

A Model of Ignatian Spiritual Conversation

1) LISTEN

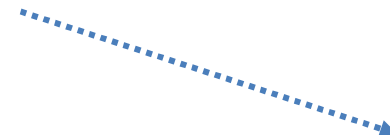
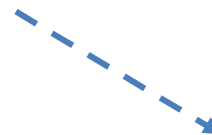
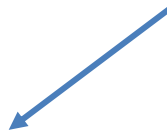


2) NOTICE WHAT MOVES

‘Discernment of Spirits’: Where does God seem to be present in this?
Holding the hope / trusting God is present



3) WHAT NEXT WITH GOD?



FOLLOW a movement

Follow what seems to be life-giving and of God, rather than what’s not

Appreciate the Godward movement from different angles

Relish the experience of God

Let it deepen

EXPLORE experience

Wander round in it

KEEP DISCERNING
(Where might God be in this?)

Help implicit movement to become explicit, seen & known

Encourage to go to God

What do they desire?

Help with prayer
(if appropriate for this speaker)

OTHER – depends on context

- Pastoral counselling
- Practical help
- Information
- Referral to other help

Spiritual conversation is 'help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, and to live out of the consequence of the relationship' (Barry & Connolly). It takes seriously the belief that God is present and active in our lives. Through attentiveness to experience, discernment and exploration we are able, with humility and care, to reflect on this encounter with God and offer an opportunity for it to deepen through grace.

LISTEN

- Use of active listening skills to help the experience be shared and explored
- Attentive, contemplative presence – engaged and interested, not leading. Holding the space of spiritual conversation
- Awareness of pace and allowing appropriate, comfortable silences

NOTICE WHAT MOVES

- Discernment of Spirits – what might be an experience of God?
- Implicit movement - a moment of peace/light/joy/energy/hope/desire/ strength
- Explicit movement – the speaker conscious of an experience 'of God'
- Noticing feelings / thoughts / bodily experiences; not focusing on counter-movement away from God
- Self-awareness, noticing own feelings, thoughts etc.

WHAT NEXT WITH GOD?

This will look different for each conversation – we encourage you to **prioritise 'following'** if you possibly can.

- **FOLLOW** – if an explicit God experience has been shared. Keep focus on that, 'mark' God. Appreciate the experience / movement from different angles. What is it like? Exploring feelings, thoughts, impression ... relishing the experience. How it is experienced in the body, with the senses ... The sense of how God may be present, what God is like ... Desires around the experience, what they want to say to God, or God to them.
- **EXPLORE** – there may be no clear sense of how God is present, but context of this conversation shows a desire to find God in experience. 'Wander around' in the experience, look at from different angles. Keep discerning, noticing, asking yourself where God seems to be moving in this. Allow yourself to ask specific 'God questions', help the implicit but unrecognised presence of God to become explicit.
- **ENCOURAGE** – the material brought is not about their relationship with God, but they are searching for something more ... Help them explore their desires, what do they want? Do they pray? Can you help them to pray, suggest ways of developing a relationship with God?
- **OTHER** – depending on the context of the conversation the outcome of your own discernment may indicate other needs or use of other skills you bring to your work / ministry, e.g. pastoral counselling; making practical suggestions for problem solving; offering information about courses / reading / retreats etc; helping them find another appropriate person to talk to, etc.