

Event Brief: Etiquette Dinner

The Etiquette Dinner offers an opportunity to learn the customs and habits that allow us to participate well in one of the most fundamental settings of human life: the shared meal.

About Annie Schreck

Annie Schreck is a Philadelphia native, mother of eleven, small business owner, and disability advocate. She holds degrees from Duke and Brooklyn Law. She co-founded a top children's consignment business, homeschooled her children, and integrates entrepreneurship, education, and advocacy in Ave Maria, FL. Annie is married to Daniel Schreck.

The Importance of Dining Etiquette

I. Food as a Foundation of Culture

Notice how often food is at the center of human life. Families, friendships, celebrations, business relationships, and communities are built around the table. Learning to eat well is therefore not merely a matter of manners; it is essential to participating fully in culture.

II. Etiquette as Consideration for Others

Notice how good manners direct your attention outward. The purpose of etiquette is not to make you look sophisticated, but to help you make others comfortable and show proper respect for the people with whom you share a meal.

III. Etiquette as Self-Mastery

Notice how the dinner requires habits of self-mastery: patience, attentiveness, conversation, restraint, and awareness of others. These habits extend beyond the dining room. Learning to conduct yourself well at the table is part of learning how to conduct yourself well in society.

Cultural Formation: Why an Etiquette Dinner?

I. The Need for Cultural Formation

The Institute forms virtuous leaders for the marketplace and public square. This requires more than just professional skills; leaders must be formed with a deeper sense of meaning and an appreciation for truth, beauty, and goodness. Accordingly, education should “combine excellence in humanistic and cultural development with specialized professional training.”¹

To that end, The Institute provides a core suite of professional skills that all leaders need, personal formation to enable them to use those skills well, and cultural formation that cultivates the search for truth and forms “the human spirit...in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, and to contemplate...”²

II. The Etiquette Dinner

The shared meal is one of the most ordinary and enduring forms of human community. Learning to dine well is therefore part of learning how to live well with others. As you participate in the dinner, consider how the seemingly small habits of etiquette—how you speak, listen, eat, and attend to others—help form the character required for meaningful participation in family, community, and professional life.

¹ Pope Saint John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 23.

² *Ibid.*

