

Sacred Listening

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FUTURE OF FAITH 

Sacred Tools for Courageous Connection



Welcome!

Question: Think of a time that
someone listened to you that made a
difference in your life.

The reality...

(I'm going to say some things that may make you feel discouraged...don't despair!)

Ministry now is...different

But There Is Hope!

In our own study, over 78% of teenagers have high levels of trust for people they know personally and correspondingly low levels of trust for large organizations (16%) and their leaders (27%).

Listening Changes Everything





So, let's listen... ■ ■ ■

What is Sacred Listening?



90% of teenagers agreed that when someone takes the time to listen to them attentively, it makes them more likely to engage with that person in meaningful conversations in the future.

77% agreed that when someone listens without judgment, the teenager feels more connected to that person

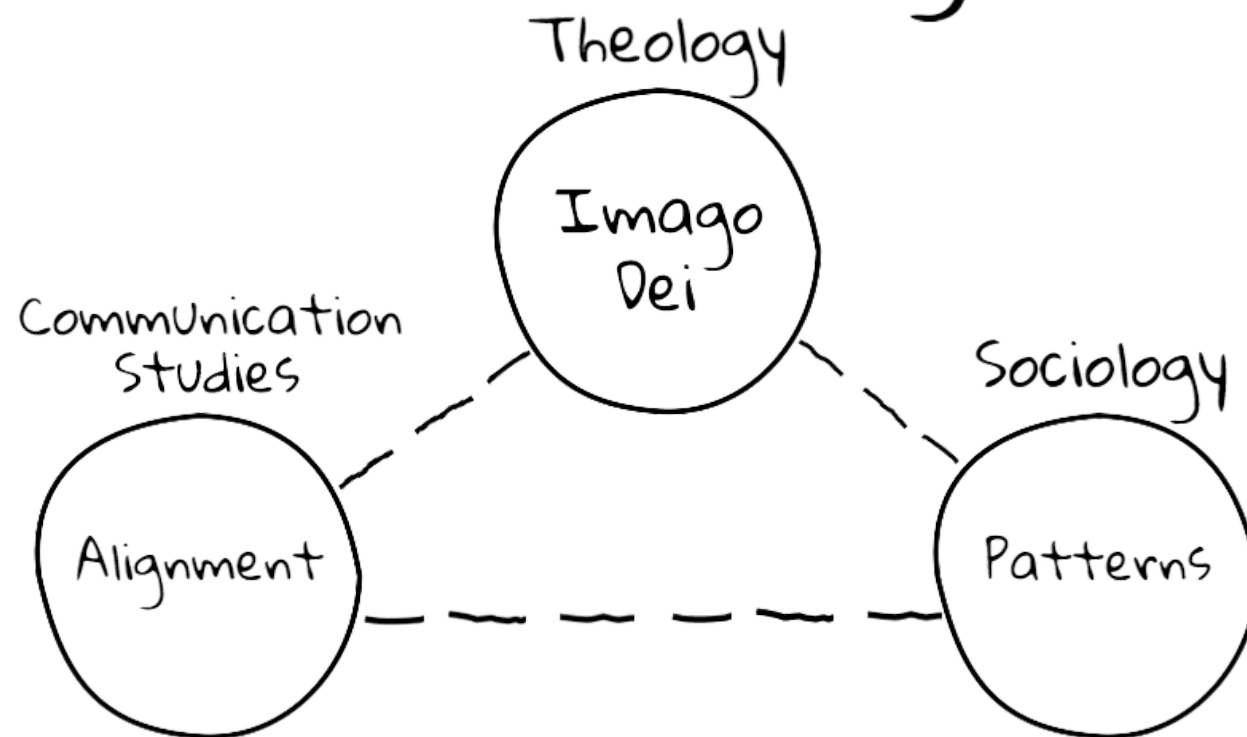
77% indicated that being listened to helps them process spiritual challenges like doubt, disillusionment, and grief

75% said that when they feel listened to in a conversation about faith or spirituality, it makes them more likely to be open about those topics in the future

