



**Having  
Calm  
Conversations**  
**Facilitator Guide**  
**4 x 20 min sessions**

## ***FACILITATOR GUIDE 4 x 20 min sessions***

# Having Calm Conversations

## Session Plans

These session plans are a guide for the facilitator. They may require further customisation for your context. An important part of facilitation is keeping to time and moving participants through the various session components.

There is a separate group participant guide to enable participants to take notes, write answers to questions and record outcomes of discussions.

These session plans are for 4 x 20 minute sessions. In 20 minutes, the problem can be identified, and the solution explained, briefly workshopped and illustrated.

For each session the general plan is:

|              |                       |   |
|--------------|-----------------------|---|
| 30 sec       | Introduction          | To set the scene for participants   |
| 5 min        | The problem           | For participants to understand the problem and identify with it   |
| 4 min        | The solution          | The Bible has the solution. Secular wisdom or other insights to help participants put that solution into practice |
| 8 min        | The breakdown         | Exercises for participants to reinforce the solution, plus presentation of a model solution                       |
| 2 min        | Reflection and prayer | Opportunity for participants to apply their learning to conversations with a particular unbeliever they know      |
| 1 min 30 sec | Conclusion            | Brief opportunity for participants to hear each other's application   |

As you can see, these session plans are content focused. If you have more time for the training, see the **Having Calm Conversations Facilitator Guide 4 x 60 min sessions**. More time for reflection, practice and feedback will enhance learning opportunities.

This Guide is for a facilitated discussion with 4 - 6 people, delivered online (for example utilizing zoom breakout groups) or face-to-face.

**As you work through the following material, have the [group participant notes](#) alongside.**

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# Session 1: Conversations that are Calm

## *How to become a calmer, less anxious presence*

30 sec

### Introduction

*Aim: to set the scene for the group participants.*

- **Explain this session**

“Conversations that are Calm” is the first session in the “Having Calm Conversations” course. It’s about learning to think calmly rather than reactively so that we can be calmer in conversation.

- **Opening prayer**

5 min



### The Problem

*Aim: This course has a problem-centred learning approach. Here we want participants to understand the problem and identify with it.*



### Play the first animation video

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**

4 min



### Solution

*Aim: The Bible provides the solution. Secular wisdom or insights can help participants put that solution into practice.*



### Bible

*Aim: This passage shows one solution to becoming a calmer presence in evangelistic conversations: it’s what’s required if we are to fulfill the Bible’s teaching about being gentle!*

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- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**

 Secular wisdom

*Aim: There is wisdom in our world (since it's God's world). Here are some simple principles to help us think calmly, rather than respond reactively.*

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**

8 min

 The breakdown

*Aim: To illustrate and reinforce the solution. 5 min for the exercise and 3 min for the video.*

- **Facilitate exercise**

### **In the interests of time, just do Q1.**

Read Q1 in the "Exercises" box.

If you need it, here is a sample answer:

#### First question

Reactive thinking for example could be getting defensive or being non-committal.

Calmer thinking for example could be around asking the unbeliever why their position is important to them.

- **Facilitate further discussion**

*Aim: to help participants see that thinking calmly rather than reactively takes effort and practice. We need to be aware of what is going on in our headspace and do some self-correction.*

Read the Reflection question in the box. For 1 min, ask for 1-2 participants to volunteer brief answers.

 **Play the second animation video**

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*Aim: to give another example of what the solution to the problem looks like in practice.*

2 min



### Reflection and prayer

*Aim: To enable participants to work out their own application, by thinking through what they learned from the material with a particular unbeliever in mind.*

- **Facilitate individual reflection exercise**  
**In the interests of time, ask participants to reflect on Point 2.**

1 min 30  
sec

### Conclusion

*Aim: For participants to hear and learn from each other's application.*

- **Facilitate discussion**

For 1 min, ask 1-2 participants to briefly share their reflection from the individual reflection exercise.

- **Thank the group for their participation**
- **Organise the next session (or do this later via email)**
- **Concluding prayer**

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# Session 2: Conversations that Evolve

## *How to have good conversations*

### 30 sec **Introduction**

*Aim: to set the scene for the group participants.*

- **Explain this session**

“Conversations that Evolve” is the second session in the “Having Calm Conversations” course. It’s about one simple principle that can help us become better conversationalists.

