

# CHRISTIANITY|EXPLORED

## *Leader's Training*

### Introduction

#### 1 Why evangelize?

- *People are lost without Christ!*
- *God commands it.*
- *We are blessed when we obey and see people's lives changed.*

#### 2 God's Role in Evangelism - and Ours - 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

##### • What is God's part in evangelism?

People don't become Christians just because we share the gospel with them. God must shine his light in them so that they see and respond to the truth of the gospel.

##### • Why can't people see the truth of the gospel?

*What do you think Paul is getting at here? What's the point of bringing Satan into the teaching?*

##### • What (then) is our part in evangelism?

**We preach, or proclaim, Christ.**

**The attitude** we should adopt as we preach.

##### • How should we do our part in evangelism?

**Integrity** – “we do not use deception”.

**Fidelity** – we do not “distort the word of God”.

**Humility** – “we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord”.

We are to become all things to all men that we may win some (1 Cor 9)

#### 1<sup>st</sup> CE Video

- What stood out to you in the video?
- Is there anything that intrigues or puzzles you about Jesus?
- How do you feel about reading Mark's Gospel?

- If you could ask God one question, and you knew it would be answered, what would it be?
  - Think for a moment about the God you are asking that question to. What is that God like?

### **3 Being a *Christianity Explored* Leader**

#### **A. COMMITTED TO THE BIBLE**

- As you read, Mark, note in margin: I (Identity), M (Mission), C (Call)  
As much as possible, we want to use Mark to answer their questions.

#### **B. COMMITTED TO PRAYER**

#### **C. COMMITTED TO PEOPLE**

### **4 Before the Course**

#### **INVITE PEOPLE!**

GET TO KNOW MARK'S GOSPEL, THE HANDBOOK AND THE VIDEOS

PREPARE YOUR TESTIMONY – 1 Peter 3:15

- Keep it honest
- Keep it short
- Keep pointing to Christ, not yourself:
  - Explain some way Christ has been working in your life recently.

### **5 During the Course – Part 1**

#### **Here is an overview of each evening**

- LEADERS' PRAYER MEETING (for those who can arrive early)
- MEAL (or at a minimum, dessert)  
Try to avoid heavy theological discussions during this time.
- EXPLORE
- LISTEN (watch a short video)
- DISCUSS (the video)
- END OF THE EVENING – "ONE-TO-ONE"



## 5 During the Course – Part 2

### EXPLORE

Remember the two components of this section of the evening.

First, discuss any questions arising from the previous week's "Follow up".

Second, we look together at a passage from the Bible.

As Christians, we are entrusted with the gospel, and that means we must present it clearly. We're not presenting our own personal agendas, and we're not seeking to dupe anyone into becoming a Christian. We want group members to be able to make an informed decision about Christ. "For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel" (1 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

During the Explore Bible study you may get replies that approach the answer to a question but are not quite complete. Try to guide your group from these initial answers to a better, more biblical answer.

?? Have further questions in mind to develop the initial answer, for example: "What did you mean by that?", "Hmm, now where does it say that?"

[explain how this helps]

?? If someone gives a wrong answer, it may be tempting to correct them immediately. Instead, try opening up the discussion by asking others what they think, for example: "Does everyone agree with Jane?"

?? Don't be afraid to correct a wrong answer graciously if you think the answer will take the group too far "off topic," for example: "Thank you John, that's an interesting point, but I'm not sure that's what's going on here."

[you could add, “You and I can discuss this later.”

Sometimes, individual personalities may make it difficult to conduct an effective group discussion:

- ?? **The silent type** – never contributes to the discussion. She’s best helped by encouraging people to work through questions in groups of two or three at points during the study and then having them feed their answers back to the main group.
- ?? **The talkative type** – likes to monopolize the discussion. Depending on how well you know him, either subdivide the group into smaller groups to give others an opportunity to speak, or have a quiet and tactful word with him (for example: “Tim, thanks so much for everything you’re contributing. I wonder if you could help me with the quieter members of the group...”)
- ?? **The arguer** – attacks the answers given by everyone else in the group. It’s best to take him aside at the end of the evening and listen to any specific issues he may have. If the problem persists, it may be appropriate to remove him from the group, asking him to meet with you “one-to-one” at a different time.
- ?? **The know-it-all** – immediately answers every question, thus stifling the group. This situation is best dealt with by supplementary questions to facilitate group discussion (for example: “Does everyone agree with Nick?”).
- ?? **The off-on-a-tangent type** – loves to steer the discussion away from the topic and talk about something entirely different. It may be that this new subject is something the whole group wants to explore, but if not, tactfully suggest that it might be good to discuss it more fully at the end of the evening.

