

**PRACTICING FAITH**

# **CHRIST- CENTERED DIALOGUE**

**A 6-WEEK CLUB CONVO  
CURRICULUM**

**PEACEMAKING**

**CREATED AS PART OF THE CONVOCATION SERIES BY  
THE SPIRITUAL LIFE PROGRAMS OFFICE**

**WRITTEN BY RACHEL COLLINS**

# CHRIST-CENTERED DIALOGUE: AN INTRO\*

So, what is Christ-centered Dialogue? Christ-Centered Dialogue is an opportunity for individuals with differing backgrounds to come together and discuss various topics in constructive and healthy ways. Christ-Centered Dialogue seeks to provide a space for individuals and groups to discuss controversial issues and “hot button” topics in a way which constructively leads to understanding of the “other.”

Throughout the next several weeks, we will walk through various phases of the dialogue process, creating a space for understanding and empathy, so that we can learn from one another. We will also study various passages in the Bible which support the Christ-Centered Dialogue process. We believe scripture supports our pursuit of understanding, bridging the gap between various people groups for the ultimate glory of God.

God created us all differently. We have different backgrounds, different genders, different ethnicities. We come from different parts of the world and different family systems. We believe different things about God and have different religious ideas. However, we are all called beloved by God and scripture leads us to seek reconciliation and empathy. Christ-Centered Dialogue is a tool to create a climate which will seek produce those kinds of outcomes.

## **So, what will these 6 weeks look like?**

1. In week one we will focus on creating an environment for dialogue.
2. In weeks 2 and 3 we will seek to understand one another in the group through sharing our commonalities and celebrating our differences.
3. In weeks 4 and 5 we will dive into those controversial issues and have respectful dialogue together.
4. In week 6 we will debrief the experience and discuss ways we can become an ally to those who are different from us.

# WEEK BY WEEK STUDY GUIDE

## **Leader's Note**

Each week you will need a print out of the scripture text. Choose a translation which you enjoy reading and stick with it. We recommend using [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) to print the material. Try to print it without headings, verse numbers, or footnotes so that your group is encouraged to read the passage as a story.

Each week will begin with an introductory activity. Be sure to pay attention to the material needed, as some activities may need small items to be brought by the leader.

After the activity, there will be an introduction, which is meant for you to read for yourself to familiarize yourself with the week. Feel free to read any parts of it to your group that you feel are helpful.

The Bible study section is broken into Observation, Interpretation, and Application. For a refresher on these elements of Bible Study, see "Observe First, Interpret Later." Also, be sure to remind your group each week of what each element means and how to do it!

# WEEK 1

## Materials

Print out of Genesis 1:26-31, colored pencils (or markers), pens, extra blank paper

## Opening Activity

We will spend this first week getting to know one another. If the group is completely unfamiliar with each other, go around the circle and share various elements of your identity with one another (example: name, age, major, family background, favorite childhood memory, favorite comfort food, etc.). If the group is familiar with one another already, go around the circle and share one time you felt “unheard” or “unseen” in a group or conversation. How did that make you feel? What are your hopes for this group study?

## Introduction

In order to create an environment for dialogue, we first need to understand what dialogue is! What is the difference between dialogue and debate? In the appendix, there is a chart which details the difference. Discuss this chart as a group. When have you been in a dialogue in the past? What about a debate? How can you tell the difference?

## Leader’s Note

The chart is found in the appendix, directly after week 6.

## Scripture

In order to respect one another’s belovedness, we must first understand our own. Genesis 1:26-31 describes the creation of humanity and the goodness of this creation. What can we learn about ourselves from this creation story? What does it tell us about our identities?

## Discussion Questions

1. Begin your discussion time by handing out and looking over the printed passages. Engage is the observation, interpretation, application method described in the “Biblical Studies Basics” section. You can practice this interpretive method as a large group, in pairs, or individually. Just be sure to come together as a group and share your discoveries after each step.
2. How do you see the Image of God lived out by the first human beings in this text?
3. What do you think it means to be created in God’s image? How does that relate to your identity in Christ?
4. How might this reality of God’s image change how you view yourself? How might it change how you view your friends? How might it change how you view people you disagree with?

