

# EQUIPPED TO SHARE

Participant's Notes



**ARISE**



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### **2025 EDITION**



# **ARISE**

Two out of every three people in the world don't yet know Jesus. But most of them do know Christians. Christianity is the majority religion in every continent in the world except Asia. Churches exist in every country (though in a few they are underground due to persecution). There are only 19 countries with a Christian population of less than 1%. The professional missionaries have done their job. The church has been planted around the world. Today it is ordinary people like you and me worshipping in ordinary churches around the world, sharing our faith powerfully and effectively with our friends and neighbours that will have the greatest impact for the gospel.

Of those non-Christians who come to a church, an incredible 77% of them come because friends or relatives invited them. Yet so many of us lack confidence, are somewhat embarrassed, and struggle to talk about our faith clearly and boldly with our friends and family. This is why Arise has developed Equipped to Share, a free course of five sessions that you can run in your church. Arise is a global movement, mobilising Christian to transform the world around us through evangelism, discipleship, fighting social injustice, eliminating poverty and restoring the environment. Equipped to Share empowers individual Christians to talk with confidence about their faith, releasing a workforce of millions to evangelise in their daily lives.

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# SESSION 1: THEOLOGY

## TALK 1: THEOLOGY

### Honestly, we all find this difficult

- Honestly – 90% of us find this hard.
- Where does that fear come from? Jesus came, in part, so that we would be released from fear. (Luke 1: 74)
- We live in a culture where our belief is not the norm and is considered strange. All human beings want to belong and be accepted, so we have this natural fear that in talking about our faith we will face rejection.
- Human beings are ***“naturally driven toward establishing and sustaining belongingness.”*** Hence, ***“people should generally be at least as reluctant to break social bonds as they are eager to form them in the first place.”***<sup>1</sup>
- We shouldn't be surprised that we find it hard. It's a spiritual battle.
- Also, in every other area of life – career, sport, music, learning a language, learning any new skill – we don't expect to be able to just do it. We have to learn, train, practice and gain experience. We get better and more confident as we go. When it comes to sharing out faith, we *do* expect that somehow, we should be able to just do it. It's not surprising we struggle. We feel guilty because we know we should be sharing our faith, but we feel paralysed because we don't know how. However, the good news is that, just like every other area of life, with a little training, a little support, and a little practice, we can all do this naturally with confidence and effectiveness.
- Intentionality is everything. This won't just happen. But if we are intentional and plan how we will do this, it can really happen. We can overcome the fear and learn how to do it effectively – hence the training on this course. You can really do this. It will transform your life. It won't be scary, but we will have to put a bit of time into it. We need to be prepared to give some time.
- All practice and training seems a little strange at first. Just like learning to drive a car, speak a foreign language or play an instrument, practice in the early days seems unnatural and we have to work at it. But after a while, it becomes second nature and we do it naturally and without thinking about it. In the same way, this course provides a bunch of tools to get us started. They will feel a bit strange at first, but the more we practice them, the easier they become and the more they will fade into the background and we will find ourselves doing it naturally and well without having to think about it.

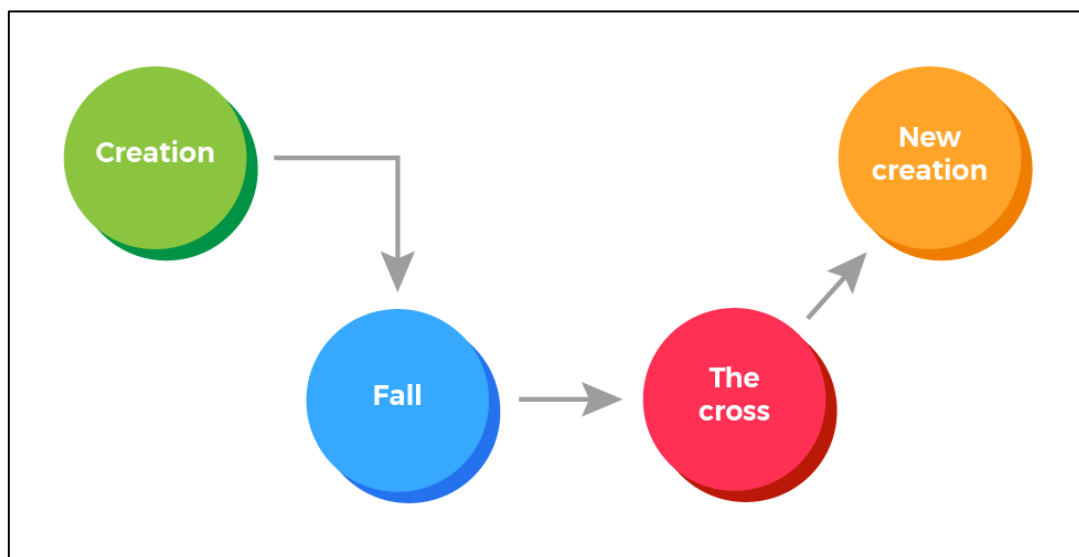
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<sup>1</sup> Mark Leary, psychologist

- The sessions in this course broadly follow the arc of a faith sharing conversation ...
  - Theology
  - Connect
  - Share
  - Apologetics (the questions people raise)
  - Invite
- So, today – Session 1: Theology is very much about getting it clear in our minds what we are meant to be doing and what we are not. It's about acquiring the right mental attitude and approach to evangelism, and less about the practical stuff. We will find this will release us from a lot of the pressure that we put ourselves under, which leads to fear. It will liberate us, so we are ready to get equipped with the tools and techniques we need to share our faith. Next time we will get into the more practical issues relating to how we are spending time with not-yet-Christians and who we are reaching out to. Then in the final three sessions we will look at and practice having faith sharing conversations.

### Situating ourselves within God's big story

- Let's start by situating ourselves in God's big story of creation, fall, redemption and glory.



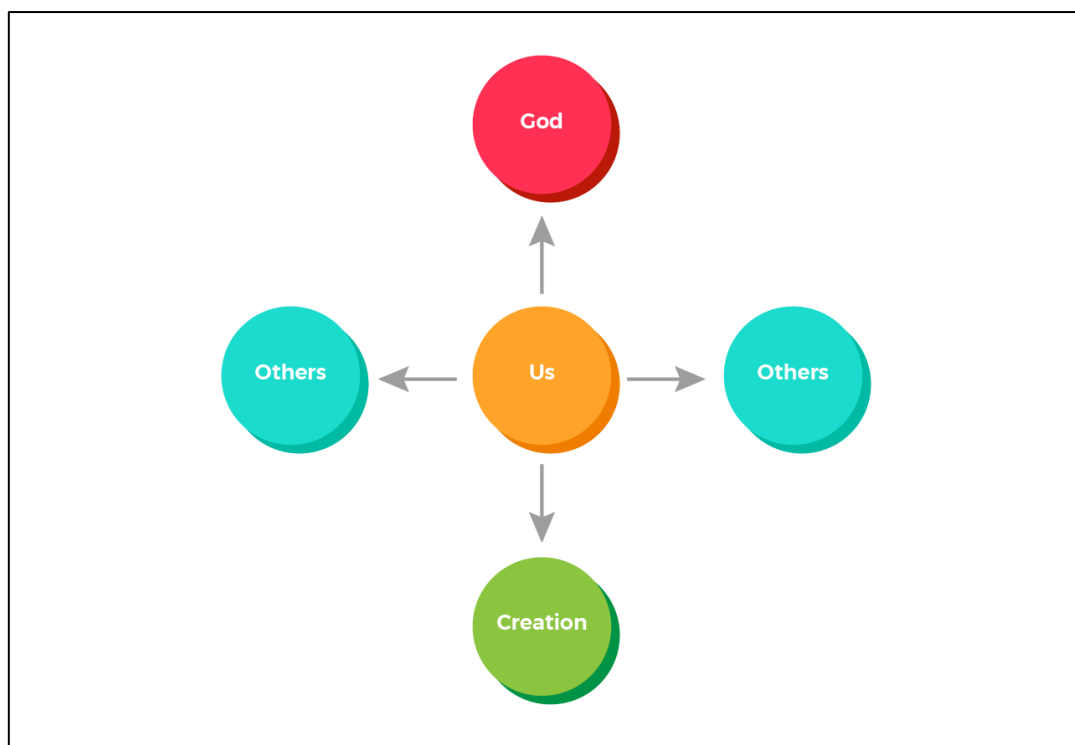
- **Creation** – God created the perfect world. ***“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*** (Gen 1: 1)<sup>2</sup>
- **Fall** – But humanity rebelled against God. We went our own way and sin has entered the world as a consequence. As a result we live in a fallen broken world, as we see in newspapers, websites and on our television screens every day. ***“There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one ... Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of***

<sup>2</sup> Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com) The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

**peace they do not know ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".** (Roms 3: 10 – 23)

- This happened not just in humanity's heart (though certainly there), but also in a broken physical world. Decay entered God's creation for the first time and as a result, mortality, disease, storms, earthquakes and other natural disasters became normality. **"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."** (Gen 3: 17 – 19)
- **Broken relationships** – The fall essentially broke the world. This can be characterised as broken relationships. The fall broke humanity's relationship with God, with each other, and with creation.
- **Redemption** – But God came to rescue us. In coming as Jesus, and through his death and resurrection, he paid the price for our mistakes and rebellion and opened up the way for us to come back into perfect relationship with him, by saying sorry for the things we have done wrong, turning back to God and accepting Jesus. This is where you and I, and especially not-yet-Christians, begin to connect with God's story. **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."** (John 3: 16)
- Jesus' death and resurrection was not just to open a way to restore our relationship with God, but also to restore and reconcile all those broken relationships between humanity and God, ourselves and others, and with creation. For we hear how God is working **"through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross ... This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven"** (Col 1: 20 – 23)
- **Advancing the kingdom** – Jesus left his church (us Christians) to continue the process he began of advancing the kingdom of God; that process of restoring all those broken relationships between people and God (evangelism and discipleship), between people and other people (social justice and development), and between people and creation (environment). And he gave us his Holy Spirit to guide us and lead us in this process. This is the part of the story that we find ourselves in now, between Jesus' first and second coming, and this is our mission and calling as a church and as individual Christians. To **"go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."** (Matt 10: 7 – 8) **"Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor."** (Luke 7: 22)
- As Christians, we are all called to spend significant amounts of our time restoring each of these broken relationships. We can't opt out of any of them, even if we might each have our own particular area of calling.





- **Glory** – We can never create a utopia or finally complete this task. It will be ongoing until Jesus returns to usher in his kingdom in full. ***“I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’”*** (Rev 21: 3 – 4)
- God’s big story of creation, fall, redemption and glory is unpacked in more detail with more Bible references in Part 1 of the Arise Manifesto ([www.ariseuk.org/vision](http://www.ariseuk.org/vision)).
- Arise is a movement that equips, mobilises and empowers Christians around the world to live out that mission of advancing the kingdom of God and transforming the world through evangelism, discipleship, fighting social injustice, eliminating poverty and restoring the environment.
- The verbal sharing of our faith and inviting people into a relationship with Jesus is a fundamental and central part of this holistic mission that all Christians have. That is why Arise is providing this course to help equip us to share our faith.

### **The importance of sharing our faith verbally**

- For us as individuals, that process of healing broken relationships, and especially our broken relationship with God, begins when we accept the part we personally have played in rebelling against God and causing suffering in our broken world. We need to say sorry to God for that, turn our back on it and turn back to God, through choosing to follow Jesus and allowing him to pay the price of our rebellion through his death and resurrection. Therefore, every person needs to hear the gospel – the good news of God’s big story – and have the opportunity to come into a personal relationship with Jesus.
- The verbal sharing of the gospel then is an essential core to our restorative message. It is a role we all have to play. ***“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of***

***the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.***" (Matt 28: 19 – 20)

- And God wants everybody to come to faith in him, even if some may never choose to do so. ***"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*** (2 Peter 3: 9)
- That is why throughout this course we have referred to 'Christians' and 'not-yet-Christians', rather than 'non-Christians'. We should approach sharing our faith with the mental model that we are all on the same side, on a journey that God desires everyone to complete. Therefore it isn't 'us' and 'them', it is all 'us'. As Christians, we just know more and are further down the road, and we want to help others along the same journey.
- This isn't just about seeing one-off short-term conversions, but about making life-long disciples. That means ensuring that those who do choose to follow Jesus can join a local church where they can make friends, grow and learn as they follow Jesus for the rest of their lives, in the context of ongoing relationships.
- The New Testament model of evangelism is as follows ...

### 1. Missionary communities

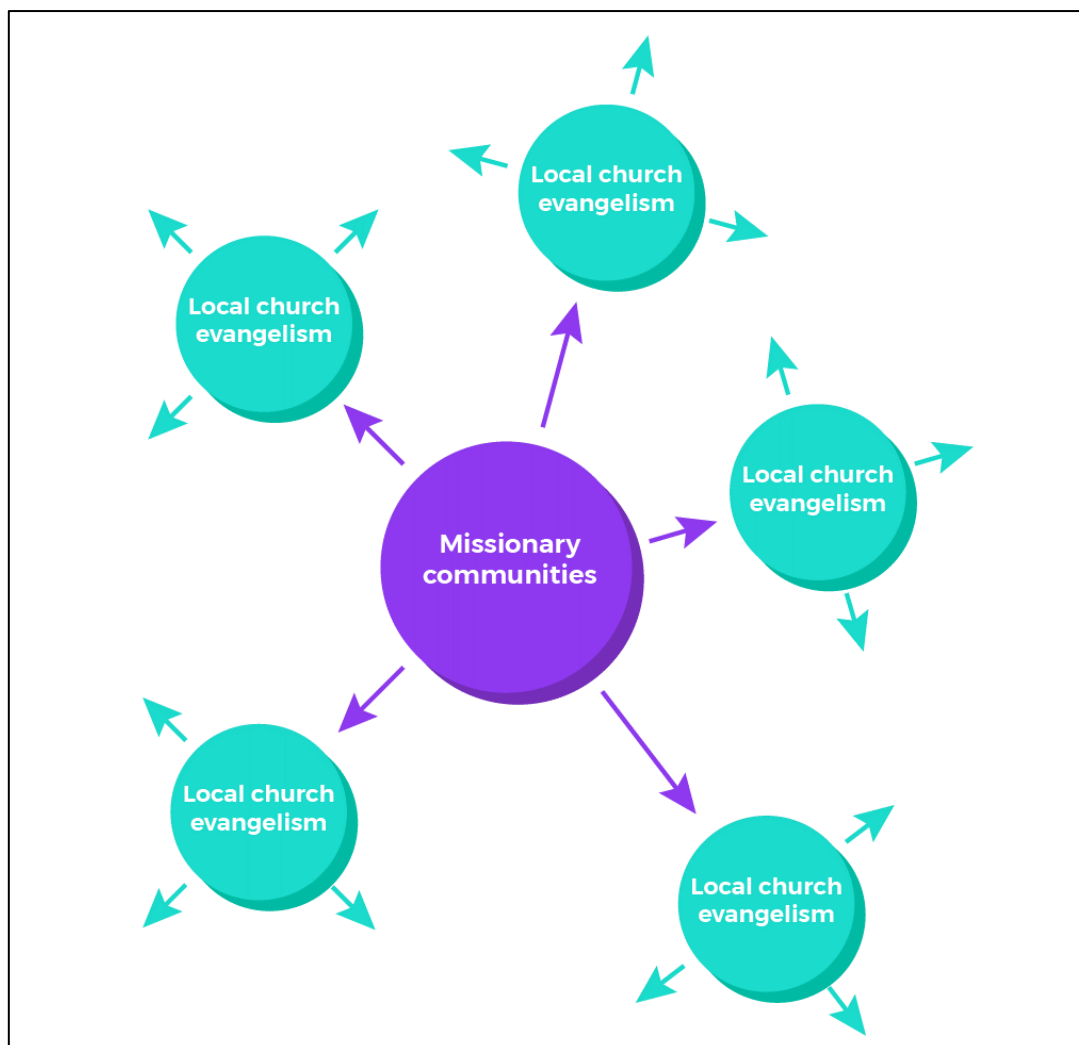
- ***Travel to new areas*** – Usually cities, as these tend to be the centres from which new ideas then spread out.
- ***Plant churches*** – Plant churches of local believers.
- ***Go as groups*** – Although there may be dominant figures, such as Paul or Peter, when you look in detail the missionaries of the early church generally went out as small groups. This has also been the successful pattern in the centuries since Biblical times, for example, the monastic missionary communities of the Middle Ages or the modern church planting movements of today. To go alone is tough, but a group attracts others in, provides encouragement, accountability and support.
- ***All things to all people*** – These missionary communities also seek to do this in the most indigenous way possible, becoming all things to all people, so they can come alongside people where they are, rather than forcing them to cross cultural boundaries to come to us.
- ***Connect to wider church*** – Missionary communities make sure that the churches they plant are connected into the wider global network of believers, and that they can receive ongoing support.
- ***Move on*** – Once a new church is established, they then move on to other areas.
- ***Those called to be 'evangelists'*** – It is the minority of Christians who have a specific calling and gifting for evangelism that tend to go out as missionary communities. It may be some of you, but it isn't what most of us are good at or called to. So you can breathe a sigh of relief and relax.

