

Moderator Guide

Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to outline the responsibilities of the moderators of The 4 Gospels Christian Network.

Scope:

This document will cover the responsibilities and attitudes of moderators in shoutbox and forums, during regular main chat sessions, Bible study fellowship sessions, and Celebrate recovery Online private chat rooms.

Moderators:

When acting as a moderator you are also managing people as much as the threads they post and/or respond to. Anytime we manage people we should keep the three “F’s” in mind, (Firm, Friendly, and Fair). Let’s be **friendly, fair and respectful** to all members even those with whom you do not agree. As a moderator, you should hold yourself to **higher standards** than the regular user. If you do this you will get better cooperation and respect from the members even if you have to warn him/her about something. Be consistent and calm. We are not wardens in a prison camp.

Keep communication for moderation with the members as brief as possible and avoid arguments with the member, (**use the rules**).

When participating in forum discuss remember to conduct yourself in the same manner that you expect the members to. If you find yourself getting emotionally involved in the topic, move to another thread for a while. You may also ask one of the other moderators or administrators to take a look at the posts that are upsetting so they can make the call.

We have in place, three very important tools that can be used to control the discussions and individual post. Please use these before resorting to banning.

1. **The Moderation Queue** – All new members post will be sent through this queue, this is also a great way to control a member that we consider to be a problem on the forum. I can easily send any member’s post through this queue when necessary. Just send me a PM with the user’s nickname, you do not need to give me a reason. This gets their attention right away, as much as a warning or more. No one likes to suddenly get a message that their post that they have been working on the last 30 minutes is not going to the forum until it is reviewed. If they contact me I will send them to you and you can explain the reason so be sure you have one.
2. **Queue Moderated Threads Forum** – The topics in this forum are topics that may have normally been locked. Simply move any topic to this forum and **ALL** post to it will go through the mod queue. Move a topic here instead of locking it.
3. **Queue Moderated Members Group** – This has the same effect of the as the “**Queue Moderated Threads Forum**” except it only effects one member not all

posting to a topic. Only an administrator has the access required to add a members to this group.

The forum rules are now posted at the top of each forum. Please familiarize yourself with the forum rules and “statement of faith”, you will be notified immediately anytime they change. These rules are a great source to use for moderation of the forum. In most cases you should only have to remind the offender of the rule that applies to the situation. Now that they are posted at the top of all forums, you have easy access to even copy and paste the rule into your post to the post in question. I may be adding and amendment to the Celebrate Recovery forums rules that may further clarify handling of issues in this area. For now they are the same. Remember, these people are hurting. Some may even be a little unstable. And also the forums are private. We want these people to have a safe place to get things off there chest. This is going to require more thought.

Forum

Try to stop by at least once a day to see how people are behaving themselves.

- **Moderator Control Panel (moderators work as a team here)**
 - **Check this first** thing after you long on. The first five times a new members post, they are sent to this queue. They are NOT on the forum. We should review and get the approved post on the forum as soon as possible to avoid frustrating the new member. Any moderator may approve or disapprove the post in the queue regardless of where it is being posted.
- **View New Posts (moderators work as a team here)**
 - **Go here next** this is where you will find all new post to the forum from members that are not being sent through the moderation queue. Please note also that the new post listed here is from your last log out. This of course means that if you log out of the forum before you view all of the post listed here you should not expect them to still be on the list the next time you log in.
- **Moderator Responsibilities On The Forum That They Are Assigned**
 - The assignment to a forum means you are the contact person for that forum. You are the primary person that will handle any complaints from that forum.
 - To be able to better handle the complaints you should be as familiar as possible with the threads there.
 - The moderator assigned will be the person that moves a topic to the “**Queue Moderated Threads Forum**” when necessary. If you move a topic from your forum to any other forum please notify the moderator responsible for that forum.
- **Post that are disrespectful (Titus 3:9-11)**
 - PM the member and ask them to edit the post and tell them why. (use the rules), be respectful.

