

# Inviting the Unchurched



## **Instructor's Guide**

Church Renewal Resource

Evangelism Ministries USA/Canada Region

Church of the Nazarene



# Acknowledgments

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Vibrant Church Renewal Resource

Evangelism Ministries

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# 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 insure the following materials are available:
    - ◇ PowerPoint presentation
    - ◇ Participant booklet (copy as needed)
  - ◇ Gather the following materials:
    - ◇ Pens and/or pencils
    - ◇ Other material you want to use
  - ◇ Make copies of the following material (one for each participant):
    - ◇ Participant booklet
    - ◇ Handouts (if used with this module)
  - ◇ Check the classroom for:
    - ◇ TV/VCR (if necessary)
    - ◇ Projector
    - ◇ Chalkboard or flip chart
    - ◇ 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.

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## I. Lecture

### Notes

In order to “Invite the Unchurched,” persons of faith must create an authentic and enthusiastic mindset about their “*home church*.” In reality, unchurched people want to talk about **GOD** and wait to hear: “Would you come with me to my *home church*? Would you come with me to [an event, party, movie, etc.]?” In fact surveys report **90%** of today’s unchurched will come to church if invited by a family member or friend. Throughout this seminar mention of the unchurched also includes the “formerly” churched and spiritually **WOUNDED** (unchurched who may attend 2-3 times per year). Unchurched people are most impressed by **LOVING-KINDNESS**.<sup>1</sup>

*Leader/Student Share Time:* Share a time when you experienced a fun, exciting time [movie, store, resort, etc.] and you told a friend about it, invited him/her to join you and s/he accepted your invitation. (Reveal emotions as you tell the story.) Ask if anyone wants to share a time.

**Invitation Insights.** *People really want to talk about God!* **THIRTEEN** percent (13%) of unchurched Americans desire someone with whom to discuss their personal and spiritual needs. At the same time Christians say they want to **WITNESS** effectively and to talk with people one-on-one about God.<sup>2</sup>

Remember the biblical story of Philip and Nathanael. Philip had just met Jesus. Jesus invited Philip: “Follow Me.” Philip immediately found Nathanael. Nathanael began to argue whether Jesus could be somebody based on the fact that he came from Nazareth. Philip didn’t try to argue the point. He just said, “Come and see” (the *Philip Principle*).

The woman at the well responded to Jesus in a similar way. She returned to her village telling them about the Jesus she encountered. She just said, “Come and see.” Of course, the response can be yes, no, or not now. Can you think of other responses to a straightforward question: “Would you come with me to my church [party, home, etc.]?”

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## I. Lecture (cont.)

### Notes

#### Two Foundational Facts about the Unchurched:

1. Every person needs Jesus.
2. The unchurched are much like the churchgoers.
  - Most of the unchurched are concerned for their families.
  - Their moral values are not radically different from the churchgoers.
  - Our children play together.
  - We work together.
  - They live in our neighborhoods.
  - They talk in friendly conversations with us.
  - They often carry the same financial and family concerns as we do.
  - Some of the unchurched are our own flesh and blood family members.

#### Before You Invite

- Get together with your church's "**BRINGERS,**" those who invite outsiders in your church.<sup>3</sup> Pray and brainstorm with them. They will provide some helpful insights into developing future ministries and special Sundays to which you can invite your unchurched family members and friends.
- Developing a relationship with the unchurched is important. *Build Bridges of Friendship by:* (1) Becoming personally acquainted with unchurched people; (2) Cultivating friendships; (3) Praying for your friends; (4) Sharing your social life with them; (5) Complimenting rather than condemn; (6) Talking about your journey of faith at the level of the unchurched person's receptivity; (7) Believing God is at work in the unchurched whether or not you see progress.<sup>4</sup>

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## I. Lecture (cont.)