### 2. Local church evangelism

- ***Locals take over*** – Once a church is planted, the responsibility for sharing the gospel with that local neighbourhood then transfers to the members of that local church.
- ***Friendship evangelism*** – This happens in a natural, ongoing way with all the people we interact with as part of living everyday lives within that community. This isn't about sharing the gospel on a stage in front of a crowd, but naturally over coffee, as part of normal conversation with a friend. ***"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple"***

**courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”** (Acts 2: 46 – 47) **“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.”** (Acts 5: 42)

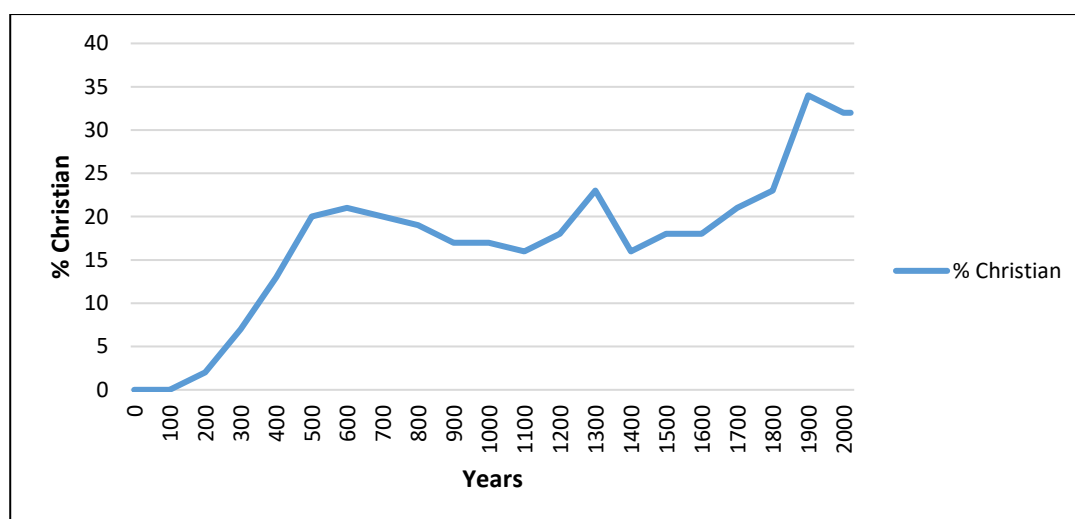
- **We are all called to this** – This is the part of evangelism we are all called to do. This is the area this course is designed to help with. With a little training, a little support, and a little practice, all of us Christians, the majority of whom are not natural evangelists, can learn to share our faith naturally with confidence and effectiveness. **“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”** (1 Pet 3:15)
- **The cycle continues** – The church continues to grow as a result of this activity, until a new missionary community goes from that church to plant a new church in a new area and the cycle continues.



### Where is the world at?

- Local church evangelism is even more important in our day and age because the work of the missionary communities is largely completed; the church is planted in most countries in the world ...

- Christianity is the largest religion in the world with approximately a third of all people living in the world identifying themselves as Christians.
- Christianity is also the most globalised religion.
- It is the majority religion in every continent in the world except Asia.
- Churches exist in every country, although in several they are underground due to persecution.
- Out of over 230 countries and independent territories in the world today, there are only 41 with a resident Christian population of less than 5% and only 19 with less than 1%.<sup>3</sup>
- So the bulk of the evangelism that needs to take place today should be focused on effective local church evangelism by ordinary Christians, like you and me.
- If we look at a graph showing the proportion of the world's population that are Christians in the 2000 years since Jesus' birth, we see the huge growth of the dynamic church of the early centuries. We then see a long plateau for over a thousand years, during which Christianity was largely confined to Europe, or a small minority elsewhere (with a small exception in the 1200s when the Mongol empires were initially receptive to Christianity, before converting to Islam). Then comes the tremendous growth of the nineteenth century missionary movement. However, for more than a century after that the proportion of people in the world who are Christian has remained essentially flat, or even declined slightly.



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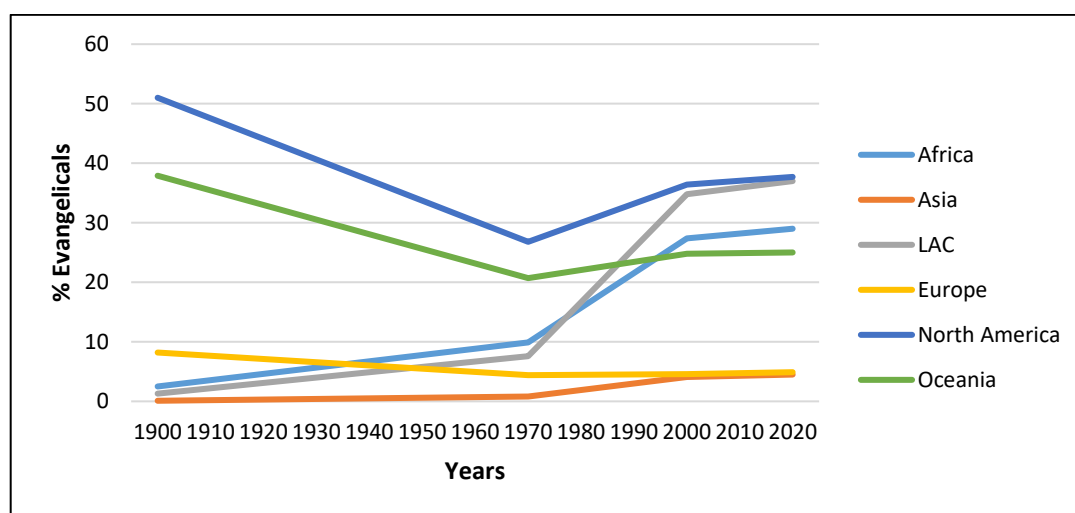
- ***“the percentage of Christians in the world has remained virtually unchanged at 34% year after year since 1900. The fact conceals the reality that (a) Christianity has made enormous progress, especially numerically, in many areas of the world throughout the twentieth century, but (b) at the same time it has also suffered catastrophic losses in many other unrelated areas. Result? The two trends have exactly cancelled each other out ... One immediate consequence is that the proportion of the world which consists of non-Christians has also remained virtually unchanged at 66% since 1900. In a vast range of secular measures, such as the huge medical endeavour to stamp out disease and epidemics worldwide, or the global attempt to***

<sup>3</sup> Todd M. Johnson & Gina A. Zurlo, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, (2020)

<sup>4</sup> Todd M. Johnson & Gina A. Zurlo, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, (2020), p. 917

**increase literacy to 100% any percentage stuck at 34% for a whole century would be considered an unacceptable failure.”<sup>5</sup>**

- To give us some encouragement though, beneath that depressing flat trend on the total percentage of Christians in our world, the percentage of Christians who can broadly be described as evangelical (those who believe in the scripture, believe in the need for personal salvation, believe in the need to share their faith etc.) has been growing in every continent in recent decades (after declining for most of the twentieth century). Therefore the potential workforce for sharing the gospel with friends and neighbours is growing.



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- So we can conclude ...
  - people in our world today desperately need to hear the gospel, and
  - most of them will hear it – not through the work of professional evangelists – but through the patient witness of their friends, ordinary people like you and me.
- Expert research confirms this.
- In an *Introduction to the History of Christianity*, W Ward Gasque shows this approach being used to enormous effect during the Roman Empire, one of the greatest periods of successful mass evangelism in history. **“Early Christianity in no way depended solely upon professional leaders for its practice and growth. Each Christian was both ‘priest’ and ‘missionary’ ... All were active in sharing the message of Christ with others.”** The point is further reinforced by Michael A Smith in the same publication, **“Personal witness was by far the most common method of evangelism used by Christians, because it was the easiest to organise. Personal friendship formed the basis for bringing many people to Christ ... Celsus mentions how Christians with little or no education seized every opportunity to witness to people, and even when confronted by educated pagans would not stop pushing their opinions.”<sup>7</sup>**
- William Carey, the famous ‘father of modern missions’ also understood this during the other great period in history of successful mass evangelism, **“He held that the foreign missionary can never make more than a small contribution to the accomplishment of the work that has to be done, and**

<sup>5</sup> David B. Barrett & Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends*, (2001), p. 75

<sup>6</sup> Todd M. Johnson & Gina A. Zurlo, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, (2020), pp. 919 – 932

<sup>7</sup> W. Ward Gasque, *The Church Begins*, & Michael A Smith, *Spreading the Good News*, in Tim Dowley (Ed.), *Introduction to the History of Christianity*, (2014), pp. 44, 59 – 60

**that therefore the development of the local ministry is the first and greatest of all missionary considerations.”<sup>8</sup>**

- Speaking about contemporary church growth in Asia, *Operation World* says, **“The recent growth of the Church has largely been through the work of national workers, local evangelists and ordinary believers. These churches are, more than ever, Asian in structure, style and leadership – taking forms relevant for those they are trying to reach”**, and again specifically in reference to South Asia, but which could be applied to any continent, **“The vast majority of Kingdom increase in this region is through the faithful witness of indigenous believers sharing the good news village by village and town by town.”<sup>9</sup>**
- Or as David B Barrett and Todd M Johnson put it in *World Christian Trends*, **“It is important to realise that evangelising Christians, the evangelising Church, consists almost entirely of lay persons – non-ordained, non-professional Christians, engaged full-time in secular occupations in the secular world. In the vast majority of Christian denominations across the world, the laity number from 99.0% to 99.9% of the entire membership of the church ... In 1954 the WCC’s (World Council of Churches) first survey Evangelism stated, ‘Laymen are on the frontier, served by the ministry whose function is to equip the people of God for its mission.’ Nearly every lay believer meets in his daily work people who are outsiders or even (in many parts of the world) persons who are unevangelised or unreached by the Gospel.”<sup>10</sup>**
- Similarly in the UK, surveys on why people who aren't yet Christians come to church have found that ...  
**“1% come because they were visited by Christians  
 2% come because of the church programme – they’ve come along to a holiday club, a senior citizens lunch, toddler group and so on  
 3% come because of bereavement  
 3% come because of Sunday school  
 6% walk through the door because they see some publicity  
 8% come because of some personal contact they’ve had with the minister or church staff  
 And 77% come because friends or relatives invited them.”<sup>11</sup>**
- Now we begin to see why Jesus didn't choose world leaders, great orators, people of power and a platform to spread the good news he brought. Instead he chose twelve ordinary people who would tell their friends, who would tell their friends and so on, continuing on to us today.
- We are the inheritors of that tradition and it is our role to share our faith with friends, family and all those around us in that same natural way, so that through all of our small efforts, all people can have the chance to know Jesus. Today it is ordinary people, like you and me, worshipping in ordinary churches around the world, sharing our faith powerfully and effectively with our friends and neighbours, that will have the greatest impact for the gospel.
- What the Bible has to say on evangelism, and its current status around the world, is unpacked in more detail in Part 2 of the Arise Manifesto ([www.ariseuk.org/vision](http://www.ariseuk.org/vision)).

<sup>8</sup> Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, (2013), p. 391

<sup>9</sup> Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, (2010), pp. 19, 60, 66

<sup>10</sup> David B. Barrett & Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends*, (2001), p. 667

<sup>11</sup> J John, *The Natural Evangelism Course*, (2014), p. 37



Take the mental pressure off

- So, that all gives the backdrop of God's big story in our world, the role that the verbal sharing of faith plays within that story, and the role we all have to play in sharing our faith naturally with our friends and families.
- However, understanding this shouldn't put further pressure on us. Let's take the pressure off by a proper consideration of what we are and what we are not called to do.

1. Give people an opportunity to hear, not win converts

- Humanity chose to rebel against God. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus is offering all people an opportunity and a choice to come back into relationship with God. But it is a choice. God never forces anybody to do anything. The whole Bible is a story of God appealing to his people to come to him and follow him. Very often they choose not to, and despite having ultimate power, he never forces them.
- Therefore, we are absolutely not called to make converts – even God doesn't force anyone to follow him, so we certainly can't. So take that mental pressure off. It is not your responsibility to convert anyone.
- What we are called to do is what Jesus did; to give people a choice to follow him by sharing our faith with them verbally. It is then up to them, not us, whether they choose to follow or not.
- More than 90% of the people that heard Jesus, the disciples or Paul, didn't accept the gospel message. Jesus was not accepted in his home town (Matt 13: 53 – 58), the rich young ruler wouldn't accept the gospel (Mark 10: 17 – 31), and by his death virtually all had abandoned Jesus (Luke 22 – 23). Similarly with Paul, **“Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.”** (Acts 28: 24)
- This explains why the approach of Jesus and the early church was not to just target a few people and keep working on them year after year, but to spread the news far and wide (like the farmer scattering the seed), giving everyone the chance to hear, expecting that many will reject. That's fine. That's their decision and God respects that. We shouldn't waste time by keeping on persevering with those who aren't open, but instead move on to others who haven't yet heard and may wish to follow.
- **“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”** (Matt 13: 18 – 23)
- Therefore, when Jesus sends out the 72, he tells them to stay and share the gospel in towns where they are welcomed, but to leave and move on (rather than persevere) in towns where they are not. This is because the next town might welcome them with open arms. **“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick**

**who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.'**" (Luke 10: 8 – 11)

- In this way, if we just keep sharing with many people, even if most reject the message, we will still reach many who are open. As Jesus says, **"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."** (Luke 10: 2)
- We often have a voice in our heads saying 'no one will be interested'. This just isn't true. The gospel is supernaturally powerful, and many will be interested. Gospel means 'good news' after all. Most people simply haven't had a chance to hear that good news yet. Even in many traditionally 'Christian' countries, we are increasingly dealing with people who have never heard the gospel in the first place, rather than those who have already understood and rejected the gospel. People have a mental image of what Christianity is all about which is a million miles away from the real good news of the gospel, which they have never heard. We will be surprised.

## **2. Respond to those God is already calling, not convince those he isn't**

- The Bible speaks about people becoming Christians at the right time because God is calling them.
- **"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them"** (John 6: 44)
- **"This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them."** (John 6: 65)
- **"One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message."** (Acts 16: 14)
- If we think back to our own experiences of coming to know Jesus, that was also what many of us found – we weren't looking for God; he came and found us.
- It's also the same for people God calls throughout the Bible – Moses, Gideon, the disciples etc. They weren't looking for him, he came and found them.
- So this transforms our understanding of evangelism. It isn't about us trying hard to be clever and convince people, and if we fail it is our fault for not being good enough. Instead it is about sharing our faith widely, seeing who responds – they will be the ones God is drawing to him at that time – and then going deeper with them. If God is calling them, they will be keen to know more. It won't be a struggle, so take the mental pressure off. People are called by Jesus, it's not our job to convert them. Our job is to have our spiritual radar open and be asking 'who is being called by Jesus today', and 'what can I do to help them along that journey'.
- This doesn't mean that God is only interested in saving some and not others. God wants everyone to be saved. (2 Peter 3: 9) Rather, it means that on any given day some are being called, and thus will be ready and open, and others are not. Those people will be ready on another day.
- This also means we can accept those who aren't interested more easily. If you are really into football and were at a party and asked someone if



they were interested in football and they said 'no', that would be fine. You would talk about something else and wouldn't feel embarrassed. If on the other hand they said 'yes', you might have a great conversation with them about football. We should think of talking about our faith in the same way.

### 3. Don't be ashamed, be natural

- You never meet a Muslim who is ashamed of their faith. If you ask them about it, they just set out plainly what they believe. You can take it or leave it, it's no skin off their nose. There is a lot we can learn from this. Conversely, most Christians seem to be acutely embarrassed about their faith.
- Don't be ashamed, think of it like any other interest in life and talk about it in the same way. If you were interested in cooking or movies you wouldn't be embarrassed when the conversation comes up, you would just talk naturally about those interests. Think of your faith in the same way and talk naturally and unashamedly about it.
- This is partly also about being more secure in ourselves. Who cares if they disagree with us? We all need to work at being less concerned about what people think of us.

### 4. Share our story, not use clever theological arguments

- People are not interested in clever theology and abstract arguments, so you don't have to worry about that. We are not trying to argue people into the kingdom who don't want to come. But people are interested in you and your story. If you ever do media training or public speaking training, you are taught very quickly that people connect with stories. Jesus taught in parables for the same reason.
- We all have at least one amazing story. There are over 8 billion people in the world, but out of all of them, no one is better placed to explain why and how you became a Christian than you. It is your totally unique story. Even if people aren't interested for themselves, they are often interested in what you believe. In sharing your story and how your faith informs your approach to life, you begin to draw them in.
- **"One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"** (John 9: 25) The blind beggar that Jesus healed didn't have all the theological facts and arguments, but he had the power of his story.
- **"Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."** (Mark 5: 19) Again, the power of your story.
- **"We are not all lawyers, but we are all witnesses."**<sup>12</sup>

### 5. Invite people into a conversation, not convert and forget

- Very few people will go from nowhere to a full conversion in a single conversation. The vast majority who are being called will want to explore, ask questions, take time, think about it and come to a decision. So take the mental pressure off. Your job is not to convert people on the spot and then wave them on their way. Your job is to share your faith and excite interest, and then continue the conversation and invite people to come and meet other Christian friends around your local church to find out more. Over time, in that loving environment they will be able to ask questions and make a decision. This also embeds people in an ongoing context of love and support, without which, even if they make a

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<sup>12</sup> J John, *The Natural Evangelism Course*, (2014)

commitment, they will almost certainly drift away. We are called to make disciples, not converts. (We will learn all about this in Session 5.)

