

2/1/2023

# **BRAVE CHURCH – HARD TOPICS**



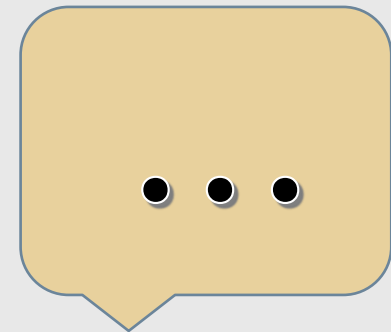
## **Why Engage in Difficult Conversations at All?**

Having conversations on difficult, controversial topics can be challenging, stressful, frustrating, argumentative.

Why engage in difficult conversations at all?

What obstacles get in your way?

## Discussion



# Some tips for conversations on difficult topics

- **Our role is not to persuade or change another's mind but to open the channel for learning, understanding, relationship**
- **Be present, listen:** Focus fully on what the person is sharing; use open-ended questions
- **Respond in love:** acknowledge what they said, recognize their experiences and feelings, value the person (even if you disagree with what they said)
- **Share respectfully:** don't lecture, focus on the topic, not the person

# BC/HT Covenant



We will...

accept conflict and commit to the way of kindness.

take responsibility for how our words are received.

ask permission before we challenge someone's views on a subject.

show respect for one another and graciously receive feedback if someone feels disrespected.

use 'I' instead of 'you' statements. We will not accuse or attack.

give everyone who wants to speak an opportunity to do so.

# Talking to Those Who are “Against” Us

## The value of maintaining relationships

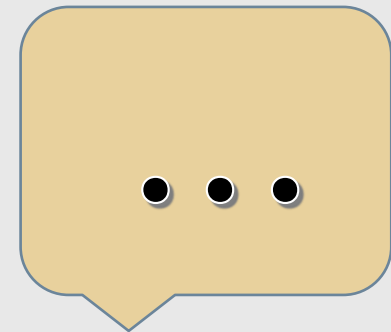
Insights from **1 Corinthians** on valuing relationships even when we disagree:

- **Unity matters**: When the Good News “is crowded out by egos and power struggles,” our voice is lost in the world.
- **We each have a part in the body of Christ**: Each of us is unique, with our own spiritual gifts, each vital to the body of Christ.
- **Love is indispensable**: Gifts of prophecy, knowledge, and faith are nothing without love.

In ***Talking to Those Who Are "Against" Us***, even though they disagreed with each other, the author said they were "fundamentally... on the same side."

How often do we see ourselves as "fundamentally on the same side" as Christians with whom we disagree?  
How can we bridge the differences?

## Discussion



# **Making Room for Stories**

## **From *Brave Church***

“...we can make room for stories that might conflict with our own experience, stories that give us a new perspective on the truth, **stories that bring us together as followers of Christ in a diverse community of faith.**” [p. 62]

**“Storytelling is a vehicle for connection in congregational life. ...We value people by valuing their stories.** By listening to more stories and listening to people who have life experiences and beliefs that differ from our own, we cultivate a sense of shared humanity.” [p. 81]



# **EXTRA SLIDES – REFERENCE INFO**



# 10 Ways to have a better conversation

## - Celeste Headlee, TED Talk

1. Be present in that moment
2. Don't pontificate
3. Use open-ended questions
4. Open your mind, go with the flow
5. If you don't know, say you don't
6. Respect their experience
7. Try not to repeat yourself
8. Stay out of the weeds – focus on relationships
9. LISTEN ... LISTEN ... LISTEN
10. Be brief

# Engaging a friend or loved one

## - Stephany Spaulding, Vote Common Good

- Find common ground up front.
- Decide where you are willing to go in the conversation.
- Determine whether the person is open to the conversation.
- Assess the level of energy and effort you're willing to put into that conversation.
- **Your role is not to persuade or change another's mind (that's an individual's decision) but to open the channel for better understanding.**

# Receiving someone else's story

## - Faith Storytelling Toolkit

- Recognize each of you is going outside your comfort zone, becoming vulnerable
- Be present with relaxed, open body language
- Focus fully on what the person is sharing – listen, take in, avoid judging or formulating a response
- Receive their story as a gift; don't be afraid of emotions
- Respond in love – don't greet in silence, but don't think you have to be profound. “honor the gift of trust... extend love and acceptance”. Offer a prayer of thanks or petition, whichever is appropriate

# What guides us?

“Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Love your neighbor as yourself.” [Matthew 22:36-40]

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you.” [Matthew 7:12]

“Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” [John 13:34-35]