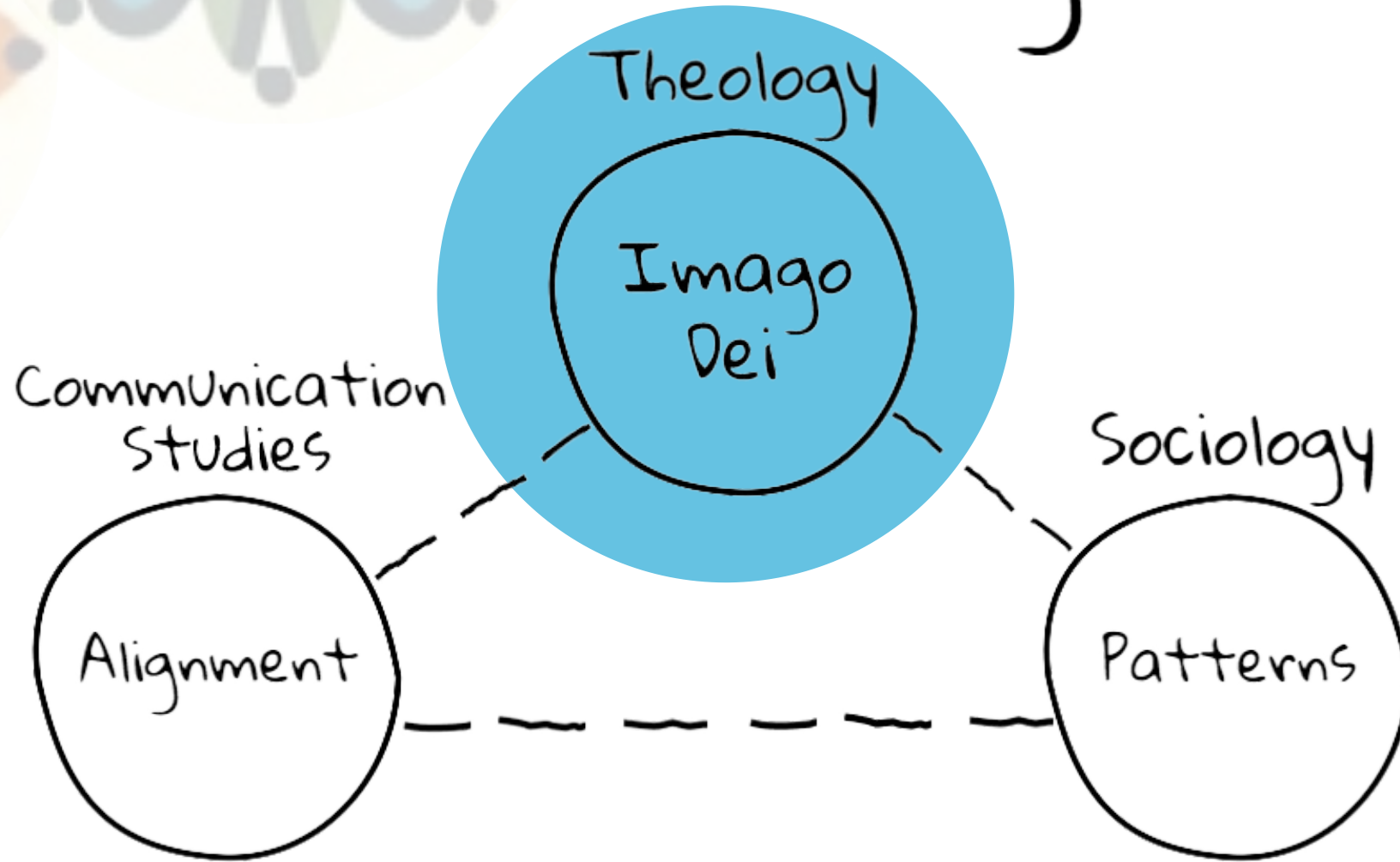
66% agree that being heard deepens their faith

What is Sacred Listening?