#### 6. Go with others, not alone

- This stuff is really hard to do alone. We are called to go together, to travel alongside others in our churches and small groups who will encourage us, hold us accountable, pray for us and support us. We can really do this as a team, supporting each other.

#### 6. Go in God's strength, not our own

- Most importantly of all, we do all this in God's strength not our own.
- It's not possible for us to do this in our human strength and wisdom. Look at what the disciples, Paul and the early Christians did. They recognised that they did not have the courage or the words to share their faith in their own strength, so they prayed that God would provide these. ***"Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness."*** (Acts 4: 29)
- In all of this we don't go alone. The Holy Spirit is with us and for us and will give us the words to say.

### Conclusion

- So today we have seen ...
  - People need to hear the gospel
  - They will hear it – not through super missionaries – but through you and me
  - We all find this hard
  - But with training and ongoing support we can all do it together
- We have explored the context and understanding of what we are doing in evangelism, and what we are not.
- Therefore in the next few sessions, with that grounding, we will start to get very practical in how we go about doing it.

### HOMEWORK

- Pray to God. Ask for his guidance in how to share your faith. Ask him to show you how you can do this effectively. Listen. Come next time ready to share anything you hear.
- Start identifying not-yet-Christians you know with whom you would like to share the gospel, both individuals and groups you come into contact with regularly. These could be physically at school, college, work, the school gate etc., but also online through social media. Come next time ready to share your list.

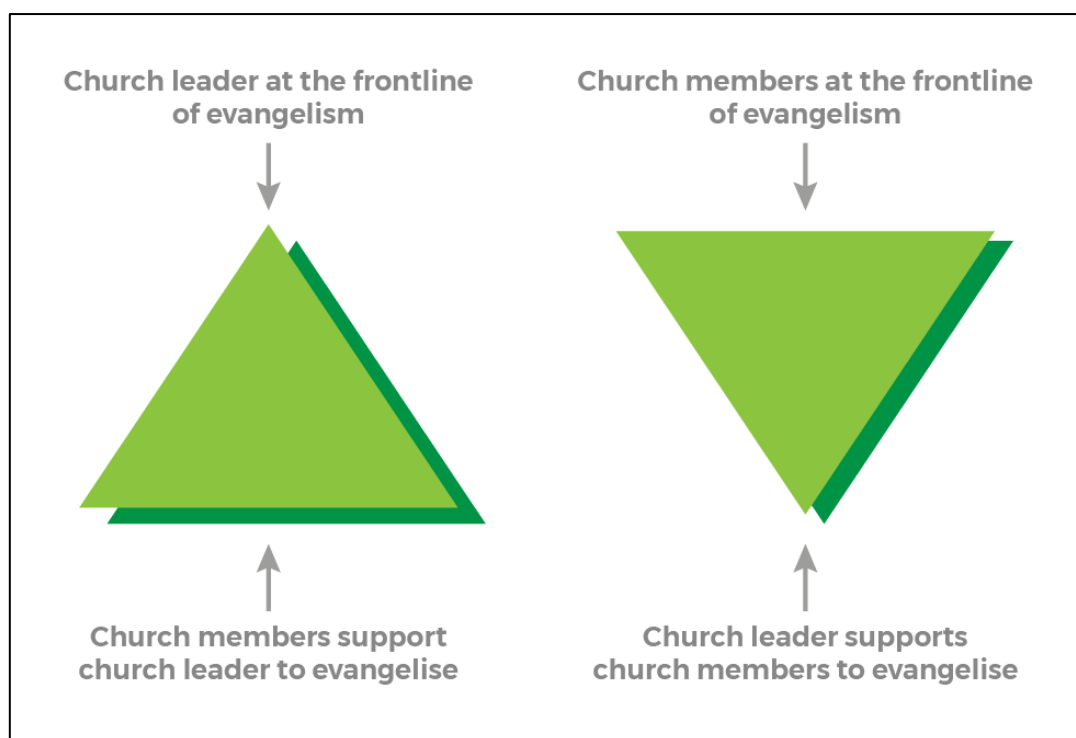
### SIGN UP TO TAKE ACTION WITH ARISE

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# SESSION 2: CONNECT

## TALK 1: GET OUT THERE

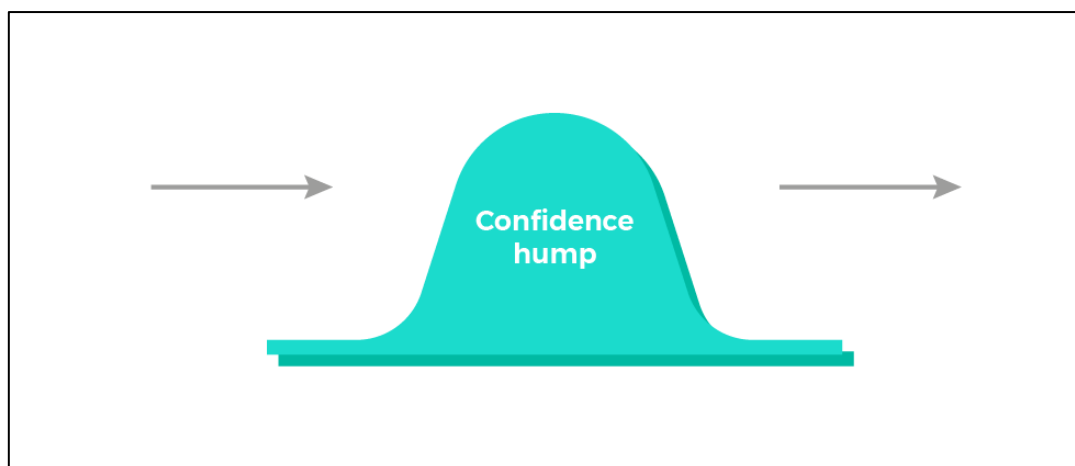
- The sessions in this course broadly follow the arc of a faith sharing conversation  
...
  - Theology
  - Connect
  - Share
  - Apologetics (the questions people raise)
  - Invite
- Last time we set the theological context. Today is focused on Connect and will be very practical about how we reach out to and spend time with not-yet-Christians in our community and beyond. The next three sessions will also be very practical in how to have faith sharing conversations with them.
- If we want to tell people about Jesus, we have to spend significant time with not-yet-Christians. How are we doing with that? This is our first priority – connect.
- It might seem strange to spend a whole session on this, but most not-yet-Christians come to faith by being drawn into a network and community where they interact as friends with Christians and conversations naturally happen. Therefore, putting time into making and strengthening these relationships is absolutely fundamental.
- How much of your time do you spend with Christians and how much do you spend with not-yet-Christians?
- Often churches can get this the wrong way around. The demands in running a local church are so great that (despite all the best intentions) all the emphasis on serving God can end up being through helping with the kids church, the youth work, joining the worship group, the coffee rota, the welcome team etc. As Christians, we can easily end up spending all our time helping out in church and all our social life with other Christians. In fact for the vast majority of us, our mission field is out there in the real world and in our daily lives surrounded by not-yet-Christians. We come to church to rest and be refreshed in order to go out again.
- Smaller numbers of us are of course called to serve in the church as church leaders. But their job is as servant leaders. They are the bottom of an inverted triangle, supporting the rest of us to get out into our communities and world and transform it. It shouldn't be the church members who support the leaders to evangelise. That's a much more inefficient model. The church leaders should be the ones amongst us who do the least evangelism.



- So, if the vast majority of our calling and time is to be out there in our community and the world, we need to be out there with as much of our time as possible making lots of friends and connections.
- Remember, even formerly 'Christian' countries are now largely secularised. Growing numbers have had virtually no contact with the church whatsoever. They won't come to us; we need to go to them.
- In our last session we learnt that we shouldn't just be thinking about targeting one or two people, but going far and wide, making lots of friendships and connections, providing lots of opportunities to hear, and see who responds. We should be open to sharing our faith with everyone we encounter, expecting that most of those won't go deeper, but many will. And these will probably not be the ones we expect.
- Think of the opportunities you have already. Who do you come into contact with in an average week? This might be through school, university, work, social clubs, old friends, family, extended family, neighbours, friends, social media and online communities, parents at the school gate, the gym, people in the retirement home we live in, the old friends on the Christmas card list, familiar faces on the commute, the regulars you meet out dog walking, familiar faces in shops, cafés or libraries etc. These will be many of the people we thought about in our homework from the last session.
- Jesus always went to the most socially excluded. God loves everyone. So make a special effort to befriend the lonely, the poor, the marginalised, the unpopular, those society rejects, that no one else will bother with.
- Don't even worry about sharing faith at the moment. Just make the connection.
- Our connection must be founded on genuine love and interest in the people around us, not just as a means of 'winning converts'. Being positively engaged in our community is part of living a restored kingdom lifestyle anyway, and it is worth doing even if people don't come to faith. If we are doing this just to win converts, then people will see right through us.

## TALK 2: WHAT'S STOPPING US GETTING OUT THERE AND HOW DO WE GET OVER THOSE OBSTACLES?

- So if we need to get out there more and spend more time interacting with not-yet-Christians, what is stopping us and how can we change that?
- Usually two things are stopping us ...
  - Time
  - Being reserved
- **Time**
  - Our biggest blocker to this is time. We live in a time precious, busy society.
  - Once again intentionality is everything. We have to choose to prioritise connecting with people, and put time into it or it won't happen.
  - People are what matter; friendships, relationships etc. These are the things that you look back on in life and cherish. They are worth investing time.
  - Social time with friends and family is not a distraction from your work of following Jesus, it is your work of following Jesus. Therefore mentally give yourself permission to prioritise this, as Jesus did.
  - Review your week. How are you spending your time? What could you change to make more time? Where is there wasted time in your life that you could use? E.g. dead time on the daily commute, watching too much TV in the evenings, lunch breaks at work, doing solitary keep fit exercise when you could do it in community with others etc. Maybe you are spending all your time in church on church activities with other Christians? Do you need to give up some things to make time?
  - As well as planned time, welcome the interruption. This might be someone chatting with you on a bus, someone in need on the street, a long phone call from a friend or family member when you are really busy etc. This is usually an opportunity. When it happens, spot it, don't be frustrated, embrace the moment and look for the opportunity. This is very much what Jesus did.
- **Being reserved**
  - Some of us are naturally sociable extroverts and find connecting with people easy. However, many (even most?) of us are naturally more reserved and find it harder.
  - Don't worry about that. Embrace the person God made you to be. We can all find ways of connecting with others which are natural for us and feel comfortable.
  - The only thing we all have to do is take the first step and reach out to make new connections. Once again, intentionality is everything.
  - **Confidence hump** – for many of us who are naturally introverted we have to make a first effort to throw ourselves over the confidence hump and reach out to new people. That first moment might feel awkward. We just have to summon up the courage and do it, and get over that confidence hump. Once we have made the opening move, the rest will be easy. And each time we do it, it will get easier. We will talk more about this in the next session.



- Make it easy. What kind of things could you do to make that first connection with the groups you have identified? Join a club or evening class in an area you find interesting. This way you can have a lot of fun and enjoy yourself at the same time as making new friends. Strike up conversations with familiar faces on your daily commute, the regulars you meet out dog walking or familiar faces in shops, cafés or libraries. Get to know them. Go through your Christmas card list or those people on Facebook you are friends with but haven't properly spoken to in years. Make time to restart old friendships you value. Call them, send a text, email or contact them through social media suggesting you meet up. Invite the neighbours around for coffee, dinner or a party? We really should know the people on our streets. Be honest about it, "We were thinking the other day that we should have made more of an effort to get to know you when we moved in. Would you like to come round for dinner?" etc. Join a political party and get involved in local politics. Suggest a weekly coffee with other parents you see at the school gate. Make an effort to socialise with work colleagues at lunch time or after work. Etc.

### TALK 3: WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OUT THERE?

#### What are the needs out there?

- We live in a broken world where there is much pain and need.
- The people we are connecting with will each have their own needs, pain and brokenness in other areas of their life, as well as not knowing God.
- How are we helping to meet the other needs of the people we are connecting with in a practical way, so that we are meeting the holistic needs of the person, as well as sharing our faith? This is a powerful witness. As you demonstrate your love practically you will create opportunities for sharing your love verbally through the gospel, which we will explore further in the next session.
- The early church grew mainly because of the love they showed to one another and their communities. So for example, we read that in Jerusalem, ***"there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need."*** (Acts 4: 34 – 35) Later the early church father Tertullian (160 – 220 AD) reported how

non-believers would remark **“See how they love one another!”**,<sup>13</sup> whilst the Emperor Julian (331 – 361 AD), who brutally opposed Christianity, complained how **“These impious Galileans (Christians) not only feed their own poor, but ours also”**.<sup>14</sup>

- Today this might mean lending a good listening ear to those in pain; offering lifts to those who need them; visiting people in hospital; lending money in a time of crisis; just being there for lonely friends (we live in an increasingly lonely society where people are crying out for human connection and don't know how to get it); helping people with DIY; baby-sitting; taking the kids off the hands of busy parents for a while; going to a meeting at the job centre with someone, or any one of a million ways that we can express our love for the whole person.
- As we saw in the last session, whilst this course focuses on verbally sharing the gospel, we also need to meet other needs, as part of holistically advancing the kingdom of God. Signing up with Arise, who developed this course, is a great way of going deeper in all these areas and helping meet the holistic needs of your friends and family. Just go to [www.ariseuk.org/sign-up](http://www.ariseuk.org/sign-up)

### Prayer

- Now that we have thought about how to get out there, addressed the issues that are stopping us getting out there, and reflected on the needs of those who are out there, the final thing to do before sharing our faith is commit to pray regularly for those out there; that God would draw them to him and into faith.
- Nothing will happen without prayer and all witness begins in prayer. We should all begin praying regularly every day for the people we are coming into contact with, that they might become Christians, but also for their wider needs as well. We should commit to praying regularly for them as small groups.

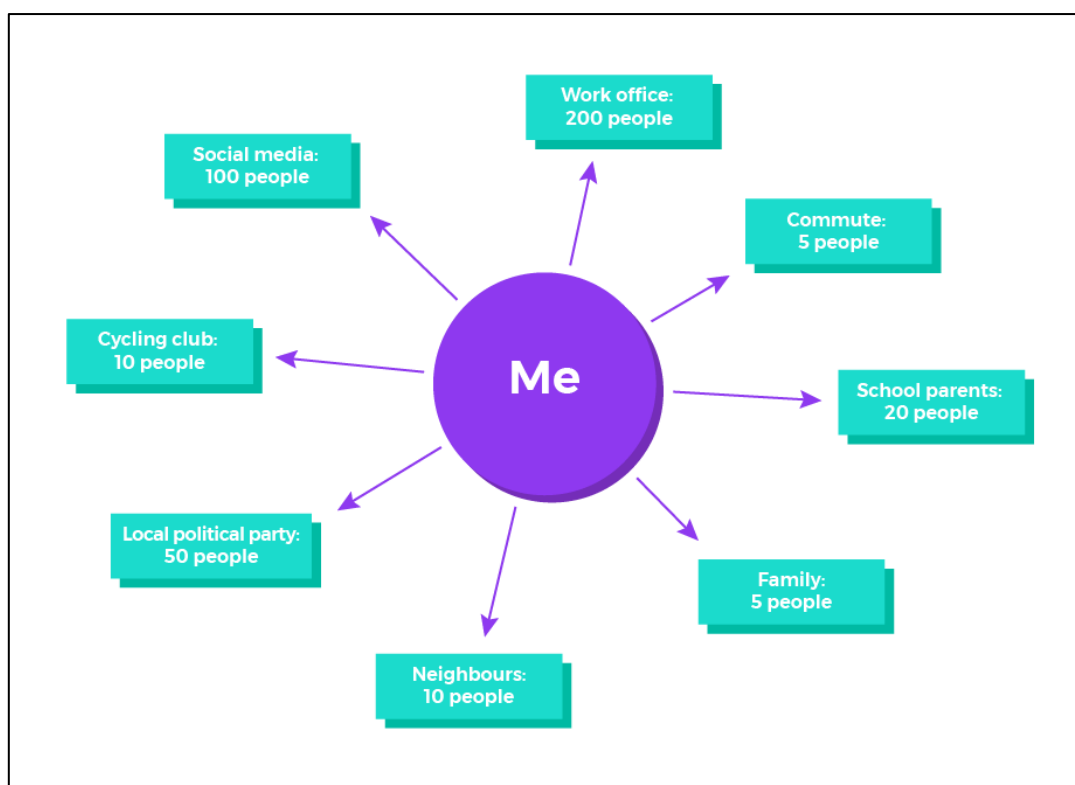
### HOMEWORK

- What will you stop? How will you clear space in your diary to spend more time with not-yet-Christians? Put it into practice before the next session.
- Which new group will you reach out to, to expand your network of not-yet-Christian friends? What first step will you take to do this? Put it into practice before the next session.
- What needs amongst your friends will you help to meet? Perhaps start with just one thing? Put it into practice before the next session.
- **Personal mission map** – Put all of this together by drawing your own personal mission map, with you in the middle and branches going out to the groups you are involved in, with the rough number of people in each. Make sure you add in any new groups you have decided to reach out to.
- Start praying for the people you have identified in your network/personal mission map, both the ones you are in touch with already, and the new ones you will reach out to.

