



SHARING GOOD NEWS

*A Simple Guide for
Every Believer*



NOVO

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Introduction

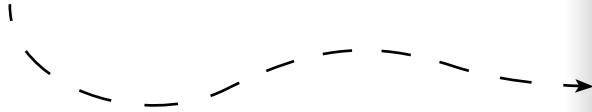
Evangelism. How does that word hit you? If you're like most people, it's not all positive. So why read a booklet on evangelism? Probably because you know that obedience to Jesus means sharing about Jesus with others. "You will be my witnesses," Jesus told his disciples (Acts 1:8). Witness isn't just something we do; a witness is *who we are*—it's part of our very identity as believers. So what do you do if the very thought of talking about Jesus to people who don't follow him makes you sick to your stomach?

Here's some good news if that describes you. *Evangelism doesn't have to be scary.* It doesn't have to be weird, and it doesn't have to be done in an awkward, seemingly fake way. We don't need to put on inauthentic personas or try to be salespeople. In fact, doing so can actually get in the way of being an effective witness. If being a witness is *who we are*, then the pressure is off and we get to witness to others *as we are*.

It may help to ask, "What is evangelism anyway?" Evangelism means "to share the good news." Followers of Jesus are people who have something good to share. What if we begin asking ourselves **how we can both be good news people (there's that identity piece again) and proclaim the goodness of God we've experienced?**

You've probably figured this out by now, but this booklet is not about going door-to-door or handing out gospel tracts. It's also not about telling every person you meet that they're a sinner in need of a savior. Instead, it's about being the kind of disciple who seeks to know and love people, and is a true blessing to their lives. It's about *truly* knowing what the good news is and how to have meaningful conversations about it. It's about being *real*, and being a really good friend.

If that appeals to you, let's get started.



Part 1

LOVE PEOPLE

Sharing good news
doesn't have to be
a project

Have you ever heard that evangelism done poorly can turn people into projects?

Maybe you've even felt a sense of guilt as you were getting to know someone because you were hoping to be able to tell them about Jesus eventually. What a crippling situation! You feel guilty if you share, and guilty if you don't! How can you break out of this double bind?

Well, according to Seth Bouchelle, a church planter and author, we *are* making people into projects if we need them to respond a certain way—i.e. accepting Christ—in order to feel validated and successful. In that case we are using people to stroke our own egos (ouch).

Instead of focusing on what we want the other person to do, **we need to focus on loving them as a person.** Having a desire for people who don't know God to encounter him in real and powerful ways *is* loving. It's both holy and Christlike. Jesus, our perfect model of what it means to be a witness, wasn't hesitant to talk with others about what God is like.

Our goal as believers should be to speak clearly and simply about who we are as followers of Christ. In other words, **our agenda is to be truly genuine and transparent with the people we are getting to know.** If we are being ourselves, then the reality of how our faith in God transforms us will leak out into every part of our lives, including our relationships.

