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CONVERSATIONAL
EVANGELISM
SERIES 1

Everyday Spiritual conversations

Small Group Study | WEEK 2

Enquire, don't disagree



Outreaching
CULTURE

A Leadership
Strategy by

all together
Consulting

Discussion 2: Enquire, don't Disagree

Notes to the leader

The only way to teach people how to 'enquire rather than disagree' is to bring up topics on which they might disagree. So this session should be fun!

Q6 – (especially the 'cultural' question) could be potentially offensive. So it is noted, the author of this sermon/study series disagrees with all four statements given at Q6. However, the fact that we disagree is the point. We're trying to learn here how to pause – not take offense – nor to 'shrink back and say nothing' – *but instead to ask questions that could open the conversation. This is the view to challenge why a person believes something in the hope that when spiritual or moral conversations come up we can help a person take a step toward Jesus.*

You will very quickly realise from Q6 onwards in this discussion that.

1. There are some key questions that are useful in most situations:
 - i) What do you mean by that?
 - ii) Where did you get that idea from?
 - iii) Have you considered...?

Resource: Video titled "How to start a conversation" at <https://alltogether.co.nz/equipping-videos-members> (4:30min)

2. It is difficult to continue a conversation very far if we don't know why we believe what we believe. (Our own knowledge is what enables us to ask wise questions!).

Resource: Our Faith Q&A video series at www.10DayChallenge.co.nz

Have fun ☺

Conversation Game (example)

Would you like to start the game?

Would I like to start the game?

Would you like to play the conversation game?

Would you like to go first?

Do I look like I want to go first?

But aren't you keen to get started?

Shall we start now?

Haven't we already started?

Do you think you're quite clever?

Are you trying to trick me so I lose?

Do you think I'd be like that?

Don't you think I can see it coming?

What would you like to discuss?

Would you like to discuss favourite movies?

What is your favourite movie?

Would you agree that Gladiator is the best movie ever?

Are you crazy?

Etc.

APPLICATION:

Where these skills really count is when topics come up related to morality, spirituality and faith. Through questions, the 'sour note' (illogical or false idea) we hear can be turned into an opportunity.

Closing Activity: What questions could you ask to open a conversation with the below 'moral' and spiritual topics – without really stating that you disagree?

- i. We're only clever like this because our brains evolved over millions of years.
- ii. All religions are basically the same?
- iii. The Bible is no different to any other religious book
- iv. The spiritual experiences you get from all the religions are the same.
- v. Churches have no right to say homosexuality is wrong. It's a personal choice – and gay people should even be allowed to be pastors if they want!
- vi. Regarding abortion, I think it's a person's right to do what they want with their own body.

What will you take away from today's discuss to apply in the week ahead?

Pray for those you are reaching out to – and for ideas on how to connect with them.

LAUNCHING ACIVITY

Opening: The question game

In pairs, start conversations in which members are

- only allowed to ask questions (no statements)
- and in which the questions must be a logical continuation of the conversation
- ...and there ideally shouldn't be any awkward pauses. *(See bottom of discussion guide for an example)*

Q1. Have you ever been in a conversation with a non-believer where they said things you disagreed with – and you were lost for words? What happened?

Q2 – Have you ever been in the same situation where you managed to say things that opened the conversation up in a meaningful way?

Q3 – Have you ever been in the same situation – but you said something and regretted it?

GUIDING

On Sunday we looked at a few Bible verses where we see Jesus in potentially tense conversations – and the people skills Jesus used in each case.

Q4. Let's look at three Bible passages again. The questions in each case are

- i. What was the point of conflict
- ii. How did Jesus respond? (Or, what was wise about how he responded?)

Luke5.33-35

- **The conflict:** Jesus breaking cultural/religious norms re fasting
- **Jesus' response:**
 - o Jesus uses a question to invite their engagement in a conversation.
 - o Jesus does so while also giving an illustration that might help his reasoning to make sense

Luke 6:1-11

- **The conflict:** Jesus breaking cultural and religious norms re Sabbath practices
- **Jesus' response:**
- Story 1: Picking and eating grain on the Sabbath
 - o Jesus used a question. Jesus did so with an illustration that might help them understand his answer.
- Story 2: Healing a man's hand on the Sabbath
 - o NOTE: In the parallel account in Mark 3:1-6 it adds an important detail – that they did not answer Jesus question.
 - o Jesus asked a question – empowering the hearers to make the decision
 - o Only then – in light of their silence (which Mark notes 'deeply distressed' Jesus), did he heal the man.

Luke 14:1-7

- **The conflict**
 - o Again the topic is whether Jesus can heal a sick man on the Sabbath
- **Jesus' response**
 - o Note that – yet again – he asks a question.
 - o Only in the face of their silence does he heal the man
 - o Then (v5) he gives them an illustration that could help

The point: Jesus often spoke in questions and stories.

Q5. How do you typically respond when there is awkwardness in a conversation:

- (a) Confront it / address it,
- (b) Silence
- (c) Ask an interested question?

Q5b. Which do you think is the wisest response?

Q5c. Why do you think you respond as you do?

(Where do our different 'presets' come from? Can we change them?)

Activity: In pairs, take turns at bringing up a disagreeable topic – so the other person can get practice at asking questions (that will keep the conversation going) – rather than disagreeing straight away (which would end the potential conversation). Make up your own or use the following examples.

- i. (SPIRITUAL) I think God has predetermined who will and won't go to heaven and hell. It's not really up to us at all!
- ii. (SPORTING) The Australian rugby team is definitely better than the All Blacks!
- iii. (FINANCIAL) Capital gains tax is a great idea. Everyone single person who owns a property should pay!
- iv. (CULTURAL) The Treaty of Waitangi is irrelevant to us today.