Other tips:

- ?? Leaders should try to avoid speaking immediately after each other.
- ?? You may feel it is appropriate to “carry over” a discussion from the Explore Bible study, if you were unable to adequately cover an important issue.
- ?? Be gracious and courteous, and act as peacemaker if the discussion gets heated.

- ?? If a question is met with silence, don't be too quick to say something. **Allow people time to think.** [stories from RSA groups]
- ?? It may be appropriate in certain circumstances to address a question directly to an individual in order to encourage discussion (for example: "Sam, what do you think about this?")
- ?? If one person's particular issue begins to dominate, gently ask him or her if you can talk about the issue together at the end of the session.
- ?? Don't forget how important the tone of your voice and your body language can be as you seek to further the discussion.

### **Training Module 8: Getting Our Expectations Right**

Jesus was the most brilliant teacher who ever lived. But a glance through Mark chapter 3 reminds us that:

- Those in authority wanted him dead.
- The public were often more interested in his miracles than in his teaching.
- One of his own followers would eventually betray him.
- His own family thought he was out of his mind.
- Many religious people thought he was evil.

Remarkably, in spite of all this opposition, rather than change his approach or water down his message, Jesus continued to teach: "With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand" (Mark 4:33).

We, too, will face pressure to change our approach and water things down. So why should we persist in teaching God's word to people who don't seem to be listening, or who openly oppose us?

Jesus gives us the answer in Mark chapter 4: God's word produces dramatic results (v 8, 20, 32). But he begins by warning us to expect disappointment and delay.

1. EXPECT DISAPPOINTMENT • Read Mark 4:1–8, 14–20 The seed (which is "the word," as Jesus explains in v 14) can fall in unfruitful places: along the path (v 15); on rocky places (v 16); among thorns (v 18). There will be those who delight us by turning up for the first session, but who never come again. There will be those who joyfully make a commitment in Session 7

but, because of family pressure, they soon decide it's just not worth the trouble. Then there are those who diligently attend each week of the course but decide right at the end that their material possessions mean more to them than anything they've heard. It can be desperately disappointing to see group members apparently respond to the gospel message, but then show no sign of lasting change. But Jesus warns us to expect disappointment.

2. EXPECT DELAY • Read Mark 4:26–29 Jesus uses the metaphor of the seed with good reason: it takes time for seed to grow. The farmer has to be patient: “Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how” (Mark 4:27). He just has to trust that the seed will grow, even though it may seem that nothing much is happening. We live in an instant culture – instant food, instant information, instant credit – and we may find ourselves expecting guests to acquire an instant relationship with God. But delay is as much a part of our work as it is the farmer's. We must be prepared to stay in touch with group members for weeks, months, or even years after the course ends. There will be those who seem to agree with everything they learn through the course. You decide to meet up with them on a regular basis and, a year later, they still agree with everything they've learned. But they're not following Jesus. There may be times when we lose patience and are tempted to give up. But we must continue to plant the word in people's lives, trusting in its power, and remembering that God's timescale is very different from our own.
3. EXPECT DRAMATIC RESULTS • Read Mark 4:30–32 Despite the inevitable disappointments and delays, there is a good reason to continue sowing God's word in people's lives, just as Jesus did: “when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade” (Mark 4:32). Even a tiny seed – like the mustard seed – can produce dramatic results. Don't be surprised if suddenly one of the people who seemed to question everything will arrive one week and tell you he or she has become a Christian. As Jesus tells us in Mark 4:20, there will be those who hear the word, accept it, and then go on to “produce a crop – thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown”. It's a great encouragement to remember that the power to change lives is not ultimately in our eloquence – it is in God's word. So, whatever disappointments we suffer, whatever delays we endure, and whatever circumstances we face, we must keep teaching God's word faithfully.