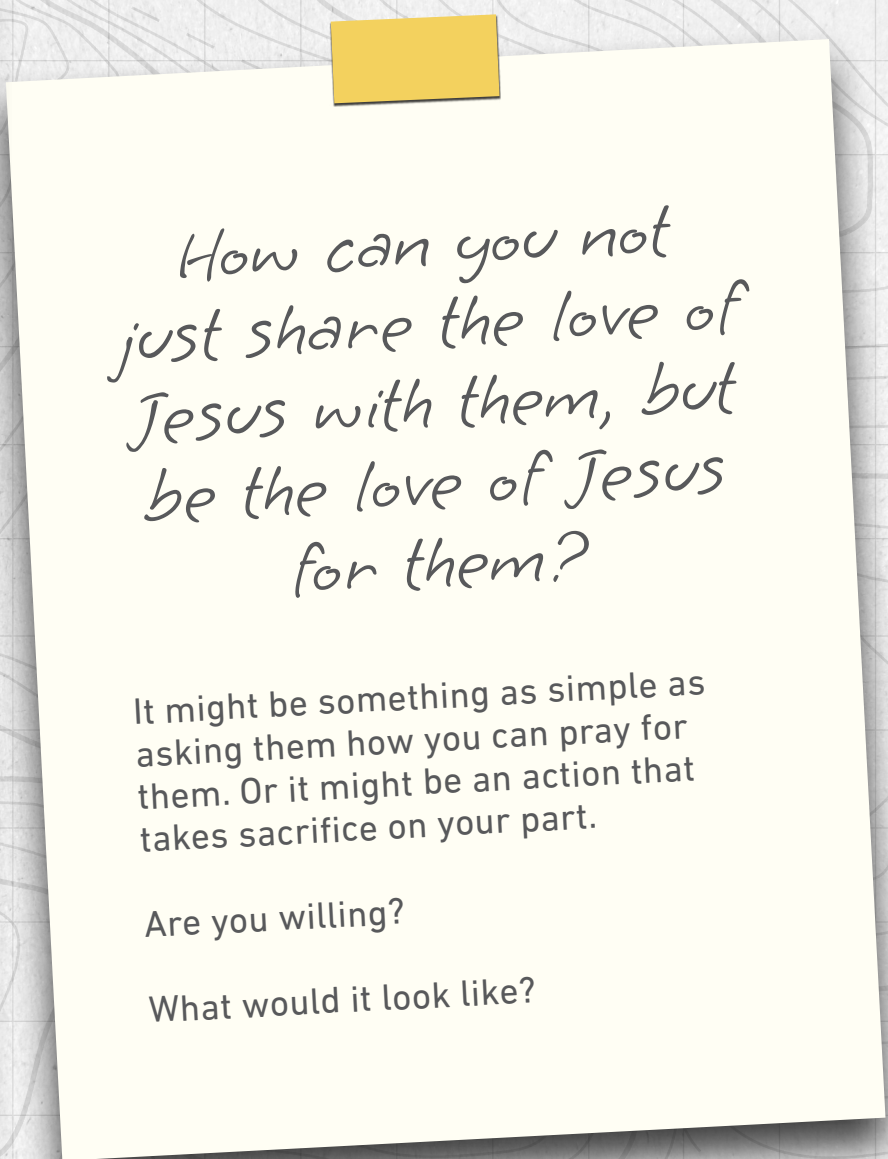
You can have conversations about faith in the same way you'd talk about other parts of your life, like your family, kids, or foods you're crazy about. You don't need to convince anyone (remember, we don't have an agenda for other people). You're simply trying to be real about your experience as you follow Jesus.

For many of us, though, there is an even simpler goal we need to start with before we can share genuinely about our faith. That's the goal of knowing and loving lost people—people who don't call Jesus their Lord and Savior. "The church is not so much guilty of not sharing the good news with lost people," Seth claims, "but of not loving lost people." Often, these people may not even be part of our immediate social circles.

If that's true of you, as it is of many of us, we need to grow our love and expand our circles of influence before we ever consider opening our mouths. How can we develop a love for lost people? Well, the first thing to do is ask God to increase our love. Start incorporating this prayer into your daily life: "Spirit, help me to love the lost, proclaiming Christ in all I do and say" (Lectio 365).

Let's look at our model, Jesus, again. We said that one way Jesus showed his love for people was sharing about what God was like. But his love wasn't only with words. It was holistic. He saw people, and he entered peoples' lives with compassion and healing. At Novo, we have a simple framework for how to do this: **prayer, care, and share**. One way of treating someone like a project is to go straight to "share" without truly caring for them first. Commit in your heart to genuinely care for the people in your path.

Finally, before you can love people, you have to find people to love. Perhaps the next time you're out running errands or heading to the office, you could pray, "Jesus, help me to see the lost sheep that you love so much." It may be that they're all around you, and you just need God to open your eyes to recognize them.

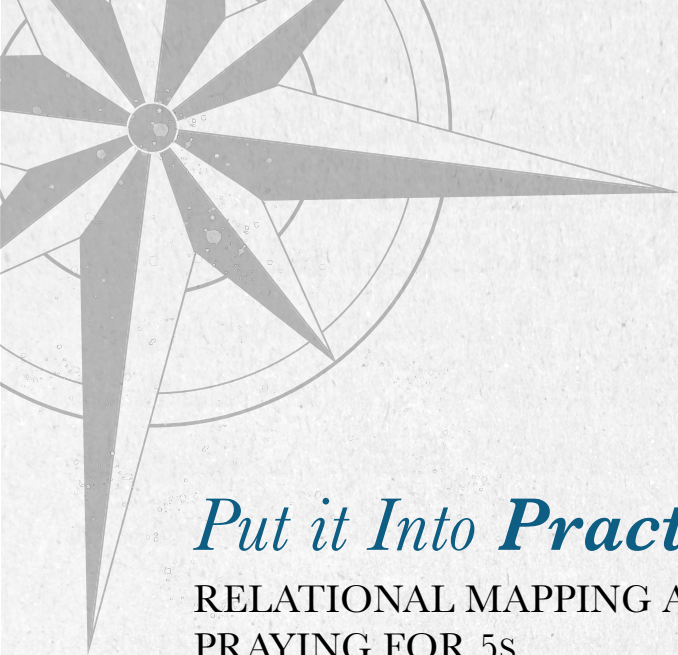


*How can you not
just share the love of
Jesus with them, but
be the love of Jesus
for them?*

