

Session 3

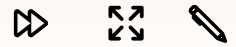
Navigating Disagreement

▶ Compact ⌚ 35 mins

↔ In-depth ⌚ 60 mins

✎ Custom ⌚

Session overview



| | ▶ | ↔ | ✎ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Intro p3 5 mins Summary of what this session is about | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Film p3 5-10 mins Young people's perspectives on navigating disagreement | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Bible story p4 10-20 mins Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4:3-42) | | ✓ | |
| Bible verse p5 5-10 mins Luke 6:31 | ✓ | | |
| Shrug, shout, shhh p6 5-10 mins Light-hearted activity exploring responses to conflict | | | |
| Agree or disagree? p7 10-25 mins Discover our responses to disagreement and build empathy | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Blind spots p14 5 mins Consider how 'blind spots' affect our disagreements | | | |
| Cancel culture p15 5-10 mins Discussion on impact of 'cancel culture' | | | |



Vision board

Reflect on this session

p17

5-10 mins



Prayer and reflection

Reflect on the learning and habits

p18

5 mins



Session summary:

Key learning

Jesus shows us that it is possible to have good relationships even when we disagree

Application

Not be afraid of conflict but learn to navigate it honestly and with empathy

Habits focus

Be present by developing empathy for those we disagree with and having the confidence to share our perspective too

Before the session

You will need:

- Two signs – one saying 'Agree' and one saying 'Disagree'
- Sticky tack
- Your group's vision board
- Emoji signs for your group [**Optional** – if you do **Shrug, shout, shhh** activity]
- A photo of a rear view mirror [**Optional** – if you do **Blind spots** activity]

Set up your room:

- For the **Agree or disagree?** activity, you will need space for the young people to walk from one side of the room to the other. On one side stick up the sign that says 'Agree', on the other stick the 'Disagree' sign. Look at the statements on p71 and p73 – choose and tailor these for your group.

Intro

00:00

5 mins

Aim of the session

This session is called **Navigating Disagreement**.

In this session we are going to:

- Explore how to disagree well in a culture where this can be hard to do.
- Discover how to listen well and find our own voice.
- Practise being present by developing empathy for those we disagree with and building our confidence to share our own perspective.



Recap

Recap the previous session and remind the group of the three habits of being curious, being present, and reimagining.

Ask your group what they remember from the previous session and if they have any examples of actions or stories from the past week.

Story

00:00



Film

5-15 mins

Discuss: What do we learn about navigating disagreement in this film?

Draw out examples of the following: being authentic; being willing to walk towards conflict instead of running away; understanding the thoughts and feelings of someone else; choosing not to judge another person

Choose either Option 1 or Option 2

Option 1



Bible story

Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4:3-42)

In this session, we return to the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. **Read the retelling of the passage to your group.** You can find this on p130. You could invite young people to take on the roles.



Questions for discussion:

- Did Jesus and the woman avoid difficult topics or express their differences? Where do you see this?
- What helped them have a good conversation even though they had different views?
- How would applying the lessons we learn from Jesus and the Samaritan women help us when we have disagreements?



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- This is the longest recorded conversation that Jesus had in the Bible – they stuck with the conversation even though it might have been awkward and was sometimes tricky.
- Jesus and the Samaritan woman showed how to be present – they expressed themselves authentically and also listened to one another.
- Also draw on the **Key learning** from the Bible verse on p68.

Option 2



Bible verse Luke 6:31

Share the verse:

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (NRSVA)



Questions for discussion:

- How would applying this help us when we have disagreements?
- Where do you see similar principles and values in other faiths, worldviews or cultures and community traditions?



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- We all want to be heard, respected and not judged – doing this for people we disagree with helps us strengthen the relationship.
- The habit of being present involves listening well and taking time to understand the other person.



Activity

5-10 mins

Shrug, shout, shhh

Light-hearted activity exploring the ways we instinctively respond to conflict

Start here



1

Tell your group that you're going to share some topics of disagreement with them and ask them how they respond.

2

Using the slide, show them three emojis to represent their possible reactions:

Shrug – I don't care much about this



Shout – I want to debate this!



Shhh – I go quiet



3

Read out the following scenarios and ask the young people to hold up or act out the appropriate emoji for each one.

- You and your friend disagree about what film to see at the cinema.
- Your parent or guardian tells you that you should be doing your homework when you're exhausted at the end of a long day.
- Someone in your class says that male footballers should get paid more than female footballers.

