



ARGUING!

PERSONAL JOURNEY

PREPARATION

- Choose a topic for debate and ask two participants to prepare 'For' and 'Against' arguments
- Collect a range of board/card games to use in the session
- Have a timer
- Prepare to play the songs you want to use

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Arguing. Some of us enjoy a fierce debate, some of us run from it! Arguing is a necessary part of life that can help us find a solution to our challenges, both on a personal and on a societal level, but it can also lead to conflict, war and broken relationships. The Bible can teach us much about how we should live alongside others and how we should avoid the detrimental effects of conflict.

ACTIVITIES

DEBATE

Choose a subject for debate and ask a couple of people to prepare 'For' or 'Against' arguments in advance and listen to their points of view in the meeting.

The subject of the debate could be anything, but try to choose something that will not cause too much tension. You could even go for silly topics, eg pineapple is a legitimate pizza topping; chocolate door handles are a good idea; people should automatically get a holiday on their birthday; cereal is a soup.

Ask members to listen carefully to both sides of the debate.

PLAY

Provide a number of board or card games for members to play. Invite them to choose a game and give them a set time to enjoy the game. Find out afterwards if any conflicts or arguments arose!

LISTEN

Ask members to break into pairs: a speaker and a listener. Set a time, eg three minutes, for the speaker to talk to their listener about something. Ask the listener

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to listen very carefully, then repeat back to the speaker what they have said. Swap over roles and repeat the process.

Invite participants to share how it feels to be really listened to without interruption.

BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

Living without complaining and arguing

The influential 20th-century philosopher Karl Popper said, 'The aim of argument should not be winning, but progress.'

Have you ever been in an argument? Of course you have. Everyone has. When you were in the argument, was your goal to win? Of course it was. It's pretty much everyone's goal. But the lesson we struggle to learn is that when it comes to arguing, almost no one really 'wins'. The person who wins the point is often the person who loses the relationship. Maybe not permanently, but damage will be done.

Complaining and arguing can so easily creep into our lives, causing division and negativity. Maybe if we take a moment, we can think about situations we are currently in where conflict is causing ourselves and others pain.

Philippians 2:14 (NLT) says, '*Do everything without complaining and arguing.*' Why does Paul write this? Apparently, many believers in Philippi were caught up in arguing and fighting with one another and this was harming the life and public testimony of the church. This wasn't productive discussion over issues of justice. This was individuals intent on getting the upper hand and winning the argument. Such behaviour is not a reflection of obedience to Christ. In fact, it was harming the mission and ministry of the church.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be lights in a dark world. Philippians 2:15 (NLT) says, '*Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.*'

Have we ever experienced complete darkness? **[Be sensitive as this might be the daily reality for some individuals present.]** The relief that light brings, whether by a light bulb, a torch or even just a match, is significant and changes how we feel. Our actions, attitudes and character can serve as a beacon of hope and guidance to those who feel lost in the darkness of sin or hopeless for the future.

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Philippians 2 goes on to encourage us to hold on to the word of God which provides guidance and strength when we feel out of our depth. In all situations of life, the Bible can give us truth, direction and wisdom. If we study Scripture, it will sustain us through life and ensure we are doing God's will.

Our focus in life therefore needs to be on Jesus, and we should avoid getting embroiled in petty arguments and disputes. We need to shine like bright lights in the world and hold on to the word of God as our compass.

'As children of God, our lives are meant to be a living testimony to the transforming power of Christ, shining brightly in a world desperately in need of his light.'

- Rev Dr Dean Courtier

PRAYER

Father God, help me to be at peace with everyone I come into contact with. Give me the patience to hold my tongue and to listen more than I speak. May I always remember that every person I come into contact with is also a child of God, worthy of respect and love. Let me not hold on to bitterness, anger or resentment, but rather seek to forgive as you have forgiven me.
Amen.

SONGS

- ♪ SASB 909 'When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed' [Count your blessings]
Watch the [lyric video](#) by Jesus is my Lord featuring Guy Penrod's southern gospel version; or the [music video](#) - no lyrics - by The International Staff Songsters uploaded by Lukas Florres
- ♪ SASB 907 'What a wonderful change in my life ...' [Since Jesus came into my heart]
Watch the [instrumental lyric video](#) by St Albans Salvation Army or the [lyric video](#) by Squirrel 24
- ♪ SASB 865 'It's no longer I that liveth'
Watch the [lyric video](#) by Edward Lee or the [instrumental lyric video](#) by Eric Bicknell featuring Camberwell Citadel Band
- ♪ SASB 376 'King of kings, majesty'
Watch the [lyric video](#) from Naturally Supernatural uploaded by Emmanuel Church Eastleigh featuring Beth Croft or the [instrumental lyric video](#) by Kelston Stanford

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WEBSITE AND CONTACT DETAILS

- Connect website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/connect
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Family Ministries

Having faith in the family

Providing intergenerational support, training and resources for

Children | Adults | Everyone