

The Compass

A tool for disciplers

COMMUNICATE



INITIATIVE EVANGELISM

CONVERSATION ON THE JOURNEY

Ask your disciple

To find out what perceptions they may already have about evangelism, you might begin by asking these questions.

1. What thoughts or feelings come to mind when you think about being involved in evangelism? (Fear, inadequacy, don't know what to say, what about questions I can't answer, possible rejection, etc.)
2. What past experiences have you had in sharing your faith?
3. On a scale of 1-10, how motivated are you to learn how to share Christ with others?

What does the Bible say about initiative evangelism?

Why should we go to people and offer them the Gospel? There are several very compelling reasons. I recommend that you briefly go over the first 4, and then get into depth looking at the passage for reason # 5.

1. Jesus took the initiative to come to us. Read Luke 19:10. Man does not seek after God according to Romans 3:10-12. God always has been the one pursuing us. During His life He was continually pursuing people and speaking with them about the Kingdom. Plus Jesus sent His disciples out 2 by 2 from village to village to proclaim the kingdom. (Luke 9:1-6 & Luke 10:1-11)
2. Jesus commanded us to go and take the Gospel to all peoples. Read Mark 16:15 and John 20:21. Just as the Father sent Jesus into the world to pursue people, so has He sent us.
3. The example of the apostles and the early church. As you read through the book of Acts, it is quite clear that the apostles and other leaders in the church were continually going to people and not waiting for people to come to them. Some of the many examples in Acts:

Acts 5:42 In the temple and from house to house

Acts 8:4-13 Phillip to Samaria

Acts 10 Peter to the Gentiles

Acts 13-21 Paul's 3 missionary journeys

THIS WEEK'S EXCURSION

The goal of this lesson is for your disciple to build a conviction about evangelism from the Bible, not from what our culture says, what just feels comfortable, or past experiences they may have had in evangelism. We want them to embrace the truth that we need to go to people rather than wait for people to come to us. Going to people with the Gospel is the most loving thing we can do. We also want to expose and deal with any misconceptions that they may have about what "going to people" means.

We want to hear from you! Please send your feedback on this guide to centerfield@uscm.org

INITIATIVE EVANGELISM • PG 2

MORE OF THE CONVERSATION

4. People cannot and will not hear unless we go to them. Read Rom. 10:13-15. Some people do not have an existing relationship with someone who can tell them the Gospel, both individuals here on campus and whole people groups overseas. The Gospel cannot spread relationally for some, because there is no relationship unless someone goes and establishes one.
5. God is preparing the hearts of people to hear the Good News. Some are ready and want to know, and He wants to send us to them.

Open together to Acts 8:25-40 and observe and discuss the many principles you see about initiative evangelism – look for these things.

- Phillip was already having a successful ministry where he was.
- The Lord led Phillip to a specific place .
- He finds a person of significant influence. Discuss who this person is – the first black man to hear the Gospel, treasurer in the court of the Queen.
- The eunuch’s heart is already prepared – a Jewish proselyte, reading Isaiah.
- The Spirit’s role in leading Phillip. We need to walk in the Spirit continuously and be sensitive to His leading.
- Phillip’s obedience to go up to a total stranger. Why might have this been something he could have hesitated to do?
- The need for someone to explain the Gospel to him.
- Phillip “opened his mouth” - a key principle in witnessing!
- The eunuch believes at the hearing of the Word and expresses his faith.
- The Spirit takes Phillip away, indicating that the Lord is going to take care of the eunuch’s follow up. (Usually we can follow up a person, and should, but sometimes we can’t and that is OK – the Lord will take care of them.)
- It is believed that this eunuch was the one to take the Gospel to N. Africa to begin the church there.

Let’s discuss some common myths often embraced

After looking at the Scripture, let’s now look at some common misconceptions about evangelism that are often held by believers in our culture, and discuss them in light of what we learned in the Word. Read each misconception below, one at a time, and let your disciple respond to it before you share any of the thoughts listed. Hopefully, they will process and verbalize some of these thoughts on their own.