- If no response, edit the post if you feel it too offensive or personal. And sight the rule that it broke.
- **Heated debates**
 - This is similar to the above except that all members are getting carried away.
 - The thread has become a war room between all members posting
 - Explain to all that the thread is being moved, (with a general post to the thread). Move the thread to the “**Queue Moderated Threads Forum**” area this will cause ALL post to be routed through moderation queue.
- **Warning and Banning members**
 - First of all we have a **moderation queue** that can be used to keep offensive posts from reaching the forum. We will use this in most cases.
 - Banning is mainly for **VERY** extreme cases
 - Anti-Christian behavior
 - Constant promotion of a known cult or false religion.
 - Extremely rude and disrespectful member
 - Pornography
 - **Never** mention the word “**BAN**” when warning a person. This automatically puts them in a defensive mood.
 - Instead of using the “b” word, issue a formal warning and inform them that their post may be sent through the **moderation queue** if they continue. Here, if he does not stop, he will get tired of his post getting disapproved and leave on his own.
 - Three warnings are not the absolute rule, **nor is it always necessary** to warn them. Some offenses are **minor** and may be handled by editing their posts. This gets their attention right away. On the other hand, some offenses are **severe** enough to simply ban the member without notice.
- **Post and Topic Pruning** (the more post on the forum the better it looks for the guest that is thinking about joining)
 - If you ban a member, **retain their post** If their post are not retained it causes **HOLES** in the threads and it looks like people are replying to their own post. The thread doesn’t make sense anymore when you read it.
 - Inactive topics are **NOT** to be deleted for now though let’s leave them where they are, they may become active again when a new member joins. Note: when visiting other forums with thousands of post in their stats, you can be certain that only a some percentage of those topics are actually active.
 - Post that break the rules should be first **EDITED** not deleted.
 - Complete topics should **NEVER** be deleted unless it falls into a seriously anti-Christian, pornographic, clearly racial (edit first if it is just on statement), or related to the promotion of a false religions or cults.(e.g. Buddhism, Jehovah Witnesses, Mormonism, etc.). *Note: The false religions and cults should actually be locked quickly, a warning post about the thread added, and left for all to see. This will serve as a **warning** to others that may start such threads.*

Audio/Video Chat

Unlike the forum, the chat is real time. Because it is in real time we have a different set of tools to use for moderation.

- Avoid bragging about your authority or speaking of banning/kicking to the room. You may be only joking but this can end up projecting a bad image of yourself and the site. Especially with new members.
- Controlling a user that is being disruptive or violating the rules.
 - Avoid public correction
 - First option, warn in private. Be friendly.
 - Second option, turn on the moderator queue. If you use this, please be aware that it effects the entire room. So be on your toes to accept or decline a post. A declined message is still seen by the moderators and by the person that sent it but not by the rest of the room. The person that sent the declined post will never know it has been declined. It will just not be seen by others.
 - Third option, silence the user if they continue. This option will close their microphone and block the user from posting both to the public and to private chat. Their user name will show dimmed in the user list. The room will see a message that says, "Jesus Loves You! The user will receive a message that says, "Shh!". When they try to post they will receive the "Shh!" message again. The system will automatically remove the silencing. When this happens, the room will see a message that says, "Praise The Lord!". The duration is currently set at 2 minutes.
 - Fourth option, kick the user. Be absolutely certain that you can quickly quote a rule that has clearly been broken if this is used. This should only be used in extreme circumstances. Avoid impulse kicking. The room receives a message that says, "[User Name] has left the room!"
- The "Ban" option has been removed from moderator tools. If you feel a user needs to be banned, write down their IP address and call a staff meeting to discuss it.

Shoutbox

The shoutbox is open to the public and guest. The rules here are much more relaxed than in the main chat.

- Avoid bragging about your authority.
- If there is a problem
 - Try posting some smilies, unrelated comments, or Bible verses until the questionable comments scroll off the screen
 - Delete the post from the shoutbox. Use this only for the absolute "No's" in the rules. You can do this by clicking the delete button to the far right of the post. (The button is invisible, but if you move your cursor over it your cursor will change.)

Admin Panel

Some of you have access to the "Administration Panel" in the forum. This area controls everything about the forum setup and administration. A mistake or unauthorized action in this area can do irreconcilable damage. Access has been given to this area for "group" management, name changes, email changes, and password resets **ONLY**. Use the moderator panel for administration such as warning, banning, any post deletion or editing, etc. **NEVER** delete an account. Once an account is deleted it can not be restored. Even if the user request their account to be deleted. Minds can change and when they do, it is always better if the user can pick up where they left off.

God Bless,
The 4 Gospels