LET’S TALK ABOUT RESOURCES

Helping congregations have more meaningful and creative conversations about resources.

FACILITATION GUIDE
Three-Part Congregational 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 three-part congregational 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 sample “scripts” for the three sessions.

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 times and places, 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.
SAMPLE INVITATION LANGUAGE

Dear friends,

We are excited to begin an experience with a fun, imaginative tool called “Let’s Talk about Resources” for congregations!

Dates/Times/Zoom link

Please come ready to collaborate with God’s creative Spirit, to dream and to play. It may also help you to take a look at these case studies ahead of time. [Link to case studies or include copies in mailer]

Blessings/Best/Sincerely,
Your name

SAMPLE SCRIPTS

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.
SESSION 1: CASE STUDIES AND DISCUSSION
45 minutes

Title Slide: 7 minutes
Welcome, opening prayer, introductions

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

Let’s take just a few moments to make sure we all know who’s in the room. If you will please start by sharing your name, your connection to this congregation, and one [reason you are here/OR/time you used something in a way it wasn’t intended to be used/OR/funny thing that happened to you this month]. I’ll begin.

Introduce yourself, then invite people to follow, either going around the room if in person or calling on people if on Zoom.

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 personally? Which resonate for us in our congregation?”

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 ones of those resonate with you personally, and which ones seem like they are familiar for our congregation?

Let’s start with personal resonance. Which of these changes make sense to you personally?
Leave some space - don’t be afraid of silence while people are thinking. But this is a sort of “ice-breaking” conversation, so make sure to move on.

**Which of these changes on the slide resonate with us as a congregation?**

Leave some space for a few responses, and then move to slide 4.

**Slide 4, CASE STUDIES: 3 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.: 25 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!
Slide 6: 5 minutes
Wrap-up and closing prayer

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?

Thanks to all of you for entering into the spirit of this. Next time we meet, we will be playing a game called “Drive and Deploy,” that will let us start experimenting with the ways we talk and think about resources. Keep thinking and maybe even praying about the conversation we had today. How do we think and dream and imagine about the resources God has entrusted to us? What might God be doing in our congregation? What possibilities might there be?

Closing prayer in your own local faith tradition and language
Title Slide: 5 minutes
Welcome, opening prayer (if you like), and getting started

Welcome back to our second session of “Let’s Talk About Resources!” We are going to be playing a game today called “Drive and Deploy,” but before we get started, I thought we could take a moment to see what might be resonating from last week. Were there case studies that stayed on your mind? Were there insights that the group had that stuck with you? Were there questions that came up after our time together?

Allow some space for reflection and conversation. There may not be much, and that’s okay, but it’s a helpful opportunity to let people reconnect with their experience from the first session, and there may be some really valuable reflections or thoughtful questions to harvest.

Wonderful. Keeping all of that in mind, then, along with what we discussed last week about the changing context we find ourselves in, let’s start the game!

Slide 2, 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 3, 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 4, ROUND ONE: 15 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 of which 2 resources they decided to use 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 5, ROUND TWO: 15 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 6: 6 minutes
Final reflections and closing

Take a few moments to invite their reflections on this experience. You could ask questions like: How did this feel? How was this similar to or different from how we usually talk about resources in our congregation? What insights or takeaways do you have from this game? Close with a reminder about the final session, and a prayer in your local faith language and tradition, either led by you or by one of the group members.

So how did this feel to you all? What does a game like this have to do with what we usually do in our congregation?

Thanks to all of you for making this fun and bringing your creativity. Next time we meet, we will be playing a version of “Drive and Deploy,” that will bring this home to our own faith community. Keep the creative spirit going, and listen for God between now and then.
Title Slide: 5 minutes
Welcome, opening prayer (if you’d like), and getting started

Welcome back to our third and final session of “Let’s Talk About Resources!” We are going to be playing a remix of our “Drive and Deploy” game today,” but before we get started, I thought we could take a moment as we did last time to see what might be resonating from our last session. Were there moments from the first Drive and Deploy game that you are still thinking about? Were there ideas or insights that the group had that stuck with you? Were there questions that came up after our time together?

Leave some space for reflection and conversation. There may not be much, and that’s okay, but it’s a helpful opportunity to let people reconnect with their experience from the second session, and there may be some really valuable reflections or thoughtful questions to harvest.

Wonderful. Keeping all of that in mind, then, and with our game-playing, creative hats on, let’s dive in!

Slide 2, MOVING RESOURCES: 2-4 minutes
You can simply review this slide aloud, more quickly than the previous session, and then check in with the group to make sure everyone is clear. Alternatively, it might be fun to ask participants to volunteer to put each one of these resources in their own words. You could also ask the group to come up with examples of each resource that are not listed in the examples at the side.

Slide 3, ROUND THREE: 20 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 4, REFLECTION QUESTIONS: 15 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 three-session experience can be very valuable for your congregation and leadership.

If the group does identify a “next step,” make sure that you’ve thought through how to appropriately approach this in your particular faith community’s system. Some faith communities may need to talk to an ordained or central leader; some may need to approach a council leader or other lay leader; some may be able to take certain steps or run certain experiments without engaging official conversation partners. You know your context and your system, and you will know how to pay attention to the ways in which conversations can be well-nurtured in your community.

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