



Share together any experiences you have had of dropping 'faith bait' into conversations, also share the response of the people you were talking to. Also talk about helping people take the step forward on their faith journey.



Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses and to grow leaders. Give us the eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of Your Spirit and courage to follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.



Exercise: You are invited...

Give an example of an invitation you were pleased to receive, or share some examples of invitations you would like to receive.



DVD: 4:1



Bible: Matthew 28:16-20

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Explore the following questions together:

- What is your reaction to seeing empty pews or chairs in church?
- Jesus gave his disciples a clear instruction to "go and make disciples"; why do you think churches have an attitude of waiting for people to come to us?
- Jesus' Great Commission is to go and make disciples of all nations, or sometimes this is translated as all people. Are there groups of people or age groups that your church finds it hard to reach? What steps could your church take to better equip it to reach all people?



Exercise: Our Networks

Working together as a group, list the different ways your church connects with the local community on a sheet of flip chart paper. List the groups and contacts and if possible try to add to the list the number of people in each category. Don't forget to include connecting with people through websites and social media. Add up the total number of people that the church connects with on a regular basis.

Points for discussion:

- What are your reactions to the exercise?
- How many different points of contact does your church have with the local community?
- Are you surprised by the numbers?
- In what ways has the church tried to share the Christian faith with these contacts?
- Has the faith sharing been through actions or words or both? Share some examples in the group.

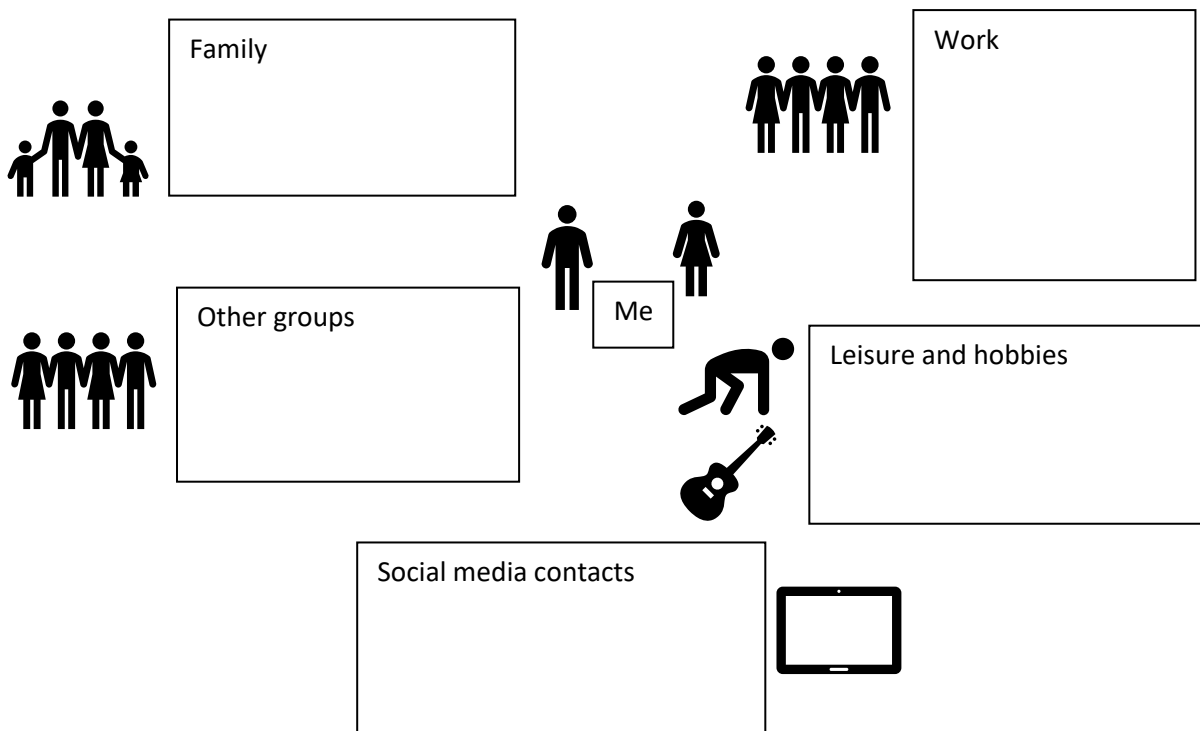


DVD: 4:2



Exercise: Jolly hockey sticks

In the DVD Penny spoke about wanting her friends in the hockey team to discover more about Jesus. Each of us also has an individual network of contacts.



