

## ART FORM CONVERSATION

### INTENT

The intent of the art form conversation is to enable participants to experience their own experience through the Art Form and to appreciate the Art Form as a medium for significant address. The conversation first enables the group to objectify its experience of the Art Form through recalling impressions of the Art Form, then to reflect on the experience of participating in the Art Form, to probe the meaning of the Art Form, and finally to consider the impact of the Art Form as a whole. There are four basic kinds of questions for this: 1. Impressionistic; 2. Reflective; 3. Interpretive or cultural; 4. Decisional or theological.

### MODEL

The art form conversation deals with music, movie, art object, and poetry. The classical questions used in the art form methodology are the basis of any conversation in this area. These questions are:

1. Impressionistic:
  - a. What object do you notice?
  - b. What color do you see?
2. Reflective:
  - a. What color would you add?
  - b. What noise do you hear?
3. Interpretive, cultural:
  - a. What story would you tell about this object?
  - b. Where do you see this going on in your life?
4. Decisional, theological:

What is the imperative on us out of these insights?

### EXAMPLE

Pictorial "Guer-nica"

This conversation is to engage the group in authentic reflection on the suffering of their lives and their relationship to it. Order your questions very carefully in the following pattern in order that a progression in consciousness takes place.

1. Impressionistic: Immediate raw data of the art form:

What objects do you notice? (Varieties of same: animate, inanimate, shapes) What color do you see?
2. Reflective: Personal relation with the data of the art form:

What color would you add? Where? (Same for objects)  
What music would you play as background to this art form?  
What noise do you hear coming from the painting? Make the noise. (Often, if individuals are reluctant, group can be divided and make the noises.)  
How would you divide the painting into two parts? Which part would you keep?  
How does this art form make you feel?  
Where would you hang this painting in your home?  
What is the group's willingness to live with the painting?

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3. Interpretive, cultural: Association of personal relations to the art form with ordinary life content:  
What story would you tell about this painting?  
What has happened here? What is going on here?  
What word is coming out of the picture?  
Where do you see this going on in your life?
4. Conclusion: Call attention to the fact that this conversation has had to do with their lives. Tell story of the painting.  
What word would you say to the painting?

Movie  
"Requiem for a  
Heavyweight"

- Introduction: 1. The movie is also art.  
2. The Church used drama from the first.  
3. Look at movie with Christian glasses on.
- Order the questions the same way as in "Guernica", but add theological interpretives: Sample questions:
1. Impressionistic:  
Scenes: (exterior, interior, with noise, music, settings -- different ways of asking the same question -- not all need be used)  
Minor characters  
Lines of dialogue (Which have we left out?)  
Objects  
Symbols
  2. Reflective:  
Symbols for you  
Who did you like? Hate?  
Where did you see emotion on screen?  
Feel emotions in yourself? (anger, laughter, physical reactions)  
Mood at the end of the movie?  
Who identify with? (Surprised at anyone's answer -- surprised at any if it had been different?)  
(When applicable -- Notice mood shift in the group? -- to make group conscious of itself)
  3. Interpretive:  
What is the movie about, in a word?  
What was the main character's problem? Did he deal with his problem?
  4. Theological:  
Where would you point with a term like the Activity of God upon main man? Sin?  
The Christ Happening in the main character's life?  
Resurrected Life? (Free man? Obedient man?) If applicable, one may note mood at end of movie with group's decision about what actual situation was at end.  
Similarities with other stories?  
If group seems ready, -- What is needed as you look at the film theologically?

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Conclusion: Point out that the Christian symbols illuminate the way life actually is and give us the tools to be self-conscious to the human happening and to humanness, authentic and unauthentic.

Purpose: To provide the group the opportunity to ground their theological understanding in the concretions of the movie drama, and therefore, in their own lives. The pedagogue is not out to get the group to agree with his analysis, but to help them become clear on what reality in life, as portrayed on this film, they would point to with the key theological symbols of the faith. Their answers must be reflected back to them in such a way as to generalize again from the specifics used as illustration to give them self-conscious clarity on what they mean. The game, "Guess what I think the Christ-event is" must be avoided.

"The Gospel According to St. Matthew"

Context:

This conversation is intended to enable the group to objectify its experience of the movie and appropriate the image of Jesus as the man from the other world rather than a personality. The conversation should serve as a helpful introduction to the words of Jesus and the other world. It begins with an initial spin designed to release the group to participate and to share impressionistic data on the style of the man from the other world.

Initial Spin:

1. Were you impressed by the movie?
2. What things didn't you like? What offended you?
3. In a phrase, what kind of person was Jesus?
4. In which scenes did he come across most effectively in your interpretation?

Objective:

What other scenes do you remember?

Reflective:

1. Were you aware of awe in the movie? Where did you first sense it?
2. Was there a climax in the presentation of Jesus as he moved? A climactic moment?

Interpretive:

1. That was a play. What was the director saying? How would you categorize it?
2. We've mentioned the other world. A lost world. It's beginning to show itself. It's in the midst of the world about us, but a different world. There are happenings in that world. It has a small gate. A narrow way. Those who have beheld it said it's the real world. I suppose it's always a rocking experience. What did he get across to you about the other world? If you're going to fool with that, watch the words, doings, style.

