

Inter-group Team Building Process

The “Intergroup Team Building Process” is a collaborative technique for helping two parties engage one another about their expectations and hopes. The parties may be two groups, e.g., sacristans and those who serve at the altar, or an individual and a group, e.g., the rector and the vestry. The approach increases communication between the parties by providing a safe, structured process. When successful it can bring clarity regarding the desires of each party, an appreciation of the need for interdependent action, and agreement regarding the future working relationship.

This process can be used when:

- Two groups want to improve their working relationship
- As a way of establishing clearer expectations between two parties
- As a team building process between two parties sorting out roles, needs, and hopes.
- As a tool in managing conflict (in a low – middle range conflict)

The Process

A. Advance Work

1. Arrange for an overall facilitator, possibly also a second facilitator. A third party is often needed for this process. The degree of tension between the parties is taken into account in determining whether the groups can self-manage the process, can use an external or internal facilitator, or need a professional consultant.
2. Those designing the meeting decide on the objectives of the total process and of the meeting(s). Decide on how each group is to be represented.
3. Arrange for any needed background material to be provided to participants.
4. Arrange for needed materials – three “pads” of newsprint for each group (to be hung side-by-side), magic markers (dark colors), masking tape.

B. The Meeting

1. Introduce the objectives of the process and the meeting(s).
2. Provide an overview of the process
3. Each group goes to its own room or area.
4. Each group prepares lists on two (or possibly three) pads of newsprint
 - One list is about what the group’s desires (that might be expressed as – wants, expectations, hopes, etc.
 - A second list is an “empathy list.” This is the group’s hunches about what the other group wants, expects, or hopes for.
 - If there is a third list it would be around a theme that affirms the relationship between the two groups – What we value (affirm, like about) our working relationship.

Each party needs to prioritize the first two lists.

5. The two groups come together and share the lists.
 - A presenter from each group shares that group’s work with a focus on the priority

items.

- The facilitator has the groups share in a matching sequence, i.e., group “A’s” list of its desires followed by group “B’s” empathy list.
- A brief exploration of similarities and differences takes place. Clarification takes place.

6. The whole group might then develop a follow-up list. (What might easily be done together to improve the work? What needs exploration and/or research?) Or the session might end with step #5. The action at this point will depend on factors such as the capacity of the parties to work together, roles and responsibilities, the time available and the importance of the issues.

C. Follow-up

Possible follow up activities: None may be needed, form inter-team working groups in a few areas, each group act on items as agreed, arrange for a second meeting of the participants.

Use between a vestry and the rector

The rector of a parish is both part of the vestry (its presider) and separate from the vestry. This process can help clarify the expectations each have of the other. It can be used as the basis for a Mutual Ministry Review, at a time when there is some tension between the vestry and the rector, and in relation to some specific aspect of their relationship, e.g., how vestry meetings are conducted.

For the purpose of this illustration, we’ll assume that each party is using two pads of newsprint. It would look like this.

VESTRY

What we expect, hope for, want from the rector -----	What we assume the rector expects, hopes for, wants from us as the vestry -----
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RECTOR

What I expect, hope for, want from the vestry -----	What I assume the vestry expects, hopes for, wants from me. -----
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Use between the rector and the parish musician (or other staff member)

Musician

What I expect, hope for, want from the rector -----		What I assume the rector expects, hopes for, wants from me -----
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Rector

What I expect, hope for, want from the parish musician -----		What I assume the musician expects, hopes for, wants from me. -----
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