

evangelism I

introduction

FACILITATOR: *This meeting is the first in a series of four on evangelism. The aim of the series is to come to an understanding of what it means NOT to know God, to see what God's plans are to bring everyone back to Him and to grasp the role that God has for us in all this. From this new understanding the cell will see evangelism in a new way and have a growing desire to reach out to the lost. As you learn together, create an atmosphere where openness and honesty are the norm. Don't let guilty feelings or a sense of past failures creep in. Also watch out for legalism – compassion for the lost comes by God changing our hearts NOT through us trying to stir up feelings and emotions.*

In this series of four, the 4Ws are tied together with a common theme. Make sure that you read through the AIM and OUTCOMES of each meeting before you delegate the sections out to people. Also make sure that you have noted and communicated to people what practical resources [like pens and paper, etc.] are needed for each meeting.

1: god's heart for the lost

FACILITATOR: *The aim for this meeting is for everyone to understand what being 'lost' is. To see the effects of the 'fall' and to grasp God's plan to bring people back to Him. To identify a number of friends and commit to demonstrating the value of 'heart for the lost.'*

Items to prepare ahead of time: some kind of music for the Worship section – use an instrument like a guitar if you can play/someone in cell plays or use a CD player if not. Everyone needs a Bible for the Word section. And you will need to write some scriptures on paper. You may want to get some large sheets of paper [like flip chart paper] for the brainstorming in the Witness section.

welcome

CELL: Share a time when you lost something of great value. How did you feel when you realized this item was lost? What steps did you take to get it back?

worship

FACILITATOR: *The first cell value is 'Jesus at the center'. Use the next 20 minutes to think about what Jesus at the center means and to invite Jesus in. Put on a CD or play a worship song and ask everyone to listen and to reflect. Everyone in the room prays out loud one at a time, inviting Jesus to be at the center of the meeting and their lives. The focus of this time is to confess our need of Jesus and to identify ways in which we can live out lives with Jesus at the center. People may also want to pray out and identify things that keep Jesus from the center of our lives. When you have done this, play a song and praise together, expressing faith and thanks that Jesus is and will be at the center of the cell and its members' lives.*

word

FACILITATOR: *This word section is designed to help you think about what it is like to be 'lost.' You will be using the Bible and people's own experiences as resources. There are 6 key scriptures representing alienation and 6 scriptures which correspond to reconciliation. Write the letter A in the top corner of 6 sheets of paper and a letter B on the back to help people know which scripture to start with.*

Write the reference to the Genesis scriptures on side A of each sheet. Write the corresponding references to reconciliation on side B.

CELL: What does the Bible say is the reason for people being 'lost'?

FACILITATOR: Ask someone to read out to the group Genesis chapter 3: 7-19. It describes the fall and the alienation it has brought about. We can identify 6 types of alienation. You will need to make a list of these 6 forms of 'lostness'/alienation. Hold up the sheets of paper as you identify each one.

- [a] self alienation [v7]
- [b] spiritual alienation [v8-10]
- [c] relational alienation [v12-13]
- [d] physical alienation [v16]
- [e] ecological alienation [17-18]
- [f] vocational alienation [v19]

- [a] Roman 12: 3 [self reconciliation]
- [b] 2 Corinthians 5: 18-20 [spiritual reconciliation]
- [c] John 13: 34-5 [relational reconciliation]
- [d] Isaiah 53: 4-5 [physical reconciliation]
- [e] Romans 8:12-22 [ecological reconciliation]
- [f] Colossians 3: 22-24 [vocational reconciliation]

CELL ACTIVITY PART 1: What does being lost feel like? What effect does it have on people?

FACILITATOR: Give each person or twosome a sheet of paper with one form of alienation to think about. Have them look up the scripture. Allow a few minutes for thinking/discussing in pairs and then ask each person/one of the pair to describe to the group how this particular alienation affects people.

