



MCC's Tips for Respectful Dialogue

HAVING BETTER CONVERSATIONS ON DIVISIVE ISSUES –

“Holy God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the heart of our battles for justice and truth, not to confront each other in hatred and bitterness, but on the contrary, to work together in tolerance and respect. Yes, Lord, imprint on us your love for those who are different from us.”

— SIAKA TRAORÉ, BURKINA FASO

Being able to have meaningful conversations about divisive issues is a necessary characteristic of healthy relationships, resilient communities, grounded churches, and a strong democracy.

We can use the space created by disagreement to fuel growth and deepen understanding.

MCC believes that healthy dialogue is a path to nurture connection, reconciliation, and promote nonviolence.

TIPS TO CREATE SPACE FOR DISAGREEMENT, RECIPROCITY, & FEELING HEARD

PREP

- Take time to understand what you care about.
- Ask “what is the other way to look at this?”
- Listen to the people directly affected.
- Ask generous questions about what others want to see happen.

LISTEN

- Check back to see if you understand what is being said.
- Consider how you want your conversation partner to feel.
- Ask “who has the most to gain / lose?” Pay attention to the narratives within the debate.

BE AWARE

- Identify your own biases.
- Recognize who is influencing you.
- Where do you see God’s image reflected in the other person?
- Risk social harmony and voice a dissenting opinion - with respect.

DIY RESPECTFUL DIALOGUE



Find Common Ground

Identify where your values match with others and go from there.



Keep Practicing

Remind yourself & others that democracies require debate. We all have something to learn.



Try a New Response

“I see where you are coming from but that has not been my experience...”

“We need to overcome social exclusion, strengthen a culture of democracy and embrace the path of reconciliation, grounded in dialogue and in the peaceful solution of social conflicts. From our experience of faith, peacebuilding demands healing wounds, restoring lives, and making a diverse participatory nation, founded on the respect for human dignity, possible.”

—JUSTAPAZ, MCC PARTNER IN COLOMBIA

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