



Personal Evangelism

Part One: Readiness for Bible Studies

iFOLLOW

Walking with Jesus

The iFollow Discipleship Series

About the iFollow Discipleship Series Pastor's Edition

Categories

The iFollow Discipleship Series is designed to be used in congregations to assist people in their pursuit of God. This assumes that individuals are in unique places in their journey and there is no perfect set of lessons that everyone must complete to become a disciple—in fact discipleship is an eternal journey. Therefore the iFollow curriculum is a menu of milestones that an individual, small group, or even an entire church can choose from. The lessons can be placed in three general categories: **Meeting with Jesus** (does not assume a commitment to Jesus Christ); **Walking with Jesus** (assumes an acceptance of Jesus Christ); and **Working with Jesus** (assumes a desire to serve Jesus Christ).

Components

Each lesson has a presenter's manuscript which can be read word for word, but will be stronger if the presenter puts it in his/her own words and uses personal illustrations. The graphic slides can be played directly from the Pastor's DVD or customized and played from a computer. There are also several group activities and discussion questions to choose from as well as printable student handouts.

Usage

The lessons are designed to be used in small groups, pastor's Bible classes, prayer meetings, seminars, retreats, training sessions, discussion groups, and some lessons may be appropriate sermon outlines.

Credits

Curriculum Development: The iFollow Discipleship Series Pastor's Edition curriculum development was lead by the **Center for Creative Ministry**. **General Editor:** Monte Sahlin; **Assistant Editor:** Debbonnaire Kovacs; **Directional Advisory:** Brad Forbes, Carole Kilcher, Ceri Myers, Cesar Gonzalez, Clayton Kinney, Curtis Rittenour, Dave Osborne, Dave VanDenburgh, Gerry Chudleigh, Jane Thayer, Jerry Thomas, John Appel, Jose Rojas, Kim Johnson, Nicole Chao, Paul Richardson, Rich DuBose, Shasta Nelson, William Sutton; **Pastoral Advisory:** Claudio Consuegra, Collette Pekar, Dave Hutman, Don Driver, Fredrick Russell, Jerry Nelson, Jesse Wilson, Leslie Bumgardner, Loren Fenton, Rebecca Brillhart; **Unit Authors:** Alberto Valenzuela, Althea Pineda, Corienne Hay, Debbonnaire Kovacs, Ed Dickerson, Gianluca Bruno, Gil Bahnsen, Greg Nelson, Jack Calkins, James Whibberding, Karen Collum, Monte Sahlin, Norma Sahlin, Pam Splawinski, Patty Ntuhuka, Reinder Bruinsma, Ryan Bell; **Additional contribution** by Maria Ovando-Gibson; **Additional editing:** Dave Gemmell, Meredith Carter; **Graphic Design:** Mind Over Media; **Layout:** Paul D. Young; **Web Development:** Narrow Gate Media.

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Personal Evangelism, Part One: Readiness for Bible Studies

This is the second in a series of four units designed to provide basic training in personal evangelism.

Learning Objectives

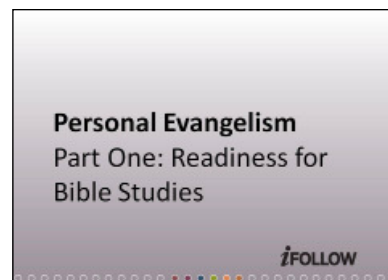
1. Understand the important role of relationships in bringing people to a readiness to participate in Bible studies
2. Understand that “Friendship Evangelism” is what comes before Bible studies begin in the journey from nonbeliever to becoming a follower of Jesus
3. Learn how to initiate relationships
4. Learn how to introduce a person to Christ
5. Understand that some people have already given their lives to Christ and have grown to a point of readiness for Bible studies before you meet them
6. Learn methods for finding people who are already prepared for Bible studies
7. Learn the mechanics of actually getting started with Bible studies

Content Outline

1. Making friends for Christ
2. Introducing people to Christ
3. Finding people interested in Bible study
4. How to start a Bible study
5. How to introduce a person to Christ (sermon)

Background Material for the Instructor

Public evangelism is often the only way we think of evangelism. There is also the evangelism that occurs in the privacy of one-to-one relationships and small circles in the home. Ellen White writes, “of equal importance with special public efforts is house-to-house work in the homes of the people.” In fact, she asserts that “there are certain classes that cannot be reached by public meetings.” She points out that “the work of Christ was largely



made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, p. 111; Vol. 6, p. 115)

In the end, all evangelism must be personal. Individuals who attend seminars or come forward to make a decision for baptism at a public meeting require personal work in order to prepare them to join the church. An evangelism campaign always includes a team of personal evangelism workers.

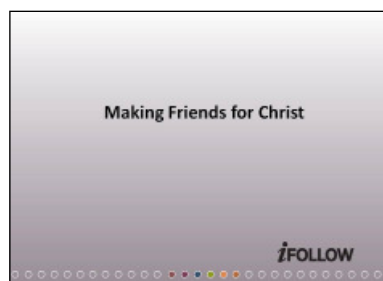
Making Friends for Christ

Almost every church member spends a large part of each week rubbing shoulders with people who have not given their lives to Christ and who do not see themselves as dedicated disciples of Jesus. But, the larger society in North America has labeled religion a private topic that is inappropriate for casual conversation. A person who is too free in talking about religion while at work or among acquaintances in the neighborhood, or even among unbelieving relatives, is labeled as impolite, insensitive and even self-centered.

