LET’S TALK ABOUT RESOURCES

Helping congregations have more meaningful and creative conversations about resources.

FACILITATION GUIDE
90-minute Cohort Model
ABOUT THIS TOOL

*Let’s Talk about Resources* uses case studies, games, and reflective discussion questions to facilitate creative conversations about how congregations can use their resources in service to their local community. It comes in two versions:

1. **Let’s Talk: The Cohort Model:** This 90-minute discussion tool is designed for a cohort of religious leaders who want to explore questions about their use of resources in conversation with one another.

2. **Let’s Talk: The Congregation Model:** This three-part discussion tool is ideal for congregational teams and retreats. It includes three 45-minute discussion modules that can be used across a series of meetings or built into a single retreat.

✔ This facilitation guide is designed for the 90-minute cohort model.

FOR FACILITATORS

*Let’s Talk about Resources* has been created to help you make hospitable space for a playful, creative conversation about a congregation’s resources and how they might be reimagined.

You should feel encouraged to use the tool loosely - after all, you know your context and your community better than we do. If it’s helpful to you to have a little more structure provided, however, we have included a sample “script” for this discussion tool.

As a facilitator, you have significant influence. Watch to make sure that all voices are being included. Whether it is reading what’s on a page aloud or discussing the different case studies, it is always beneficial to mix up who is speaking. Encourage all participants to offer input. You may find that you need to directly invite participation from quieter participants.

PREPARATION FOR ONLINE OR IN PERSON

You can host these conversations either way! Instructions for both approaches follow.

**ONLINE**

- Choose an online meeting platform, like Zoom, Google Meet, Whereby, etc. Set up your online meeting link and share with participants ahead of time.
- Choose one person to be the “host.” It may be easiest if this is you. Make sure the host is comfortable sharing their screen. The host will fill out the PDF tool as the group moves through it together.
- Choose three case studies you want to look at with your group. You might think about questions like, “Is there one of these communities with which we have a lot in common? Is there a story that could really stretch or challenge or inspire us?” Make sure these case studies are accessible to share and that you have practiced sharing them on screen.
IN PERSON

- Set your time and place, and invite your participants.
- Download and print out enough copies of the tool for all participants.
- Choose one person to be the “scribe,” to fill out the tool as the group moves through. All persons are welcome to make notes on their own copies, but this way you’ll have a record of the group’s work and conversations.
- Choose three case studies you want to look at with your group. You might think about questions like, “Is there one of these communities with which we have a lot in common? Is there a story that could really stretch or challenge or inspire us?”
- Download and print out enough copies of the selected case studies for all participants.

A FINAL WORD

Have fun with this tool! The Drive and Deploy game will require imagination and creative thinking. You might find yourself having to think outside the proverbial box. There are no “wrong” suggestions - just enjoy the process.

Please use the following scripts in whatever ways they are helpful. We strongly encourage you to tailor rhythms and content to your leadership and your setting! Text in italics are instructions, and blue print indicates a sample script a leader can simply read.
INTRODUCTIONS AND CONTEXT
10 minutes

Title Slide: 5 minutes
Welcome, opening prayer, introductions (if needed)

Welcome to “Let’s Talk about Resources,” a conversation starter for us to start stretching our imaginations a bit. Talking about money and other resources in churches can be stressful sometimes, so we’re taking a new approach, and we hope that this will be fun for all of us. Let’s start with prayer.

Prayer in your local faith tradition and language, followed by brief introductions if group members don’t know one another.

Slide 2: How to Use this Tool
This slide summarizes facilitation guidance and may be skipped.

Slide 3, CONTEXT: 5 minutes
Read the slide text aloud. Make sure everyone understands the slide. Repeat the questions: “Which of these changes resonate for you in your specific context?”

Let’s look at this first slide together. It describes the larger context we find ourselves in - in other words, what’s going on around us that has an impact on us and our congregation. There are some pretty big cultural changes happening - changing needs in our wider communities, the challenge of finding economic support for our congregations, changing patterns of giving, and new ways of using resources for social good. All of this means that as things change around us, we may have new questions for our work together. So looking at the four factors there - the changing needs, the challenge of finding economic support, changing patterns of giving, and new ways of using resources - which of those resonate with you most? Do you see connections among them?

