



## **Visioning Conversations Discussion Groups — Information for Facilitators and Scribes**

*The information below is to foster engagement with discussion group participants and to support summarization of the discussion.*

### **Before the Discussion Group**

#### *Facilitator*

- Send the discussion questions to participants in advance (not more than one week prior)
- Include in your message content such as:
  - “To help prepare for an engaging discussion, we’re providing you the discussion questions in advance. Feel free to jot down any points you might wish to share with the group. Our time together will go quickly, and we will have to manage the time spent for each question.”
  - “On behalf of the Connectional Table, we look forward to our discussion!”

#### *Scribe*

- Determine in advance how you will capture the notes for the discussion group
  - Use pen and paper?
  - Type electronically?
- Have the questions already written/typed with blank space following to be ready to capture the notes
  - You may use Word document already created with the questions and spacing regardless of pen and paper or typing to capture the notes
  - You can pre-populate the group name/brief description and date of discussion
- Plan to capture the key themes, phrases, words from the participants for each question
  - Do not capture any verbatim comments
  - Do not attribute any information to specific participants
  - Use bullet points
  - Do not need full sentences

### **During the Discussion Group**

#### *Facilitator*

- May want to remind participants the time allotted for each section prior to starting with the discussion for each section
- May need to ask a participant to speak more slowly and/or repeat information so the scribe can capture key points
- May need to ask a participant to clarify information if it is not clear how the information relates to the question – keep the discussion focused on the question at hand
- May need to manage gently a participant response in terms of time – inform you need to allow time to hear from another participant and to cover all the questions

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- May want to ask the scribe periodically if he/she needs a minute to “catch up” with discussion comments
- It is vitally important that only one participant speak at a time – for the benefit of the whole group and the scribe

### *Scribe*

- Don’t hesitate to ask for a “pause” so you can catch up to the discussion comments, if you need a moment to capture the information
- As needed, ask a participant to repeat the information if you did not hear it clearly
- Remember you’re aiming to capture the key themes, phrases, words from the participants for each question
  - Do not capture any verbatim comments
  - Do not attribute any information to specific participants
  - Use bullet points
  - Do not need full sentences
- During the discussion, help the facilitator adhere to the time for each section; if you need to speak up to inform it’s almost time to move to another question, please do so

### **After the Discussion Group**

#### *Facilitator and Scribe*

- Convene as soon as possible after the discussion group to review the notes and what you both heard
- You both may recall key themes and words even if not captured specifically in the notes
- Review the notes together:
  - Boil down the notes for succinctness, to remove extraneous information and words
  - If the same themes, words, phrases provided by multiple participants, that can be identified in the notes (e.g., value of “grace – multiple participants”)
- Read the notes a final time before submission
  - Ensure the information associated with each question is clear to someone who was not involved with the discussion
  - Strive for clarity and conciseness
- Submit the final notes in the form/format as requested for each discussion group (clarify once we have this information)

*Thank you for your important work on behalf of the Connectional Table!*

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### **Discussion Guide**

#### Welcome, Ground Rule & Confidentiality

(10 minutes)

##### Welcome

- Thank you for coming. My name is [*insert name of moderator here*]. I'm an [*insert brief bio here*]. I'll be leading this discussion on behalf of the Connectional Table.

##### Ground Rules

- We are participating in a focus group because you were selected to share your insights on a particular topic: Identity, Vision, Mission and Connectionalism of The United Methodist Church.
- I have a set of questions designed by the Connectional Table specifically for this discussion.
- Please share your honest feelings and insights—there are no “wrong” answers.
- This group will be recorded. Your responses will be reviewed, only by myself and representatives from [*insert organization name here*]. Your responses are not reviewed as an individual, but as a group.
- Please silence cell phones (and if someone enters the room or you have to talk please mute your microphone).
- Please stay until the end of the group.
- Talk one at a time; speak clearly and loudly for the recording.
- We may have to limit how much you say so we can hear from everyone. If this happens you can follow up with the ‘chat’ option in the lower portion of your screen and give me more information there. And, you can email me at: [*insert email address here*].

##### Confidentiality

- I would like a verbal confirmation from everyone that you are here of your own volition and you will keep what others say confidential, unless they give you permission otherwise.

#### Overarching Objective & Introductions

(10 minutes)

The overall objective of this focus group discussion is to gather information that explores and seeks to define The United Methodist Church vision, connectionalism, mission and identity during this time of transition. This information will be used to guide The UMC as the church casts a vision for the future.

##### Introductions

Please introduce yourself. Share your name, location, your role in the church and something that brings you joy.

##### Identity

(15 minutes)

1. How would you describe the values of the UMC?
2. What words come to mind when you think about the personality of the UMC?
3. What is different/unique about the UMC?

##### Mission

(15 minutes)

4. What is God calling the UMC to do more of?
5. What keeps us from doing that?

##### Vision

(15 minutes)

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6. What would make being a United Methodist even better?

Connectionalism

(15 minutes)

7. How does our church live out its connectionalism?

Closing

(10 minutes)

Please share any final remarks. Are there any questions you wish we would have asked? Are there any people you think we should speak with about this topic?