

The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations

Civil Discourse Five Week Curriculum



**OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS**

Written and Compiled by members of The Presiding Bishop's Staff:

Alan Yarborough

Communications Coordinator and Office Manager, The Office of Government Relations

Wendy Johnson

Officer for Digital Formation and Events, Formation Department

The Rev. Shannon Kelly

Officer for Young Adult and Campus Ministries, Formation Department

*Published by the Office of Government Relations of The Episcopal Church, 110 Maryland Ave Suite 309,
Washington, D.C. 20002*

*© 2018 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of
America. All rights reserved.*



WEEK 5: SACRED SPACE FOR DEBATE PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Opening Prayer:

Everliving God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (Prayer for the Mission of the Church, BCP p. 816)

Sacred Space for Debate

As you pursue greater understanding through civil discourse, carry the following quote from Thomas Merton with you:

“Don’t be too quick to assume your enemy is a savage just because he is your enemy. Perhaps he is your enemy because he thinks you are a savage. Or perhaps he is afraid of you because he feels that you are afraid of him. And perhaps if he believed you were capable of loving him he would not be your enemy. Do not be too quick to assume that your enemy is an enemy of God just because he is your enemy. Perhaps he is your enemy precisely because he can find nothing in you that gives glory to God. Perhaps he fears you because he can find nothing in you of God’s love and God’s kindness and God’s patience and mercy and understanding of the weaknesses of men.”

- Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, p. 177

Reflection

- What topics would you like to engage in using Civil Discourse?
- With whom would you like to have those conversations?
- What ideals from these sessions would you want to make sure and take with you into those conversations?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, who traveled with the disciples on the road to Emmaus:
Be with us on the way,
that we may know you in the scriptures,
in the breaking of bread,
and in the hearts of all whom we meet. Amen.

([Saint Augustine's Prayer Book](#), Forward Movement)

