



## HOW TO WIN AN ARGUMENT WITHOUT LOSING A SOUL

We recommend that you watch *How to Win an Argument Without Losing a Soul* as part of a group, and then, as a group, use this guide as an aid for reflection, discussion, and application. Begin and close your study with a prayer for the fruitfulness of the experience and discussion.

### ARGUMENTATION

1. What is an argument?
2. What do many people mistakenly believe an argument to be?
3. What's an argument that you have been involved in that was counterproductive? Why was that the case?
4. Are Internet debates generally more or less productive than face-to-face dialogue? Why/Why not?
5. What three things are necessary for a sound argument?
  - a. Clear \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. True \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Valid \_\_\_\_\_
6. Give examples of arguments that lack one or more of the above necessary components.
7. What is the difference between deductive and inductive reasoning?

## LOGICAL FALLACIES

8. Give your own examples of the following fallacies:
  - a. Self-referential incoherence: a position that when applied to itself refutes itself.
  - b. Genetic fallacy: attempting to invalidate a position based on how it originated.
  - c. False dilemma (false dichotomy): falsely limiting the available options to two.
  - d. Attacking the man (ad hominem): rejecting an argument because of the one making it.
  - e. Circular reasoning (begging the question): assuming what you claim to prove.
  - f. Straw man: oversimplifying an opponent's position.
  - g. Red herring: an irrelevant distraction to an argument.
  - h. Appeal to shame (ad ignominiam): confusing the shameful of something with a valid argument against it.

## FIVE STRATEGIES FOR CONSTRUCTIVE DISCOURSE

9. Discuss how the following strategies have been, or will be, helpful when dialoging with non-Catholics.
  - a. Listen. Really listen.
  - b. Prudential evangelization.
  - c. “What would it take?”
  - d. It’s all right not to know.
  - e. Pray!
10. What other strategies for constructive discourse can you think of?

## PRAYER FOR CONVERSION

Eternal and merciful Father, I give you thanks for the gift of your divine Son who suffered, died, and rose for all mankind. I thank you also for my Catholic Faith and ask your help that I may grow in fidelity by prayer, by works of charity and penance, by reflection on your word, and by regular participation in the sacraments of penance and the Holy Eucharist.

You gave St. Monica a spirit of selfless love manifested in her constant prayer for the conversion of her son, Augustine. Inspired by boundless confidence in your power to move hearts, and the success of her prayer, I ask for the grace to imitate her constancy in my prayer for those who no longer share in the intimate life of your Catholic family. Grant through my prayer and witness that they may be open to the promptings of your Holy Spirit and return to loving union with your Church. Grant also that my prayer be ever hopeful and that I may never judge another, for you alone can read hearts. I ask this through Christ, our Lord.

St. Alban, pray for us.

Amen.