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<sup>13</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, (197), 39: 7

<sup>14</sup> Julian, *Letter to Arsacius*, (c 362)



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# SESSION 3: SHARE

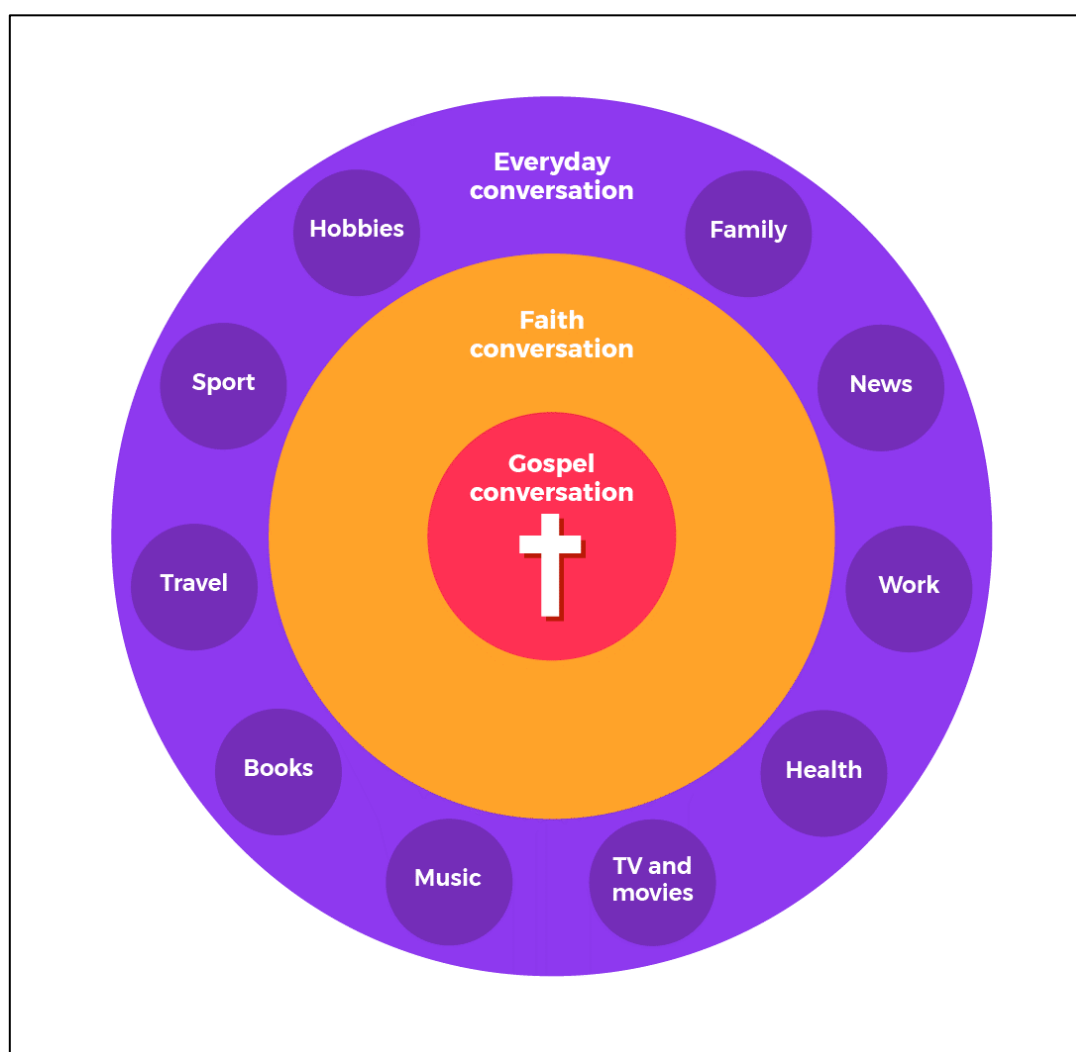
## TALK 1: SPOT/CREATE THE OPPORTUNITY AND THE COURAGE TO SPEAK OUT

### Structure of a faith sharing conversation

- The sessions in this course broadly follow the arc of a faith sharing conversation  
...
  - Theology
  - Connect
  - Share
  - Apologetics (the questions people raise)
  - Invite
- In the last session we looked at what we can do to create a wider circle of not-yet-Christians to connect with. Today we will look at how we begin to Share our faith with them.
- **The periphery and core model** – This is a model to help us understand the two phases these conversations usually have. The outer circle is where normal ‘Everyday conversation’ happens. These are the conversations that happen naturally anyway as we talk with those around us, on topics like ...
  - Family
  - Work
  - News items, politics or moral issues
  - TV programmes and movies
  - Hobbies and interests
  - Sport
  - Travel
  - Books
  - Music
  - Suffering, loss, ill-health
- The next circle is ‘Faith conversation’. This is all about spotting and creating opportunities in ‘Everyday conversations’ to introduce an element of faith or a spiritual conversation, and thus move the conversation further inwards to become a ‘Faith conversation.’ This might be by telling people you went to church at the weekend, talking about a Christian book you have just read, asking them if they have ever prayed etc. Remember what we learnt in our first session. Our job is not to convince those who are not open. Our job is to find those who God is calling today and are therefore already open. Those who are not ready today will not ‘bite’ on the opening to a ‘Faith conversation’ and will

turn back and return the conversation to an 'Everyday conversation'. That's fine, just let it go and carry on chatting as normal. However, those who are open and are being called today will respond to your opening and go deeper in the conversation.

- We have begun a 'Faith conversation', but we are not truly evangelising until we are talking about Jesus, the cross and the resurrection, the core of the gospel. So having introduced an element of faith into the conversation, we then need to quickly bridge from this into a core 'Gospel conversation' and talk about Jesus. If this sounds a bit daunting and the inner two circles don't fully make sense at the moment, don't worry. We are going to work with this model through the rest of this session, and it will make sense by the end.



- Another way of looking at this model is that it represents you. As a Christian at the very core of your life the most important thing is your relationship with God. This is only possible through Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection. If we are truly following God and being good disciples, this will have an impact on every aspect of our lives. This applies from the core, right out into the areas of your life touched on in the everyday conversations at the edge of the circle.
- Therefore, in sharing our faith we need to be thinking about two things ...
  1. Spotting/creating the opportunity and having the courage to speak out to move 'Everyday conversations' into 'Faith conversations'.

2. Bridging and moving from the edge to the core to move 'Faith conversations' into 'Gospel conversations'. Basically keep bringing it back to Jesus.
- That is what we will look at in today's session.
  - Before we start, it is worth pausing to reflect on two common misapprehensions when we think about sharing our faith in this way. That this kind of approach can feel ...
    1. Manipulative, like we have a hidden agenda in our conversation.
    2. Unnatural and artificial rather than just allowing conversation to flow naturally.
  - We have seen that everyone needs to hear the gospel, and that all of us are called to share the gospel. We therefore have three options in how we approach sharing the gospel with people ...
    1. We can be reactive only, just living good moral lives and waiting for people to ask us.
    2. We can be proactive and just explain the gospel to everyone whether they ask us or not.
    3. Or we can take a middle road, like in this model, where we look to create opportunities in everyday conversations to move towards talking about the gospel of Jesus.
  - Option 1
    - By taking the time to connect with people, as we learnt about in our last session, we will indeed find that people will ask us about our faith and some opportunities will come naturally.
    - However, as we have also seen in each session, intentionality is everything.
    - Usually faith sharing conversations won't just happen unless we are intentional about them. We can't just be reactive and wait for opportunities to happen. We also need to be proactive in helping create many more.
  - Option 2
    - There are opportunities where we can just go straight in and explain the gospel, and we will consider some of these later.
    - However, think about most of the interactions you have with friends. This would seem very strange and unusual behaviour if every time you walked up to someone you opened your mouth and out of nowhere started to talk about Jesus' death and resurrection. It isn't how Jesus or the disciples did it. It also goes against everything the experts would tell us about communications theory. You are just broadcasting at people what you think, rather than what is far more effective; genuinely taking an interest in the other person, and listening and starting with what they care about and then bridging from that into what you think is important.
  - Option 3
    - Therefore, most sharing conversations have to follow a simple structure, such as Option 3 and the model we are exploring today.
    - This will feel clunky and unnatural at first – don't worry about that. Faith sharing conversations are slightly different to normal conversations which just go where they will. In faith sharing conversations, you are proactively trying to make certain points. In professional communications training to do good media interviews, participants are taught that rather than just naturally answering the questions they are

asked, as you would in a normal conversation, they should remember 'ABC' – Acknowledge the question, Bridge to the point you want to make, and Communicate your point. This can feel very clunky and artificial to the participant, but that is not how it comes across to others. To them it appears totally natural. It is the same with sharing our faith. It is like learning to drive, learning a new language or learning a musical instrument. They all feel unnatural and awkward at first. It is practice, practice, practice that over time means they come to feel natural, comfortable, confident and familiar. So don't worry if this feels artificial and uncomfortable at first, go with it and it will become more natural and instinctive/unthinking over time.

- Remember this model also represents you. It is true that the most amazing thing in your life that influences everything else is your faith. Remember the gospel is 'good news'. In fact, going round *not* talking about it is what is weird. The thing that holds you back is the social pressure not to talk about it. If you had found the cure for cancer, won the lottery, just got engaged or had a baby, you wouldn't be able to shut up about it. This model is actually a way of helping you get your thoughts in order and unleash, not hide, the real you. It helps you talk about what you really believe naturally and authentically, rather than hide or repress it.
- Also, don't worry about this being manipulative or about us unwantedly 'Bible-bashing'. The other person is always in control of the conversation. They can stop it at any stage, whether in the introduction, or talking about Jesus at the core. If they do, we should respect that, back off and carry on the conversation talking about other things. Remember we are fishers, creating opportunities for people to respond. Many won't respond and many will. Don't worry, respect that either way.
- This is a very Biblical model. Jesus and the disciples did it, and it is how faith sharing conversations usually happen in the New Testament. We will look at three examples, but there are many more.
- Jesus
  - ***"So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon."*** (John 4: 5 – 6) Even before he has met anyone, Jesus is choosing to position himself in a communal place where he will have the opportunity to connect with people, as we saw in our last session.
  - ***"When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?'"*** (John 4: 7) Jesus is proactive in making the connection, an everyday conversation.
  - ***"Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'"*** (John 4: 10) Jesus is proactive in turning an everyday conversation into a faith conversation, moving further inwards in the circles model.
  - ***"Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'"*** (John 4: 13 – 14) Jesus is proactive in bridging from a faith conversation into a gospel conversation at the core.

- John 4: 15 following – The conversation goes where it will, guided by the Holy Spirit.
- **Philip**
  - ***“Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ Philip asked.”*** (Acts 8: 30) Philip connects with the Ethiopian eunuch and creates a faith conversation at the edge of the circle.
  - ***“Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.”*** (Acts 8: 35) Philip moves the conversation inwards to a gospel conversation at the core. He brought it back to Jesus.
  - Acts 8: 36 following – The conversation goes where it will, guided by the Holy Spirit.
- **Paul**
  - ***“All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.”*** (Acts 17: 21) Paul engages with an everyday conversation.
  - ***“Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: ‘People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD ...’*** (Acts 17: 22 – 23) Paul moves the everyday conversation inwards to a faith conversation.
  - ***“So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.”*** (Acts 17: 23) Paul brings the faith conversation inwards to a gospel conversation at the core. He brought it back to Jesus.
  - Acts 17: 24 following – The conversation goes where it will, guided by the Holy Spirit.
- **The golden rule: personalise it** – Before we get into the mechanics of spotting and creating opportunities, there is one golden rule about everything that follows – personalise it. Remember your job is not to explain what an orthodox Christian position is or to introduce people to Christian theology. Your job is to tell people about the Jesus you have met and experienced, why you believe what you believe, why you do what you do.

### **Spotting the opportunities**

- As we saw in the last session, just by being a good friend and reaching out in love, you are already creating the fertile soil for opportunities to come up naturally in conversation.
- We need to be ready to spot these. If your eyes are open and you are looking for these opportunities, you will feel the Holy Spirit's prompting when one of these comes along.
- ***“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect”*** (1 Peter 3: 15)
- So, what are some common opportunities that might come up? Here are some examples ...
  - **“What did you do at the weekend/last night etc.?”** – If you have been to church or a church activity, this is a great opportunity to talk about it.
  - **Comments prompted by your life being a witness** – Following Jesus may lead us to take financial, career or lifestyle decisions which seem

strange to not-yet-Christians, and should hopefully lead us to be kind, encouraging, supportive etc. All of these can prompt questions or compliments. This is a great opportunity to explain how your faith motivates you.



- **“You’re a Christian aren’t you?”** – Another great opportunity to begin a faith conversation.
- **Supernatural, spirituality, other religions or superstition** – Any mention of these issues is an obvious opportunity to ask someone if they think of themselves as spiritual or have any sort of faith. Do this in a way which opens up a conversation, rather than just explaining why they are wrong, as this can shut things down. Many people don’t think of themselves as religious, but would consider themselves ‘spiritual’, and be open to discussions around spirituality.
- **Outrageous comments** – Don’t let statements that you totally disagree with because of your faith go unanswered. They are another great opportunity for a faith conversation. But respond graciously, not aggressively, explaining why your personal beliefs lead you to disagree.

- **“What’s wrong with the world?”** – You often hear sentiments like this come up when discussing some news story or sad topic. They are a great opportunity to graciously begin to talk about what you believe.
- **Wearing a Christian symbol** – Wearing a fish lapel badge, necklace or bracelet, or some other Christian symbol, can lead to people asking about it, creating natural opportunities.

### **Creating the opportunities**

- However, we don't need to just be reactive and make the most of opportunities when they come up, we can also be proactive and choose to create opportunities anytime we want. It is within our power and control to do this.
- So how do we create those opportunities? Think about the diagram. The cross is at the centre of God's big story, and hence of all of life. The diagram also represents you. Your faith is the most important aspect of your life, at its very centre. It will (or should) be having an influence on every area of your life. (Remember we want to keep this personal.) So all we need to do is think about the topic we are discussing on the periphery and consider how our faith influences our views on the topic or what we do, and then bring that into the conversation. When we do this, we immediately move that everyday conversation naturally into a faith conversation, and create an opportunity for the other person to respond if they want to. (We should do this with ***“gentleness and respect”*** as the Bible says. (1 Peter 3: 15) So, if our faith leads us to have certain perspectives on a subject, or leads us to follow some form of behaviour in our life, we need to talk about that in a way which doesn't make the other person feel like we are judging them.) Following this model, we will find we can talk about what we believe and who we are in a way that is natural and relevant to the conversation we are having, and will be of interest to many people. Mentally we will find this really helps. We are not just passively waiting for the relevant conversation to come up. All conversation is relevant. We are on our home turf already. If we keep this model in mind, we will all have the ability to turn any everyday conversation into a faith conversation whenever we choose to.
- Here are some ways we might do this ...
  - **Family** – How has your faith influenced things you do as a family? How can you introduce it into a conversation about the family by talking about some of your practices?
  - **Work** – How has your faith influenced your career and aspiration? How does it influence how you deal with frustrations in the work place? There are lots of creative ways to introduce faith to a conversation about work.
  - **Politics, news items or moral issues** – Humbly suggest what you think is right for the situation and explain how you come to that position from your faith. Do this in a way that is opening up a conversation and getting people to think, not just saying what we believe in a judgemental fashion that shuts down discussion.
  - **TV programmes and movies** – Many contain stories and modern myths which have huge resonances with God's big story in scripture. Think of some examples that you can link back to your faith to bring into the conversation.
  - **Hobbies and interests** – What are your hobbies and interests? Are they informed and shaped by your faith in anyway? Think of ways you can raise your faith in these conversations.





