

INITIATE

I cultivate
relationships
with people
outside of faith



Developing rhythms
in my relationship
with the world

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I cultivate relationships with people outside of faith

We've made evangelism something separate from our lives, and therefore difficult to do. Instead, what if we took time to just build friendships with people who don't yet know Jesus? What if we cared for them as people who matter to God, not as a "mark" for sharing the gospel. As people know you value them, sharing the most important thing in your life (your faith) will flow naturally as part of the conversations. But, if we don't initiate and seek out these kinds of relationships, we can't expect to have an opportunity.

PRACTICES

DO LIFE: One of the greatest practices in relational evangelism is to live your life in such a way as to "rub shoulders" with people outside of faith. Join a club, participate in a sport or frequent a coffee shop. Intentionally insert yourself into environments that allow you to engage with those who don't know God. Be consistent in where you go and learn people's names, get to know them and look for ways to share your faith. Find ways to incorporate what you are learning about them into opportunities to build deeper relationships. Relationship gives you permission to speak into others' lives, including spiritual conversations.

PRAYER LIST: It's highly likely that you already have acquaintances who are not yet believers in Jesus. Write down their names and commit to praying regularly for them. Pray for opportunities to grow in your friendship. Pray for opportunities to let them know what's important to you. Pray for God to open their hearts and minds to the Gospel message. Believe that these are prayers God loves answering and anticipate His movement in them. Act on the opportunities when they present themselves, and if you feel God's nudgings create an opportunity!

INCLUDE: One of the best ways to reach people is to begin to include them in outings and times with your other friends who are believers in Jesus. If you and your friends from church are going to do something, why not invite someone(s) outside of faith to join you? Matthew threw a party for all his tax collector friends and included Jesus. Think about the opportunities they had! If nothing else, your unbelieving friend will get a chance to meet other Christians, and who knows what doors may be opened or perceptions it might break down!

DIG IN

Read Matthew 9:9-13

Who did Matthew invite to his party?

Why do you think the religious people didn't like this party?

What does Jesus' response tell you about the kind of people we need to be intentionally hanging out with?

Read John 4:1-30

What was Jesus first comment to the woman? It seems like such a common thing to ask for a drink of water, and yet with this simple starting point Jesus was able engage in much more. What are some things you can learn from the way Jesus talked with this woman?

What did Jesus do when the conversation topic was changed by her? How did He just go with the flow?

In verses 28-30, what kinds of people do you think the woman talked with? Why do you think she was so effective in reaching people?

What do you learn from these two stories (Matthew & the woman at the well) that can help you initiate and cultivate relationships with people outside of faith?

RESPOND

Of the three practices (Do Life, Prayer List, and Include) which feels most natural to you? Which stands out as an area for growth? If a practice is natural for you, take it to the next level. If a practice is an area where you would like to grow, make a plan to read more about it, and seek out others who do it well or have incorporated it into their lives. Then, actively and intentionally try out that practice for a month. Write down how you have seen God working in you, and others, as a result of anticipating God's movement through the practice.

Think through and list out your current connections with people who you are unsure where they are spiritually speaking. Identify a few of them that you want to intentionally build a better friendship with and take steps to do so. Look for opportunities to put into practice the things you are learning.

Initiate – seek out places and environments where you can get to know others. Learn names, be friendly, and look for opportunities to represent Jesus by being a great friend. As God opens doors for conversations, take them!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism by Timothy Keller

Faith Is Like Skydiving: And Other Memorable Images for Dialogue with Seekers and Skeptics
by Rick Mattson

This Invitational Life: Risking Yourself to Align with God's Heartbeat for Humanity
by Steve Carter

FOR KIDS

Choose Kindness: 3-Minute Devotional Inspiration for Kids by JoAnne Simmons



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