

The Compass

a tool for disciplers



Equipping Believers for Ministry

Relational Evangelism

Conversation On the Journey

What do you think of when you hear the word “evangelism?” If you ask five people that question I’m sure you’ll get five different answers. And then you can ask the question, “How do you feel when you hear the word ‘evangelism?’” As I’ve asked that question, I’ve found that most people have a lot of misconceptions about what evangelism is. Visions of televangelists perhaps come to your mind, or “Bible Thumpers” or people wearing obnoxious trinkets and t-shirts. Often we think that evangelism is someone else’s responsibility or that it’s an awkward conversation with a stranger, or perhaps trying to get someone’s attention with a fish on your car. Evangelism is simply sharing with the people around you about the most important thing in your life - Christ. The reality is, you can share Christ with your friends. Let’s talk about how to do that.

What is God’s role in evangelism? And what is your role? First, God’s role... take a look with your disciple at John 16:7-11. Who is doing the work in this passage? God is, through His Holy Spirit. So then what is our role? It is two-fold. One, prayer: we need to ask God to do what only He can do - change friends’ hearts. Second, we need to be available. Take a look at 2 Corinthians 5:20a and 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. Our *availability* is more important than our *ability*. God is going to make His appeal through us. We must simply be His faithful ambassadors. Ask your disciple how these passages will impact the way he shares his faith.

So, what are some practical ways that we can be available, faithful ambassadors for Christ? We can befriend non-Christians; we can deepen those friendships; and we can be spiritually intentional in those friendships. But, beware, this is not a three-step process: we’re not saying “*first*, you befriend non-Christians, and *then* you deepen the friendship, and *finally* you talk about Christ after you reached a particular depth.” What we are talking about is that all three aspects are happening all at the same time. You can include spiritual conversation into the beginning stages of a friendship, because, after all, that’s who you are - you’re a Christian, you are spiritual. We’ll take a closer look at each of the three aspects.

Befriending Non-Christians

Have your disciple make a list of ten friends that aren’t Christians. Often what you’ll find is that many Christians today don’t have many non-Christian friends. We tend to bubble ourselves (if that’s a word) and just hang out with our

This Week’s Excursion

This lesson is designed to help your disciple learn how to share Christ in a loving, relational way with the people he interacts with everyday. He will become more effective in his personal ministry as you talk about God’s role and his role in evangelism, some misconceptions of evangelism, as well as how to befriend non-Christians, deepen friendships with non-Christians, and be spiritually intentional with those friends.



comfortable Christian friends. Unfortunately, we won't be very effective in evangelism if we continue on that path. The greatest impact you can make will be with people that know you, like you, trust you. So what are some practical ways you can befriend non-Christians? First of all, pray. (Again, we're asking God to do what only He can do). Secondly, encourage your disciple to put himself in places, settings, situations where he can connect with non-Christians. Perhaps at work, a coffee shop, a fitness center, or his neighborhood would be good places to meet some non-Christians. Ask your disciple, how will you make a friend this week? Write out a practical step (maybe something very simple like "introducing yourself"). Brainstorm with your disciple some easy ways to befriend some non-Christians this week.

Deepening Friendships

At this point it's good to remind yourself and your disciple that people are not your projects. Don't share your faith for the sake of your personal ministry. We get to share our faith for God's glory - out of love for Him and love for people. If we don't share our faith out of love then we'll sound like a bunch of noise (1 Corinthians 13:1). But moving on, ask your disciple to take a look at his list of ten people again: are any of those friends listed meaningful friendships or are they simply acquaintances? What are some practical ways to deepen those friendships? Consider the words time, talk, and care. Spend time with those friends, talk to them about issues more significant than the weather or what they had for dinner last night, and care about them.

Time: ask your disciple what he likes to do or what he's involved in. Are there any friends on his list that like to do those things too? Then wouldn't it be great if they did those things together? Does he like to go to movies? Eat? Work out? Perhaps he could plan an outing with his family and his friend's family...things like going to a park together, having a cookout, throwing a party together, or going to a baseball game. Another great way to spend time with non-Christians is to serve them. Ask your disciple in what ways he could serve some of the friends on his list. Help rake leaves, shovel snow, trim hedges, or mow the lawn? Take dessert to a new neighbor? Bring dinner to a friend that had a birthday, had a baby, or experienced a death in the family? Whatever the mutual interest is, encourage your disciple to spend time cultivating that interest.