- **Sport** – Are there Christian sportsmen and women you know of? What are some of the moral issues in the sport you are discussing at the moment? Do you have a church football team? How do you balance involvement in sport and church at the weekend?
- **Travel** – Is there anywhere in the Bible you would love to visit? Introduce it to the conversation and explain why. Do you choose not to fly or fly less because your faith leads you to care about climate change? Another opportunity.
- **Books** – Ask what people are reading at the moment. Talk about a Christian book you have read.
- **Music** – Ask what people are listening to at the moment? Are there famous musicians that are Christians? Talk about Christian music.
- **Suffering, loss, ill-health** – All of us experience this at some stage in our lives. This is a topic that can come up often with different friends and family members. There are sensitive ways you can raise your faith. Offer to pray. Listen and gently share thoughts you have found helpful, coming from your faith perspective. Offer to connect them with the leaders of your church to talk or receive support if they might find that helpful.

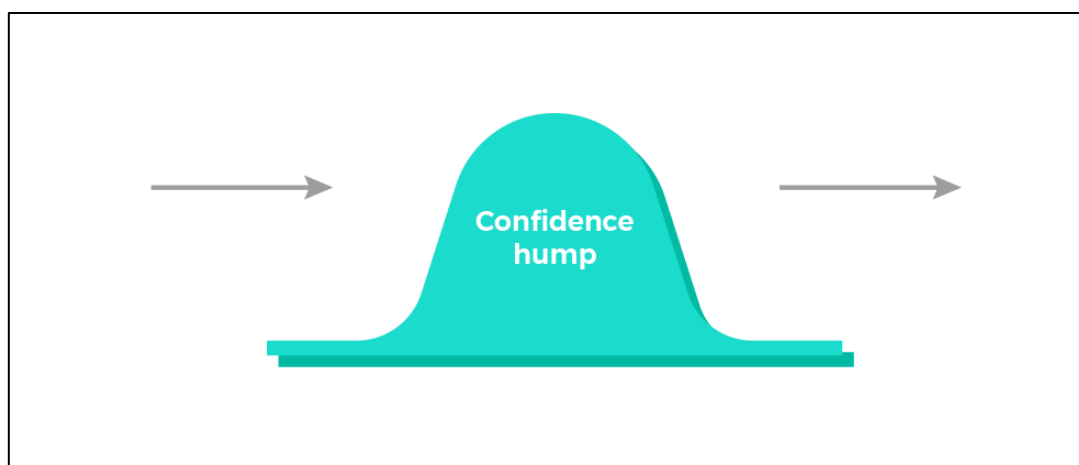


- These are just some ways to create opportunities, but we can find the right way to do so in the moment. Remember if we keep it personal and think about how our faith influences the topic we are discussing in our lives, we will always be able to find a natural way in, without having to remember lots of different opening lines.
- As you are in conversation with friends and family you can also be praying. Ask God to show you how to turn this everyday conversation into a faith conversation.
- As well as taking this approach of creating opportunities by turning everyday conversations into faith conversations, there are some other approaches to starting faith conversations that you might want to think about.
  - **Social media and online communities** – In the modern world many of us will be active online in multiple social media and online communities. Everything we are covering in this session can apply equally well to online interactions as to physical conversations. However, in addition, there are other online opportunities to spark faith and gospel conversations through the things we post, especially Christian content. It is good to vary these with posts on other topics, to follow both Christian and not-yet-Christian friends and to comment and engage with discussion threads in constructive ways.
  - **Honest conversation with good friends and family** – There may well be some friends and family you know really well who you have never had a gospel conversation with. In these situations you have earned the right to have that conversation. You might want to pray and consider whether you should approach them and ask if they would mind talking about this. In fact we recommend you do. This might be something along the lines of ... “You know I am a Christian, and I was thinking the other day I have never really talked with you about what I believe or why. Would you mind if we had a coffee or dinner and I just shared with you a bit about that? I’m not trying to ‘Bible-bash’ you and we never need to talk about it again if you don’t want to, but I would hate for us to have never really talked about this when it means so much to me.” This may feel a bit strange at first, but with those you know well and who love you, an honest direct approach like this can break out of a pattern where something is just never talked about. After that initial conversation, do keep trying to create opportunities for further conversations, if they are open to it.
  - **Can I pray for you?** – If you hear someone describe a situation of pain or need, as well as offering to help practically you can offer to pray. Pray with them in the moment if they are happy for you to do so, or commit to pray for them afterwards if not. People always appreciate this and are touched even if they don’t believe. This is a great way of starting a faith conversation.
  - **Miracles** – In the New Testament, miracles are often the way sharing conversations begin. If someone has given you permission to pray for them for a health issue, be open to the fact that you might see immediate healing. Do ask them how they feel after you have prayed. Alternatively you could talk about something miraculous you have experienced, or someone you know has experienced, or ask them if they have ever experienced something like that. It is much more common than we think, and people are far more open to the possibility than we think. It is a great way to open a faith conversation.

- **Spirituality** – As already mentioned, most people today don't think of themselves as 'religious' but may well think of themselves as 'spiritual'. Therefore, if you introduce an element of spirituality into the conversation, then ask them "Are you a particularly spiritual person?" This can be a great opener.
- We shouldn't overdo this. The vast majority of our conversations with our not-yet-Christian friends won't be spiritual ones. We don't want to turn into a crushing bore that turns every topic back to Jesus every time. That wouldn't be a great witness. However, some of our conversations can be on this. Aim for ...
  - Initially one spiritual conversation a week, usually with different people, not always the same person, so we don't bore them.
  - Increase this gradually to one a day, usually with different people, not always the same person, so we don't bore them.
- This all begins in prayer. In your prayer time each morning think about when you will be spending time interacting with not-yet-Christians during the day (meetings, going to the office, lunch breaks, phone calls to friends and family members, meeting up with friends for coffee, evening classes etc.). Pray for an opportunity. Pray that God will help you create an opportunity. Build this into your daily prayer routine so you go into these times proactively seeking to spot and create opportunities. Then, as you go through your day, try and remember to have your spiritual radar switched on. When you are with not-yet-Christians you can ask God, "Who is here that you would like me to talk to about Jesus?" You will be surprised how often you get a strong sense and feel guided to a particular individual by the Holy Spirit. God already knows who is open to hearing more about him on any particular day and can lead us straight to them.

### **Courage to open your mouth**

- Whether we are spotting an opportunity or creating an opportunity, we are going to have to open our mouths and choose to speak about our faith.
- **Confidence hump** – Many of us find this hard. There is no way around this, we have to just summon up our courage and go for it. It will always feel awkward when you first start to do this. Just accept that; don't feel guilty. It might sound awkward to our own ears, but to others it doesn't at all, it seems perfectly natural. In the last session we talked about the confidence hump and this applies here as well.



- You have to just throw yourself over it. Remember, this is the hardest bit. Once you have made a start, the rest of the conversation will be easy. Also, the more often and regularly you throw yourself over that hump, the smaller it gets and the easier it becomes. Once you are in the habit of doing this, you will be away. You will take off and feel great liberation and excitement.
- What God wants from us is the courage to open our mouth and do our best. After that first step, he will help provide the words to say by his Holy Spirit.

### General points to consider whether spotting or creating an opportunity

- **Be patient with yourself** – It will take a bit of time for this to work smoothly and feel natural to you. It will feel awkward at first. You will duck it and make mistakes. Have a lot of grace and patience with yourself. God is delighted that you are trying. Don't worry if you feel you have had a go and you didn't do well, you have messed up. You have had the courage to have a go. That is what really matters to God. You will get the hang of it and it will start to feel natural and become second nature quicker than you think.
- **Go together** – As we have already mentioned, this stuff is very hard to do alone. We should continue to do it together, being accountable to each other, encouraging each other and praying for each other as we step out and share more and more. Small groups are the perfect forum for this. Try checking in with each other each time you meet. How many sharing conversations have you had this week?
- **Avoid jargon** – In all our conversation we should try to avoid Christian jargon which doesn't mean anything to not-yet-Christians.
- **Ask questions** – we should see this as a genuine conversation, rather than as a one-way download of information. Ask questions and show an interest in the other person. This also fits with good education and communications theory. People personalise and engage when they have to think through what they believe about something, rather than just hear a monologue.
- **Pray and listen to God throughout your conversation** – As you are in discussion be silently praying and listening to God. Communication needs to be tailored to the audience. Be asking God, "Where is this person at?" "What do they need to hear today?" Then follow your gut instinct in how you engage in the conversation and what you say.
- **Don't get sucked into judgemental conversation about personal morality** – The Biblical model of discipleship is that Jesus meets people where they are and loves them as they are. All they require is repentance and faith in him to start their walk with him. Jesus does not require them to sort their lifestyles out before they come to know him. That happens through a slow process of discipleship and personal conviction afterwards. Therefore, avoid putting these hurdles before people by getting sucked into a long conversation on controversial personal morality points. This will turn people off, not attract them.

## TALK 2: BRIDGING AND MOVING FROM THE EDGE TO THE CORE

### Bridging from a 'Faith conversation' to a 'Gospel conversation'

- Having looked at how we get started and move 'Everyday conversations' into 'Faith conversations', now let's think about how we bridge from a 'Faith conversation' into a 'Gospel conversation'.

- We need to try and do this quickly, straight away if possible. If we aren't talking about Jesus and the core of the gospel, we aren't really evangelising. Our faith is not a religion or a series of theological positions, but a relationship with Jesus. Keep bringing it back to Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.
- Again intentionality is everything. This won't just happen. We need to think about how we will do it.
- There are many ways of doing this, and you might be able to think of many of them, but we are going to suggest two ways to focus on now.
- **Ask about their faith** – By starting a faith conversation you have just raised the issue of faith. Depending on the response, a natural and unthreatening next step is to ask them whether they have any kind of faith or belief. This is really helpful as it is a question which shows a genuine interest in people. We want to be drawing people into a two-way conversation, not just broadcasting one-way at them. This is how Jesus often did things, by posing questions and inviting people to think. Whatever the person says, it is important that we don't confront it and tell them why they are wrong, but affirm it, and then in the conversation that follows, help them to go deeper from where they are. Remember, our mind-set is not that we are 'Christians' and they are 'non-Christians' (i.e. we have to convince them why they are wrong), but rather we are Christians and they are 'not-yet Christians'. With this framing we are all on the same journey to deeper faith in Christ. We are further along, but atheists, agnostics, Hindus, Muslims etc. can all be on that same journey. An atheist is a seeker after truth and evidence – that's great, so are we; we can build on that. An agnostic is open-minded – that's great, so are we; we can explore further with them. A Hindu already recognises there is a spiritual side to life and believes in spiritual beings – that's great, so do we; we have a lot of common understanding not shared by atheists and agnostics that we can build on. A Muslim already knows there is only one God and that Jesus is a major prophet – that's great, so do we. In each case, we can affirm what they already believe, but help them further along the road by showing there is more. Finally having asked someone about their faith, a very natural next step would be to explain ours, and thus we have bridged into a gospel conversation. This leads us straight into sharing our testimony as a natural next step in this conversation to explain how we came to believe what we believe.
- **Explain 'Why'** – Another way we can all easily bridge from a faith conversation to a gospel conversation is to explain the 'why'. If we look at our diagram again, remember we said this can illustrate us as well as our conversations. The cross is at the centre of our lives as the most important thing that ultimately has an impact on all of our life. We then saw how we could turn an everyday conversation into a faith conversation by thinking about how our faith influences our views or approach to any everyday topic we are discussing. Having made that initial comment, if the other person is open and interested, we can then bridge into the gospel core by explaining 'why' our faith leads us to that view or behaviour. Keep bringing it back to Jesus. Our whole faith is based on Jesus and his death and resurrection, so ultimately anything we do or any view we hold that is influenced by our faith finds its ultimate explanation in Jesus. So the key to easily bridging from a faith conversation to a gospel conversation is to think about why the view or behaviour you have expressed in the faith conversation finds its ultimate explanation in the gospel and explain that. Again we can see why keeping the conversation personal, rather than

abstract and theological, makes this easier. Once more, this leads us straight into sharing our testimony. It's a natural next step in the conversation.



### Your Testimony

- So, we've considered some ways we might bridge from a faith conversation into a gospel conversation, now let's think about what we might say in a gospel conversation.
- We strongly suggest that you should aim to include two elements: your own testimony in brief, and a simple explanation of the heart of the gospel. Obviously, it won't always be possible to cover all of this in every conversation, but try and include as much as you can, always providing, of course, that you don't overwhelm the other person.
- We will consider both of these separately and then think about how we can bring them together. First, let's look at our own testimony.
- We saw in our first session how powerful story and your personal testimony is. People love people, people love stories, and you won't need to struggle to remember it. Your passion will shine through naturally.
- Remember that a story has a beginning, a middle and an end. In our testimony this means explaining ...
  - What we believed before we found Jesus

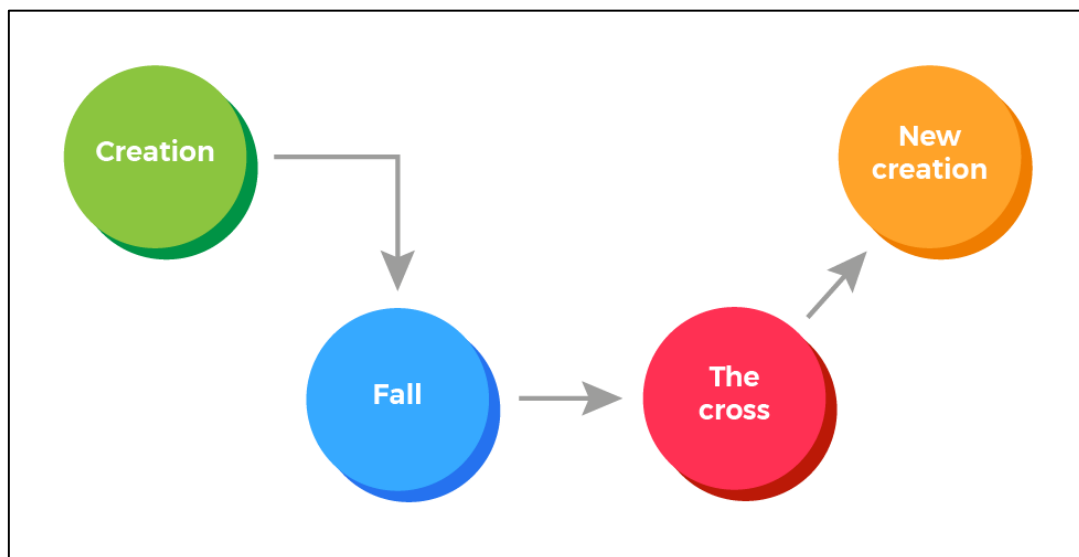
- How we found Jesus, and
  - What our life has been like since
- By starting from what we believed before we found Jesus, we avoid confrontation between 'Christians' who are right, and 'non-Christians' who are wrong. The reality is, we too were once 'not-yet-Christians' around their side of the table. We are just a little further along the journey. We can tell other fellow travellers what we have found further along the path. "I haven't always been a Christian", "I didn't always go to church", "I never went to church until a few years ago", "When I was younger, going to church was just something I did because my parents took me." All of these points are natural ways to lead on from an initial faith conversation. Some of us weren't raised as Christians and can remember a specific moment where we chose to follow Jesus. Others will have been born and brought up in Christian homes, or might not be able to think of a clear moment when we became a Christian because it was a more gradual process. However it happened; we all have a story. At some point in our lives we made a choice to follow Jesus for the first time, or to continue to follow him, and our faith became more real and alive for us than it was before.
- When we talk about our life since finding Jesus, remember to be honest. Life still has its ups and downs. But deep down we have peace and assurance and know we are loved.
- We need to practice honing our explanation down to just one or two minutes, with a beginning, a middle and an end.
- As well as (or sometimes instead of) our personal story of how we came to faith, we can also share stories of times when we have seen God at work in our lives. It is worth setting aside some time to think, remember a few examples and practice sharing them briefly.

### Explaining the Gospel

- So, having considered briefly how we share our testimony, let's look at how we might explain the core of the gospel and bring it back to Jesus.
- There are a few essential core elements that we need to try and cover. However, there are different entry points and ways of explaining the gospel.
- We are going to look at a few examples, but there are many others.
- Over time as we do this more and become more confident, we will be able to explain the gospel message in different ways to different people, depending on the person and the circumstance, just as Jesus used different approaches to explain the core of the gospel at different times.
- However, for now we encourage you to experiment with these different gospel explanations and find one that you feel comfortable with, can easily remember and that works for you.
- **God's big story** – We covered this in our first session. It has four key elements ...
  1. Creation – God created the world, including us.
  2. Fall – We rebelled against God and messed up the world, breaking our relationship with God, each other and creation.
  3. Redemption – God loved us so much, he came as Jesus to pay the price for our rebellion through his death and resurrection and restore all those relationships. This opened up a way for us to come back to God by saying sorry for the things we have done wrong and choosing to follow him.
  4. Glory – Jesus will return to complete the work he began on the cross and restore the whole world to its perfect state.