Think about your personal network of connections with people who are not yet committed Christians. Think about work, leisure activities, hobbies etc. Jot down some names of people in those groups in the boxes above.

Discuss in threes what steps you could take to share Jesus with your contacts.



Exercise: A bit of a do!

Think of some of the social and outreach activities organised by your church; in what ways could these activities be used to communicate some aspect of the Christian Faith? If your church isn't currently doing any outreach events that share the Christian faith, would any of the ideas listed on page 5 and 6 of these Course Members' Materials be a useful starting point?

Using the list of potential outreach ideas, consider as a group which events might work well in your setting.

As a group select two outreach activities that would help people find out more about Jesus. Consider together the best way of getting your church to put on these events.

- 1.
- 2.



DVD: 4:3



Exercise: I'm going, it's going to be good, would you like to come?

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. John 1:40-42

Think about the people you have committed to praying for. Are there any activities organised by your church or some other Christian group that you would feel able to invite them to? You might like to record some ideas in the box below. Discuss your thoughts in pairs.



Prayer:

Spend some moments in silence praying for the people on your prayer list. Then ask God to help you to identify outreach events that you might be able to invite them to. Pray that your church would feel able to put on some outreach events.

Pray together the 'Being Witnesses' prayer:

Lord, help us to be witnesses through our actions and our words.

May we be faithful in prayer, gracious in service and more confident in speaking.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen



Take away activity:

Think of someone you could invite to a church based outreach activity in the near future and then invite them! Remember – I'm going, it's going to be good, would you like to come?

Outreach Ideas

Presence events:

Most churches already have an on-going presence in their local community and are well practised in running presence events such as:

- Spring fairs • Harvest festivals • Garden parties • Social events • Trips

Suggestions for presence events

- Coach trip outing
- Christmas Fair, Springtime garden party
- Community Action Day (litter picking, bulb planting, gardening, community celebration event...)
- Church open day, stalls, trip up the tower, cream teas
- Memories and moments – afternoon for older folks
- Film nights
- Valentine's dinner
- Mums', Dads' and kids' football tournament
- Beetle drive with food
- Crazy Olympics for families

This experience gives us a good foundation to build on by either incorporating a proclamation element into our next social gathering, or to use it as the invitation for a proclamation event.

Proclamation events:

A proclamation event may look like a good social event or a special 'festival' type service. It is an event where the Christian faith is presented in an appropriate and attractive way perhaps through a relevant talk or testimony.

Suggestions for proclamation events

- Food and speaker event (Breakfasts, Curry nights, Medieval Banquets...)
- All Souls service
- Back to Church Sunday
- Mission weekend with guest speaker
- Themed Outreach Evening (Chocolate, Sports, Quiz night...)
- 'Pints of View' - Any questions event in a local pub
- Local pilgrimage – with short time of reflection
- Big stories – one or two local people talk about their life and faith, plus a speaker
- Big God night – questions, apologetics
- Reel Issues – Using clips from popular films to talk about life and faith
- Women's night out
- Teenagers' sleep-over
- Restaurant night
- Men's gathering

- Book night
- Supper party at vicarage
- Games night
- Agnostics Anonymous
- Creative arts – drama, music etc.
- Coffee Morning
- Hard Questions

Presence and proclamation events both work very well in conjunction with the major festivals.

As presence pours itself into proclamation, so proclamation filters itself through to persuasion.

Persuasion:

Persuasion is not twisting peoples' arms or coercing people to believe. It's allowing people space to explore and ask questions about the relevance and importance of the Christian Faith.

Suggestions for persuasion events

- Using Table Talk or Puzzling Questions resources
- Running an Enquirers' course (Start!, Alpha, Pilgrim, Christianity Explored, Life Explored etc.)
- Searching Questions – discussion events
- Themed presentation/discussion evening (Faith and Science, God and Suffering, Other Faiths...)
- Activity Day with natural opportunities to talk and discuss (craft, church walk, outdoor challenges and activities)
- Pints of View – pub based discussion evening
- Agnostic Anonymous group
- 'If you could ask God one question - what would it be?' Apologetics Evening
- Encounter Evening – Exploring Christian spirituality through creative prayer stations