How can you make friends for Christ as you go about your daily routines? Ellen White states that Jesus “reached the hearts of the people by going among them as one who desired their good. ... He met them in their daily vocations, and manifested an interest in their secular affairs.” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 151) She points out that “many can be reached only through acts of disinterested kindness. Their physical wants must first be relieved. As they see evidence of our unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ.” (*Testimonies for the Church Volume 6*, pp. 83-84)

Friendship evangelism begins with a kind, unselfish attitude. Every church member should be known among their work associates, neighbors and relatives as a person who is compassionate, caring and trustworthy. The evidence by which their circles of influence will come to know this is not based on what is said about religious topics, but on acts of mercy and fairness. Do you have a reputation as a person who takes time to help those in need, to listen to those who want to talk? Are you known as a person who puts time into causes such as poverty, the environment, social justice, HIV-AIDS, public health, etc.?

One of the key skills at this beginning stage of witness is the ability to listen. In our society today much value is placed on each person expressing themselves, having their own opinions and tastes, being “true to yourself.” Little value is placed on the unselfish act of listening carefully to another person. Consequently, when someone is a good listener, that person becomes known to his or her acquaintances as a particularly empathetic person.



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Not only is the ability to listen to others a silent witness, an act of grace in Christ's name, it is also a way to gain a knowledge of the needs, values and spiritual condition of each person. A good listener is trusted by his or her colleagues and friends. Eventually the level of trust builds to the point that even unchurched individuals are willing to discuss spiritual topics in private conversation.

Our culture does not value listening skills as it does expressive skills. This is why parents, grandparents and aunts and uncles all worry about when a baby will say his or her first words and how fast little children learn to talk. Schools focus on helping children learn to speak and write, and express themselves through art, music, drama, and sports. Listening skills are almost never taught. Consequently most adults in the U.S. and Canada have a severely underdeveloped ability to listen.

Part of the Friendship Evangelism Seminar and the Learning to Care training program is to teach listening skills so they can be used in personal witnessing. A number of specific skills are demonstrated and then the trainees are given opportunity to practice these skills on each other in one-on-one conversation and in small group discussions. Some criticize these elements of the training as unrelated to "real" witnessing. A few even attack listening skills as somehow unchristian in nature.

Ellen White clearly underlines the importance of listening in Christian witness. She describes Christ's methods as an example of how we should conduct personal evangelism, and observes that "when He opened His lips to speak," the attention of those around Him was "riveted upon Him" because He had "comforted their sorrowing ones ..." (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 338) She writes that the apostles, following Christ's example, "labored in weakness" and describes how they "visited the sick and the sorrowing, comforted the afflicted and lifted up the oppressed" instead of always feeling it necessary to preach, teach and instruct others. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 250)

The unselfish example of Christ as a sympathetic listener is specifically applied by White in directives to Adventists today about how they should witness to their neighbors, work acquaintances and unbelieving relatives. "Visit your neighbors in a friendly way and become acquainted with them," she wrote in a Review article in 1902. "Those who do not take up this work, those who act with the indifference that some have manifested, will soon lose their first love, and will begin to censure, criticize, and condemn their own brethren." Unfortunately, most congregations today have at least one example of this kind of judgmental, unchristlike behavior in a person who thinks of himself as skilled in personal ministry and will take a negative attitude toward the need to develop listening skills. (*Review & Herald*, May 13, 1902)

"Go to your neighbors one by one," Ellen White had begun this theme in an 1888 Review article, "and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. Sympathize with them, pray with them, watch for opportunities to do them good, and as you can, gather a few together and open the Word of God to their darkened minds." Here she clearly outlines the role of empathetic listening, prayer, acts of

kindness and an attitude of caring and fairness as building the level of trust that will be necessary before you can think of inviting your acquaintances into Bible studies. (*Review & Herald*, March 13, 1888)

Jard DeVille outlines the process of friendship evangelism in a book recently re-published by the General Conference Ministerial Association. (*The Psychology of Witnessing*)

First, the believer demonstrates caring and compassion through a genuine friendship that is unconditional—not conditioned by any behavior of the unbeliever! The believer does not expect their unbelieving friend to accept Christ or join the church because the unbeliever may never do that, no matter how much we might like it. The believer does not expect the unbeliever to do anything for the believer’s ego, pocketbook or career. The believer, in Christlike unselfishness, accepts the unbeliever “just as he is.”

Second, the believer seeks to understand the needs of the unbelieving friend as they are perceived by the unbeliever. The believer does not make a theological judgement or a Christian analysis of the unbeliever’s needs, but accepts the feelings of the unbeliever as he understands them. The believer is aware that the needs of the unbelieving friend, along with the Holy Spirit’s constant effort, will eventually push the unbeliever toward a readiness to hear the good news about Christ.

Third, the believer finds opportunities to share the alternative of faith in God as something that will meet the felt needs of the unbelieving friend. These openings are often brief and fragile, and they are always highly personal moments. In the lives of some, they are rare. Usually these moments occur when secular values fail to yield genuine substance and inner strength—times when secular values don’t seem to work for the nonbeliever.

Listening skills are the key to this approach. When a church member really listens to another person, they are demonstrating that they care about the other’s opinions, feelings and values. Disciplined listening embodies unselfish love and compassion at a practical level. It also helps to uncover the felt needs of the nonbeliever and paves the way for an appropriate verbal witness even to those usually resistant to “religion.”

