

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ALMIGHTY



August 2019 (4 - 31 August)



This month we thought it would be interesting to highlight the importance of interpreting and understanding scripture in a contemporary context. So we offer various contexts and situations in which the writer, reader and God find themselves in conversations which are being illustrated before their very eyes by the surroundings they find themselves in. We are asking our writers to try and use their imagination when describing a situation.

In planning the outlines sometimes the daily scripture reading has helped us to suggest a modern day context and other times we have simply chosen a context to bring contrast and diversity sparking off the conversation between God, writer, and reader; allowing the Holy Spirit to direct the conversations into different areas of thought. At other times we have introduced a third party's voice in order to reflect the complications and conflicts we uncover as we read scripture.

Context is important in helping us understand scripture. Both the context in which it was written and the context in which we find ourselves reading it today. Some scripture has significance for a community that has still to be formed while other scripture helps us understand how God has spoken to people in the past. The voice of God as heard in scripture is never spoken in a vacuum. It is always spoken in context in order to give us meaning and direction in our lives.

This month as we read scripture together it is our prayer that we will take these God conversations and use them as starters to bring about conversations with others in order to connect our friends and families into the great conversations in Scripture.

Each week of the theme runs Sunday-Saturday and has its own subtheme, which contains daily Bible readings and thought triggers.

Creches, cafes + conversation (4 August)

Contemporary context + ancient words...

1. Hosea 11: 1-11 1. **Conversation with God in the creche** God's frustration and love like that of mother.
2. Psalm 107: 1-9, 43 2. **Conversation with God in a cafe after a long cross-country walk.** To understand God understands our struggles.
3. Ecclesiastes
1: 2, 12-14;
2:18-23 3. **Conversations with God and a self-made woman at a funeral.** An opportunity to explore the transitory nature of life power and materialism.
4. Psalm 49: 1-12 4. **A wealthy writer has a frank TV interview with God.** An opportunity to explore the spiritual side of creative people.
5. Colossians
3: 1-11 5. **God in conversation with a Twitter addict.** An opportunity to explore the hidden prejudices we can carry as Christians.
6. Luke 12: 13-15 6. **God in conversation over a contested will.** Explore the corrosive effect of greed on our lives.
7. Luke 12: 16-21 7. **A conversation between an architect, a farmer, and God.** How different it would have been to build a barn to store up generosity!

Creation, camping + CCTV (11 August)

Seeing old words in a new way...

1. Isaiah 1: 10-20

2. Psalm 50: 1-2

3. Psalm 50: 22-23

4. Genesis 15: 1-6

5. Psalm 33: 12-22

6. Hebrews 11: 1-3

7. Hebrews 11: 8-16 +
Luke 12: 32-40

1. **God in Conversation with Christian Festival Organisers.** The danger of large events that have no depth to them.

2. **God in conversation with creation at a lakeside, Beauty can turn a heart.** An opportunity to reflect upon the the conversations God has with people daily as they walk through creation.

3. **God in conversation with an atheist doing worthy work.** Everything falls apart without God, even meaning has no meaning - futility breaks the soul apart.

4. **A conversation with God about family in a camp site.** An opportunity to explore faith in the face of impossible odds.

5. **A conversation with God and his use of CCTV technology.** Exploring the careful caring eye of God on his creation (Careful Caring Terra Vision = CCTV).

6. **God in conversation with an astrophysicist in a lab.** Faith is the beginning of scientific pursuit.

7. **A conversation with God in a refugee camp.** Faith turns despair into hope and hope speaks of the eternal.

Difficult conversations (18 August)

Difficult questions, difficult answers...

1. Isaiah 5: 1-7
 2. Psalm 80: 1-2, 8-19
 3. Jeremiah 23: 23-29
 4. Psalm 82
 5. Hebrews 11:29 - 12:1
 6. Hebrews:12: 2
 7. Luke 12: 49-56
1. **Living with disappointment and injustice.** Facing the truth brings solutions.
 2. **Even if we have lost all, faith inspires us to build again.** It is because we have experienced beauty - we can be inspired to build again.
 3. **God's listening in and will break into dismal conversations to change mindsets.** This is an opportunity to discuss the danger of following false dreams and unreliable leaders.
 4. **Judge God has some searching questions to ask of us all.** This psalm lays the fault of injustice at all of our doors.
 5. **Never give up.** Look at the example of the saints of the past.
 6. **Jesus** — finally it begins and ends with Jesus.
 7. **Standing for truth...** brings division.

Conversations in Love (25 August)

Conversing with God's Love...

1. Jeremiah 1: 4-10
 2. Psalm 71: 1-6
 3. Isaiah 58: 9b-14
 4. Psalm 103: 1-8
 5. Hebrews 12:
18-29
 6. Luke 13: 10-17
 7. 1 John 4: 7-12
1. **God in conversation with a teenager.** The danger of overlooking the contribution of young people.
 2. **God in conversation with self doubt.** Reflect upon the feelings we have when we know we are up against it.
 3. **God shares his strategy...** for rebuilding a nation.
 4. **A personal conversation with self.** An opportunity to speak truth and wisdom to ourselves.
 5. **When God answers and opens the door.** Take a deep breath, think again, look where you are. Surrounded in mystery beauty and holiness. Everything within you is changing.
 6. **Grace always trumps law...**because love is the fulfilling of the law.
 7. **Conversations in Love.** Here in this verse is a summary of all we need to know about God life and eternity.