

Adapting the questions

You may find that adapting the wording of the questions might help them have fuller impact.

In adapting the questions keep a group focused and alert:

- Regarding their current relationship with Jesus/God and others
- Through questions that are challenging enough and not too simple to answer
- Towards an increasing self-awareness of their discipleship journey
- By attending to the different spiritual styles in any group

Learning from the questions

Key to the Changing Lives Conversations (CLC) is the learning about how more confident faith might develop in your community. The learning might include areas of community life that enable renewed faith or areas that sap confidence and hinder growth.

It may be that individuals and groups identify actions that help consolidate and embed new discipleship practices within the life of the community. The resources listed on the CLC web page can help enhance the kind of culture change God is leading your community towards.

A good number of churches have now joined a Missional Learning Community (MLCs) to increase their capacity for renewal and growth. The spiritual practices of MLCs can be truly transformative. To find out more contact Steve Coneys sconeys@diocant.org

Gauging the changes

We don't know what effect these questions will have within your community. Hopefully you will observe attitudes, beliefs, values or behaviours shifting as you use these questions over a period of time. How does this set of questions stimulate your community to be more responsive to the call of Christ in this present time?

We have asked some groups in the diocese to commit to using these questions at least 6-8 times over the coming year. We have provided a questionnaire on line for participants in the group to fill in at the beginning and at the end of that period while they use the questions. We want to learn what makes a difference in increasing confidence in our relationship with God. What really helps us be more ready to give account of God's gift of faith with those we work and play and share life with. If you do want to access the questionnaires please do so via the CLC website.

Supporting you and your group

The CLC team will be available for any questions that arise in the course of these conversations.

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If you want to know more please confer with the CLC web pages on the Diocese of Canterbury <https://www.canterburydiocese.org/changing-lives-conversations>



Changing Lives Conversations

Changing a culture by changing the
conversations

A Guide for Church Leaders and Facilitators

CHANGED LIVES → CHANGING LIVES

Why 'conversations' and why now?

Our Diocesan strategy Changed Lives → Changing Lives focuses us on the life-changing love of Christ which we have experienced. This points us outward to consider how we can make that love real for others.

We know, however, that we have not always communicated this life-changing love well. This is why we are seeking more than ever to encourage and initiate support for churches and worshipping communities to move outside our church walls; if we want to share something of our experience of how Jesus has changed us, we need to be able to honestly speak of our experience of God and faith– to bear witness in word and action more intentionally in our work places, school playgrounds and shops, with our neighbours, friends and colleagues.

To encourage us, a number of different groups in the Diocese have already been using these questions. The Bishop and Senior Staff team have been using them, Area Deans and Lay Chairs have been introduced to them, Church Wardens at all three Archdeaconry training days this autumn used them. They have engendered significant conversations and caused people to reflect on the difference it makes to focus on our discipleship in this way as well as the task or purpose of the gathering in question.

The genesis of these conversations is the national Reform and Renewal initiative 'Setting God's People Free'. If we are to engage more fully with God's world, we need to urgently address our need to grow in confident expression of what God means to us every day.

Setting up and facilitating the conversations

Choosing a group

The starting place could be a PCC or committee or a team, a larger group meeting or service.

- Is this a group that would benefit from engaging with discipleship focussed questions more fully?
- Will members be able to reflect and learn through their responses to the questions?
- Might this group have potential impact if they use the questions over a period of time and follow through with their discoveries?

Creating a trustful environment

Sharing needs a trustful safe space. You will need to create that environment.

Facilitators will need to:

- Explain the process simply and clearly
- Reassure people to share only what they wish and that this will be respected
- Clarify that confidentiality will be honoured
- Give people the option to opt-out
- Attend to any pastoral or safeguarding needs that may arise in the group

Introducing the questions

Ask these two questions sometime when this group meets– allow between 10-15 minutes depending what you choose to do. They could be a warm up, or as a lead-in to prayer. You will know best how people might respond! Adapt the questions as best you can according to the group's capacity and readiness.

The first question

'How is knowing Christ/God changing your life now?' In pairs for 4-5 minutes share a recent experience or perspective on this.

The second question

'How can we best support one another to be 7 day a week disciples?' The same pair takes 4-5 minutes to choose helpful ways to do this.

Following the questions

- invite a time of prayer (and/or)
- ask the group if there are any observations they would like to make.

Review questions could be used directly following the conversations and/or at the end of the gathering.

- What was your response to being asked and in answering the questions?
- What was the actual effect of the questions in your pair discussion?
- How might the conversations have influenced the process or outcomes of the meeting/service?

Learning from the responses

Did you observe any of the following?

- Personal reflection on one another's journey of faith; where others have come from and where they are heading
- A mutual trust and interest in one another's walk with God, with a stake in the health of that relationship
- Attention to what it means to support someone as a disciple in the way of faith through all its ups and downs.
- Specific actions that help support every day faith as a priority