Listening skills such as “active questioning,” how to check out the feelings of another person and “story listening” can be taught in a few hours of simple workshops where church members enjoy the fellowship as they “practice” on each other. These are basic life skills and life-changing skills that can improve family communication as well as help in relating to nonbelievers in the secular context of work, neighborhood and community service.

There is a beautiful example of these skills modeled by Christ in John 4. He encounters a Samaritan woman coming to draw water at a well about a mile outside of town. The conversation begins with the problem of thirst, which Christ quickly realizes has to do with a deep, inner thirst for love and affection down inside a woman with five failed marriages. He ends up using “living water” as a metaphorical expression. It carries the deep meaning of the gospel to this lonely woman, who accepts Christ as her Messiah and becomes an active witness in the town.

In fact, several stories recorded in the first few chapters of John's Gospel illustrate a whole range of needs-related approaches that Christ used in ministry to people. In John 2, Christ's mother and her friends have a social need to enjoy a wedding feast. Christ supplies that need. In the same chapter the poor of Jerusalem have an economic need not to be exploited by the temple money-changers. Christ acts to meet that need. In John 3, Nicodemus has a spiritual need for deeper understanding and growth in his relationship with God. Christ recommends "new birth" as an answer to that need. In John 5, Christ meets the medical need of the invalid at the pool of Bethesda, and in John 6, Christ meets the physical hunger of the masses.

Through discussion and sharing of real-life "case studies" church members can sharpen their ability to identify the needs of others, and hear opportunities for sharing gospel answers to the deep inner pain of unchurched people. Discovery of opportunities for appropriate verbal witnessing, when the "window of opportunity" is open even in some of the most antireligious individuals, revolves around skillful use of a simple question. It is asked after some time has been invested in listening, and the feelings of a friend have been heard: "Do you have any spiritual resources to help you with this?"

Careful attention to the verbal response and body language of the nonbelieving friend will quickly tell the Christian if there is a readiness for sharing Christ. This sets the stage for another basic skill area: verbal witness designed to meet the unique needs of each individual at the very time of the exchange.

Bringing People to Christ

What is appropriate to say when a church member discovers an opportunity to speak about spiritual things to one of their non-believing work associates, acquaintances, neighbors or relatives? It is vital that our members not only learn to approach people with the sensitivity and compassion of Christ, but also that they be prepared to speak the right kinds of words when an opportunity for verbal witness comes to them.

The first task of personal evangelism is not to teach doctrine, but to bring the unbeliever to a personal relationship with Christ. Until a person has given his or her life to Jesus, a study of prophecy or Bible doctrine will not make much sense. In fact, there is the risk that the unconverted person will jump to the conclusion that keeping rules, or holding the correct view, will enable them to work their way into the kingdom.

No memorized script will work. Personal witnessing is highly personal. When Christ is introduced to a nonbeliever, He must be introduced in terms that fit the precise moment—the immediate needs and motivation of the nonbeliever, the immediate context of the conversation, the immediate dynamics of the unstructured moment of opportunity.



In the Friendship Evangelism Seminar the skill of “what to say when you have an opportunity” is labeled “Option Introduction.” This label is used because the immediate task is only to introduce faith in Christ as one alternative that might be considered as the unbelieving friend seeks to meet his or her needs. To make a more conclusive statement at this point would simply cause the unbeliever to back off.

For example, if an unchurched friend has just shared his deep inner feelings of discouragement about his career, and answered the readiness question in a way that indicates openness, the believer might respond by simply saying, “Have you thought about the possibility of establishing a serious faith in Jesus? If you were to do so, that relationship would provide you with a different standard against which to measure success in your career. You would have the benefit of feeling that a life of service is more rewarding than achieving the highest positions of power in the corporation.”

Jesus uses this very type of verbal witness in John 4:13-14. He tells the woman that the solution to her deep, inner thirst is “water I shall give.” It has the advantage of quenching thirst forever, so that those who receive it “never thirst.” And the specific benefit of becoming in the woman “a spring of water” or source of eternal love.

If the nonbeliever responds to this Option Introduction with questions and obvious interest, then the church member must be prepared to share a brief personal testimony and an introductory Bible study that shows the unbeliever how to begin their relationship with Christ. If the nonbeliever raises objections to Christian faith, the church member must be prepared to enter into a friendly dialog without getting carried off into the spirit of debate. If the nonbeliever simply changes the subject or states their unwillingness to discuss spiritual things, then the church member must be prepared to drop the subject and resume the process of listening, kindness and compassion.

Many church members are learning to apply this model in their everyday contacts with non-believing friends, relatives, neighbors and work associates. It not only creates a flow of prospective members into the church, but transforms the attitudes of church members towards the secular aspects of their life. They begin to see the relationships they have with others as precious in the eyes of their Lord. Secular life becomes a true “vocation” under the direction of the Lord!

One church member states that he had made repeated attempts to circulate handbills for evangelistic meetings in the office where he has worked for twenty years, and finally gave up because of the offensive remarks of others. Within three months after attending a Friendship Evangelism Seminar, two of his professional colleagues had visited Sabbath worship with him and begun to study the Bible. A middle-aged lady describes an adult son that had refused to have anything to do with religion when she was converted five years earlier, but because she was able to help him see that Jesus cared about his chronic unemployment he was willing to attend a stress seminar at her church.

Where churches are able to teach friendship evangelism to the members, and set up spe-

cial Sabbaths when members are urged to bring their friends, church attendance greatly increases. In 1987-90 the North American Division Church Ministries Department conducted an experiment with the “Friend Day” concept. Reports were received from more than forty churches, large and small, who implemented it. They all reported attendance by nonmembers equal to 25 to 35 percent of the church membership. These become an immediate pool of prospects to be engaged by personal evangelism and invited into Bible studies.

