

CONFIDENTLY SHARING JESUS WITH FRIENDS

LAMB OF GOD LUTHERAN CHURCH, COLUMBUS, OHIO



LESSON ONE: THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS

PART ONE: VIDEO

Use the space below to take notes as you watch the video:

- Common Excuses for Not Sharing Jesus
- Three Things Needed
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- Identifying People Who Need Jesus
- Important Things to Remember as We Build Relationships with Others
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.

PART TWO: DISCUSSION

ACCEPT PEOPLE IN CHRISTIAN LOVE.

- **Read 1 John 4:7-11.** Why do we want to share Jesus with others?
- Why is it important that this alone is our motivation for sharing Jesus?

- **Read Luke 19:1-10.** What risks was Jesus taking in this account? Why was he willing to take those risks?
- **Read Matthew 5:16.** What does it mean to “let your light shine before men,” and how might it lead someone to “praise your Father in heaven”?

BE INTERESTED IN PEOPLE WHO NEED JESUS.

- **Read Mark 9:35.** Where did Jesus find people who needed the salvation he came to bring?
- **Read Mark 5:19.** Why is it important to remember a passage like this one and not just the “great commission” (“Go and make disciples of all nations...”)?
- If the only people you know are active Christians, what can you do to get to know people who need Jesus¹?

IDENTIFY FRIENDS USING A “FRAN” FORM.

- Identify people from among your circle of friends, relatives, acquaintances, and neighbors, who need to be reached with the good news of our Savior Jesus.
- Pray for these people.
- Ask God to give you opportunities to talk to them about Jesus.
- Invite them to come to worship with you.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR “FRANS”

- Dale Carnegie once said, “You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.” What are some things that can get in the way of our building genuinely caring relationships with the people in our lives?
- Ask about their FORD.
 - F
 - O
 - R
 - D

¹ All people need Jesus, but in this study, I’ll use this phrase to describe those who don’t yet know and trust in Jesus as their Savior from sin.

- Building and strengthening relationships with friends
 - A commitment of time is necessary. Give it the priority it deserves.
 - When you meet someone, take the initiative to introduce yourself. Smile!
 - Small talk is important because communication fuels friendships. Use small talk to learn names, where people live, family relationships, occupations, and interests (FORD).
 - Listen attentively – give your full attention; look people in the eye. Listening is earning the right to be heard.
 - Imagine yourself in their shoes. Try to better understand how they feel.
 - Be available especially when your friends “need to talk.”
 - Be sensitive to times of need, crisis, stress, etc. Be available.
 - Be genuine – accept yourself as you are and be yourself to others. Allow your friends to get to know the real you.
 - Share some your own past experiences and life situations.
 - Talk freely about your faith and it’s meaning for your day to day life.
 - Create an atmosphere that invites questions.
 - Allow your friends to do kind things for you.
 - Be generous with compliments. Build others up in love.
 - Give them a gift.
 - Remember a special event with a card or brief hand written note.
 - Spend time with your friends, sharing ordinary times of life together. We grow closer with people when we do things together regularly.
 - Go shopping together.
 - Play golf, go fishing, or bowling, etc.
 - Go to mutually enjoyable events and activities together.
 - Invite your friends to a backyard barbecue, coffee, etc.
 - Plan an outing with your friends where they will have opportunity to meet other Christians from your church.
 - Love them unconditionally in Christ and seek to serve them.
 - Pray regularly for them
 - Other suggestions?

HELP PEOPLE IN THEIR EVERYDAY NEEDS.

- **Read again Mark 9:35.** Why was the way that Jesus helped people with their physical needs such an important part of his ministry?
- Describe situations when the help you offer might be especially meaningful to people.

- Why might people be somewhat more willing to listen to the message of the Bible at “times of transition,” such as:
 - Getting married
 - Getting divorced
 - Having a baby
 - Moving to a new city
 - Starting a new job
 - Dealing with the death of a loved one
 - Dealing with a major injury or illness?

COMMIT YOURSELF TO THE LORD IN PRAYER.