It might be something as simple as asking them how you can pray for them. Or it might be an action that takes sacrifice on your part.

Are you willing?

What would it look like?



Put it Into Practice

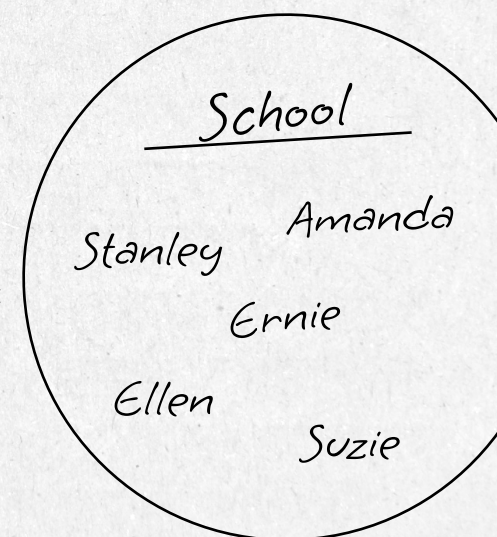
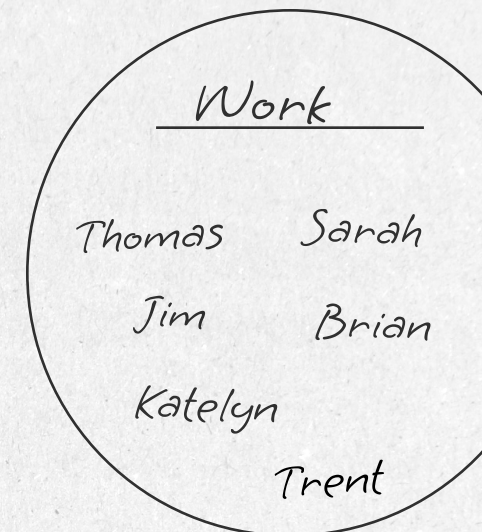
RELATIONAL MAPPING AND PRAYING FOR 5s

This simple exercise can help you think through where you have contact with people in your normal life who don't know Jesus, and get intentional about pursuing a relationship with them. First, you'll create something called a *relational* map, and then you'll choose a handful of people to start praying for specifically (we learned this way of praying, called *Praying for 5s*, from Anne de Leyser and [Local Houses of Prayer](#)). If this sounds a bit overwhelming, don't worry—we have some easy steps to follow. God uses this tool in powerful ways, so we hope you'll take time to do it!

1 Think about the different spheres where you spend your time: where you live, work, learn, or play. This might include your neighborhood, your kids' school (or yours), a gym, coffee shop, or park, etc. Now, write them down on a piece of paper and draw a circle around each.

2 Think about the people you know or interact with in each circle. Who do you have the strongest relationships with (even if they're not that strong)? Write those names by their corresponding circles.

3 Ask God if he wants to highlight any specific people on your map that you should commit to praying for. Then, on the back of the paper, write down the names of 5 people from your map—those God highlighted or those most on your heart—that you want to commit to pray for.





4

Pray for those
5 people
5 minutes a day
5 days a week (that's 25 minutes total per week).

Speak blessings over those people as you pray. Ask yourself, *"If all the good things of God were available to this person in their work, home, family, health, finances, etc. what would it look like?"*

Pray those things happen for them. ([You can learn more about praying for 5s and blessing prayer here.](#))

Did you notice that this isn't focusing on praying for their conversion? We're just asking God to give them good things.

5

As you pray for your 5 people, you'll probably notice a couple of powerful changes.

First, things will start to shift spiritually as you pray. God will be at work in their hearts and they may even start to show interest in spiritual things.

Second, you will probably start to take a deeper interest in their lives and become more intentional in your relationships with them. As you pray, you will likely notice that your love for each person increases.