In the Friendship Evangelism Seminar a little exercise is done in which everyone is asked to write their name in the middle of a sheet of paper, and then make three concentric circles around it. The inner circle is labeled “close friends.” The next circle “work associates,” and the outer circle “casual acquaintances.”

Each church member is given five minutes to jot down the initials of as many people as possible in each circle who, so far as they know, are not professed followers of Jesus Christ. This includes the “unchurched”—people who may say that they believe in God, or even have some knowledge of the Bible, but are not participating in a local church of any denomination.

It is really a very simple idea that has been around a long time. Each church member in the United States and Canada has about 200 friends, relatives, neighbors and people they know on the job. The church member is the best agency to reach and win this network. In fact, the Bible teaches that each believer is responsible for evangelizing his or her network.

The gospel commission of Matthew 28:16-20 is a command to all believers in Christ. But parallel passages always condition it. When He first sends out the twelve they are told, “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel”—their own kin and neighbors. (Matthew 10:5-6) Later, even when many of His disciples have begun to reach those outside their own community, He states that their witnessing should be first to “Jerusalem” and then to “Judea,” and only then to “Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

This concept is a very practical one for church growth and soul-winning. It has in recent years come to be called “lifestyle witnessing” or “relational evangelism” or “networking.” In the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America it is called “Friendship Evangelism.”

Whenever this exercise is conducted with church members, their eyes are opened to new possibilities. It never fails to generate excitement and fresh, new commitment to personal evangelism.

Does your local church have a strategy to systematically encourage and support your members in “working their networks” through casual, everyday opportunities for witness? In experimenting with this approach, churches have discovered that an effective training program in this type of personal evangelism must include at least three elements which

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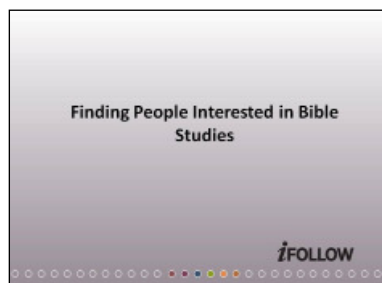
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have not usually been included in the past. In addition to the skills of verbal witnessing and Bible study, to be effective in friendship evangelism church members must learn (1) to relate to secular people in love and compassion, (2) to hear their non-Christian friends' perceived needs, and (3) to share faith in a way that it makes sense to the non-Christian.

It should be emphasized that friendship evangelism is not a replacement for the work of giving Bible studies. Friendship evangelism leads to Bible studies. Friendship evangelism prepares people for Bible studies. If, in each local congregation, friendship evangelism were practiced by the majority of the members while 10 percent to 20 percent of the members become active Lay Bible Ministers or in similar Bible study programs, a real evangelism explosion would ensue! In fact, if a church begins to use friendship evangelism, but does not have one or more lay evangelism programs functioning, it will not realize the harvest and may, as a result, conclude that friendship evangelism is ineffective.

Finding People Interested in Bible Studies

In addition to friendship evangelism—which has always been the most productive source of new members for the Seventh-day Adventist Church—various ministries of the church have programs that identify people interested in Bible study. The missionary periodicals such as *Signs of the Times* and *Message* provide opportunities for people to respond, requesting materials or sign up for Bible lessons. The media ministries make regular offers for people to call in to the 800 number operated by Adventist Information Ministries (AIM) and request literature or special prayer or Bible studies. These get an immediate response from chaplains (seminary students) at AIM and are passed on to local churches for continued ministry. Many of the books published by the Adventist publishers—particularly the Outreach Book of the Year—include offers for people to write in and request Bible studies. Other ministries have similar methods.



A small number of these names arrive in the mail to your pastor or church office on a regular basis. There are likely several that have accumulated somewhere over recent months. If your church does not have an Interest Coordinator to keep track of these, then maybe they are somewhere in your pastor's briefcase or desk drawers. Your pastor can obtain from AIM a printout of all the names from specified Zip Codes (or Postal Codes). These represent people who (at least at the time they phoned or wrote in) have an interest in Bible study.

AIM is a 24/7 telephone answering service based on the campus of Andrews University, staffed largely by students. On a busy weekend, AIM will receive over 4,000 calls. Each is answered by a real person. Since AIM started in 1982, more than half a million individu-

als have called in. AIM serves all of the national media ministries of the denomination and various departmental initiatives. You can arrange for AIM to take calls registering people for your next health, family life or Bible seminar. When people receive a brochure or advertise with AIM's 800 number (800-253-3000) they can call and register for your program, if you have prepared AIM with the basic dates, times and information about your event. You can contact AIM at 616-471-3522. This is also the place to contact AIM and request a list of names from their data base.

Don and Marjorie Gray report that "one small church in Wisconsin got 72 requests asking for Bible studies, utilizing media names." A letter is sent to all *It Is Written*, *Amazing Facts*, *Voice of Prophecy* and other media names in your area offering free Bible study guides to those who are really interested in studying God's Word by subject. A response card is enclosed. When the response card is returned, the study team goes to place the Bible and lessons with the person, explaining how the program works. They return each week and study the lessons with the person or family.

