

Possibilities to Include in Franciscan Solidarity Table Group Guidelines

Having an agreed upon set of guidelines allows for all current and future members of an FST to understand the expectations for themselves and each other. In order to foster ownership of your Table's guidelines, it's recommended that you set time aside at the beginning of the process to allow all members to give their input and reach an agreement on what the group's guidelines will be. After the initial guidelines for your Table are set, they should be reviewed by everyone whenever a new member joins the Table. Here are some possibilities and ideas:

- Treat each other with respect in all forms of communication and in all actions. Listen respectfully, even when the other's point of view is different from your own or uncomfortable. Interruptions and side conversations are not permitted.
- Always be honest and open with the other Table members.
- When not understanding another member's perspective or disagreeing with it, try to look for clarification or greater understanding in a loving way.
- Confidentiality: What is shared in the group remains there, unless the members agree that it can be shared outside.
- Acknowledge and respectfully accept the differences that we have as individual persons.
- Each person is expected to participate and shares a responsibility for the group's experience.
- During a moment of reflection or in the time between table members sharing, allow for silence.
- Give each person the opportunity to speak. In a time of sharing or dialogue, before speaking a second time, members will wait until those who have not spoken and would like to speak are given the chance.

Questions to ask:

- How will the group make decisions? How will you ensure that consensus is reached; in other words, that all Table members agree to commit to finding solutions that everyone supports or at least can live with?
- How will the group handle conflict should it arise?
- What are the attendance expectations? What does one do if they cannot attend?
- What is the cell phone policy?
- How will logistical questions about meeting time and possible refreshments be decided?
- How is it decided who speaks next?
- How long will the Facilitator and Spiritual Servant serve in their roles? How will new people be chosen to fill those roles?