Part 2

KNOW PEOPLE

If you can have a
conversation, you
can have a gospel
conversation

Once you've started praying for people and growing your capacity to love people, it's time to start engaging with them. And here's some more good news: If you can have a conversation, you can have a gospel conversation.

What does that mean? Well, let's break it down a little bit. First, you need to know how to have a conversation. That may sound super obvious, but the truth is, not all of us are good conversationalists. We need to learn how to talk in ways that other people actually engage with us.

THE KEY TO BEING EFFECTIVE AT EVANGELISM

Cory Ozburn, a Novo staff member who's been involved in launching gospel movements in Kansas City, says sometimes we confuse social discomfort with spiritual receptivity. If someone has a negative reaction to the gospel, we might assume that person has written Jesus off, when in reality they are reacting negatively to how we're talking to them about Jesus, not Jesus himself. How we talk with people really does matter!

The most important skill you can hone to get people more engaged in what you're saying is actually *listening*, not *talking*. Listening is the most important part of being a great conversationalist—even (and especially) when we're talking about the gospel.

In a great conversation, you're showing interest in the other person. You ask questions because you're trying to get to know them. What makes them tick? Avoid the temptation to turn the conversation back to yourself when a point of connection comes up. Get curious about the people around you and keep the focus on them. How might God already be at work in their lives? Who knows—if you ask good questions, you just might find out!

IS ASKING GREAT QUESTIONS AND REALLY LISTENING TO THE RESPONSES.

Asking good questions at each stage is what can move the conversation to a deeper level. But it's important to realize that **meaningful and spiritual conversations most often come from a relationship that has been intentionally cultivated over time.** We want to have meaningful and spiritual conversations with people, but it's not a rush to the finish line. The focus needs to stay on the person and helping them feel seen and loved, not pushing them into a conversation they're not ready to have.

Sometimes when the Holy Spirit is at work in someone, they will be ready to have spiritual conversations much more quickly than we might expect. So don't avoid those topics altogether! Just stay attuned to the person and what God is up to in them. Not forcing a conversation to go in a direction someone isn't ready to go (i.e. talking about Jesus) is an important skill. But so is willingness to talk about Jesus if they're curious to do so. This takes social awareness and sensitivity, but it's not rocket science. Just think of a stop-light. Green, yellow, red.



We've covered a lot of ground pretty quickly. To review what we've looked at so far, here's a video from Cory Ozburn explaining some basics for having spiritual conversations with people and how to recognize people of peace (those who are spiritually open).
<https://link.novo.org/spiritual-conversations>