Leave some space for a few responses, and then move to slide 4.
CASE STUDIES
30 minutes

**Slide 4, CASE STUDIES: 2 minutes**
You will have already selected the three case studies you wish to engage in your preparation for hosting the course. It is possible that some of your participants will have outside knowledge about the specific case studies. This process works best if people bracket any additional knowledge and approach each story together fresh, considering only the information on the page.

We are going to take a look at three case studies - all of which are real stories of real congregations. All these stories, in one way or another, reveal two things: (1), an imaginative use of financial and non-financial resources, and (2) a whole lot of diverse ways to deploy or use those resources.

If you happen to know one of the congregations we are discussing, I am going to ask you to BRACKET what you know and approach the story fresh, considering just the information on the page. This puts us all on a level playing field for this discussion.

**Slide 5, CASE STUDIES, cont.: 28 minutes**
Take turns reading the case studies aloud.

*In person:* Consider having people read aloud one paragraph or column at a time, going around the table or room. (This gets lots of voices into the mix early.)

*Online:* Invite a volunteer to read each case study aloud.

After EACH case study, pause to discuss, drawing on the discussion questions in the blue sidebar on Slide 5. WAIT to fill in the boxes on the right until all three case studies have been discussed.

Once you have read through and discussed each of the case studies, talk about them as a whole, drawing on the boxes on the right side of Slide 5. Encourage multiple answers - people will respond differently to the various stories, and this diversity of interpretation is a strength!

Does anyone have anything additional to add? Any thoughts that you want to make sure we don’t lose? One question or idea you want to take with you?
**DRIVE AND DEPLOY**

30 minutes

Now we will move into the game “Drive and Deploy.”

**Slide 6, DRIVE & DEPLOY: 1 minute**
You can simply read this slide aloud, and then take questions and clarifications from the group. Make sure they all understand the game so far.

**Slide 7, MOVING RESOURCES: 3 minutes**
This is another good opportunity to hear group voices. Perhaps one group member could read aloud the description of each of the resources, along with the examples. If you are in person, you can invite participants to take turns around the table; if you are online, you will need to call on or assign participants. Either way, hearing the richness of the various voices is valuable!

After the text has been read, invite the group to choose which two resources they want to “drive” in Round 1. After you’ve chosen those resources, you can move to the next slide.

**Slide 8, ROUND ONE: 10 minutes**
This is where the game begins! Read, or invite a participant to read, the text in the “Need/Opportunity” box. Make sure everyone understands, remind the group that they are using the other two resources for this round, and then let the creativity flow!

Ideas for how the selected resources could be used to meet the need/opportunity should be recorded in the boxes, either by your scribe in person, or by being entered into the PDF by the person sharing their screen (probably you). Encourage expansiveness. More ideas are always welcome. Nothing is too silly to celebrate. This should feel fun, creative, and energetic.

**Slide 9, ROUND TWO: 10 minutes**
Round 2! Repeat the rhythm of Round 1: read the “need/opportunity” aloud, remind the group that they are using the other two resources for this round, and let them go to it.
Slide 10, ROUND THREE: 10 minutes
Begin the game! Read the instructions aloud and make sure you proceed according to the numbers at the bottom of the page - in other words, start all the way to the right with “Identify need.” This should be fun and creative - remind your participants that there is no obligation to implement this idea, so it can be as big or creative as they want.

As the facilitator, you have freedom to work with here. If the group easily and quickly identifies one idea, you might invite them to play again with a different community need. If they struggle to think of resources, you can offer some options. Keep this as imaginative and fun as possible.

Slide 11, REFLECTION QUESTIONS: 10 minutes
Reflection and next steps
Move through the questions on this page thoughtfully and at a comfortable pace. Take good notes, either with the scribe using the paper tool, or typing into the PDF with screen shared. The recorded “fruits” of this experience can be very valuable for your cohort.

Close with gratitude for all your participants have offered, and a prayer in your local faith language and tradition.