- **Opening prayer**

5 min

### **The Problem**

*Aim: This course has a problem-centred learning approach. Here we want participants to understand the problem and identify with it.*

### **Play the first animation video**

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**

3 min

### **Solution**

*Aim: The Bible provides the solution. Secular wisdom or insights can help participants put that solution into practice.*

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### Bible

*Aim: This passage shows one solution to the problem of listening in evangelistic conversations. The helpful corrective is to focus on getting to know the person. That way, when we do have a chance to speak, we answer rather than tell.*

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**



### Secular wisdom

*Aim: There is wisdom in our world (since it's God's world). Here are some simple principles to help us become better listeners.*

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**

8 min



### The breakdown

*Aim: To illustrate and reinforce the solution. 5 min for the exercise and 3 min for the video.*

- **Facilitate exercise**

NOTE: the following is different to what appears in the "Exercises" box. This is because it has been reworked into a role play. The statements are listed in the "Exercises" box but the activity is different.

The advantage of a role play exercise is that it provides more opportunities for participants to improve their listening skills - from their own self-reflection, feedback from other participants (especially the observer in a dedicated role) and modeling by other participants.

Explain the role play exercise.

**In the interests of time, nominate a participant to play the role of the Christian and another to play the role of the unbeliever. Select participants whom you are fairly confident are up to the task.**

**In the interests of time, only Statement 3 will be used. This was picked so that over the Having Calm Conversations course, a number of different presenting issues have been explored.**

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1. Statement 3: "I don't need religion. My life is going well as it is"

For this role play exercise, there are 3 roles - unbeliever, Christian, observer.

The unbeliever makes the above statement. The aim for the Christian is to keep the conversation going as long as possible, by being a good conversationalist and demonstrating the listening principles (listen to learn, be curious, discover what's important to them). The observer needs to keep a tally of when the Christian demonstrates the learning principles.

The role play stops after 3 minutes or when the unbeliever runs out things to say! (The observer can be the time-keeper).

- **Facilitate further discussion**

*Aim: to help participants see that good listening takes effort and practice. Being aware of what is going on in our headspace (or in what we say!) and doing some calm thinking and self correction.*

Read the Reflection question in the box. For 1 min ask for 1-2 participants to volunteer answers.



**Play the second animation video**

*Aim: to give another example of what the solution to the problem looks like in practice.*

2 min



**Reflection and prayer**

*Aim: To enable participants to work out their own application, by thinking through what they learned from the material with a particular unbeliever in mind.*

- **Facilitate individual reflection exercise**

**In the interests of time, ask participants to reflect on Point 2.**

1 min



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### 30 sec **Conclusion**

*Aim: For participants to hear and learn from each other's application.*

- **Facilitate discussion**

For 1 min, ask 1-2 participants to briefly share their reflection from the individual reflection exercise.

- **Thank the group for their participation**
- **Organise the next session (or do this later via email)**
- **Concluding prayer**

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# Session 3: Conversations that Intrigue

## *How to make good Gospel connections*

30 sec

### Introduction

*Aim: to set the scene for the group participants.*

- **Explain the course**
- **Explain this session**

“Conversations that Intrigue” is the third session in the “Having Calm Conversations” course. It’s about how to make a good Gospel connection by saying something relevant, true, engaging and winsome about Jesus.

- **Opening prayer**

5 min

### The Problem

*Aim: This course has a problem-centred learning approach. Here we want participants to understand the problem and identify with it.*

### **Play the first animation video**

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**
- **Facilitate large group discussion**

4 min

### Solution

*Aim: The Bible provides the solution. Practical wisdom or insights can help participants put that solution into practice.*

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*Aim: This passage shows one solution to the problem of making good Gospel connections. If we know the person, then what we say of Jesus should be intriguing to them. It should be our regular practice to be throwing some salt into conversation.*

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**



*Aim: A practical solution to enable us to throw some salt into conversation.*

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**

8 min



*Aim: To illustrate and reinforce the solution. 5 min for the exercise and 3 min for the video.*

- **Facilitate small exercise**

**In the interests of time, just do Scenario 1 of the exercises. This scenario was picked because Christians should have some familiarity with the topic of forgiveness.**

Here is a sample answer if you need it:

### Scenario #1

Forgiving someone is hard. That Jesus has forgiven me so much helps me to forgive others.

- **Facilitate discussion**

*Aim: to help participants see that making good Gospel connections isn't easy and requires effort and practice. It does get easier with practice!*

Read the Reflection question in the box. For 1 min ask for 1-2 participants to

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briefly volunteer answers.



***Play the second animation video***

*Aim: to give another example of what the solution to the problem looks like in practice.*

2 min



**Reflection and prayer**

*Aim: To enable participants to work out their own application, by thinking through what they learned from the material with a particular unbeliever in mind.*

- **Facilitate individual reflection exercise**

**In the interests of time, ask participants to reflect on Point 2.**

1 min 30 sec

**Conclusion**

*Aim: For participants to hear and learn from each other's application.*

- **Facilitate discussion**

For 1 min, ask 1-2 participants to briefly share their reflection from the individual reflection exercise.

