



Annual Meetings 2021



San Antonio, TX  November 20–23

Instructions and Information for In-Person Session Presiders

revised 4 November 2021

Below you will find the guidelines for session presider as outlined in the Annual Meeting Program Unit Chair Handbook. Program unit chairs and presiders have a particularly important role to play at the Annual Meeting, making sure that sessions are conducted in such a way as to promote healthy, academic dialogue. It is the responsibility of every attendee to adhere to the guidelines laid out here and in [SBL Professional Conduct Policy](#) to ensure that the meeting fosters an environment of accessibility, inclusivity, diversity, professionalism, and engagement. Please take a moment to review these guidelines, along with the Professional Conduct Policy, so that you will arrive in San Antonio ready to help create a meeting that fosters biblical scholarship in accordance with [SBL's mission and core values](#).

Guidelines for Session Presiders:

The following guidelines are intended to help those who are moderating sessions encourage a professional and respectful environment.

Pre-recorded Presentation Video Files

If you are planning to play video files of pre-recorded presentations that have been uploaded into the meeting platform, you can pick up a USB flash drive of the files associated with your session at the SBL membership desk. Files uploaded prior to November 15 will be included there, but we may not be able to include files uploaded after that point. Please make provisions to have a laptop on which to play the files, as a computer will not be provided in the room. After the session is done, please return the USB flash drive to the SBL membership desk.

Before the Session:

1. Confirm that presenters are able to access previously requested A/V. If there is a problem, look for an A/V tech in the hallway or come to the registration desk.
2. Do not rearrange room. Doing so will result in additional charges for which the program unit will be responsible. If there is a problem with the room setup, contact SBL staff.

Beginning of the Session:

1. Welcome the attendees to the session.
2. Be sure to mention the name of the program unit(s) sponsoring the session and any theme that the session might have.

3. Remind attendees that it is meeting policy that masks must be worn during the session. Presenters may remove masks during their presentation.
4. Announce that the first row of seats is reserved for presenters and those with accessibility needs. All other attendees must take a seat in one of the remaining chairs. If the seats are all occupied, the session is full. Sitting by the walls or on the floor is not allowed this year.

Presentations:

1. Address. Refer to all panelists equally. Studies show that it is more common for women to be referred to by their first names even when they have a professional title. Demonstrating respect, you should confirm ahead of the session how panelists would like to be introduced. We recommend having you announce the first name and last name, so as to avoid using titles that some presenters/respondents might not have.
2. Sound. If there are microphones in the room, ask each presenter to use the microphone. Even if a presenter thinks that he or she speaks loudly enough, microphone amplification helps all audience members, especially those who have a hearing impairment.
3. Time. Managing time is critical so that each person in the session or on the panel has an equal opportunity to present. Before the session, reiterate the expectation for each presentation's length. Presiders should sit near the podium, in order to communicate with the presenting speakers. We recommend having a five-minute warning, a one-minute warning, and a "time is up" sign for you to use.

Discussion:

1. Try to allow for question-and-answer period of at least 15 minutes or as defined in the program schedule.
2. During Q & A, remind the audience to avoid jargon, speak briefly (no more than 30 seconds), and ask a question. Repeat the question after it is asked, as it is sometimes hard for all attendees to hear the question as initially asked and also helps to ensure that the person asking the question knows that they have been heard.
3. To ensure parity, please be mindful of who is asking questions. Research shows that when women or gender non-conforming people are called on first, there tends to be more gender balance among subsequent questioners.

Please also be sure to familiarize yourself with SBL's [Professional Conduct Policy](#).