## Notes

Create a visual display board with the pictures and first names of the unchurched persons you have committed to pray for and invite to church.<sup>5</sup>

### Pray

- for the unchurched
- for perseverance because ministry is time consuming
- for patience for complex and resistant circumstances
- for sensitivity to opportunities for sharing the gospel

- Ask the Holy Spirit to stir your spirit with the truth of Romans 10:14, *“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not **HEARD**? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”*
- Seeker-sensitive worship services must not take responsibility as the only evangelistic methodology. There remains a great need for personal evangelistic efforts including a personal invitation to church. According to Rainer, it is a myth the unchurched cannot be reached by direct personal evangelism. Over one-half indicated that someone from the church they joined shared Christ with them.<sup>6</sup>
- Jesus said, *“And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself”* (John 12:32). When Christians become attracted to Jesus and thus attracted to the unchurched, Jesus will draw the unchurched into a relationship with Him.

According to Thom Rainer in *The Unchurched Next Door*, *“Only 2% of church members invite an unchurched person to church”*<sup>7</sup>



## I. Lecture (cont.)

### The Heart and Mind of the Unchurched

The unchurched yearn for a **COMMUNITY** in which to belong.

- Belonging leads to change in beliefs and **VALUES**.
- Gallup's survey revealed that **52%** of unchurched Americans indicate they intend to return to worship services.<sup>8</sup>
- The unchurched feel **GUILTY** about not attending church.
- Church **INTIMIDATES** the unchurched.
- The unchurched **FEAR** they will feel out of place.
- The unchurched may not know rituals and liturgy.
- Many believe church to be the **MOST** relevant institution in today's society.
- Ninety percent (90%) of unchurched will come to church if invited.
- Some unchurched report negative experiences from visiting churches (i.e. unfriendliness, unkempt facilities, poor signage, confusing worship moments), yet they are forgiving and view the church **POSITIVELY**.

### Who are the Unchurched?

They have personality and temperament traits that typically accompany being upscale and unattached. They tend to be aggressive, energetic, skeptical, experimental and transitory. They tend to be fairly mature, sophisticated, well-trained for cultural ascendancy and independence and not involved in a traditional family experience. Thirty-one percent (31%) have a college education. Fifty-three percent (53%) are single. Most unchurched people were churched at some point in their lives. They are not merely unchurched; most have *de-churched*. Overall, 85% of all unchurched adults have had a prolonged period of time during which they consistently attended a church or religious center. Their cost-benefit analysis has determined that they do not get enough positive benefits from church participation to merit their continued involvement. People stop attending church because they believe that churches have nothing of real benefit to offer.<sup>9</sup>



## I. Lecture (cont.)

### Needs and Interests of the Unchurched

Unlike the typical church leader where personal and corporate spiritual growth, morality, values, salvation by grace, purity of worship, praising God, seeking forgiveness through Christ, and biblical knowledge are of spiritual importance. Few think of the quality of their relationship with God. They do not tie their involvement in a community of faith into their personal belief system.

The unchurched say that financial needs are their most pressing concern. This perception is dismissed by church people and leaders as a diversion. That conclusion by the church is interpreted by millions of unchurched people as “They don’t understand or they don’t care about my struggles. They are into their own agenda—beliefs, values, morals—that is far from where I am. The church has nothing to offer me today.”<sup>10</sup>

Discover the felt needs of the unchurched in your community. Take an opinion poll of at least 100 households in your area.

Use Rick Warren’s five questions:

1. Are you an **ACTIVE** member of a nearby church? (if yes, wish the person well and end the interview.)
2. What do you think is the greatest **NEED** in [your area]?
3. Why do you think most people don’t **ATTEND** church?
4. If you were looking for a church in the area, what kinds of things would you look for?
5. What advice would you give me as a layperson in my church? What could I do for you?<sup>11</sup>