"One church phones the various media names, stating that they are representatives of that program. They then ask if the person being phoned has heard about the Bible study guide offer being made by the program to all those who might be interested in studying the Bible by subject. If the person phoned is really interested in finding out God's plan for the world and for their lives, they are told that the one making the call will be happy to drop by with the guides and explain how they work. The guides are free, it is explained, and there is no cost to them now or ever." (Gray, p. 60)

Other types of advertising media can be used locally to find people interested in Bible study. Seminars Unlimited—one of the resource centers affiliated with the North American Division Church Resources—offers a number of different direct mail pieces that have been used over the years. One version that has been used for many years is crafted around the theme, "Something Wonderful for You." Don and Marjorie Gray report that for each 1,000 pieces mailed out, responses usually average 10 to 25 cards that come back, enrolling in Bible study. (Gray, p. 58) There is a dropout factor to these numbers when contact is made with these names because most of the individuals sending a response card do not expect to have someone knock on their front door.

The Grays suggest some similar methods, that do not involve paying Seminars Unlimited to rent a mailing list and cover the postage, as well as print the materials. "An attractive little door hanger is available" to be left at homes as you walk through a neighborhood, perhaps during your daily exercise time. "Pray for the individuals in each of the homes as you pass by" jogging or walking each day. "People often have an emotional response when they learn they are being prayed for. By letting them know that they are the object of your concern and prayers, doors often open, and people become more receptive to your invitations to study the Bible with you." The door-knob hanger provides a response card "on which they can check prayer requests for special needs or the desire to start studying the Bible. This can be left on the door or handed to them in person." Another suggestion is to place a classified ad. "Often a small ad in the classified section of the local

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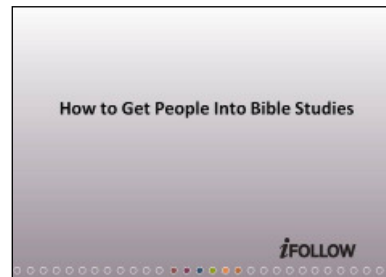
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newspaper has proved fruitful. Bargain shoppers and regional papers are usually very economically priced.” (Gray, p. 59)

How to Get People Into Bible Studies

In developing the interest of persons you meet and get acquainted with, it will be necessary for you get them either to read or study. The Holy Spirit will speak to their hearts as they let their minds dwell on spiritual things.

If the person is not interested in studying the Bible when you first meet him, it would be well to have two or three interesting small booklets, such as Nick’s Discovery, that you leave with him to read. These stories will touch his heart and create a desire in him to study more deeply into the things of God.

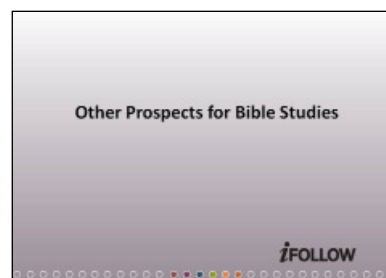


Before people become Seventh-day Adventists, it will be necessary for you to get them into the study of the Bible so they can really understand God’s plan for their lives and for the world. You should be looking for an opening to get them into Bible studies when they are ready. When they are ready for Bible study, suggest to them that you have a simple, systematic way by which they can learn the key themes in the Bible. Explain how it works. Be enthusiastic.

You might say, “Each lesson is really exciting, and I know you will really enjoy every one of them. They get more interesting as you go along. You really have a treat in store for you as study these lessons.” (Gray, p. 57)

Other Prospects for Bible Studies

1. Former church members.
2. Relatives of church members who live in the same household or the same community.
3. People who have read books about the Adventist Church and its doctrines.
4. Anyone who has attended church on occasion.
5. Anyone who has attended an Adventist school in the past.
6. People who have attended public evangelistic meetings, Revelation Seminars, etc.

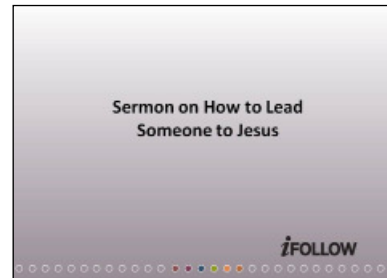


7. People who have been in an Adventist hospital or treated by an Adventist physician, dentist or other health professional.
8. Anyone who has had an emotional experience recently such as a death in the family, divorce, unemployment, diagnosis of a terminal illness, etc.
9. A person who has recently accepted Christ.
10. Someone who is dissatisfied with their former church.

Sermon on How to Lead Someone to Jesus

When you talk about leading someone to Christ, it's important to remember that it is the Holy Spirit that converts a person to Jesus. We can't convert anyone. However, there are certain laws that govern the spiritual realm. If we know and understand those laws we can be more effective in aiding the Holy Spirit in his work of converting people to Jesus.

When we are willing to be used of God, He will actually guide us through our day; bringing us into contact with the people He wants us to witness to. He will actually put the words He wants us to speak in our mouths.



Jeremiah 1:7-9—"But the Lord said to me: 'Do not say, "I am a youth," for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you,' says the Lord. Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: 'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.'" (New King James Version)

We don't have to think in advance about every single word we will need to say. We don't have to be a walking Bible encyclopedia or have the theology degree to witness for God.

Mark 13:11—"But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit." (New King James Version)

The wonderful thing about the Holy Spirit is that if we're willing, He will use even the humble, most uneducated person to do a great work for Jesus. We see this in this story of the demoniac. He was a very frightful and scary person. He begged Jesus to take him with Him, but Jesus said no. Sometimes Jesus tells us no for very good reasons.

Luke 8:38-40—"Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.' And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. So it was, when Jesus

returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him.” (New King James Version)

So you see, even this humble instrument in the hands of God became a powerful witness and a successful evangelist. He had done his job. He had successfully prepared a multitude to receive Jesus and he had done it so well, that they were waiting for Him to return.

