

HOLY MANNERS FOR GROUP PROCESS

1. **First and foremost we acknowledge that we come together as brothers and sisters in the One Body of Christ.** When we remember that Christ is in our midst, and within each of us, it is easier to behave in ways we know he expects of us—with compassion, openness and love.
2. **Confidentiality:** What's said in the group stays in the group unless there is full agreement and permission to share a piece of information. There may be things shared or learned that might help a broader audience. If so, obtain consensus for ways this information might be shared without violating the safety or privacy of any group member. Even with permission, sharing with "anonymity" (no names) is best.
3. **Respect:** "Disagree without being disagreeable." Acknowledge the other person's point of view. Confirm that you heard correctly before responding. Avoid sarcasm and hurtful comments or tone of voice.
4. **Truly Listen:** Sometimes the hardest thing to do is simply listen to a person without already thinking of what you are going to say back before they even finish. Rather than get into a "discussion," or give advice, simply receive the person's sharing and give only a response of affirmation or understanding.
5. **Be more committed to relationship than to "winning" or being "right."** It is hard to have true dialogue with people whose whole goal is to prove their point or win their agenda. Practice "holy listening" to each other and be respectful. Stay open in your sharing and receiving.
6. **Destructive or hateful behavior is not acceptable under any circumstances.** When destructive behavior is discovered, use Holy Manners to bring the awareness of such behavior (with specific examples) to the person and find ways to help him or her cease or change the behavior. Support and help should be offered as appropriate. A person who persists in not honoring the Holy Manners agreement needs to be asked, with grace, to leave the group.
7. **Be committed to attending each group and really "showing up."** When we are busy or stressed it is easy to find reasons not to come to a group meeting, or to physically show up, but mentally or emotionally be elsewhere. Make the commitment to not only physically make all the group meetings, but to be fully present to each other while you are together.