

RELATIONSHIP WITH A WORLD

THAT NEEDS TO KNOW CHRIST

MEETING

22

step **1**

START GROUP WITH PRAYER (ACTS)

step **2**

FOLLOW UP

Evaluate how you did on last meeting's risk. If you need a reminder of what risk you pledged to take, turn back to page 120.

NAME

RYG

WHAT YOU DID

WHAT GOD DID



NAME

RYG

WHAT YOU DID

WHAT GOD DID



NAME

RYG

WHAT YOU DID

WHAT GOD DID



NAME

RYG

WHAT YOU DID

WHAT GOD DID



NAME

RYG

WHAT YOU DID

WHAT GOD DID



NAME

RYG

WHAT YOU DID

WHAT GOD DID





step 3

PRACTICE THE 3 CIRCLES

Break into groups of 2 or 3 and practice the 3 Circles method of sharing the gospel. Everyone needs to draw out/explain the entire process. Use the space below. Give one another feedback. Did you forget anything? Could something be clearer? It's okay to make mistakes, we are just practicing.



step 4

HAVING A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

A spiritual conversation, at a minimum, is a conversation in which you set expectations and direct it towards God. Both of these steps are important. When you start the conversation, you set the expectations by telling him/her that you plan to talk about spiritual matters. Then, you direct the conversation towards God by listening intently, responding with the truth of God's Word, and being prepared to share the gospel.

Your risk these next two weeks will be to have a spiritual conversation with someone in your Crossroad(s). Let's discuss this a little more.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Whether you are talking to a trusted friend or a complete stranger, setting the expectations up front is imperative. If you simply invite someone to lunch and then once seated begin to talk about God, that person may feel trapped and betrayed. If this happens, they will then shut down and close themselves off to anything you have to say. It's like asking an unchurched friend if they want donuts on a Sunday morning and then taking them to church to get donuts in your Bible Fellowship classroom. Some call this tactical, but really it's just being dishonest. If you are upfront and honest, they are either going to hear what you have to say or they will reject you (2 Cor 2:15-17). If you are dishonest, you run the risk of defaming the name of Christ. Since beginning the conversation is usually the hardest and most awkward part, here are some examples to get you into a spiritual conversation.

FOR A COMPLETE STRANGER:

- “Hi, my name is _____, I am with a local church and we are surveying people regarding their spiritual beliefs. Do you have time to talk?”
- “Hey, my name is _____, and today a group of us are asking people about what they believe. Do you have time to talk?”

FOR SOMEONE YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH:

- “Hey _____, my church has challenged me to ask people about their beliefs and also share my own. I'll be nice; don't worry. If you come to lunch, I'd love to buy.”
- “Hi _____, I know you have been going through a lot right now. When I fall on hard times, my faith in Jesus is what holds me together. If you would be willing, I would love to talk to you more about that.”

Notice how these prompts are clear, non-invasive, and relationship building. The gospel is invasive and offensive enough, for it requires people to accept that they are sinful and need a Savior. They are much more likely to hear what you have to say if you express the love of Christ from the beginning.

How does having a conversation like this make you feel? Why?

DIRECTING THE CONVERSATION TOWARDS GOD

There are two ways we can direct the conversation towards God. The first one doesn't require our mouths (at least at first). Your ears are your greatest tools when you evangelize. When you listen intently, you are able to respond personally with the Word of God. If someone divulges to you that they don't always see a reason to get out of bed, you can make the gospel personal by stating that your reason for getting out of bed is found in Jesus because he brought you out of darkness, gave you hope in a bright future, and gave you a mission to accomplish before heaven. Studies have shown that the more we sincerely listen to someone, the more likely they will be willing to hear what we have to say. You can't share God's truth in their context if you don't listen! So, remember: using your ears can help you share the gospel just as much as your mouth.