CELL ACTIVITY PART 2: What does God want to do about it?

FACILITATOR: Have the person or twosome keep the paper. Ask them to turn the paper over and have them read the scripture out to the cell group. You will need to explain that all of verses refer to reconciliation, which means 'to restore something to its original condition'.

Ask each person to think about one of the above areas of alienation, which they can identify with. When they have got an area in mind, ask them think about how God has reconciled them to Him and His original plan for them in that area. After a few minutes ask people to share with the group which they chose and why they picked it. Encourage descriptive, detailed answers.

witness

CELL: What are you going to do about it?

FACILITATOR: If what we have just read is true – that people are lost and alienated from God and that God has a plan to restore them back to a relationship with Him – how should we respond? Many of us believe this to be true and many of us will be able to pin point changes that have taken place since we became a Christian. However, many Christians are happy to keep this to themselves.

How far are you prepared to go? Read this quote of Martin Luther King out to the group.
Martin Luther King said...

“you haven’t found what you are living for until you have found what you’ll die for”

To make sure that people don't take a downward spiral as they think about these things, ask them to make a commitment to 1 step forward in the area of witness and 'heart for the lost.' Make the step manageable and realistic. This question may help : “What one thing could I change in my attitude or my actions that would make my Christian life count?” Take time for people to pray about these steps. Encourage them to pray verses of reconciliation for the people they will meet throughout the week.

Thinking on a cell level, rather than the personal level, take a look back over the previous weeks/term and ask each person to give an example of how the cell has demonstrated the value

'heart for the lost.' What evidence is there of prayer, preparation and outreach going on?

what now?

FACILITATOR: *Get each person to see their part in the cell picture and verbalize things that relate to 'heart for the lost' that they can commit to doing/seeing happen over the next week. An effective way of getting people to be accountable to the group, is to get them to identify between 3 - 5 people they have regular contact with. For each person write down 1 practical way to bless them & one prayer to pray for them. Get people to put themselves in the shoes of the other person, asking what would that person want/need?*

***You may want to consider forming Triad prayer groups for the month. (See the 'core values' starter pack, week 1- witness section, for an explanation of how to do this.)*

2: barriers to evangelism

introduction

FACILITATOR: *The aim this week is to pick up from last week. People are separated from God, God has a plan to bring people back to Him and we have a role in this. It is useful to review this with the group before starting the WORD section in this cell meeting.*

This meeting outline looks at how our intentions are often thwarted and the things that can get in the way of getting a heart for the lost. By identifying barriers we can be effective for God in every area of our Christian lives.

The materials you will need to gather ahead of time are a pen and some scrap paper for the welcome as well as 6 sheets of paper for the word section. You will also need to make sure that everyone has a Bible for the word section.

welcome

FACILITATOR: *Go around and ask the cell members the following questions.*

What is the most embarrassing thing you have ever done/said? Why was it so embarrassing? How did it feel? What do you think other people were thinking about you at the time? [Make sure people answer all 4 aspects to get the most out of it]

worship

FACILITATOR: *Make sure everybody has a Bible. Ask the group to stand and turn to Psalm 136. Going round the circle, each person reads a verse and then the whole group reads the refrain, 'His love endures for ever'. This would naturally lead into praising God for everything the Psalm talks about. Have a guitar ready or a CD with a suitable song that will allow the group to continue to declare God's goodness.*

word

FACILITATOR: *Have the group read the story of Jonah to themselves and then answer the following questions together. (Simply summarize the account of Jonah if there are time constraints.)*

CELL: What different barriers to evangelism can be seen here?

