

Serve and Reach Unbelievers

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Main goal: Identify the strategies you will use to connect your target group to Christ.

Infuse prayer into outreach

Prayer walks with and for unbelievers are a great way to begin the process of outreach. See the community through God's eyes. Ask God for discernment and that He pour out His blessing on the people you see.

Here are some questions to get you strategically praying for those around you:

- Lord, I pray that You draw _____ to Yourself (John 6:44).
- I pray that _____ might hear and believe the Word of God for what it really is (1 Thess. 2:13).
- I pray that _____ might seek to know You (Acts 17:27).
- I ask You, Lord, to prevent Satan from blinding _____ to the truth (2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:25-26).
- Holy Spirit, I ask You to convict _____ of his/her sin and need for Christ's redemption (John 16:7-14).
- I ask that You send someone who will share the gospel with _____ (Matt. 9:37-38).
- I also ask that You give me or _____ the opportunity, the courage and the right words to share with _____ (Col. 4:3-6).
- Lord, I pray that _____ turn from his/her sin and follow Christ (Acts 17:30-31; 1Thess. 1:9-10).
- Lord, I pray that _____ would put all of his/her trust in Christ (John 1:12; 5:24).
- Lord, I pray that _____ would confess Christ as Lord, take root and grow in faith and bear fruit for Your glory (Rom. 10:9; Col. 2:6-7; Luke 8:15).

Questions for consideration:

- How will you incorporate prayer into your outreach strategy?
- What is God showing you about your community through prayer?

Make meaningful connections

2 Timothy 2:2 illustrates the reproductive nature of discipleship and evangelism. After you've identified your oikos, or "household," connections, you can expand your network of relationships to other people's friends, relatives and work associates.

The early church grew so rapidly because the Christians eagerly and naturally shared the gospel with the people they knew. Among our natural network of relationships, there exists a pre-established commonality of love, trust, respect and interests. That's why these natural relationships provide the most effective avenues for evangelism.

Questions for consideration:

- Draw a diagram, or write a description, of the oikos connections around you.
- How will you expand your oikos connections?

Cultivate redemptive relationships

Everything in the kingdom of God is about relationship - loving God and loving others. Relationship is the vehicle that God uses to bring redemption. Our relationship as a community is essentially a modality - a family which has a specific way of life. This life is modeled as well as taught, and takes place in the context of relationship.

Reconciliation is the act of redeeming a relationship. It is a process, and so it normally takes longer than one meeting to resolve. Third parties are sometimes needed to facilitate the reconciliation.

Here are some suggestions for reconciling with those you love:

- Acknowledge the pain and get in touch with feelings.
- Pray for an openness to God's love.
- Renew commitment to the relationship.
- Confront and share.
- Recognize that both parties are partially responsible.
- Confess, repent and ask for forgiveness.
- Forgive each other and release any debt owed.

Questions for consideration:

- What are some relationships in your ministry that need to be redeemed?
- How can you support reconciliation in church planting?
- How can you deepen the relationships in your church plant?

Focus on the "person of peace"

When God is at work in a harvest field, there is often a "person of peace." This person is a catalyst to spark transformation within a whole group of people. A "person of peace" is typically:

- Responsive to the message you bring
- Relationally connected to all in the group of people
- Renowned in reputation

Cornelius is an example of a "person of peace" who had a reputation of "good" character (Acts 10:1-34). The Gerasene Demoniac is an example of a person of peace who had a "bad" reputation (Mark 5:1-20).

Questions for consideration:

- Who is a "person of peace" in your community?
- How can you best serve and reach this person?
- How can you encourage this person to reorient his/her life for Jesus?

- How can the "person of peace" help you reach his/her oikos?

Maximize the harvest

In order to accelerate growth when numbers are small in the early days of a church plant, consider ways to increase the number of potentially fruitful relationships. If reaching unchurched people isn't made a priority, groups can become closed units where "outsiders" don't feel comfortable and the new church will stall out in its growth.

Be creative in your evangelism efforts. Here are some ideas designed primarily to cultivate relationships, while others are geared to harvest new relationships.

- evangelistic dinners
- home Bible studies
- businessmen's breakfasts
- Mayor's prayer breakfasts
- evangelistic movies
- conferences or retreats
- seminars (need-oriented)
- hobbies and sports
- concerts
- neighborhood teas
- youth activities
- craft classes
- exercise classes
- women's luncheons
- holiday parties
- camps
- plays
- housewarmings
- door-to-door
- book stall
- welcome wagon
- street drama
- picnics
- block parties
- fliers and tracts
- books and cassettes

The goal is to grow things organically, from micro to macro. Build with the smallest units first.

Questions for consideration:

- How can you make "outsiders" feel more comfortable in your ministry?
- What ways of evangelism have worked for you in the past?
- What are some creative ideas that you can implement to harvest new relationships?