



# GO AND...

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## DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS- HOW TO START, AND HOW TO HAVE THEM.

### Further Resources to Go and Have the Conversation

There are a number of great resources to help start the process of having difficult conversations. Among these, here are few that have been lifted up and selected as particularly helpful for congregations and disciples working through and making space for, difficult conversations. These selected resources offer different ideas and input but would be greatly applicable to most any congregation of the Nebraska Synod.

1. “[Difficult Conversations within the Church.](#)” This is a toolkit that has been written, edited, and assembled by the Nebraska Synod’s Micah 6:8 team. This resource was created by Micah 6:8 in order to “equip the congregations of the Nebraska Synod to live out their baptismal promise ‘to strive for justice and peace throughout all the earth.’” This resource includes: resources for Bible Study and theological reflection; guidelines for communication; examples of ground rules; topical conversation tools; an advocacy primer; and other resources.
2. About twenty years ago, the Alban Institute published a resource by pastor and theologian Rev. Dr. Katie Day called, “[Difficult Conversations: taking risks, acting with integrity.](#)” The book was written with the premise that, “We don’t talk about controversial issues here!” This premise it is noted, results in that “congregations are noticeably absent from the public forum and members of faith communities fail to develop ‘social capital.’” Rev. Dr. Day invites the reader to “engage in difficult conversations,” through “a process she hopes will become habit forming,” and “a new way of being communities of faith.”

3. From the ELCA comes the resource, “[Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues](#).” This resource was designed in 1999 to help disciples and congregations discern and discuss difficult topics. It has been particularly applicable for congregational use when discussing the content and possible themes of various social statements that the church has considered, debated, discerned, and adopted over the years. Though some of the pictures and layout will look dated, the concepts and themes are still timely and useful.

4. Within the ELCA as a whole and the Nebraska Synod, we hold “Accompaniment” as a value for how we walk together as God’s people and engage the world and our own communities through our daily lives as disciples. To explore this theme, and how it can help create space for hard, difficult, and meaningful conversations that might lead to change of understanding and growing relationships, use this [Accompaniment Booklet](#) resource from ELCA Global Mission. It emphasizes the importance of listening and relationships, and puts the conversation and accompaniment process within the frame of “God’s Story, My Story, Your Story.” This emphasis and these related themes may be particularly useful for our synod’s February and March focuses of “Go and Have the Conversation,” and “Go and Be Intentional.”