

Vestry 101

Module 6: Group Dynamics

Rev. Wendy Huber

The text of this section of the video is below. Please refer to it as necessary as you reflect on and consider the ways you attend to the dynamics of the group when members enter and leave it, and how you handle decision making in the group.

1. How do you close out vestry service to those cycling off?
2. How do you orient new vestry members to the work?
3. How do you manage the different energy needs of the group? Do you allow for time to pray, think, take notes? Do you engage in brainstorming and prioritizing activities?
4. How do you manage decisions—do you have a process for making decisions in the group? Have you discussed consensus (100%) versus majority votes on important decisions?
5. Are important decisions made in the full vestry? If not, why? What dynamics might be at work if the full vestry is not empowered to make decisions? Can you change?

Group Dynamics

Once your meeting begins it is important to be familiar with and use best practices in regard to group development and dynamics.

Any time someone joins or leaves a group, the group changes. Every year, we have members cycle off and cycle onto leadership. Be attentive to saying thank you to those leaving, and allowing orientation of new members.

Pay attention to the energy and data needs of your group. Some are more extraverted, others more introverted. Allow time for quiet, small group conversation, as well as free-for-all style brainstorming. Some members will be more driven by the concrete, others are more interested in vision and concepts. Some will want to move quickly to a decision, others will want time to pursue all the possibilities.

Finally, with group decision making, it is important to understand that if you want the group to fully back the decision, vision, or direction, make sure that work is done in a full session, not put off for an executive decision

Meetings should begin and end in prayer and our prayer book provides a number of appropriate prayers for use in meetings. If you are well prepared and lovingly interact with one another you will be successful even when there are conflict laden topics to be considered.

So remember pray, plan, and pray some more for effective and fruitful meetings.