

Chapter 7: Counseling Conversations & Scripture Reference Guide

All Material is adapted from Teen Leadership Conference (Clarks Summit University) Counselor Guide

CONVERSATION STARTERS

How did you hear about “The Well”/Living Water?

Tell me about your summer.

- What have you done? Where have you gone?
- What have you enjoyed?
- What else do you have planned?

Tell me about school.

- When grade did you just complete?
- What activities were you involved in?
- Have you had any specific struggles in school?
- What are you looking forward to next year?

Tell me about your family.

- How many are in your family?
- What words would you use to describe your family? Why?
- What kind of relationship do you have with your parents? Brothers or sisters?
- What next steps do you need to take?

Tell me about your spiritual life.

- When did you trust Christ?
- What words would you use to describe where you are right now?
- Any specific struggles you are having or ones I can pray with you about?
- What next steps do you need to take?

What kind of influence do you have in your world?

- Why would you describe it that way?
- Who are some kids you are trying to have an influence on? What have you been doing?
- What kind of influence would the people in your world say you are?
- What needs to change for you to become a more effective influence?

After high school, what would you like to do?

- What abilities has God given you?
- What do you enjoy doing?
- What have you been doing right now to get ready or see how God might use you?

This year at “The Well” I hope I.....

- Just make a short list of some of the things they say.
- Ask them what they think they need to do this week for those to happen
- Ask them what they think they need to avoid for those to happen
- Maybe create some specific goals. Not only spiritual ones
- Think about what you have just talked about.

How to Lead Someone to Christ

by Don Bunge

"And when were you saved?" I asked. "The first time was when I was six years old. Then, when I was 22 years old, I really got saved."

It was at an Awana Leadership Training Conference when I was teaching a workshop on the subject, "Following Up the New Convert," that this conversation took place. I mused to myself, "How could this poor lady, as a leader in a girls' club, ever lead young people to Christ if she is that confused?"

I asked her to explain what she meant. She admitted her utter confusion about salvation when it was presented to her as a child. Several other leaders also shared similar experiences. My wife and I could relate to her problem. When we were students in a very reputable Bible college, we became similarly confused as we attended a required course entitled "Public Evangelism." At that time, two schools of thought prevailed. One was that salvation should be clearly presented to an audience. Then listeners should be invited to trust the Lord Jesus for salvation right while they sat in their pews or chairs. The other was that one should never conclude a service without urging listeners to "come forward," indicating their decision through a public response. Our college teacher stood with the first as correct, but proceeded to instruct us always to urge prospective converts to respond publicly to a salvation invitation. As a result of all this confusion, I decided to study the Word of God. I wanted to see for myself what the Bible says concerning how to lead a soul to Christ.

I have the utmost respect for the many fine men and women who are engaged in a public ministry through which they have opportunity to share the gospel. Unfortunately, many of them are using salvation invitations which are not biblical. Some of these are:

"Won't you give your heart to Christ tonight?"

"Come and confess your sins to the Lord and get saved."

"To go to heaven, my friend, you need to make a commitment."

"Won't you come and let Jesus come into your heart?"

By contrast, let's consider four examples from the Word of God describing people receiving Christ. Please read about Nicodemus in John 3:1-19; the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-19; the Ethiopian in Acts 8:26-37; and the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:25-31. Notice in all four examples that the dominant word is BELIEVE!

How then do we lead a sinner to Christ?

The simple steps needed to point sinners to salvation are few, but very important. Help the prospective convert to...

...accept the Bible as God's Word without reservations.

...believe what the Bible says about his/her sinful condition. Explain that if he/she were to die without justification, he/she would be lost forever. He/she must realize that because God is holy, no sin is allowed in His presence. Hence, no unjustified sinner is allowed near Him.

...acknowledge God's love for him/her in that He sent His only Son to pay the price for man's sin. Explain that Christ died for our sins by shedding His blood on the cross (Gal. 3:13; Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). Emphasize that He was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. This is all good news. Take the person to Calvary and let him/her see what a price was paid for our salvation.

...answer affirmatively the question: "Do you now believe that the Lord Jesus, by His death, paid the penalty for your sin?"

If the person still doesn't understand, go over the plan of salvation again. When it becomes clear that he/she believes, then you might have him/her thank the Lord. Prayer is not a requirement for salvation, but can have a part after a person is saved. Does a baby cry before it is born? Does it cry to get born? Of course, the answer is "NO." It cries after it is born as evidence that it is alive. so it is with new babes in Christ; they can't get saved by crying to the Lord. Let them be born first and then let them cry to the Lord (*What Happened to the Word, Believe?* by Don Bunge).

Why can't we use the terms the Bible uses when talking to children about the Lord? Use biblical words such as *trust*, *receive*, *accept*, *born again*, *believe*, and *faith* to lead others to Christ.