- **Read Colossians 4:2-6.** Paul not only encourages the Colossians, as they let their light shine and share their faith. He also asks them to pray for him. For what did he ask them to pray?
- As you pray for those who need to meet Jesus, here are some things you might ask for:
 - Ask God to help you be more confident about sharing your faith.
 - Pray for the knowledge you need for speaking about Jesus as the world’s Savior.
 - Pray that Christ give you a deep concern for the souls of all people, but especially for the ones that you know personally.
 - Ask God for the privilege of being used by him to reach out with the gospel to those people who need Jesus.
- Pray regularly (“*Pray continually,*” 2 Thessalonians 5:17)
- Pray specifically
 - Pray for individuals by name, for their unique circumstances
 - Let them know that you are praying for them
- Pray “dangerously”
 - “Lord, give me no choice but to witness”
 - These prayers are “dangerous” because we know that it is God’s will for others to come to know him and for us to be his witnesses

CONCLUSION

Growing friendships requires attention and time. But the effort is worth it. As Christians we have a concern for friends in an eternal sense. In our love for them we have the expectation of sharing the good news of Jesus.

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LESSON TWO: STARTING A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

PART ONE: VIDEO

Use the space below to take notes as you watch the video:

- It's not so much what we say but what we don't say. It's all about _____.
- When we actively listen to people, we communicate...
- We should not be surprised when people challenge something about Christianity.
- The inability to answer a tough question on the spot can actually be a good thing.

PART TWO: DISCUSSION

LISTEN PATIENTLY AND INTENTLY

- **Read James 1:19.** James includes this advice in a section in which he is going to talk further about handling anger, but it is good advice in the context of any relationship. Why do you think good listening skills are so rare (or at least rarely used) in our world today?
- **Read Proverbs 18:13,15.** What makes good listening an important skill to use in sharing our faith?
- Explain. The things that you hear when you are listen may not be as important as the respect and trust that you earn when you listen.
- Agree or disagree. When you listen to someone who needs to know Jesus, you should always be listening for chances to talk about your faith.

- What are some keys to good listening? Work with two people seated near you (groups of three) to compile a list of at least five things that makes someone a good listener. Be specific (for example, not just “shows he cares,” but “shows he cares by...”).

ASK LIFE-RELATED QUESTIONS

- When you take time to really get to know someone and show genuine interest in the everyday things of their lives, you start to earn two important things from them:
 - _____
 - The _____ to _____
- Besides such “relationship equity” that life-related questions can build, how do such questions help in starting the conversation about Christ?

APPROACHES FOR TURNING THE CONVERSATION TO CHRIST

- Feel...Felt...Found
 - I can see how you might **feel** that way.
 - Others have **felt** the same way (or: I once felt that way myself)
 - But what I’ve **found** is...”
- When people speak with you about their problems: p, P, S, s
 - Our problems (p) are rooted in the main Problem (P), which is sin.
 - In his love, God sent Jesus who is the Solution (S) for our sin.
 - Since God saved us from sin through Jesus, we can be confident in his promises to help us with solutions (s) to the problems we have in life.
- Using Biblical narrative
 - Share a Bible story that relates to what your friend is thinking, feeling, or experiencing, and then share the spiritual truth that the story teaches.
- **Read John 4:1-26.** What approach did Jesus take to turning the conversation?

HANDLING CHALLENGES

- **Read 1 Corinthians 1:18.** How does the two-sided perspective on the gospel (the message of the cross) that St. Paul presents in his verse affect us, as we share that message with others?
- **Read Luke 10:1-3,8-12,16.** Jesus said, "I am sending you out like lambs among wolves." These are not words that we would consider positive, encouraging, or calming. Why do you think Jesus chose to say them?
- What important truth about rejection did Jesus teach his disciples, and why is that truth important for us to remember when we witness?
- **Read Luke 16:31 and 1 Corinthians 3:5-9.** Our goal is not to win an argument. Instead, what do these verses help to clarify as our goal?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.** Why is it important to keep the main thing the main thing when you share your faith?
- **Read Psalm 119:97-99 and Acts 17:32.** If we don't know the answers to questions that people ask us about the Bible, how can that situation actually be a blessing?

CONCLUSION

Being a good listener helps us grow our relationships with others, and it helps us find opportunities to apply God's Word to the lives of those who need Jesus. Our goal is to turn their attention to Christ, plant the seed of his Word, and seek to keep the door open to future conversations.

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LESSON THREE: SHARING OUR SAVIOR

PART ONE: VIDEO

Use the space below to take notes as you watch the video:

- Distractions that Threaten our Connection to Jesus
- The Importance of Having a “Resurrection Faith”
- Key Truths to be Prepared to Share
- Sharing Jesus from a Personal Point of View
- Confidence in Sharing Jesus

PART TWO: DISCUSSION

REMAIN IN CHRIST

- **Read John 15:1-4.** How is staying connected to Jesus essential for sharing our faith? How is that connection reinforced?
- Share with a friend one tool or approach that you use to stay connected to Jesus in your daily life.

