

TEACHER TRAINING AUGUST 10 & 17:

EVANGELISM - **BRIDGE ACROSS**

FALL 2022 DISCIPLESHIP EMPHASIS SEPTEMBER 11, 18 & 25

ABF EMPHASIS HISTORY IN SEPTEMBER

2015 *Beyond Membership*: Emphasis of Tools of Discipleship

2016 *Real Life Ministries*: Emphasis of Living Circle: *DiscipleShift*

2017 *Sharpening Your Ax*: Emphasis of *Gospel-Centered Teaching* and *Saving Eutychus*

2018 *Living Circle*: Emphasis on Living Circle & Know-Be-Do, Traits, Phrase from the Stage

2019 *Power of Together*: Relational Discipleship in *The Power of Together*

2020 *Living Circle: Evangelism*: Bridges Across the Table & Generations - Dave Robinson

2021 *Tools2Excel*: Tools for Bible Study (OICAS, BlueLetter, Otter.ai, Zoom)

2022 *Evangelism - Bridge ACross* (Circles of Assurance, Commission, Distractions, Bridge+)

WEEK TWO SEPTEMBER 18

Entering the Bridge

Tools to Begin: "Tinker Toys to Avatars" to "Sometime"

Testimonies: Jill's Story • Elliot's Tools, Tales & Conviction

Too Many Distractions: Redeeming the Time Amidst Distractions

Tools to Begin

This is where we are challenged to identify the tools of communication available to us today. In our discussion with our folks, we will seek to list a number of avenues of sharing and seed-sowing that we have considered (Tinker Toy familiar) or may never have considered (Avatar), such as:

Phone/FaceTime _____

Text messages _____

Email _____

Notes/Letter _____

Clubs & Organization _____

Websites _____

MyStory.Me: Upload testimony _____

Uber _____

Starbucks _____

Sporting Events _____

Spectator _____

Twitter _____

Facebook: ask engaging questions _____

Facebook is the third largest world population behind China and India. More than 50 percent of the world's population is under 30 and more people own a mobile device than a toothbrush.

What's more, college students are said to spend an average of 3.5 hours on social media daily.

(CRU: <https://www.cru.org/content/dam/cru/store/social-media-evangelism.pdf>)

Beyond simply listing these avenues, let us take a moment to develop ideas for using each one to sow seeds of the Gospel.

Several years ago, Dave Robinson, one of our supported missionaries, introduced a tool developed by CRU for opening the spiritual conversation with someone. It is a simple concept but like anything, if we want to get better at it, requires practice. This is a tool many of our folks may have missed when we introduced it, and it's worthy of review!

“Sometime” Tool: Prep & Practice

ENTRY

First make a spiritual statement. Then ask a spiritual question.

Example: “Last weekend, I went to First Street Church. Are you currently involved in any kind of faith community?”

State your spiritual statement _____

State your spiritual question _____

“Sometime, I’d like to hear more about your spiritual journey...would you be up for that?” And during that conversation (or in a next one), ask if you can meet to hear his or her story.

Repeat this statement **verbatim**, and then ask them to meet you at _____ at _____.

ENGAGING EXPLORATION

SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND—YOUR FIRST PRIORITY

Your first priority is to simply understand your friend's experiences. Ask questions. Focus. Listen. It's that easy. There is no pressure to do or say anything. Simply listen! Put yourself in your friend's story. See what your friend sees. Feel what your friend feels. Experience your friend's life through the stories he or she is sharing.

Share who was present and what were the circumstances of when you first trusted Jesus to save you. Listen with your eyes as well as your ears. Listen with your whole body. What's a followup question from what your friend shared? _____

If you don't understand something, ask further questions. And if you disagree with what your friend is saying, your first step is to seek to understand. (This is not a time to debate. Empathy doesn't mean that you have to agree with their perspective; it means you authentically understand the person's experiences, emotions, and viewpoint.) Learning to be a good listener is one of the most important skills you can learn. Listening keeps the door open for future conversations. For your friends, the experience of feeling listened to and understood can be incredibly powerful.

Before you explore the spiritual backstories of your friends, reflect on your own! (For some helpful questions, check out “Preparing Your Personal Testimony”)

Ask God to help you; He will.

EASY APPROACH

Explore Past Experiences: Where they've been?

- What was your religious background as a child?
- What have you tried in your spiritual journey since?

Explore Present Attitudes: Where they are?

- Where are you now in your spiritual journey?
- How has your search left you feeling?

Explore Future Direction: Where they are going?

- Do you think you are moving toward God, away from God, or staying about the same?
- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your desire to know God personally?

Practice asking and answering this scale: 1 none 3 some 7 mostly 10 always

LISTENING TIPS

- Focus – Give your undivided attention. (Remember it's not about you!)
- Invite - Invite them to share more. ("Tell me more about...")
- Ask – Ask permission to go beyond. ("Can I ask you about...?")

Which of these are you best at? _____ Which do you most need to improve? _____

EXERCISES IN INTEREST

Continue to engage in your friend's story and take interest in your friend's life. Have fun, laugh together, create shared experiences.