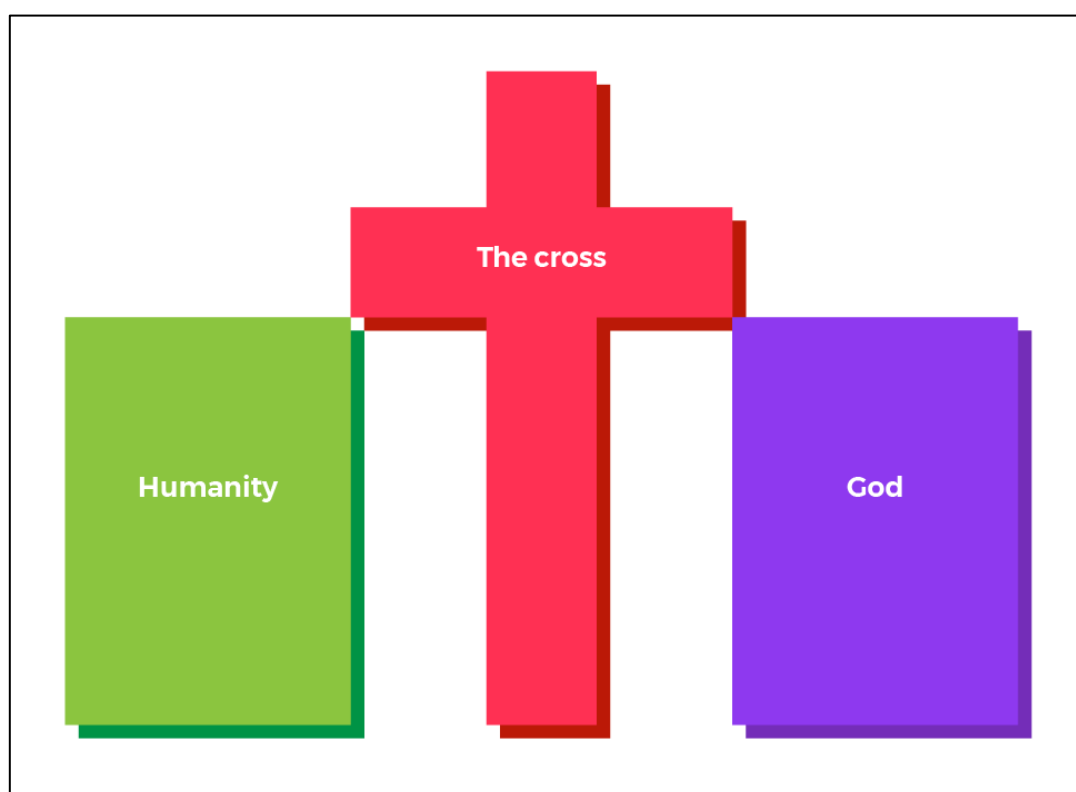
- There are several big advantages to this. First, it is holistic. It covers the entirety of God's big story, rather than being a narrower subset of it, just focusing on 'me'. Second, it is a story. As we have seen throughout this course, human beings love stories. That means it will be easier for you to remember and more natural to tell than any set of abstract theological points. But crucially, it will also be more interesting for people to hear and easier for them to remember. Avoid using the specific terms 'fall', 'redemption' and 'glory'. These are Christian jargon that won't make sense to most people. Just talk about the concepts and use terms like 'messed up/rebelled', 'rescue', 'restore' etc. In this explanation of the gospel (or any other) when you talk about the 'fall' it is better to avoid insisting on a very literal interpretation of this happening at a point in time in the Garden of Eden (even if you believe it). This is so far from modern, universally accepted understandings of science that you place huge barriers to people going further. Some Christians believe in a literal interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis, and some believe they are symbolic. Either way, figuring that out is a process that happens after we come to faith, not before. Instead if we talk about the world being a broken place, that nobody is perfect, and that all of us contribute to that brokenness, that is much easier for people to understand. We only have to switch on our TV screens to see this is true. You can also draw this explanation in a diagram which can help people remember.



- **Four spiritual laws** – This is a classic for evangelists, originally developed by Campus Crusade for Christ in the US in the 1950s, and since used in various forms (but essentially the same core message) by Christians around the world. This explains the gospel as follows ...
  1. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.
  2. Humanity is sinful and separated from God. Therefore, we cannot know and experience God's love and plan for our life.
  3. Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our sin. Through him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.
  4. We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.

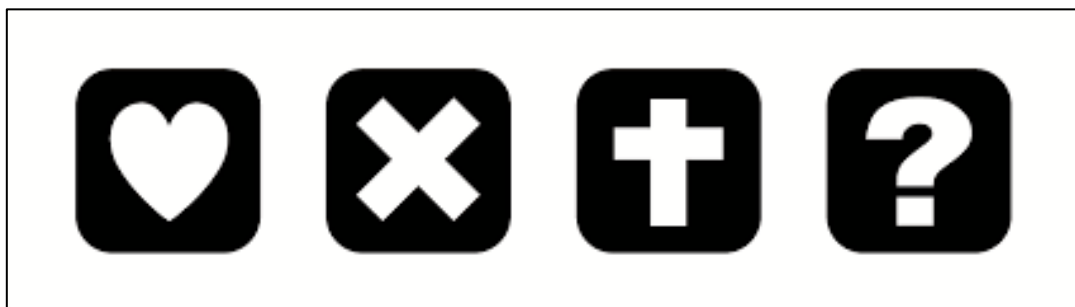


- One of the advantages of this approach is that it makes the gospel very personal. It is all about the recipient, they are at the core. As a result, this approach doesn't cover the entirety of the gospel and God's big story, advancing the kingdom of God and restoring the whole of creation, as per the first approach. (We unpacked that in more detail at the start of Session 1 when we first considered God's big story and our place in it.) Instead, it just focuses on a narrower part of that story, individual salvation. However that is OK. It starts with the individual's need and can begin people on the journey of faith. Through ongoing learning and discipleship, their understanding will expand to see how their personal salvation fits into the wider story of God at work in creation. If you are using this approach, we advise you to find another word to use than 'sin' ('messed up', 'rebelled', 'turned our back on God', 'walked away from God' etc.), as again this is meaningless jargon to anyone who is not yet a Christian. Once again this can be represented as a diagram, drawing humanity and God and the chasm between us – created by sin – as you explain the second law. You can then add the cross as you explain the third law to show that Jesus has provided a way for reconciliation.



- **4 Points** – Essentially this covers the same gospel core as the four spiritual laws, but more simply, in modern language ...
  1. God loves me.
  2. I have sinned.
  3. Jesus died for me.
  4. I need to decide to live for God.
  - This approach also has a diagrammatic way of explaining it. The first point is represented by a heart, the second by an X, the third by the cross

and the last by a question mark. ([www.the4points.com](http://www.the4points.com)) Once again we would encourage you to find a non-jargon alternative word for 'sinned'.



- **Overall theological summary** – This version breaks down God's big story into a few more steps, and adds in more about our life after we become a Christian. It can be useful in talking about having a life of meaning and purpose.
  1. God created the world.
  2. Humanity rebelled against God.
  3. God came in Jesus to reconcile the world to God through his death and resurrection.
  4. As a result, if we say sorry and follow in faith we come back to God.
  5. Now we have a vision, a mission and a purpose to our lives, to follow Jesus in transforming and restoring the world.
  6. Jesus will return and finalise this work.
- **Personalised gospel explanation** – This version explains some key Christian concepts like 'sin' and 'repentance'. It also reorders some of the core steps of the gospel so the logical flow is that because we have all turned away from God, we need to say sorry and come back to him, and then explains that this is possible because of Jesus.
  1. God created humanity and the world.
  2. Humanity turned its back on God and evil (sin) entered the world (just look at world around us, we know this is true).
  3. We need to turn around and come back to him, say sorry (repentance) and begin living as he would have us live.
  4. The reason we can do this is because God came as Jesus to take the punishment for all the wrong we have done.
- **What does it mean to be a Christian?** – This version is framed around a particular question that can often be present in faith and gospel conversations.
  1. Being a Christian is not about being good and perfect – we are all bad (sin).
  2. The heart of being a Christian is about saying sorry (repentance) to God. Then trying our best to follow God and live well.
  3. Christians believe this can happen because God came as Jesus to take the punishment for all the wrong we have done.
- **What will happen to me when I die?** – This version is framed around another common question.
  1. After we die, good people go to be with God (heaven) and bad people go to be without him (hell).
  2. The problem is we are all bad (sin) (just look at world around us, we know this is true). We are all going to be without him.

3. But God didn't want this to happen and therefore came as Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment for all the things we have done wrong.
  4. Therefore, if we say sorry (repentance) we are claiming what Jesus has done for us, all our sins are washed away and we can live with God from now on and go to be with him when we die.
- These are just some of the different ways in which the same core message of the gospel can be explained in short easy steps. There are of course many others, such as the Jesus at the Door card which uses nine questions to guide a conversation through the core of the gospel ([www.jesusatthedoor.com](http://www.jesusatthedoor.com)).
  - All of these models and illustrations of ways to explain the core of the gospel give you the building blocks. You don't have to just rely on these, you can experiment with putting the story together in slightly different ways to find one which works for you.
  - So we should try and convey at least the core of this in our conversation if we can. That is why it is important to try and find ways to explain it clearly, but also briefly. However, remember the other person is always in control of the conversation, so do your best, but don't worry if we don't always have a chance to convey the whole gospel message every time. That's fine.
  - It is worth always having tracts or leaflets on you (kept in a purse or a wallet). You can give these to those you are talking to as part of a gospel conversation. They are also useful for you to refer to, to help you remember the main points of the gospel message. If appropriate look together at the tract and talk them through it as part of your conversation. These can be ordered from organisations like the 4 Points ([www.the4points.com](http://www.the4points.com)), Lifewords ([www.lifewords.global](http://www.lifewords.global)) or Agape ([www.agape.org.uk](http://www.agape.org.uk)), or use specific resources like the Jesus at the Door card ([www.jesusatthedoor.com](http://www.jesusatthedoor.com)). There are plenty of others available online if you just do a search. Many also have equivalent apps for your phone to help you remember and to look at together with a not-yet-Christian as part of your conversation.

### Putting the two together

- The last thing we will look at in this session is how we put your story and the core explanation of the gospel together in a natural way.
- This is important because your story should lead people towards Jesus and a core explanation of the gospel. It is a witness statement that leads towards the discovery of a truth.
- Once again you won't always be able to fully explain all of this every time. Sometimes you will tell your story, sometimes you will explain the core of the gospel, when you can try and do both together. Don't worry if this doesn't happen every time though, that's fine.
- We have said that our decision to follow Jesus has been a three-part story. The middle part is how we met Jesus and chose to follow him. This is where a brief explanation of the gospel would most naturally fit. Think about when you became a Christian. What was it that convinced you when it was explained to you? How was it explained to you? Who explained it to you? Or if you grew up always knowing the gospel message, when did it become real for you? What made you see it in a new way? For example, "Before I was a Christian, I used to believe it was just about being a good person, but then I discovered ...". "My friends explained to me that God had created the world, but we have broken it with our violence, selfishness, consumerism etc. We are all to blame. It just

made so much sense to me ...". Thus, when you explain what it was that convinced you to follow Jesus, this is a natural place for you to fit in a brief explanation of the core of the gospel into your testimony. This whole approach, once again, has the huge advantage of putting you on the same side as the person you are talking to, rather than trying to drag them over to your side of an argument. You are re-telling the moment when you too were like them and didn't know Jesus. You are inviting them to see the wonderful good news of the gospel as you saw it, through your eyes.

- Once again, don't worry if this feels a bit awkward and unnatural at first, or if you try and feel it doesn't go well. It looks far more natural to the other person. Again, it will become easier and feel more natural with practice, so be patient with yourself. Just go with it. You are taking the first step and trying, and that is the important thing. It will get easier every time and be second nature very soon.
- So to recap, today we have looked at natural ways to drop an element of faith into an everyday conversation ... to turn it into a faith conversation. We have then looked at how to bridge from a faith conversation into a core gospel conversation about Jesus. Finally, we looked at how to briefly share your testimony, including within it a core explanation of the gospel.
- From there, the conversation will go in different directions, depending on who you are talking to, and it is very much a case of praying as you are talking and being led by the Holy Spirit in what you say. We will look at more of that next time in our session on apologetics.
- At some point, your conversation will end naturally. Remember, very few people will go from nowhere to a full conversion in a single conversation. The vast majority who are being called will want to explore, ask questions, take time, think about it and come to a decision. So take the mental pressure off. Your job is not to convert people on the spot and then wave them on their way. Your job is to share your faith and excite interest and then continue the conversation and invite people to come and meet other Christian friends around your local church to find out more. Over time, in that loving environment, they will be able to ask questions and make a decision. This also embeds people in an ongoing context of love and support, without which, even if they make a commitment, they will almost certainly drift away. In our fifth and final session, we will look at making that invite in more detail.

## HOMEWORK

- Between now and the next session, try and practice turning an everyday conversation into a faith conversation once a day with a not-yet-Christian friend or family member. Remember what we have learnt this time. It is within our power to create opportunities, even when they don't come up naturally, so practice this and put it into action. Also remember that the other person is always in control of the conversation and not everyone will be open all the time, so expect many of these conversations not to go further than your opening comment. However, some will do, in which case practice bridging from a faith conversation into a gospel conversation.
- Pair up with someone from your group (if possible, someone other than the people you partnered with today). Arrange a time to meet. Practice role-playing the things you have learnt today, in particular putting them all together to go from an everyday conversation to a core gospel conversation that shares

your testimony with the core of the gospel embedded in it. Take it in turns. Try three or four different entry points to the conversation each.

- Keep praying for the people you have identified in your network/personal mission map, both the ones you are in touch with already and the new ones you will reach out to.

### **SIGN UP TO TAKE ACTION WITH ARISE**

- This course has been provided by Arise. Arise is a movement that equips, mobilises and empowers Christians around the world to advance the kingdom of God and transform the world through evangelism, discipleship, fighting social injustice, eliminating poverty and restoring the environment. If you are interested, you can sign up to receive just one action each week that you can take to help transform our world, one step at a time. This is all free and Arise never asks for money. Just go to [www.ariseuk.org/sign-up](http://www.ariseuk.org/sign-up)

# SESSION 4: APOLOGETICS

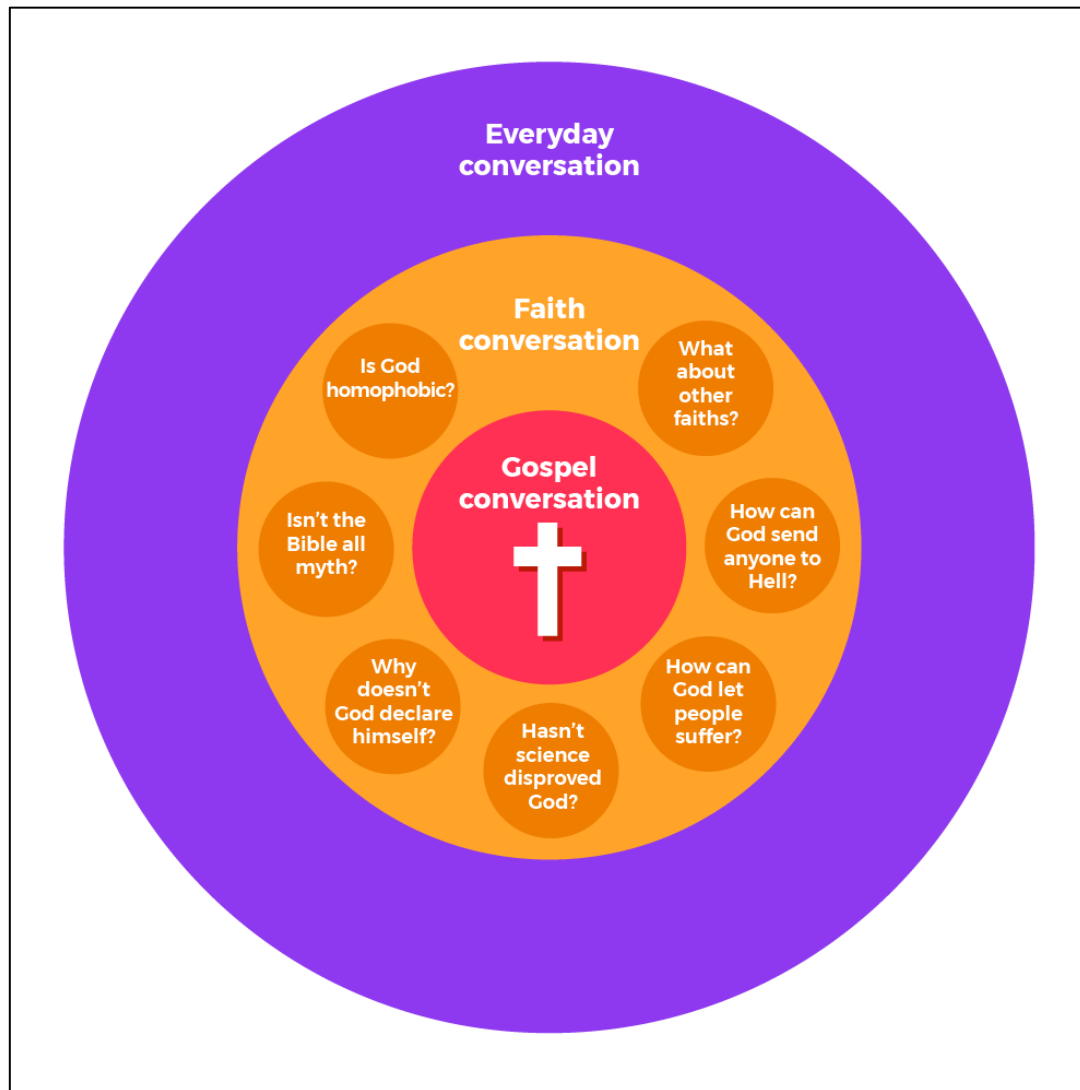
## TALK 1: APOLOGETICS

- The sessions in this course broadly follow the arc of a faith sharing conversation ...
  - Theology
  - Connect
  - Share
  - Apologetics (the questions people raise)
  - Invite
- So, today we are looking at Apologetics.
- Apologetics are ... ***“Reasoned arguments or writings in justification of something, typically a theory or religious doctrine.”***<sup>15</sup>
- Once we are truly into a gospel conversation, it will be very obvious and natural for people to come back with doubts, questions and disagreements with your beliefs. We then have to respond to these. In many faith sharing conversations, we will often find ourselves quickly into apologetics.
- This doesn't always happen, but it is good to be equipped for when it does.
- When we talk about our faith, these are the kinds of doubts, questions and challenges that people sometimes have ...
  - How can God allow innocent people to suffer?
  - How can God send anyone to hell?
  - Hasn't science disproved God?
  - Isn't the Bible all myth, not history? Aren't there other books from the Bible that the church has suppressed?
  - Is God homophobic?
  - If God exists why doesn't he just declare himself?
  - What about other faiths?
- Before responding to any of these, let's spend a little time thinking about what drives them. It could be one of two things ...
  1. A genuine concern from someone who is open and interested but really wrestles with a difficult issue.
  2. A distraction from someone who loves a good argument.
- As we are talking, it is good to have open ears and be listening and praying. Which situation are we dealing with here and how should we respond? Let the Holy Spirit guide you.

