

EVANGELISM EXERCISES

The purpose of the exercises shown here is to help people understand and feel more comfortable with sharing their faith. They can also be used to help people understand what evangelism is.

Section A -Personal Exercises

1. Identify the journey

Not everyone who is a Christian can identify a specific moment of conversion. We sometimes refer to such dramatic moments as a 'Damascus Road conversion' because of the Apostle Paul's sudden experience. Some people refer to an 'Emmaus Road' experience based on the journey taken by two disciples who walked with Jesus for several miles as light dawned on them. However, there are some Christians that might even find difficulty identifying with the Emmaus Road type experience.

Start by writing down what your faith means to you personally. Try not to use doctrinal definitions such as "I believe Jesus is the Son of God". Instead, see if you can describe it as a relationship and describe how that works. Some years ago I helped to put together a video of 'ordinary rural Christians' sharing something of their journey of faith. One lady started by saying that she had never had a dramatic experience but went on to describe how she has very real times of prayer when walking her dog in the countryside, during which she senses God's presence and interaction. In my books, that is dramatic.

So write in as few words as possible your experience of faith today.

Now see if you can identify what might have led to that. Take a look at the list in Part B and tick any that might apply. Spend some time (perhaps at least 10 minutes) thinking about your answers and see if you can discern not only what God has used to speak to you, but when and where that happened. Is there any kind of timeline?

Make a few notes on the rest of this page. Then turn over.

Exercise 2. Telling your story

Meet up with a Christian friend (perhaps invite them round for a coffee) and explain that you are doing some exercises on sharing your faith and would like them to be your guinea pig.

- (a) Talk about a journey you took recently. This could be a significant journey if possible such as a holiday trip or a visit to someone quite a distance away. Explain why you were going, where you started from, and stages and any events along the way. For example, how long did the journey take? How were you travelling? What route did you take? Were you delayed at any stage?

If you are unable to think of a significant journey you could talk about the journey you take to a shop, or the dentist, or church. Put in as much detail as possible. How long does it take?

Afterwards: Ask your friend whether they were able to imagine your journey. If not, try again. If the journey was special, how did you feel about telling someone about it? Do they have any questions?

- (b) Think about someone you know well but who the other person might not know (if possible). For no more than five minutes tell your friend about the person you have been thinking about. Start by saying their name (unless it should be confidential!), then describe what they look like (male, female, rough age, general appearance). Now explain how it is that you know them and how you came to know them. Finally, provide additional information (e.g. hobbies, things you like to do together, any organisations you both belong to, and dunny anecdotes, or sad news, etc)

Afterwards: Was that difficult to do? How does your friend feel about what you shared? Do they feel they have got a good understanding of the person about whom you were talking? Did you enjoy introducing someone to your friend? Do they have any questions?

- (c) Take a look at Part C where there is a group exercise that can be done in a church or a setting with more numbers. Draw up your own list of three things that make Jesus special for you (take at least 5 minutes on this) and then gently explain these to your friend. Take time to do this and don't just give a one word or one sentence answer. Explain why – in your personal experience – these aspects are important to you.

- a.
- b.
- c.

Afterwards: How did you feel about talking about Jesus? Was it uncomfortable? Was your friend embarrassed by what you said? Were they able to appreciate why these three aspects are important to you? Do they have any questions they might like to ask you?

Finally: Reflect on the three exercises. Talking about Jesus is really like talking about any friend. Describing a faith journey is similar to talking about any journey you have taken. Why not finish by telling your friend about your faith journey and/or what God has used to speak into your life?

A Worksheet from Rural Mission Solutions

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Section B – Group Exercises

This section contains three exercises for group work. It involves some time for personal reflection, then some work in small groups, ideally three to a small group, and then possibly an all-together session. You could also use some of the Personal Exercises in Section A as part of this.

We recommend that you print off on separate paper the content for each exercise (but not the process).

Exercise 1. What is evangelism?

