

Growth Groups Material
(5 studies to help us develop our personal evangelism)
March 2023

Booklet Contents

Introduction	p.3
Connect Calendar	p.5
A Word to Growth Group Members...	p.6
Additional Resources	p.6
Study 1: Understanding two worlds	p.8
Study 2: Coffee, Dinner, Gospel	p.12
Study 3: Tell a better story	p.16
Study 4: Be their unofficial chaplain	p.20
Study 5: Lean into disagreements	p.24

Important Note

This material is adapted from studies prepared by St Luke's Anglican Church, Miranda and used with permission.

The content is loosely based on the book, How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy), Sam Chan, Zondervan Reflection, 2020.

Excerpts are taken from How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy) by Sam Chan Copyright © 2020 by Sam Chan. Used by permission of HarperCollins Christian Publishing

www.harpercollinschristian.com

Introduction

Jesus' words at the end of Matthew's gospel are world-changing! They give our lives direction and purpose:

*16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:16-20)*

With these words, Jesus includes us in the eternal work of God to see people find life and joy in him, and we now have a responsibility to not just enjoy the benefits of life and faith for ourselves but to share them with others. This is a wonderful joy and immense responsibility. **This all beckons the question; how do we actually do it?**

Over the course of these studies, we will explore ways that we can all begin to reach out with the good news of Jesus and help our friends and family come to know him. These studies are based on the book *How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy)* by Sam Chan. You might like to buy the book and read it as you work through the studies. It's an easy, light and at times, funny read.

These studies are designed to help everyday people like you and me to get better at talking about Jesus. They are for the hesitant, anxious, rusty, and awkward among us and those who are more comfortable in this space. They will give you some helpful tools to see how an everyday person like you can go about helping someone come to know Jesus.

As we begin to think about how we talk to our friends about Jesus, it's important to remember evangelism is a team sport, not an individual sport. It's cricket, not

tennis. This is helpful to remember for two reasons; on the one hand, it's a great comfort because we are reminded that we don't do this alone; there are 500 other people at Jannali Anglican who are participating in helping your friends and family know Jesus. On the other hand, it's a reminder that we all do have a part to play. We are all in the game. There are no spectators in evangelism.

While these studies focus more on how we do the work as individuals, it's good to remember that a lot of the work we do is in tandem with others. On the next page you can see a calendar of our combined evangelistic efforts as a church. Take a few mins to read over the calendar and familiarise yourself with what we are doing as a church and think about how you can be involved and utilize this combined work to see your friends come to know Jesus too.

P.S. The things on the calendar list our 'over-and-above' activities. We also have a bunch of regular activities like Its Music time, ESL, JAC Youth Friday Kids Club, Connect and Create and Insight.

I'm praying that God will you use to see many people come to find life in Jesus.



Ross Collins
Connect Director

Connect Calendar:

Month	Event	Extra Details
July	All For Jesus Night + Life Boat List Launch	All for Jesus is an opportunity to get everyone from church together to think, pray, strategize, and get excited about evangelism for the year ahead. Our Life Boat Lists are lists of three people we are praying for and trying to invite evangelise too.
August	Prayer and training month.	A month dedicated to praying for our LB lists and a 4 week opt in immersion training in evangelism.
September	Spring Outreach Events	A month of targeted outreach events at specific subcultures in our church. Men, women, Mums, dads, parents, YA etc
October	Life Series	A five-week evangelistic course to help people look into what life with Jesus looks like. This is our key activity in helping people become Christians.
November	Establish Series	Establish is program designed to help people who have come to faith in Jesus become established as Christian. It's like a 'life a Christian' 101 course.
December	Christmas outreach events	This includes, Connect and Create Christmas party, Family Gingerbread, Wreath making, Outdoor Carols, Christmas services.
January	Summer Church	A month of more relaxed church services.
February	Prayer Month	A month to pray for people to come to share life and come to know Jesus.
March	Share Life	Four weeks of evangelistic church services.
April	Easter Outreach	Easter services + any additional outreach events.
May	Life Series	Connect people in from Share life + easter
June	Establish Series	Connect people from Life series.

A Word to Growth Group Members...

Before you launch into this fantastic material, there's a few things you should know. This material will feel different to 'normal' growth group material. Whilst we're definitely asking you to open your bibles, there's also more of a 'training' feel to things. There are some excerpts from the Sam Chan book, and plenty of opportunities to brainstorm about how to put things into practice! You will also find there is a lot of questions to work through. No one expects you to do it all. Feel free to skip some questions and focus on what's working well for your group!

