

ONE MODEL

Ground Rules for Discussion

Read the Material

Take Time to Think – In reading the material, note the important ideas in the selection, the way in which the author presents his or her points, and any confusing words or passages. Consider the extent to which you agree or disagree with the points the author makes.

Strive for Understanding – The discussion is intended to probe the selection, trying to address and resolve the issues raised by the author. Participants need to realize, however, that not all issues can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Discussion is meant to stimulate ideas, not necessarily to bring them to a final conclusion.

Speak Up Freely – Indicate what you think when an issue has been raised and be ready to explain your view. Feel free to agree or disagree with anything said by your fellow participants. Speak to them and direct your questions to them rather than to the discussion leader.

Support Your Statements – A statement should not be judged by who has made it or an event by how many others agree with it. A statement should be judged by how well it is brought out by the selection. Be ready to support statements you make by referring to the relevant passages in the selection or by offering your own reasoning which has led to your conclusions.

Listen Carefully – When others speak, pay attention to what they say. Don't get lost in your own thoughts. Make sure that comments you make reflect the fact that you have carefully attended to what others have said. Don't hesitate to question any remarks that you don't understand.

Be Courteous – Don't interrupt when someone else is speaking, and don't engage in private conversation or make comments not intended for the whole group. Give your leader and fellow participants the same respect you would like for yourself.

Strive for Balance in Participation – One of the goals of a discussion group is to have approximately equal participation among its members. Those who tend to have a lot to say should consider holding back a bit; those who are inclined to participate relatively little should look for opportunities to contribute to the discussion.

Reach Your Own Conclusions – Two important aims of discussion groups is to stimulate a deeper understanding of the material being discussed and encourage participants to formulate their own views regarding the issues at hand. Interaction with other participants is intended to help you clarify your own thinking regarding issues of importance.