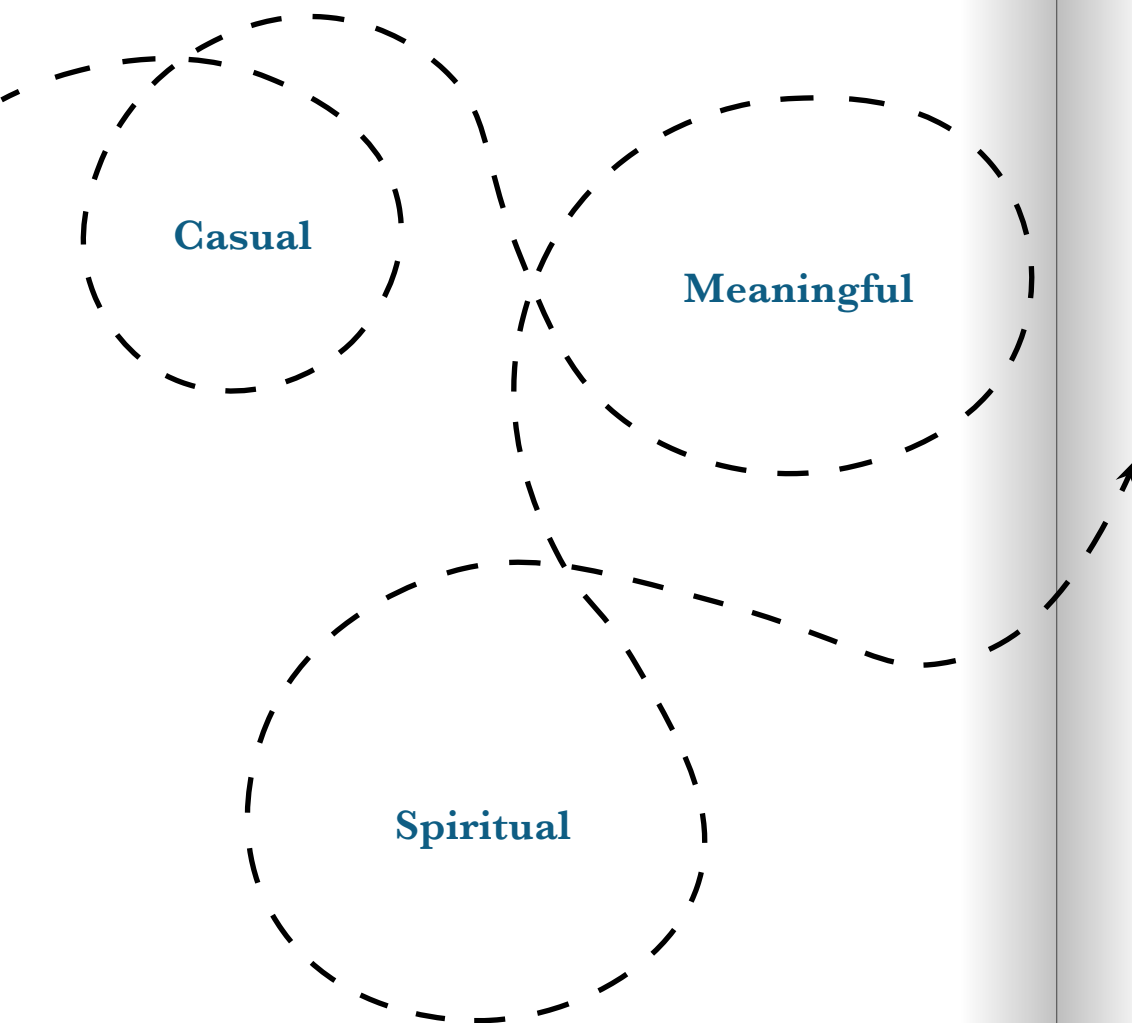
If you bring up something about God or spiritual things and the person leans in, **green light!** They are interested and ready to engage in this kind of conversation. So go there! Lean in with them.

If they aren't really leaning in, but they're also not moving away, that's a **yellow light.** Proceed with caution.

But if they have an angry response, quickly change topics, or in some way show that they don't want to talk about it, **Red light!** Stop there, and don't push them to go further.



It's not our job to convince people of something they don't want to talk about. It's our job to be witnesses for those God is already preparing to hear the message.



Conversations go through a natural progression from *casual*, to *meaningful*, to *spiritual*.

As we consider gradually moving conversations from casual to meaningful to spiritual, it's worthwhile to think about what we can talk about with people besides Jesus. One acronym to aid our memory of good topics of conversation is **F.R.O.G.**

(Ever heard of "having a frog in your throat"? Well, this frog will actually *help* you talk to others instead of making it difficult to get a word out.)

F.R.O.G. Conversation Topics:

Friends & Family

Recreation

Occupation

Goals & Gifts



Put it Into Practice

ASKING QUESTIONS FROM THE F.R.O.G. ACRONYM

To start preparing to have good conversations with people, use the F.R.O.G. acronym to write out one casual question and one meaningful/spiritual question you could potentially ask someone around that topic. Working through this exercise will help you avoid awkward surface-level exchanges, and make it feel more natural to move a conversation toward meaningful topics. (Note that asking direct questions can make some people uncomfortable, especially those not from an American background, so be sensitive to that dynamic. Sometimes you'll want to leave out the questions and just have conversations around these topics.)

Here's an example for **F** (friends and family)

Casual: Tell me about your family? What's home like?

Meaningful/Spiritual: Was your family involved in church or religion while you were growing up?

Friends & Family

Casual Question: _____

Meaningful/Spiritual Question: _____

Recreation

Casual Question: _____

Meaningful/Spiritual Question: _____



Occupation

Casual Question: _____

Meaningful/Spiritual Question: _____

Goals & Gifts

Casual Question: _____

Meaningful/Spiritual Question: _____

Part 3

KNOW THE GOSPEL

It's not just about
forgiveness of sins

Remember our purpose as believers (Acts 1:8)? It's that we would be good witnesses—that we would listen well and speak simply and intentionally about our faith in Jesus. Now that we've covered some of the basics of loving lost people and getting to know them, it's time to dig into how we can actually speak about Jesus in normal conversations in a winsome way!