Now once you have shared your faith, and they are ready to receive Jesus as their Savior, how do you lead them to Christ? You need to be familiar with the Four Spiritual Laws, (or some similar outline) and lead them through the steps to faith in Christ.

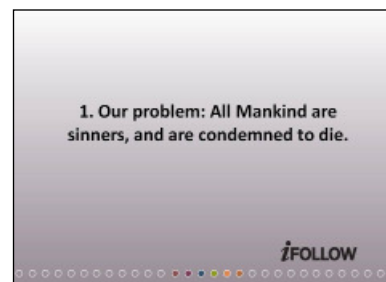
1. Our problem: All Mankind are sinners, and are condemned to die.

All the descendants of Adam and Eve are born by nature children of wrath.

Ephesians 2:3—“We all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, just as the others.” (New King James Version)

As we shall see, all human beings have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:10-12, 20-24—“As it is written: **‘There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.’ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.** But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the **righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.**” (New King James Version)



1 John 3:4—“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for **sin is the transgression of the law.**” (King James Version)

These verses tell us that we are lawbreakers. The sad fact of the matter is the wages of sin is death. We have broken God’s Ten Commandment Law and are worthy of death. Even one violation is worthy of death. We are utterly lost, condemned to die a sinner’s death. That is the problem of sin.

James 2:10-12—“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and **yet offend in one point**, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be **judged by the law of liberty.**”

Romans 6:23—“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Isaiah 53:6—“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (King James Version)

2. Our Helplessness: We cannot save ourselves. We have no means of paying the debt.

John 3:36—“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and **he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.**”

Romans 7:12, 18—“Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. ... For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

Romans 3:27, 28—“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith **without the deeds of the law.**”

Ephesians 2:8,9—“**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.**” (King James Version)

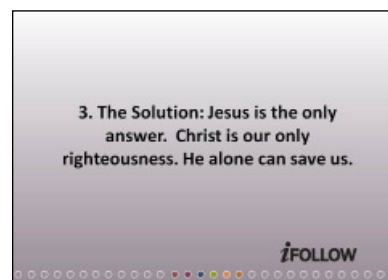
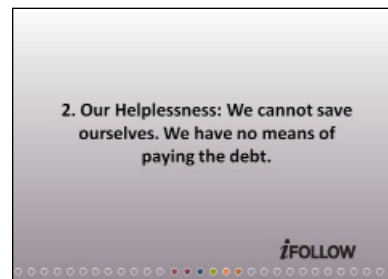
Can a leopard change its spots? Can we save ourselves? Of course not. **If we could, we would not need Jesus.** So it is important for us to realize that we are lost, condemned to death for breaking God’s law, and that we are powerless to save ourselves.

3. The Solution: Jesus is the only answer. Christ is our only righteousness. He alone can save us.

1 Peter 3:18—“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit”

John 14:6—“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Philippians 3:7-9—“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, **and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.**” (King James Version)



Jesus lived a perfect life for me. He fulfilled the law, and when I accept Him as my Savior, I receive his perfect righteousness. The Bible says that if I confess my sins to Jesus, He is faithful and just to cleanse me of all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) Isn't that wonderful? All unrighteousness! Cleansed by the blood of the Lamb! We must accept his free gift of eternal life.

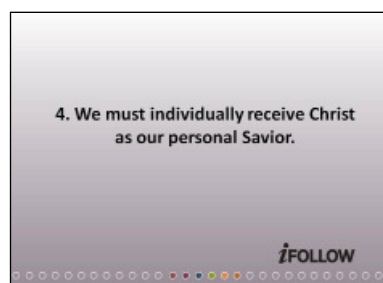
4. We must individually receive Christ as our personal Savior.

Once you recognize that you are a sinner, admit that you have broken God's law, acknowledged that you are powerless to save yourself, and recognized that Jesus is your only hope then you must take final step and accept him as your personal Savior.

Romans 10:13—"For whosoever shall **call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**"

John 3:16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 1:12—"But as many **as received him**, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that **believe on his name.**"



Revelation 3:20—"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, **and open the door, I will come in to him**, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Matthew 11:28, 29—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Philippians 1:6—"Being confident of this very thing, that **He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.**"

2 Corinthians 5:17—"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, **all things are become new.**"

Revelation 21:27—"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but **they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.**" (King James Version)

These texts are some of the most wonderful promises recorded in God's Word. Once you have surrendered your heart to Jesus Christ, and have begun sharing the great things God has done for you with your friends and neighbors you will surely meet someone who will want to surrender their life to Jesus.

When you have developed a friendship with someone, and have an opportunity to invite him or her to open his or her heart to Jesus, you may say something like this:

“Have you ever thought about becoming a Christian? Have you ever thought about giving your heart to Jesus? Have you ever thought about letting Jesus take control of your life?”

“All of us have broken the Ten Commandments and sinned against God. Are you willing to acknowledge that you have broken his law? Are you sorry for your sins? Would you like to ask God for forgiveness? Would you like to open the door of your heart so that Jesus can come in?”

“Would you like me to pray a prayer with you, so that you can ask God to write your name down in the Lamb’s Book of Life?”

“Please repeat each line after me:

Dear Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner, and that I have broken your law.

Please forgive me for my sins, and wash me in the blood of Jesus.

I open the door of my heart, and invite You to come in and be my Savior.

Please write my name down in Your book of life.

