

Group Guidelines

Over years of practical experience, we have developed a set of guidelines for using *Reading Between The Lines* in a group setting:

- **Focus on the text.**
Reading Between The Lines is an invitation to enter into the story. It is not a group for exegesis, theology, discussion, or therapy. If the focus begins to wander, come back to the text.
- **"I statements" are encouraged.**
The goal is to explore how *you* respond to the text. This is not to discount tradition and the scholars; but to say that here it is how you hear, feel, think about, and react to the text that is of primary importance.
- **Pauses between responses are important.**
A subtle reminder that we are not in a discussion group. The aim is to engage the text rather than one another. What we hear others say can be crucial. Why they say what they do is a conversation that can take place over coffee later.
- **The goal is not consensus, agreement, or a right answer.**
The richness and value of the experience may depend upon the very opposite.
- **There is no expectation that you explain, justify, or defend anything you say.**
This may be hard to remember; even if you are working through *Reading Between The Lines* alone.
- **Silence is part of the process/ silence can be pregnant.**
Alone this may simply be about taking your time and allowing some in-between spaces. In the silence there is a chance not only to ponder what others have said, but to hear the echo of your own voice.
- **Allow space for others to speak**
The richness of the discussion depends on hearing different voices and different perspectives, not just one.
- **You can change your mind as often as you like.**
"How do I know what I think until I hear myself say it?" In this process, once you hear what you have said, feel free to change your mind not once but over and over again.
- **Honestly try the nonverbal exercises.**
This is not an art or theater competition. Silence your inner critic and be prepared to be amazed and enlightened.
- **What is said in the *RBTL* group stays in the group.**
In the group, we touch sacred ground in ourselves and each other. Have the respect for the group and yourself to honor that confidentiality.

For more information on our method and resources, or to place an order, please visit our website:
www.educationalcenter.org ; call our office at 704-375-1160, or send an email inquiry to:
info@educationalcenter.org