

HOW TO: Conversation Starters

HOW TO START A CONVERSATION IN A NEW SHEPHERDING RELATIONSHIP?

Good conversation starters are the ones a person can easily relate to.

Introduce yourself. Let the person know you are looking forward to getting to know them!

ASK questions to show interest in learning about the person AND what they care about.

FOCUS on the person and what they are telling you.

STAY in the moment. Don't drift in thought to your next question.

FOLLOW their affections by genuinely wanting to learn something new about the person.

SHOW LISTENING with good eye contact, leaning in, nodding, "mhm", etc.

ASK appropriate follow up questions.

REMEMBER, relationships take time to develop.

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HELPFUL CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR SURFACE LEVEL INTERACTIONS

It should be expected that small talk will be the first step in a relationship. People need to develop trust before they begin to open up about emotional issues or theological questions. Here are some Pump Priming questions.

What brought you to Covenant Church? What do you enjoy about the service and activities?

How is your week going?

Are you new to the area? Where do you live?

Tell me about yourself /family? (Look for commonalities)

What do/did you do for a career? What do/did you like most about your work?

What do you like to do for fun/ relaxation? Do you play any sports?

What keeps you busy during the week? (hobbies, volunteering...)

What are your plans for the holidays?

Do you have any questions about the ministries and activities available to you at Covenant that I can assist you with?

How can I pray for you this week?

What would be a good time for us to get together for (coffee, lunch, dinner)?

The above questions are just some suggestions.

Other topics that promote commonality and put people at ease are:
travel, food, music, hobbies, plans, sports, seasons, holidays and others.

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TAKING THE CONVERSATION DEEPER

Once a relationship has been established, begin to listen for places to dig deeper. This is accomplished by asking yourself these types of questions.

- What is dear to them?
- What is loved?
- What is feared?
- What is hard?
- What are the feeling words they say?
- What is God doing in their life right now?
- How has God been faithful to them in the past?

Some people respond with very basic answers to all questions. But sometimes the words they say don't match the emotions in which they say them. If you sense this is true, adding the word REALLY to a question can help.

- How are you doing, really?
- How has work really been?
- How are your kids really doing?

This communicates to them that you really do care and want to know what is going in their life. It is not done to challenge them but, rather, to give them permission to talk freely about what is going on.