

THE ART OF CONVERSATION, Pt. 2

Discussion Guide

The Art of Conversation, Pt. 2 *Discussion Guide*

This Week's Reading Assignment

The Art of Conversation, Part Two looks at some basic conversation skills. It is odd but most of us consider ourselves to be good conversationalists. It is important to remind ourselves that the pursuit of good conversation skills is life-long. With so many bad conversations going on all around us encourage your group to look honestly at their own skills.

A Note to the Teacher (session objectives)

In this session you will discuss the three tension points of good conversation and three basic skills; listening, asking questions and telling stories.

Class Structure

Please plan 2 ½ hours for this session.

30 minutes

Hook and Discussion: *While You Were Sleeping*

40 minutes

Learning Activity: Modern Parables

50 minutes

Project Discussion: Hosting Conversation Gatherings

15 minutes

Summing Up

Resources:

Project 2 Hosting Conversation Gathering

Additional Resources for Hosting Gatherings

***Hook and Sharing:
While You Were Sleeping
30 minutes***



Starring: Sandra Bullock, Bill Pullman, Peter Gallagher, Peter Boyle, more cast
Directed By: Jon Turteltaub
Released By: Unknown
Genre: Comedy
Rating: PG

Movie Synopsis: A lonely Chicago transit employee, Lucy, has a hopeless crush on a handsome commuter who passes her booth every day. On Christmas day the commuter is mugged and pushed off the platform onto the tracks. Lucy heroically jumps onto the track and saves his life. While the commuter, Peter, is in a coma Lucy is mistaken for his fiancée and is embraced by the man's warm and welcoming family.

Scene 1 Introduction: After saving Peter from certain death Lucy goes to the hospital to check on him. As a result of a series of miscommunications his family thinks that she is his fiancée.

Scene 2 Introduction: A normal dinner conversation in this family consists of lots of talking but not much listening. All comments are run through each personal grid and no real conversation takes place.

Sharing:

- Have the group share about some of the worst conversations that they have had. Try to keep it funny and positive.
- Have the group share about their personal conversation fears.
- Did the article address any of these fears?

Discuss the Three Conversation Tensions:

- Do these tensions make sense? Why or why not?
- Where are you weak, where are you strong and why?

← Talking too much Not talking enough →

← Being too light-hearted Being too serious →

← Making statements Asking questions →

***Learning Activity:
Modern Parables
40 minutes***

Discussion: Telling a story well and with a purpose is one of the more difficult parts of conversation. It can be difficult to introduce a story into a conversation and then difficult to know what to do with the story once you have told it - to actually use the story to launch into meaningful conversation.

Take five minutes and have the group discuss how they have managed or failed to incorporate good stories to deepen conversation.

Writing Modern Parables

Instructions: Divide your group into smaller groups of twos, threes or fours and have them work on rewriting one of Jesus' parables in the modern, urban, context. Give the groups 10-15 minutes to work on this task.

How do the principles in this story relate to our modern context?
How might Jesus make the same point today?
How can you update the story to fit the modern setting?

When the groups are done have them tell the modern version of the parable to the group.

Choose from the following parables:

The Good Samaritan	Luke 10: 30-37
The Parable of the Sower	Matthew 13:1-8
The Prodigal Son	Luke 15:11-32
The Unmerciful Slave	Matthew 18:23-35
The Vine Growers	Mark 12:1-9
Tares among Wheat	Matthew 13:24-30

***Project Discussion:
Hosting Conversation Gatherings
50 Minutes***

The Project Assignment is the second of two projects that accompany The Art of Conversation; Hosting Conversation Gatherings

You will find additional resources for planning your gatherings in the file Additional Resources for Hosting Gatherings.