It's also important to be aware that these studies don't correspond to the bible passages or themes being preached in our weekend gatherings. So you can use this material at any time! We thought that the Share Life Month of evangelistic gatherings (March 2023) was a good opportunity to think about personal evangelism in our growth groups.

Lastly, we've prepared a website with some additional material that you might find helpful. There's a link to purchase the book, and a stack of podcasts and videos where Sam Chan has discussed the ideas explored in this material. Individuals can check out this material at their leisure, or you might like to make use of it during your group time. It's up to you.

Additional Material

You can find links to some additional materials including videos and podcasts at our series website:

<https://jannalianglican.org.au/howtojesus>



Page left intentionally blank

Use it to scribble, write prayer points....whatever suits you

Study 1 | Understanding two worlds

THE BIG IDEA

The ideas in this study emerge from the first two tips in Sam's book.

Tip 1: Merge Your Universes (Evangelism is a lifestyle change). Here Sam explains that modern people, in a post-Christian society like Australia don't tend to form beliefs in the way we imagine – by analysing information and forming objective conclusions. On the contrary, people need to see and experience things, in order for ideas to become 'believable'.

Tip 2: Go to their things (and they will go to your things). If we're genuinely spending time with our non-Christian friends and investing in their lives, then the idea of inviting them to a church event won't feel so foreign.

The common theme to these two tips is that our unbelieving friends must see our faith integrated with our life – and that this will make the claims of Christianity more believable – or at least less weird.

Discuss

1. What do you think are some of the biggest barriers to people you know becoming Christians? Is it a matter of pride? Access to the information? Is the Church itself perceived as a barrier to faith?
2. Which people in our society do you think are the most trustworthy? Do you think Christians/the church are seen as trustworthy? Why/Why not?
3. In his book, Sam Chan talks about "Plausibility structures" (those things that determine whether someone/something is trustworthy or not) and the importance of building them with non-Christians. What is it that makes Christianity believable for you?
4. The three main sources contributing to plausibility (or the trustworthiness of something), according to Sam, are listed in order, below. Does this order surprise you? How should this affect our approach to evangelism?
 1. *Community - we trust friends and family.*
 2. *Experiences - having some kind of experience with something makes it trustworthy, and*
 3. *Facts - evidence and data.*

Optional extra: Listen to Sam explain this idea in his interview with Colin Hansen on the Gospelbound podcast at around 8.00. (see page 6 for details of additional materials)

Space for notes

Read and Investigate

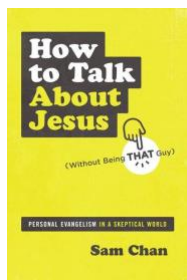
5. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul gives a passionate defence of the good news of the gospel. **Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-19** and try to identify where Paul appeals to community, experience and facts in his writing.
6. Why do you think all three play such a healthy role in seeing people come to authentic faith? What might happen if people miss one of the three?
7. **Read Matthew 9:9-13**. Jesus made it a practice to invite “tax collectors and sinners” to eat with him and his disciples, often doing so at their houses. What was Jesus’ purpose in doing this?
8. What can we learn from Jesus’ example, in terms of the people we spend time with, and his approach to reaching people?

Discuss and Apply

9. Why do you think it is so easy to keep our Christian friends and our other friends in separate groups? Where do you think some natural points of connection might be in your life?
10. The second chapter of Sam’s book is about “Going to their things”. The more we show we are willing to invest in others, the more likely they are to come to something to which we invite them. What are some areas in your life where you might be able to invest in others?
11. What do you think it looks like in our day to day lives to make Christianity a “plausible” life choice for our friends/work mates?
12. Are there activities that you do solely with friends from Church? What would it take to make it an activity to which you’d be keen to invite some non-Christian friends? How do we avoid the situation of looking like we’re trying to “set people up” for evangelism?

Pray for opportunities and diligence to ‘merge’ your Christian and non-Christian worlds, and that we’d live in such a way that makes our Christian faith “plausible” to others?

Space for notes



Extra Reading

How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy) by Sam Chan

Page 19

Rico Tice, a gifted UK evangelist, talks about three cultural phases of evangelism in the West. The first phase was in the late twentieth century, the time when Billy Graham was giving his talks. His audience was Christianised. Even though they weren't believers, they had Christian friends and had grown up in Sunday school. Billy's talk only had to be twenty minutes because he was asking them to believe what they already knew to be true.

