



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

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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

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>