

# Practices for Talking About Things That Matter

1. Respect start/end times.
2. Honor our baptismal vow to respect the dignity of every human being—this includes one another, this includes those who think differently in the wider community, this includes our elected officials.
3. Be present to one another.
4. Listen to each other and the Spirit—listen to receive and understand, not to refute or plan a response.
5. Make space for all voices. Commit to hear every voice every gathering. Participants share at their level of comfort.
6. Use “I” statements to avoid sweeping statements and generalizations.
7. Make use of silence—pause between people speaking.
8. Accord one another the best of motivations and intentions.
9. Practice respecting differences and making space for different views. Let ideas that are uncomfortable float without having to knock them down.
10. Be self-aware—hold back or contribute as needed.
11. Do not “fix” other members of the group or give advice.
12. Respect that the stories and concerns people share are not ours to share beyond the group.
13. Have compassion for imperfections in self and others.
14. Be curious and generous. People are multifaceted and complex. Move from “*You’re wrong*” to “*Wow, I see that differently.*”
15. We cannot guarantee a safe space—we can and will say or do things that hurt one another. If someone says or does something that hurts you, have the courage to name the hurt, circle back, and work it through. If you say or do something hurtful, have the courage to own it, circle back, and work it through.