Sacred Listening Theory



Sacred Listening Theory

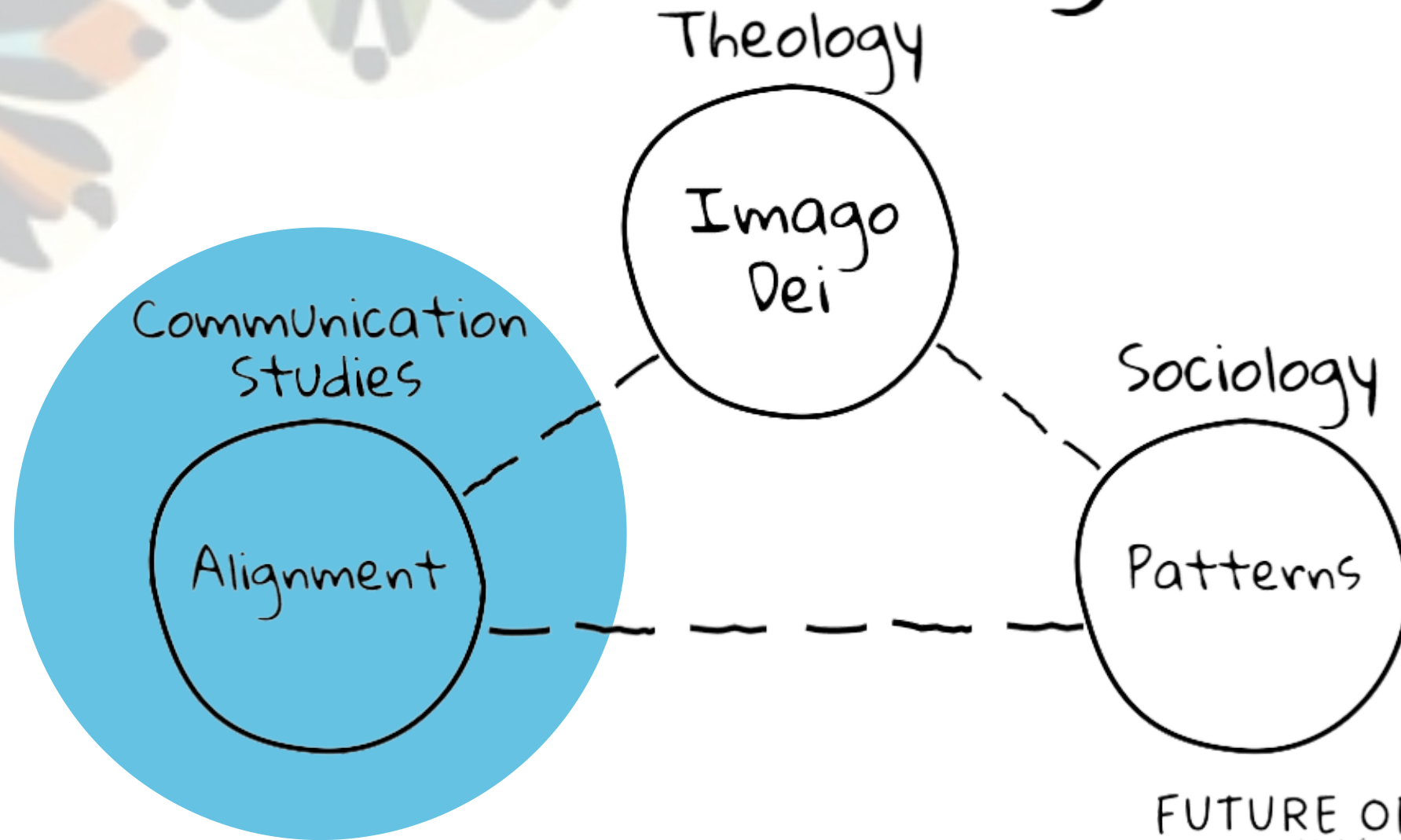




Imago Dei

Feel and foster sacred
moments with people in
everyday interactions.