The second way requires you speaking God's truth in love. What I am about to say is not authoritative, but rather it is my opinion. Some people teach that in order to share the gospel with someone you have to be skilled at transitioning into spiritual matters. For instance, if your co-worker says, “I can't eat bread because I am gluten-free.” and you reply by saying, “Well, you know that in John 6:35, Jesus claims that he is the Bread of Life. You don't have to be allergic to him anymore”, you would have succeeded at making a skilled transition. Here are the problems I see with this approach. First, these transitions are 99.999% of the time awkward and forced and they discredit your relatability. Second, the conversation itself is far from personal because you spent the entire time they were talking thinking about what you were going to say next. The above is a crash course in *How to Make Someone Feel Like a Project 101*. We are taking personal risks here, not mechanical ones. The gospel is personal because Christ's love is personal. Therefore, when I am talking to someone about my Lord and Savior, it is no different than when I talk to someone about my wife or my family. In a sense, when you are engaging in a spiritual conversation you are saying, “Can I tell you about something that means

so much to me?” This marks the end of my soap box. Even if you disagree with me, I will rejoice because the silence has been broken and Christ is being proclaimed. I would much rather people hear the gospel and be offended than be unoffended and doomed. So, hear me when I say this, “The only way you can mess up is by saying nothing at all.” Philippians 1:15-18 reads:

¹⁵Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. ¹⁶The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. ¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.

Even the aggressive atheist Penn Jillette (from Penn & Teller) understands this point:

“I’ve always said that I don’t respect people who don’t proselytize. I don’t respect that at all. If you believe that there’s a heaven and a hell, and people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life, and you think that it’s not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward [...] how much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?”

Even if you were to preach Christ with evil motive, there would be more room to rejoice than if you said nothing. Be awkward. Stumble through it. Just don’t be silent. On to how to share the gospel.

A spiritual conversation does not always need to include a gospel presentation. We never want to miss out on an opportunity, but it may be better to meet a second time instead of forcing it into the conversation. This goes back to my soap box. If you demonstrate to someone that you don’t care what they have to say by not listening to them and then put the icing on the cake by telling them something that sounds “religious” to them, they are going to dislike you and Christ. If you need to share the gospel, you don’t have to force it. All it takes is this: “Hey, we are about to run out of time. I really want to tell you something that is so important to me. Do you care if I share?” If they say yes, you share your 15-Second Testimony and then you move into the 3 Circles. (This is why we have been practicing!) Transitioning from your story to God’s story requires one statement: “Let me tell you how Christ changed everything.” If they say no, then you move on. Regardless of how someone responds, you are successful. All we need to do is seek to share the gospel and trust God with the results.

What stuck out to you most about what you just read? Why?

Do you think we could listen better than we do?

Why do you think Christians can shy away from sharing the gospel?

RECAP – A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

- **Set the Expectations** – *Be upfront and honest about your intentions.*
- **Direct the Conversation towards God**
 - Listen - *Make the gospel personal.*
 - Ask to Share
 - **IF YES:**
 - Share Your Story (15-Second Testimony)
 - “Let me tell you how Christ changed everything.”
 - Share God’s Story (3 Circles).
 - **IF NO:**
 - Move on

step 5

RISK TIME

Put your discussion into practice. Record what risk you want to take as well as how and when you intend to do it.

Have a spiritual conversation with someone in your Crossroad(s).

R

NAME

WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

WHEN: _____

HOW: _____

NAME

WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

WHEN: _____

HOW: _____

NAME

WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

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HOW: _____

NAME

WHAT YOU WANT TO DO

MAKE IT MEASURABLE

WHEN: _____

HOW: _____

step **6**

EVALUATE THE CONVERSATION

After you have had your spiritual conversation, record what happened below and answer the following questions. Even if you were rejected, write down what you can below. Be prepared to share with your group during the next meeting.

Summarize the conversation:

Overall, how did the conversation go? If you shared the gospel, what was their response?

What was the hardest part of the conversation?

What more, if anything, could you have learned from the person you talked with? If you talk again, try to find out these things.

Finally, was it worth the risk? How do you feel on the other side?

step **7**

END GROUP WITH PRAYER (ACTS)

NEXT MEETING OBJECTIVES

Keep seeking out people to be in your next R3 Group.
Complete Step 6 of this meeting after your conversation.