### **Christ-Centered Dialogue Agenda**

This week, we will create a group agreement or covenant. Spend 10-15 minutes discussing the various elements you would like to include in this covenant. Key items to discuss include: confidentiality, how we interact with one another, how we demonstrate we are listening, technology use, what it means to be respectful, how we disagree with one another, etc. Once you have written your group covenant, have everyone sign it. Bring the covenant back each week to remind one another of your promise.

### **Takeaway Challenge**

Take some time this week to think through the commitments we made as a group in our covenant. If you think of anything additional that you would like to add to the covenant, write it down, and bring it to next week so that we can discuss it as a group.

### **Leader's Note**

Be sure to keep the group covenant somewhere safe and to bring it back to each meeting.

### **Prayer**

This week involved a large learning curve and lots of heavy lifting! Spend a brief time in prayer today as a leader. Pray over your group!

## WEEK 2

### Materials

Print out of 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, colored pencils (or markers), pens, extra blank paper, copies of “safe space versus brave space” found in the appendix

### Opening Activity

Spend some time checking in with your group about your covenant. Now that everyone has had a week to think about it, is there anything the group would like to add or amend? Do that now.

### Leader’s Note

If no one has additional pieces to discuss including in the covenant, be sure to have another “ice breaker” suitable for your group prepared in its stead.

### Introduction

For our introduction today, we are going to review the handout “safe space versus brave space.” Have each group member read the handout to themselves, or choose one person to read it aloud. After the handout has been read, discuss the following questions:

1. What is the difference between a safe space and a brave space?
2. Can you think of a situation you have been in that you would label a brave space?
3. How can we create a brave space in this group?

### Scripture

Today’s scripture passage builds on the belovedness we discovered last week in Genesis 1. This week, however, we will discuss how our belovedness functions in community. In 1 Corinthians, Paul is writing a letter to a church in conflict. The church has not been functioning together as one and has been discriminating against certain members. So, to correct this, Paul uses an analogy of the body. The body only works when everyone is present, working together. One part of the body cannot go off on its own. Each part is uniquely valuable.

### Discussion Questions

1. Begin your discussion time by handing out and looking over the printed passages. Engage is the observation, interpretation, application method described in the “Biblical Studies Basics” section. You can practice this interpretive method as a large group, in pairs, or individually. Just be sure to come together as a group and share your discoveries after each step.

2. Why do you think Paul uses this analogy to communicate to the church in Corinth?
3. What do you think Paul is implying by discussing the “weaker” parts of the body?
4. Are there any implications for your own life in this text?

### **Christ-Centered Dialogue Agenda**

This week we will be practicing active listening for our agenda item. One great way to create a space for healthy dialogue is to learn how to truly listen to one another. Often, when we are listening, we are thinking about what we want to say next or we are generally distracted by things going on in the room or in our minds. Listening takes work! For this activity, break into pairs and spend 2 timed minutes listening to your partner share their response to the following prompt: tell me about a time you overcame a challenge in your life. After the 2 minutes is up, swap places. Then, come together and discuss as a group what it was like to listen fully without interrupting the other person.

### **Leader’s Note**

In order to set up this activity, it will be helpful to review “Active Listening Guidelines and Techniques” found in the appendix with your group prior to completing the agenda item.

### **Takeaway Challenge**

For next week, please bring one item which reflects an aspect of your social identity. A social identity is an attribute of oneself which automatically puts them in a group. Examples would be: woman, Catholic, student, Asian, etc. Be prepared to share what this item means to you and how it relates to your chosen social identity.

### **Prayer**

This week gather together in your pairs. Pray for your partner from this week, sharing prayer requests and encouraging one another.

# WEEK 3

## Materials

Print out of James 1:26-2:12, colored pencils (or markers), pens, extra blank paper

## Opening Activity

For our opening activity today, we are going to make a list of personal and social identities. A social identity is an attribute of oneself which automatically puts them in a group. Examples would be: woman, Catholic, student, Asian, etc. A personal identity is a self-described quality which makes an individual stand out. A personal identity would be: rare coin collector, procrastinator, sports enthusiast, etc.