Most Common Mistakes

Not giving people time to think before answering.  
Being too theological and deep  
Leaders dominating the discussion

Thank you for your participation last night at Christianity Explored. It was encouraging to see so many guests there, most of whom do not know the Lord. That is the purpose of the study – to have those folks there learning what Christianity really is, straight from the Bible. So thanks to those of you who invited and brought people. Let's pray our number of seekers increases!

This is also to provide some tips as reminders to those of you who have been through the Leader's Training and also to alert our other Briarwood friends who came last night to check out the course or to bring people.

1. The course is for the guests who do not know Christ. So think about that even in where you sit. For example, try to sit so that guests are facing the TV for the video. Also, our leaders need to spread out. That was my mistake last night not to notice it but one table had 5 leaders!
2. Remember that those who don't know Christ and have not studied the Bible before will take longer to answer the questions. This is a new skill they are learning. So, times of silence after a question is asked is normal. If we, the believers, jump in and answer each question immediately, it prevents them from struggling through to figure out what God is saying in the Bible. Give them time to think and try to answer for themselves.
  - a. *Shout out to John Gomillion who did a good job of not rushing things and giving time for the group to think in the group I sat with.*
3. Try to keep the focus on the study at hand. Each week has a theme. Try to stick to that. For example, next week the theme is "Identity," that is, who is Jesus. Let's try to keep the focus there unless one of the guests specifically asks about something else.
4. Also, leaders should not direct the questions only to the guests but to the group in general and when we answer, look to the person who asked the question rather than the guests – they can really feel targeted if we are not careful.
5. The leaders who are not asking the questions can be helpful to keep track of the time and help keep the group on track in regards to the time by gentle reminders to the one leading.
6. There will be some differences in Week 2 from Week 1:
  - a. The significant differences this week from last week are these:
    - i. Tom will be kicking things off as I did week 1. He will not give as lengthy an introduction this week. It will be much briefer, unless we have a lot of new people there.
    - ii. You will NOT start into the homework, called "Follow up" in the red handbook, but will simply assign them to do that at home.
    - iii. These two things being different should mean that you have a lot more time to do the study at the beginning of the lesson (pages 13-15) and to discuss the video.

I want to use this email each week to try to continue our training of how to be most effective at our tables, whether we are leading or just participating. I am also leading a CE discussion with Dental students on Monday mornings. Today we had 4 of us believers and 5 guests, some of whom we know are not Christians, and some we are not sure of. I'm also learning from this experience as well as our Wednesday night study.

Here are some points for you to take note of:



1. When serving as the Table leader, ask the question exactly as written. Our tendency is to try to put things in our own words. But remember that this study was put together over years with lots of trial and error and editing. So, start with the question as it is. Only rephrase it if the group does not seem to be able to understand and answer the question.
2. Here is an example of a finer point for leading. Look on pages 22-23 of the Handbook. Notice Q #3. There are 2 questions on this one #3. The intention is that you would read BOTH questions together and then have discussion. It is intended to be all together. However, if you look at Q # 4 and #5, you will see 2 questions, but deliberately separated by having each number differently. This implies that you would ask them one at a time, not together, as in #3. If my explanation does not make sense, call me – it would be much easier to verbalize what I am saying than it is to write it.
3. Another idea: Since we are regularly having 2 or 3 tables going at once, and not all of them are able to keep to the same pace, and some have more discussion, what do you do if your table finishes the last discussion (of the video) before everyone else? You could go ahead and do one of the Follow-up Questions together as a group (as we did in week 1).
4. Final tip for today, ***and maybe the most important***: Remember that this study is intended for those who are not Christians and therefore is to be kept as simple as possible. Some of us have a lot of Bible study under our belts. Some even have seminary degrees. This is NOT the time to demonstrate our mastery of theology! As much as possible, let's try to stick to answering questions by reference to statements in the gospel of Mark. I can share some examples with you of doing this from my dental group if you are interested. Just ask me and I'll show you in the gospel of Mark.

Here is the schedule for tomorrow night.

Please note what is highlighted in yellow – we will do the 2<sup>nd</sup> video of the “Day Away” study. It is not really near in the book to the study we are doing this week, so note the page number on this schedule so you can direct people to it when that time comes.