



Learning to **FISH**

Small Group Evangelism Training and Small Group Guide



Learning to FISH

– Small Group Evangelism Training and Small Group Guide –

*Summit small groups exist to make disciples through Bible study,
community, and mission.*

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Introduction

Hey Summit small group family!

You hold in your hand (or see on your screen) a resource created to equip you to be a disciple-maker and missionary in your community.

The Great Commission exhorts every Christian to be a disciple who makes disciples who make disciples. We put this resource together to equip you to be able to share the gospel, hopefully leading friends, neighbors, and family members to trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. This resource is also created in mind that once you lead people to faith, you can immediately help them understand these basic concepts so that they can also make disciples.

This resource has two primary parts: a small group study and an evangelism training guide, which introduces the FISH acronym and how to apply it to your daily life. You can study the the evangelism training guide by yourself, in a group setting, or one-on-one. It. The small group resource contains four weeks of curriculum and may be used during your regular meeting times.

I pray that this resource equips and encourages many to be on mission and make disciples in their day-to-day lives!

David Talbert

Small Groups Pastor

The Summit Church

What to Expect in This Study

Sharing the gospel is exciting! Evangelism can also be intimidating. Many people are afraid to share their faith in Jesus Christ with others, whether they know them well or not at all. We tie this emotional response to the misconception that we are not equipped to share our faith and that it is overwhelmingly complicated.

Some describe their thoughts on evangelism this way: “I would share my faith, but I’m afraid that I will not know the answer to someone’s question.” But if you are a believer in Jesus, and you don’t know the answer to a question, then it is obviously not the linchpin for someone trusting or not trusting Jesus. In fact, not knowing the answer to a question is a great opportunity to point back to the gospel as the true foundation for faith and an open door to invite someone to study the Bible with you for mutual learning.

There is something you should know about evangelism training: No study, including this one, will ever resolve all your fears or answer all your questions on sharing the gospel. We can be confident and comforted that God is the one doing the work; we are merely his instruments. By the end of this small group study, you will not only be more assured of the promises of God as it pertains to evangelism (John 15:20-21, 1 Peter 4:12, Matthew 28:18-20); you will also see it as one of the most exciting aspects of the Christian life.

Over the next four weeks, we will use the FISH acronym (Appendix 3) as our model and the Bridge diagram (Appendix 5) as our method. There are many good models and methods for sharing the gospel. It doesn’t matter which one you pick as long as you pick one and use it!

This is a topical study. We will interact with different passages from the Bible, but the topic is evangelism. The study will last four weeks and utilize three of the Summit Small Group Rhythms (Appendix 1). There are also:

- **Two small group Bible study guides**
- **One D-Group guide**
- **One Missional Hangout plan**

Note to small group leaders: You may not be super comfortable sharing the gospel. But it's not your job to be the best at anything your group does, just to help everyone in your group take a step forward.

Note to SG members: Your leader's job is not to do evangelism for you. His or her role is to help everyone in your group take a step forward.

FISH Bible Study

Week 1

Introduction

At the Summit, we often ask, “Who is your one?” What we mean is this: Who is one person God has placed in your life that you are intentionally seeking to share the gospel with in hopes that that person comes to faith?

From time to time, we may have the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ with a stranger. However, we share the gospel more often one piece at a time with people we already know that we know don’t know Jesus. God has placed specific people into our lives - friends and acquaintances - that we can share with. The gospel moves forward best through these pre-established friendships. We must be ready to share the gospel in these friendships. Sharing the gospel almost always requires an intentional initiation of a gospel conversation.

Wanting to have good conversations and friends is not enough. We have to actively create the space in our lives to establish new relationships. An essential element of building friendships is having the margin in our lives to do so.

This week in small group we have two objectives:

- **To identify and pursue friendships with non-Christians.**
- **To initiate spiritual conversations within those friendships.**

Take a few minutes to go over the “Building Friendships” and “Initiating Spiritual Conversations” sections from the **FISH Training Guide in Appendix 3** with your group.

“Building Friendships” Questions

1) Do you know many non-Christians? Are you friends with them?

2) Read Colossians 4:5-6. What observations about building friendships with non-Christians do you see in these verses?

