

Introduction:

Invitational rhetoric was created with the goal of understanding one another rather than persuading others to believe what the rhetor believes. As an alternative to contemporary communication theory (rhetoric as persuasion to change other people), invitational rhetoric can be used to foster strong relationships. In this activity, participants will practice offering perspectives without the goal of persuasion and practice listening to other's perspectives without judgment.

Activity Instructions:

1. Watch the first 11:47 minutes of the Invitational Rhetoric [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5JJOgpUrXs) (12 minutes). Full hyperlink here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5JJOgpUrXs>.
2. Small group practice. You will take turns being the rhetor and an audience member:
 - The first participant (rhetor) will offer a perspective on a topic of their choice (e.g., "Violent games should be banned for teenagers," "How can a college education help you get a good job?" "Arts vs. science. Which is better?" etc.).
 - The audience members accept the offering (e.g., "You have a valid point...").
 - The rhetor then responds to the audience without judgment.
3. Small group discussion:
 - What deep belief was challenged when you accepted the invitation?
 - How did it feel to accept the invitation despite your beliefs?
 - How would it feel to accept the opinion of someone that is discriminatory to you or a group you identify with?
 - How can you make your audience feel comfortable enough so that they feel they can accept your invitation and offer you an invitation to consider their perspective (i.e., with the language you use, etc.)?
 - What are some words or attitudes that might hurt, degrade, or belittle an audience member (e.g., "What you're saying is totally offensive and wrong," etc.)?
 - What are some of the challenges of engaging in invitational rhetoric?
 - In what situations could it be most useful (e.g., class discussion, conversation with friends, discussing ideas with teammates on a project, etc.)?
 - In what conditions might it be less useful or effective? Why?
 - What are the differences between invitational rhetoric and traditional rhetoric? Can you think of examples from popular culture (e.g., movies, speeches, etc.)?
4. Whole group debrief:
 - What did you learn from this activity?
 - How will you apply this in the real world?