

Sharing Christ

Getting Started

⇒ *What are a couple of your favorite insights from your reading this week?*

Sharing Christ . . .

Spheres of Influence

Where do we regularly interact with unchurched people?

Sharing Christ . . .

The Path

1) THRESHOLD 1: _____ A CHRISTIAN

- A. Our typical reactions when someone doesn't trust us:
1. Defending our character or opinion.
 2. Hurt feelings or bruised ego.
 3. Avoiding the person.
 4. Judging the person instead of trying to understand him or her.
 5. Preparing an argument.
- B. Strategies to consider:
1. Pray for the other person.
 2. Listen to his or her story.
 3. Bond over common interests.
 4. Affirm positive characteristics about him or her.
 5. Welcome him or her into your life story.
 6. Look for opportunities to invite.
 7. Be genuine.
- Posture: Be trustworthy
 - Question: *How's it going?*

The most important ingredient of any meaningful relationship is trust.

(Dean Harbry)

2) THRESHOLD 2: BECOMING _____

- A. Curiosity is a three-step process:
1. Awareness of something different.
 2. Engagement of exploration.
 3. Exchange of ideas.

B. Strategies to consider:

1. Learn more about the other person by asking questions.

- Ask questions that produce more questions.
- Ask in a non-judgmental way.
- Do not assume answers.

- Posture: Be curious back.
- Question: *What makes you ask that?*

Following Jesus' lead and being a learner means that we too ask good questions, even of those who are annoying or distrustful. Jesus lets people capture his whole attention. He is captivated by them, their story, their yearnings, their needs. He listens to their "whole story" and show us how to be intrigued with each person's uniqueness.

(Don Everts & Doug Schaupp, *I Once Was Lost*)

[TABLE TALK]

1. Who is the best question asker you know? What is unique about that person?
2. How might your relationships change if you committed to trying to influence people through asking questions?

3) THRESHOLD 3: BEING _____

A. This is the most difficult threshold for most people to cross.

1. Change is both humbling and scary.
2. Change usually takes time.

B. When responding to people at this threshold:

1. Be patient, and then plan to be more patient.
2. Choose carefully when to challenge.

- Posture: Be patient.
- Question: *What's a doable next step?*

[TABLE TALK]

1. Was there a time in your life when you were not open to change and someone was or was not patient with you?
2. Which of your relationships could benefit most from you understanding the first three thresholds?

4) THRESHOLD 4: _____ AFTER GOD

A. Indicators that someone is crossing this threshold:

1. He or she wants to know about Jesus.
2. He or she begins to count the costs of believing.
3. He or she is excited about spending time with Christians.

B. How to respond:

1. Be ready to say that faith and reason can coexist.
2. Know who Jesus is to you.

- Posture: Be honest about your faith.
- Question: *Who do you think Jesus is?*

5) THRESHOLD 5: BECOMING A _____

A. Indicators that someone is crossing this threshold:

1. The person shares doubts while expressing a desire to believe.
2. The person explicitly states that he or she wants to follow Christ.

B. How to respond:

1. Be appropriately urgent.
2. Ask a well-timed challenging question. For example: "What is holding you back from following Jesus?"
3. Recognize this as an opportunity for the person to come to faith – not a guarantee.

C. The message:

1. God **loved**.

-God initiated a relationship with us.

We love because He first loved us.

(1 John 4:19)

2. God **gave**.

-God views us through His perfect Son, Jesus.

But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(Romans 5:8)

3. We **believe**.

-Trusting in God requires faith.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

4. We **receive**.

-Believing in the work of Christ leads to a permanent relationship with God.

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)

- Posture: Understand the gospel.
- Question: *Is there anything keeping you from following Jesus?*

CONCLUSION

- A. Meaningful spiritual discussions require investment in a relationship.
- B. Focus on making a connection instead of on making a point.

Nadine and I would sit for hours in her room. Mostly we would talk about boys or school, but always, at the end of it, we talked about God. The thing I loved about Nadine was that I never felt like she was selling anything. She would talk about God as if she knew Him, as if she had talked to Him on the phone that day. She was never ashamed, which is the thing with some Christians I encountered. They felt like they had to sell God as if He were soap or a vacuum cleaner, and it's like they weren't really listening to me; they didn't care, they just wanted me to buy their product.

(Donald Miller, *Blue Like Jazz*)

Your Assignment

- Review the 5 Thresholds Resources at evangelism.intervarsity.org/five-thresholds