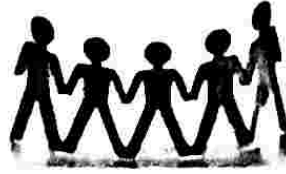


NINE-STEP COLLEGIAL DECISION MAKING PROCESS



Step 1 INITIATING (at personal, local, regional or area level)

- individual or group names the issue
- proposes a solution for Assembly discernment and decision: Proposal or Recommendation
- states the rationale for proposed solution

Step 2 INFORMING (internationally)

- presents Proposal through the community newsletter, All-To-All (ATA)
- submits Proposal to ATA no later than the April/May issue
- invites SFCC response through the ATA

Step 3 STUDYING (at all levels: personal, local, regional and area)

- SFCC research and discuss the Proposal at local and regional meetings
- submit to the ATA suggestions, opinions, alternatives, etc.

Step 4 CLARIFYING (at International Assembly 2 days prior to Consensus Session)

The Consensus Facilitator

- reads the Proposal and Recommendation
- invites Clarifier to present any further information
- opens floor to questions for clarification
- uses small groups if needed
- encourages Assembly members to further discuss during the next 2 days

Step 5 PREPARING THE SETTING

The Business Team and Assembly Team provide

- a comfortable circular seating arrangement for small group discussion
- chalk board or news print for small group reports/sharing
- overhead projector or other technology for group reports/summaries
- microphones made available for full range of audibility

Step 6 DECIDING COLLEGIALLY

The Consensus Facilitator

- opens session with music, centering silence and invocation for Holy Spirit's direction
- introduces Consensus Team members and their specific duties
- Consensus Team members: Recorder I (note taker), Recorder II (media recorder),
Time Keeper, Evaluator who appraises the consensus process at the end of the general session
- States each Proposal and Recommendation in updated form
- forms discussion groups of 5-6 persons. A recorder is chosen for each group
- provides for interregional sharing by each person present
- encourages face to face dialogue from the floor to provide all members the opportunity to know the thinking of all present

- invites Recorder I summaries from small group discussions
- allows ample time for modifications, sets arbitrary cut-off limits, knowing that the SFCC Collegial Process is based on the Pauline theology of community: "The Spirit speaks where it will, to the least as well as the greatest, to persons of every rank for the upbuilding of community." (COR 12:11). Unless all have an opportunity to be heard, the Holy Spirit will be limited, as well.
- deflects prolonged arguments which suggest a genuine lack of readiness for consensual decision-making by taking a "consensus check" on the need to table the Proposal or Recommendation until the following year after more research and discussion is applied.
- watches for shifts toward or away from consensus and takes periodic checks to advance the process
- asks: "Is there now consensus that we accept/reject the Proposal? Recommendation?"
If there is not perfect consensus, checks to see if there is anyone present who cannot live with the affirmation and implementation of the Proposal/Recommendation. If not, consensus is affirmed. If someone steps forward, then the Proposal/Recommendation is returned to the originating region for further study
- if consensus exists, recorder I takes down the exact wording of the Proposal/Recommendation

Step 7 PLANNING THE IMPLEMENTATION

The Consensus Facilitator

- asks the Assembly how the Proposal/Recommendation is to be implemented if it involves any follow-up work
- asks Recorder I to take note of any committee that is created for the follow-up. The committee will be included in the Consensus Session report to the ATA
- delivers to the next Assembly Team a report on any unfinished business their Assembly will need to address

Step 8 EVALUATING THE PROCESS

The Consensus Facilitator calls forward the Evaluator who assesses on the general session that has just ended according to the nine steps delineated on these pages.

Step 9 REPORTING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

- Each member carries full notes back to her region for sharing at a Fall meeting or newsletter
- ATA Editor Team dedicates the September/October issue of the community newsletter to a comprehensive report of the Consensus Session and its results.

The Consensus Facilitator closes the Session with a prayer of gratitude