If we're going to share the good news with people, we first have to know what it is. And guess what? It's not only about Jesus dying for our sins.

The Bible says that Jesus came preaching the *good news* of the *Kingdom* (Matthew 4:23).

What does that mean? The Kingdom of God is the place where God rules and reigns—where things happen the way God intends them to be.

But, it's important to say that we can only really know the good news to the extent that we truly know God. Jesus spent a lot of time helping people understand who God is and what he is like. We will struggle to talk about God if we don't know him well! **But if we have an intimate walk with God, good news will start to flow out of us naturally, just like it did for Jesus.** We will speak and do things that demonstrate God's Kingdom, because we are living right in the center of it—in a rich relationship with God.

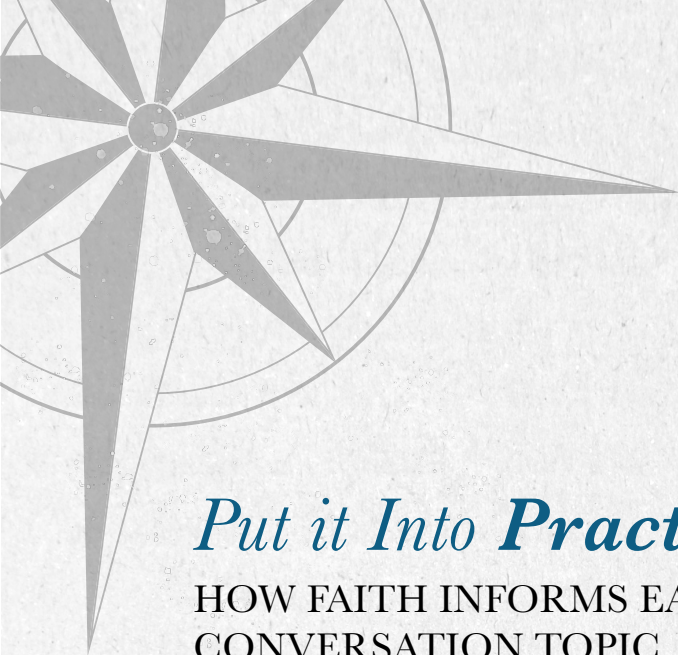


Seth Bouchelle thinks of the good news as a mosaic: hundreds of different, beautiful pieces coming together to form an incredible picture. The cross of Christ is the most important piece—it's at the center of the mosaic. But, every dimension of God's character is a piece—his goodness, compassion, creation, faithfulness, love, justice, etc. And so is every way that God's Kingdom informs our lives and tells us what the world would look like if things happened the way God wanted them to.

We don't have to give the whole picture of the gospel in a single conversation. In fact, that would be impossible! **We are having gospel conversations every time we share *one piece* of that mosaic.**

For example, if you have a conversation with another person about injustice and how you're passionate to bring it to an end because God cares about all people, that's a gospel conversation. If you talk about the way God gave you comfort in a painful situation, that's a gospel conversation. There are *so many* ways to talk about the good news!

Five main topics of conversation that people bring up over and over again are money, work, family, politics, and recreation. So if you know how your faith and identity in Christ impacts each of these areas, you are ready to have a gospel conversation no matter *what* the topic of conversation.



Put it Into Practice

HOW FAITH INFORMS EACH CONVERSATION TOPIC

Think about the five big topics of conversation from a gospel perspective. How does your faith in Christ, the truth of God's Kingdom, or your identity in Christ impact your view on each one? Write down some initial ideas for each category.

Examples:

Money: my worth isn't in how much money I make... everything I own actually belongs to God...

Family: God created the family... the Bible says children are a blessing...

Money _____

Family _____

Work _____

Politics _____

Recreation _____

Another way to bring parts of the gospel into focus as you interact with someone is to affirm them. Call out parts of God's character that you recognize in that person. Does your coworker demonstrate incredible generosity or compassion? Compliment them on that characteristic. And don't just stop there; ask them a question about it and seek to learn from them. For example, you could say,

“You know, Amy, your compassion for that person sitting on the front steps really reminds me of Jesus. As a follower of Jesus I’m always trying to be more like him. Could you tell me how you learned to be so loving to people in need?”

This is one of Seth Bouchelle's favorite ways to share a piece of the good news. “No one gets offended by being compared to Jesus!” he says.

