Lesson 2

Starting Spiritual Conversations

Learn to share Faith Stories.

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Starting Spiritual Conversations

For many of us, starting spiritual conversations is like jumping off a cliff. They are leaps of faith. The first step is the hardest. Anxiety of the landing makes you cautious or wanting to flee the scene.

For many, starting spiritual conversations is more challenging than explaining the Gospel. However, as "ambassadors" for Christ, He wants to help us!

General Principles

PRAYER
Seek God's help. He is working at drawing people to Himself. Let Him know you are willing and available.

Colossians 4:2-6 provides Biblical guidelines in preparing your heart for sharing. Seek God's help. He is working at drawing people to Himself. Let Him know you are willing and available. Colossians 4:2-6 provides Biblical guidelines in preparing your heart for sharing. Colossians 4:2-6 provides Biblical guidelines in preparing your heart for sharing. Devote yourselves to PRAYER, being WATCHFUL and THANKFUL. And pray for us too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ for which I am in chains. Pray that I may PROCLAIM it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always FULL OF GRACE seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Colossians 4:2-6

Download the Evangelism Prayer Bookmark on website.

CARE
Seek to genuinely care about others. Care about their physical, emotional and especially their spiritual needs. Ask God to help you.

Be empathetic about circumstances they are facing. Be quick to listen.

Caring about their spiritual well-being will help you be sensitive and watchful for opportunities to share your faith.

ASK QUESTIONS
Get to know others better by asking questions. Questions that show you are interested to know more about them. What interests they have. How they feel about things. What is important to them. Find out what they like to talk about.
Ask questions that "**draw them out**" and develop trust in you. Ask about how they "think" or "feel" about things. Ask questions using "what", "how", "when", etc. as they encourage more than simple "yes" or "no" responses.

Genuine caring and being interested go a long way in building **trust**. Trust that will help them be **open** to your offer to talk about spiritual matters.

**BE SENSITIVE**
Sensitive to the **Holy Spirit's promptings**. He will **guide** you in caring, asking questions and **showing** you openings to share on a spiritual level with someone.

*Learn to trust Him.*

**Share “Faith Stories”**

**Coaching Tip:**
**NOT A SALVATION TESTIMONY**
Faith stories are **different than a "salvation testimony"** where you tell what your life was like **before** you came to faith in Christ, **how** you came to faith in Christ and what your life is like **now since** you came to faith in Christ. (Faith stories are more about a specific circumstance and generally **shorter to tell**. They tend to speak to a similar circumstance or struggle of the person you are talking.) However, there are times when your salvation testimony is very appropriate to share.
For help in **Preparing to Share Your Salvation Testimony** see website.

**GOD’S HELP IN LIFE’S STRUGGLES**
Faith Stories are short "testimonials" of how God has **helped** during a **personal difficulty**; how your faith in Him has made a **positive difference** during a **struggle** in your life. They tell specific ways a **situation** was **influenced for the good because of your faith**.

**RELATE TO THE OTHER PERSON**
As you ask questions and get to know other people, often **they mention a problem**, difficult situation or **challenging circumstance** they are dealing with. And, because God is at work, it’s likely you have had or may be dealing with a **similar situation**.
However, **your faith** in God has been very **helpful** to you.
For example:
They may share about a difficult person at work. Perhaps someone you know and have had similar difficulties. However, the Lord has helped you with patience and forgiveness towards that person. You share a "Faith Story" telling how your faith in God has helped you deal with that person to have peace, be patient and be forgiving so anger doesn’t control you.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL ISSUES where your faith may have helped you:
- Difficult Relationships
- Family issues (marriage and kids)
- Work and financial challenges
- School issues
- Health problems
- Safety and security issues

EMOTIONAL ISSUES where faith in God has helped you:
- Anxiety and fear.....God’s peace
- Anger.....calm
- Abandonment and rejection.....God’s love, care and acceptance
- Bitterness.....forgiveness
- Insecurity and inferiority.....God’s love and acceptance
- Insignificance and emptiness.....purpose and meaning
- Aimlessness and restlessness.....direction and guidance
- Failure.....grace and a second chance
- Unforgiveness.....freedom of forgiving another
- Hopelessness.....hope

BE SPECIFIC
Avoid general statements and seek to share a "life experience". Talking about specific circumstances will make your story more genuine and credible. Share as much detail as you are comfortable and seems appropriate.

BRINGS GOD INTO THE CONVERSATION
Telling about your faith in God naturally brings Him into your conversation. He has become a natural part of your life. Therefore, be natural and mention how He is making a favorable difference in it.
CREATES INTEREST AND CURiosity
Sharing how you have found help often creates interest in others to hear more. If someone really wants help, they'll seek it out. If God is at work they likely will listen to how you discovered God's help for your life.

PEAK BEHIND THE CURTAIN
Now that you have brought God into your conversation, ask a follow-up question to see if God is stirring their heart to hear more. Something like:
- What's your spiritual background; do you, or have you ever gone to church?
- Have you ever heard of John 3:16, a verse in the Bible that tells how God wants to help us?

Ask PERMISSION to share:
- May I share what God desires for us to have and experience?

COACHING TIP:
ALWAYS ASK PERMISSION TO SHARE
It shows respect. Their answer will tell you if you should proceed.

Also it helps you as a witness to not have to "force it to happen".
If they say "no", take it as an indication that God would not have you share with them at this time. Thank them and silently pray for an opportunity sometime in the future.

An exercise to learn how to tell Faith Stories:
(You can use the Faith Story Guide for this.)

Look at the lists and pick out 2 or 3 issues where you've experienced God's help.
Develop several Faith Stories asking:
- What issue were you struggling with?
- Explain the situation.
- How did God make a positive difference?

Watch for issues people are dealing with where God has helped you. Share your stories.
LEADERS: SUGGESTIONS FOR LESSON 2

- Using your Leaders notes to encourage **Prayer, Caring, Asking Questions** and learning to trust the leading of the **Holy Spirit**.

- **Explain the concept of Faith Stories** and how they differ from a "salvation testimony".

- How to **listen** closely to other people and letting the Holy Spirit help you recognize areas or issues He has helped you.

- Discuss the issues listed and how God can make a difference.

- Go over the **Faith Story Guide**.

- Allow participants time to formulate a Faith Story and have them **share** it with another participant.

- Give an **assignment** to develop 2-3 more Faith Stories to engrain the concept and make them more sensitive to opportunities to use them.

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