



## INTRODUCING PHOTOVOICE

*“The PhotoVoice experience helped me develop my attention to details and my ability to capture scenes that I found engaging. It awoke some of the artistic side in me. I saw the very core of what the photograph was meant to be when it was invented—capturing a moment that will never repeat.”*

*—Gustavo Santos*

*“While we all have different communities, most of us could relate in some way or another to the stories shared behind each photo. Talking about challenges we all share highlighted the different ways that we react to said situations as well as the emotions that come up as a result of them.”*

*—Haley Stocks (UVA’22)*



### What's in your pocket?

More than 97% of Americans have a mobile phone. We use their incredible photographic capabilities to capture who we are, where we go, and what we care about. Could we be holding a powerful key that unlocks authentic understanding with others?

Where social media promises a feeling of connection yet fails to deliver the tangibility of true relationship, the new conversation model called **PhotoVoice** seeks to forge – through practical, simple tools – real, deep communication.

**PhotoVoice is an art-based approach to interpersonal understanding that has participant photography at its core.** Designed by national dialogue consultants Essential Partners, PhotoVoice is a fresh expression of dialogue that invites participants to share, through amateur photographs, the most important facets of themselves and their communities.

### A Fresh Dialogue Model

**Theological Horizons** is a UVA-based Christian non-profit that supports believers and seekers by providing a welcoming community and opportunities for conversation around meaning and spirituality. We seek UVA and Charlottesville collaborators to share this inventive PhotoVoice dialogue model that we have found to be easy, fun, and generative.

Essential PhotoVoice gathers participants into small group facilitated conversations where they are invited to share photos in response to prompts about their lives and communities. No photography skills or special equipment are needed, beyond a simple method for taking photos (phone or camera).



## Flavors of PhotoVoice

PhotoVoice is a flexible approach to dialogue with limitless variations. A project might look like:

- **An icebreaker:** Folks at a staff meeting are invited to share one recent photo of a memorable experience, event or exchange, taking a moment to talk about their photo. A prompt might be: "What does relaxation look like to you?" "What is one place you go every day?" "Share a photo of something sustaining you right now."
- **One hour-long session:** A group of First Years are invited to bring photographs that answer a prompt like, "What are some things from home (material objects or immaterial things such as practices or rituals) that you are excited to bring with you to UVA? What are some things you would like to leave at home?" They sit in small groups and share their photos for 5-10 minutes each, and then are invited to notice similarities and differences between what they and their other group members shared.
- **Three (or more) sessions over time:** Small groups of UVA staff and students are invited to take pictures about space and place. Each session they offer pictures in response to prompts. Session One: "What is something symbolic of your community?" Session Two: "Where is your community flourishing?" Session Three: "Where is your community experiencing need?" Participants share about their photographs, ask each other questions, and notice where their responses correlate or differ. Select photos may be presented as a final exhibition, photobook, or online gallery.

## Collaborate with us!

To support fruitful personal connections across UVA and Charlottesville, **Theological Horizons** has hosted eight Deeper Dialogues@UVA events over the past three years, guided by trainings, program design, and coaching from Essential Partners.

Theological Horizons is now honored to offer **Essential PhotoVoice**, the new initiative of **Essential Partners** in collaboration with **Interfaith Photovoice** and with the support of the **Fetzer Institute**.

## How may Theological Horizons offer PhotoVoice to you or your group on Grounds?

Do you have an idea of where the PhotoVoice model of conversation might be useful? Do you have a physical space that you might like to populate with photographs? Contact us!

Visit <https://www.theologicalhorizons.org/dialogues> or email [mary-dryden@theologicalhorizons.org](mailto:mary-dryden@theologicalhorizons.org).

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