



Starting Spiritual Conversations

Participant's Handout



Purpose:

Teach participants to start spiritual conversations and build their confidence to do so.

Objectives :

- To understand how Jesus started spiritual conversations
- To practice and become more comfortable starting spiritual conversations
- To develop an action plan for starting spiritual conversations and sharing this material with your church

Lecture Notes

Spiritual conversations help us _____ relationships with unbelievers so they may begin a relationship with Jesus.

From John 4:4-42:

- Jesus _____ initiative: he starts the conversation (v. 7).
- He does so even though it isn't socially acceptable. He _____ some boundaries set by social custom. (v. 9)
- He says things that are _____ (v. 10).
- His comments _____ curiosity and invite the woman into a deeper conversation (v. 11-12).
- He makes _____ of what the future will be like (v. 14).
- He _____ to her openness and moves closer to the heart of the issue (v. 16-18).
- He _____ her to change (v. 21).
- He _____ to be drawn into religious talk about competing religious perspectives (v. 21-24).
- Our testimony _____ a bridge to God so others can hear Him for themselves.
- We show our genuine interest for others in how we _____ and respond to what they say.
- **Ears:** Listen to spoken _____.
- **Eyes:** Observe _____ that conveys how the speaker is feeling.
- **Heart:** Listen to _____ and emotions for greater understanding.

Small Group Exercise

1. Discuss how you would respond to the following situation:

Claudia and Ann are neighbors who often chat at the curb. Today, Claudia is trying to make light of a family problem, so she says to Ann, "My daughter's marriage is on the rocks, so I told her to go out and spend some money. Hey, it always makes me feel better!"

2. Discuss how you would respond to the following situation:

When Jackson stops for gas at the neighborhood convenience store, he makes a point of chatting with Marco, the store manager. Since both men like to play basketball, Jackson asks Marco to join his church's ball team. Amazed at the invitation, Marco says, "But I'm not a religious guy...and wouldn't you make me listen to a sermon before each game?"

3. Discuss how you would respond to the following situation:

Sarah and Glenda have been co-workers for several years. When Sarah invites Glenda to church, Glenda's response is a variation on this theme: "Oh, Sarah, you know how busy I am. Right now my Saturdays are crammed with shuttling my kids to ball games and practices, so Sunday is the only day I have to juggle housework and grocery shopping. Ask me again in a few years when my kids are all grown up!"

4. Read through the list of questions (below) and discuss which would be most natural for you to ask. Discuss opportunities when these questions might be useful for starting spiritual conversations.

Questions to Start Spiritual Conversations

Do you give much thought to God and spiritual things?

Tell me about your church background. Did you go to church as a child?

How do you feel about your upbringing and your awareness of spiritual things?

How would you describe your life with God now?

When did you feel closest to God?

What were the factors or influences that brought you near to God?

What would renew that sense of closeness?

Tell me about your most memorable spiritual experience.

What do you think is a person's greatest spiritual need?

How do you think a person begins a relationship with God?

Homework

The homework assignment for this module is:

1. Personally start at least three spiritual conversations.
2. Document what went well and what you will do differently next time.
3. As a church team, develop a strategy for sharing this information with others in your church (e.g. Sunday School class or Bible study group).

Action Planning/Reporting

Conversation Starter	Who	When	What was the effective?	What would you change?

Our strategy for sharing this information:

What to share?	How to share it?	When?	With whom?	Results