About the author: Don Bunge has pastored for 18 years. In 1966, he and his wife, Mary, became the first full-time Awana missionaries. Presently, they are Missionaries-at-Large.

Quick Scripture Guide

Overcoming Sin - Living Life in the Spirit

Romans 8:1-14 1Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. 5Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; 7the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. 9You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. 10But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. 12Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Galatians 5:16-25 16So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. 19The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Temptation

God Tempts no one

James 1:13-15 13When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

God will never give you more than you can bear

1 Cor 10:13 13No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Bitterness - See the grace of God

Heb 12:15 15See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Lust - Don't dwell on how to fulfill your sinful desires.

Rom 13:14 14Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

1 Pet 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

Forgiveness of sin - God forgives our sins

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Pro 28:13-14 13 He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. 14 Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.

Forgiving Others - Forgive as God forgives

Eph 4:31-32 31Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Forgive a repentant friend and love them

2 Cor 2:7-8 7Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

Fear and Anxiety

Phi 4:6-7 6Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Pet 5:6-7 6Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Growing in Grace-Sanctification

2 Pet 3:18, Col 3:16, 1 Pet 2:2-3, 2 Tim 3:16-17, Heb 4:12, Heb 12:1- 2, 1 Tim 4:7-8; 2 Tim 3:16-17, Ps 1-:7-8,
Phil 3:12-14, 2 Pet 1:5-7

God's Sovereignty

Eph 1:11, Ps 104, Ps 145, Ps 147, Pro 16:4, Pro 16:9, Pro 21:30, Ps 135:6

Sexual Sins

Col 3:5-7(Put them to death)

Mt 15:19-20 (They come from the heart)

1 Cor 6:12-20 (Sins against God and your body, God can cleanse you from sin)

Gal 5:16-18 (You can overcome them through the Holy Spirit)

1 Th 4:3-6 (God expects believers to avoid sexual sin and control their own bodies)

A Guide to “Confronting” a Friend with the Gospel

Introducing the Conversation

To begin, say, “I just have a few questions for you.” Then, ask:

1. When would you say that you became a Christian? What happened at that time? What does being a Christian mean to you?
2. If you were going to share tell someone who wasn't a Christian how to become a Christian, how would you explain that to them?
3. So, theoretically (because I don't think it happens this way), but, theoretically, if you were to die today (because any of us could die at any point), so if you were to die today and stand before God in heaven, and He was to say to you, __ (Name) __, why should I let you into heaven, what would you say?

Allow them to answer....

People typically respond in a few different ways to this question:

1. Unsaved (sinner - sees that, is sad about that), “I don't know. I don't think God should let me into heaven. I'm a sinner.”
2. Unsaved (sinner - doesn't see that, hopes good works are enough), “I don't know. I guess I would say that I'm a pretty good person – go to church, help people, and that I would hope that would be enough and that God would be kind and let me into heaven.”
3. Saved (has accepted Gospel, but lacking assurance of salvation), “I don't know. I believe in Jesus and I try to do what's right, but I know I'm a sinner, and don't deserve heaven, so I hope God would let me in, but I'm not sure He would.”
4. Saved (Accepted Gospel – assurance of salvation), “I guess I would say something like: Even though I'm a sinner, I've trusted Jesus Christ to forgive me and save me, and You promise that if I do that, I will be saved and spend eternity with You.”

The truth of God's Word is the same for all of these people, but their responses help us to focus our explanation of the Gospel to meet their needs and reveal the truth that is most relevant to their current situation. Unless someone responds with the 4th response and is walking in a manner consistent with Christ, I would still take them through all the steps included in this guide.

As we now endeavor to share the Gospel, we need to realize that there is no “fool-proof” plan for evangelism. We want to do our part by clearly articulating the truth of the Gospel. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit must use us and our words to convict the hearts of the hearers to respond to Him. And sometimes people respond to the Holy Spirit right away, sometimes later in life, and sometimes, very sadly, not at all. So, pray, do your best, and entrust the rest to God.

1. First, the Bad News...

Help Them See We Are All Sinners Who Cannot Save Ourselves.

Ask: Do you think you have done wrong things? Like have you ever lied, stolen, thought something mean or lustful towards someone?

God's Word says "All have sinned (rebelled against God and done evil things" – including me and you. Let's read some passages that confirm this. Read each of these passages aloud (either you or them if they are willing.)

1. Isaiah 64:6 – Righteousness is like filthy (period/menstrual) rags
2. (if applicable, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10) – sexual sins – will not inherit the kingdom of God
3. Romans 3:10-21 – No one is righteous, no one seeks God, no fear of God before their eyes; all mouths stopped, whole world held accountable to God.
4. Romans 3:23 – All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
5. Romans 6:23a – The wages (result/fair punishment) for sin is death.
6. Revelation 21:8 – And that death means separation from God, others, and being thrown into "the lake that burns with fire and sulfur".

