



Unit: Ground Rules
Skill 28: Minding your Manners
Activity A: Manners

Activity Skills:

One-on-one conversation,
 role playing.

Leadership Skills:

Understand the
 fundamentals of good
 manners.

Suggested Level:

Beginning

Time:

30 minutes

Supplies needed:

Flip chart
 Markers

Do Ahead:
Source:

Developed by:
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Based On:

"Basic Etiquette,"
<http://www.rfc791.org/~chur/lit/manners/basic.html>

BACKGROUND:

Whether we like it or not, people judge us based on our manners. Manners are basic rules of behavior that have been established over time. Most manners and rules of etiquette have been around for years. Emily Post, 1873-1960, wrote several guides to good manners, notably "Etiquette" in 1922. This book became very popular and set the standard for proper social behavior, with most of the rules still in use today. As new challenges arise, like when and where to answer your cell phone, new rules of etiquette develop, but Emily Post is still considered the gold standard of the basics.

If we go back to some of the fundamentals, we can safely state the following rules are the minimum behavior expected of everyone, regardless of age, sex, or status. (Write these out on a flip chart as discussed, so they are visible for reference during the activity.)

Be polite - Always try to act in a professional manner. Be sure to say, 'please,' 'thank you,' 'excuse me,' and 'you're welcome,' as appropriate. Some people will take offense to the phrase, 'no problem,' since it belittles your own effort, and thus it renders a person's thanks as meaningless. Some people actually do make a big deal out of this.

Be punctual - It is basic courtesy to keep one's appointments in a timely manner.

Do not swear, shout, or lose your temper - Keeping your anger in check shows your grace and composure.

Do not pick anything - This includes nose, ears, bellybutton, teeth, toes, etc. Don't scratch yourself or spit either.

Do not point or stare - It's just rude.

Do not interrupt or dominate the conversation - Wait for appropriate pauses before joining into the conversation, and try to listen more than you speak.

Remove your hat indoors - Upon entering any home or establishment, you should immediately remove your hat.

Do not check your watch - Unless you absolutely must be somewhere, it is rude to check your watch constantly. Refrain from this action when at a party or dinner or any function.

Respect your elders - Age and wisdom necessitate your regard.

Avoid the dreaded three - Never discuss religion, politics, or finances.

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Notes:

WHAT TO DO:

Have people divide into small groups of 3-4 for a role playing exercise. Each group will choose one of the guidelines to illustrate with a quick skit. They will show the wrong behavior, and then repeat the situation with good manners. For example, a group might show two people waiting for the third, who is late, to illustrate being lack of punctuality. Then they can repeat the skit showing how things go when the third person is on time. Try to have groups cover as many of the fundamental rules as possible. Since they go quickly, groups can possibly do 2-3 rules each, either showing several rules within one skit or doing several shorter ones.

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- Was it easy to show the difference between the wrong or inappropriate behavior and the version with good manners?
- Did having to do the wrong thing feel strange?
- Did having to illustrate good manners feel strange?

Apply:

- Why do you think people don't use good manners all the time?
- What reasons do people have for being rude or inconsiderate?
- As a leader, why do manners matter?
- What judgments do people make about us based on manners?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Find a person in your field that you would benefit from knowing. This will involved some research! Develop a plan for how you will contact them, and do it. What kind of response did you get? What will you do to follow up?

Resources And Web Links:

<http://www.theexecutivescloset.com/BasicEtiquette.htm>

<http://www.emilypost.com/etiquette/everyday/index.htm>

"Basic Etiquette, <http://www.rfc791.org/~churl/lit/manners/basic.html>