# **Game Plan 4 - Handling the Big Objections**

**Belong – Believe – Behave**

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In Game Plan 3, we learned steps to move the dialogue forward to identify objections.

* **Ask powerful questions** – What is the biggest thing keeping you away from the Church?
* **Stay humble** – Remember your own faith journey had its own ups and downs.
* **Express empathy** – “I can imagine how frustrating that must have been for you.”
* **Restate your loved one’s thoughts** – “I think I hear what you’re saying. Please correct me if I’m wrong. You feel \_\_\_\_\_”

**Conversation Framework – Talking about Objections:**

Let’s imagine that the objection is “The sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church was just too much for me. I couldn’t continue to be part of a Church where that happens.”

* **Find common ground** – Don’t deny the scandal. Instead empathize and express common ground. “I was just as shocked and scandalized by what happened as you are.”
* **Acknowledge the other person’s good intentions** – “You’re right to be enraged about what happened and concerned that the abuse doesn’t happen anymore.”
* **Share the Church teaching or current circumstances to clarify any misconceptions** – “Most of the abuse happened in the past and the Church made changes to prevent abuse. The Catholic Church now completes thorough background checks on every Church employee and volunteer, especially those who interact with children. Reporting systems are now in place to allow victims to come forward safely without fear of retribution. In fact, the Catholic Church has become a leader in the prevention of sexual abuse. Many outside institutions and governments now look to the Church’s policies for guidance.
* **Guide them to the next steps. Know some resources to recommend.** – “I get just as disheartened as you about this, but then I remember that the overwhelming majority of priests are wonderful holy men who offer their lives for their flock. I had to ask myself; do I trust that Jesus is guiding and protecting his Church? Don’t I believe that Christ can heal this scandal and what can I do to help?”

If you would like to give this more thought, I can suggest a short book written by Bishop Robert Barron called [*Letter to a Suffering Church*](https://media.wordonfire.org/ebooks/Letter-to-a-Suffering-Church.pdf). It gives more insight on the problem as well as hope and encouragement for the future of the Catholic Church.

**Let’s Practice!**

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| Ask powerful question |  |
| Find Common Ground |  |
| Acknowledge their good intentions |  |
| Share Church teaching to clarify misconceptions |  |
| Guide to next steps. Offer appropriate resources |  |

**Resources:**

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| Objection | *Return* by Brandon Vogt | *What to Say & How to Say It* by Brandon Vogt |
| No time for Church | Page 144 |  |
| Mass is boring  | Page 146, 188 |  |
| Church is focused on guilt | Page 148 &156 |  |
| Married to a non-Catholic | Page 151 |  |
| Bad experience in Church | Page 152 |  |
| God can never forgive me | Page 154 |  |
| Church is judgmental | Page 156 |  |
| Cohabitation outside marriage | Page 164 |  |
| Women can’t be priests | Page 167 |  |
| Divorced | Page 174 |  |
| Never encountered Jesus  | Page 182, 188 |  |
| Atheism | Page 177 | Vol. 1, page 1 |
| Evil & Suffering | Page 189 | Vol. 1, page 29 |
| Trusting the Gospels |  | Vol. 1, page 57 |
| Explaining the Eucharist |  | Vol. 1, page 95 |
| Abortion | Page 170 | Vol. 1, page 123 |
| Same-Sex Marriage |  | Vol. 1, page 161 |
| Transgenderism |  | Vol. 1, page 191 |
| Faith & Science | Page179 | Vol. 2, page 1 |
| Jesus’ Resurrection |  | Vol. 2, page 31 |
| Heaven, Hell & Purgatory |  | Vol. 2, page 69 |
| Relativism |  | Vol. 2, page 89 |
| Islam |  | Vol. 2, page 115 |
| Homosexuality | Page 158, 162 | Vol. 2, page 145 |
| Devotion to Mary |  | Vol. 2, page 169 |
| Understanding the Bible | Page 185 | Vol. 3, page 1 |
| Salvation |  | Vol. 3, page 29 |
| The Mass |  | Vol. 3, page 53 |
| Contraception | Page 170 | Vol. 3, page 69 |
| End-of-life Issues |  | Vol. 3, page 95 |
| Church Scandals | Page 149 | Vol. 3, page 119 |
| Miracles |  | Vol. 3, page 143 |

**Homework – You and Your Small Group:**

1. Identify each of the objections that members of the group are working on.
2. Share resources and experiences.
3. Provide help and support.