- **Thank the group for their participation**
- **Organise the next session (or do this later via email)**
- **Concluding prayer**

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# Session 4: Conversations that Resolve

## *How to disagree well and turn a negative into a positive*

30 sec

### Introduction

*Aim: to set the scene for the group participants.*

- **Explain this session**

“Conversations that Resolve” is the fourth session in the “Having Calm Conversations” course. It’s about some simple negotiation techniques to help us disagree well in challenging conversations.

- **Opening prayer**

3 min



### The Problem

*Aim: This course has a problem-centred learning approach. Here we want participants to understand the problem and identify with it.*



### Play the first animation video

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**

4 min



### Solution

*Aim: The Bible provides the solution. Secular wisdom or insights can help participants put that solution into practice.*



### Bible

*Aim: This passage shows one solution to the problem of listening in evangelistic conversations. The helpful corrective is to focus on getting to*

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know the person. That way, when we do have a chance to speak, we answer rather than tell.

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**



### Secular wisdom

*Aim: There is wisdom in our world (since it's God's world). Here are some simple negotiation techniques that will help us to show respect and disagree well in challenging conversations.*

- **Ask a volunteer to read this section aloud**

10 min



### The breakdown

*Aim: To illustrate and reinforce the solution. 5 min for the exercise and 5 min for the video.*

- **Facilitate exercise**

Give participants 3 minutes for the exercise.  
1 minute for feedback.

Here are some sample answers if you need them:

Meet Zac and Amy. Zac and Amy are work colleagues and get along well. Zac knows Amy is a follower of Jesus. They have had a few conversations now where it is clear they hold quite different positions.

One Monday Zac and Amy grab a coffee.

Zac asks Amy if she thinks he will go to hell if he doesn't believe in Jesus. Amy feels like Zac has just thrown her a live grenade.

Amy takes a breath [good] and asks Zach why [good question] he's asking her that first thing on a Monday morning. Zac says his wife has certain beliefs and he's wondering whether Amy's are the same or different. Amy thinks: Great, he's pitting my beliefs against his wife's. And of course he'll go with hers. [Amy working off assumptions here. She misses what Zac is

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*really saying - he just wants to know the differences. If Amy had heard this, she could have thought of it as a problem they could solve together].*

So she asks more and more questions until she has a complete rundown on Zach's wife's religious beliefs and history *[Amy is stuck on Zac's mountain. It's a safe place to hide!]* Eventually Zac, with a tone of slight frustration, asks his original question again. *[Amy's evasion is adding to the emotional temperature].*

Amy feels like she has to bite the bullet. So she says yes, that is what she believes. One has to believe in Jesus if one wants to avoid hell. *[Amy could have said something true and wonderful about Jesus e.g. she doesn't know how bad hell is, but Jesus does and offers his own life as a get-out-of-hell free card].*

In a flash of inspiration, she asks Zac why he thinks she and his wife have different beliefs when it comes to Jesus and hell *[good valley question].*

Zac says that's a good question and he doesn't know. Amy says, somewhat assertively, it's because they have different ways of reading the Bible. *[Amy's assertiveness here could be a sign her frustration is rising].*

Amy then asks Zac what he thinks about the Bible. Zac doesn't have a very high opinion of the Bible. Every objection Amy raises, Zac comes back with 3 or 4 counter objections. *[They have both stopped listening to each other].*

At last Zac says that he'll be ok anyway, going by his wife's beliefs. Amy says well what if the Bible is right and perhaps Zac should seriously consider that. *[Amy's assertiveness here is a sign of frustration. She's trying to drag Zac over to her mountain rather than invite him over].*

Zac says with a tone of frustration: calm down Amy. Let's just agree to disagree. *[Has Amy disagreed well and turned a negative into a positive?]*

- **Facilitate discussion**

*Aim: to help participants see that using these negotiation techniques takes effort and practice. It does get easier with practice!*

Read the Reflection question in the box. For 1 min ask for 1-2 participants to briefly volunteer answers.

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*Play the second animation video*

*Aim: to give another example of what the solution to the problem looks like in practice.*

2 min



**Reflection and prayer**

*Aim: To enable participants to work out their own application, by thinking through what they learned from the material with a particular unbeliever in mind.*

- **Facilitate individual reflection exercise**

**In the interests of time, ask participants to reflect on Point 2.**

1 min 30 sec

**Conclusion**

*Aim: For participants to hear and learn from each other's application.*

- **Facilitate discussion**

For 1 min, ask 1-2 participants to briefly share their reflection from the individual reflection exercise.

- **Thank the group for their participation**
- **Organise the next session (or do this later via email)**
- **Concluding prayer**