FACILITATOR: *Get the cell to share some ideas from the Bible passage. Involve people who don't speak straight away.*

To make it easier for people to identify with barriers to evangelism, use these 6 headings. Before the meeting write each one on a separate sheet of paper:

- 1 - a lack of God's heart for the lost
- 2 - apathy
- 3 - fear of people: of what they might say or think and of losing their friendship
- 4 - fear of God: a wrong understanding that leads to fear of displeasing him through getting it wrong
- 5 - bad time management
- 6 - a lack of non-Christian friends
- 7 - non-distinctive lifestyle

After you have discussed these barriers with the cell members, spread the sheets of paper around the floor of the room and then pose these questions to everyone:

- In what ways do these barriers affect me and others?
- Is it to do with fear/poor discipline/not caring?
- Where does this come from? [Maybe fear of mistakes/never tried to share my faith/high expectations from others to be 'sound' or to have all the answers.]

Give people a few minutes to consider these questions and then ask them to go and stand on (or next to) the piece of paper that they feel they can most identify with. Have them take time to identify with the barrier and go over the questions again – this time to themselves and with more care.

While standing on/next to the pieces of paper, take the rest of the time as a group to pray through what you have been discussing. You may like to encourage one another to repent, first, of where you have let these things stand in the way of your evangelism and then pray for each other that these barriers will be removed. You need to decide whether to do this altogether, in pairs or quietly each person on their own.

witness

FACILITATOR: *You now have a chance to move on from barriers and to do something practical about evangelism. We know that the vast majority of people become Christians through the friendship they have with another Christian. This is why we encourage each cell member to identify a handful of friends [3-5 people] whom they relate to at school and to pray for them regularly. We also use cell meetings to develop the cell value 'heart for the lost' together.*

Spend these twenty minutes praying for friends each cell member identified [last week]. Ask God to give opportunities to demonstrate to unchurched friends the Good News of Jesus.

If people haven't yet identified a few people that they pray for and witness to, ask them to think of three people now – it could be housemates, people in their dorm, classmates, or people they work with. It is useful for cell leaders to make a mental note of these individual situations. Speak to them after the cell and explain that by being accountable to the cell for our praying and witnessing, it is easier to maintain it as a lifestyle. Knowing which people God has laid on your heart also helps you to be focused, avoiding being frustrated and unproductive in your efforts to make your life count.

what now?

CELL: *As you have contact with those friends you have been already been praying for, ask them if they have anything in particular you might pray for them. Commit to those friends that you will be praying for their individual situations. You may be surprised how open they are to allowing you to pray for them (some may have friends or family who are sick, or personal dire situations, etc.) Allow the Lord to use this as an open door for you to speak to your friends regarding spiritual matters.*

3: the gospel and its relevance

introduction

FACILITATOR: *The Gospel is a story. It is the story that we read about in the Bible as we see how God has been unfolding his plans through his people throughout history and it is the story that we experience ourselves as we see God working in our own lives. It is this story that we want to understand and encounter as we look at its relevance to those around us.*

The aim of this cell meeting outline is to help people identify the process that is going on. Rather than seeing people's lives as a pre-Christian time and a post-conversion time, life is a journey. Many of our friends are on a journey towards God. Knowing how the process works is helpful as we pray and witness.

welcome

CELL: Who did God use to bring you to the point where you knew you needed Jesus? What had been going on in the previous weeks/months? Had you been changing or did your conversion come like a bolt out of the blue?

worship

CELL: We have all experienced God working in our lives and are aware of how different we would be if we were not Christians. Take time to say what God has changed in you, whether that be character issues, relationships, lifestyles and so on, and then thank God for these things.

FACILITATOR: *Depending on what is said and how open people are, look for opportunities to pray for individuals. As always, watch out for jargon and don't let people get away with trite answers! Use music to create an atmosphere where people can reflect and then pray out between songs, verses or even over the top of the music. Allow other people's stories to encourage each member. Remember that 'Jesus at the center' is what we're aiming for so when there is the opportunity to invite Jesus in – do so. Affirm peoples' confessions of need. Affirm that God is at work. Ask God to continue His work.*

word

FACILITATOR: *Read 1Corinthians 15: 1-8 as a group and then answer the following question, going through each verse to check that everyone understands what each part really means:*

What are the basic components of the Gospel, according to Paul?

