

Valuing the Other — A Missional Practice

Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.

Purpose: To deepen conversation and understanding by developing active listening skills when meeting with your team or in a group. This is a critical part of the congregation's missional journey for deepening relationships and creating a safe place for people to share their insights and feelings.

Steps:

Have an easily seen object such as a rain stick or ball that participants pass from person to person.

Outline the following ground rules for group discussion:

1. When the group discusses a topic or question, the person holding the object speaks while all others listen. Set a time limit for speaking such as three minutes unless the questions or sharing need more time. Each person is responsible to listen carefully to the person speaking.
2. For a person to speak he or she must receive the object from the person speaking. To receive the object from the person speaking, one restates what the person said to that person's satisfaction. Note: it is important that each person feels heard and understood.
3. Follow these steps for question or topic under discussion.
4. End with discussion about how people felt about the experience. Some people will feel the process was cumbersome. Sometimes we think we are listening carefully when often we are crafting our response.

Tips for the Process:

The discussion leader should be alert to how people are responding both verbally and nonverbally. Ask participants if they felt heard before they pass the object to the next person. Using all our senses so we not only hear but feel what the other person said takes concentration and time to develop. Be patient with one another.