



Week One: Relational Evangelism

Adapted from Rick Richardson's book, Reimagining Evangelism

Objective

This resource attempts to break down the stereotypes of evangelism and make it a part of your everyday life and your relationships. It is designed to be a guide for someone discipling someone else, either one-to-one or in a group. There are six sections in this resource, which have been designed for six meetings, though you could easily combine sections if preferred.

I. Vision

1. What are the first things that come to mind when you think about evangelism?
 - a. Examples: salesman throwing a pitch, answering all the tough questions, saying the right "formula" to convince people, debate
 - b. We need new images: a servant, a friend, a trail guide.
2. How do you share your faith? What are your struggles?
3. What is true evangelism?
 - a. "Evangelism" in Greek means "good news."

Read Isaiah 52:6-7, 61:1-3, Mark 1:14-16, and Matthew 28:18-20.

Text Questions

1. What other scriptures tell us to spread the Good News?
2. Why do the Scriptures tell us to spread the Good News?

God is at work in new ways in our culture. Instead of having all the "right" answers, what would it be like if we were more imaginative, vulnerable, and told stories of how God has moved (and moves) in *our* lives? Because of the importance of evangelism (and how mediocre most of us are at doing it), we're going to walk through five areas that will help us all to grow in sharing the Good News. This may take a few meetings to really walk through and process with someone else.

The Overview of Evangelism

1. Do what you love with people that don't know Jesus.
2. Use your gifts.
3. Ask good questions.
4. Respond to tough questions.
5. Share your story.

**Each of these steps are designed to start the conversation with someone. You are free to personalize them to better meet the other person's needs.*

The Take-Away

We should have a biblical vision of evangelism, sharing the Good News, and begin to be freed from the stereotypes or ways it has been done in the past which have done more harm than good. Encourage your group to be excited about the opportunity to share Jesus with the world, knowing it's the best rescue plan ever enacted!

Study the Scriptures we mentioned and learn more about what the Bible says about evangelism.





Week 2: Do What You Love

“We assume evangelism is some separate activity that we do isolated from the rest of our lives. The truth is that evangelism begins naturally, by doing what we love to do.” - Rick Richardson in *Reimagining Evangelism: Participant's Guide*

While it's great to have close Christian friends, it's good to have a balance of Christian and non-Christian friends, because that's what Jesus did!

Read Mark 2:15-17.

Text Questions

1. What do you notice about Jesus?
 - a. He was around non-Christians!
 - b. We also should be around non-Christians in order to share our lives and love for God.
2. What are some things that you love to do during your free time?
3. Who are some friends that are interested in these activities (especially non-Christians)? If no one comes to mind, how can you meet non-Christians who are interested in these activities?
4. What would need to change in your schedule in order to have time to build relationships with people who don't know Jesus? Do you have time for these types of relationships right now?

The Take-Away

We should realize our God-given talents and interests are ways to reach non-Christians! Have your group brainstorm ways to develop relationships with non-Christians through activities and interests. Pray with them and encourage them not to *start* something new, but to do things they already enjoy with purpose.

Encourage everyone in the group to find an organization or activity that you enjoy and allows you to be around non-Christians. To do this, some activities (even “Christian” ones) may need to be cut out of your schedule.





Week 3: Use Your Gifts

Take time to make sure that they've made steps to "do what they love" with non-Christians.

Read Romans 12:3-8 and Ephesians 4:11-16.

Text Questions

1. What do these scriptures mean?
 - a. Often when we think of evangelism, we see it as an individual initiative. While God is concerned about what we're each doing to reach out in our own life, He also desires that we reach out together as the body of Christ.
2. What are the benefits of working together as a community versus as an individual?
3. What do you like to do, or feel that you are good at?
 - a. Take a Spiritual Gift Inventory together to find one (or a few) gifts with which you operate regularly. One can be found on the resource page xaatuva.com.
 - b. Take time to process this with your Core Group. Discuss the potential applications of their giftings.
4. Why would God give us gifts?
5. How can we foster their growth and development within us?
6. How does your Heavenly Father see you and the gifts He has given you?
 - a. He knows the gifts he has put inside us, stewards and grows them for His glory, and delights in them. Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Corinthians 12:14-20, 27, Psalm 139:13-14, 1 Samuel 16:7
 - b. He does not respond to us with disappointment or criticism but with grace and love. Romans 8:31-32, Isaiah 54:10, 1 Kings 19:5-8
 - c. He treasures and rejoices over us. Zeph 3:17, Isaiah 49:15-16, Isaiah 62:4-5, Romans 8:37-39
 - d. He is more interested in the process than the product; it's all about relationship as we're being transformed by Him. Philippians 1:6, Philippians 2:13, 2 Corinthians 3:18.
 - e. He is attentive to us. Psalm 116:2, Psalm 139:7-12, Matt 6:25-34
 - f. *(He has placed gifts inside of you and called you to be a priest, fisher of people, child of the King, and citizen of His Kingdom! He is not waiting for you to fail but is going with you.)*
7. How can your gifts be used in community, in conjunction with other believers, to show the love of God to the relational spheres around you?

The Take-Away

We should be able to see the importance of working together in evangelism, and see our unique giftings that can be used for God's purposes.

Take the "Spiritual Gift Inventory" at xaatuva.com, if you haven't already. Discuss with someone else and get feedback on how to better use your gifts within a community.





Week 4: Ask Good Questions

Take time to see how they are processing their spiritual gifts. Go over any new results of the Spiritual Gift Inventory.

