

What is a Conversation Piece?

Ever met for a chat and not known how to get conversation flowing?

When you have a Conversation Piece to focus on, it's a lot easier to get the ideas moving.

Participants create a conversation piece to demonstrate a key point from their learning in the SFC Short Course they've just completed.

A Conversation Piece may take a variety of forms, depending on the Participant and the nature of their learning. Conversation Pieces might look like -

- A 600 word written reflection
- A work of art - paintings, drawings, songs, poems
- A set of curated pictures, referring to specific learning ideas
- A letter in the style of St Paul, to a friend, encouraging them to understand something that really struck you in the course.
- Something else?

A quote, an image, an idea may have sparked something in you. Run with it, see what you can create from this aha moment.

Your Conversation Piece doesn't have to describe **everything** in the course, just a spark that happened along the way. It might contain points of learning, questions that have arisen, insights made and reflections and links between the content of the SFC Short Course and your experience.

It will be the launch pad for a conversation about the ideas you found through that SFC Short Course. It is NOT an assessable piece!

Why not bring your journal to the Post-Course Conversation? Then you can dip into it for other ideas too.

Check out the example of a Conversation Piece on the next page...

An example of a Conversation Piece

After the SFC Short Course “What Matters About Jesus”



See next page for an excerpt from a conversation using this Piece...

An excerpt from a Post Course Conversation Using that Collage

CONVERSATION PARTNER:

Tell me about this Conversation Piece, I can see straight off that it is full of life and has some pretty significant words scattered throughout. What's behind this image?

FIONA:

Firstly, I really loved watching and reflecting on "What Matters About Jesus!" There are so many wonderful ideas in it that set off sparks, but one really stood out.

OK, well, I know that it seems simple, but there were a few key places in the first video, the one called "Was Jesus Real", that made me think.

One was when Archbishop Phillip Aspinall mentioned that some people were shocked by Jesus and his behaviour/words/life...and this made me kind of turn around to the 'audience' to become more aware of those around Jesus. Often I guess when I read the Gospels, my focus is on Jesus and on learning how to be more like him. This comment made me realise that if I'm in the audience watching a narrative with Jesus as the main character, it would be cool to look beyond Jesus to the guys watching on...to the observers, those who reacted to Jesus...the secondary characters!

So, I went back to a few of my favourite Gospel stories about Jesus, and you know that story of the woman at the well, the way she runs back to the village (where she may well be a bit of an outcast) and tells about her meeting Jesus...and she is so convincing that people ask Jesus to stay there with them...and then, THEY all believe! Stunning. Imagine the looks on those faces, it really brings the story alive because I thought, "Hey, I've inherited all those reactions...I'm really here in part because of the reactions of millions of people before me who allowed their lives to be changed by Jesus...who reacted and responded."

CONVERSATION PARTNER

I get that! Tell me more about that idea: that the secondary characters come alive.

FIONA

Even the first miracle, where Jesus and his friends arrive at a wedding and Jesus turns the water into wine. What were those wedding guests thinking when Jesus and his rowdy fishermen friends rocked up late and (I like to think!) drank all the wine? Imagine the look on Mary's face when she said to a young Jesus "Fix it! I don't care what you do, just replace the wine!" and we have that wonderful miracle of generosity and abundance and life-giving sparkle. It is like Jesus saying to Mary, "It's going to be OK mum. I got this."

CONVERSATION PARTNER:

Not a traditional reading of that story, but I like the Mother/Son dynamic in it!
How did the other episodes inform this idea for you?

FIONA:

Well, then in the episode “Did Jesus Really Rise From the Dead?” Sarah retells the story of the disciples hiding in fear after Jesus’ death. They didn’t know what to expect, and they went about responding to a death, not to a life! And again, I spent some time imagining the faces of the disciples...the men in fear for their own lives now their radical inspiration was dead. And the women who wanted to tend to his body, to prepare it for burial...imagine their faces when they saw the grave empty. Imagine Thomas’ face when confronted by an impossible thing: Jesus alive and well. His confusion and fear, the consternation and hope that drove him to seek proof of life!

Why would the Gospel writers go to such trouble to tell the story? Because they’d been moved by it, changed by it, shocked by it, ... generations of reactions are built into the story that we receive, and we can be a part of it now.

I was reminded of a wonderful statement that I heard in my first week of Theological College way, way back in 1991: “You don’t waste nails on ‘gentle Jesus, meek and mild’.”

The Gentle Jesus Meek and Mild bit comes from a hymn by Charles Wesley published in 1742...but the statement reminds me that Jesus really offended people...enough that as Peter Kline says in episode 4: Jesus was tried for blasphemy and sedition! The religious elites were disturbed by Jesus and decided he had to go...and they were prepared to invest hardware ... wood and nails in getting rid of him! That’s a pretty big reaction!

So, I’ve just decided that is the title of my artwork: “You Don’t Waste Nails on Gentle Jesus Meek and Mild!”

CONVERSATION PARTNER:

That’s fascinating. I like how you’ve connected your faith history with your learning from the course! Tell me more! How about some reflections from the other videos...?