

GATHERING YOUR CONGREGATION—ACTIVITY

Having difficult conversations is hard, especially when you find yourself in an anxious situation where the stakes are high and the path forward is uncertain. Yet your congregation will benefit from inviting everyone to include their voice in healthy discussions together. A *conversation covenant* will help you create agreed-upon expectations for entering into these discussions.

Time needed for activity

about 30 minutes

Group size

Any number of current members and regular visitors

Steps for Activity

1. Review this [Communication Covenant](#).
2. What would you change, delete, or add to a covenant for healthy congregational communication in your setting? One way to encourage this discussion is to put bullet points on separate papers on the wall. Give everyone a green sticker, a red sticker, and a yellow sticker. Ask them to post these as bullet points on the papers to show something they'd keep (green), something they'd get rid of (red), and something they have a question about or need clarification on (yellow).
3. Using this information, your facilitator can help you draft a Conversation Covenant. Before finalizing it, share a draft copy with participants for their feedback. Once it's completed, hand out a copy to each person at *every* meeting you have in this Crossroads Discernment Process. You may also want to post a large copy on the wall and have participants sign it to show that they're committed to these guidelines. Some groups also choose to sign the document as a group to demonstrate their commitment to communicating well together.
4. At the end of each stage, you may want to ask, "Is there anything we should add or change in this covenant?"

Facilitator's Questions

After the activity, allow time for discussion around some questions like these:

1. What parts of this covenant are more idealistic than realistic? What barriers make it so?
2. What type of environment will this covenant help you form? What happens if you don't have this type of environment for these conversations?
3. What expectations and hopes do you have for the conversations you'll have together?