- Your friend tells you that your favourite singer/band is worse than their favourite.
- You find out that your parent or guardian votes for a political party you don't like.
- Your friend says they don't believe in climate change.



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- This activity is about noticing our responses – not judging them or thinking that one is better than another.
- Most of us find conflict challenging.
- We each respond to conflict in different ways. Some common responses include: wanting to avoid conflict, seeking confrontation, becoming defensive, wanting to talk it out.



Activity

Agree or disagree?

Discover how we respond to different perspectives and how we can generate empathy for those we disagree with

 **10-25 mins**

Start here



Step one: Light-hearted statements

1 Select a couple of light-hearted statements from the list below:

- Pineapple belongs on pizza.
- Dogs are better than cats.
- Money should be spent not saved.
- x singer is a better performer than x singer.
- x computer game is better than x computer game.
- x social media platform is better than x social media platform.
- Bowling is better than swimming.
- Sweets are better than chocolate.
- Snow is better than sun.
- Maths should be optional in school.

2 Read out the statements and ask the group:

- Decide if you agree or disagree and then move to the sign that says 'Agree' or 'Disagree'.
- If you have a strong opinion, stand right next to the sign – if not, stand closer to the middle of the room.

3 Invite one or two people from each side to explain their view (depending on how much time you have).

4 Ask the group to reflect on the following:

- Think about how you felt when you listened to people explaining their opinions. Were you preparing your counter argument — or wondering why they think that?
- If they agreed with you, were you relieved to hear someone back you up, did it embolden your view?

- How did you feel if you didn't get to feedback, did not getting to share your view impact how you listened to the other side?
- If they agreed with you, were you relieved to hear someone back you up, did it embolden your view?
- Were you making any assumptions about other aspects of this person as they shared their view? *"If they believe that, then they probably also think this"* *"If they like pineapple on pizza I bet they also like maple syrup on bacon"*?
- If they disagreed with you, what was your body language, did you feel defensive, arms crossed, or was your body language leaning in, open, wanting to listen?



Key learning

Please highlight the point below:

- It's valuable to notice how you usually respond in disagreement (e.g. avoiding conflict, trying to prove you're right) and to realise that others may respond differently.

Step two: Polarising statements

5 Read a polarising statement from the list below and invite the young people to move accordingly:

- Everyone should be vegan.
- Social media benefits society.
- The climate crisis is more important than raising the minimum wage.
- Exams are pointless.
- All teenagers should be able to vote.
- Going to university isn't worth the money.
- Killing other people is never justified.
- There's no point in individual lifestyle changes because the planet is already ruined.
- Globalisation is a force for good.
- It is easier being a young person today than it was for our parents.
- Teenagers have too much choice.
- The richest person in the world could end world hunger.
- TikTok influencers have more impact on young people than teachers.
- People had more morals 50 years ago than today.

6 Invite two people from each side to explain their view. (Remind the young people to think about how they are listening.)

7 **Say:**
Now imagine it was someone in a position of power on the other side of the room from you e.g. a teacher, parent/carer, politician or church leader.

- What impact does that make?
- Do you feel empowered to share your view? Would you need extra support?
- Would you still question their view like you would a peer?
- Do you think they are interested in your view?



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- It's helpful to notice the impact of power dynamics on conflict.
- It can be hard to disagree well if one person or group in the disagreement is less empowered to express their feelings and views.
- If we are the ones with power in a situation, we need to pay special attention to how we use that influence and to how we take a genuine interest in the other's perspective.

Step three: Step into the other person's shoes

8

Read another polarising statement from the list and invite the young people to move accordingly.

9

This time, instead of asking volunteers to share their opinion, ask all the young people to move to the exact opposite position.

10

Say:

- Imagine you are stepping into the shoes of someone who holds the opposite view to you. (It's not easy, so don't worry if you can't do it straight away.)
- Be curious about their point of view and why they might think that.
- **Ask yourself:**
 - 'What experiences, relationships or beliefs may be influencing their view?'
 - 'Where do you think the person that holds this opposite view might be coming from?'

i **Note to host:** If some participants struggle with this step, encourage them that it can be challenging to imagine someone else's perspective. Invite them to listen to others in the group

11 Ask for a volunteer from each side to explain the opinion that is opposite to theirs, and the reasons behind that opinion.

Note: Model an example here for your group.

12 Ask the volunteer:

- How does it feel to try and understand the opposite point of view?

Step four: Think about a disagreement in your own life

13 Standing where they are, invite the young people to think of a disagreement in their own life (either with someone or with a view in society). It doesn't need to be a big one - something they can think of in this short time.