Bottom Line – We have all done wrong/evil. God is just. He can't just let sin go without punishing it. If He did, it would be like a judge letting someone who murdered your family member go free with no penalty. God has to punish evil. And because of the evil we have done, we deserve to die and burn in hell, separated from God and others forever. This is really bad news. There is no being "good enough". We deserve death for what we have done against the Holy, Loving, Just God of the Universe and against other people.

So, that's the Bad News. Now, don't leave your friends hanging here. Help them to understand the Good News.

2. Next, the Good News...

God Loves Us and Offers Us Salvation through Jesus.

The Good News is: God loves us, and He wants to save us from the punishment we deserve. So, Jesus, God, the Son, came to earth as a Man, and was the only human ever to live a sinless, perfect life. Then, out of His love for the world, He gave up His life on the cross. In dying on the cross, Jesus paid the price required by God (the Father) for our evil ways. He endured the punishment of death that we all deserve to get for our sin. But, because He is God, He didn't stay dead. He rose back to life three days later and proofed once and for all that He has power of sin, death, Satan and the demons. He made a way for us as humans to be forgiven of our sins and have a relationship with God again – one that starts now and last forever. This means God, the Holy Spirit, comes to live in us now, and that when we die, we will go to heaven to live in the presence of God forever.

These verses help us to see this truth:

1. John 3:16 – God so love the world that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.
2. Romans 3:23-24 – All have sinned, fall short of the glory of God – but are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus
3. Romans 5:8 – God demonstrated His love while we were still sinners by sending Christ to die for us.
4. Romans 6:23 – The wages of sin is death, BUT, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. Finally, the Response...

Help Them Understand that We Must Believe in Christ to Receive Salvation.

So, this is great news! But, does this just mean we can all go around happy that Jesus took the punishment for sin, so now we will just automatically go to heaven? The Bible is clear that the salvation that God offers is a free gift. That means that we can't do anything to earn it. But, like with any gift, we still have to decide whether or not to accept it. We have to decide if we believe that this gift God offers is real. And if it is, and if we want it, we have to agree with God that we need this gift in the first place, and ask Him to forgive us and save us because of what Christ has done on our behalf.

The Bible says:

1. Romans 10:9-10 – If we confess (agree with God) with our mouths, that Jesus is Lord (God and Rightful Ruler of the Universe), and believe (truth fully) in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved.
2. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 – We are saved by believing the Gospel - that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised as God's Word's says
3. 1 John 1:8-9 – If we confess (agree with God) about our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
4. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 – Even those of with significant (sexual or other) sin can be washed, sanctified, justified (made right with God) in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit.
5. John 14:6 – Jesus is the ONLY Way to God (salvation).

Ask Them If They Are Ready to Respond Right Now.

So, the question for each of us to consider is, how will we respond to these truths from God's Word? Will we believe that Jesus is both 100% God and 100% Man and really lived, died in our places for our sins, and rose back to life? Will we agree with God that we have done evil and ask Him for the forgiveness and salvation that only comes through Jesus?

(If they gave the 3rd response, ask: have you ever done this before? If so, you can say with confidence that the reason God should let you into heaven has nothing to do with your ability to be good and everything to do with your faith in what Christ has already accomplished through His death and resurrection. However, if they gave the 1st or 2nd response or gave the 3rd but say they have never accepted Jesus as Savior before, continue with the last steps.)

Tomorrow may be too late. I encourage you to respond today to the gift of forgiveness, salvation, and a relationship with God that is available through Jesus Christ. God is offering each of us a gift. We can either reject it and “drop the gift on the floor” or respond to the offer and receive the gift Christ offers. Are you ready to respond?

Do you agree with God that you have done wrong? Do you agree with God that you can't save yourself and need His help? Do you agree that the only way to be saved is by believing in and accepting the forgiveness and salvation that He offers through Jesus death and resurrection?

If so, talk to God about that right now. Just talk to Him like you would to a friend. It's not the words the exact words you pray that save you, it's if you believe the truth of the words you say.

Say something like this:

Dear God, I agree with you that I have done many wrong things against You. Because of that I deserve death. But, I believe that Jesus is God and came and died in my place to take the punishment I deserve for my sins. I believe that He came back to life 3 days later and that He can give eternal life too. God, because of what Jesus has done, please forgive my sins and give me a relationship with You that starts now and lasts forever. And please help me to live my entire life in thankfulness to You. Amen.

Be sure to encourage your friend to connect right away with other believers/church at least weekly (including you if possible), with God in prayer, and with God's Word. I have included a simple “Journey through Psalms & Proverbs” devotional that is a starting point for them in God's Word.

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