Leader: Each person spends some time reflecting on the following definitions of evangelism or evangelization. Allow no more than 5 minutes for this but do not let people rush it. They are asked to evaluate each definition on a scale from 0 to 5 where they consider 0 to mean a bad definition and 5 to be an excellent definition. *Please note that they are not evaluating them against other definitions and making an ordered list. Each is to be considered on its own merits.*

“Introducing people to Jesus”. Score _____

“One beggar telling another beggar where he can find bread”. Score _____

“Sharing with others what we believe about God and Jesus”. Score _____.

“Encouraging others to believe in and follow Christ”. Score _____

“Sharing with others what God has done in your life”. Score _____

Leader: Invite the participants to form groups of 3 (split up any couples) and compare notes, looking at each definition in turn. Point out that there is no right or wrong answer and that people will have different opinions, and that is OK. When they have finished the small group work, encourage people to indicate if anyone scored a definition either zero or 5, taking each definition in turn. If the participants are comfortable with talking openly, you could ask them to explain their decision. Important: Make sure sharing does not create discomfort.

Exercise 2. How has God spoken into your life.

Leader: The aim of this exercise is not necessarily related to a conversion experience. The leader should point out that the majority of Christians cannot identify a specific experience of conversion. Faith often develops over time. But Christians have moments of encounter with God (no matter if this is not earth shattering). Participants are encouraged to look at a list of things God might have used in their life with some degree of significance. Each participant will need time and space to think through the list.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct evangelistic activity | <input type="checkbox"/> A sermon in church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading the Bible | <input type="checkbox"/> A Christian Retreat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading a tract or Christian book | <input type="checkbox"/> A religious film, video or drama |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The life of another Christian (e.g. parent, teacher, friend) | <input type="checkbox"/> Holy Communion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday School | <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmation (or similar) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A personal crisis | <input type="checkbox"/> Some other? |

Leader: By now participants might be feeling comfortable with talking in small groups. Encourage them to get back into their small group and compare notes. To encourage conversation, you could suggest they explain when, where and how these influences took place. If the number of participants is ten or more, you could have an all-together session and ask people to raise their hand if they ticked a box. People are usually interested in seeking the different ways (or any similarities) in which God has worked in lives other than their own. If anyone ticked the “other” box, you could ask them to explain what this was (if they are comfortable doing so).

Exercise 3 – What makes Jesus Important?

Leader: The order of these group exercises is important. In this final exercise invite people to take several minutes to reflect what – in their experience – makes Jesus special for them. A Christian is distinct from other religions because of what we believe about Jesus. But this exercise is not about doctrine or erudite theological definitions; it is about personal subjective experience. People have different experiences. What made Jesus special for Bartimaeus would be different to what made Jesus special for Zacchaeus.

Each group member is invited to write the three main things which, in their experience, makes Jesus special to them. If possible they should try to order them.

When they have had a good amount of time to do this, encourage them back to their small groups and ask them to take turns explaining what they have written and why. When they have each had sufficient time to speak, ask then whether anything someone else in the group said anything that might make them alter their list.

Then invite them to see if they could agree one list of three aspects without the need for someone to give up on an aspect that is really important to them. They might not be able to agree but it might be an interesting discussion!

Finally, get some feedback for an all-together session. If the group is not too large, each person could just give their list while the other participants could be encouraged to shout “Yo” or “Amen” etc if the same aspect is on their list. This could be fun. Where there are a lot of participants, you could save time by having just one feedback per small group.

Additional Exercise

See Section A and make use of these exercises in sharing stories and experiences.

Leader: The purpose of these exercise is to help people to understand how and when God has interacted in their lives helping them on a journey of faith. It is vital that the whole experience of these exercises is enjoyable and not threatening. If it has felt like fun, then get people to affirm that publicly. Some participants might even be willing to do the Personal exercises in Section A part 2 with a non-Christian friend!