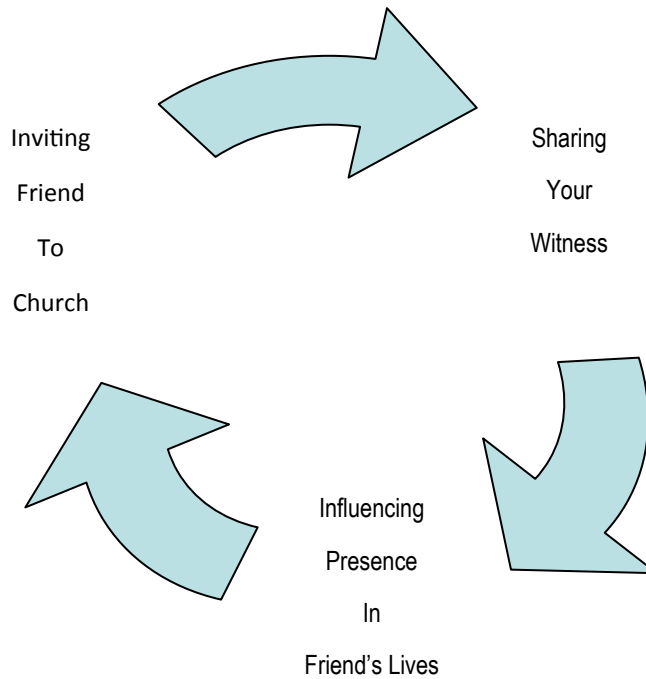




## II. Learning Activity

Notes

### Circular Effects of Inviting the Unchurched



### Factors in Inviting

#### Spiritual Network

Members of your spiritual network are people you share the routine of life with and who meet these four criteria: (1) You know their first name and they know yours; (2) You have regular and consistent contact; (3) They are open and responsive to a relationship with you; (4) They don't currently enjoy a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Christian has a spiritual network, e.g. Acts 10:2, 24. <sup>12</sup>

#### Identify your Network

Discover common ground and take the initiative in relationships prior to inviting the unchurched. The catalyst must be love. Without this love, all the preliminary network effort will appear manipulative.

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## II. Learning Activity (cont.)

Notes

### Invitation Readiness Indicators

People are more apt to be ready to accept an invitation to the church and to Christ when (1) They have gone through an insecurity-producing situation; (2) They begin to discuss spiritual things; (3) They show signs of moving toward God instead of away from Him.<sup>13</sup>

**Trial Basis** *“Would you like to come and see?”*

### Friend Campaign

In *The Friendship Factor* McGinnis says, “It is no accident so many important encounters occurred between Jesus and His friends when they were at the table. There is something almost sacramental about breaking bread with one another.” Invite your friends to a special event you both enjoy. Helping your friends with a special project builds strong friendships.<sup>14</sup>

### Inviting Campaign (“The Philip Principle”)

Make a wall with bricks or a paper chain with the name of one unchurched person on each brick or link for whom you are praying and anticipating an opportunity to invite to church. Emphasize Reuben Welch’s book theme “We Really Do Need Each Other” or “Everybody is Somebody” or “The Power of Everybody.” Consider devotional/study material from Nehemiah’s example of building the temple walls.

### Special-Day Inviting

Make a list of special Sunday possibilities:

Traditional church year, e.g., Advent, Palm Sunday, Easter, Pentecost;

Life of the Church, e.g., World Wide communion Sunday, National day of Prayer;

Local events, e.g., Back to School Sunday, Homecoming, Family Day, Friendship Sunday;

Other opportunities, e.g., Graduation, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Golden Wedding, Graduates, Mother’s Day, Father’s

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## II. Learning Activity (cont.)

Notes

Day, and provide special events and services especially for the unchurched. People want to know when it's a good time to bring their friends to church—not the morning the pastor speaks on stewardship.<sup>15</sup>

### Educational Events

These events can include classes on almost any subject designed to teach concepts or skills. For example, Who is Jesus?, Parenting Preschoolers, Caring for Your Aging Parents, How to Live on a Budget, GED, ESL.<sup>16</sup>

### Matthew's Party and other Social Events

Matthew's Party is patterned after the biblical account of the call of Matthew who hosted a dinner party for his former colleagues to give them an opportunity to meet Jesus (Luke 5:27-32).

“God’s desire is for us to value unbelieving friends the way Matthew did. I also think that He would want us to be wary of status quo techniques for evangelizing lost people, when in our hearts we know these aren’t the best solutions for reaching the people we hope to help.”

### Application questions

1. Which one of the above suggestions would work for our church?
2. Which of these suggestions would be well received by your community.
3. Selecting two or three suggestions, which ones would you prioritize to implement first.

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## II. Learning Activity (cont.)

