

The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations

Civil Discourse Five Week Curriculum



**OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS**

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Introduction

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is discord, union;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

(Prayer attributed to St. Francis, BCP p. 833)

The Office of Government Relations, for purposes of this curriculum and our engagement on this topic, defines civil discourse as the following:

Civil discourse is engagement in conversation intended to enhance understanding.

Rabbi Steve Gutow, speaking at the Episcopal Church's event Civil Discourse in America¹, remarked that, "civility is simply demonstrating respect for the dignity of our fellow humans—even those humans with whom we have sharp disagreement. Civility is allowing others to speak, and having the humility to admit that we may have something to learn. Civility favors truth over cheap gain, and patience over knee-jerk judgment."

Notes for the leader:

- Italics signify notes and directions for the leader.
- Each session has a list of materials you will need.
- Make sure you make copies of the handouts for the participants and read them over so you know what instructions they have.
- Have nametags at each session, even if you think everyone knows each other's names.

¹ <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/civil-discourse-event>