

Adapting or adding to the questions

You may find ways of asking the questions that have more impact. Seek to shape them so they encourage fruitful conversations:

- Regarding their current relationship with Jesus/God and other people
- That are challenging and not too simple to answer
- That increase self-awareness of the discipleship journey
- That allow the different spiritual styles in any group to participate fully

Additional questions can be included that help groups reflect on the Bishop's priorities. Eg. How is Jesus changing my/our lives through a)prayer or b)reading the bible or c)generosity or d)evangelism?

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 that sap confidence and hinder growth. Be alert that some signs of resistance to the questions is to be expected!

Individuals and groups may 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 cultivating in your church community.

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

Gauging the effects

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? If not, why not?

We have asked some groups in the diocese to commit to using these questions at least 6-8 times over the 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 web pages.

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>

March 18th, 2020



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 experience of the love of Christ and how that love can be really known by others.

Communicating this life-changing love within our every day lives is the key challenge in bearing witness to the good news of Jesus Christ. Now more than ever our churches need encouragement and support to communicate outside our church walls- to share something of our experience of how Jesus changes us. We need to speak of our experience of God more authentically- to bear witness in word and action in our work places, school playgrounds and shops, with our neighbours, friends, family and colleagues.

To encourage us, a number of different groups in the Diocese have already been using the two Changing Lives Conversations (CLC) key questions when they meet. The Bishop and Senior Staff team, Area Deans and Lay Chairs, Church Wardens training days, Diocesan Synod have all been using them to see what difference it makes in their relationships and ministry. Significant conversations have enabled people to reflect on what 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 grow in confidence- expressing what God means to us in the contexts we live and work in every day .

Setting up and facilitating the conversations

Choosing a group

This 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 upon their responses to the questions?
- What is the potential impact if this group uses the questions over a period of time?

Creating a trustful environment

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

- Explains the process simply and clearly
- Reassures people to share only what they wish and that this will be respected
- Clarifies how confidentiality will be honoured
- Gives people the option to opt-out or pass
- Attends to any pastoral or safeguarding needs that may arise in the group

Introducing the questions

Ask these two questions, one at a time, sometime when this group meets- allow between 10-15 minutes for both. They could be a warm up, or as a lead-in to prayer. The facilitator needs to use the standard questions or to shape the questions according to the group's capacity and readiness.

The first question

'How is Jesus/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 encourage one another to be everyday disciples?'
The same pair takes 4-5 minutes to identify what encouragement looks like.

Following up- as time allows.

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

These 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 experience of each question in your pair discussion?
- How might the conversations have influenced the process or outcomes of the meeting/service?

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 every day faith as a priority