Consider a few questions:

- How can you bless your unbelieving friend?
- How can you be praying for your friend?
- How does your friend's story connect with yours? And how does it connect with God's story?
- How can you initiate more conversations about your friend's faith journey? (Do you have unanswered questions, things you're still curious about?)
- What might be some ways you can bring your friend closer to God?
(Can you connect your friend to other Christ-followers? Is your friend willing to read a book of the Bible, like the Gospel of John, and discuss it?)
- What can you do to thoughtfully care for your friend, especially in light of his or her life and faith journey?
- What are some things you can do for fun with your friend?
- If you're really busy, how can you make time to hang out with your friend?
- If you volunteer for something, can you invite your friend to come with you?

Which question is your favorite? _____

Ask your practice partner this question _____

Isn't this what we really want? Wouldn't we love to have these kinds of conversations with friends—ones that open the door to further conversations, deepen relationships, and create space for the gospel?

Based on CRU "Sometime" tool

Sometime Survey

A - Text, email, or DM a friend this survey in your own words:

"Hey Friend! How are you? Hope all is well! I'm reaching out because my group at church is trying to do a better job listening to - and sharing with - folks about beliefs on spirituality and life. Would you sometime want to get together in-person or over video chat to share your beliefs with me? I'll have a series of simple but meaningful questions for you, and then I would love the opportunity to share with you what I have come to believe as a Christian!"

B - At your meeting, ask the following questions:

*Below is a **Sometime Survey**. Remember, this is a chance for you to listen well, so do not argue. Mostly you will not a lot and and many "whys," so you can better understand why they think the way they do — even if you disagree. How are you doing in this time of pandemic, community unrest, virtual classes, etc?*

Sometime Survey

1. What has kept you going through everything?
2. How important is spirituality in your life? And have your thoughts and feelings changed towards it since the start of the pandemic?
3. What's your perception of God?
4. Do you think it matters what we believe in as people? Please explain.
5. How do you personally form your beliefs?
6. Do you feel like people know the real you and what you truly believe? Why or why not?
7. Do you feel fully satisfied with your life? If yes, why? If not, what do you think would make you feel fully satisfied in life?
8. Christianity has a lot to say about life, what do you perceive the basic message of Christianity to be? And why?
9. Thanks so much for all that you shared. I'd love to share some of my answers to these life questions with you through something called The Gospel which means the Good News. I'd also love to hear your thoughts on it; would I be able to share with you?

C - Transition to and share the gospel!

Once you are finished asking all the questions, thank them for sharing and ask their permission if it's okay for you to share what you believe about life and faith and Christianity. They will certainly say yes, since you took the time to listen to them!

Follow Up

Make sure after your meeting, you send your friend a thank you message! Make sure they know you are open to further dialogue.

A Story and a Testimony of Gospel Going Forward

• Jill's Story

• Elliot's Tools, Tales & Conviction: Trail Ride Magazine • Personal Tracts • Post Office and Home Depot • Believing the Destiny of the Soul

Redeeming the Time Amidst Distractions

Resource – **The Insider** by Jim Petersen & Mike Shamy

1. Taking Little Initiatives

The kingdom of God advances in people's hearts as its citizens go through their daily lives living according to Christ's rule. Little initiatives are a part of their life pattern, not a silver bullet.

This idea that the kingdom advances in the course of everyday life for its citizens is implicit in several of the metaphors Jesus used to describe it. It is like yeast, salt, seeds, or the light of a candle. Yeast permeates, so does salt. Seeds germinate and light shines. Every kingdom citizen is called upon to take these little initiatives every day.

It's a lifestyle consisting of small but very significant things, in that they are contrary to the ways of our society and our religious culture.

The Power in a Greeting

And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?
Matthew 5:47

2. Praying & Responding

Jesus frequently used agricultural metaphors to describe the way people enter the kingdom. With these metaphors He communicated the idea that conversation doesn't just suddenly happen out of nothing. When it takes place it is because seed has been sown, watered and cultivated. It has had time to germinate, then harvest time comes. Understanding this truth, that evangelism is a process rather than an event is fundamental to our fruitfulness as an insider.

Sowing and reaping are different activities with different goals. Often our notion of evangelism includes little more than reaping. For many, evangelism consists of leading people into making a decision. All their efforts are oriented around an event. This notion puts all but very few beyond the reach of our witness. But when we understand that the gospel needs to grow in a person's heart before it can bear fruit, our opportunities widen significantly. Suddenly we find we have access to many, we gain patience, the kind a farmer has as he waits for his harvest to ripen.

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. Colossians 4:2

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, Ephesians 6:18-19

Personal note: we must remember that we are part of a process, some plant, some water, some cultivate, some get to reap. When it comes to prayer, we must be praying for others that God is using in this process.

3. Serving Others

Genuine serving is meeting another person's need because we are motivated by a desire to express love and gratitude to Christ for His unspeakable service to us—the motivation for why we serve others, not just to gain an opportunity to present the gospel. They will see right through it.

4. Conversing the Faith

Many are trained in an approach to evangelism that did not serve their daily life. Many compartmentalize their life into work and ministry.

Personal: our life and the gospel are to be lived out together, the gospel is not just a presentation. Our lifestyle should be an honest presentation of a gospel-life.

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. Colossians 4:5-6

To know how to answer each person' means being sensitive to the Spirit but also really paying attention (listening) to them.

We sabotage our conversations because we have picked up some bad listening habits. We are bad listeners when we feel compelled to give advice or to fix someone's problems; or escalate conversations into debates. Sometime we are not fully present in the conversation. Often a person is only listening to see when they can jump in with their own thoughts.

Paying attention really does cost us, but the payoff is often gaining insight and understanding into a person's life.