3) What are ways you can get to know and build friendships with non-Christians?

4) Most people are open to being “friendly,” a one-time positive interaction, but lack the time to develop a real friendship. What do you need to add, modify, or remove from your schedule to create the margin necessary to build intentional friendships?

“Initiate Spiritual Conversations” Questions

1) Anything you are passionate about is easy to talk about. What are some topics that you enjoy that you could turn into spiritual conversations?

2) What is the difference between having a spiritual conversation and sharing the gospel?

3) One of the best ways to initiate to spiritual thing is to share how God has worked in your life in a specific area or time. Break into groups of 2-4 and practice sharing a way God has worked in your life.

4) Using the resource in Appendix 4, create your FISH Tracking Sheet to help you focus and pray for the relationship God has brought into your life.

This Week's Next Steps:

- Pray for opportunities with each person you listed in the FISH Tracking Sheet by name.
- Initiate a conversation or meal with someone on your FISH Tracking Sheet.
- Begin asking people on your FISH Tracking Sheet about their Easter Weekend plans. You can invite them to Easter services with you or to your small group's Missional Hangout on Easter Sunday.

FISH Bible Study

Week 2

Introduction

In the FISH Week 1 Bible Study we said that the first step to being evangelistic is identifying who your “one” is - and building a friendship with them. But the goal is not new friends and good intentions. God desires that all people would come to him (reference) and therefore part of a Christian’s perspective on the world is that any friendship with a non-Christian would include sharing the gospel at some point. Spiritual conversations are great for building rapport and bearing witness to Christ in you (the hope of glory - ref.). In order for someone to fully accept (or reject) God they must hear the full scope of their separation, God’s love, hope in Jesus, and how to begin a relationship with God. We need not be ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God to save any who believe (Romans 1:16).

This week we have two objectives:

- **Share the gospel.**
- **Help people believe the gospel.**

There is not a “strange, invisible line” that exist and can be crossed when you know someone for a long time but never share the gospel with them. Additionally, sharing the gospel is not the same as convincing someone that your worldview, or set of convictions and perspectives, is absolutely right. Rather, the gospel is the doorway by which one’s worldview is changed. The gospel changes the heart first, emotions, behaviors and perspectives are the fruit of a new heart. Additionally, this week we will practice using **The Bridge** evangelism tool.

Take a few minutes to go over the “Building Friendships” and “Initiating Spiritual Conversations” sections from the **FISH Training Guide in Appendix 3** with your group.

Sharing the Gospel:

1) On a scale of 1-10, how prepared do you feel to share the gospel? Explain.

2) Read Romans 6:23. What does it mean that “the wages of sin is death”?

3) Since death is our consequence for how we live, how can one receive life?

4) It is an inaccurate Christian cliché that one must “earn the right to share the gospel.” How can you point to your own sinfulness as an example of the good news available to anyone you are sharing with?

5) Look at The Bridge diagram in Appendix 5. Break into groups of three & practice sharing the gospel using the bridge diagram.

Help them Believe:

1) What helped you trust in Christ when you became a Christian?

2) The goal of helping a friend believe the gospel is taking a step forward in faith. What are small steps (resources or opportunities) you could take with someone to help them grow in their understanding of the gospel?

3) One way to help someone believe is by sharing your personal testimony. Using Appendix 6, break into groups of three and practice sharing your testimony in less than two minutes each.

This Week's Application:

- Pray for opportunities to share the gospel with people on your FISH Tracking Sheet.
- Practice explaining The Bridge using a napkin or piece of paper.
- When God provides the opportunity to share your testimony, ask if you could show them a few verses in the Bible that speak to what you just shared.

FISH D-Group Guide

Main Focus: Evangelism

Core Bible Passage: Matthew 28:18-20

Robert Coleman said in *The Master Plan of Evangelism* that, “Men were to be his method of winning the world to God.” God’s plan for people who do not know him to be introduced to him by the people that already know him. There is not another plan.

Yet, for all the striving that many Christians pursue as it relates to their Christian life, obedience in evangelism is often neglected as a primary means of living as a Christian. Using the FISH small group guides and other resources we will look at practical ways to engage more in daily, relational evangelism. But using this D-Group guide, we will examine what we truly believe about evangelism and its place and importance in the Christian life.

