

INST 154

Apollo at 50

Discussion Questions

Session 17: Apollo 8: Lunar Orbit

1. What were the most difficult parts of the Apollo 8 mission? I am asking here not about which were the most dangerous parts, but rather which parts of the mission required the greatest skill from the astronauts, the launch control team, the mission control team, the recovery team, or some combination of those? These are the issues to which the greatest attention would have been paid in training. So another way to ask this question is how should the limited amount of training time that was available have been allocated?
2. Some people have claimed that the cultural significance of humans leaving Earth for the first time on Apollo 8 exceeds the cultural significance of Apollo 11's Moon landing, and that December 1968 is therefore the date from the Apollo Program that will be most remembered. There was, however, no specific effort by NASA to plan commemorative activities for Apollo 8 (as there was for Apollo 11). Should there have been? Why or why not? If so, what should have been done at the time to signify and celebrate the event?