Please take complete control of my life and help me to live for You from now on in Jesus name, Amen.”

May God bless you as you search for souls to lead to your precious Savior.

May He give you the words to speak, and the courage to speak them is my prayer for each and every one of you, in Jesus name, Amen.

Handouts in this Package

1. A Basic Bible Study that Introduces Christ
2. Following Up Names from the Media Ministries
3. The Interest File
4. Willingness to Engage in Conversation (diagram)
5. The Four Cs of the Adventist Message



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Additional Resources

- Dronen, Don (1993). *How Can I Find a Bible Study?* Fallbrook, CA: HART Research Center.
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- Gray, Don and Marjorie (2003). *You Are My Witness: Sharing Jesus in the 21st Century*. Keene, TX: Seminars Unlimited.
- Martin, Carlos (2000). *Turning the World Upside Down*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association.
- Sahlin, Monte (2003). *One-Minute Witness*. Lincoln, NE: Center for Creative Ministry.
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Discussion Questions

1. When is a person really ready for Bible studies to learn the basic doctrines of the Christian faith [or the church]?
2. What do you think of the rule that Bible studies should not begin until the person has accepted Christ as their personal Savior and Lord or made a commitment to be a follower of Jesus?
3. How is listening part of the process of bringing a person to readiness for Bible studies?
4. What are some assumptions that Adventists have traditionally expected (perhaps without thinking about it) of a person before he or she begins Bible studies? Which of those assumptions have changed significantly in our social/cultural/historic context?
5. How do we avoid falling into the trap of being friends with people just to get them into Bible studies instead of genuine friendship? How do we keep non-Christian or secular friends from feeling that is our only reason for spending time with them?
6. What are some types of people who may already be at the point of readiness to start Bible studies?

Group Activity

Purpose: To practice the basic Bible study to introduce Christ to people. This will help the participants feel greater confidence in their ability to give the basic Bible study.

Preparation: Make sure everyone has copies of the handout with the basic Bible study. It is best for the participants to stand during this exercise, so almost any kind of space can be used so long as there is enough room for the teams to get some space between them and not be overwhelmed by the noise of other teams talking at the same time.

Assignment: Work in teams of two. Decide who will be the Christian and who will be the other person. The purpose of the exercise is for the Christian to practice giving the basic Bible study to someone who may be a nonbeliever or a nominal Christian.

Time: Take three to five minutes for the participants to pair off in teams of two, find places to stand together out of ear-shot of the others and decide who will be the Christian and who the other person. Then, announce that the practice will begin and that they will have about five minutes. Monitor the teams without intruding and decide if five minutes is enough time or whether to allow a few more minutes so they can get most of the way through the basic Bible study. Bring the Bible study to an end and give the person receiving the Bible study three minutes to give feedback to the person practicing. Then, ask each team to trade their roles and go another five minutes so that the other person can practice. At the end, give the teams another three minutes for feedback. Then, bring the whole group together again and spend at least 20 minutes for everyone to share what they have learned and answer questions they may have.

Handout 1

A Basic Bible Study that Introduces Christ

(This Bible study is designed to help a person establish personal faith in Christ as their Lord and Savior. For additional ideas, see *Steps to Christ* by Ellen G. White, chapters one and two.)

1. The Bible says that God is love. (Read 1 John 4:8.)

Yet even though God is love, our world is filled with hatred and violence, all sorts of cruelty and suffering. You may have wondered how this can be reconciled with the fact that God is love.

God did not want a universe full of robots. He created human beings with the power of choice. We are free to choose His way or other ways. When we selfishly choose our way, instead of His, we are ignoring His wisdom. We are rebelling against God. That rebellion is called “sin,” and it separates us from God. We can never have any real happiness, hope or peace of mind until we come to God and end the separation.

2. Each one of us is under the power of death because every one of us has sinned. (Read Romans 3:23.)

In Romans 6:23 it says, “The wages of sin is death.” So we are all doomed to eternal death from which there is no resurrection.

But God is love. He doesn’t want us to die. Yet what could He do? Well, He couldn’t set aside His law, because to do so would have meant a universe full of chaos. An alternative would have been to provide a substitute—someone to die in our place.

There was only one person in all the universe who could be a substitute for all human beings—Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He came and took our place. (Read John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

3. God’s gift solves the problem. We don’t have to face eternal death. Now we have a choice. (Read Romans 6:23.)

We can choose a life that never ends or a death that never ends. But we cannot earn that never-ending life. We are not saved by works. We are saved by grace. (Read Ephesians 2:8-9.)

Grace is pardon, forgiveness, mercy which we don’t deserve, which we cannot earn.

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It's a gift. We receive the gift when we accept Jesus Christ by faith as our Savior and Substitute. And so long as He remains the Lord of our lives—so long as we do not turn away from Him—we have eternal life through Him. It is ours.

It is something like a marriage. At a wedding a man and a woman are united in a marriage relationship when they exchange marriage vows. So long as the marriage partner is faithful to his or her spouse, so long as the partner maintains his or her vows, the marriage continues. But it is possible to end that relationship. Just so is the faith relationship with Christ. So long as we maintain our relationship with Christ, we have eternal life. But that life is in Him. If we leave Him we no longer have it. (Read 1 John 5:11-13.)

4. A faithful relationship with Christ makes it necessary to become detached from the values of this world and attached to the values of His realm. (Read Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.)

Again, this is something like a marriage. Just as a couple are attracted to each other by love, so love attracts us to God. Just as a man or woman gives up any other romantic attachments, so, when we give ourselves to Christ, we cut loose from anything that would hinder our relationship with Him.

