

Compass Conversations Facilitator Guide

A guide to support you as you plan, lead and capture responses from your local *Compass Conversations*.

Welcome to *Compass Conversations*! Thank you for your willingness to facilitate the Compass discussions. We hope you find these notes helpful as you guide your team through the conversation.

Compass Conversations is a set of open-ended questions designed to help the local corps, fellowship or other ministry expression engage in The Salvation Army's Global Strategic Framework.

This facilitator guide has been devised to assist you as you lead these discussions. It does not provide instructions, but offers suggestions on how you might guide the conversation to ensure it is relevant in your corps or local unit. (Note: 'corps' is used throughout this document to refer to any local Salvation Army ministry.)

Compass Conversations is not a formal review, nor is it designed to take the place of your own strategic plan or corps evaluation. It is offered as a resource to stimulate reflection and promote action steps that you yourselves will determine. It is meant for use at the local level – to support the local corps or other ministry expression.

You will see that the questions are both corporate and individual. Change always begins with a person. *Compass Conversations* asks each person to consider the question for themselves – and then asks the group to apply it to their corps.

You will also find that the questions are mostly open-ended. They are meant to stimulate further discussion and dialogue. Feel free to let that happen – it is within the extended conversations, as people engage personally with the topic, that the most important revelations will be discovered.

You are more than welcome to develop your own questions – on topics that are relevant to you and your corps. Think of topics that matter in your context – and talk about them.



Guidance for leading group discussions

Here are some principles for leading guided discussions. You may find them helpful as you prepare:

- **Size of group:** In order to stimulate conversation and to ensure everyone is comfortable, it is suggested that these conversations be conducted in a group of no more than 10 people. You can use multiple groups if you want to get more people involved.
- **Define the purpose and goals:** As you begin, clearly articulate the purpose and goals of the meeting. What do you want to achieve for your corps? What do you hope to accomplish?
- **Establish ground rules:** Set expectations for respectful interaction, active listening and constructive feedback.
- **Encourage participation:** Actively seek input from all members, including quieter individuals, and create a safe space for expressing diverse perspectives.
- **Be open to different ideas:** Acknowledge and value a range of viewpoints, even if they differ from your own.
- **Manage conflict:** Encourage diverse responses, but if disagreements arise, help the group to find common ground.
- **Be prepared to redirect:** Be ready to gently redirect the discussion if it veers off course or if one person dominates the conversation.
- **Allow time for introverts:** Be mindful of introverted personalities and proactively invite their contributions. Don't force someone to talk if they are not prepared to do so.
- **Start with the *Compass Conversations* questions,** but allow the dialogue to develop naturally – see where it takes you. Avoid questions that can be answered with just 'yes' or 'no'.
- **Use more questions** to probe for deeper insights, encourage clarification and stimulate further discussion (see pages 3 and 4).
- **Decisions:** Help the group to arrive at a consensus or a clear understanding of the key takeaways.
- **Summaries:** As the dialogue for each question winds down, summarise what has been said, offering an opportunity for clarification or additional comments.
- **Provide closure:** At the end of the meeting, share any conclusions, decisions and action plans that have been agreed to.





Questions

Here are some suggestions and follow-up questions for guiding through the *Compass Conversations* questions:

Spiritual Life

This section is all about our personal and corporate spiritual life – our own and that of our corps. Consider starting the conversation with people's own experiences – then talking about the corps. Remember that everyone has different experiences. Some may be new Christians, while others may have been believers for a long time.

- How do we grow spiritually?
- Who are our spiritual mentors? Think of someone who helped you. How might we follow their example?
- What are we doing to invest in discipling our people, in helping people to grow spiritually?
- What else could we be doing to grow spiritually – personally and in our corps?
- How do our programmes, preaching and practices point to Jesus?
- What does 'holiness' mean and how can we demonstrate it?

Leader Development

This section is about our 'ministry leaders'. It includes our corps officers, local officers and anyone who has leadership responsibilities at the corps. The goal is to help them to grow and develop in their roles, and to encourage, enable and equip new leaders.

- At our corps, who should we be encouraging to step into a ministry role? How can we help them to prepare?
- What are we doing to engage with our young people? What more can we do?
- What can we do to support our current ministry leaders?
- What training should our division or territory provide to develop current and future leaders?

Officer Well-Being

This section considers Salvation Army officers. The goal is to support and encourage them in their ministry. Think of your corps officers, as well as others around the world, as you work through the *Compass Conversations* questions. While this may seem like a 'THQ matter', there is much that we can accomplish at a local level. If you are the corps officer and you are leading the *Compass Conversations* meeting, be open and honest in the discussion – share your thoughts; but also remember that this is about *all* officers.

- What does 'holistic' mean in this case? Be specific.
- What helps people to 'thrive'? (For example, for officers, this may be finding fulfilment in ministry, assurance of family well-being, good health care, etc.)
- This section also asks about candidates for officership. Are there people in your corps who you feel might be called to officership? How can you support them?

Membership

Membership is an important part of Salvation Army corps as well as the Church in general. 'Membership' and 'belonging' can mean different things to different people. Be prepared for a wide range of responses to the *Compass* questions.

- What does 'belonging' mean?
- What does it mean to be a 'member' of The Salvation Army?
- What are we doing to invite new people to the Army? What do we do to welcome them and make them feel comfortable?
- What are we doing that makes people feel they 'belong' here?
- Many corps are experiencing a loss of membership. What are we doing to encourage people to stay?



Mission Integration

These questions are addressing one of the long-standing tenets of The Salvation Army: holistic ministry. Combining spiritual and social ministries has always been an important distinction of Salvation Army programming. It is about building relationships with our local community and ensuring that everything we do points the way to Jesus. This section is designed to help us look at how we are integrating these two priorities at our corps.

- How are we making Jesus known outside our corps?
- How do people who visit our corps know we are a church? (This can be about signage, greetings and more.)
- How well connected are the Salvation Army programmes in our area/division (for example: corps, schools, charity shops, residential social centres, health programmes, etc.)?

Covenant

The word 'covenant' generally refers to an 'agreement'. In the Bible and in the Church, it is usually used in connection with God. It can also be used for any 'agreement' that has spiritual implications. These questions are likely to elicit a broad range of responses. While the stated goal of this line of questions is about Salvation Army membership covenants – the Officer's Covenant, the Soldier's Covenant and the Adherent's Covenant – you may find that it results in a deeper discussion about your corps. As before, let the conversation itself lead the discussion.

- What does 'covenant' mean in today's world?
- What does 'covenant' mean to me?
- Covenants are not just for officers, soldiers and adherents. What other kinds of covenants do we make with God? How do we recognise this?

Resource Allocation

These questions talk about 'mission effectiveness' – how we use our personnel, property and financial resources to accomplish the mission of The Salvation Army. It is also about our programmes – ensuring that what we are doing, and what we could be doing, are focused on our true priorities – preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and meeting human needs. This section can – and should – result in a hard look at our programmes. While it is not a formal review, it can be used to take an honest look at what we do, how we spend our time and money, and what is actually important to us. It may be time to consider revising our programming to meet the needs of our community in today's world.

- What can we do now to ensure the long-term sustainability and stability of our corps?
- What are we doing best that spreads the good news of the gospel?
- What are we doing best that helps us to meet the needs of our neighbours?
- Are there programmes that are less effective? Is it time to reconsider them?
- How much of our resources are we allocating to programmes that are less effective in sharing the gospel or meeting people's needs?
- If we reallocated our resources (personnel, funding, space), what might we do instead? How could we make better use of our resources?