Ten Commandments for Group Discussion

1. There are no wrong answers to questions that call for the expression of one’s one personal opinion.

2. Group members will courteously listen to one another, and will not engage in arguing because of disagreements and differences of opinion. Rather, it will be the code of the group that each person is entitled to his or her own viewpoint and opinion. Freedom of expression, opinion, and participation will be extended to all without judgment and accusation.

3. Though highly personal matters discussed in the group should not be talked about to anyone outside of the group, group members are cautioned to be careful about what they discuss, making sure that they are comfortable with disclosing whatever information they choose to reveal.

4. Group members should not talk about things that will hurt or damage the reputation of other people unless they have the consent of those people to talk about such things. For example, if a group member’s boyfriend/girlfriend/mother/father/brother/sister is using abusive language at home, and the group member feels victimized by this behavior, it would be better for the group member to say that he/she feels victimized by some things that her boyfriend/girlfriend/mother/father/brother/sister does rather than name specifically what they do. No one in the group is to challenge them to say exactly what that person does or does not do. (*If the session leader feels that there is physical abuse this must be reported to the Conference leadership immediately for the safety of the youth.)*

5. If group members choose to speak in the “third person” (i.e., “I have a friend who. . .”) they are not to be challenged, since people often find it easier to discuss personal matters by using another identity. No one is to say to them, “You know you’re talking about yourself.” The dignity of each group member is to be preserved.

6. Group members will speak **one at a time**, waiting to be recognized by the session leader. The session leader will make sure that all members have an opportunity to talk and that no one member talks too much. The session leader will allow for reasonable follow-up and rebuttal when it is clear that group members need to respond to what has been said.

7. If it appears that a group member’s issues are too heavy for group discussion, the session leader will recommend the group member to a pastor or a counseling ministry of one of the churches in town. **The group is not to attempt to serve as a therapy session unless the session leader is a trained and licensed therapist**.

8. Some topics that might be considered beyond the scope of the group’s ability to discuss and that should be referred are **murder, rape, incest, adultery, physical abuse, unreported crimes, chronic depression.** (*If the session leader feels that there is abuse this must be reported to the Conference leadership immediately for the safety of the youth.)*

9. Group members will respect the session leader and cooperate with him or her always.

10. Group members will pray for one another and be there to support one another.