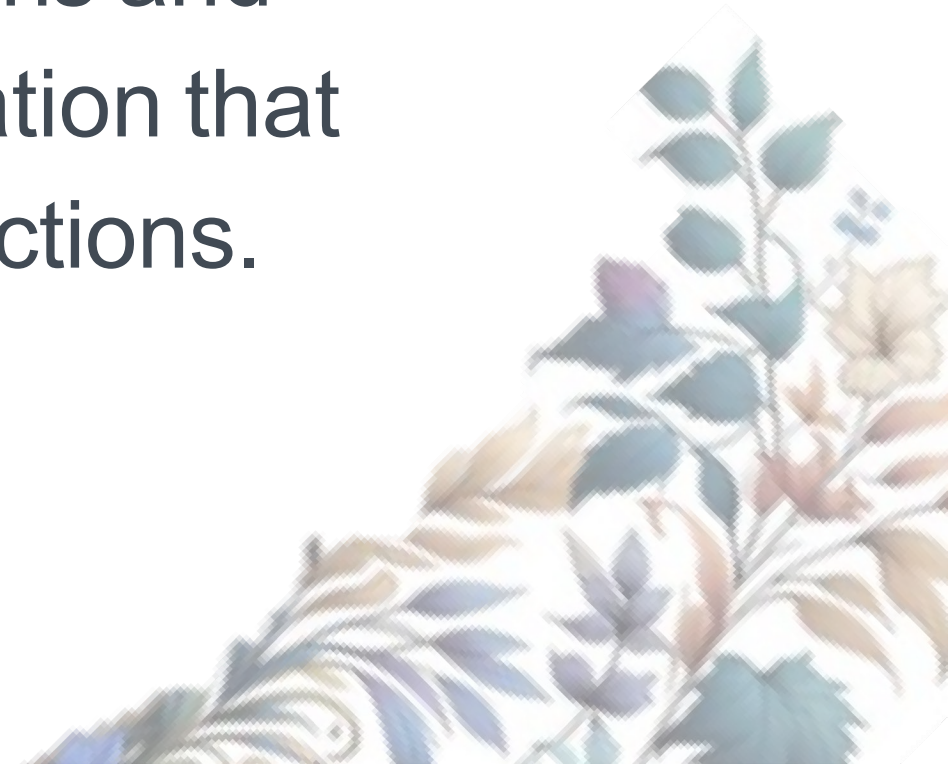
Sacred Listening Theory



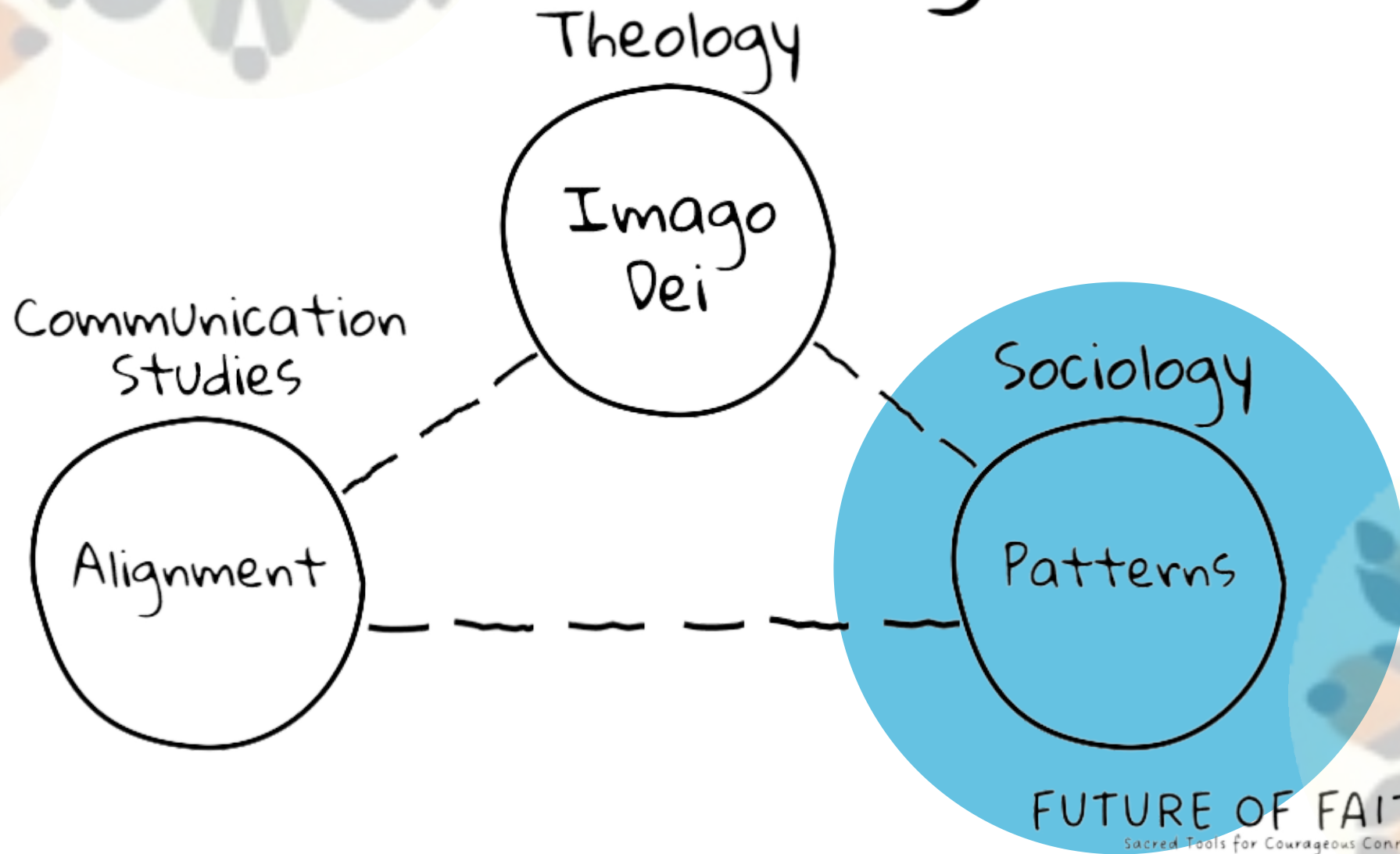


Alignment

Ask meaningful questions and
gather important information that
leads to deeper connections.



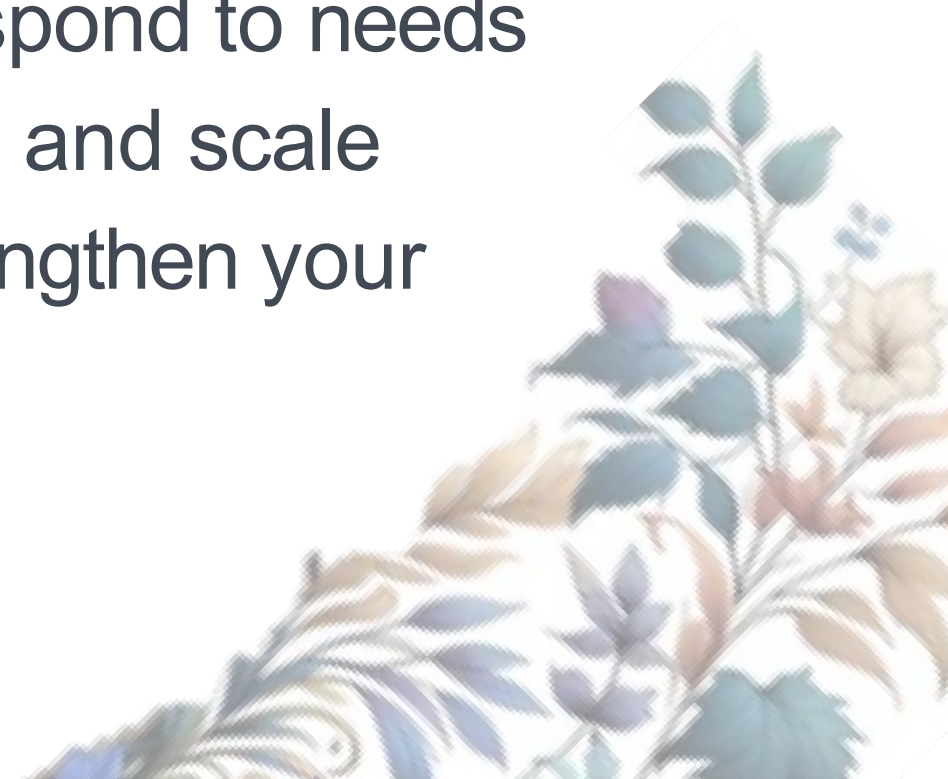
Sacred Listening Theory





Pattern Recognition

Recognize patterns in what people are experiencing so that you can respond to needs in a timely and relevant way and scale relationships to build and strengthen your community.