For personal reflection: Since it is through his Word that God has established and grows my relationship with Jesus, what are some specific ways that I can give more attention to the Word of God? What will have to change in my attitude, my priorities, and my schedule to make this happen? What blessings do I anticipate? How will this help me in sharing my faith?

PREPARE TO SPEAK

- **Read Luke 6:45** and **Acts 4:20**. What is the most important way to continue to prepare to share Jesus with others?
- **Read 1 Peter 3:15**. A helpful and important part of being “*prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have*” is articulating that reason for yourself first.
 - Put the reason for the hope that you have into your own words.
 - Explain how being a Christian makes a difference in *your* life...
 - when *you* are hurting:
 - when *you* need help:
 - when *you* are happy:

OVERCOMING FEARS WITH GOD’S PROMISES

- Name common fears or concerns that keep us from being confident witnesses.
- What comfort and encouragement do the following verses offer, as we share Jesus with others?
 - **Matthew 10:19-20**
 - **Matthew 28:18-20**
 - **Acts 1:8**
 - **Isaiah 55:10-11**

IT’S TIME TO SPEAK

- **Read Romans 10:13,14,17**. Maybe you’ve heard someone say something like this: “Your life may be the only Bible some people will ever read.” Why might that “bible” not be enough?

- Approaches to Witnessing:
 - Apostles' Creed
 - Tell a Bible Story
 - Your Story – My Story – His Story
 - Law/Gospel Presentation
 - God's Great Exchange (more on this February 16)
 - What God Demands
 - What God Sees
 - Man-made Remedies
 - God's Remedy
 - God's Promise
 - The Bridge
 - Paradise Lost...Paradise Regained
 - Do vs. Done
- What pros and cons do you see to using a planned presentation, when you share your faith?
- How important do you think a personal point of view is in sharing our faith?

CONCLUSION

As you prepare to share the Savior with those people you know, remember the love that Jesus has for them, too. He loves and cares for them even more than you do. He paid the tremendous price of his blood to redeem their souls. He has a passion for them to be connected to him by faith, and like branches joined to the vine, he wants to give them spiritual life. He desires to have them as members of his eternal kingdom and longs to have them live with him in heaven.

God promises, "My word will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). He will use our witness, however simple or inadequate it may seem, and make it serve the purpose that he intends. Trusting God's promises, we know that God will bless our preparation for witnessing and help us to share the message of salvation through Jesus.

10 P'S FOR SHARING JESUS WITH A FRIEND

1. PRAY

Pray regularly for people who do not believe in Jesus and also for those who do believe but are struggling in their spiritual life.

Pray specifically for your friends who need Jesus. Ask God to work in their hearts with his powerful gospel to bring them to saving faith in the Savior.

Pray that God will give you opportunities to tell your friends about Jesus, and pray that he will help you at those times to speak about the love of the Lord.

2. PREPARE

The Bible says, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15). People will notice that you are a Christian, and they will ask about it. "Why are you so kind to people, even to those who aren't very nice to you?" "Why do you pray before you eat?" "Why do you wear cross jewelry?" "Why do you read your Bible and attend worship services?" Think through beforehand what you will say. Ask yourself the question, "What does it mean for me to believe in Jesus?"

3. PRACTICE

Just like a lot of things, the more you practice, the better you can do it. The same is true of sharing your faith. Practice with a friend or family member who already believes in Jesus. This will help you overcome nervousness and make you more confident. It will also help you to be better prepared to answer questions and concerns that people may raise as you talk to them about Jesus.

4. PROJECT YOUR LIGHT

There's an old saying, "You might be the only Bible someone ever reads." While our actions will never bring someone to faith, they may open a door to telling someone the gospel which can bring a person to faith. Let your light shine! Just asking someone "How's it going?" can lead to an opportunity that you never expected. On the other hand, you can't tease someone about the color of their hair one day (or something else that you think is strange) and expect the person to take you seriously the next day when you try to talk about the importance of Jesus.

5. PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS

The good news about Jesus is the power that the Holy Spirit uses to work faith in the hearts of people. So when you have the opportunity (and God will give you those times), proclaim Jesus. Tell people about Jesus – that he is our loving Friend who saved us from being separated from God and his spiritual blessings. He died to give us life with God right now and forever in heaven. Just tell people from your heart what the Bible has convinced you to be true about Jesus our Savior.

