

# TOPICS

# FOR DIALOGUE & UNDERSTANDING

dap

DIVERSITY  
AWARENESS  
PARTNERSHIP

## DIALOGUE

- Is about learning
- Finds the solution together
- Is collaborative
- Finds strengths in other's points
- Is open-minded
- Seeks new options
- Is ongoing

VS.

## DEBATE

- Is about winning
- Has one right answer
- Is combative
- Finds flaws in other's points
- Is closed-minded
- Seeks closure
- Is short-term

## SUGGESTIONS FOR MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE



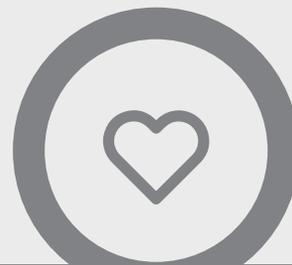
### LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

Work to understand the intent and perceptions behind people's comments instead of arguing why your perspective is right.



### EMBRACE COMMON GROUND

Identify common ground and focus the discussion on how to find solutions together.



### ENGAGE RESPECTFULLY

Enter the conversation assuming goodwill and try to find the value in people's comments.



### ASK QUESTIONS

Asking questions is a way to try and understand a person's perspective. For example: "That's an interesting point. Why do you think that?"

# SUGGESTIONS FOR MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE

You can help foster dialogue by encouraging people to explore why they hold the ideas and beliefs that they do by reflecting back to them what they just said, and inviting them to examine what's behind it.

For example, people will often make comments based on their unconscious bias without reflecting on what they just said, or why they said it or believe it. We all have different aspects that shape our identity, including religion, race, and ethnicity. How can we invite others, and ourselves, to be more understanding and inclusive of different identities in our community?

Try asking: "I hear you saying \_\_\_\_\_. Can you tell me more about why you think/feel that way? Have you had a personal experience that relates to it that you could tell me more about?" Keep it open and inviting with why, how, and what questions.

## RELIGION

Almost all major world religions have similar central values of love, compassion, peace, and respect. If divisive conversation targeting or blaming a particular religion comes up, try finding common ground by asking: "What do (speaker's religion) and (religion being targeted) have in common? Tell me more about what leads you to believe \_\_\_\_\_?" If you are of the same religious tradition as the speaker, try: "I'm a \_\_\_\_\_, too, and it's been my experience that our religion teaches us to love and respect one another (or be more specific depending on the topic)."

## GENDER & SEXUALITY

There are many different topics that come up under the umbrella of gender, sexual orientation, expression, and identity. If you are with someone who makes a discriminatory comment, uses disparaging language, or advocates for legal discrimination based on one of these categories, identify what it was that they said and ask: "Why did you just say \_\_\_\_\_, or use the word \_\_\_\_\_?" and "Why do you think that?" Affirm that you heard them, explain why you find that hurtful, and suggest an alternative. Or, try engaging them with a personal story that lifts up the humanity of a person in that category, especially if it's someone they know and care about.

## RACE

It's easy to generalize an entire group of people based on one identity, like race. If you hear someone using words referring to an entire race (e.g. "all those", "they all", etc.), try redirecting them with these questions: "I heard you say all \_\_\_\_\_, but that's probably not what you meant. Did you have a particular negative experience with a person who is \_\_\_\_\_ that you would like to talk about?" "I have had a different experience with a person of that identity. Can I tell you about it?" If someone makes a racist comment or joke, remember to call out the behavior or words, not the person: "What you just said is racist because \_\_\_\_." (Not: "You are a racist.")

## RESOURCES FOR OPEN CONVERSATIONS

**DAP Resources** for Trans Allies and White Allies, Debate vs. Dialogue, and more

Resources compiled by **Karen House Catholic Worker on Race and Intersectionality**

Resources on **InterFaith Dialogue**

[www.dapstl.org](http://www.dapstl.org)