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<sup>15</sup> Oxford English Dictionary

- However, whichever we are dealing with, the way we handle apologetics conversations should be largely the same.
- Think back to the circles diagram from the last session. If you think about it, almost all of these questions move the conversation out from the gospel conversation core, back to a faith conversation. We will stop talking about Jesus, and start talking about less core faith issues.



- Remember, we saw last time that unless we are talking about Jesus and the core of the gospel, we are not evangelising.
- We could spend hours arguing about faith and science or suffering, but unless we are talking about Jesus and the core of the gospel, we won't be helping the other person find the answer to their concerns.
- Therefore, we need to try and keep bringing it back to a gospel conversation.
- Again, this is not manipulative. As we saw in our last session, our entire faith hinges upon Jesus' death and resurrection. So, if we think about how we personally have considered each of these tough questions, ultimately, we will have found our own personal answers to them lying in the core of our faith in Jesus. So, once again we don't need to learn lots of different techniques when dealing with apologetics for how to move things back into a gospel conversation. We just need to think about how – for us personally – the answer



to that difficult question can be found in, and rests on, Jesus. Once again, we need to think about the 'why'.

- Whether these questions come from a genuine concern from someone who is open and interested but really wrestles with a difficult issue, or are a distraction from someone who loves a good argument, either way we can best respond by showing how the answers rest on our faith in Jesus, and thus lead the conversation back into a core gospel conversation. As ever we should do all of this with **“gentleness and respect”** as the Bible says. (1 Peter 3: 15)
- Obviously, there is no one right answer in each case. There are multiple ways that the 'why' of each tough issue leads back to Jesus. There are also many excellent Christian books and resources available on each of these subjects.
- Here are some ideas how the 'why' of some common tough issues can be found in Jesus ...
  - **How can God allow innocent people to suffer?** – Remember God's big story. Suffering isn't caused by God; it is caused by humanity's rebellion against God. The vast majority of suffering is caused by other humans. Some suffering is caused by a broken natural order, also a result of humanity's rebellion. God can't instantly end it because he doesn't force himself on us. He gave us free will. If God prevented anyone ever acting in a way that would hurt someone else, he would turn us all into mindless automatons. We would no longer be human and free. However, God does want to end suffering. That's why he came as Jesus and died and was reborn, in order to take the punishment for the things we have done wrong and open a way back to him. We still live in a broken world until Jesus finally returns. But God's plan to end that suffering is for us to come to faith in Jesus and come back to him, and then live our lives to roll out his kingdom of perfect peace and justice and restored relationships. Therefore, we all become agents of change in our world, to fight against and reduce suffering with love, not because we are mindless robots, but because we choose to. Will you sign up for that?
  - This is a theologically correct response, but it can also be hard to swallow or leave people cold. The truth is there are no easy pat answers to suffering. Even in the Bible, when Job asks this question, he doesn't receive a clear answer. Instead God reveals the wonders of the whole of creation, and Job realises that even though he still doesn't understand why suffering occurs, he knows he can trust that God knows what he is doing. (Job 38 – 42) We see this ultimately in Jesus' death on the cross for all of us. Even though we don't understand why suffering occurs, we see in Jesus a God that loves us so much that he underwent a terrible death for us. It is inconceivable that a God that loves us so much would allow such suffering if there was any other way. Thus, even though we still don't fully understand why suffering occurs, we know we can trust the God who loves us so much, as demonstrated through Jesus love and death for all on the cross.
  - **How can God send anyone to hell?** – Again as we saw in God's big story, God has given us free will and won't force himself on us. We have rejected him and walked away from him. Hell is not some medieval torture chamber; it is existence without God. If we have chosen not to follow God, we have rejected him. We have chosen not to be with him. He won't force himself on us, it's our choice. That is why Jesus came, died and was reborn, to offer us a way back to him. Will you choose God now?

- **Hasn't science disproved God?** – Science is wonderful. So many leading scientists are Christians. It is an amazing gift of God to understand how creation works. There is nothing in it that threatens our faith. That is a category error. Science can tell us everything about 'how' creation works, but nothing about 'why' it works. Some elements of science can be read as challenging Biblical beliefs. Instead of getting sucked into debating these, point out that your faith is not based on whether the early chapters of Genesis are literally true or not, or any other area of the Bible that might superficially appear to be challenged by science. Our faith is based on the historical fact of Jesus' death and resurrection. If that is true, then everything he said, believed and taught must be true, even if we don't fully understand how we reconcile all of that to modern science. Our faith stands or falls on Jesus' death and resurrection, so discuss that, rather than some area of science that appears to challenge part of the Bible.
- **Isn't the Bible all myth, not history? Aren't there other books from the Bible that the church has suppressed?** – Actually the Bible holds up incredibly well to historical scrutiny. The gospels which contain the accounts of Jesus' life are incredibly early written sources, produced while living witnesses to Jesus' life were still around to confirm them. We have very early copies of the gospels and other Biblical texts still existing, and they have come down to us unchanged through history. They are extremely well established. The alternative gospels were all written much later, by minor sects. We can rely on the accuracy of the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, and that it is a historical reality.
- **Is God homophobic?** – All Christians agree that God loves everyone radically. Some Christians believe that the Bible is specifically against homosexual acts, but not against the people who commit them, they are still deeply loved by God. Other Christians believe that those statements in the Bible are either misunderstood or must be understood within their historical context and shouldn't apply to monogamous homosexual relationships today. The global Christian community is a large one, with many diverse views on different subjects, such as politics, economics, just war or pacifism. It can hold these different views within its community. Either way, this is absolutely not the core of what I or other Christians believe. It is a side issue in the Bible, with very few verses on it. What is core is God's big story of creation, fall, redemption and glory, and Jesus' death and resurrection at the core of that. That is the entry point to knowing God. Whatever you do or don't believe on sexuality comes after that. If you follow Jesus, pray about it, talk to others, and he will bring you to a place where you feel settled in your mind on the issue. But all of that comes later along the journey. There will be lots of other questions you will have and other things you want to figure out as well. It isn't a barrier to you beginning that journey.
- **If God exists why doesn't he just declare himself?** – It's about faith and relationship and choosing to follow God because we love him. God gave us free will and wants us to choose to follow him because we want to, not because we have to. Naked scientific proof that is unanswerable would mean God is just fact; there is no need for faith or repentance. There is no choice, no freedom. God has given proof in coming in Jesus, but not unanswerable proof, proof that we have to investigate and come to a choice about. We have to choose to trust him, rather than have no choice

but to trust him. The proof God has given is by coming as Jesus to die and rise again as a historical reality.

- **What about other faiths?** – Rather than confront, affirm the good things that can be found in any faith. To recap from our last session, an atheist is a seeker after truth and evidence – that's great, so are we; we can build on that. An agnostic is open-minded – that's great, so are we; we can explore further with them. A Hindu already recognises there is a spiritual side to life and believes in spiritual beings – that's great, so do we; we have a lot of common understanding that atheists and agnostics don't, much we can build on. A Muslim already knows there is only one God and that Jesus is a major prophet – that's great, so do we; they are so close. But we believe that the truth others see only in part, is revealed in full in Jesus' death and resurrection. The many millions of people who have come to follow Jesus from all of those backgrounds don't see that they were fundamentally wrong in their former beliefs, but that they didn't fully understand. Now they do fully understand, and have something even better, because they have heard the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection.

## TALK 2: LAST THOUGHTS ON APOLOGETICS AND QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

- Try and get on the same side in the discussion, so it isn't adversarial. Don't dismiss the questions people raise. It's good that people have them. It often shows that they are wrestling, thinking and engaging. We should acknowledge that they are important and tricky issues.
- Some of the things people say you may find outrageous and strongly disagree with. But don't get riled. Stay calm. Agree to disagree. It's not about winning. God doesn't need you to defend him, he can look after himself. An argument gets nowhere and only endorses a negative perception of Christian behaviour. Our behaviour and our attitude can often speak more about Jesus than our words.
- Don't feel you have to be an expert, just be honest about how you personally see those issues. This will keep it personal and again will bring it back to the core.
- **One answer you can use in any discussion** – On any of these areas – if we are not sure what to say – there is one honest answer we can use in any discussion, which takes us straight back into a gospel conversation, "Look I don't know the answer to that question. But my faith is not based on that. My faith is based on Jesus' death and resurrection. If that is true, then everything else (including this issue) must have an answer and will fall into place, if not then it all unravels, so let's discuss that."
- Alternatively, if you don't know the answer to a question just be honest and say so. It is a great opportunity to agree a time and place to meet again and continue the conversation after you have done some research. There are lots of good books and other resources out there from Christians on these subjects. Ask Christian friends for recommendations. Perhaps give one to your friend to read or discuss it together.
- Another option is to invite them to church to talk with your church leaders about the topic. Ultimately, if they have serious questions on some of these tough issues, we might give them lots of thoughts that can help (especially in showing how the ultimate answers to those challenges can be found in Jesus'

death and resurrection), but all their questions are not going to be resolved in one conversation. They need time to talk with others, think about it, maybe read something. We want those we are making connections with to start coming to our church community where they can explore more about faith in a context of friendship and support. If they have questions like these that need answers, that is a great opportunity to invite them. We will talk much more about this in the next session.

- Alongside apologetics, as our conversations continue, we need to also remember to keep asking questions. All good educational practice and theory is that people don't learn from a one-way download of information. It is in the conversation and helping people figure it out for themselves that learning occurs. Therefore, continuing to ask questions about what the other person thinks, feels or believes about the particular thing you are discussing, helps that process. It also keeps on personalising the conversation to that individual, rather than being an abstract argument.
- We need to be led by the Holy Spirit in our conversations from here. See where the conversation goes. Just go with it depending on what people are interested in, but keep bringing it back to a core gospel conversation if you can. Keep bringing it back to Jesus.
- Remember to pray and listen to God throughout your conversation. As you are in discussion, do be silently praying and listening to God. Communication is a two-way process and needs to be tailored to the audience. Keep asking God "Where is this person at?", "What do they need to hear today?", and follow your gut instinct in how you engage in the conversation and what you say.

## HOMework

- Between now and the next session, try and practice turning an everyday conversation into a faith conversation once a day with a not-yet-Christian friend or family member. Remember what we have learnt. It is within our power to create opportunities, even when they don't come up naturally, so practice this and put it into action. Also remember that the other person is always in control of the conversation and not everyone will be open all the time, so expect many of these conversations not to go further than your opening comment. However, some will do, in which case practice bridging from a faith conversation into a gospel conversation.
- Pair up with someone from your group (if possible, someone other than the people you have partnered with before). Arrange a time to meet. Practice role-playing the things you have learnt, in particular putting them all together to go from an everyday conversation to a core gospel conversation that shares your testimony with the core of the gospel embedded in it, as we did last time. This time the other person should also throw in one of the challenging questions, so we can practice answering in a way that again leads back into a gospel conversation. Take it in turns. Try three or four different entry points to the conversation each.
- Keep praying for the people you have identified in your network/personal mission map, both the ones you are in touch with already and the new ones you will reach out to.

## SIGN UP TO TAKE ACTION WITH ARISE

- This course has been provided by Arise. Arise is a movement that equips, mobilises and empowers Christians around the world to advance the kingdom

of God and transform the world through evangelism, discipleship, fighting social injustice, eliminating poverty and restoring the environment. If you are interested, you can sign up to receive just one action each week that you can take to help transform our world, one step at a time. This is all free and Arise never asks for money. Just go to [www.ariseuk.org/sign-up](http://www.ariseuk.org/sign-up)

# SESSION 5: INVITE

## TALK 1: INVITE AND COMMIT

### Invite

- The sessions in this course broadly follow the arc of a faith sharing conversation
  - ...
  - Theology
  - Connect
  - Share
  - Apologetics (the questions people raise)
  - Invite
- So, today we are looking at Invite.
- So ... we have had our faith sharing conversation. It has gone well. But people seldom come to faith in one conversation. The vast majority come to faith over time, as they question and their questions are answered. What we have been doing is exciting interest. So where do we go from here?
- We need to invite them along to church to continue the conversation. We need to draw them in so they make friends with Christians in our local church and the network of friendships that surrounds it. Then over time, their questions will be answered; they will make a commitment and grow. Remember, we are not in the business of winning converts but winning disciples. Christianity is a team sport. It is very hard to do it alone and in isolation. Our interested, not-yet-Christian needs to be in an environment where they are spending time with Christians, making friends, and having their questions answered. Once they have made a commitment, they need to continue in this environment so they can be discipled and grow in their faith. We need to get them into church.
- Our local church family network should be a loving, welcoming, non-threatening community where people are welcomed for who they are, and find acceptance and belonging. This is the fertile atmosphere in which their questions can be explored and they will come to faith.
- In the New Testament, it was this loving, caring atmosphere that was the critical thing which led to the growth of the church.
- ***"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and***

**ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”** (Acts 2: 42 – 47)

- **“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.”** (Acts 4: 32 – 35)
- This was also true in the early church after New Testament times. The early church father Tertullian (160 – 220 AD) reported how non-believers would remark **“See how they love one another!”**<sup>16</sup>
- This is also true today. **“People will come to church for many reasons, but they will stay for only one – friendship. People aren’t looking for a friendly church; they’re looking for a church where they can make friends.”**<sup>17</sup>  
Exactly the same rule applies whether people are Christian or not-yet-Christians. If they make friends, they will stay, if they don’t, they will go.
- **“The web of relationships, friendships, and acquaintances that Christians normally have makes up the net into which not-yet-Christians will swim. We believe the missional-incarnational church will spend more time on building friendships than it will on developing religious programs.”**<sup>18</sup>
- Therefore, we need to create an environment which is loving and welcoming to all in our churches. We need to be radically caring and loving towards each other, meeting each other’s needs. None amongst us should be in trouble. We should all be supporting each other.
- We can all help with this. One simple, practical thing we can all do is to always look around for those who no one else is talking to during the informal social times before and after a church service. Make a special effort to go and talk to them. No one should be left out. This is exactly what Jesus would have done.
- As our friends are drawn in and start coming, we need to put the time in to keep walking alongside them, be there to answer their questions, spend time with them and invest in them on their journey to faith.
- When it comes to those people who we have shared our faith with online through social media, they too need to join and be physically present in a church if they are to make Christian friends and their faith is to take root, grow and last. If they live locally, you can invite them to come to your church. If not, then do some research and find a good church in their area that you can encourage them to go to and connect. Maybe ask if you can put them in touch with the leaders of that church, or with a local Christian friend if you know anyone in that area. Obviously, it is important to follow the usual rules of safe behaviour online. Sadly people may not be who they claim to be. Never arrange to meet anyone privately. Instead encourage them to come and meet you at a public church service.

