



Action Guide.

1. Plan regular connection events.

Connection events bridge the gap between people having respect for Christians and seeing why they have any need for faith. Their lack of response is a misunderstanding about what they need because they are looking in personal temporary terms rather than eternal salvation terms. The issue is that people with this thinking will instinctively respond to an invitation to a course with phrases such as 'not for me' or 'I'm okay thanks'. Connection events allow unbelievers to start to see the eternal dimension to life by seeing how Christian faith in a personal God impacts the issues we face in daily life. Connection events therefore open people's eyes to a completely different world view without them feeling they are being preached at or part of an *Star Trek* Borg drone-making programme!

Discuss what connection events might provide a bridge into evangelistic courses and discussion groups in your setting.

Questions to help that discussion include:

- what are the prevailing world views in the culture contrary to the gospel?
- what topics engage sceptics to the extent that they'd come to an event and be willing to hear a distinctive perspective?
- what types of event will help renew a sceptic's thinking rather than shut them down because they feel 'preached at'?
- what type of events work socially in your context and would provide a natural pre-runner to an evangelistic course or discussion group?
- what would the invitation strategy and follow on strategy be for the event?
- would any of the formats suggested on pages 140 to 142 be suitable and if so how might you adapt them to your situation and link them into an overall strategy?

For resources on Conversation events please go to becauseapproach.com.

Output: Plan for connection events as part of evangelistic process that is formed into the church's evangelism strategy. What and how?

2. Introduce connection elements to weekly gatherings.

Conduct an audit of your church gatherings (see elements p143-148):

- Invitation strategy: How do people hear about the church?
- Pre-service experience: Are people welcomed appropriately?
- Service first impression: Is the bulletin they receive and opening words of the service leader demonstrating that they are welcome and included?
- Opening worship: Is the assumption that it's okay to be exploring faith?
- Style of music: Does it allow unbelievers to at least understand why the words that are being said or sung are of meaning?
- Style of service: Is it appropriate in its participation and formality to allow people not to feel threatened but also not to feel like a pure observer?
- Are you EPIC (Experiential, Participatory, Interactive, Communal)?
- Use of multimedia: Do visuals clarify information, illustrate and make the teaching real or just entertain? Is everything to a quality outsiders expect?
- Discussion: Can people ask their questions?
- Do you know your audience, how they think, what they read and watch etc? How could you listen to them more and gain more feedback?
- Style of preaching: Does the preacher assume there are unbelievers present and that their understanding of the gospel is a priority?
- Making it real: Are there opportunities to hear from ordinary Christians about how the teaching applies in ordinary life?

Output: Agree how each connection element could be developed.

3. Develop evangelism training.

Questions to discuss include:

- what are the barriers to people sharing their faith day by day? Is it confidence about knowing what to say, nervousness about starting a conversation with an unbeliever or willingness to be involved at all?
- what training is available elsewhere that could be recommended?
- what resources have been used before and what worked best?

Depending on the answer, an evangelism training strategy may include:

- a course (such as Good to Go - see becauseapproach.com)
- a sermon series, especially to inspire people about the lost
- interviews with people in services or prayer gatherings
- real life examples of conversations explained in talks, blogs etc.

Output: Agreed personal evangelism training strategy