Groundrules for Safe Dialogue in Groups

- 1) Presume welcome and extend welcome.
- 2) Refrain from fixing, saving, or setting straight others in the group.
- 3) When the interaction gets tricky, turn to inquiry rather than advocacy (wonder about something instead of defending something). Pay attention to the distinction between dialogue (which begins with a question) and debate (which begins with an answer).
- 4) Ask open, honest questions. Open questions are ones to which you cannot imagine 'the right answer' and which have several possible responses; honest questions are ones which do not have a hidden agenda.
- 5) Speak for yourself (this will require listening to yourself).
- 6) Think of silence as another member of the group.
- 7) Observe confidentiality regarding material shared in the group.

Based on "Guidelines for Group Interaction in Marriage and Family Therapy Courses and Formation Experiences" at Bethel Seminary (St. Paul, MN). Originally composed by Carla Dahl, Ph.D., L.M.F.T. Adapted by Andrea Hollingsworth, Ph.D. student in Constructive Theology, Loyola University Chicago.