## Leader's Note

Write down the lists on two sheets of paper and then read them off to your group at the end of the introduction time. Additional explanation of the distinction between personal and social identities can be found in the appendix.

## Introduction

Sometimes our social identities can be challenging to identify. Other times, they are quite easy. Everyone has a different relationship to their social identities and everyone has had different experiences which make it easy or challenging to identify them. As we read through the scripture assigned today, try to think through why social identity is challenging for some to identify and easy for others.

## Scripture

The Book of James highlights the importance of our faith matching our actions, particularly as it relates to systems of privilege and oppression. James chooses widows and orphans to highlight the importance of seeing and empowering those on the margins. Widows and orphans were often the most vulnerable in the ancient near east because their social identity made it impossible for them to have income, property, or protection. So, James makes sure Christians know that their obligation as believers is to these groups.

## Discussion Questions

1. Begin your discussion time by handing out and looking over the printed passages. Engage is the observation, interpretation, application method described in the "Biblical Studies Basics" section. You can practice this interpretive method as a large group, in pairs, or individually. Just be sure to come together as a group and share your discoveries after each step.



2. The Book of James is famous for coining the phrase “faith without deeds is dead.” Comment on the meaning of this phrase.
3. Why do you think showing favoritism is so, in James’ mind, anti-gospel?
4. What does the Book of James mean for us as believers?

### **Christ-Centered Dialogue Agenda**

This week we will share the items we brought which represent a piece of who we are. We call this activity a “culture chest.” They could be items which represent our personal or social identity, but they likely reflect a social identity. Each group member will present their object and talk about, in light of the lists created in the introduction time, which parts of their identity and story this object represents.

### **Leader’s Note**

Full instructions for this activity can be found in the appendix.

### **Takeaway Challenge**

Spend some time journaling this week about the culture chest conversations.

### **Prayer**

This week’s prayer time will be done as a large group. But instead of choosing one person to pray, everyone will get to pray- just in short bursts. Think along the lines of “God, thank you for our time together.” (that’s it!). Then another person might say “God we pray for your wisdom in applying this passage to our lives” (done!). Then a third person might say “God we confess to you that we have not loved one another as we ought” (that’s it!). See how each person prays a short prayer but everyone gets to pray? Encourage that style of “po corn prayer” for about 5 minutes. Every gets to pray as many times as they like. Then you, as the leader, can close the prayer time.

# WEEK 4

## Materials

Print out of Luke 10:25-27, colored pencils (or markers), pens, extra blank paper, a handout of “Circles of my Multicultural Self” for each group member

## Opening Activity

This week we will wrap up our discussion on the identities we bring into the group. For our opening activity, we will read out a list of identities, life experiences, and backgrounds. Everyone who identifies with the item read will step into the center of the circle. After each item the circle will reset.

Discuss the experience after the activity

## Introduction

Interwoven within our group’s collective social identities is the nature of privilege and oppression. Sometimes those words make us nervous or uncomfortable, but they are really just describing the ways in which our social identities make it easier or difficult for us to live in this world. Everyone has many social identities and each one brings unique privileges or challenges to our experiences and ability to be successful. This week, we will begin to talk about those experiences in our lives.

## Leader’s Note

Be sure to adequately prepare your group for this phase and to take any additional time needed so that all feel comfortable.

## Scripture

The Good Samaritan is a well-known parable told by Jesus. On this occasion, a religious leader asks Jesus to clarify who his neighbor truly is. Those who have read this parable throughout the ages have speculated that the religious leaders were trying to trick Jesus with these kinds of questions. Nevertheless, Jesus responds with the story of the Good Samaritan. In this story, a man is injured and is looked over by those who travel along the road. However, a Samaritan stops to give the man aid. In this story, the Samaritan (an individual who would have been discriminated against and looked down on in 1st Century Israel) is the true neighbor to the injured man.

## Discussion Questions

1. Begin your discussion time by handing out and looking over the printed passages. Engage is the observation, interpretation, application method described in the “Biblical Studies Basics” section. You can practice this interpretive method as a large group, in pairs, or individually. Just be sure to come together as a group and share your discoveries after each step.

