

Spiritual Conversation practices before Module 2

Self-Reflection Form

- 1) In general terms, what was the setting of this conversation and who were the participants? Was it planned or spontaneous? Was it a more mutual conversation (both of you spoke and listened), or a more one-way one (where you were the listener and the other person was the speaker)?

This was a spontaneous conversation that occurred after a service in my church. It began as a mutual conversation, then became more one-way, as I listened and the other person spoke.

- 2) How did the conversation take place? Was there a natural quality to the ebb and flow of the conversation? How was the balance of talking and listening? As a listener, what did you do (or not do) that seemed to help the speaker to share what moved them or seemed most important?

I know the other person fairly well, and the conversation began with usual greetings and exchange of recent news. I then asked how she had found the service that day. Aware of wanting to put listening skills into practice, I did not give my own perspectives, but gave more space, a couple of times just mirroring one word, and at one point just silence, which seemed to encourage her to say more of her own experience – without me asking any further questions.

- 3) When listening, what active listening skills did you use to good effect?

Keeping quiet to allow the other to speak Yes **mirroring a word or phrase** Yes

minimal encouragers (verbal or non-verbal) Yes **reflecting back feelings**

questions to explore **summarising** **paraphrasing** Yes **focusing**

any others...?

- 4) Did you notice movement in the speaker as you listened? How did you respond? Did something seem to deepen for the other? Where was God in this conversation? What might God have been doing in them, or in you, or in the relationship between you?

As she recounted the feelings inspired by the content of the service, and I used one word or non-verbal responses. In the space this gave, she put into words the experience

of her own prayer and emotions – expressing a realisation that she felt God had given about her own life. I felt like an observer of a precious moment. She had sensed God speaking and was giving me the honour of sharing it with me. It seemed to me that by recounting this moment, it was brought into focus and she was able to explore it further as she wondered how this might outwork in her week. It felt like God was inviting her to greater freedom. For the two of us, it felt like a deepening of our friendship.

- 5) In the light of this reflection, what do you want to continue to do? And what needs more work? What might you want to do more of or less of in conversation with other people?

I want to continue to use simple words and pauses to give space to others to reflect. I think I too often use long questions, which makes people think, but not necessarily more deeply, just more widely. I think I often use humour to deflect in a social situation, and I'd like to be more conscious of that, so that I give more attention to what might be important to the other person.