



Session 4:
EXTRA INNINGS: DISCOVERING THE SWEET SPOT IN YOUR COMMUNITY
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

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Facilitator's Note: Each person should have a study guide before the video is shared with the group. Give a brief introduction and purpose for your using this series with your church, committee, ministry team, governing body, etc. Summarize in your own words or share the following script:

Thus far we've been introduced to the idea of "Finding the Sweet Spot" and talked about holy conferencing as a means of grace. We have also reviewed the nine principles of holy conferencing, or basics of good sportsmanship. This session will invite us to consider our next steps toward finding the Sweet Spot of holy conversation.

How do we take *one step* toward building on the principles shared in this series?

What does the "rule of good sportsmanship" look like in our church?

Establishing a Guiding Framework for Conversation

You must establish a framework. A good framework should have a group covenant and conversation plan. The group covenant provides the ground rules for conversation and fosters a culture of respect and safety. There are several sample small group covenants available at Discipleship Ministries (see Going Deeper resources below), or you can create your own. Whichever covenant you choose, be sure to convey these key ideas: respect for each participant, a commitment to listening, and a willingness to learn.

What are key values of our community that we want shared in our conversations?

What are our non-negotiables (behaviors or words that are either encouraged or are unacceptable)?

How do we hold ourselves accountable to one another and our covenant?



Activity:

Once a covenant is formed, consider writing it up so it can be posted publically in a room where conversations happen as a visual reminder of the agreement. Consider a signing ceremony where the participants covenant to hold themselves accountable to the values and statements included.

Closing Prayer:

Lord you call us to have the mind of Christ.

We confess that our minds are often distracted and focused on selfish pursuits.

Forgive us, O Lord.

May your Holy Spirit wash us and renew us – all of us –

from our most base appetites to our fleeting thoughts.

May the power of your grace cause us to be made closer into your image

that our thoughts, behaviors, and words would *so* closely mimic Jesus

others would be caught off guard by such manifestations of your Love. Amen.

Going Deeper:

- Sample Group Covenants: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/topics/courageous-conversations-sample-guidelines>
- How to Address the Hot Topics by Adam Hamilton <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/6447/how-to-address-the-hot-topics>