Potential Questions:

- List reasons that Christians share the gospel. Which ones motivate you the most? Least?

- On a daily basis, how often do you think about or pray for the salvation of others?

- Where do you regularly intersect with non-believers? Could God be calling you to befriend some of these people?

- Have you ever shared the gospel with a non-Christian? When was the last time you did so?

- What are reasons that you don't share the gospel - some may be practical and some spiritual?

- Do you believe that God wants to use you to bring others to faith in his son Jesus?

- Do you feel equipped to share the gospel with a non-Christian? Explain.

- Are there any obvious areas of your life that prevent you from being able to share the gospel?
(generally or specifically)

- Spend five minutes praying with a partner for God to reveal idols and sin that stand in the way of you proclaiming the gospel.

FISH Missional Hangout Guide

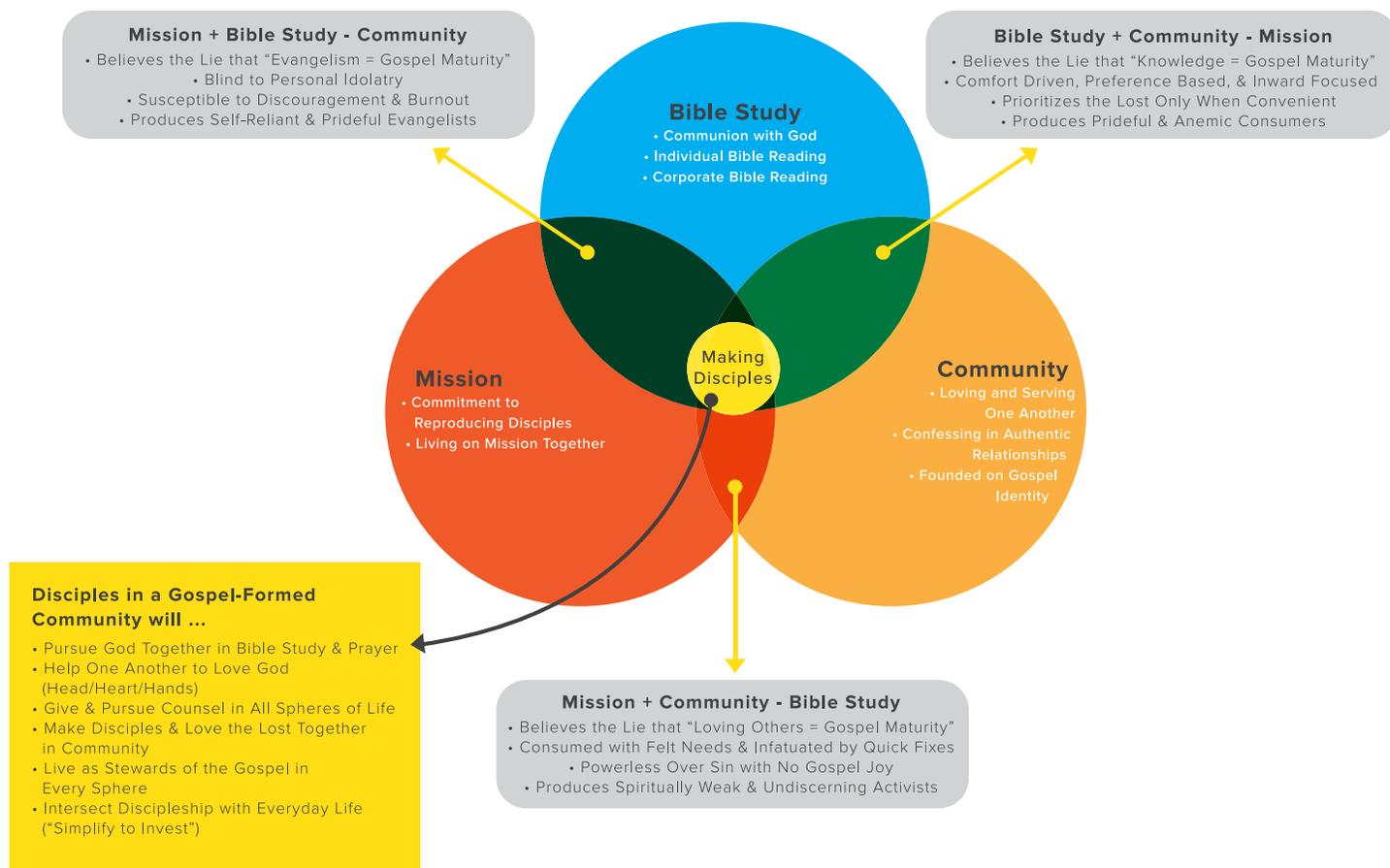
Plan a Missional Hangout (MH) to conclude your small group's FISH study. MHs are intentionally planned in advance to allow time for small group members to invite people. MHs create opportunities for small groups to live on mission together and invest in each other's friendships with non-Christian friends. At their core, MHs are fun for the small group and the people they invite. Sharing a meal typically provide the best context for MHs to occur.

