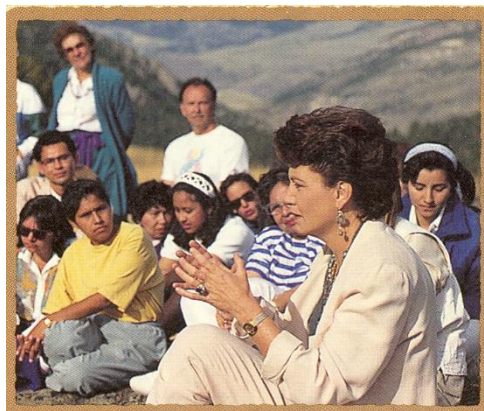
Building Community at Each Meeting

- At the beginning of each meeting ask questions like:
 - How was your week?
 - How did you like this week's reading? (You'll find out if people didn't have time to read it!)
 - Is there something from the reading you would especially like to discuss?
- Questions like the ones above help people get back in touch with each other. This helps establish a sense of community within the group.

Follow your heart, 💖

go with the flow 🌊

and have lots of fun! 😄



Introductions—Some Ideas for the First Meeting

Facilitator’s Introduction—Things You Say to Set the Groundwork for People to Connect

- Let people know why you are having the group. See the beginning section on The Purpose of Maitreya Book Discussion Groups for ideas.
- Encourage openness by giving some personal background on why you were inspired to facilitate a MBDG.
- To set the tone of heartfelt sharing, you might want to share how an inspiring quote from the book touched your heart.

Group Member Introductions

- Ask if people would like to introduce themselves and share something about their interest in the topic or why they came.



Beginning the First Meeting

- Find out if everyone has the book. Explain how people who still need a book can get one.
- Find out if everyone downloaded the discussion questions and explain where they can download them.
- If some participants have not read the first chapter, you could ask the group to take turns reading the chapter aloud before jumping into the discussion questions. We don't recommend this for every chapter, since some chapters are long, but this would work well for the first chapter.

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Concluding the First Meeting

- Before the end of the book discussion group, it is helpful to check in with the participants and give them the opportunity to make final comments or ask questions.
- Remind them about the personal reflection exercise at the end of the discussion questions, which they can complete on their own after the discussion.
- Announce the date and time for the next meeting.
- Thank everyone for coming. Invite them to e-mail you with further questions or suggestions.
- Thank the masters for their presence and support. Make a call to go to the retreats together to keep studying and internalizing the material. People might want to take turns making the closing call at the end of each meeting.
- It's a nice idea to exchange phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses. Discuss if people would like to continue the conversation via an app group (WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.) or another platform, such as a private Facebook group. Ask if there is someone who would like to set this platform up for the group.
- Make sure the meeting date and time will work for everyone in the upcoming weeks.
- You may want to schedule a celebration after your last meeting to commemorate your time together!



Have a great Maitreya Book Discussion Group experience!

How to Host a Zoom Meeting

Sign Up for a Zoom Account at Zoom.us

- A free Zoom account allows for 40 minutes of meeting time.
- For \$15 a month, a PRO Zoom account gives you unlimited time and Zoom hosting features. You can get a 20% discount on the annual plan [here](#).
- To learn more about Zoom, click [here](#). You can also read this [Zoom Meetings Training Reference Guide](#).

Paying for a Zoom Subscription

- If you choose to use Zoom for hosting a MBDG, we recommend purchasing a Zoom subscription. The current yearly costs of a Zoom Pro subscription are \$149.90 US (€ 139.90 in Europe).
- If you do not already have a Zoom subscription, you could ask participants to give a love offering of \$3 for each meeting to help offset the subscription cost. If you have 24 meetings for each of the 24 chapters, each participant will donate \$72 total.
- If you collect more than what you need to reimburse your costs, we invite you to donate the rest to The Summit Lighthouse Mission Fulfillment Fund.

Preparing Your Environment

- Set up your computer.
- Set up your screen at least one hour in advance or the day before and test your lighting and sound. Sit in a well-lit room. Sitting near windows or adding a lamp behind your screen can help. Be sure to check that no shadows are cast on your face from your lighting.
- Keep screen position just above eye level. It's best to keep your eye on the camera and to look up slightly so your audience sees you looking at them. Adjust the height by placing your computer on a stand, box or thick book and center your face by moving your screen or chair.
- Keep your background clutter free and beautiful.
- You can find more tips in this video here: [How to look better on Zoom](#).



- Test your sound and volume levels. If your computer sound is not the best, you might want to try using a handsfree speaker phone.

Prepare Your Internet Connection

- Use a hardwire internet connection if possible. A strong WIFI connection will work too.
- You may want to exit the sync programs on your computer (Dropbox, OneDrive, etc.) and close other programs for a better internet connection. When you restart your computer, the sync programs should resume automatically.

Advance Invitation and Practice for Attendees

- Send an invitation that includes ZOOM ID number and passcode. You can find the Zoom number in your Zoom account after you set up the meeting date and time. For example, this link has the meeting ID and passcode embedded into it:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82599873313?pwd=R1hWTGo3akk3T3FJQjJKWlhmWGJWQT09>

- Another option is to send the prepared invitation that Zoom creates for every meeting. This includes the Join number (e.g. 82599873313) and the passcode (e.g. 003632).



- You can also use “instant meeting” ID for your meeting practice. See your account section for how to find this ID.
- Before the day of the event, provide a short Zoom training for participants. As a facilitator, you will need to focus on the discussion rather than tech support. People will appreciate your service and before the book discussion group begins.
- You can send a video orientation ([such as this one on YouTube](#)) to those new to Zoom.
- By reaching out to participants in advance, you help build community and enhance the success of your book discussion group before the group even starts.
- Encourage people to come 10–15 minutes early to the first meeting for social time. This allows everyone to deal with technical issues before the scheduled start of the meeting.

