

# Discerning Spiritual Receptivity



## Instructor's Guide

Church Renewal Resource  
Evangelism Ministries USA/Canada Region  
Church of the Nazarene

# Acknowledgments

Director of Course Development - Dr. Lyle Pointer

Author of Module - Dr. Lyle Pointer

Curriculum Developer - Brenda K. Styers Brinson, M.Ed

Curriculum Re-Designer - Whitney Lett, 2012

Graphic Designer - Jackie James, 2012

Evangelism Ministries

© 1994, 2012 USA/Canada Region

Church of the Nazarene

All Rights Reserved

Permission is granted to copy this material for local church training.

No part of this material may be copied, photocopied, or reproduced in any form for the purposes of sale.

Permission to copy for local church training only.

© 1994, 2012 USA/Canada Region

Church of the Nazarene

Discerning Spiritual Receptivity

For more information go to:

**[www.missionevangelism.org](http://www.missionevangelism.org)**

## Preparation Checklist

**The following information will help you prepare to instruct this module.**

- Review the material and make notes of specific areas for special emphasis.
- Check to ensure the following materials are available:
  - PowerPoint presentations
  - Participant handout (copy as needed)
- Gather the following materials:
  - Pens and/or pencils
  - Other material you want to use
- Make copies of the participant handout
- Check the classroom for:
  - Projector
  - Audio/Visual Capabilities for relevant video
  - Sufficient number of tables and chairs for the participants
- Arrange the room so that each church team sits around an individual table and you have ample room to move among the teams.

## MODULE AT A GLANCE

The table below identifies each module section, the time allotted for each section, and a brief description of the section's objective. When you are familiar with this module, you may want to teach from this page rather than the detailed information.

SECTION	TIME	PAGE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Purpose and Objectives	5 mins.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce module, objectives, and outline.</li> </ul>
Lecture	25 mins.	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitator presents information to encourage participants to witness openly and winsomely.</li> <li>"That may be true for you..." video located at <a href="http://www.usacanadaregion.org/media-library/video/may-be-true-you">http://www.usacanadaregion.org/media-library/video/may-be-true-you</a></li> </ul>
Small Group Exercise	20 mins.	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants work in teams to identify places where God is working in their lives and determine who might be receptive to this information.</li> </ul>
Discussion	5 mins.	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants share thoughts about the information presented and insights about how the information will assist in their leadership.</li> <li>Two possible questions to start the discussion in addition to the questions during the exercise are:  What new ideas or thoughts did God reveal to you?  What new techniques will you begin using as you think about others in your church?</li> </ul>
Action Planning/Reporting	15 mins.	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants begin preparing for their homework assignment: Identify a person who does not know Christ and determine what you will do to develop a relation or enhance the relationship. Plan to share Christ to the point of this person's receptivity.</li> </ul>
Module Wrap-up	5 mins.	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close the module with your final comments regarding the topic.</li> </ul>
Total Module Time: 75 mins.			

Permission to copy for local church training only.

© 1994, 2012 USA/Canada Region

Church of the Nazarene

Discerning Spiritual Receptivity

For more information go to:

[www.missionevangelism.org](http://www.missionevangelism.org)

## Module Purpose and Objectives

### (5 Minutes)

## Notes

Distribute Participant Material

Let the participants know the material is theirs to keep and encourage them to take notes. The participant material includes:

Purpose  
Objectives  
“Fill-in-the-blanks” for the lecture  
Application exercises

*The purpose of this module is to:*

***Encourage Christians to witness openly and winsomely.***

*The objectives for this module are:*

- *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.*

## Lecture

## Notes

- The underlined text represents the blanks in the participant booklet.
- I. The prevailing **THOUGHT** patterns in American society are relativism and pluralism.
  - A. Relativism means there is no objective truth, i.e. everyone can **BELIEVE** as they want to.
    - 1. With relativism the primary authority is one's own personal opinion. For example, people no longer see the Bible as authoritative on how to live. If they see the Bible as authoritative, they pick and choose which parts of the Bible they will allow to direct their lives.
    - 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 **TRUTH** can be seen in a variety of ways.
    - 1. Dogmatic pluralism **ACCEPTS** diversity as absolute truth. To suggest someone needs to change is to be disrespectful of the other's uniqueness.
    - 2. Descriptive pluralism recognizes and **VALUES** uniqueness, while acknowledging God does work differently in people's lives.
- II. The church has not effectively **COUNTERED** relativism and pluralism.
  - A. While we can **ARGUE** logically against relativism and dogmatic pluralism, they pose problems for the Christian.

