

## **Some Helpful Tips for Engaging in Difficult Conversations**

1. Pray, alone or together, before beginning a difficult conversation
2. Focus on yourself; evaluate your assumptions; ask, why am I reacting this way? What am I afraid of? What do I want from this conversation for myself, for the other(s), for the relationship? As best as I can discern, what does God want for this situation?
3. Enter the conversation with a posture of humility, curiosity, patience, and openness to learning and to new possibilities
4. Express your perspective and reasons for holding it with commitment and conviction, but in a non-coercive style that invites conversation
5. Try to understand the other person's perspective; provide the other a welcoming space to express their viewpoint and seek to empathically understand the reasons for that perspective
6. Assume the good intentions of the other; extend grace by trying to not judge motives or assume that everyone has the same life-shaping experiences
7. Consider the conversation as a beginning point for future dialogue, not the only opportunity to have a conversation
8. Trust that the relationship has enough strength to survive a disagreement or misspoken word; confirm your desire to continue the relationship at the start and again mid-conversation if needed; if you don't think the relationship has enough strength to survive, work on the relationship before tackling a difficult conversation.