6. PACE YOURSELF

You don't have to tell a person everything that you know about the Bible all at once. Take your time and as your relationship with a friend grows share more and more about Jesus.

7. PERSIST

Sometimes people won't listen or accept what you say. But don't be discouraged. As you have opportunity, keep reminding your friend about Jesus and share what you believe. God loves your friend too, even more than you do, and God wants him or her to experience the joy and hope of being one of his children by faith in Jesus. Pray that God's will be done for your friend and that God will keep using you and others to share Jesus.

8. PROMISES

Confidently trust the promises of Jesus that he will always be with you (Matthew 28:20), that you have the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), and that God's Word will always accomplish what he wants it to. (Isaiah 55:11).

9. PATIENCE

Don't give up on people too soon. Remember how patient our God is with us! God's loving patience is an example for us to follow as we introduce people to Jesus.

10. PRIDE

Be proud of your Christian faith! You have been given a gift that is more precious than all worldly wealth. Your Savior is honored that you believe in him, and he is pleased that you are willing to share his name with others.

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LESSON FOUR: KEEP ON SHARING JESUS

PART ONE: VIDEO

Use the space below to take notes as you watch the video:

- Advantages of Witnessing to Friends
- Love For Their Souls
- Things to Keep on Doing
- Be Patient and Persistent
- The Gospel is the Power of God for the Salvation of Souls
- Confidently Share Jesus with Your Friends

PART TWO: DISCUSSION

FRIENDSHIPS OFFER OPPORTUNITIES AND ADVANTAGES FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL

- Read the two passages below, and discuss how friendship creates an ideal setting for sharing your faith.
 - **Proverbs 17:17**
 - **Proverbs 27:6**

PRAYER AND PERSISTENCE

- It is a privilege for us to include people in our prayers, confident that God will hear our intercessions for them and answer them according to his will. You may let people know that you are praying for them. What message(s) would this communicate to your friends?
- How do the following passages show the importance of both patience and persistence, as we share Jesus with our friends?
 - **1 Corinthians 2:13-14 & Romans 8:5-8**
 - **1 Timothy 2:1-7**

BRING YOUR FRIENDS INTO CONTACT WITH THE WORD OF GOD

The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to turn the hearts of people to Jesus and work saving faith. Here are some suggestions for ways we can follow-up our spiritual conversations with friends to bring them into more contact with God's Word:

- Invite friends to worship or other events at church. Offer to come with them and even give them a ride.
- Invite them to a Bible study. Your friends might be more inclined to come to classes that address issues that they have questioned and talked to you about. Offer to attend the Bible Basics Class **with** your friends. (***Our next class starts February 26***)
- Share good Christian books, tracts, and videos, especially those that address your friends' curiosity and questions about the Christian faith.
- Introduce your friends to other Christians who have similar situations, concerns, or interests. God may use the witness of others to help reach them with the gospel.
- Share helpful web sites: www.LambofGodColumbus.org, www.WhatAboutJesus.com, www.wels.net, etc.
- Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to share bible passages, blog posts, articles of interest, devotions, and words of encouragement with your friends. This can also be a way to invite them to attend an event (either in person or an online concert, service, or bible study).
- E-mail daily devotions on portions of God's Word. At *WhatAboutJesus.com*, you can subscribe to receive inspirational devotions by email each weekday. Or give them a copy of *Meditations*.
- Send Christian cards for their birthdays, special occasions, and holidays.
- Other ideas?

CONCLUSION

- What further tool(s) or support would help you to confidently share Jesus with your friends? What questions or fears remain for you? How can your church, pastor, and/or fellow Christians equip and support you as you work and witness for Christ?

God wants us to share the message of his love for the world in Jesus. We have considered various aspects of witnessing to our friends who need Jesus. What remains is doing it. People need to hear about their best friend, Jesus. Prepare yourself and with the God's help, you can confidently share Jesus with your friends.

Prayer:

Jesus, you are my best friend. In infinite love you sacrificed yourself to bring me into a close relationship with you. Your abiding presence in my life fills my heart with joy and peace. I have the hope of heaven where I will see you face to face and have more blessings than I can even now imagine. Help me use the things that I have learned in this course to prepare myself for sharing you with people I know. I ask that you give me the confidence to speak about my faith when the opportunities come. Use the gospel that I speak to my friends to work saving faith in their hearts, making them your friends and heirs of eternal life. Bless me, Lord, as I witness to my friends, relatives, acquaintances and neighbors who need you. What a privilege I have to share with them the glorious message of your love! Amen.