



Conversation Prompts

Host: You may find little or no need for getting acquainted prompts. And on the other hand, you may find the topics under MORE PROMPTS could be single topics for the next 4 gatherings.

1. Possible Initial Conversation Prompts

- What's something that gives you hope right now?
- Share a moment when you felt truly heard.
- What does community mean to you?
- What do you long for that seems missing in today's world?
- How do we hold space for people who see things differently?

This is just a beginning. There are no perfect words, no perfect plans—just your willingness to show up and listen. That's how the threads of community are rewoven, one table at a time.

2. More Conversation Prompts

a. Understanding Each Other

- When have you felt misunderstood about something that mattered deeply to you?
- What helps you feel heard, even when someone disagrees with you?
- Share a time when you listened to someone you disagreed with and came away with new understanding.

b. Bridging Differences

- What's one belief or value you hold strongly — and how do you share it without judging others?
- What is one small thing neighbors could do to make this community feel more respectful?
- How do you decide when to speak up and when to simply listen?

c. Ethics & Integrity

- How do you stay true to your ethics when facing pressure to “take sides”?
- What does respectful disagreement look like to you?
- How can we hold people (or ourselves) accountable without shaming or excluding them?

d. Hope for Our Community

- What gives you hope that we can find common ground?
- If we could model one value for the next generation, what should it be?
- What small step could we take after today to build trust in our neighborhood?



OTHER CONVERSATION STARTERS

🕒 1. Grounding + Why We're Here

Open with something like:

“Look, I know most of us here are doers. You all have jobs, commitments, values, and probably strong opinions. Me too.

And if we’re honest—we’re also tired. Angry. Confused. Some of us are losing hope. Some of us are *ready to fight*.

The truth is—we’re showing up in the same neighborhood with different truths and we’re not helping each other.

So I’m proposing a pause—not to avoid the issues—but to slow down enough that we don’t lose *each other* in the middle of them.”

Then add a touch of humor:

“And don’t worry—we’re not joining hands and singing. We’re just going to try this ancient, radical act... called **listening**.”

🔥 2. Acknowledge the Fire (Real Talk Prompt)

Instead of a soft question, try this:

“Let’s go around and answer this:

What’s one thing you’ve felt lately about the state of our country—or your neighborhood—that’s made you want to scream, cry, or check out completely?

And then—what’s one thing that’s kept you *from* giving up?”

They’ll relate. They’ll laugh. Some will sigh.

You’re creating shared emotional ground before shared ideology.

💬 3. Move Into “What’s Breaking Down?” (Not “What Do You Believe?”)

Prompt the group:

“Where do you see breakdown in how we talk to each other today?

Where’s the moment the conversation stops being productive?”

If folks get political or heated, bring it back to communication:

“Let’s not fix the world right now—let’s just name where the wheels fall off in our conversations.”

4. What Would *Better* Feel Like?

When you feel your group is ready for this:

“If we could change one thing about the way people speak to each other—what would it be?”

“What would it feel like to be heard, not just agreed with?”

5. Closing – Light But Real

“We won’t solve democracy today/tonight, but maybe we can remember we’re not enemies. Maybe next time we disagree, we’ll pause long enough to breathe—before we post, or react, or walk away.”

“So what are you leaving with—one word, or one idea?”