

Conversations that Lead to Spiritual Conversations

Presentation Outline and Notes

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Introduction:

It has been stated that, “The world is a waffle and not a pancake.” I would contend that cities are waffles with sprinkles on top. There tends to be both a gathering of people groups into conclaves and at the same time an integration of other peoples who tend to stand outside the normative grouping of their people. All this to say, in cities, even though we may focus on a specific people group, let us be careful that we do not allow lost people walk pass us.

Everything that is presented in this webinar is designed to provide general principles and practices. Not everything shared will speak specifically your particular situation. However, I hope that these ideas will provide a catalyst for your own thinking and development.

Lastly, we will not have the time to move into the evangelistic options available when entering spiritual conversation. We will limit our discussion today to the process engaging people and that of moving from conversations to spiritual conversations.

I will answer as many questions as possible, however, to be fair to everyone, I want to be sure that we cover all of the prepared material.

Outline:

As a general outline we will cover three areas related to engaging people with conversations that lead to spiritual conversations.

urban perspectives

urban myths

urban practice

So let's get started.

URBAN PERSPECTIVES

* There are two questions I would like for you to think about.

- * What is the driving force behind what you do each day?
- * Do you know what to do when you wake up each day?

Conversations that lead to spiritual conversations begin with an intentional desire to enter into the life of another person. We need to be careful that we don't see our engagements as simply checking off a to do list item or simply a strategy to follow. We are attempting to provide others with an opportunity to experience a radical change in their life.

* Intentionality:

- Be intentional about making engaging people a lifestyle pattern
- Be intentional about prayer
- Be intentional to leave your residence
- Be intentional to surround yourself with lost people as often as you can
- Be intentional in seeking opportunities to enter into conversations
- Be intentional to move the conversation to a spiritual conversation

* Building trust:

Our conversations begin the process of building trust between us and those we encounter. We need to ask ourselves frequently,
"Is what I'm about to do building trust?"

NOTE: we will deal with building trust through friendship evangelism in a few moments

Here are some ways to Ways to build trust:

- Find opportunities to serve others
- Allow others to provide assistance to you
- Offer to pray for the person you are engaging
- Be open to who you are as quickly as you can (follower of Jesus Christ)
- Don't be judgmental
- Show genuine interest

Ways that hinder trust:

- Judging before knowing all the facts
- Talking more than listening
- Jumping into a "canned" presentation
- No showing genuine interest in their side of the conversation
- Not allowing others to know that you are a person of faith

* Accountability:

Few of us will be successful in this area of ministry without consistent accountability. You must find someone who will ask you challenging questions each week or at the most, every two weeks about your engagement activities. For example:

1. How many conversations did you have this week that you intentionally tried to turn to spiritual conversations?
 2. How many times did you share your testimony?
 3. How many times were you able to share the Gospel?
 4. How many times were you able to share a Bible Story?
 5. What were the responses of the people you engaged?
not interested, somewhat interested, seeker, believer
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URBAN MYTHS

Debunking urban myths related to engaging people and spiritual conversations:
The following represent some of the most common myths and biblical responses.

Myth #1

"I have to build a long term relationship with someone before I can earn the right to be heard and engage them in spiritual conversations."

Let's go ahead and address the issue of friendship evangelism. There are many who hold to the position that you must earn the right to be heard through a friendship type relationship. Although sharing the Gospel with those whom you have developed a friendship is not wrong, using this as a primary evangelistic strategy has shown minimum effectiveness.

Response

This does not match the biblical pattern of evangelism.
Limits the spread of the Gospel to the number of people you can befriend.
Can give the appearance of "bait and switch". Are you making a friend or seeking a convert.

Myth #2

"I need to be careful not to offend people."

Response

Obviously, we do not want to intentionally offend people with our words and actions. However, we need to understand that the other extreme is to never confront others with the claims of the Gospel for fear of offense. How you present who you are and what you desire to share about your faith can be done in a way that generates more conversation most of the time.

Myth #3

"I need to be sure that I can respond to any comment or question before I go out to engage people with spiritual discussions. Especially if I am an introvert."

Response

It is good to be prepared and each of us should have options of what we want to say before you go out. A key to being effective is, Practice - Practice - Practice What do we need to practice?

Conversation starters

Bridges to spiritual conversations: ways to change the direction of the discussion

How to respond to rejection

Here are some examples:

Conversation starters:

Based upon your city and people group, what do people talk about?

Asking for help or information

That's an interesting tat. What's the story of why you got it?

Bridges to spiritual conversations:

Give credit to God, " You know God never intended for it to be this way."

"Does your faith impact how you think, respond to, live, etc."

"I'm a person of faith and because of that I believe, think, respond to, etc."

"Do you know of any churches around here?"

"Have you ever heard a Christian response to your question, concern, etc?"

How to respond to rejection:

Pray and evaluate if there was something you said, something did, or some other cultural taboo that was the real offense.

Take comfort in the fact that you have been obedient and only responsible for your obedience and not the response of others.

Share with a friend or colleague and pray for that person.

URBAN PRACTICES

Practical suggestions for engaging people that lead to spiritual conversations:

1. Pray the prayers of the Apostle Paul.

Colossians 4:3 For open doors

Ephesians 6:19 For the right words to say and boldness

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 For the word to spread rapidly and protection from evil men

2. Become comfortable and confident in the simple act of initiating conversations with people whether or not you move to spiritual issues.

3. Go out with a partner whenever possible. A good biblical model. If possible, go out with someone who is extroverted or a bold witness and watch what they do.

4. Know the worldview of the person or city in order to develop a large reserve of questions and topics that others are more likely to discuss with someone they do not know.

5. Don't hesitate to insert a spiritual comment at any time during the conversation.

6. A colleague has stated:

I make sure that my schedule is not full of stuff

Two days a week I have nothing scheduled and I get lost in the city --

When I am lost, I have to ask for help

I look for God outside the church

7. Listen for open doors to respond with your faith.

I am living out my faith with God.

I am a follower of Jesus Christ.

My position on that topic is influenced by my faith in Jesus Christ.

My faith is important to me, what would you say is important to you.

Many people are happy to talk with you and sometimes will open up and share more than you might expect. But also remember, you are looking for people of peace, seekers or those interested in faith issues. Not every conversation will lead to a decision or even a spiritual conversation. But we will never find those who are ready to hear, understand, and respond if we do not begin with a simple, hello.

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