Divide the group into 3 smaller groups and give each group one of the scripture passages below. Have each group discuss their passage, looking at the context and how the explanation changes accordingly.

CELL: Let's look now at three very different situations in the Bible in which God's story is explained.

Group 1: Paul in Athens in Acts 17

Group 2: Jesus with Nicodemus in John 3

Group 3: Pentecost, Acts 2

What are the key elements and why are they key? Feedback to the group.

Now, let's consider some situations today in which, either now or in the future, we may find ourselves story-telling. Break down into pairs. Look at a situation and discuss how what you say might change accordingly:

to a fellow student

to a lone parent

to a business person

to someone from the slums of Sao Paulo

witness

CELL: What situations do you each find yourselves in which there is an opportunity for you to tell the story (again remembering that the Gospel is more than words)?

FACILITATOR: *Let everybody talk about their opportunities, and then pray for one another that we may have real effectiveness in these situations. You could do this by going round the room, breaking into pairs or splitting the cell group into 2 halves depending on how you feel the time could be best used.*

what now?

CELL: Make a conscious effort to take advantage of the open opportunities the Lord gives us to share the story of the Gospel with non-believers. Seek out such an opportunity this week to share the Gospel story with one of the friends you have been praying for. Do not allow any barriers to evangelism keep you from opening up with those around you. Be ready to share next week with the cell group the opportunities you encounter.

4: living evangelism

introduction

FACILITATOR: *This is the fourth and final meeting in this evangelism series. Last week we looked at how the Gospel is about the story of God in our lives and in the unfolding of his plans through history. As followers of Jesus, the challenge to us is to be living out that story in our own lives. This is where we discover that evangelism is not just about clever arguments and illustrations, but is about our lifestyle. We want the group to realize that often it is easier to have clever arguments rather than a lifestyle that witnesses to Jesus.*

welcome

FACILITATOR: *Ask people to be thinking about the last few weeks. Encouraging honesty and reminding people that there are no right or wrong answers, ask people to share a situation where they have had a very positive experience of witness OR to share a situation where despite the best intentions, the situation didn't go so well.*

worship

FACILITATOR: *A suggestion for this section is that you start by turning off all the lights and lighting a single candle in the middle of the room. Then someone could read a scripture; ex. 'I am the light of the world'. You could lead from this into a meditation on the 'I Ams' of Christ.*

word

FACILITATOR: *Read Isaiah 42:1-8 and Luke 10:25-37 together, then answer the following questions.*

CELL: The Gospel is, literally, good news. Think about your college:

- What material needs do people have?
- What can you do as a group to begin to meet these needs?
- What structures already exist to help students?
- Could any of you get involved and so begin to influence these structures?

Statistics suggest that 63% of Christians became so through a process over time rather than through a crisis and that 70% of Christians became so through their friends.

Divide into pairs to discuss and then feedback to the group.

- What can we learn from these statistics for our evangelism?
- How will this affect us both individually and as a group?

FACILITATOR: *Ask people to say what they have learnt from this meeting. Is there anything in particular that they are aware that they struggle with? Is there anything that anyone would like to be prayed for? Spend time praying for one another for whatever has been said.*

witness /what now?

CELL: Over the last four weeks we have looked at how God wants to reconcile people back to Him, how the Gospel is a story unfolding throughout our lives and how influential we can be as we befriend, pray and share our lives with people. We know that by being accountable to the group for our own personal goals, we are more able to stay on track.

We have identified a circle of friends whom we relate to and pray for. As the final evangelism section, grab a sheet of paper and brainstorm all the ways that your cell has connections and influences with the college. It could be through a job, playing in a sport team or participating in other activities not to do with church. After you have a list of the contacts and points of influence, thank God for them. Pray for everyone to make the most of these opportunities this week.