

Outline for Befriending Presentations:

The following outline was created to be used for two 30 minute small group sessions, each with 20 minutes of content and 10 minutes of discussion.

Lesson 1 could cover points I-V and Lesson 2 points VI-VIII

- I) Introduction – The vision of this Befriending effort is an increase in our evangelistic zeal and developing a culture of personal evangelism. So what if North Campus was more passionately and consistently developing gospel friendships with unbelievers?
- II) Show Video
- III) Give an outline of what we're doing:
 - A) Example Story of what befriending could look like:

Mike is my next-door neighbor. We had only said "hi" before this summer. Desiring to grow our relationship, I invited him to the National Night Out in August, where we chatted a little.

Then, the other day, I saw him in his yard. I walked over and started asking him about why he was spraying his grass. We shared and laughed about our struggle to control our weed problem. Then we talked about deer hunting for a while. Then the topic of trucks and motorcycles came up. He invited me to see his truck and motorcycle in the garage. We continued our time in the garage...

What started out with walking over to him and asking about spraying the grass, turned into some fun and meaningful conversation about things we both enjoy and care about. Before I could leave, he brought me into the house so that he could give me a ton of his venison sausage!
 - B) Explain where we're going: we are going to talk about how God befriends and how we can apply that.
- IV) God: the source of our passion for outreach
 - A) Trinity
 - 1) From all eternity The Father has loved the Son.
 - a) God the Father calls Jesus his beloved Son
 - i) "and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.'" (Luke 3:22)
 - b) Jesus is called the "Beloved"
 - i) "to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1:6)
 - ii) "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son," (Colossians 1:13)
 - c) Jesus makes explicit statements:

"The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand." (John 3:35)
 - 2) Christians, in Christ, get included in this love relationship.
 - a) "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love." (John 15:9)
 - 3) The Father's love spills onto the Son, which spills onto us:
 - a) "...the shape of the Father-Son Relationship (the headship) begins a gracious cascade, like a waterfall of love: as the Father is the lover and the head of the

Son, so the Son goes out to be the lover and the head of the church.....And therein lies the very goodness of the gospel: as the Father is the lover and the Son the beloved, so Christ becomes the lover and the church the beloved."

Michael Reeves *Delighting in the Trinity* p28

- 4) Application questions: If God has always existed in a relationship of love, and desires to include us, how does this change the way we think about outreach?
 - a) Makes it relational, God is bringing others into this love relationship.
- B) God's befriending looks like
 - 1) Loyal love: love that promises to do good unconditionally then passes the test of time
 - a) "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)
 - b) Jesus shows himself as the ultimate friend by loving sacrificially.
 - 2) Affectionate love: desire because of some pleasure in the object loved
 - a) How can God have true affections for us if we are sinners? The answer is found in the gospel.
 - i) "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - ii) "Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:18–19 ESV)
 - b) "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing." (Zephaniah 3:17)
 - c) "For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you." (Isaiah. 62:5)
 - d) "And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14)
 - e) God deeply desires and values his people.
 - 3) Creating commonality: a shared desire, passion, pursuit, weakness, or struggle
 - a) "You are my friends if you do what I command you." John 15:14
 - i) A caution: God's not your buddy without authority, he is still Lord
 - ii) A blessing: sharing common pursuits with the Lord because of New Covenant heart transformation (Ezekiel 36:26–27), transformation into his image, sharing a common mission "For we are God's fellow workers." (1 Corinthians 3:9)
 - 4) Transparency: a willingness to open up your life and share close communication
 - a) "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15)
 - 5) Positive Interactions (fellowship): repeated deposits into the relationship
 - a) Jesus wants fellowship with his church:

- i) “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”
(Revelation 3:20)

6) Optional question: how does this picture of God choosing to befriend affect the way we see our relationship with him?

V) Us – What is required of us based on God’s befriending?

A) Receive his friendship in the ways he befriends:

- 1) For instance, I might be OK with his Loyal love, but have I grasped the fact that he is building commonality our relationship? Or maybe we’re uncomfortable with him having incredible affections for us.
- 2) Ask for help from the Holy Spirit: Paul prays in Eph 3:17–19 “that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”
- 3) Marvel at the ways God has chosen to befriend us.
- 4) Optional question: How can you tell if someone has internalized and is receiving/grasping God’s love and acceptance?