2. In this parable, the Good Samaritan is a man who comes from a less desirable background (from the perspective of the Israelites). Why do you think Jesus chooses him for his parable?
3. What is the context of this parable? What issue do you think Jesus is trying to speak to?
4. How does this text encourage all Christians to engage in biblical justice?

### **Christ-Centered Dialogue Agenda**

This week's agenda item is called "Circles of my Multicultural Self." Each group member will quietly journal on their handout for 5 minutes and then share their writings with the group.

### **Takeaway Challenge**

Have each person bring an article, image, or video that corresponds to the hot topic selected for next week.

### **Prayer**

This week's prayer time is in two parts and will occur with a partner.

Part 1 gives the pairs from some time to check in with one another.

Part 2 will focus on confession in response to biblical justice. This part will encourage your group to think through the ways in which they have struggled to act justly and live out biblical justice. Feel free to structure this prayer time in a way that works best for your group.

# WEEK 5

## Materials

Print out of Luke 14:1-24, colored pencils (or markers), pens, extra blank paper

## Opening Activity

For this week's opening activity, we will do a gallery walk. Have each participant post or share their article, image, video, etc. on either a wall or table. Then allow your group to observe all of the articles and images for 5- 10 minutes. Discuss.

## Introduction

Allow your group to write down controversial or "hot topics" to discuss. Put them in a hat and draw two. One will be discussed this week and one will be discussed next week.

## Scripture

In this parable, Jesus tells the story of someone of means who invites all of the poorest and marginalized in the community to his meal. The people invited had no chance of repaying this man with another meal or any sort of compensation, yet, they were the ones invited. Jesus often emphasizes the importance of including and inviting everyone to the table of God.

## Discussion Questions

1. Begin your discussion time by handing out and looking over the printed passages. Engage is the observation, interpretation, application method described in the "Biblical Studies Basics" section. You can practice this interpretive method as a large group, in pairs, or individually. Just be sure to come together as a group and share your discoveries after each step.
2. What do you think is the significance of the invitation to share a meal?
3. Why does Jesus make a point to invite the marginalized? Where else do you see Jesus doing this in his life and ministry?
4. Who in your life needs to be invited to the table?

## Christ-Centered Dialogue Agenda

For this activity, a small group of students will sit in the center of the circle and discuss the topic chosen during the introduction, while the rest of the group sits on the outside and silently listens. Then, once their discussion is over, others will enter the center and take their place until each person has had a turn in the center.

### **Leader's Note**

Instructions for the fishbowl activity can be found in the appendix.

### **Second Leader's Note**

As a leader, you may choose to participate in a center circle conversation or it may be best for you to facilitate outside of the circle. Use your best judgment as a leader.

### **Takeaway Challenge**

Challenge the group participants to journal about their experience discussing controversial issues.

### **Prayer**

This week, in light of our dialogue, carve out some time for each person to spend time in silent prayer, individually. Sometimes it can be very encouraging and moving to pray silently alongside others who are also communing individually with the Spirit of God. As the leader, set the time for 5 minutes and at the end of the experience, pray a blessing over your group to close the prayer time.

# WEEK 6

## Materials

Print out of Revelation 7:9-17, colored pencils (or markers), pens, extra blank paper

## Opening Activity

This week, we will practice Christ-Centered Dialogue with the second selected topic. Spend some time debriefing the first dialogue experience. What went well? What could you improve this week? How did everyone feel leaving the experience last week?

## Leader's Note

Depending on how the first dialogue went, you may need to spend more or less time on the introduction

## Introduction

This final session will be devoted to the idea of allyship and utilizing one's spheres of influence for the betterment of society. This ChristCentered Dialogue experience is beneficial on its own, but works best when it is taken into the world. Leaders equipped with Christ-Centered Dialogue are able to recognize their own privilege and be allies to others.

## Scripture

The Book of Revelation paints a picture of all different people, with different social identities, coming together to worship God. It is the picture of the Kingdom of God fully realized. And that picture is diversity. Studying Revelation means leaning into a future of true celebration of God's beloved creation in each person. Revelation is the outpouring of Genesis 1- a true celebration of God's image in each of us as "good."