1. If we just live a good enough life, people will come to us and ask us, and then we can share our faith with them.

Response : Of course people ought to be seeing the difference in our lives, and that should make them thirsty for what we have. But often they still don’t come to us and ask how to know Jesus, unless we bring it up. Or even if they know that the difference in our lives is because we are Christians, they often still don’t understand the Gospel and why they need Jesus or how to receive Him. We need to offer that understanding to them.

NEXT STEPS

1. Since the Bible is clear that we are to go to people, how do you think we can be doing that on campus? Are there some people groups on campus who are not being reached? Do you have a heart to reach out to any of them?
2. Who are some people in your sphere of influence that you want to initiate with? (People you already know.) Consider developing a 10 most wanted list & ask your disciple if that is something he wants to do. Join him in praying for the 10 on his list.
3. Discuss practical steps on how to reach out to the people with whom your disciple wants to share. Brainstorm ideas & offer accountability to help him take the necessary steps of faith.

SIDE TRAILS

Witnessing Without Fear. Bill Bright. New Life Publications.

Tell It Often- Tell It Well. Mark McCloskey. New Life Publications.

Order at campuscrusade.com

To further build your convictions from the Word, read through Luke or Acts and observe how Jesus and the early apostles spread the Gospel.

2. If we go to people we will turn them off.

Response: Yes, if we are obnoxious, pushy, and insensitive. But if we learn how to sensitively approach people and offer them the opportunity to interact on the Gospel, and have a dialogue if they are interested, then we won't turn them off. If we preach at people, don't listen, and don't give them a choice to interact with us, but rather force the message upon them, then they aren't too positive. But that is not initiative evangelism in the power and sensitivity of the Holy Spirit.

3. People don't want to hear the Gospel; they don't want to be bothered.

Response: True, some are not interested at all, or at this time in their lives, but there are always some who do want to hear, or want to understand more, so they can consider it later on if they are not ready to turn to Christ right then. We can trust God to lead us to the ones who are hungry now, and to lead us to ones for whom our role is going to be just to sow the seed. Plus, if our approach is dialogue and interaction, rather than preaching, most people enjoy discussing issues related to the Gospel.

4. You can't share Christ with someone until you have a relationship with them.

Response: Most importantly, the Bible doesn't teach that and we will see that in the lesson below. While having a relationship is really valuable, and often most effective, the question is: how long does it take to build a relationship and trust? A month, a year? Sometimes trust and rapport can be developed in 5 minutes. God prepares many hearts of people for us to talk with, whether or not we have a relationship. In fact, offering to rescue lost people with the Gospel is the most loving thing we can do for them. We are being selfish if we don't!

Illustrations:

If a house is on fire and someone is trapped on the 3rd floor and about to be burned to death and you are on the ground with a ladder laying there, would you say in your mind, "I really don't have enough of a relationship with that person to help them"? Of course not! People are dying and headed for Hell, and we have the "Gospel ladder" to extend to them. We are being selfish if we don't offer it, regardless of how well we know them.

Or if a person is drowning in a lake and you are on the boat with a life preserver in your hand, would you say in your mind, "I really don't have enough of a relationship with them to throw them this life preserver"? Again, of course not! Now they may refuse to use it because they think they are a strong enough swimmer, and with a little more effort they are going to make it without your help, but you would still offer them the life preserver. Love takes action and initiates to meet a serious need!

5. Initiative evangelism means street corner preaching or knocking on doors.

Response: While God uses that, and on occasion we may be involved in those forms of evangelism, 95% of the initiative we want to be doing on campus, and the rest of our lives, will involve more relational connection with people. There are many different ways to initiate; i.e., following up a contact from a dorm outreach; dorm surveys taken; a Greek, athletic, or campus wide outreach; paintball outreach; or most often, initiating with someone you already know from a club you are in, your dorm, house, or from class. Taking the initiative simply means I am going to offer them the opportunity in some loving and sensitive way to interact about the Gospel.