There are three essential elements that make a MH successful.

- 1) **The “WIN” is in the invite.** Only God can make the seeds we sow produce spiritual life in our friends. The simple act of inviting moves the relationship forward. Invitations display the care and effort you are investing into the relationship.
- 2) **Follow up is the key to a successful MH.** An invitation followed by silence does not help build a friendship. Follow up shows that you care whether or not the person attends.
- 3) **Be aware of the “margin” barrier.** An overcommitted and busy schedule is one of the greatest barriers to living on mission. Saying “yes” to too many good things prevents small groups from investing in each other and the lives of non-Christians.

Appendix 1

Summit Small Groups Vision and Rhythms Overview



Small Group Rhythms Definition

- **Bible Study - (3 times / month)**
 - This time is focused on studying Scripture together and orienting all of our lives around the Word of God.
- **Family Time - (2 times / month)**
 - Gospel community is lived out in every sphere of life. This rhythm creates a space to spend informal time having fun or eating together.
- **D-Group - (1 time / month)**
 - D-group is a designated time for discussing our recent circumstances, helping one another apply the gospel to our heart, and growing deeper in the gospel by speaking truth and praying for one another.
- **Missional Hangout - (1 time / every 2 months)**
 - This is an opportunity to invite non-Christian friends to connect with your small group in a fun and social "neutral space."
 - This creates an environment for small groups to live on mission together and pursue the people God has put into your life.

Appendix 2

Five Reasons to Evangelize

1) Jesus commands us to evangelize.

Jesus commissioned his followers (called disciples) to continue making new disciples by evangelizing (telling the good news of the gospel) the lost.

Matthew 28:18-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

2) The harvest is plentiful.

There are many people who have never heard of the saving work of Jesus, and God is preparing them to listen. We are God's laborers to share that good news.

Matthew 9:37-38, "Then (Jesus) said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'"

3) Mission is part of God's character.

Jesus became the ultimate missionary when he left his throne and came to earth to proclaim the Kingdom of God and draw many to himself. The mission to save lost sinners by proclaiming the good news of Jesus' finished work is a part of God's character. God is a missional God, so we must be a missional people.

John 20:21, "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'"

4) Living as an ambassador is part of every Christian's identity.

Evangelism is not a task to accomplish, but a natural part of the Christian life. Every relationship is an opportunity to be an ambassador for Christ. Effective evangelism is faithfully sharing the gospel with the people that God has brought into our lives, and trusting him to change hearts.

2 Corinthians 5:20, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."4) Living as an ambassador is part of every Christian's identity.

5) To practice everyday evangelism as a lifestyle.

Evangelism is not meant to be a switch we flip on and off. Everyday, every relationship is an opportunity to engage in being an ambassador for Christ. Effective evangelism has nothing to do with the result and everything to do with our willingness to tell what God has done for us with the people God has brought into our lives.

Isaiah 6:8-9, "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me.'"

Appendix 3

FISH Training Guide

Overview:

This resource provides a basic framework to help Christians be intentional in daily, personal evangelism.

This guide may be used for teaching in a large or small group setting, one-on-one environments, or individual study.

The acronym “FISH” will provide the framework for this training guide.