## Discussion Questions

1. Begin your discussion time by handing out and looking over the printed passages. Engage is the observation, interpretation, application method described in the "Biblical Studies Basics" section. You can practice this interpretive method as a large group, in pairs, or individually. Just be sure to come together as a group and share your discoveries after each step.
2. Revelation demonstrates to us a culmination of all redemption. Why focus on the diversity of the people worshipping?
3. What is necessary in order to truly worship with all people as equals? What does the gospel message encourage us to do in order to worship with all people?
4. What would you have to give up in order to truly live out the hope found in Revelation? What would you gain? How can you take action as an ally today?

### **Christ-Centered Dialogue Agenda**

This week, replicate the fish bowl activity done last week. This time, use the hot topic issue selected for this week. Allow small groups to discuss the issue and then trade the inner circle in with new people. Make sure everyone practices active listening and engages in dialogue, not debate!

### **Additional Christ-Centered Dialogue Agenda**

For our final Christ-Centered Dialogue agenda item, we will brainstorm as a group: **ways we can be good allies to others with different social identities.** Allow others to speak into your list and affirm one another's participation in this 6-week study. What have you observed as strengths in dialogue for others in the group? Go around the circle and speak those affirmations.

### **Prayer**

This is our last week together. Take a little more time than normal to pray together. Bring up your action points from the study with the group and reflect on how well you've done with them. Reflect also on the study and allow each person to go around and share one thing they plan to take away from the six weeks. Allow each person to also share a prayer request which relates to what they shared about the study. Have each person pray for the person on their left. Close the prayer time with a blessing that you give to your group.

# **APPENDIX**

Here you will find all relevant handouts and additional material required for you as a leader.



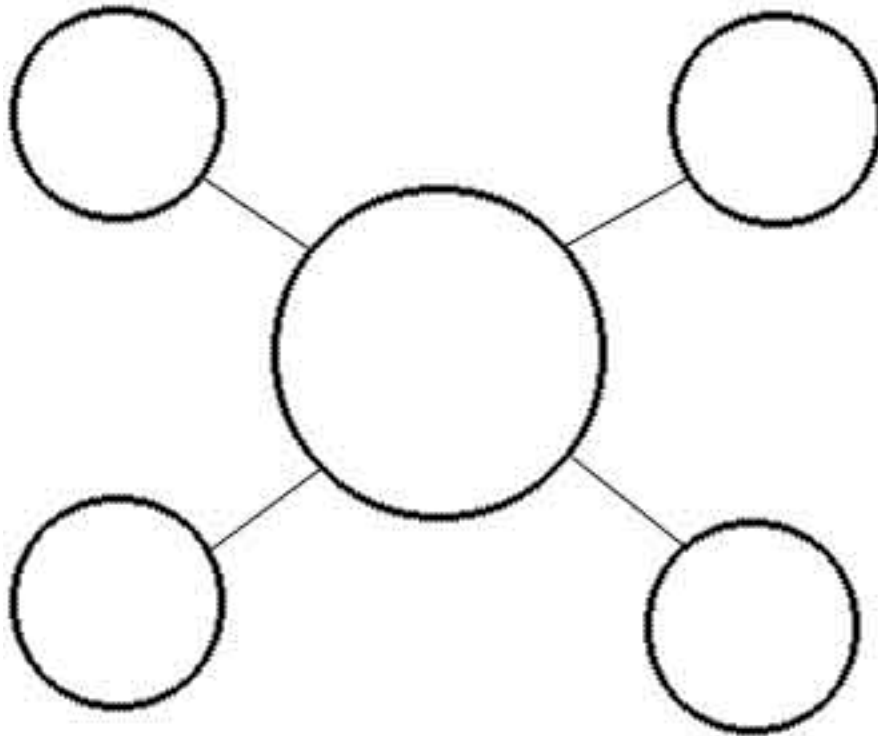
# CHRIST-CENTERED DIALOGUE



## Circles of My Multicultural Self

This activity highlights the multiple dimensions of our identities. It addresses the relationships between our desires to self-define our identities and the social constructions that label us regardless of how we define ourselves.