B) Befriend those around us:

- 1) Because God has given us the ministry of reconciliation “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”
(2 Corinthians 5:18–20)
- 2) We can befriend in these ways:
 - a) Loyal love: be steadfast, go for the long haul
 - b) Affection: rejoice in the image of God in them
 - c) Commonality: look for shared interests, desires, concerns
 - d) Transparency: don’t be afraid to share your struggles and the hope you have
 - e) Positive Interactions: hospitality, do fun things together
- 3) Optional question: How can we apply each of these ways of befriending to our relationships with unbelievers?

VI) Transition – an example story of befriending from a BBC member:

“My sister-in-law texted me the other day, just as I was getting ready to start a meeting for the women’s bible study small group leaders--full of nerves--feeling very unprepared to teach that morning. I was annoyed, to be honest. Two nights prior she had been continually texting me while I was trying to write my script for teaching, and I thought, “Bah! Not NOW!” But when I read the text, my heart changed very suddenly.

My sister-in-law was asking for a recommendation on types of bibles. What?! She explained that she and her husband had just found a church, and that this church was planning to read through the bible in a year, and that my brother-in-law wanted to participate. Well--she had my attention. I happily and joyfully texted back two different

recommendations. My heart's attitude changed quickly from nerves to thankfulness as I was reminded that the Lord is Sovereign over changing our hearts, and that He IS working, even when it appears to us that He is not.

You see, when my sister-in-law met her to-be husband, we were unable to discern where the two of them were at, spiritually speaking. Both having been raised in the church, they didn't seem to display the kind of fruit of the Spirit we would associate with someone whose heart has been transformed by Christ. They didn't have any real interest in participating in the body of Christ, or desire to find a place to attend. My brother-in-law liked spiritual ideas--like from the book "The Secret"--but didn't seem to understand how it would be contradictory to scripture. They knew the basic tenets of the faith, and would define themselves as Christians. They married in a church, by a pastor.

So, for years, my husband and I have sporadically prayed for and talked with them about God. We LOVE them. They are our family. My sister-in-law can make anyone laugh. My brother-in-law is welcoming and safe. They are trustworthy, and love our kids. They are responsible and hospitable. We love to have them over and to go visit them. We were not expecting God to open doors, but little by little He has.

They would ask us for parenting advice. We would occasionally get into spiritual discussions over a beer, and on one occasion, the Lord opened the door for us to share the gospel with my brother-in-law. There was no miraculous light-bulb moment, and soon after the kids invaded our space and made it tough to keep talking. Our brother-in-law would share difficulties he was having with his family and how it made him feel. We are there for him, affirming his value in God's sight and loving him when he is frustrated or sad. We share with him our struggles too--things that we are learning in therapy, or struggles that we are having.

And then out of the blue--a desire prompted by God without our knowledge to read the whole bible. And while we haven't yet heard a conversion story--we are very encouraged to see the work that the Lord is doing, and our motivation to pray is greatly increased. We are now aware of what the Lord is doing, and anticipating how we can be a part of what He is already doing in their hearts."

VII) How do we befriend?

A) Befriend like God befriends. Trust God to love unbelievers in these five ways, especially displaying loyal love. We in no way want to slam other methods of evangelism. AND, we want to grow in living out a more persevering love with our unbelieving friends! Did you notice that in the story above?

1) "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end."

(Lamentations 3:22)

a) Oh, how I need God to help me with this! A neighbor I've been trusting the Lord to love just called me to ask if I'd transport him home after knee surgery. I was very busy in that season. My initial reaction was to grumble. God was handing

me an opportunity to serve an unbelieving neighbor on a platter, and I'm complaining inside! "Help us in this, Lord! Your love NEVER ceases."