F: Build a friendship

I: Initiate spiritual conversations

S: Share the gospel

H: Help them make a decision toward Christ

F: Build a Friendship

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Col. 4:5-6

Building a friendship is simple. God has already brought many people into all of our lives (family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, baristas, etc.).

- We fail to build new friendships because we either don’t see or don’t take advantage of the opportunities in front of us.

- Building a friendship has (almost) everything to do with time and intentionality and much less to do with personality.
- Remember, building friendships for the sake of the gospel is not about concentrating all of your “effort” onto one person, but making the most of every relationship.

How do you build a friendship? Look for opportunities - this may mean that you have to make changes if your current lifestyle limits or prevents your interaction with non-Christians.

- Pray for God to bring opportunities to develop genuine friendships with non-Christians.
- Be faithful at work and love your neighbor.
- Invite them over for dinner at your house.
- Invite them to do something fun with your friends and SG.
- Ask questions about their life, family, job, past, passions, dreams.

I: Initiate Spiritual Conversations

“In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”
 1 Peter 3:15-16

Initiate spiritual conversations. Spiritual conversations rarely form out of thin air, but we should all think about the world through the lens of faith.

- Spiritual conversations engage our faith with the people and circumstances God has brought into our lives.
- A good conversation is two-sided and informal; the key to a good conversation is asking good questions.

How do you initiate a spiritual conversation? Ask intentional questions to initiate spiritual conversations.

- Pray that your friends would be open to talking about spiritual things.
- Spiritual conversations are meant to open the door to gospel conversations.
- Be a good listener. Never marginalize someone else's views.
- Examples of questions to ask:
 - What do you believe about God?
 - Do you ever think about why you do that?
 - How do you find the strength / resolve to love you spouse / kids?
- Share how God is working in a part of your life with your friend.
- Use Scripture and share with others when your faith influences decisions you make.

S: Share the Gospel

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

Share the gospel whenever you can and trust God with the results. Always invite someone to respond after hearing the gospel.

- The more we think about the gospel, the more readily we can help others think about it.

How do you share the gospel? You can share the gospel however you want to and suites the occasion. The key is always to be ready.

- Pray for your friends to receive the gospel and respond in faith.
- We suggest using The Bridge evangelism model; it is simple and easy to remember.
 - You can find The Bridge model in Appendix 5.
- Always conclude by inviting your friend to make a decision to repent and trust Christ.
- There are many effective tools. Find one you like and use it!

H: Help Them Make a Decision Towards Christ

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.” 1 Corinthians 3:6-7

Help them make a decision toward Christ. Everyone responds to the gospel when they hear it. Help your friends know what their next step is.

- Every small decision toward Christ is significant.
- Helping to clarify what decision has been made is primary for identifying someone’s next step.

How do you help someone make a decision toward Christ? Some potential next steps are:

- Pray with and for your friend that whatever decision they are making that God could continue to draw them to himself in faith.
- Your friend decides to trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and desires to learn what it means to follow him.
 - Offer to read the Bible and pray with them.
 - Tell them the importance of being involved in a local church. Offer to find one with them.
- Your friend decides they are not ready to trust Jesus yet.
 - Continue your spiritual conversations and look for more opportunities to share the gospel.
 - Invite them to begin reading the Bible and meeting with you to discuss.
 - Invite them to your small group.