Place your name in the center circle of the structure below. Write an important aspect of your identity in each of the satellite circles -- an identifier or descriptor that you feel is important in defining you. This can include anything: Asian American, female, mother, athlete, educator, Taoist, scientist, or any descriptor with which you identify.



1. Share a story about a time you were especially proud to identify with one of the descriptors you used above.
2. Share a story about a time it was especially painful to be identified with one of your identifiers or descriptors.
3. Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence:

I am (a/an) \_\_\_\_\_ but I am NOT (a/an) \_\_\_\_\_.

# CHRIST-CENTERED DIALOGUE



(So if one of my identifiers was "Christian," and I thought a stereotype was that all Christians are radical right Republicans, my sentence would be:

I am a Christian, but I am NOT a radical rightwing Republican.

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## **CULTURAL CHEST ACTIVITY (DEVELOPED BY TANYA O. WILLIAMS)**

**Each of you will be creating a “Cultural Chest” which will allow you to share personal information with the group about who you are and how you believe others see you.**

Select three objects that are significant to you because they describe an aspect of yourself in connection to your membership in any of the following social groups: Gender, Race, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, and/or Social Economic Class. These objects might be a photograph, piece of art, book, music or any artifact that describes an aspect of your personal and family history or social identity that is significant to you. The idea about this assignment is to be creative and share some of yourself with the class. Please try to think deeply about what you bring and why it represents the assignment above. Refrain from bringing shallow-minded representations of your identities (e.g., a picture of a girlfriend or boyfriend to show that you are heterosexual; a dollar bill to show that you are wealthy. I want you to think deeper about your identities and why they contribute to who you are or who you have been socialized to be.

- Place the three objects inside a small box or bag (shoe box, paper bag, etc.)
- Decorate the outside the box or bag with images (pictures, your own drawings, and words or phrases) that describe how you think other people see you based on your visible identities
- Come prepared to share what you have placed inside and outside your chest with the group.

# BRAVE SPACE COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Social justice work is not often easy. One of the most common guidelines in this work is the creation of a “safe space” to express ideas and opinions without fear of attack, ridicule, or denial of experience. This ideal is an important one, but the creation of a safe space in social justice work may not be possible for all group members, especially those from subordinated social groups, who no matter the context or intent of guidelines, often have to deal with very unsafe things being said and done. For members of privileged groups, a safe space can mean staying in **comfort zones** where working through challenges that arise in such work feels “unsafe” and so is not pursued, rather than helping folks move into and operate from **learning edges**, or places where grappling with the issues is not easy, but viewed and appreciated as necessary to building a more just world. What we need is not a safe space, but a brave space, where we take risks, challenge and are challenged, and support and are supported in our development as justice-minded individuals.

## Controversy with Civility

*From the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, 1996)*

- Controversy with civility “is a value whereby different views are expected and honored with a group commitment to understand the sources of the disagreement and to work cooperatively toward common solutions” (p. 59)
- An alternative to “agree to disagree”

## Own Your Intentions AND Your Impacts

- The intentions of our actions are not always congruent with our impact on others
- Good intentions do not trump negative impacts
- An alternative to “don’t take things personally,” “no judgments,” “it’s okay to make mistakes”

## Challenge by Choice

- How are you affected when as a \_\_\_\_\_, you opt not to challenge yourself over issues of \_\_\_\_\_?
- What factors will influence your decision about whether or not to challenge yourself on any given issue?
- How will this awareness affect your participation in uncomfortable situations?
- A possible alternative: “be aware of comfort zones and learning edges”

## Respect

- What does “respect” look like?
- How can you firmly challenge the views of another participant in a respectful way?
- How can another participant firmly challenge your views in a respectful way?

## No Attacks

- What is the difference between a personal attack on an individual and a challenge to an idea or belief?
- What is the difference between a personal attack on an individual and a statement that makes an individual uncomfortable?

## Additional Guidelines:

# Comparison of dialogue and debate

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.

*Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.*

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.

*In debate, winning is the goal.*

In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.

*In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.*

Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.

*Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.*

Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.

