

## GROUND RULES

- Listen carefully and respect others
- Speak honestly about your thoughts and feelings
- Speak for yourself, rather than as a representative of a group – use “I” statements
- Remember that the Holy Spirit is present and active in the conversation and has given each participant a part of the truth we are all seeking to discern
- A true conversation needs give and take (all perspectives shall be heard)
- Maintain confidentiality about what is said in this class.
- Keep an open mind and heart
- Exercise care and sensitivity for participants who become upset, emotional, hurt, or disturbed about what is said
- The quality, outcome, and safety of the conversation is everyone’s responsibility.
- Remember that within the Church, the Family of God, God’s grace and love for each and all of God’s family/creation is foremost in our time together
- Whenever there is tension, the group may move into a period of silence to allow space for all participants to re-focus on the presence of God among us and God’s love and desire for each of us. A ‘Presence Keeper’ will strike a bowl to move the group into a period of silence when
  - A point has been made that seems significant
  - A break in conversation is needed
  - Tension has escalated and all need to be reminded of God’s presence with usand will end the silence by also striking the bowl.
- GOAL – not to change, influence, or convert anyone to a different position but simply to ‘understand’ (literally, to STAND UNDER) each other, especially those who may differ from us. (Modeled after Jesus who calls us to be ‘servant’ rather than ‘lord’ by washing the feet of his disciples – John 13.)