

# Relational Evangelism Guide

Most Christians fear the word *evangelism*. This resource attempts to break down the stereotypes and make evangelism a part of your every day life and your relationships. This tool is designed to be a guide for someone discipling someone else. There are six sections in this resource, which have been designed for six meetings. Although you could easily combine sections, if preferred. It would be best if you read the corresponding section before each meeting, amending it as needed.

This resource has been adapted from Rick Richardson's book, *Reimagining Evangelism*.

## I. THE VISION FOR EVANGELISM

Questions to Ask:

1. What are the first things that come to mind when you think about evangelism?
  - a) Examples: salesman throwing a pitch, answering all their tough questions, saying the right "formula" to convince people
  - b) But 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) the word "evangelism" means "good news"

Scripture:

1. Read Is 52:6-7, 61: 1-3, Mark 1:14-16, Mt 28:18-20.
  - a) What other scriptures tell us to spread the good news?
  - b) 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 our 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:

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. Feel free to personalize them to better meet the other person's needs.*

The Take Away:

This person should have a Biblical vision of evangelism, and begin to be freed from the stereotypes associated with it. He/she should be excited about the opportunity we have to reach the world for Jesus, knowing that its the best rescue plan happening on earth!

Possible Assignment:

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

## **II. 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.

Scripture:

1. Read Mk 2:15-17.
  - a) What do you notice about Jesus?
    - a) He was around non-Christians!
    - b) So we also should be around non-Christians in order to share our lives and love for Christ.

Questions to ask:

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?

Take Away:

This person should realize that his God-given talents and interests are ways to reach non-Christians. He/she should brainstorm ways to begin developing relationships with non-Christians through these activities/interests. Pray with them and encourage them not to *start* something new, but do enjoyable things with purpose.

Possible Assignment:

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

## **III. USE YOUR GIFTS**

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

Scripture:

1. Read Romans 12:3-8, Ephesians 4:11-16.
  - a) What do these scriptures mean?

Often times when we think of evangelism, we see it as an individual initiative. We ask, "What can I do to reach this person?", rather than thinking about how the larger Christian Body can reach that person. 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.

Questions to Ask:

1. What are the benefits of working together as a community versus as an individual?
2. 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 within which you operate regularly. One can be found on the resource page XAatUVA.com.
  - b) Take time to process this with your core group member. Discuss the potential applications of their giftings.
3. Why would God give us gifts?
4. How can we foster their growth and development within us?

Additional things to Discuss: What are the parallels between how our Heavenly Father receives our gifts of service for Him and His Kingdom? Below a few truths are listed for discussion. Afterwards, you should pray for one another.

- He sees the heart – He takes DELIGHT in our gifts – He's seeing the gifts, which He gave, grow and develop in us – Eph 2:8-10, 1 Cor 12:14-20, 27, Psalm 139:13-14, 1 Sam. 16:7
- In no way does He respond with criticism or disappointment – His response is always gracious, and loving – Rom 8:31-32, Isaiah 54:10, 1 Kings. 19:5-8
- He treasures and rejoices over us – Zeph 3:17, Isaiah 49:15-16, Isaiah 62:4-5, Heb 12:2, Psalm 149:4, Romans 8:35-39
- He is more interested in the process than the product (it's about relationship; we're being transformed by Him) – Phil 1:6, Phil 2:13, 2 Cor 3:18
- He is extremely attentive to us, which shows His love for us – Psalm 139, Matt 6:25-34, Psalm 121
- He's so proud of us and who we're becoming in Christ – Matt 3:16-17 (now we're in Christ, we receive the Father's affirmation through Christ), 1 John 3:1

Take away:

This person should be able to see the importance of working together as a community in evangelism, and see his/her unique giftings that should be used for that purpose.

Possible Assignment:

Take the “Spiritual Gift Inventory” on XAatUVA.com, if you haven’t already. Discuss with someone else and get feedback on how to better use your gifts within community.

## **V. 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 to friends and loved ones can be spiritual conversations. We don’t always know how to bring up spiritual topics with friends. We don’t want to be inauthentic, but we know we need to be intentional. So how do we start spiritual conversations?

Questions to Ask:

1. Why do you think it’s difficult to bring up spiritual conversations? Is it difficult for you? Why?
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?

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 this 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?
- 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.

Take Away:

This person should be willing to start spiritual conversations, and have a few ideas of how to start conversation.

Possible Assignment:

With someone who you are already comfortable with (a friend), begin a spiritual conversation with one of the above questions. See where it goes. You only get better with spiritual conversation with experience!

## **IV. 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.

Often times people don't consciously know what questions they have about Christianity. So in order to help, we 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.

Scripture:

1. Read Col 4:2-6
  - a) What does this passage say?
  - b) How does this apply to us?
  
2. Read John 4:4-30, 29-42:
  - a) What questions does she ask?
  - b) What were the trust issues underlying her questions?
  - c) How does Jesus respond?
  - d) What do you learn from His response?

Questions to Ask:

1. When someone asks you a tough questions (such as, Why would a good God send people to hell?), what's the inner dialogue saying 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 - ask them why they are asking. It may be a deeper issue than their surface level question. *Tough questions are often trust questions.*
- Address the trust question. Apologize for other's 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!

*If you'd like more examples of how to respond to tough questions (i.e. scenarios), talk to the staff about more resources.*

Take Away:

This person should be more confident with answering tough questions, and be able to identify possible trust issues behind them.

Possible Assignment:

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.

## **V. SHARE YOUR STORY**

Take time to ask them how their conversations went with a friend since their last meeting.

The most important thing that you have is your story. Your "story" is the story of how God has moved in your life. What are the things He has done in your life? Sometimes we feel like we don't have much to share and that our lives are boring. This is not the case!

Your "story" is not just a conversion story, although it will include your conversion. But it also includes the seasons or times that you've experienced transformation. Maybe you've experienced spiritual change in the way you see yourself, interact with others, prioritize things in your life, etc. Your story includes times that you've experienced or encountered God. You may still be a work in process, but you're seeing change in your life.

Overall, your spiritual journey (or your "story") is a series of transformations. These encounters are to be shared with those around you.

Questions to Ask:

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 time in your life that would be a transformation story?
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](http://XAatUVA.com).

Take Away:

This person should be able to identify transformation stories in his/her life, and be willing and able to share them with others.

Possible Assignment:

Spend time developing and sharing your story with others. Go through the "Sharing Your Story" resource on [XAatUVA.com](http://XAatUVA.com).