

REACHING Outward

Helping your group members
bring Christ into
everyday relationships

*A book of cell agendas by Jim Egli
with Scott Boren*

This book is an adaptation of the previously published work entitled *Relating Jesus*

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Introduction

Jesus told His first followers, “Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!” (Mark 1:17, NLT). Following Jesus immediately involves both discipleship and sharing Him with others.

Jesus’ words also tell us that outreach involves teamwork. Simon and Andrew, who first heard these words, didn’t fish with rods and reels. They were part of a team, casting and drawing in nets. Net fishing is far more efficient than rod fishing. In the same way today, we can best reach others when we work as a team. Together, we can display the full range of the Spirit’s gifts as we love others by serving, praying, encouraging, teaching, healing, and giving.

I am encouraged that Jesus said, “I will show you how.” Reaching out takes time and requires learning. As you lead your cell group through the six weeks of agendas found in this book, Christ’s Spirit will make good on His promise to be your teacher and guide.

These agendas are designed to make your role as the cell leader more effective and simplify your life. If you will take the time to focus your devotional life on the topic of each week’s agenda, work hard to spend time with lost people yourself, and pray for your members to do the same, I believe you will see personal and numeric growth in your cell group.

May an expanding number of people discover Christ as your group reaches out together!

—Jim Egli

How to Use This Book

Devotionals

Each agenda begins with a personal devotional for you, the cell leader. The best way to use this devotional is to meditate on it each day between your meetings. For example, if your group meets on Thursday evenings, use the next week's devotional to begin your daily time with God on Friday morning, meditating on the scripture each day until the next Thursday. Ask God how the truths discovered in the scripture and devotional should shape how you facilitate the meeting and work with your group members one-on-one.

This Week

The devotional is followed by a brief overview of the agenda, goals for the meeting, and instructions. Reading this insures your group will get the point of the agenda and you'll be prepared.

Agendas

The agendas are organized around four W's, which are *Welcome, Worship, Word, and Witness*. These four areas are designed to help your group experience Christ's presence, embrace His power, and understand His purposes for your lives to the point of practical application.

- **Welcome:** An opening question to get your group members involved in the weekly meeting.
- **Worship:** Practical ways for your group to enter into Christ's presence.
- **Word:** Applying God's Word to your everyday lives that results in member-to-member ministry in and out of your meetings.
- **Witness:** "Putting feet" on what you've discussed so your group can live out Christ's purposes for your lives.

In some agendas, you'll notice the order is not as it appears here. This has been done to keep it interesting for your group and set an important tone.

Leader's notes and tip boxes

We've included helpful tip boxes and author's notes under many of the discussion questions to help you understand their meaning. Read through the agenda a few times in the days before your meeting to grasp the direction and outcome of each agenda. *Use the notes and tips to prepare, but don't read them aloud during your meeting.* They have been placed within the agenda to help you become a better facilitator.

Questions in the Word section

Each numbered question in this Word section of the agenda has been written so you can simply read it to your group. To increase involvement, write each question on a slip of paper and distribute them to various members of your group to read aloud in smaller groups. If you feel these question should be rephrased to better fit your group or make the meeting more powerful, go for it!

Unless otherwise instructed, keep the last questions in each agenda for yourself as the main facilitator. These are ministry questions that usually require follow up.

Between-the-meetings options

Because healthy cell life is more than a once-a-week meeting, it will be important for you to look over these ideas, possibly share them with your group, and then determine which option or options will help your group grow.

If you find implementation to be especially challenging, remember these practical things are what make cell life so powerful and different from other kinds of small groups you may have led before. Work as hard at your between-the-meetings activities as you do preparing for your weekly meeting and you'll see growth in yourself and your group.

Scripture memory verses

Each agenda ends with a scripture verse, which we highly recommend your group members memorize. There's nothing like scripture memory to keep your mind on glorifying God! Feel free to copy this verse and pass it out to everyone as your members walk out the door after each meeting. To make it fun, offer a small prize (a candy bar, etc.) for the first person who can recite the verse to you when you next meet. When you celebrate scripture memory, everyone will join in.

At the back of this book you'll find an appendix with each week's scripture verse on a time-saving, easy-to-duplicate page. This is one area of cell life that you can easily delegate. Ask a member to duplicate the scripture verses and distribute them for you for the next six weeks as the meetings conclude.

What should you do if unbelievers visit during this study?

Use your best judgement as to whether you should use the agenda's questions or share testimonies and offer to pray for various needs in the group that night. The second time they visit though, invite them to join in! You'll be surprised at how well some unbelievers "evangelize" when they find a family like yours.

