



**OUR LADY OF SORROWS**

Faith + Knowledge + Community

## **GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVE & REFLECTIVE LISTENING SKILLS**

- Repeat back what you think the speaker said and how they feel.
- Let the speaker determine the pace of the conversation: don't rush them along or sidetrack them.
- Refrain from making judgments about the speaker and what they are saying.
- Speak with the same feeling as the speaker, unless they are upset and angry, at which time you should remain calm.
- Eliminate things (i.e., cell phones, computers, etc.) that may distract you from giving the speaker undivided attention.
- Consider your own body language and what it's telling the speaker (i.e., leaning in to listen vs. turned away/arms crossed, etc.).
- Sympathize and Empathize with the person as much as possible (i.e., walking in their shoes)

### **Use Active or Reflective Listening when the “other person”...**

- Talks about or expresses feelings (including non-verbal feelings).
- Has a problem.
- Is sharing ideas which are important to him/her.
- Is happy or excited about something in their life.
- Is angry, assaultive, or resistant.

### **Use Active or Reflective Listening when “you”...**

- Are unsure of what the other person means.
- Think you understand, but want to be sure.
- When you have a history of misunderstanding this particular person.
- When you want to “share” or be with another person (building a deeper relationship).

### **Listening DO's:**

- Listen with openness, acceptance, and positive interest.
- Listen with expectancy so the speaker really wants to tell you what they have to say.
- Involve yourself in feeling the feelings of the speaker; feel the feeling with them but don't get carried away by it.
- Listen with care and concern. In all cases treat the person with respect.

**Holy Listening is Never Cheap and must be worked at!**  
**Holy Listening tells the speaker that they are important and they matter.**  
**Holy Listening tells the speaker that they are important to you.**

## ROADBLOCKS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

The following habits tend to intensify rather than alleviate problems. Check which blocks are common habits you use.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Mind reading** - Disregarding or not believing what the speaker says and trying to figure out what they “really mean.” Too much importance is given to the non-verbal rather than the verbal communication, as well as the listener’s assumptions, bias or mood.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Rehearsing** - Figuring out your response while the speaker is still speaking rather than hearing what the speaker is saying.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Filtering** - Listening to some things, but not others. You are filtering when you only hear the negative, the angry, critical, or anxious words and tones and miss the positive, happy, affirming, or relaxed words or tones. We often filter when the speaker is saying something we don’t want to hear.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Judging** - Judging means that you have stopped listening because of some negative judgment or you only listen in order to find blame or fault.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Daydreaming** - Letting your mind wander off to other thoughts rather than focusing attention on the speaker.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Advising** - Jumping in with advice, sometimes before the speaker is even finished speaking. Even if the speaker does want your advice (and they may not), you need to let them finish speaking and really hear what they are saying. Sometimes the speaker just wants you to affirm the feelings they are sharing, rather than solving their problem for them.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Sparring** - Disagreeing, arguing and debating rather than accepting, learning, or reconciling with the speaker. Excessive arguing.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Being Right** - The need to be right prevents you from hearing anything the speaker is saying. To avoid any suggestion that you might be wrong, you will lie, shout, change the subject, justify, quibble, make excuses, or any other listening block that will fight off criticism.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Derailing** - You change the subject or make jokes whenever the conversation becomes too personal or emotionally threatening. This block prevents you from hearing the speaker’s serious concerns.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Placating** - You are too quick to agree rather than work through a difficult issue, only to be inwardly unhappy with the agreement.

**The best person to solve your problem is you! Better listening skills can help!**

## TRADITIONAL TESTIMONY WORKSHEET

1) What has been a significant moment or movement of change/conversion in your life?

2) Describe what your life looked like before this change/conversion?

(What things were most important to me? What did my life revolve around? Where did I seek security and happiness?)

3) Describe how God was present or encountered in this change/conversion?

(What was the message I came to understand and believe? Why did I decide to stop living as stated previously? What motivated me to overcome struggles with Christ/Truth/Church?)

4) Describe how your life is different since this encounter/conversion?

(How did Christ change the areas noted in point #1? What are some specific illustrations of these changes?)

## **GOD MOMENT TESTIMONY WORKSHEET OR ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY STORIES TO TELL**

Why is going to Mass important to you?

Why is going to Confession important to you?

Why is prayer important to you?

A time when God answered a prayer...

A time when you know God spoke to you or inspired you in prayer...

A time you strongly felt God was with you and supporting you...

The first time you truly felt moved or had an epiphany by reading or hearing scripture...

A particularly difficult time or hardship when God gave you peace and strength...

A time when you had a difficult decision to make and sought God's guidance...

A time your faith was challenged and how you resolved this challenge...

The first time you knew/felt you were deeply loved by God...

A time when a homily/retreat/teaching/presentation inspired you...

A time when a homily/retreat/teaching/presentation challenged you...

Share about a person in your life who models deep and inspiring faith...

Share about a time God worked a miracle in your life or in the life of someone you know...

### **Web Resources:**

[How to Have a Good Religious Argument Podcast with Bishop Barron](#)

[Strange Notions - A helpful website to search and find smart answers to typical objections to Christianity](#)

### **Book:**

[Arguing Religion: A Bishop Speaks at Facebook and Google](#)

[Handbook of Christians Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions](#)