

## GATHERING YOUR CONGREGATION—ACTIVITY

Particularly in today's North American culture, we don't often have meaningful conversations with people who fundamentally disagree with us. We've lost the skill of having these conversations in a respectful yet helpful way. This activity takes you back to the basics of listening to one another.

### Time needed for activity

30-45 minutes

### Group size

Any number of current members and regular visitors

### Steps for Activity

1. Begin your time together with opening worship that focuses on your unity as the body of Christ.
  - a. Potential Bible passages: Ephesians 4:1-7; Colossians 3:12-17
  - b. Potential songs:
    - Jesus Is Our King (Sing 18)
    - We Are Members of Christ's Body (Sing 178)
    - The Church's One Foundation (LUYH 251)
    - Somos uno en Cristo/We Are One in Christ (Sing 179)
    - Christian Hearts in Love United (PH 513)
    - They'll Know We Are Christians (LUYH 256)
    - Blest Be the Tie That Binds (LUYH 257)
  - c. Liturgy: Affirmation: The Unity of the Body (LUYH 259)

Sing = *Sing! A New Creation*    LUYH = *Lift Up Your Hearts*    PH = *Psalter Hymnal*
2. Begin by asking people to pair up with someone they don't know very well. Choose a topic that's basically trite but is one that people probably disagree about. (Examples: Are dogs or cats better pets? Is football or basketball a better sport? Should breakfast be eaten at dinner?) Ask the persons in each pair to each take a different position. For one to two minutes, the first person should share why they believe their position is true. The listener may not interrupt and may only ask curious questions ("Don't you think that . . ." is not a curious question). Then the second person should share while the first person listens.
3. After both persons have listened, ask them to share with the rest of the group something the other person said that sounded wise.

### Facilitator's Questions

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

1. How did it feel to be the listener? What was hard about it? What did you learn?
2. How did it feel to be listened to? What was hard about it? What did you learn?
3. What did you learn from this experience that could help you form principles for having conversations about more difficult topics?