Note: Give an everyday example of your own which demonstrates to the group at what level to share.

14 Invite the young people to spend a moment quietly reflecting on their own view:

- What do you think and feel? Reflect on your own perspective. What has led you to have this view and perspective?

15

Now invite the young people to walk to the opposite of their own position. (If they're at one extreme, walk to the opposite extreme – if they're near the middle, they won't need to move much!)

Note: *Be ready to help those who might struggle with this. Help them to understand their own point of view and the emotions associated with that that. Then explain what the opposite position might be. Chat about why a person might think that.*

16

As they did earlier, invite the young people to 'step into the shoes' of the view they disagree with - invite them to try and empathise with the other person:

- Be curious about where they are coming from.
- Quietly reflect on what they may be thinking and feeling. Try to understand their perspective.



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- Disagreement and conflict are a normal part of life. Yet it can be hard to navigate disagreement (in our friendships, families, online).
- Each of us has a voice worth listening to, even if we disagree with each other.
- Fear of being cancelled, or saying the wrong thing can make it hard to find our voice, or to listen to someone who we think is wrong.
- Handling disagreement well has the potential to strengthen friendships when we try to understand how the other person feels and what may have led them to their opinion.



Activity Blind spots

🕒 5 mins

Start here



- 1 Show the young people a picture of a rear-view mirror in a car (you may also want to illustrate by bringing in a mirror and demonstrating a 'blind spot').

- 2 **Ask:**

- Do you know what a blind spot in a car is?
- What have blind spots got to do with how we approach disagreements?



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- In disagreement, it's helpful to notice our own motives and desires because these affect how we interact with others.
- We may have preconceptions, misunderstandings, prejudices or lack awareness.
- A 'blind spot' may also be something that we do because we always have done, or which we have never thought to question.



Activity

Cancel culture

🕒 5-10 mins

Explore the impact of cancel culture

Start here



1

Share these quotes with your group:

- *"Cancelling people pushes them away and makes them more likely to find spaces where bad views are the norm... Cancel culture, as I see it, involves the shutting down of different perspectives."* (Matt Haig)
- *Being called out has made me a better person. Not being cancelled has enabled me to be accountable, learn from my mistakes, and go on to share those lessons with others and do good with my privilege.* (Jameela Jamil)
- *"[Cancel culture creates a] culture of accountability which... needed to come into being."* (Lisa Nakamura)

2

Ask your group for their views on cancel culture and on these quotes.

- Do they agree or disagree?
- Online disagreement can be confrontational and may lack nuance. Are there more constructive ways to have a conversation about the disagreement?



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- We live in a culture in which it is difficult to sustain relationships when we disagree.
- If you have experienced online trolling or being cancelled, that is a difficult thing to go through. We're here if you want to talk about it further.



Vision board

🕒 5-10 mins

Guide your group through this activity using the instructions below:



1. Draw an iceberg on the vision board, like this:
2. Explain:
 - Did you know that only 10% of an iceberg is visible? The other 90% is below the water.
 - When we disagree, we often see only the opinion of the other person – this is like the 10% of an iceberg that is visible above the surface.
 - Below the water is another 90% of the iceberg. These might be our motivations, experiences, needs, hopes and fears – the many complex elements that lead a person to hold a position or view.
3. Guide your group as follows:
 - Think about when people disagree.
 - What are the things we can see? (e.g. 'people shout', who people hang out with, what they post on social media, the opinions they share, the clubs they attend) – write these in the part of the iceberg above the water.
 - What things might be happening that are harder to see? (e.g. life experiences, feeling afraid or hurt, someone's hopes and dreams) – write these in the part of the iceberg below the water.



Key learning

Please highlight the points below:

- Let's try and understand the 90% 'below the water' when we disagree.
- Perhaps there is someone you often disagree with – thinking about the iceberg below the water may help you understand them more.



Top takeaway

Ask your group (to write down or say aloud):

What is something you want to remember in this session?
(Give them a minute to reflect before answering.)



Prayer and reflection

Please use this as a prayer or guide for reflection:

Loving God, fill us with your Spirit now.

We think about what we have learnt about empathising with the person we disagree with..

Help us to **be curious** about others' stories – listening as often as we speak.

We think about someone who we often disagree with and what we have learn about building good relationships even when we disagree.

Give us the courage to **be present** – showing up and sticking around.

We think about the things we have learned about navigating disagreement in this session.

Inspire us to **reimagine** what's possible – finding hope, knowing that you can transform all things.

In Jesus' name. Amen