ZOOM Etiquette—Be Professional

- Arrange the screen distance so the head and shoulders are showing.
- Movement can be distracting to the viewers. Be still and steady during the meeting.
- Minimize noise in your room and people/pets in the background.
- Dress appropriately, preferably in business casual.
- Make sure your hair and makeup are neat.

Tips for Sharing Your Screen

- Click on “share screen” to show a PowerPoint presentation, video clip, teaching, or decree.
- **After clicking on “share screen” you must click on the two tiny squares that say, “share computer sound” and “Optimize screen sharing for video”. This ensures that sound can be heard and video seen clearly. This is vital!**
- Click on two tiny squares that say, “share computer sound”, “Optimize screen sharing for video”.
- Maximize the size of what you’re sharing by clicking the [] on the bottom right corner of the file.
- If you are sharing music, the music must be already downloaded on your computer or available via an online source. Do not use an external speaker or source connected to your computer because the music will sound garbled.
- When sharing, prepare the files in advance and have them already open on your computer before the meeting begins. (e.g. PowerPoints, music, Word files, etc.)
- Practice sharing your computer screen before the day of the meeting so you can have smooth transitions.

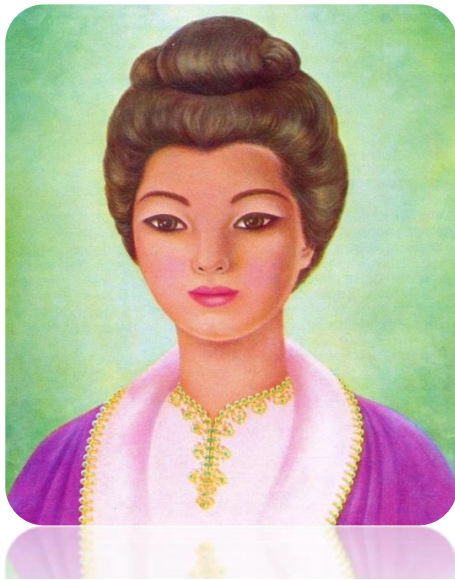


Enhancing Sound and Video Management

- When there is background noise, it disrupts the presentation.
- After the welcome, you can mute all participants by clicking on “manage participants” and then “mute all”.

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- If you mute the entire group, explain to participants that they will be responsible for clicking on the microphone icon in the bottom left of their screen when they want to ask a question. Ask participants to mute themselves after speaking.
- You may need to mute someone who forgets to press mute after they speak. You can do this by clicking on the mute area on their picture.
- If decreeing or singing, keep everyone muted except the leader/host to avoid echoing.
- If Mother is decreeing, let her lead. The host does not need to decree above Mother.



Duties of the Host

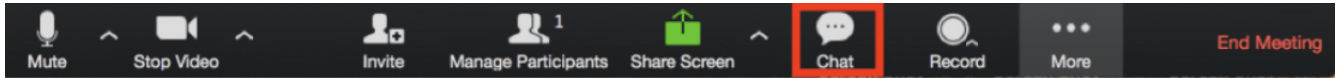
- As a host, please arrive early! We recommend at least 20 minutes early.
- It is always a blessing for everyone to be able to greet each other and meet the host.
- Before starting the session, invite the participants to practice muting and unmuting themselves.
- If people join after the session has begun, you can welcome them. Or, if this would disrupt the flow, you could send the newcomer a chat message saying, e.g. “Welcome, Brad.”
- Look at the camera as much as possible rather than always looking down at your notes, just as if you were speaking from a podium.

Communicating with Participants Before, During, and After the Book Discussion Group

- The welcome time before the meeting begins is important. You can set up the meeting so that participants’ microphones are unmuted when they join. Although ZOOM best practices do not recommend it, having the person be able to speak when greeted is important. If the person is new to ZOOM, they may not be familiar with how to mute and unmute themselves upon entering.
- During the session, you or the attendees can send messages through the “chat” button.
- Chat messages will pop up on your screen if you are not in “share” screen mode. Enlist the help of an assistant to keep an eye on the chat from another computer so that you and other participants are not interrupted during screen sharing.

To Send a Message or Question (BY COMPUTER)

- Click “Chat” in the meeting controls bar at the bottom of the screen.



- The chat window will open on the right.
- Type a message in the chat box
- Click the drop-down, choose ‘To’ to send a message to a specific participant
- When a new chat message is sent, the chat button will flash orange.
- Click the button to view the chat window.

Discussion Questions and Raising Hands

- The discussion questions are designed to enhance learning and build community.
- If needed, you could ask people to digitally raise hands in Zoom if they want to participate in the discussion. You can find instructions on how to raise your hand in Zoom [here](#).
- Periodically, you could ask if anyone has questions. At this point a person could raise her hand and you could invite her to unmute herself to speak.
- You will find that keeping others muted when one person speaks will help cut down on background noise that could disrupt the meeting.



Video or No Video?

- To create a community setting, meeting with video on is highly recommended.
- Nevertheless, some internet connections are not strong enough to sustain video sharing via Zoom.
- If this the case with a participant in your group, you could suggest that this participant turn off his or her camera.

Feedback

- Ask a friend attending your group “How was the sound?”, etc. so you know if you need to make any changes next time.

Need More Zoom Help?

- If you feel that you need additional Zoom training, please contact the SU Registrar at Registrar@SummitUniversity.org.



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