



### *Protocol for Courageous Discussions in Schools*

Prior to engaging in a **courageous conversation**, the mission and values need to be clearly understood and communicated to all constituents. The school leader has been in conversation with the pastor seeking his insight, wisdom and perspective or from a trusted faith mentor.

#### **Courageous Conversations Protocol Discussion**

1. *Stay Engaged - support each other by being present in the conversation without distraction*
2. *Experience Discomfort - keep an open mind and heart throughout the experience, despite being out of one's comfort zone*
3. *Speak to Your Experience and Accept that Others may Differ - support everyone's unique lived experience by accepting their reality of lived experiences*
4. *Expect/Accept Non-Closure - the discussion may not conclude with specific solutions or action items. Ideas may need time for discernment.*
5. *Understand Impact versus Intent - one's intent may not align with the impact of a person's actions or beliefs. This must be recognized and reconciled individually.*

#### **For the Leader of the School Community: Creating a Classroom Culture of Shared and Mutual Respect**

- I. *Leaders establish relationships between teachers and the community for developing parameters and expectations grounded in respect for individuality and commitment to the expression of diverse world views.*
- II. *Leaders model these expectations by providing multi-viewed resources and providing time to explore diverse opinions on topics regardless of personal beliefs on the subject.*
- III. *Leaders must be respectful of each other's world views, regardless of personal opinion, and engage in conversations that are challenging and constructive, not argumentative and destructive.*
- IV. *Leaders provide a discussion protocol (the one suggested above, or one that your staff has agreed to use) to reference when social commentary is necessary - to both keep the discussion respectful and constructive, and also, to maintain the safety of diverse thought within the school community.*
- V. *Leaders provide the school community with the teachings of the Catholic Church - when or if the Catholic lens is not known, it is appropriate to ask for grace and time to delve into and research the topic more fully.*
- VI. *Above all, it is important that all principals (school leaders) understand school wide learning expectations and standards, classroom engagement expectations and access to resources to ensure all community members are actively engaged in furthering the mission of our Catholic faith, engaging in the work of discipleship, evangelization as we ground our work in Catholic Social Teachings as a response to the secular perspective.*

### ***For the Educator: Creating a Classroom Culture of Shared and Mutual Respect***

***It is imperative that all teachers create a classroom that provides a safe space for students of all backgrounds and beliefs to be open to share their views, beliefs, and understanding of what is happening in the world. To that end, these are best practices in how to establish a classroom culture that is conducive to learning, growing, and discernment:***

- 1. Educators establish relationships between students and teacher, and amongst classmates by providing guidance for classroom rules, parameters and expectations grounded in respect for individuality and commitment to the expression of diverse world views.*
- 2. Teachers model these expectations by providing multi-viewed resources and providing time to explore diverse opinions on topics in their classrooms regardless of personal beliefs on the subject.*
- 3. Students must be respectful of each other's world views, regardless of personal opinion, and engage in conversations that are challenging and constructive, not argumentative and destructive.*
- 4. The teacher provides students with a discussion protocol (suggested protocol, or one that your staff has agreed to use) to reference when social commentary is allowed - to both keep the discussion respectful and constructive, and also, to maintain the safety of diverse thought within the classroom.*
- 5. Teachers provide students with the teachings of the Catholic Church - when or if the Catholic lens is not known, it is appropriate to ask for grace and time to delve into the topic more fully.*
- 6. Above all, it is important that all teachers and their principals (school leaders) understand school wide learning expectations and standards, classroom engagement expectations and access to resources to ensure all community members are actively engaged in furthering the mission of our Catholic faith, engaging in the work of discipleship, evangelization as we ground our work in Catholic Social Teachings as a response to the the secular perspective.*