



## **Discussion Guide for A Quick Guide to Anabaptist Values**

### **I. Introduction (pages 1-6)**

- Historical Background of the Mennonite Health Services Alliance
- A Few Words about Format and Content
- Top Ten Frequently Asked Questions about Working in an MHS Alliance Organization

This section may raise quite a few initial questions among readers like,

“Why were Mennonite and Brethren folks conscientious objectors during World War II?” or

“Why did was baptism such a big sticking point during the time of the Reformation?”

Simply let such questions emerge and provide answers to the degree you can. If you don’t know an answer, say so. It may be an area that someone in the group wants to follow up on, it may not be. Here are several questions to help direct discussion from this section:

- Have we gotten better in society at dealing with religious differences? What are some we encounter today, particularly in our community?
- Are some in the group part of Anabaptist related groups? Which one? Are others part of other denominations or religious groups that also have various “branches?”
- Have any of the participants, as part of your organization, encountered a sense of their being spoken or unspoken “cultural assumptions?” What have they been?

### **II. Who Are the Anabaptists? (pages 7-10)**

- Top Ten U.S. Anabaptist Denominations
- Top Ten Places in the United States Where Anabaptists Live
- Top Ten Places in the World Where Anabaptists Live
- Top Ten Groups Most Frequently Confused with Anabaptists

Unlike the first section, this section will likely raise very few questions. However, here are a couple of items is you want to generate at least a bit of discussion.

- Is your family or faith community more heavily distributed in certain parts of the country or of a region?
- Were there any things that surprised you about where Anabaptists live?
- Have you ever confused Anabaptist or Mennonite with another group? Have you ever done that in some way with other groups?

### **III. Anabaptist History and Theology (pages 11-21)**

- Top Ten Anabaptist Theological Beliefs Shared with Other Christians
- Top Ten Beliefs Most Likely to Set Anabaptists Apart from Other Christians
- Top Ten Historical Dates That Anabaptists Tend to Remember
- Top Ten Anabaptist Biblical Texts
- Top Ten Words That Anabaptists Use to Describe Peace
- Top Ten Ways That Anabaptists Are Inconsistent
- Top Ten Things That Tend to Make Anabaptists Proud

There are lots of places to go with this section. Here are a few suggestions:

- How many of our denominational or religious traditions agree on some things and disagree on others. How do we choose to affirm the things we share in common? How can we be different and even disagree while respecting each other?
- What do we find challenging in Anabaptism? What do we find challenging from other denominational and faith traditions?
- What does this discussion teach us about how we want to treat each other in our work environment?

### **IV. Anabaptist Churches and Ministries (pages 22-24)**

- Top Ten Ways to Know if You Are in an Anabaptist Congregation
- Top Ten Anabaptist Worship Practices
- Top Ten Types of Anabaptist Service Organizations in the United States

Once again this section can facilitate a number of different discussions, but here are a couple of possibilities:

- What are the Anabaptist congregations in the region where your organization is located? What seem to be some of their traditions and practices?
- If you attend church or have a particular faith tradition, have you ever thought about how your church is designed or its traditions? What do these things tell you about what is important in your particular faith community?
- Are you aware of other Anabaptist-related service organizations in your community? Can you think of service organizations in your community or elsewhere that grow out of other denominations and faith communities?
- How important a role do churches and service organizations play in your community? What do they contribute?
- How does this discussion impact how you think about your work and/or association with this particular organization?

### **V. The Human Face of the Anabaptists (pages 25-30)**

- Top Ten Stereotypes Anabaptists have of Non-Anabaptists
- Top Ten Stereotypes of Anabaptists
- Top Ten Anabaptist Heroes
- Top Ten Changes Among Anabaptists in the Past Twenty-Five Years

This section is both playful and serious. You might pose some of the following questions:

- What stereotypes have you carried, if any, of Anabaptists?
- Are there stereotypes from your own background that you think people might have about you?
- Who are heroes in your own life or from your background? Why do you consider them heroes?
- What changes have you observed in your religious background? Are these changes for the better in your opinion?
- How can we work at breaking down our stereotypes of each other in our organization?

## **VI. Connecting Anabaptist Themes and MHS Alliance Organizations (pages 31-34)**

- Top Ten Reasons Why You Should Work in an MHS Alliance Organization
- Top Ten Anabaptist Values That Have Special Relevancy for MHS Alliance Organizations
- Top Ten Ways to Integrate Anabaptist Values into Your MHS Alliance Organizations

This section hopes to connect values to the workplace. These questions might help:

- Do you feel the organization you are associated with reflects a positive work environment and does have people who want, in ways great or small, to make the world a better place? If so, what do you think makes it that way? If not, what might help? How might you contribute to a positive work environment?
- Are there ways you see the values listed on page 32 active in our organization?
- Does our organization practice some of the ways of integrating Anabaptist values listed on page 34? Are these good things for us to be doing?

## **VII. Conclusion and Invitation (pages 35-38)**

- Your Role in an MHS Alliance Organization
- Top Ten Services Provided by MHS Alliance

This section provides an invitation for people to bring to the organization the unique gifts of their own background and tells them a bit more about MHS Alliance. You might use this section to talk with participants about your organizations history and affiliation with MHS Alliance. Also use it as a place to talk about the MHS Alliance mission, vision and values and how those relate to ones your organization has adopted.

Ask participants what has stood out to them as they read the booklet, and how they see themselves and their background contributing to your organization.

## **VIII. To Learn More about the Anabaptists (pages 39-40)**

- Top Ten Places to Learn More about Anabaptists on the Web
- Top Ten Books to Learn More about Anabaptists

If you have participants or readers of the booklet who want to know more about Anabaptists refer them to this section.

If, as your group discusses this booklet, there are questions or methods of discussion you think would be helpful to include or add to this Study Guide, please feel free to send those thoughts and ideas to Tim Stair at MHS Alliance by [tim@mhsonline.org](mailto:tim@mhsonline.org). This study guide will continue to be improved by your thoughts and contributions.

To order copies of A Quick Guide to Anabaptist Values and The Quickest Ever DVD Guide to Anabaptists and Their Values, contact [Deloris@mhsonline.org](mailto:Deloris@mhsonline.org)