

ANATOMY OF A FRATERNITY MEETING

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St. Elizabeth of Hungary
Regional Fall Conference

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Essential Elements of a Fraternity Meeting:

(All elements should be present for most meetings)

Communal Prayer Experience

Business

Ongoing Formation

Social

Communal Prayer Ideas:

Liturgy of the Hours

Shared intentions

Decade of Crown rosary

Stations of the Cross

Meditations

Prayers of Franciscan Saints (Francis, Clare etc)



Business:

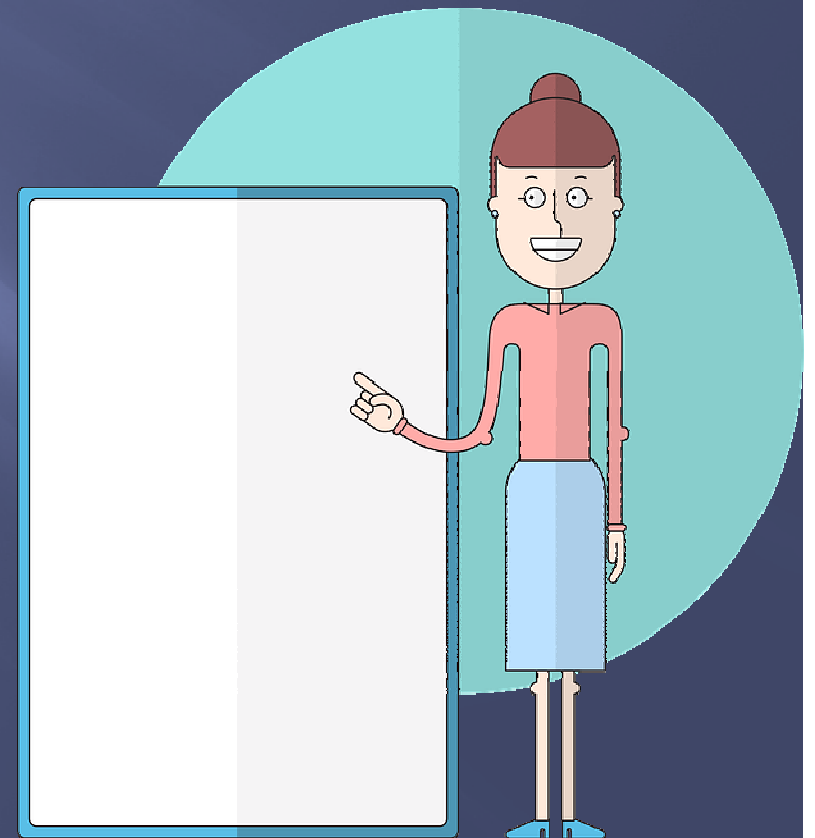
Announcements- retreats, upcoming events, anniversaries, deaths

Apostolates:

Volunteer needs:

CIOFS/ NAFRA/Regional
News:

Fraternity Housekeeping



Ongoing Formation

Should be Franciscan in focus

Must be done every meeting

The Fraternity Council should make up a calendar of formation topics for each Meeting of the upcoming year.

Ideas can come from the CIOFS website, fraternity needs, interests, current events/issues.



Social:

Every meeting must have a time for the brothers and sisters to informally share among themselves to experience fraternity!



Serving and Animating a Fraternity

It is NOT:

- Directing
- “My way or the highway”
- Power and control

It Is:

Listening

being open to ideas

valuing & encouraging the growth of others

The “Ideal” Fraternity:

The “anima” of the Franciscan Charism

Cohesiveness of fraternal spirit & sharing

Sincere love witnessed in personal interactions

Acceptance and warmth

Unity of purpose while accepting diversity in expression



Conflict is all part of the Spiritual Journey!

As Anne Mulqueen, OFS, states:

“The people who trigger us to feel negative emotion are messengers. They are messengers for the unhealed parts of being.”



When meetings are held, this concept of a Spiritual Journey should be foremost in mind! Discernment is key!

All actions should be taken with Franciscan charity, mutual respect, care and LOVE for the others

Common Issues in Fraternity Life

Monopolizing the conversation

Promoting their own “agenda”

Conflicting Ideas

Negativity

Gossip

Rudeness (talking over others)

Lack of Charity



Possible Council Interventions

Intervention #1:



Ongoing Formation on Franciscan
ideals & values:

(as a reminder of our Francis'
insistence on courtesy, respect.)

Address the Issue:

**Develop a
Common Goal**

within the Fraternity
to prevent negativity
&/or monopolizing
conversation.



Control the topic

(to prevent going “off topic” and onto tangents.)

Remember: AARR:*

Acknowledge that the group has gotten off topic,

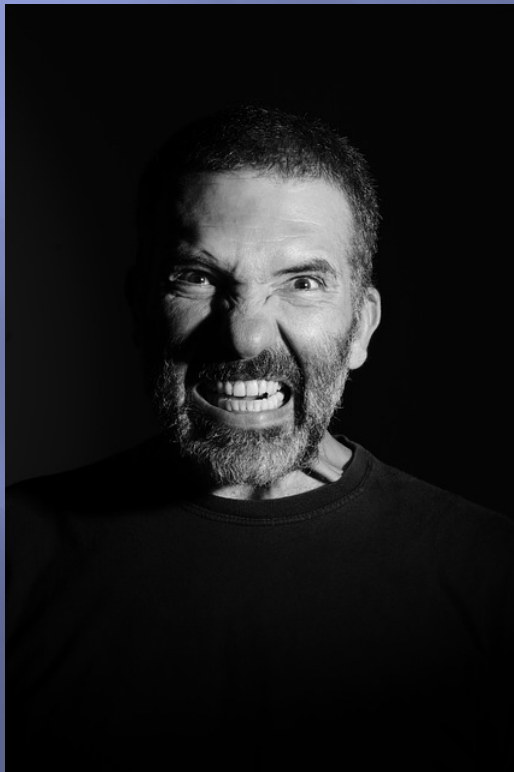
Affirm what is being shared as valuable.

Refocus and re-direct: the group back to the topic*

*Taken from *Why Catholic*, 2013 Training

Control the Manner of Address

(when lack of courtesy/respect is evident)



Immediately stop all conversation! Refocus!

Control the Manner of Address (Continued)

- **Take time out for prayer!**
- **Substitution:** How can we rephrase that so “Patti” can hear what you are saying?
- **Clarifying:** Do you mean to say....(in a nicer way)
- **Continue to Insist on Rules of Behavior:** If all else fails, insist that all people address each person with respect . Interrupt if needed. Take a “time out” for prayer & reconvene.



Learning and using mutual invitation techniques during group discussion.

Mutual Invitation Principles

- ▣ All Sharing is considered confidential.
- ▣ The atmosphere in the group is warm, open and welcoming to everyone. It will not be limited to “friends only”. (Sometimes giving out numbers for groups, limits cliques of friends.)
- ▣ It is accepting of the person and their feelings who finds sharing difficult or does not want to share at the time.
- ▣ Respectful communication is required even if you do not agree with the ideas. No belittling allowed!

Mutual Invitation Process

- ▣ The facilitator invites a person to speak.
- ▣ That person can pass for now, pass (not speak at all) or speak his/her thoughts.
- ▣ After a person *briefly* speaks (knowing that others need to have a turn) he/she invites another to speak.
- ▣ Each person in turn invites another until all have spoken who want to.
- ▣ No one speaks a second time (or adds to it) until all who want to speak have spoken.
- ▣ Use a 1 minute timer if needed.