

Dialogue and Discussion

Father Stephen Frase

Meeting about our

meetings:

The art of facilitating
dialogue and
discussion

(those terms do not mean
the same thing)

2018 Small Parish Forum

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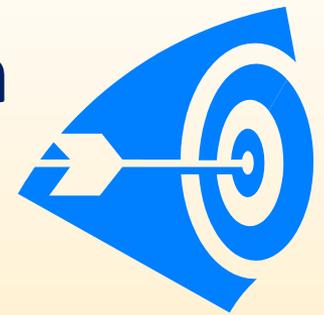
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What do we hope to accomplish today?



By the end of this learning opportunity, I can:

- **Identify common meeting frustrations / struggles**
- **Describe important decisions parish ministry groups may be charged to form**
- **Contrast being an “adaptive” vs. merely an “adapted” parish**
- **Distinguish between the ways of talking known as *dialogue* and *discussion***
- ***Intentionally* engage in the two ways of talking**
- **Analyze positive outcomes of intentionally employing both ways of talking**
- **Take the skills acquired and have a plan for incorporating them into future ministry meetings**

Why do we sometimes *despise* meetings? Why do we sometimes enjoy meetings?

- **At your table with 4 to 6 other people:**
 - Each person think of a “bad” meeting (at work, church, etc.). Why was it bad?
 - Then, think of a “good” meeting. Why was it good?
 - Each person shares without anyone else commenting, adding to, etc.
 - With the same group of people, agree on the top 1-2 causes of both bad meetings and good meetings.

Every Meeting Ever



Important decisions ministry groups oftentimes need to form:

**Lets brainstorm some important decisions
parish council and other ministry groups face or
may face.**

Meeting about our meetings:

- If meetings are so important, then why do we invest so little time learning and working toward producing positive and productive meetings?
- When we invest the time to meet about our meetings, we are being *adaptive vs. adapted*.
 - What is the difference between these terms?
 - *Adapted* – The group / organization he become specialized to fit specific conditions within tightly defined boundaries (examples Blockbuster video; a parish organized to serve a particular ethnic group)
 - Adaptive – The group / organization is able to change form in concert with clarifying identity

Meeting about our meetings:

- There are many ways groups can work toward improving their meetings and becoming a more adaptive entity.
- One of the more simple changes is to be *intentional* regarding *how* we speak with each other during meetings.

2 ways of speaking with each other during our meetings: *Dialogue* and *Discussion*

- **Dialogue**

- Greek for “Making meaning through words”
- Goal is *understanding*



- **Discussion**

- Latin for “To shake apart”
- Goal is to *form a decision*

Let us practice!

- Important discussion topic:
 - What type of candy will your group choose?



Let us reflect

(because we don't learn from experience, but we learn from *processing* our experience)

- What are the advantages to *intentionally* distinguishing between dialogue and discussion?



As we conclude this session:

Keep in mind the following attitudes when working with your group:

- Be loving
- Be forgiving
- Be patient
- Be principled – principles are rules with *soft* edges
- Be intentional
- Be relentless



**What questions do
you have?**



**Thank you for the
opportunity to learn with
you today and may your
parish family have a joyous
time as you continually
improve together for God's
glory!**

Information for this session regarding dialogue and discussion is from

- Garmston, R.J. & Wellman, B.M. (2009). *The Adaptive School: A Sourcebook for Developing Collaborative Groups*. 2nd ed., Norwood, Massachusetts: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.

More learning opportunities:

- *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni
- *Crucial Conversations* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler
- <http://www.thinkingcollaborative.com/>