- b) What might happen if we default to short-term gospel relationships?
 - i) This can lead to our friends feeling like a project.
 - ii) It might foster in us a belief that we are ultimately responsible for personal salvation. No one comes to Jesus unless the Father draws him. (John 6:44)
- 2) Optional question: Describe how you'd like God to help you persevere in love with an unbeliever.
- B) Befriend prayerfully. Dependence on God is expressed through prayer.
 - 1) Prayer card. The reason our main "tool" is a prayer card is because this persevering love is impossible without God.
 - a) Ask God for help identifying an unbeliever. Who could I choose?
 - i) Availability – someone you can imagine getting some quality time with over the next few months. (Do you live close enough for this? Do you naturally run into them?)
 - ii) Affinity – someone you can imagine enjoying time with as you learn more about each other. (Is there a hobby you could enjoy together?)
 - (a) Why choose for enjoyment? We are Christian Hedonists who believe God is worshiped through our enjoyment of his image in a friend.
 - b) Ask God to help you pray/befriend for at least one year, as a simple goal.
- C) Befriend in community.
 - 1) Ask God to help identify a "prayer partner" in this journey. Who could I choose?
 - a) We need others: Acts 2:42-47, 2 Corinthians 6:1 and Proverbs 18:1.
 - b) Availability – someone you trust will follow through with prayer for you and your friend.
 - c) Like-minded – someone who gets it – they desire the salvation of unbelievers.
 - d) Encourager – someone whose words will strengthen and uphold you on this journey.
 - i) For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. Phil. 2:20
 - e) Helper - Example: I was helping my daughter move into an apartment when I noticed a woman standing across the parking lot enjoying a smoke. I called over to her, saying, "Hey, isn't that an amazing moon?" She happily agreed and we said a few more things. Before I knew it, my daughter followed up by walking over to the woman and entering into a 30-minute conversation. God used us together so that Brenna could enter into a friendship with a new neighbor!
- D) Befriend with the gospel message.
 - 1) God saves through a specific message about his Son. "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit..." (Eph. 1:13)
 - 2) Testimony – Sharing what God did to woo and win you will often be a winsome way to bring up spiritual things and help you to be transparent in a growing friendship.
 - 3) [Bridge Diagram](#) – This discussion based evangelism tool can be easily drawn on a piece of paper. It is a brief way to clarify why Jesus had to die on the cross.

- 4) When should you mention spiritual things?
 - a) Ask God and your “prayer partner” for direction.
 - b) Think “invite.” Trust God for help discerning their readiness as you share some of your story and/or observe their response to any spiritual topics that naturally come up. Does it seem like they are warm or cold to your invitations to go a little deeper?
 - i) Scott Breslin’s article has a section on inviting. – [The Workplace Priest: Activating Our God-given Identity as Priests at Work.](#)
 - c) Contextualized comments or questions. The sky is the limit.
 - i) “Remember when you said _____ last year? What are you thinking now?”
 - ii) “My pastor just said _____. What do you think of that?”
 - iii) “That makes me think of something Jesus said. He said _____.”
 - iv) “Could I share a little about my journey of faith?”
 - v) “Could I ask about your faith story?”
 - vi) Discussion question: what are some other transitions that you’ve found helpful?
 - E) Befriend from a heart desiring their salvation. Ask God to give you Jesus’ heart.
 - 1) The example of Paul: “Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.” (Romans 10:1)
 - 2) Example: In college, my friend Jack told me, “I’ll believe like you some day when God shows me that I need him.” I said, “I love you, Jack. You don’t want to tell God what to do. I want you to be in heaven with me.” He went on to be in my wedding. We meet about once a year. We just attended his daughters wedding, and he came to our daughter’s wedding. He’s on my prayer card and I’m praying how we can grow in our friendship!
 - F) Befriend with story telling: let’s talk about what God is doing in our befriending in order to praise God, to encourage others to befriend and to inspire prayer for unbelievers.
 - 1) Prayer partners.
 - 2) Small Group or other discipleship context.
 - 3) BBC-related social media or web format.
- VIII) Q&A
- A) Having enough time to pursue these relationships has come up in our workshop a lot. How can we have the time to actually do this?
 - B) How do we navigate the possible ungodly influences of such close association with unbelievers? (I Cor.15:33)