You can also speak about God and bless people by giving them hope that God is at work. So often in our world today, people are not asking if God is *real*, but whether he is still *actively working* around us. In a world that often feels out of control and hopeless, they are looking for hope. “Where are you, God?” they may ask. So be on the lookout for opportunities where you can encourage someone by sharing how God has been real and active in your own life.

To prepare for those opportunities, you can actually think through and practice *15 second stories* of how God moved in your life. The goal of these stories is not to share the whole gospel, but a quick snap-shot (just one picture) of who God is and how he's at work.



Put it Into Practice

WRITE 15 SECOND STORIES

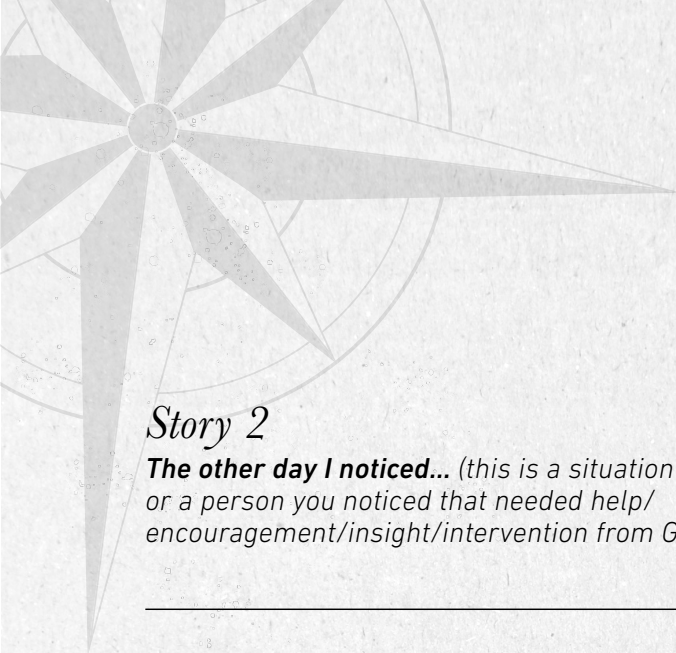
Take time to think through your life and ways God intersected it in meaningful ways, and write down a 2-3 sentence version that you could share with others.

Story 1

There was a time when... (this is what life was like before knowing God or before he redeemed a specific part of your life):

Then God... (this is how God changed the hurt/pain/struggle/confusion etc.):

Now... (this is the positive part of how God redeemed you and your story in a specific way and what that means for your life today):