<sup>16</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, (197), 39: 7

<sup>17</sup> Nicky Gumbel: ‘People come to church for many reasons, they stay for one – friendship’, Christian Today, (2014)

<sup>18</sup> Michael Frost & Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, (2013), p. 65



**Commit**

- At some point when our friends and family are ready, they need to make that specific step of commitment and give their lives to Jesus.
- You might not be there when this happens, but you might be.
- Do be praying and listening to God in your conversations with your friends and family at this stage. They might need a gentle suggestion or prompt if you feel they are ready to take this step.
- All that we need to do is pray to God, say sorry for the things we have done wrong and say we want to follow Jesus for the rest of our lives. There are no magic words, we can use any words that express this.
- You might want to encourage them to say this in their own words. They might say it in their head or out loud, or you might pray it for them and ask that they follow and agree in their hearts.
- Afterwards, make sure they have a Bible of their own and encourage them to read a little bit each day (starting with the gospels and the New Testament), and to pray daily.
- They will still have many questions after this, so as we have seen, it is really important that we get them embedded in church and a small group straight away. Otherwise, they will almost certainly drift and their new faith evaporate. We also need to continue to walk with them and support them as a friend, to ensure they are in really fertile soil to be discipled and for their faith to grow.

**TALK 2: WHAT IF THEY WOULDN'T COME TO CHURCH? AND PLANTING NEW CHURCHES****What if they wouldn't come to church?**

- Having done all of that, we can probably think of people we know who might be interested in exploring following Jesus, but would never come to our church services. At least not yet. So where do we invite them if not to church? Is them not fitting with our style of meeting an impossible barrier to them coming to know Jesus? Surely that can't be right?
- There are two things we need to think about here ...

**1. Make our services more welcoming**

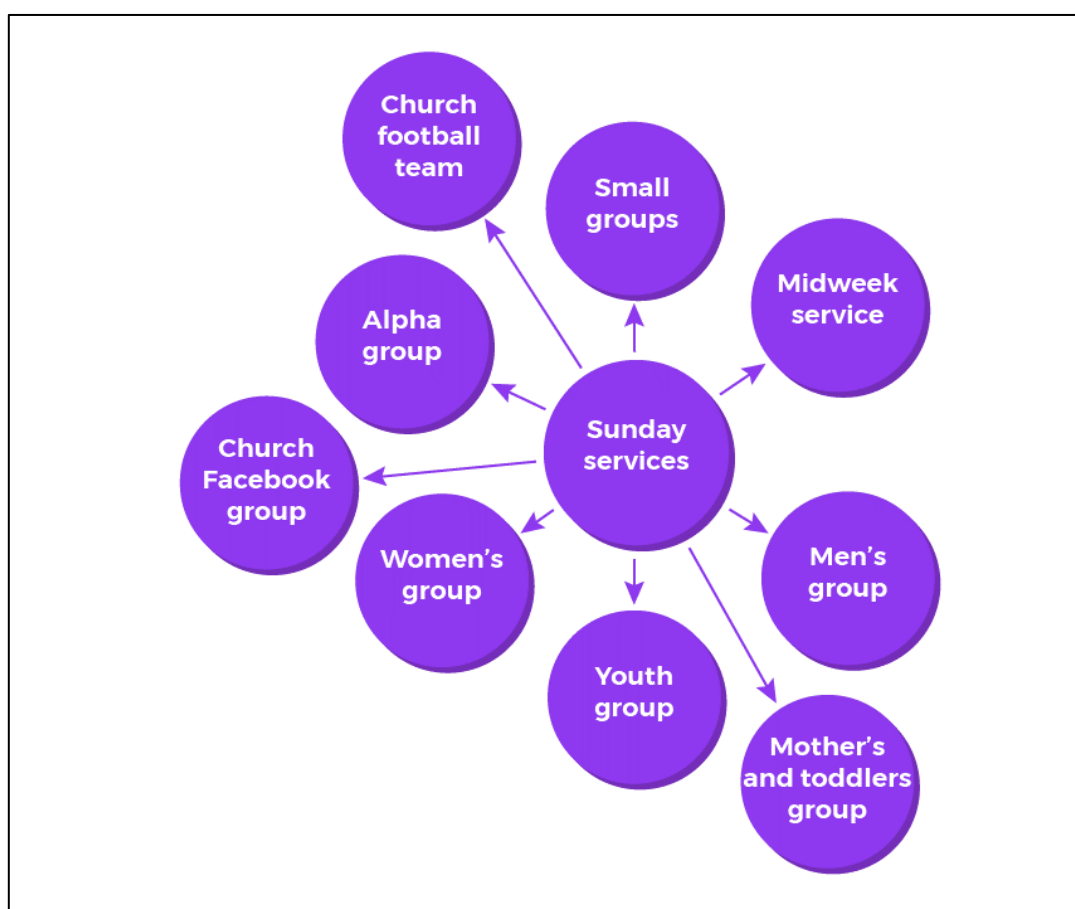
- First, how do we make our services as open, non-threatening and engaging as possible, so they become places people want to come?
- A local church is simply God's people meeting together to worship, learn and support each other.
- That's it. So any tradition – sung worship, worship bands, organs, pews, sermons, meeting on Sunday mornings, liturgy, PowerPoints, coffee – the whole lot is all up for grabs. If it is getting in the way of discipling people and making not-yet-Christians welcome, then it needs to go.
- It is key to note here, traditional services can be attractive to many not-yet-Christians, and modern worship music and open prayer times can become a tradition that stifles life. So this is not just about replacing an older style of church with a newer one; it is changing anything that gets in the way.
- This also means experimenting, changing things, trying new things to find what works to prevent us becoming stale. Consider whether you always have to meet in the church building, why not somewhere else? Explore different types of meeting for different constituents with different needs. Maybe get rid of sermons and have more Bible studies

and interactive workshop style teaching that engage and involve people more. Should you eat together regularly when you meet? Look at anything that make your services a welcoming, non-weird and fun place to be.

- Also consider running special one-off events and services where you can invite not-yet-Christians.
- Courses like the Alpha ([www.alpha.org](http://www.alpha.org)) or Christianity Explored ([www.christianityexplored.org](http://www.christianityexplored.org)) have been amazingly fruitful places where people can come, make friends, explore their faith questions over time and start to belong as part of the wider extended local church.
- But even more importantly ...

## 2. Expand our understanding of what our local church is

- Even if we make our services much more attractive, they still won't work for everyone.
- But the truth is, our local church is so much more than just the services we hold in our building.
- Early churches were much smaller and more informal. They met in people's homes, and spread and grew quickly. Actual church buildings don't start turning up in the archaeological record until the third century. That means for over 200 years, during one of the fastest, most dynamic periods of church growth in history, it never occurred to any Christian that they needed a special building in which to hold services.
- When we think about our local church, we probably think first about the Sunday service/s. But of course our local church is about so much more than just our Sunday service/s.



- There are often other spaces where we meet together as local church. These might be small groups, Alpha or Christianity Explored groups, discipleship courses, mothers and toddlers groups, mid-week services, youth groups, church football team, men's and women's groups, any online church social media groups, even a group that goes to the pub after the evening service on a Sunday etc. Therefore there are several different places we can invite people. It doesn't have to be a full Sunday service. How do we make sure not-yet-Christians are being given the opportunity to be discipled and have their questions answered in these other spaces as well? How do we draw them further into our life as a church, and involve them in different groups, not keep them just docking into one space on the edge?
- But, do we need to be still more radical than this? What are the major communities in your local area? These might be major employers, schools, particular ethnic communities, nursing homes, the local skate park, particular housing estates, sports clubs, online social media communities, the local prison etc.



- Do you, or people in your church, have any connection with any of these spaces? Are there any where more than one person from your church is present? Could we plant a little expression of our 'church' within these

spaces and meet together regularly there? This might be an office weekly prayer and breakfast club, an office Friday night beer in a pub and a short talk evening, starting a new small group in one of your houses on a particular estate, an online social media group for locals who are interested etc. Maybe this is already happening?

- As you share your faith with people in these communities, and find those who are open, then you could invite them to one of our congregational spaces. However, if that isn't going to work with that person, then why not suggest you meet with them within that community, and maybe make that a regular thing and also invite others from that community who are interested to come. Instead of calling people out of the communities they are in, we are going to them. As these ideas form, think about how we as a church see that as a legitimate part of our extended church network? How do we help discipleship to take place within it?



- Some of the local communities in your area may not be connected to anyone from your church. How are these people going to hear the gospel? Do some of us need to pray and think about building connections into these communities – as we saw in our second session – and add them to our personal mission maps? Do we as a local church feel called to go into these communities? Do we need to do something

more intentional together as a church? It maybe that we don't for all those groups. We can't do everything. Or maybe it's not for now, but for later. However, let's challenge ourselves. If we are the local church here, then we should be trying to make inroads into most of these places.

- So now, looking at our map we have a much broader vision of what our local church is and many more places where we can invite not-yet-Christians. None of these separate meeting places are churches in their own right. They don't have the depth of experience, variety of members, breadth of worship etc. to be that. Also they need to be linked into the wider local church and the global church. The Bible has no model of local church in complete isolation from the wider global church. However, they are very much part of our extended local church. Of course, we do want to create connections between these communities wherever we can, and we do want to draw people in from the communities more on the edge to the centre to access even more discipleship and teaching. However, that can happen over time as people grow and mature in their faith. We should also be putting emphasis on the other direction as well. How are we promoting good discipleship within all the communities we consider more out there on the edges? In particular, we need to think about how we bring not-yet-Christians into small groups for ongoing discipleship with a small group of believers.

### **Planting new churches**

- As your church starts to grow through what we have learnt in this course, you might at some point want to consider a formal church plant.
- This goes beyond the many expressions of your networked local church that we have been talking about. It is the permanent planting of a new local church in a new area.
- Remember back to our first session – this goes beyond the local congregation evangelising their local community, it is the missionary community.
- This involves seeing who in your local church family feels the call to go and plant a new church and then commissioning and sending a group to do this.
- Remember, keeping churches smaller and dynamic, and spreading and growing, is the Biblical model.

### **TALK 3: HOMEWORK – BUILD IT INTO THE ONGOING LIFE OF YOUR SMALL GROUP**

- At the beginning of this course we said that no course alone will transform your approach to evangelism. It is the ongoing putting what you have learnt into practice with others that results in real change.
- We have come to the end of the course, so rather than just set homework for the next session, now is the time to consider how we do this in an ongoing way.
- The good news is we have already been starting to do it over the last three sessions.
- If we don't do anything, nothing will change. If we try and do everything, it will be too much and we will give up very quickly. So, we have just two simple things that we can all each do, and two simple things that we can do together when we meet as small groups to build into our regular routine.

#### **As individuals**

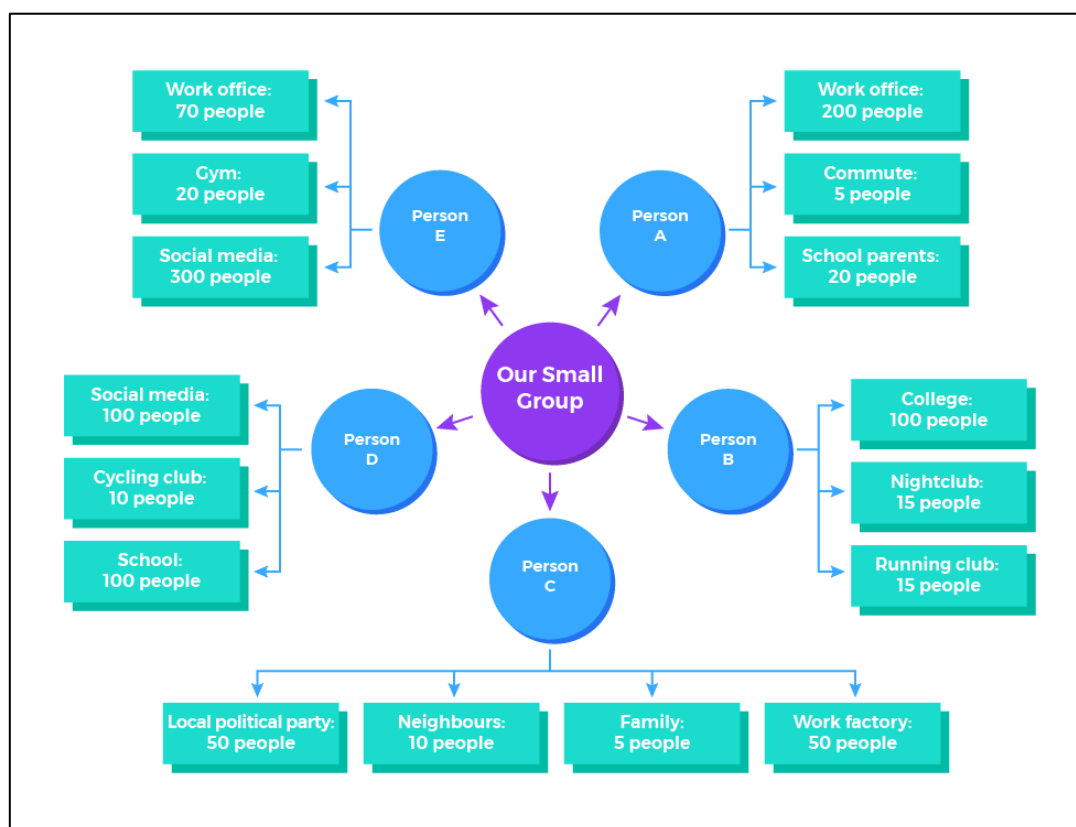
1. **Pray for your personal mission map daily** – Remember your personal mission map. Will you commit to pray for the people and communities on it every day

in your prayer times. Remember, nothing happens without prayer, and it all begins in prayer. Pray that Jesus will draw the people on your map to himself, that you will have sharing conversations with them, and that they will come to faith. If when you made the map, you found you didn't have many not-yet-Christians on your list because almost all your time was with other Christians, then keep asking God to challenge you on this. Identify the things you will stop in order to release more time, and the new groups you want to reach into. Add them to your personal mission map and keep updating it as you go. (If you haven't drawn your personal mission map yet, do so when you get home.)

2. **Turn an 'Everyday conversation' into a 'Faith conversation' daily** – Will you commit to turning an everyday conversation into a faith conversation at least once a day with a not-yet-Christian friend or family member. Remember what we have learnt, it is within our power to create opportunities even when they don't come up naturally, so practice this and put it into action. Also remember that the other person is always in control of the conversation and not everyone will be open all the time, so expect many of these conversations not to go further than your opening comment. However some will do, in which case turn them from a faith conversation into a gospel conversation. As you do this more and more, it will get easier and easier, and increasingly become natural and unthinking. You will feel more relaxed and confident with it. When you have got into a good routine after a couple of months, practice taking it up a gear to two conversations a day, and so on.

### As a small group

1. **Pray through your small group mission map every time you meet** – As well as praying daily for your own personal mission map, will you commit as a small group to praying together for your group mission map every time you meet?



2. **Check in on how your sharing conversations have been going every time you meet** – Finally, will you commit to briefly check in with each other on how your sharing conversations have been going every single time you meet? This is partly for accountability, to support each other. Have we each been trying to turn an everyday conversation into a faith conversation each day? If not, how can we support rather than criticise each other, until we are all doing that. Then over time, how can we agree to take this up to two conversations a day when we are all ready and so on? This is also about learning. How did it go? What was hard? What worked? What did you learn? What might we do differently next time? Finally, it is about encouragement and prayer. Some of these will have turned into full sharing conversations where you managed to talk about the gospel as well. Share these to encourage each other and to be praying for the people involved.

### **SIGN UP TO TAKE ACTION WITH ARISE**

- We are now at the end of the course.
- Well done everyone for all your commitment and hard work.
- This course has been provided by Arise. Arise is a movement that equips, mobilises and empowers Christians around the world to advance the kingdom of God and transform the world through evangelism, discipleship, fighting social injustice, eliminating poverty and restoring the environment. If you are interested, you can sign up to receive just one action each week that you can take to help transform our world, one step at a time. This is all free and Arise never asks for money. Just go to [www.ariseuk.org/sign-up](http://www.ariseuk.org/sign-up)







Two out of every three people in the world don't yet know Jesus. But most of them do know Christians. Christianity is the majority religion in every continent in the world except Asia. Churches exist in every country (though in a few they are underground due to persecution). There are only 19 countries with a Christian population of less than 1%. The professional missionaries have done their job. The church has been planted around the world. Today it is ordinary people like you and me worshipping in ordinary churches around the world, sharing our faith powerfully and effectively with our friends and neighbours that will have the greatest impact for the gospel.

Of those non-Christians who come to a church, an incredible 77% of them come because friends or relatives invited them. Yet so many of us lack confidence, are somewhat embarrassed, and struggle to talk about our faith clearly and boldly with our friends and family. This is why Arise has developed Equipped to Share, a free course of five sessions that you can run in your church. Arise is a global movement, mobilising Christian to transform the world around us through evangelism, discipleship, fighting social injustice, eliminating poverty and restoring the environment. Equipped to Share empowers individual Christians to talk with confidence about their faith, releasing a workforce of millions to evangelise in their daily lives.



[ARISEUK.ORG](http://ARISEUK.ORG)