



KI Toolbox

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KI Toolbox includes:

- Respectful Communication Guidelines (3)
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Each time you use one of our tools for your organization, and it enhances your community interaction in building an inclusive community, please consider making a GracEconomics donation to KI so we may continue to offer our resources to more and more people.

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Respectful Communication Guidelines

R = take **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you say and feel without blaming others.

E = use **EMPATHETIC** listening.

S = be **SENSITIVE** to differences in communication styles.

P = **PONDER** what you hear and feel before you speak.

E = **EXAMINE** your own assumptions and perceptions.

C = keep **CONFIDENTIALITY**.

T = **TRUST** ambiguity because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong.

Communication is one of the most important elements in building a more inclusive community. People of different backgrounds bring with them different communication styles. Sometimes these differences can cause conflicts among members of a community—often in an unconscious way.

Guidelines for communication are like the traffic rules that one has to understand and observe before getting a license to drive a car. We are required to pass a test proving that we know and will follow the rules in order to lessen the possibility of traffic accidents. With interpersonal communication, we do not require people to pass a test but we do need to remind people about how to interact respectfully. Conditioned by our society, we may react to others who are different with negative attitudes, put-downs, judgments and dismissal. If we are to express the essence of God's inclusiveness, we need to agree to behave differently when



we are attempting to build a more inclusive community. The Respectful Communication Guidelines provide a foundation to uphold the well-being of the community.

These guidelines are affirmed using different formats in every session of every course. You are welcome to introduce a creative format that has not been suggested, but whichever format you use, the Respectful Communication Guidelines MUST be used. Different communities use different versions of communication guidelines. The guidelines used most often by the Kaleidoscope Institute have been developed over the years through working with various groups. They are written in an acronym that helps group members remember the guidelines. During the first meeting of the group, the meaning of each letter should be explored. In later meetings, the guidelines should at least be read and agreed upon, and sometimes, with briefer explanation.

Mutual Invitation

The Process:

In order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak, we will proceed in the following way:

The leader or a designated person will share first. After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share. Whom you invite does not need to be the person next to you. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share.

If you are not ready to share yet, say "I pass for now" and we will invite [you to share later on]. If you don't want to say anything at all, simply say "pass" and proceed to invite another to share. We will do this until everyone has been invited.

We invite you to listen and not to respond to someone's sharing immediately. There will be time to respond and to ask clarifying questions after everyone has had an opportunity to share.

(from The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lamb by Eric H. F. Law)

Because there will be participants with different perceptions of power, facilitation that exclusively uses the "volunteer style" of interaction that favors those from individualist cultures excludes those whose interactions favor a collectivistic culture. Therefore, the Mutual Invitation process is used in order to insure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak when the catalyst gives the instruction to do so. As group members become more accustomed to using this tool, they make connections with everyone in the session, because they are required to invite each speaker by NAME. The person who is invited may or may not be someone from whom she/he ordinarily wants to hear. When Mutual Invitation is used, it encourages deep and holy listening to one another, because there are no interruptions or refutations allowed until everyone has spoken

who wants to speak. It is important to remember that in some cultural settings, group members will not speak up in a discussion unless they have been invited. The reasons for this may be gender- or age-related or other traditions embedded deeply in one's culture.

There may be those who are uncomfortable singling a person out to share. For them it may feel like when they were a child and were being selected (or not selected) to play on a team. There are two safeguards built into the process that can assuage people's fears. One: each person invited has three options: share, pass for now (which means "I am not ready, please come back to me"), or pass (which means "I do not chose to share on this topic"). However, no matter which option is selected, the one invited has the privilege of inviting another person in the group by NAME. Two: Throughout the process, the invitation to speak passes back and forth, and no one is left out of the process.

Kaleidoscope Bible Study Process

1. Read the *Respectful Communication Guidelines* and invite members of the group to affirm them for their time together.
2. Inform participants that the Bible passage will be read 3 times. After each reading, participants will be invited to share their reflections.
3. Invite participants to capture a word, a phrase or image when listening to the passage the first time.
4. Invite someone to read the passage.
5. A moment of silence to capture a word, a phrase or image that stood out from the passage for them.
6. Using *Mutual Invitation*, invite each person to share his or her word, phrase or image briefly. (This should take no more than 5 minutes.)
7. Invite participants to consider the second question appointed for this passage. (Facilitator should prepare ahead of time a question that is relevant to participants' context.)
8. Invite someone to read the passage a second time.
9. A moment of silence to reflect on the question.
10. Using *Mutual Invitation*, invite each person to share his or her reflection.
11. Invite participants to consider the following question while listening to the passage again.
 "What does God invite you to do, be or change through this passage?"
12. Invite someone to read the passage a third time.
13. A moment of silence to reflect on the question.
14. Using *Mutual Invitation*, invite each person to share his or her reflection.

End the session with a prayer circle:

Invite participants to join hands in a circle. Invite each person to mentally complete the sentences:

I thank God today . . .

I ask God today . . .

The leader will begin by sharing his or her prayers. After he or she has shared, the leader then squeezes the hand of the person to the right. That will be the signal for the next person to share his or her prayers. If the person does not want to share, he or she can simply pass the pulse to the next person. When the pulse comes back to the leader, he or she can begin the Lord's Prayer and invite everyone to join in.