

LESSON 16:

EVANGELISM



AIM:

To explain why Christians should share their faith with others and provide some practical help in the task of evangelism – especially through lifestyle among peers. (This session is written for young people who are Christians.)

YOU WILL NEED:

- Bibles
- Actual Reality CD
- Computer
- box of chocolates
- paper and pens

ACTIVITY:

Send all of the group out of the room except for two people. Give one of those remaining a box of chocolates. Tell them that it is entirely up to them what they do with the chocolates although you would encourage them to share the chocolates in some way with everyone. Now invite the others back in. Ask the young person with the chocolates what they intend to do. They don't have to share the chocolates, but if they want to they can do so now.

DISCUSS:

Ask the group if they would have all shared the chocolates. If so, why? If the young person had not shared the chocolates what would the others have thought? (Try to draw out discussion about selfishness, temptation to keep good things to oneself and the difficulty of sharing things fairly.)

INFORMATION:

Christians have been given astonishing gifts from God: forgiveness from sin, a new start in life and a purpose for our existence, to name but three. God wants us to share the hope of the 'gospel' with others and the news is so good we *should* want to share it! In fact, it's a great privilege to tell people about Jesus. However, the task can be daunting and therefore it is important to know not just *why* we should share our faith, but *how* we can do it most effectively.

BIBLE

Jesus came to earth to spread a message of Good News – this is what the word 'gospel' means. Remind the group of Jesus 'manifesto' that was covered in Lesson 1 (Luke 4:16 – 19). Discuss for a moment or two if this could also be the 'manifesto' for the worldwide church today. Read Matthew 28:18-20 to see Jesus final words to his disciples before He returned to heaven. This was their new 'mission statement' and as disciples of Jesus it's ours too.

CD:

Follow these screen clicks to get to the 'Spacecraft in Field' screen:



Click on 'Mongolia' for a short movie about 'The Great Commission' in Matthew 28. Then click on 'Christown' and 'Neighbor' for two reasons why Christians should share their faith.

ACTIVITY:

Divide into groups of three or four young people and ask each group to write down on a large piece of paper the friends and acquaintances of their age with whom they socialise, *who are not Christians*. At the bottom they should count up the names. Display all of the lists and add up the total number of names. Point out that this is just the number of direct friends and acquaintances with whom the group could share their faith, but there are probably hundreds more people who they come across briefly in their lives and many more they have yet to meet. There is no shortage of people who have yet to hear the gospel or make a commitment to follow Christ!

ACTIVITY:

Here is a simple mathematical challenge for the group. Ask them to calculate how long it would take for the whole of the UK to be evangelised if each of the group shared their faith with 6 different people each week, then 50% of these became Christians and also shared their faith with 6 others each week; 50% of these became Christians, etc. Assume there are 60 million people in the UK. (For a group of 12 the answer is just 12 weeks, but don't spend too long trying to work it out!)

CD:

Click on the spaceship to get to the 'Newsboys' screen. Click in turn on the orange highlighted sections of text to see some short movies giving advice on how to witness effectively – 'You don't understand' is highlighted twice so only click on one of these or you will see the same clip repeated. After each clip ask the group members to say what they found most helpful and note the answers down on a flipchart or overhead projector.

INFORMATION:

When sharing one's faith, there are times to speak and there are times to listen. There are times to tell people very specifically about the Christian faith and many other times when we should just demonstrate the Christian faith through the way we ourselves live and relate to people. St. Frances of Assisi once said; "Preach the gospel and if you have to, use words." We must remember that we should not just speak good news, but also BE good news. If our lifestyle is the opposite of the faith we talk about then we are hypocrites – and Jesus had little time for hypocrisy! The rest of the lesson looks at areas of lifestyle that can affect our witness to others.

BIBLE:

Read 1 Timothy 4:12 and ask the group in what five areas the writer Paul encourages his young leader, Timothy, to work on in order to demonstrate a lifestyle that communicates something about the truth of Jesus to others. Note these five areas down.

ACTIVITY:

You could show a clip here from the video 'More than Champions' (available for purchase on the web at www.cpodirect.org) in which famous sports personalities talk about how their faith impacts their lifestyle and in so doing demonstrates a credible Christian witness.

ACTIVITY:

Divide the group into five teams and give each team one of the five areas that Paul highlights in 1 Timothy 4:12; Speech, Life, Love, Faith and Purity. Tell the teams that they have about five minutes to produce a role-play of a real-life situation that demonstrates how, as a Christian, their faith should affect the particular area they have been given. Each group should then perform their drama.

BIBLE:

Summarise the following core teaching points as appropriate for the group:

1. *Example in speech* – Being known as someone who lies or talks unkindly about other people 'behind their backs' is a bad witness – gossiping always ends in hurt. Let's face it, everyone has probably been guilty of these things at one time or another so it's no wonder James put such a great emphasis on controlling the tongue in his New Testament letter. He says it all in James 1:26; "*If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless*". Consider the following advice:
Listen more – speak less;
Think more – speak later (i.e. think before you speak);
Filter more – speak right (i.e. don't allow thoughts about swearing, verbally abusing someone, etc. come to fruition in speech).

2. *Example in life* - There is a very simple bench-mark for us to consider here. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:31, *"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God"*. If this is the standard then we have to ask ourselves whether all of our behaviour and actions bring glory to God. The answer to this is generally very clear if we are honest with ourselves. Whether we're prepared to do something about it is a much bigger issue.
3. *Example in love* - Here in 1 Timothy 4:12 the Greek word for love, 'agape', is used, which means a love that is sacrificially given without any expectation that it will be given back. This is a love that goes beyond words and actually equates with tangible action. This is a love that makes time for people and meets their real needs. In 1 John 3:17 we're asked to consider, *"If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?"* Jesus showed genuine, practical compassion for people – and so should we. Caring in this way shows others our faith is real.
4. *Example in faith* - The questions for us to consider here are very simple. Are we leaning on God or on ourselves to cope with all that life brings us? Are we spending time getting to know God better through prayer and reading the Bible? Whilst we are obviously not perfect, is it true that every day we are pursuing a life more like Christ's, and less like our own? And when life gets REALLY tough do we follow the advice of the writer in Proverbs 3:5; *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding"*. If others see how much we gain from trusting in God and following Christ's example and teaching, won't they want to do the same?
5. *Example in purity* - Often we may find ourselves thinking, 'How much can I get away with?' rather than 'What is the right thing to do in this situation'. Areas such as our attitude to alcohol consumption, the jokes we tell and what we watch on TV/video/the internet, all need careful consideration. Paul delivers some advice with his usual sharp clarity in 1 Thessalonians 4:7 when he says, *"For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life."* The question we should really be looking to answer therefore is not 'How much can I get away with?' but rather 'How close can I get to God's standard of holiness'. Non-Christians often understand the 'holiness' aspect of the Christian faith better than we realise and when we compromise in this area we risk losing our respect and undermining our witness.

ACTIVITY:

To end the lesson, ask the group to each consider three people they know well and who aren't yet Christians and to think about how they are going to be a better example to them. You could close by praying that God would give opportunities to share the Christian faith with them at the right time and in the right way.