What is Sacred Listening?

The Process dedicated to
intentional, genuine curiosity
and a commitment to learn,
show-up, and follow-up



Phase 1: Intentions (Imago Dei)

Everyone is sacred. Create a sacred setting.

- Establish a Sacred Space
- Set the Tone
- Engage Through Rituals



Phase 2: Ask and Record (Alignment)

Pay attention, be curious, be empathetic.

- Alignment
- Ask Great Questions
- Write it Down



Phase 3: Explore and Follow-up (Pattern Recognition)

Discover patterns, plan for the future, scale relationships.

- Look Back and Learn
- Keep in Touch
- Spread the Word



Let's Try it!

Learning to Listen

Phase 1: Intentions (Imago Dei)

1.INTENTIONS

01

ESTABLISH A SACRED SPACE

The people sitting around you are sacred. The space you are creating together is sacred. Sacred Listening begins by recognizing that the interactions you are having with others are powerful, meaningful, and divine. Sacred Listening starts by setting a very intentional, respectful, and empathetic tone for the session that facilitates a deep and meaningful engagement.



1.INTENTIONS

02

SET THE TONE

As we dive into this core part of the activity, we're going to explore the terrain of your relationships and spirituality through some simple shapes and words. But don't let the simplicity fool you; these circles, squares, and triangles are going to tell us a lot about who's central in your lives, and why. You will draw shapes to represent the people you engage with daily, trust deeply, and talk to about your faith. A few additional markers and text will provide context about your spiritual habits and wishes. This is an introspective journey mapped out on a notecard. By the end of it, we'll have a mini-blueprint of your social and spiritual world, which we'll later discuss, and find meaningful paths to enrich.

1.INTENTIONS

03

ENGAGE THROUGH RITUALS

Read the following poem out loud:

The listener's path, a journey so profound,
Where words are felt, and meanings found.
A trail of echoes, a track of sounds,
In listening, the soul abounds.

Space for reflection:



Phase 2: Ask and Record (Alignment)

2.ASK AND RECORD

01

ALIGNMENT

This activity is built to have a low barrier to entry and offer ways for the people around you to share their story through multiple modalities. Alignment means that we try to offer various ways of connecting and gathering information that isn't limited to just the privileged

2.ASK AND RECORD

02

ASK GREAT QUESTIONS

Questions signify interest and attention. Genuine curiosity aligns people to one another, leading to inclusive dialogue. But inquiry is not always enough to lead to connection. Writing down what others share actively engages you, demonstrating that you are committed to understanding and remembering what they share. It may seem counterintuitive to take notes while someone is sharing, but it is crucial to knowing them more deeply.

2.ASK AND RECORD

INSTRUCTION ON DRAWING SHAPES

Give these prompts:

1. Circle: Draw a circle for every person you talk to most days. Put the person's initials inside the circle.
2. Square: Draw a square for each person you trust with your secrets. If someone is already a circle, put the square around the circle. Again, put their initials inside the shape if you haven't already done so.
3. Triangle: Draw a triangle for every person you talk to about your faith life. Same rules apply —surround existing shapes if needed. Again, put their initials inside the shape if you haven't already done so.

NUMERIC AND TEXTUAL PROMPTS

1. Bottom Right Corner: Write the number of these people who are in your immediate family.
2. Bottom Left Corner: Write the number of times you go to church or another religious service per month.
3. Top Right Corner: Write how many times per week you have conversations about faith.
4. Top Left Corner: Place an "X" if you wish you had more conversations about faith.