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Key Question:

1. What did he see that others did not see? (get out long long list)
2. How were you addressed by the movie?

"The Emmigrants"

Context: The movie has a significant role to engage the spectator to see his own experience through the mirror of social critique and to determine his own role in a changing society and to free his conscience to act out a new decision.

Questions:

Objective:

1. Scenes, outdoor, indoor.
2. Names of characters, describe
3. Objects, animate/inanimate
4. Lines/ which character
5. Sounds/Silence
6. Music/Where

Reflective:

1. Emotion on screen/where
2. Your emotion
3. Objects become symbols / of what (push here)

Interpretive:

1. What going on in the movie/ what movie about?
2. What happened to these people?
3. What was the stance of each toward his situation/ where did you see that?
4. What did they learn?
5. Who was a man of integrity? What decision did he make?
6. What did his last look tell you (under the tree)?
7. Why is this movie so popular in 1973?
8. Is it a sign of resurgence? How might it be?

Television

Questions:

Objective:

1. What scenes, characters do you remember? Which program?
2. What lines of dialogue?
3. What music, silences, jingles do you recall?
4. What symbols did you see?
5. What advertisements do you remember--what parts of them particularly?
6. At what points did the ads occur?

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Reflective:

1. When did you see emotion on the screen? What emotion?
2. When did we laugh, get bored, angry, sober up?
3. What images of male/female did you see?
4. What images did the different life phases project?
5. What were the characters struggling with?
6. Where did you see them transcending their situation?
7. Where did you see transparency?
8. Where did you see men grasped by the "other world"?

Interpretive:

1. Who are the people who choose to watch these programs?
2. What happens to them as they watch?
3. What struggles in contemporary society have been addressed?
4. What does this evening illuminate about the spirit mood of society?
5. What are the program's word about life?
6. Where did you see signs of resurgence?

GUIDELINES

One basic conversation method is art form reflection. This is the basic thought process whereby questions are asked in a sequence which gradually deepens the group's reflection. In other words, when the group reflects on a particular subject, the pedagogue allows a coordinated exploration into the depths of the subject by asking certain questions or making certain statements that increase the intensity of reflection.

First there are objective questions that get out first impressions and immediate responses. Then there are reflective questions that begin to push at what is going on behind what is at first apparent. Thirdly, interpretive questions ask for the significance of the subject relative to life situation. Finally, there are decisional questions that ask what the imperative is that comes out of this reflection.

Statements pertinent to the subject can also be used in this sequence as in giving a context or a lecture. This method of reflecting can be used on any issue. The pedagogue uses the art form method in grounding experiences. This tests an issue's relevancy by seeing how it applies to life situations. The pedagogue's willingness to expose himself by giving one of his own life experiences to ground an idea or reflection, releases other people to expose themselves. The pedagogue asks people to reflect on an idea by asking them where they see that going on in the world, in their homes or in their lives.

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PREPARATION

In preparing the art form conversation, use the abstract method on yourself in relation to the art. Then write the questions that will be most helpful to the group.

CONTEXT	Short course on the meaning of art.
IMPRESSIONISTIC QUESTIONS	Questions of objective sense impressions 1. 2. 3. 4.
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS	Questions of personal relationship: cognitive, emotive or decisional 1. 2. 3.
INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS	Questions of meaning 1. 2.
DECISIONAL	1. Question of Imperative

Breakfast and Scripture  
News Conversation

INTENT	<p>The breakfast conversation consists of the capital verse, scripture conversation and the news conversation. The intent of the capital verse conversation is to hold before the Community tradition as it is given in the Scripture and to allow its wisdom and objectivity to address and heal lives as it has so many times in the past. The intent of the news conversation is to <u>symbolically</u> hold before the Community the World in its present state of being.</p>
MODEL Scripture	<p>Get the attention of the group. Read the capital verse powerfully.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What word(s) captured your attention?</li><li>2. How would you say that today?</li><li>3. What is the address of the scripture for us today?</li></ol> <p>When the rabbi determines that a proper address has been made he cuts off the conversation, and asks for news announcement.</p>
News	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are the happenings of the past day that have claimed the attention of the globe?</li><li>2. Which of these caught your attention? shifted your consciousness? impacted your consciousness? came as "news"?</li><li>3. What is going on in that situation (begin to swirl situation getting out data, situation, forces at work, etc.)</li><li>4. How is this news related to or illustrative of resurgence in our time? or, how does this news inform the task of the guildsman?</li></ol>
EXAMPLE Alternate Scripture Conversation	<p><u>Meaning in Times</u> Read Scripture</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What images did you see?</li><li>2. What did this mean for the people who first heard this?</li><li>3. What does it mean for the people of our day?</li></ol> <p><u>Art Form Scripture</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What words struck you?</li><li>2. Did the Scripture make you angry? Happy?</li><li>3. What does this scripture say?</li><li>4. What decision is demanded of us in response to this passage?</li></ol>
Alternate News Conversation	<p><u>Other World News Conversation</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are the happenings of the past several hours that have claimed the attention of the globe? (news items are reported)</li><li>1. Which of these caught up your attention? Shifted your consciousness? Impacted you? Came as "news"?</li><li>3. What's going on in that situation? (begin to swirl situation getting out data, situation, forces at work, etc.)</li><li>4. Standing in the Other World what do you notice as you look at that configuration of events. (Suggest that the first day or two the conversation might be closed after question 3 without</li></ol>