*Debate defends assumptions as truth.*

\*Dialogue is about understanding more than agreement.

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.

*Debate causes critique of the other position.*

Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.

*Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.*

Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.

*Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.*

In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.

*In debate, one submit's one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.*

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs. \* This does not mean letting go of your values or passions.

*Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.*

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.

*In debate, one searches for glaring differences.*

In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.

*In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.*

Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.

*Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.*

Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.

*Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.*

Dialogue remains open-ended.

*Debate implies a conclusion.*

*Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call the national ESR office at (617) 492-1764.*

## **Fish Bowl Discussion**

Today, instead of a regular Socratic Seminar, we are going to do things a little differently. Today we are going to do a fish bowl- that is one group of you will discuss your article, while the other group observes. Then we will switch sides and repeat the process.

### **Fish Bowl Process:**

- Step 1- Fish Bowl #1- Group 1 inside, Group 2 outside.
  - Group 1 will discuss as if this were a full class seminar. Remember- you are a fish, you cannot speak to anyone outside of the bowl.
  - Group 2 will observe the fish, taking notes on important or insightful comments. Remember- they are fish, so you cannot speak to them, they can't understand you anyway.
  
- Step 3- Fish Bowl #3- Group 2 inside, Group 1 outside.
  - Group 2 will discuss as if this were a full class seminar. Remember- you are a fish, you cannot speak to anyone outside of the bowl.
  - Group 1 will observe the fish, taking notes on important or insightful comments. Remember- they are fish, so you cannot speak to them, they can't understand you anyway.
  
- Step 4- Full group discussion of fish bowl process. As a group we will discuss what we noticed about questioning techniques and student behaviors. Hopefully, this will give you some insight into what your discussions should look like.

\*\* Taken from <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/FreeDownload/Fish-Bowl-Discussion-Instructions-756538>

## Appendix 3N

### Becoming an Ally

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#### What Is an Ally?

An ally is typically a member of advantaged social groups who uses social power to take a stand against social injustice directed at targeted groups (Whites who speak out against racism, men who are anti-sexist). An ally works to be an agent of social change rather than an agent of oppression.

#### Characteristics of an Ally

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- Feels good about own social group membership, is comfortable and proud of own identity
- Takes responsibility for learning about own and targeted group heritage, culture and experience, and how oppression works in everyday life
- Listens to and respects the perspectives and experiences of targeted group members
- Acknowledges unearned privileges received as a result of advantaged status and works to eliminate or change privileges into rights that targeted group members also enjoy
- Recognizes that unlearning oppressive beliefs and actions is a life-long process, not a single event, and welcomes each learning opportunity
- Is willing to take risks, try new behaviors, act in spite of own fear and resistance from other advantaged group members
- Takes care of self to avoid burn-out
- Acts against social injustice because it is in her/his/hir own self-interest to do so (as well as in the interest of targeted group members)
- Is willing to made mistakes, learn from them and try again
- Is willing to be confronted about own behavior and attitudes and consider change
- Is committed to taking action against social injustice in own sphere of influence
- Understands own growth and response patterns and when she/he/ze is on a learning edge
- Understands the connections among all forms of social injustice

## Definitions of Social Identity Concepts

**Social group:** a group of people who share a range of physical, cultural, or social characteristics within one of the social identity categories. We are focusing here on social identity groups and the social group memberships typically included in discussions of social justice and oppression.

### Examples of Social Identity Categories and Social Groups

Examples of Social Identity Categories	Examples of Social Groups
Race	Black, White, Latino/a, Native American, Asian, biracial, multiracial
Sex	Female, male, intersex
Gender	Women, men, transgender, genderqueer
Religion	Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Hindu
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual, gay
Class	Owning class, working class, poor, middle class
Age	elders, adults, young people
Ability	able-bodied, person with a disability

**Social groups have different statuses:** Within each social identity category, some people have greater access to social power and privilege based upon membership in their social group – **advantaged group**. We call groups whose access to social power is limited or denied the **targeted group**. Other descriptors for these two groups include:

- **Advantaged:** agent, dominant, oppressor, privileged
- **Targeted:** target, subordinate, oppressed, disadvantaged

**Border Identities** are identities that do not fit into the binary of advantaged/targeted or oppressor/oppressed. Examples include people of mixed racial backgrounds, transgender individuals, bisexuals, people who were adopted and raised by a family of a different race, people who are bicultural by virtue of being born or raised in one country or culture and moving to a new country and culture. Those with border identities may experience both privilege and advantage due to their status.