2.ASK AND RECORD

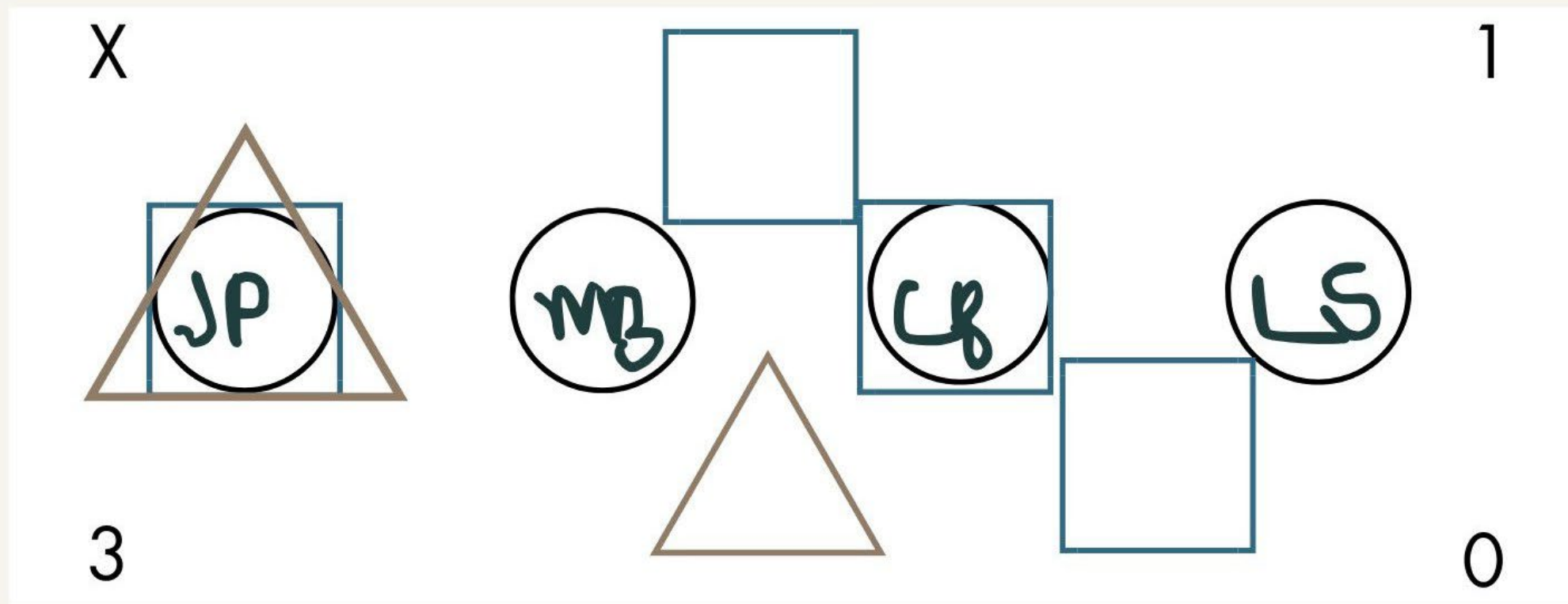
FLIP THE CARD

On the back of the card, have them write down a conversation topic you might like to have about faith, or a type of discussion you'd like to have with an adult about faith. Place your own initials in the bottom right corner.

WRITE YOUR STORY

Spend a few minutes thinking about what you've recorded. On the following page, write down notes, thoughts, salient things, memories, etc. about the story of the relationship map in front of you. Be prepared to share a little about this story.

NOTE CARD DIAGRAM-FRONT EXAMPLE



2.ASK AND RECORD

03

REFLECT ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP MAP'S STORY

How did the activity make you feel? What did you learn about your world of relationships? What memories come up? What feels important, salient, or surprising?

In the lines below, capture your observations, your own feelings, and things that came up so far.

2.ASK AND RECORD

03

PAIR AND SHARE - REFLECTIONS

What makes you trust this person?

How has this person supported your spiritual growth?

How did you feel mapping these relationships?

Were there any surprises in who you trust?"

Record notes and themes as they talk, noting things that seem important to them.

