



Unit: Ground Rules
Skill 28: Minding Your Manners
Activity B: Formal Dinner Protocol

Activity Skills:

Role playing.

Leadership Skills:

Understand basic dinner etiquette for formal meals.

Suggested Level:

Advanced

Time:

30-40 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Plates, silverware, napkins, and glasses – paper and plastic will do

Do Ahead:

Set the scene with tables that are prepared with a full table settings for each person.

Source:

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Adapted from:
Dining Etiquette, Ball State University Career Center,
<http://www.bsu.edu/student/careers/students/interviewing/dinetips/>

BACKGROUND:

Table manners play an important part in making a favorable impression. They are visible signals of the state of our manners and therefore are essential to professional success. Regardless of whether we are having lunch with a prospective employer or dinner with a business associate, our manners can speak volumes about us as professionals.

How do you behave when in a formal dinner setting, and what basic rules do you need to know to make a positive and professional impression? These apply for any meal eaten with colleagues or business associates, whether dinner or not. Let's review the handouts to begin.

WHAT TO DO:

Break into small groups of 5-6 people and conduct a mock formal meal. Have each group select a scenario – they are colleagues interviewing a potential hire over lunch, they are business owners taking a client to dinner, etc. Have them place orders (one person can be the server), use their napkins and silverware, hold polite conversation while eating, etc.

Have one person sit out and serve as the observer. This person will jot down notes about etiquette rules that weren't followed. Once the group has had 3-5 minutes to practice, have them rotate and take another 3-5 minutes so that other participants can have the server and observer roles.

TALK IT OVER:**Reflect:**

- Was it difficult to hold a conversation and still pay attention to what you were doing?
- If you played the server during one of the sessions, what was it like to watch the manners of the others?
- What lapses did the observers notice among their group?
- Did you feel any pressure to eat "properly"?
- Does your family require formal meal etiquette, or are family meals more relaxed?
- Do you have situations where you get to practice your table manners?

Apply:

- Why is it important to make a professional impression in such situations?

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Notes:

- Why do people judge us based on etiquette and manners?
- Why do leaders set the tone at formal meals? Do you feel ready to serve as a role model at the dinner table?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Attend a formal dinner or lunch event and practice! If you can't do this, ask your family if they would help you practice and have a formal meal at home, complete with all the silverware and cloth napkins if you can. How did people behave? Did you feel differently when you were using more formal table manners?

Resources And Web Links:

<http://www.bsu.edu/students/careers/students/interviewing/dinetips/>

Baldrige, Letitia. *The Amy Vanderbilt Complete Book of Etiquette: A Guide to Contemporary Living*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1978.

Craig, Betty. *Don't Slurp Your Soup: A Basic Guide to Business Etiquette*. New Brighton, Minnesota: Brighton Publications, 1991.

DuPont, M. Kay. *Business Etiquette and Professionalism: Your Guide to Career Success*. Los Altos, California: Crisp Publications, 1990.

Sabath, Ann Marie. *Business Etiquette in Brief: The Competitive Edge for Today's Professional*. Holbrook, Massachusetts: Bob Adams, 1993.

----- *Gaining the Competitive Edge with Business Etiquette: How to Avoid the Ten Most Common Faux Pas*. Cincinnati, Ohio: At Ease, Inc., 1989. (Videorecording)

----- *Gaining the Competitive Edge with Business Etiquette: How to Conduct Yourself More Professionally during a Business Meal*. Cincinnati, Ohio: At Ease, Inc., 1989. (Videorecording)

Stewart, Marjabelle Young, and Marian Faux. *Executive Etiquette in the New Work Place*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.