Leader's Devotional

"As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and 'sinners' were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him." (Mark 2:14-15)

Rebecca Manley Pippert wrote in her book, *Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World*, "Christians and non-Christians have one thing in common: They both hate evangelism." Most Christians see evangelism as something they do to non-Christians, either through a special "soul-reaching" emphasis or through a mass crusade. The goal of this kind of evangelistic activity is to recruit people into the Kingdom.

Jesus demonstrated a different way, one that is much more costly to the Christian. Instead of recruiting people into His Kingdom, he ate with them. He loved them where they were, without placing any expectation on them to respond to His love. He invested time and energy in men and women who were called "sinners"—those who would not have been acceptable companions of the religious leaders.

Most Christians interact with the lost every day: co-workers, family members, neighbors, and friends. These people are part of your mission field. You don't need to go to Africa to reach the lost! You only need to look to the person in the next office or next door.

What is the state of your heart with regard to the lost in your life? Do you have friendships with lost and unchurched persons? If so, how do you treat them? Does your attitude reflect that of Jesus?

Take time each day this week to pray about your attitude toward lost persons. Ask God to reveal anything that does not belong, and confess it as sin. Ask Him for His heart for the lost, and to pour out compassion for those who have yet to discover His powerful, life-transforming love. Also ask Him for a fresh understanding of His love for you! When this happens, you'll share out of the abundance within your own heart to anyone who will listen.

This Week

The Objective

This lesson will help the members of your group:

1. Replace misconceptions about outreach with positive images.
2. Understand practical ways to overcome negative images they may have about evangelism.
3. Pray for their friends who do not have a relationship with Christ.

The Point

When most Christians think about evangelism they cringe. They have bought into myths about evangelism that make the task of reaching out to the lost about as much fun as going to the dentist. But the truth is that effective evangelism does not work according to these myths. When people begin to see that their images of evangelism are false, they can then start practicing the first step of effective evangelism: prayer. Praying for lost friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family members is the first thing to do when you and your group want to reach out to them.

Preparation

1. Make enough photocopies of Handout #1 and #2 for each member of the group, found in Appendix A. (Use thick paper to copy #2 if possible.)
2. Gather enough pens or pencils for each member of your group.
3. Photocopy this week's scripture memory verse, found in Appendix B. Cut into strips and distribute to each member after the meeting.

The Agenda

Worship

For this agenda, sing only one simple song to open the meeting and focus everyone on each other and the Lord. (The other parts of this lesson will take additional time this week.)

This Week is Different:

This week, you'll do the Welcome activity after a time of worship.

Consider your entire agenda for the evening as you plan worship. Lengthen or shorten the amount of time allowed based on the most important elements of the meeting that week. Choosing one powerful song that directs focus to the theme can be more effective than several disconnected ones.

Welcome

Give each member a copy of Handout #1, entitled "How do people come to Christ?" and a pen to each group member. Instruct them to answer the questions. After everyone has completed the handout, lead the group to discuss their answers.

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word "evangelism?"

Encourage honesty. Most people have negative images. Allow them to share their thoughts and feelings without trying to provide any alternatives or judging them.

2. Who was most influential in your decision to follow Christ? What was the person's relationship with you (friend, relative, co-worker, teacher, stranger, etc.)?

About 90% of all the people in church today were led to the Lord by a friend, relative, co-worker, or family member.

Week 1: Pray

3. What did the person *do* that influenced you?

It should become clear that “active caring” (not only one’s words) is central to impacting others to accept Christ.

4. How many times did you hear the Gospel before you came to Christ?

For most people, they heard it more than once, often many times. Conversion is normally a process that involves repeated exposure.

5. How long did the process take? How many people were involved in the process?

Extended time and multiple people are the norm. Your group members will probably laugh when you re-read this question as everyone feels they are “a work in progress.”

Word

Below you will find four myths about evangelism that will get your group talking. Read each myth and then ask your group to discuss why it is not a reality.

Myth #1: Evangelism means talking to strangers.

Reality: A majority of people (80% or more) are reached by friends and family members.

What this means for your group: Your group is called to show God’s love to those closest to you!

Myth #2: Evangelism means saying the right words.

Reality: The reality is that people are won to Christ through active love (time spent together and servanthood) *and* words.

What this means for your group: Your group should serve others, pray for them, and take time to listen and care for them.

Myth #3: Conversion is normally instantaneous.

Reality: Conversion is a process.

What this means for your group: Relax and give people time!

Myth #4: People are brought to Christ through the influence of just one person.

Reality: The more Christians a non-believer knows, the more easily he or she will become a Christian.