Talk: seek to move conversation with your friend from the head/surfacey level to the heart. Asking good questions is a great way to do that. Instead of asking him his plans for the weekend, ask him his plans for the future. Search Ministries (www.searchministries.org) talks about opening doors of deeper conversation:

Door #1 General Conversation

Check Doorknobs: Ask and share on the basic: name, family, occupation, where they live now, where they were raised, hobbies, etc. **Keys:** Ask questions. Listen. **Goal:** To establish common ground.

Next Steps

Challenge your disciple to make his list of ten non-Christian friends. Then challenge him to follow through on his action points in each area of relational evangelism... take steps to build some friendships, deepen those friendships, and be spiritually intentional in those friendships. Pray specifically for each of those action points.



Door #2 Personal Conversation

Check Doorknobs: Questions about their background. Questions and statements related to feelings. “That must have been a really frustrating time in your life.” “You must have felt really down after that.” “Would you consider that to be one of the more difficult experiences in your life?” *Keys:* Practice healthy self-disclosure. Listen. *Goal:* To communicate care, to get to know them better, and to establish trust. *Now care:* find out what matters to your non-Christian friend and show him that, because you care about him, it matters to you too. Maybe he likes a certain kind of music, or is crazy about a particular sports team. Maybe he competes or performs in some activity. It could even be something that you think is stupid or really unspiritual - but if he cares about it then you communicate care by caring about it too.

So ask your disciple what the next step is for him this week to take a friendship deeper. *Time:* what could you do together? *Talk:* What could you talk about? *Care:* How could you show you care? Brainstorm some easy ways you can include time, talk, and care in your everyday lives.

Being Spiritually Intentional

What is spiritual intentionality? It just means talking about spiritual things in conversation on purpose, for a purpose. Have your disciple pull out his handy-dandy list of ten friends again. Ask him to look at the list and figure out if any of those friendships have a spiritual element to them. Here’s the crazy truth: asking a spiritual question of your friend is a great way to get into a spiritual conversation. Really, it’s true. If you’re not sure how to do that, simply ask your friend, “What do you believe about spiritual things?” It may feel a bit awkward, but not at all as awkward as not talking about the most important aspect of your life. Let’s look at two other doors...

Door #3 Spiritual Conversation

Check Doorknobs: Sharing an element of your own religious background or personal testimony. Questions related to religion, for example: “What do you believe about spiritual things?” or “I guess I don’t know much about your religious background. Were you raised in a religious home?” *Keys:* Ask questions. Listen. *Goal:* To communicate care, to get to know them better, and to understand a person’s spiritual interests and beliefs.

Door #4 Gospel Presentation

Check Doorknobs: Transitional questions and statements, for example: “Do you sense that you are moving toward a personal relationship with God?” “Is there something keeping you from placing your faith in Christ?” “Do you know how to enter into a personal relationship with Christ?” “Have you come to a place in your own life where you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven? On a scale of one to ten, how sure are you?” “Let’s assume there is a God, a life after this life, and a heaven. If you were to die tonight and stand

Side Trails

Becoming a Contagious Christian. Bill Hybels. Zondervan

Finding Common Ground. Tim Downs. Moody Press.

How to Reach Secular People. George G. Hunter, III. Abingdon Press.

Why I Believe. James Kennedy. Thomas Nelson Publishers.

I’m Glad You Asked. Kenneth Boa, Larry Moody. Cook Communications.

Order at christianbook.com



before God, and He were to say, 'Why should I let you into heaven?' What would you say?' Keys: Listen. Know a clear Gospel presentation and be ready to answer common objections. Goal: To glorify God, love your friend, and make the Gospel clear and give wise answers to key objections.

The critical thing to remember when being spiritually intentional is to not depend on self. Instead trust God to work through you. (1 Corinthians 2:4) Our interactions should be characterized by active dependence on God! Pray, pray, and pray some more. When you have the opportunity to present the Gospel then do so (and if you're not sure how to give a clear presentation of the Gospel, see the lessons on *The Four Spiritual Laws* and *Intentional Evangelism in The Compass*). Another great help in being spiritually intentional with your friends is to team up with other Christians. The most effective way to reach a non-Christian is by bringing them into a community of Believers that are really loving God and really loving each other. Discuss with your disciple some personal barriers he has to bringing up spiritual things in conversation. Ask him what steps he'll take this week of spiritual intentionality.

Summary

Evangelism doesn't have to be something awkward or contrived. It is simply talking to the people in your life about the most important aspect of your life. Build friendships with non-Christians, deepen those friendships, and be spiritually intentional in those friendships.

End

Notes to Self

The Compass is the discipleship curriculum for Campus Crusade for Christ's Campus Ministry. It was created by Centerfield Productions, the field based division of CruPress. We'd love to hear your feedback on this lesson. Please write us at centerfield@uscm.org