One of the scariest parts of witnessing can be starting spiritual conversations. In the ancient world, as in Paul's context of Athens in **Acts 17:16-31**, one had to be convinced of which god or gods to follow, not always *if* there was a god of some kind. How many of us would love for our non-Christian friends to ask about our faith what the Athenians asked Paul: "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?" (Acts 17:19)? Many of us will not get that luxury! In our post-religious cultural context, it can feel difficult to speak with friends and loved ones about a Being they don't believe exists. We don't want to be inauthentic in bringing it up, but we know we need to be intentional, so how do we start spiritual conversations?

Application Questions

1. Is it difficult for *you* to bring up spiritual topics? Why do you think it's difficult for others?
2. What could someone say or do that makes it more comfortable for you to share your personal thoughts, emotions, or spiritual experiences with them?

Often people don't actively think about what questions they have about Christianity, so sometimes we may have to help them unpack them by **asking good questions**. Not only do we get to the source of the issues, we also get to know people better.

Here are some examples of spiritual questions you could ask others:

- Have you ever felt like you received a sign from God? What would you do if God gave you a sign?
- What is the most significant thing that has happened to you in the last month?
- What is your take on the whole God question? What do you think God is like? How has it changed since you have been in college?
- What do you think is wrong with Christians today or Christianity?
- What do you think life is about? Do you think you have a destiny?
- Have you ever had a spiritual experience? Would you like to have one?

While it may seem difficult to bring up these questions, opportunities are more common than you might think. Pray that God will give you discernment, and then begin to pay attention to where God might be moving in your friends' lives.

As you answered above about how someone else could make it more comfortable for you, ask yourself how you could make it more comfortable for a friend to share their true thoughts with you. As we will talk about next week, it is not always best to respond in debate, with logic, rebuttal, or persuasion.

The Take-Away

Hopefully you can walk away feeling equipped and excited to have spiritual conversations. With someone you are already comfortable with, begin one of these conversations with one of the aforementioned questions. See where it goes. Everything gets better with practice and experience!





Week 5: Respond to Tough Questions

Take time to ask if they had any spiritual conversations since your last meeting. Ask how they went.

Richardson addresses the need to respond to tough questions in *Reimagining Evangelism*. He says that we need to learn to respond by **rebuilding trust with people** and by **speaking truth**.

Read Colossians 4:2-6.

Text Questions

1. What does this passage say?
2. How does this apply to us?

Read John 4:4-30, 31-42.

Text Questions

1. What questions does she ask?
2. What were the trust issues underlying her questions?
3. How does Jesus respond?
4. What do you learn from His response?

Application Questions

1. When someone asks you a tough question (such as, "Why would a good God send people to hell?"), what's the inner dialogue in your head?
2. Why do you think we may be afraid of tough questions, and even wish them away?
3. Why might it be more important to identify the trust issue behind the question, rather than just answer the question as asked?

Some key things to remember when responding to a tough question:

Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit - pray for wisdom while you think of how to respond. Affirm the validity of their question. Don't respond right away with logic or try to persuade them otherwise; get good at listening! Ask them why they are asking and really listen for the answer. It may be a deeper issue than their surface level doubts. *Tough questions are often trust questions.* Address the trust question. Apologize for others' actions or the person's experience if it was a bad one. Speak truth if it's needed. If you don't know, say "I don't know." That's okay! Challenge them to give God a chance, and use Scripture if you can. Don't go by a script or by what you think you *have* to say. Remember that it's a person you're talking to, so be natural!

The Take-Away

Challenge your group (and yourself) to be more confident with answering tough questions out of their personal journey/doubt, and to be able to identify possible trust issues behind them!

Ask a trusted friend to ask you some of their tough questions about God or Christianity. Use the skills you've learned to affirm them, identify any trust issues, and, if necessary, respond in truth.





Week 6: Share Your Story

Take time to ask them how their conversations went with a friend since their last meeting, including any tough questions they were posed that they feel like they answered well, or to which they were able to say “I don’t know”.

The most important thing that you have is your story. No one can deny what has happened to you or what you experienced. Sometimes we feel like we don’t have much to share and that our lives are boring. This is not the case! To say that your story is meaningless is to say that God has done nothing in you or through you. Your “story” is the story of how God has moved in your life and no one else has the exact same one as you.

This is not just a conversion story, although it will include your conversion. It also includes the seasons or moments that you’ve experienced transformation throughout your entire walk with God. Maybe you’ve experienced a spiritual change in the way you see yourself, see God, relate to others, prioritize things in your life, etc. Think through these changes as well as times you’ve directly experienced God. Sure, you may still be a work in progress, but you’re seeing change in your life because of God’s work in you.

Generally speaking, your spiritual journey is a series of transformations. Transformation stories are all over the Bible and are *shared* with us. Why? Because they are powerful! And they show God’s grace, mercy, power, love, and discipline to shape us for His glory, our good, and the good of those around us. Like the biblical stories are shared with us, we are to share our transformative God-encounters with others.

Application Questions

1. Where do we see transformation stories in the Bible? Discuss one or two.
 - a. Examples: The apostle Peter, Saul/Paul, David.
2. What is a transformation story from your life?
3. Have you ever shared this transformation story with others? When and how?
4. How comfortable are you sharing this story with others?

Go through the “Sharing Your Story” resource on the resource page at xaatuva.com with your group.

The Take-Away

Think through other crucial transformative seasons or moments in your life, with a willingness and readiness to share them with people. Think through friends in your life who may be encouraged in their specific struggles by a specific season in your life in which God worked.