**Social construction of social identities and status difference:** concepts created through historically and culturally specific social processes. For example, the concept of race has varied across time and culture, based on political, social, and historical dynamics.

### **Characteristics of Social Identities**

- **Multiple:** We have many simultaneous identities (e.g., able-bodied, lesbian, Jewish adult)
- **Interconnected:** We are all our identities; no single one describes us completely.
- **Change:** Are these identities fixed through our lives? *Some are; some may change (e.g. ability, class, nationality).*
- **Choice:** Did we choose all our identities? *Some (religion, occupation); some not (ethnicity, age).*
- **Observable:** Can we see/hear all these identities in people? *Some we can observe (or think we can); some are not visible or audible.*
- **Salient:** Are we always aware of all our identities, all the time? *No, there are some identities we do not think about consciously (are not salient) to us; for example, we may not think daily about being U.S. citizens until we travel outside the country.*

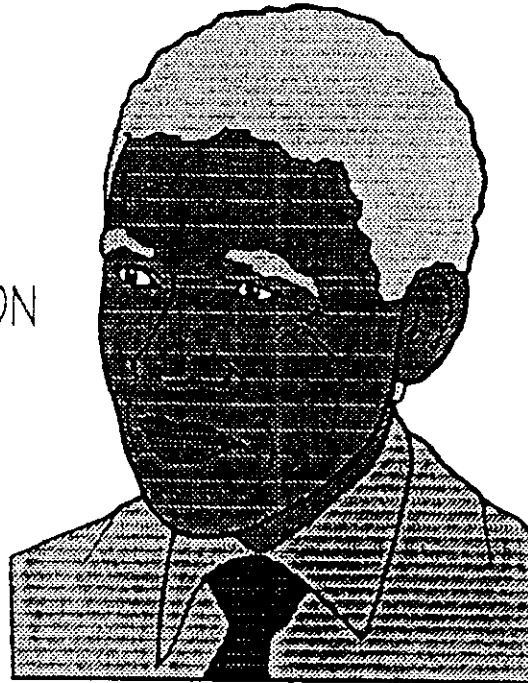


# Active Listening Guidelines

# Active Listening Techniques

## Effective Non-Verbal Behaviors:

TONE OF VOICE  
FACIAL EXPRESSION  
GESTURES  
EYE CONTACT



ENCOURAGE:  
conveys interest and  
promotes continued  
talk

CLARIFY:  
"if you don't know,  
you better ask  
somebody"

RESTATE/REFLECT:  
repeat the words  
as well as the  
feelings/emotions

## \*DO NOT:

- INTERRUPT
- OFFER ADVICE
- GIVE SUGGESTIONS
- TALK ABOUT YOUR  
OWN EXPERIENCE

VALIDATE:  
acknowledgment can be done  
w/o agreement is okay

SUMMARIZE:  
let the speaker know that their  
message has been heard

# Comparison of dialogue and debate

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.  
Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.

In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.  
In debate, winning is the goal.

In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.  
In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.

Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.  
Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.

Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation. *\*Dialogue is about understanding more than agreement.*  
Debate defends assumptions as truth.

Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.  
Debate causes critique of the other position.

Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.  
Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.

Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.  
Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.

In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.  
In debate, one submit's one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.

Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs. *\* This does not mean letting go of your values or passions.*  
Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.

In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements. *\* IGD is founded on a social justice framework. It does not promote tolerating intolerance.*  
In debate, one searches for glaring differences.

In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.  
In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.

Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.  
Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.

Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.  
Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.

Dialogue remains open-ended. *\* We measure to talk through multiple identities so that it isn't just the marginalized educating always.*  
Debate implies a conclusion.

*Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call the national ESR office at (617) 492-1764.*

*\* there isn't just one story from the other side. we are all multi-dimensional and there is a lot to unpace for all of us.*