Notes

- George Hunter III offers themes and strategies for reaching and inviting secular “unchurched” people, such as:
  1. Provide ministries of instruction—“What is Christianity?”
  2. Help unchurched people make sense of their lives and find meaning and purpose.
  3. Engage them in dialogue. Often the very process of unthreatening dialogue with a caring nonjudgmental Christian is a liberating experience.
  4. Address unchurched people’s doubts and questions.
  5. Provide opportunities to meet credible Christians.
  6. Provide opportunities for people to overcome alienation. The key to the problem of modern day agnosticism is fellowship.
  7. Offer people hope in the Kingdom of God.
  8. Provide support groups for people with addictions.
  9. Identify and reach receptive people.
  10. Reach across social networks.
  11. Multiple “units” of the Church—new classes, new congregations, new groups.
  12. Offer ministries that meet needs.

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### III. Small Group

Notes

#### Dialogue questions for small groups:

1. Why are we members?
2. What is special about this congregation?
3. What might someone new to this congregation gain by being with us?
4. What might our congregation gain by inviting friends to visit with us for worship and other events?
5. How do we invite friends to visit our congregation?
6. How are newcomers welcomed and encouraged to become part of us?
7. Are we ready to invite people?

**Role Plays:** Take turns giving the invitation. The person receiving the invitation will ask why they are invited to the event/service.

- ◆ Scenario 1: Invite a friend to come to a worship service to hear about Jesus.
- ◆ Scenario 2: Invite a friend to go to a movie with a Christian theme.
- ◆ Scenario 3: Invite a friend to go with you to provide social care.



## IV. End Notes

- <sup>1</sup> “Building Bridges of Friendship, Evangelism Resources for Your Church: Developing Your Churches Evangelistic strategy,” Printed Brochure from [www.missionevangelism.org](http://www.missionevangelism.org) .
- <sup>2</sup> “Unchurched People Want to talk about God,” VE-41 pamphlet, Evangelism Ministries, Church Growth Division, Church of the Nazarene, no date.
- <sup>3</sup> “Building Bridges of Friendship, Evangelism Resources for Your Church: Developing Your Church’s Evangelistic Strategy,” Printed Brochure from [www.missionevangelism.org](http://www.missionevangelism.org) .
- <sup>4</sup> “Building Bridges of Friendship, Evangelism Resources for Your Church: Developing Your Church’s Evangelistic Strategy,” Printed Brochure from [www.missionevangelism.org](http://www.missionevangelism.org).
- <sup>5</sup> D. Alan Folsom, “Creating a Climate for Reaching the Unchurched Community,” from [www.gabaptist.org](http://www.gabaptist.org), 10/29/11.
- <sup>6</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), p.42.
- <sup>7</sup> Greg Hanson, “Understanding the Unchurched” sermon, Part 1, Sunrise Wesleyan Church, April 24, 2005, [www.sunriseonline.ca/sermons/unchurched next door.html](http://www.sunriseonline.ca/sermons/unchurched%20next%20door.html) (accessed October 29, 2011).
- <sup>8</sup> *Unchurched People Want to Talk about God,*” VE-41 pamphlet, Evangelism Ministries, Church Growth Division, Church of the Nazarene, no date.
- <sup>9</sup> George Barna, *Evangelism That Works: How to Reach Changing Generations with the Unchanging Gospel* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1995), pp. 48-51.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-5.
- <sup>11</sup> C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth: The Secret of Pastor/People Partnership in Dynamic Church Growth* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984), pp. 203-4.
- <sup>12</sup> Mike Barton, “Everyday Evangelism: Sharing Christ Where You Live and Work,” *Herald of Holiness*, April 1995, Nazarene Publishing House: Kansas City, MO, p.14.
- <sup>13</sup> Charles “Chic” Shaver, *The Bible Speaks to Me About My Witness* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1991), p. 46.
- <sup>14</sup> Win and Charles Arn, *The Master’s Plan for Making Disciples*, Edited by Bill Sullivan (Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House, 1984), pp. 86-7.
- <sup>15</sup> Calvin Ratz, Frank Tillapaugh, Myron Ausburger, *Mastering Outreach and Evangelism* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1990), p. 49.
- <sup>16</sup> Robert L. Bast, “Evangelism through Special Events,” *New Ideas in Evangelism and Church Vitality—Net Results*, December 1991, p. 23.

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