

3.

BE READY TO SHARE YOUR FAITH (2)

LESSON 3 TEXT HANDOUT

The ultimate job of evangelizing is done by individual Christians who have prepared themselves to reach out to others. This lesson and the next considers six key areas in which each personal worker needs to be right. It is the combination of all of these that pays big dividends in reaching people for Christ.

4. THE RIGHT APPROACH

Once we have found someone with whom to study, the next step is to decide how to move forward. Remember you want to lead a person to Christ so they can share in the great benefits he can bring them. Here are four approaches you might use to provide your contact with more spiritual development:

1. Use Our Worship. Be sure to make our worship open to visitors and make them feel welcome. Then you will feel good about inviting your friends to come with you to worship meetings.
2. Use Our Activities. Most every church has some activities to which you could invite someone who is not a church member. It may be a social event, a work project, a gathering at someone's home, or a special speaker. It may be a more formal activity or an informal time among friends. Such occasions are great for helping your friends to make more friends among those at church and this can be a very important step forward.
3. Use Small Groups or another Home Bible Study. Having your special friends join you for these events help to get them acquainted with more people in the church on a spiritual and social level, and can be prompts for more in depth spiritual discussions.
4. Use Individual Studies. There are multiple avenues that are available for individual study.
 - a. You could begin using the lessons that you learn in class, some Stafford North has created some Correspondence Course type lessons that go hand in hand with the lessons we will begin to learn that I can make available to you. There is both an adult version and children's version.
 - b. You could also use the Visualized Bible Study originally created by Jule Miller. It contains five videos that are each around 45 minutes long and cover the following topics: 1 - The Patriarchal Age, 2 - The Mosaic Age, 3 - The Christian Age, 4 - The Church, and 5 - The History of the Church. Each has a workbook with it which the student can use after they have seen the video to review the contents. We have some of these available here, and they are now being provided by gladtidingspublishing.com
 - c. You could let the special friend ask questions and you answer them or say you will find the answers and then do so or ask for help from someone at the church.
 - d. You could also use the We Care Bible format.

- e. And you could ask for help in the individual teaching from someone at church—there are lots of very knowledgeable and experienced members that can and would be happy to help with individual studies.

It is very important that, at the right time, you move toward some Bible teaching with your friend. If you push for this too quickly, you may drive the person away. But if you wait too long, you may miss an excellent opportunity to share and the best window of opportunity may pass.

5. THE RIGHT FOCUS

It is sometimes easy to get caught up in thinking about methods and materials and forget where the focus must always stay in our teaching. Of course, our purpose is always to help people see the Christ and to establish a personal relationship with Him. John said his gospel was written to present evidence on which people can “believe that Jesus us the Christ, and that believing you might have life through his name” (John 20:31). That is always our goal.

We do not seek to convert people to a doctrine or even to a church. We seek to convert them to Jesus and what He taught. We want our students to “fall in love” with Christ who died for them so they will have that relationship as a foundation to keep them faithful. This in no way means that we do not teach what Christ and His apostles taught as necessary to “obey the gospel.” Philip went out preaching “the good news about the kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). And hearing this message, both men and women believed and were baptized.

The focus of our teaching, however, must always be Jesus and what He did for us and what He asks us to do in return. Philip, after he left Samaria, encountered the Ethiopians who was reading from Isaiah. “The Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus” (Acts 8:35).

If those we teach “connect: with Jesus because they are responding to His love for them, they will want to make Jesus the Lord of their lives, follow His example, and be faithful in serving Him and being with His people. As we teach through group lessons or individual study we always want to keep Jesus at the center. This will help our students to not only make a decision but a commitment.

6. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

The personal worker must not only have the right methods and the right focus they must also the have the right attitude. How we approach people will have an effect on the outcome of our studies. Jesus was kind but firm with the woman at the well. Philip was helpful to the Ethiopian by asking, “Do you understand what you are reading?” Paul was respectful to the jailer when he said, “Don’t hurt yourself; we are all here.” Jesus honored Zacchaeus when he invited Himself to dinner at his house.

Every Christian quality has a place in personal work: love, patience, kindness, joy, peace, generosity, mercy, humility, and even suffering. In this section, however, we are going to focus on a few attitudes that are the most essential for the personal worker.

We must be humble—not appearing to know everything, not speaking down to others, not being so arrogant we monopolize the conversation.

Personal evangelists should also be open—not judgmental. If the person tells you of sins they have committed, do not be quick to condemn. Rather, be sympathetic. Show understanding. If you believe the other person has taken a position that is not in harmony with scripture, be careful how you

respond. Instead of telling the person they are wrong, ask if you could explore some other possible answers.

Humility includes being a good listener. We must let the other person share in the conversation, we must ask questions and really hear answers. We should not be planning what we will say next in such a way we are not really listening to the other person. Our body language should show an openness to the other person and our voice should be kind and not harsh.

Be empathetic. Often put yourself in the other person's place. Think of the problems the other person is having. Think of how you would feel if you were visiting someone else's church. How would you feel if someone were telling you that a view you and your family have held is not according to scripture? Empathy means that we try to understand how our friend may be feeling about things.

Personal evangelists must also be generous. Like those of the first century and like those who have taught us, we must be willing to give our time, not only to teach but then to help those we teach. They may call on us to help with their problems, to assist when they are sick, even to help financially when they are in need. One reason some are reluctant to become involved in personal work is because it means getting involved with other people. Most of us are already busy. How can we take on any other responsibilities? Yet, we love the lost and want to help bring them to Christ. To bring others to Christ, we must have the unselfish spirit of the Lord who gave so much for us.

Getting ready to teach someone about Jesus, then requires the right motivation, the right involvement, the right person, the right approach, the right focus, and the right attitude. Most of us must work to develop some of these approaches so we will be better prepared for this work.