

# Manners Matter

## Activity Guide Ages 13 to 19

### Advanced Phone Manners

#### The Right Foot

Today's technology makes it much easier to stay in touch by phone. Mobile phones and pagers keep us connected when we're away from home. Features like call waiting, call forwarding, and voice mail ensure that we won't miss a thing. But new technologies often emerge before the etiquette for using them does. Are your phone manners properly wired?



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#### Civil Action

Take the following quiz to test your phone etiquette. When you finish, discuss your answers with your helper.

Choose all answers you think apply.

1. In which of these places is it acceptable to have your phone or beeper turned on?
  - a. Movie theater
  - b. Grocery store
  - c. Wedding ceremony
  - d. Restaurant
2. Which of the following are good reasons to answer your call waiting?
  - a. You think the incoming call might be more interesting than the one you're on.
  - b. You have asked a friend or family member to call you when he or she safely reaches his or her destination.
  - c. You are expecting a call about a job offer.
  - d. You have placed an ad in the paper regarding a lost item.

#### Life Skill

- Communication

#### Project Skill

- Phone skills

#### Objective

- Participant takes a quiz, keeps a log of examples of good and bad telephone etiquette, and writes a quiz on good telephone skills.

#### Success Indicators

- Participant demonstrates an understanding of a variety of phone manners

#### Eti-Kit

- Notepad
- Pen or pencil

#### Courtesy Corner

- Driving while using a cell phone is more than annoying to other motorists; it's plain dangerous. One study concluded that drivers are four times more likely to be involved in a collision while on a cell phone. This is comparable to the crash risks of drivers who are drunk.

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3. Which of these things should you do before forwarding your calls to another number?
  - a. Make sure you've keyed in the proper forwarding number.
  - b. Ask permission of the owner of the phone to which you're forwarding calls.
  - c. Forward your calls to the number at least an hour before you plan to be there.
  - d. Decide whether the calls you're expecting are worth inconveniencing people at the other location.
4. Which of the following things are proper to do while talking on a mobile phone in public?
  - a. Talk louder than you would on a non-mobile phone.
  - b. Tell the caller where you are at all times during the call.
  - c. Drive a car.
  - d. Make sure you have a strong enough signal to complete the call.
5. What should you do if a person on a cell phone is disturbing you?
  - a. Don't say anything, but move to another location if possible.
  - b. Ask the person if he or she could take the phone elsewhere.
  - c. Yell: "Would you please shut that thing off?"
  - d. Ask an authority figure, such as a restaurant manager, to intervene.
6. What constitutes good speakerphone etiquette?
  - a. Use it so that other people in the room can eavesdrop on your conversation.
  - b. Ask the person you are calling if he or she minds being put on speakerphone.
  - c. Let the person on the other end know if others are in the room with you.
  - d. Ask the person immediately if she or he can hear you well.

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What other important phone manners can you think of that are not covered by this quiz? Keep a log for one week of types of inappropriate phone behaviors you observe. Also, make note of examples of good phone etiquette. Write your own quiz and give the test to your helper or friend.

### Extra Polish

Because some people don't use good manners voluntarily—or often are ignorant of proper behavior—many places like restaurants and theaters now post and enforce restrictions on cell phone use. Lawmakers are considering bans on dialing and driving. And some companies are even developing technology capable of disabling ringers on phones in public places. Investigate the evolution of cell phone etiquette, then compare it to development of other laws and customs that apply to other cultural practices, such as smoking or Internet use. What similar patterns emerge? How does our society balance personal rights with the comfort and safety of others?

### Finishing School

#### Share

- What phone behavior did you observe during the one-week period? What behavior was the most obnoxious?
- Which rules of phone etiquette are a matter of common courtesy, and which ones are based on ethics or safety?
- Is it easier to communicate with people in person or on the phone? Explain your answer.

#### Process

- Why is it generally a good idea not to confront strangers who are behaving badly? Can you describe any time when intervening would be appropriate?
- People often say that the solution to a problem is not always black-and-white. What etiquette considerations fall under the category of “gray” areas?

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- What are the advantages and disadvantages of modern communication?

### **Generalize**

- Manners often develop gradually around the use of new technology. What other “new” rules of etiquette affect you?
- What laws do you comply with that may have been developed to resolve questions of etiquette?

### **Apply**

- Which of your own behaviors, if any, will you modify as a result of what you learned here?
- How can you use what you learned about the phone etiquette to communicate more effectively in other situations?