What this means for your group: You should introduce your non-Christian friends to as many Christians as possible, preferably other cell members!

Now ask someone to read Acts 16: 29-33:

“The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ... Then immediately he and all his family were baptized.” (Acts 16:29-33)

After the scripture is read aloud, read this short background paragraph to your group and then ask the two follow up questions:

“Paul and Silas found themselves in a difficult situation. Instead of moping about their troubles, they praised God in worship. This led to an earthquake which caused the prison doors to open and their chains to fall. As a result, the jailer was open to the Jesus they had been worshipping. This radical change in the jailer opened a door to share Christ with his family. This pattern is also seen in many other passages in Acts, Mark, and John.”

1. Why do you think friends are more effective at evangelism than strangers?”

Strangers are usually met with skepticism. Also, assumptions may be made by the giver or receiver that can hinder the message.

Week 1: Pray

2. How can God use you in the midst of your relationships like He used the Philippian jailer?

Don't be afraid of silence! Wait until someone answers. Sometimes people are slow to answer because the Holy Spirit is convicting them. Give your group members the time they need to mentally process this question.

Your Ministry Time

If your group is larger than ten people, divide into men's and women's sub-groups to discuss these questions and minister to each other according to the needs that are shared.

Tip:

Anticipate the need to break up into sub-groups to allow for more sharing and deeper responses during ministry times. Write out the ministry questions on note cards each week just in case the Holy Spirit prompts you to break up into smaller groups, and give the note card to a potential leader. It's a sneaky way to train a future leader!

3. Myths begin as thoughts planted by Satan and can grow into what is called a *stronghold*. Which one of the four myths about evangelism has most stood in the way of your being an effective evangelist?

These are direct questions. So, if members speak in generalities, ask them which of the four myths they would have to say have been their own personal stumbling block to sharing Christ freely.

4. Are you being held captive by the stronghold of fear of rejection, unforgiveness, selfishness, or impatience?

Once again, expect silence after you ask tough questions that require a tough answer. While you are waiting for people to confess, ask God to break through to people right now.

5. Are you willing to confess these and to allow group members to pray with you for freedom from it so that God can use you to reach others?

As people share, ask them to pray aloud and confess the stronghold. Then, ask one or two other members of your group to put a hand on their shoulder and pray over them, thanking God for their life. Be sure to tell each person who confesses in prayer that God has indeed forgiven them and they are deeply loved by Him and the group.

Witness

Distribute handout #2 found in Appendix A entitled "Prayer Card," and a pen to each group member. Then ask your group the following question:

In the following categories of people in your life, who does not yet know Christ?

- Family Members
- Friends
- Co-workers
- Classmates
- Neighbors

If someone does not have any non-believers in his or her circle of influence, encourage them to think of friends of friends or to share names with someone else in the group.

Now ask each member to write the names listed in the above four categories onto the Prayer Card (Handout #2).

When everyone has written down the names, ask the group to break up into pairs for a time of prayer. This prayer time should not be focused on the names just written on the card, but for yourselves. Cry out to God and ask Him for His heart of love and sacrifice for the lost!

Tip:

These agendas don't contain open ministry questions concerning personal issues. So, it will be vitally important for you to challenge members to call one another between meetings to minister to each other. Don't neglect to use the 6 days and 22 hours between your meetings for ministry!

Week 1: Pray

Between-the-Meetings Options

Option #1

Place the prayer card in a prominent place, (i.e. car visor, bathroom mirror, or over the kitchen sink). Pray for those on the card each day for a week. Ask the Lord to help you love them as He does.

Option #2

Meet with or call one or two other group members and pray for those on your lists. Share the names of the people on your lists and explain your relationship with them.

Option #3

Set a day during the week to fast as a group for the people for whom the group is praying.

Option #4

Set a time in the day when everyone in the group agrees to pray at the same time for those on their lists.

Option #5

In a journal, write about the myths that keep you from evangelizing your lost friends and family members. Be honest about how you feel, and don't give in to the temptation to write the "right" things. Tell God how you really feel about evangelism. He can handle your honesty!

Scripture for the Week

"Thus the saying, 'One sows and another reaps' is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."
(John 4:37-38)

Leader's Weekly Journal

This week, I realized my relationship with unbelievers is lacking in the following ways, and this is what I plan to do about it:

This week, I learned the following about my group members as it pertains to sharing their lives and faith with unchurched people:

(Share your thoughts with your coach or pastor when you next meet.)

Important Note:

In order to use this agenda, you will need to buy this resource to gain access to the handouts. Order your copy through our web site or by calling our toll free number.

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