2.ASK AND RECORD

03

WRITE IT DOWN

Write down any similarities you have with your cards.

Write down themes or words that stand out to you as you share with each other.

Write down things that seem important to the person you're talking to.

Phase 3: Explore and Follow-up (Pattern Recognition)

3. EXPLORE AND FOLLOW-UP

01

LOOK BACK AND LEARN

Review your notes, highlighting recurring themes such as shared traits (e.g., reliability, empathy) or trust-building moments (e.g., times of crisis).

PATTERNS

Look at your map next to your partner's map. Write down similarities.

Shapes:


Numbers:

Text:



3. EXPLORE AND FOLLOW-UP

Look at your notes from the stories you told each other. Write down words you have in common. Also note qualities that matter to them, actions they took, things that surprised them.



A decorative vertical bar on the left side of the page, featuring a series of colorful icons. From top to bottom, the icons include: a snowflake-like floral design, a circular mandala with a cross, a circular mandala with dots, a stylized plant with leaves, a circular mandala with a cross, a stylized plant with leaves, a circular mandala with a cross, a stylized plant with leaves, a circular mandala with a cross, and a stylized plant with leaves. The icons are arranged in a vertical column, with some overlapping.

3. EXPLORE AND FOLLOW-UP

PATTERNS

Write down how this helps you understand the person in front of you. Do your similarities help you empathize or feel more connected to them?

Write down two follow up questions or things you're curious about the other person.

3. EXPLORE AND FOLLOW-UP

02

KEEP IN TOUCH

For the purposes of this activity, write down one idea you have for following up with the person you've shared with during this activity. What is just one follow-up action. Make it specific and intentional.


If you plan to connect, ask permission for how they like to be listened to in the future- text? Email? Social? Call?

3. EXPLORE AND FOLLOW-UP

03

SPREAD THE WORD

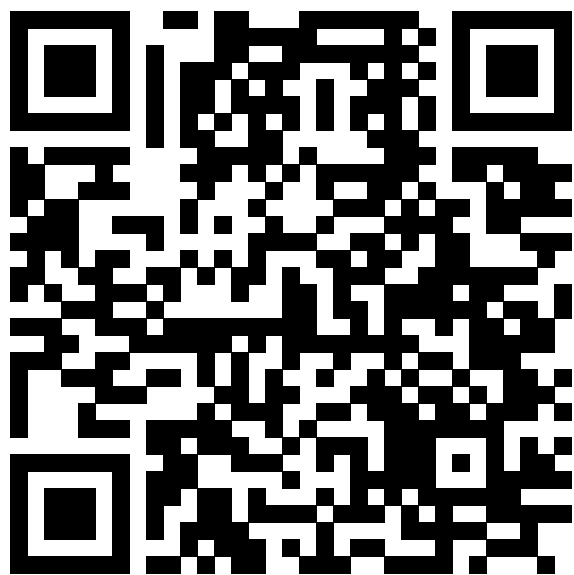
Sacred Listening works best in ministry when you can scale your relationships. You can't possibly hold all of the information about everyone on your own. While listening to others, pay attention to where you can make connections to others with them, outside of yourself.

The background of the entire image is a vibrant, stylized illustration. It features a mix of architectural elements like spires and arches, and organic shapes like leaves and flowers, all in a muted color palette of blues, greens, oranges, and greys. In the foreground, two young men are engaged in a conversation. The man on the left is seated, wearing a dark blue jacket over a grey hoodie, and is looking towards the other man. The man on the right is standing, wearing a dark navy blue zip-up jacket, and is looking back at the seated man. A large, dark blue circle is positioned on the right side of the image, containing white text.

*If you can't
show up,
follow-up.*

-Keedren Boston

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This QR code is to download slides. Takes you to The future of faith page with the drop down menu to select your presentation. Then we compile the Names and send a pdf of slides the next day or so.



THANK YOU!

We are honored that you are part of the Future of Faith community. We are committed to listening more deeply so that we can have better conversations, ask better questions, and tell better stories in our faith lives. Please visit our website for more exercises focused on different audiences and objectives. www.futureoffaith.org



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