Appendix 4

FISH Tracking Sheet

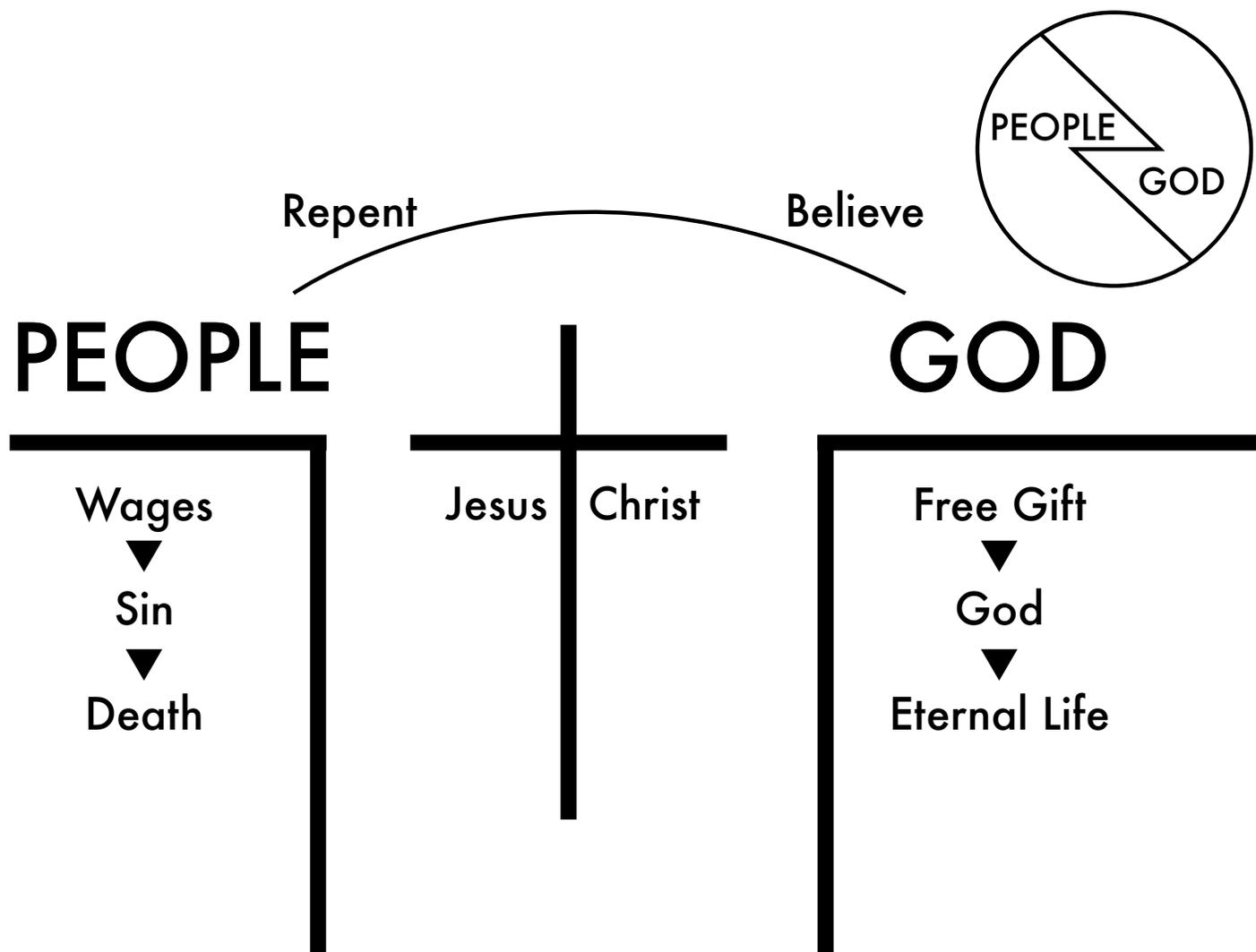
Building Friendships	Initiating Spiritual Conversations	Sharing the Gospel	Helping Friends Believe
Name	Date/Topic	Date/Response	Action Plan
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
Next Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask good questions. • Invite to a meal. • Be intentional. 	Next Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for opportunities. • Listen well. • The 'win' is the conversation, not the result. 	Next Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be thorough. • Don't be long winded. • It's not about you, it's about Jesus. • Use a tool/model that helps you. • Challenge them to a specific response. 	Next Steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be ready to take a next step with them. • Invite them to your small group/church. • Baby steps are good steps. • Help them learn to share the gospel. Begin Again.

**As you fill in your sheet, more boxes will be filled on the left-hand side compared to the right.*

***Use this as a prayer list for the non-Christians you hope to see come to faith in Jesus Christ.*

Appendix 5

The Bridge Evangelism Tool



Adapted from The Bridge to Life™ by The Navigators

Appendix 6

Link to Testimony Tool

[“Sharing Your Testimony Clearly” Resource](#)

Appendix 7

Additional Books on Evangelism

The Master Plan of Evangelism, Robert E. Coleman

Just Walk Across the Room, Bill Hybels

Questioning Evangelism, Randy Newman