"That may be true for you..."  
video: <http://www.usacanadaregion.org/media-library/video/may-be-true-you>

- B. Relativists are **ACCEPTING** of everyone's point of view. Since they are willing to listen to our beliefs, but not willing to accept our viewpoint, we are confused about what to do next.
- C. Dogmatic pluralists are **INSULTED** that we would even attempt to suggest they or anybody need a better life. They respect our beliefs and wonder why we won't do the same for them. Again, we're not sure how to further communicate with them.
- D. Human experience shows that **ENGAGING** 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 **ADVOCACY** approach to our culture.
  1. Advocacy means that we aggressively **PROPOSE** our faith. In the political arena, advocates are people who believe their cause is "right" and they are willing to work long hours for extended periods of time to make sure all parties hear their side.
  2. Christians are to put their values and beliefs into the **MARKETPLACE** of ideas alongside all others. Not meekly, but boldly. Then we develop relationships with people so the door is always open.
  3. The advocacy approach then **RELIES** upon the Holy Spirit to drive home the truth in the hearts of people. Christians recognize they cannot "save" the unbeliever. We place our faith in the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.
  4. Advocacy speaks the Good News to people in our community.

## Lecture (cont.)

IV. When Jesus came to earth, He **RE-ENVISIONED** God for people.

A. People had never seen God as Jesus **DESCRIBED** Him.

1. Jesus **EXPLAINED** that God was good and loving.
2. God wanted to **ANSWER** prayer.
3. He wanted to **FORGIVE** sins.

B. Jesus said He was a **REFLECTION** of the Father.

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

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

- A. **ESTABLISHING** credibility as a consistent, godly person.
- B. Making **CONTACT** with the world at the point of their interest and need.
- C. **ENGAGING** in acts of compassion that convince the unbeliever of your concern.
- D. Communicating the gospel in words that **EXPLAIN** the grace of God and the centrality of Christ.



## Lecture (cont.)

- E. Counseling people to **SEEK** the Lord with their whole heart.
- F. Challenging people to enter into a **LOVING** relationship with Christ.

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

A. God **FREES** 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 **ACCEPT** Christ?

1. They first **ACCEPT** you as a person.
2. They are willing to enter into **SPIRITUAL** conversation.
3. They are willing to **LISTEN** to the gospel.
4. They **EXPRESS** an on-going interest in the things of God.
5. They understand that the gospel **REQUIRES** a change on their part.

## COMPONENTS FOR MAKING SPIRITUAL DECISIONS

### The Christian's Response to the Pre-Christian

The conversation of the pre-Christian determines the methods and processes of evangelism.

The Christian witness must listen and respond appropriately.

METHODS OF EVANGELISM	CONVERSATIONS OF THE PRE-CHRISTIAN	PROCESS OF EVANGELISM
<b>Presence Evangelism*</b>		
I try to live the life. I model Christian living. I do nice things for unsaved people.	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?	Credibility of the Christian is being established. Contact with the world. Compassion or acts of kindness are shared.
<b>Proclamation Evangelism**</b>		
I explain what Jesus means to me. I tell about the time Christ came into my life. I recount how Jesus died for everyone.	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.	Communication of the Good News. Counseling people about Spiritual matters.
<b>Persuasion Evangelism***</b>		
I ask if he is ready to accept Christ. I tell her I hope she will become a Christian soon.	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?	Challenging people to respond to God's offer of relationship.

*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.

## Small Group Exercise

**(20 MINUTES)**

The small group exercise portion of the module provides an opportunity for the teams to discuss the information presented and how it applies to their church.

*Turn to the Small Group Exercise portion of your participant booklet. In this section you will identify areas where God is working in your life. The purpose of this activity is to stimulate your thinking about God's work in your life, so that you will be ready to share the personal side of your relationship with Christ as you identify unbelievers who are receptive to your proclamation.*

Remain available during the exercise time to answer questions.

Announce to the group when five minutes remain. Again announce to the group when two minutes remain.

## Discussion

(5 Minutes)

## Notes

The discussion portion of the module provides an opportunity for people to share their thoughts about spiritual receptivity and their role in leading people to Christ.

- If you're ahead of schedule, the discussion can go a few extra minutes. However, it's easy to lose track of time so watch the clock.

Open the floor for discussion. If the group is hesitant to discuss, start with one of the questions they discussed during the exercise.

The questions were:

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/Reporting

(15 MINUTES)

This section gives the participants an opportunity to discuss their plans for using this information when they return home.

The homework assignment for this module is:

Identify a person who does not know Christ and determine what you will do to develop a relation or enhance the relationship. Plan to share Christ to the point of this person's receptivity.

*Let's take about 15 minutes to discuss how you plan to use this information. Individually complete the exercise. In your teams share how you will complete this assignment.*

## Action Planning/Reporting (cont.)

Move among the groups to answer specific questions. Listen for discussions not focused on the assignment and guide them in completing the activity. Let the groups know when there are five minutes remaining and ask them to begin to conclude their discussions.

### Module Wrap-up

**(5 MINUTES)**

This section provides an opportunity to close the module.

Ask participants to share their thoughts about the module.

Answer any questions and provide encouragement.

Close in prayer for the witness and the unbeliever.