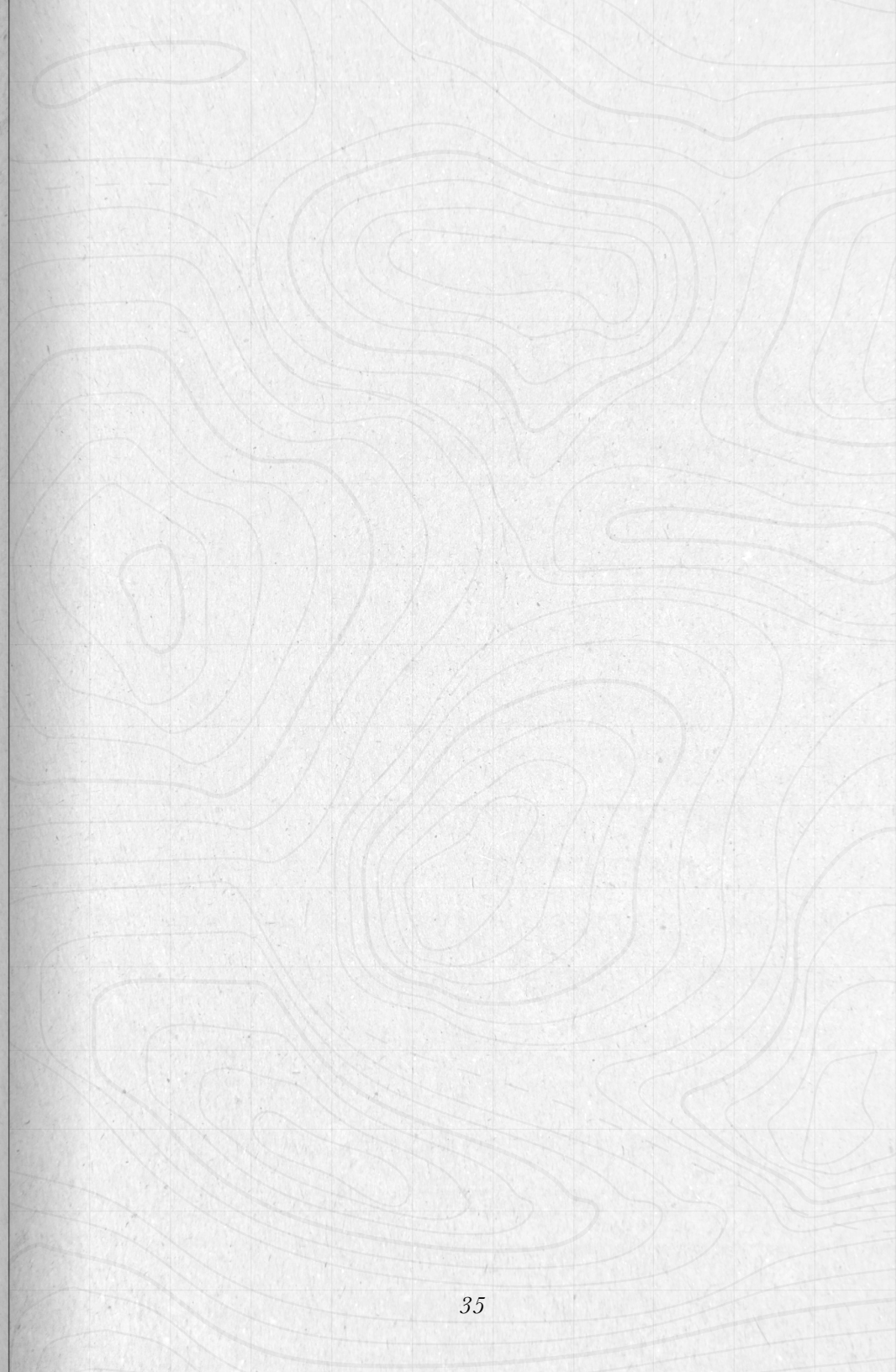


Story 2

The other day I noticed... *(this is a situation or a person you noticed that needed help/encouragement/insight/intervention from God):*

Then God... *(this is how God got involved in the situation or person's life—and it might involve how you responded to God's leading):*

Now... *(this is the positive change that took place because of what God said or did):*



Conclusion

If you've worked through the exercises in this book, you should be ready to start engaging people with the good news, without being weird about it. Congratulations! The world desperately needs more followers of Jesus who are ready and willing to talk about him in a genuine way in their relationships. You are now equipped to be one of those people.

We've gone over some great foundational steps for having spiritual conversations with the people around you. But what do you do if people actually respond to those conversations by wanting to learn more about Jesus? Well, there's another excellent tool for evangelism we didn't cover in this booklet that depends on scripture and the Holy Spirit to do all the work instead of you. It's called Discovery Bible Study, and you can learn all about it at novo.org/dbs.

We know that we can have the very best training and tools, and still find ourselves silent. It takes courage to share our faith, and our enemy would like nothing better than to scare us into not opening up about it. So before we go, we'd love to leave you with a blessing on your relationships and your ability to use these tools to share Jesus in powerful ways.

I bless you right now in the powerful name of Jesus with wisdom and knowledge, that you may know the hope of the incomparable love and grace of Jesus. I bless you to grow in your love for the lost and your desire to be a blessing to them. And finally, I bless you in Jesus's name to speak naturally and clearly about the goodness of God and his good Kingdom to all those you encounter.

Amen.

About

Seth Bouchelle has worked as a church planter and evangelist among a diverse group of global populations in the Bronx, NY since 2014. In addition to missions in NYC, Seth is the Director of Equipping for the Exponent Group, where he works to train and empower churches and everyday Christians in missionary skills and practices.

Cory Ozbun, along with his wife Suz and their three kids, is a part of Novo's Gospel Movements division, living in the Kansas City area where he primarily serves as a catalyst, mobilizer, and trainer. He is actively engaged in many streams of coaching relationships working toward movement, in addition to hosting a microchurch with neighbors and friends. In late 2018, Cory helped launch the Kansas City Underground, a network of reproducing disciples and microchurches throughout the KC metro.

Author

Megan Reynolds lives on the Western Slope of Colorado and has been serving with Novo since 2014. She has a background in Bible, discipleship, and spiritual formation. She loves discovering new wonders of the world with her family and leading staff care and spiritual development for their wilderness therapy ministry.



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