

Discerning Spiritual Receptivity

Participant's Handout

Purpose:

Encourage Christians to witness openly and winsomely.

Objectives :

- Discover ways to interact with people outside the Christian faith;
- Discern how receptive people are to the Gospel;
- Inspire people to re-envision God for our culture.

I. The prevailing _____ patterns in American society are relativism and pluralism.

A. Relativism means there is no objective truth, i.e. everyone can _____ as they want to.

1. With relativism the primary authority is one's own personal opinion.
2. Common expressions of relativism include:
 - a. "It all depends upon the individual."
 - b. "Whatever is right for you. . ."
 - c. "No one can tell you what is best for you."

B. Pluralism believes _____ can be seen in a variety of ways.

1. Dogmatic pluralism _____ diversity as absolute truth.
2. Descriptive pluralism recognizes and _____ uniqueness, while acknowledging God does work differently in people's lives.

II. The church has not effectively _____ relativism and pluralism.

- A. While we can _____ logically against relativism and work of the Holy Spirit dogmatic pluralism, they pose problems for the Christian.
- B. Relativists are _____ of everyone's point of view.
- C. Dogmatic pluralists are _____ that we would even attempt to suggest they or anybody need a better life.
- D. Human experience shows that _____ people in philosophical discussions brings little, if any, satisfactory results.

III. So how do we speak to our world in a way that brings life-changing results?

A. Christians may become effective by taking an _____ approach to our culture.

1. Advocacy means that we aggressively _____ our faith.
2. Christians are to put their values and beliefs into the _____ of ideas alongside all others.
3. The advocacy approach then _____ upon the Holy Spirit to drive home the truth in the hearts of people.
4. Advocacy speaks the Good News to people in our community.

IV. When Jesus came to earth, He _____ God for people.

A. People had never seen God as Jesus _____ Him.

1. Jesus _____ that God was good and loving.
2. God wanted to _____ prayer.
3. He wanted to _____ sins.

B. Jesus said He was a _____ of the Father.

1. Jesus _____ out what He said God was like.
2. He _____ His followers to be like Him.
3. Jesus told His disciples they were to _____ what His Father had sent Him to do.
4. The disciples _____ with the world what they had seen, heard and experienced (1 John 1:1-4).
5. The work of re-envisioning God is simply _____ what one has seen, heard, and experienced.

V. People are most _____ by a process of evangelism. The process includes:

- A. _____ credibility as a consistent, godly person.
- B. Making _____ with the world at the point of their interest and need.
- C. _____ in acts of compassion that convince the unbeliever of your concern.
- D. Communicating the gospel in words that _____ the grace of God and the centrality of Christ.
- E. Counseling people to _____ the Lord with their whole heart.
- F. Challenging people to enter into a _____ relationship with Christ.

VI. Effective evangelism requires those witnessing to _____ the openness of people to the Gospel.

- A. God _____ us to seek responsive people.
 1. When people do not accept us, He recommends we go on.
 2. He tells us not to cast our pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6).
 3. In other words, there are times when we should not share the Gospel.
- B. How do we know when a person is ready to _____ Christ?
 1. They first _____ you as a person.
 2. They are willing to enter into _____ conversation.
 3. They are willing to _____ to the gospel.
 4. They _____ an on-going interest in the things of God.
 5. They understand that the gospel _____ a change on their part.

Components for Making Spiritual Decisions

Presence Evangelism:	Christians continue to build their relationships with the pre-Christian, modeling Christ's love. Christian witnesses show genuine concern for prospective believers and seek ways to meet their needs.
Proclamation Evangelism	Christians share what they have seen, heard, and experienced of God. Often conversations simply turn from surface to spiritual matters. During proclamation the Christian is always listening and praying for an opportunity to share how God has or is working.
Persuasion Evangelism	Christians encourage pre-Christians to accept Christ. Christians also explain how to accept Christ and invite them into a relationship with God.

Exercise: God's Work in My Life

Identify areas where God is working in your life. Thinking about God's work in your life prepares you to share the personal side of your relationship with Christ as you identify people who will be receptive to the message.

1. Has God answered prayer? When?
2. Has God guided you in some important matter? When? How?
3. Has God blessed you with a new sense of peace, security, and freedom since you became a Christian? Write about it.
4. Has God helped you handle a difficult personal relationship? Describe the situation and how God helped.

Action Planning: Evangelism in My Life

Identify a person who does not know Christ and determine what you will do to develop or enhance your relationship with this person. As you evaluate his or her openness to the Gospel by listening to conversations, you can discern his or her level of receptivity and determine what method of evangelism will be appropriate and effective. Use the chart below to plan your actions.

Methods of Evangelism	Conversations of the Pre-Christian	The Process of Evangelism	Actions (What I will say or do.)
Presence	Sure, I believe in God. I don't know the Bible. I didn't grow up in church. I've wondered about God and the Bible. I know I ought to learn more about God. Can you answer a question for me?	Make CONTACT. Establish CREDIBILITY. Show COMPASSION.	
Proclamation	I know God loves me. The Bible says I need to accept Christ. If I get saved, I know I will need to make some changes.	COMMUNICATE the grace of God. COUNSEL people about spiritual matters.	
Persuasion	I know I should get saved. I need to get right with God. I think I'm ready to accept Christ. Will you pray with me?	CHALLENGE others to enter into a loving relationship with Christ.	