As we see Christ's love for us and feel a responding love in our hearts to Him, we will gladly give up anything that might come between us. His love leads us to be sorry for anything that we have done to wound Him, and to repent—to completely turn away from those sins.

(After this presentation, ask the nonbeliever, "Is there any reason why you cannot enter into a faith relationship with Christ right now?" If the person indicates an interest, invite them to pray and invite the Christ into their life as Savior and Lord. If they indicate that they do not know what to say, ask them, "Would you rather just repeat some short sentences after me?" Be prepared to provide them with a prayer of reception such as this: "Dear God, I invite you to take control of my life. I want Jesus to come into my heart and mind. I want him to be my Savior and my Lord. Please forgive my sins. And thank you for giving me eternal life in Christ. Help me to follow Him faithfully. Amen." You should immediately pray a short, simple prayer thanking God for the person's decision.)

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Handout 2

Following Up Names from the Media Ministries

1. Look over the names that you have been sent: Find the location of the addresses on a map. Study the information you have on each one—religious preference, age, source of contact, etc.

2. Pray for these individuals by name.

3. Prompt contact is very important. Some weeks have already gone by (possibly longer) since they made their request. The more time that goes by, the more likely it is that they have completely forgotten their original contact and met their needs through some other ministry.

4. Memorize the name of the person before you go to their door and use it in your initial conversation with them.

5. Identify yourself and the media ministry you represent at the door. You should approach the person answering the door with interest, warmth, tact and kindness. If they are in the middle of a meal or dealing with a child or some other pressing situation, tell them you will come back at a better time. If they are in the middle of painting or mowing, asking them if you can help.

6. Aim to build a bridge of understanding between yourself and the person. Be friendly, confident, relaxed; smile. If you are tense, they will pick up on this tension and respond guardedly.

7. The first visit may be short. Here is a sample approach:

Hello, is this where the Browns live? Are you Mr. Brown? ... I am a field representative for the *It Is Written* television program, Mr. Brown. I don't want to take more than a minute or two of your time right now, but I would like to find out if you received the free book you asked for? ... Have you had opportunity to read the book? ... Did you learn anything new?

Pastor [speaker's name] would like to visit personally with each person who responds to the program, if that were possible. Because that is not possible, he asked me to visit you in his place. Have you been told about the Bible study program that he recommends?

8. As you are able to establish a relationship, you might asked if you could pray for

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them. Ask if they have particular concerns or needs that they would like for you to pray about.

9. Follow through as the relationship develops with Bible study materials, pray ministry, and practical help as is appropriate.

Source: Don Dronen (editor), *How Can I Find a Bible Study?* (1993, HART Research Center, Fallbrook CA), pp. 103-104

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Handout 3

The Interest File

The “Interest File” is a master database of all the people from your community who have had contact with the outreach programs of your local church—cooking schools, Revelation Seminars, health classes, family life seminars, Vacation Bible School, etc.—and the national media ministries and similar programs of the denomination. If your church does not have one, here is how to set it up and begin to use it to find people for Bible studies.

1. Decide if you are going to keep the information in a computer data base or in a card file. Your conference Ministerial Association office will have supplies for a card file and you can obtain software from www.softwareforministry.com.
2. Collect every name you can from every source.
3. Appoint an Interest Coordinator to keep the information up to date.
4. Before you start making contacts, go through the names and classify them according to the following system. The first priority in making contacts is the “A” names, then the “B” names and so on.

Category A Prospects

People currently attending church

People currently studying Bible lessons related to Adventist doctrines

Category B Prospects

Former members who still believe in the Adventist faith

People who have attended evangelistic meetings or Bible studies and plan to someday join

Children from church families who have not yet made a decision for baptism

Spouses or relatives who believe in the Adventist faith but do not attend church

People who occasionally visit church on Sabbath

Category C Prospects

People who have requested materials about the Adventist message

People who have studied Bible lessons by correspondence or online

People who have attended outreach seminars conducted by the church

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People who are getting one of the outreach periodicals
Relatives of church members who have not yet studied the Adventist faith

Category D Prospects

People who have attended a few evangelism meetings and have little interest
Clients of community service programs

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Handout 4

Willingness to Engage in Conversation

Organized
religion

Ready to talk
about Jesus

Ready to talk about God

Open to hearing personal stories

Interested in spirituality

Not interested in spiritual things

The percentage of people willing to engage in conversation gets smaller and smaller as you progress up the diagram. Only those at the top level are ready for traditional Bible studies.

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Handout 5

The Four Cs of the Adventist Message

Christ

Jesus is the divine Son of God; God made in the form of humanity.
He is the Eternal Self-Existent One and **not** a created being.
He is fully God. He is the one who created the world.
(Hebrews 1:1-13, Colossians 1:16-18)

Cross

Christ paid the penalty for man's sin on the cross. (2 Corinthians 5:19)
Only the sinless one could pay our debt: "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)
By accepting His grace we receive eternal life, "Not of works, lest any should boast." (Ephesians 2:9)

Commission

Because of what Christ has done for us, we want to give our lives to His mission.
(Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 4:18-19)
Following Jesus means being faithful to all of His teachings. (John 14:15)
We are not saved by our commandment-keeping; we are loyal to Him because He has saved or liberated us.

Coming Again

Jesus has promised to return and live with us. (John 14:1-3)
He will fully establish His regime on Earth. (Matthew 24-25, Revelation 21)

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