The second phase was in the early twenty-first century. Here the audience sort of knew the gospel. But they also had "defeater beliefs" that stopped them from believing this gospel. For instance, what about other religions? What about science? What about evil? Here our job was to remove these defeater beliefs and clear the way for them to believe the gospel.

The third phase of evangelism is where we are now. Today, our audience is in a completely different universe. They don't know of the gospel. They don't even know why they should care. It's of no relevance to them. And deep down, they suspect that the gospel is a tool of oppression used by those who used to be in power. They are hermetically shut off from the good news of Jesus.

This is why we need to merge our universes. It's one of the most powerful ways our friends can come into contact with the gospel.

Study 2 | Coffee, Dinner, Gospel

THE BIG IDEA

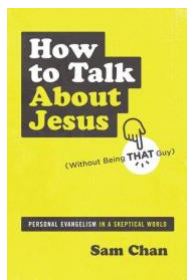
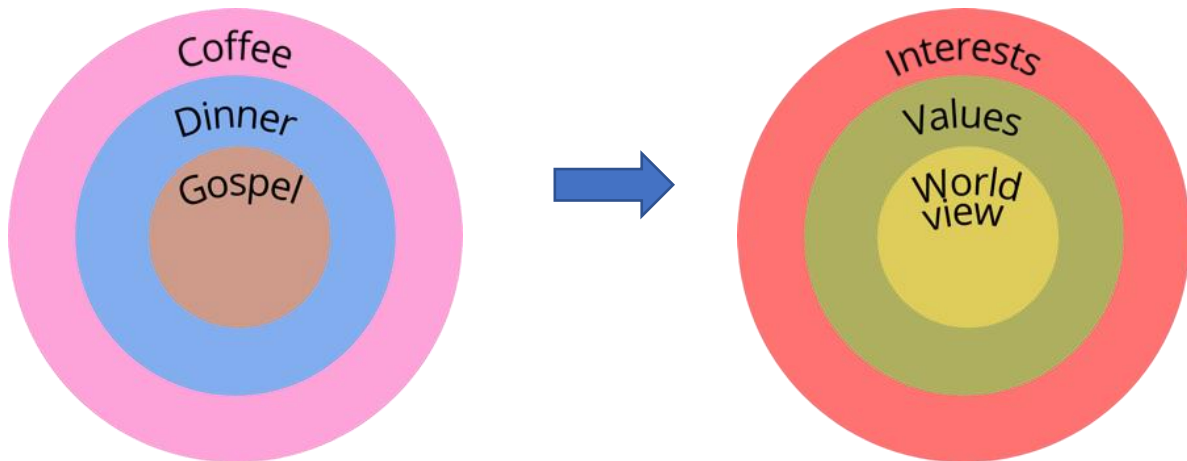
The ideas in this study emerge from the third tip in Sam's book.

Tip 3: Coffee, Dinner, Gospel (Find Creative Ways to Do Hospitality). How do we even begin to talk about Jesus when the conversation with our non-Christian friends remains pretty 'safe' and superficial. The key is to understand, and using, the three layers of conversation.

Discuss

1. Do you feel like asking a friend about their views of Jesus would be like going from 'zero to one hundred' (to use a car racing metaphor)? Why is this the case?
2. Have you ever had a gospel conversation go badly? Why do you think that happened?

The three layers of conversation



Essential Reading

How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy) by Sam Chan

In the third chapter of his book Sam unpacks the “three levels of conversation”, which he calls “Coffee, dinner and gospel” conversations.

Coffee conversation focuses on surface level or “interest” based things. People are more likely to describe their interests. Subjects at this level might include things like weather, sports, or what you are watching on TV.

Dinner conversation is where you move to the next level and begin to discuss values. At this point, people are not only describing something they like, but are willing to prescribe an actual value to things. This is the moment where people might share why they like one show, but they don't like another, what

Summary of
pages 36-38

the thought process behind a particular decision they made was, or how a particular thing made them feel.

Finally, there are **Worldview** conversations. These are the deeper conversations where people share elements of how they make sense of the world and what things mean to them on an existential level. Most of the relationships we have start at a surface level before we delve a little deeper. Often it is only those closest to us to whom we are willing to open up about our world views.

Space for notes

Read and Investigate

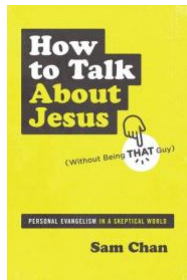
3. **Read Acts 17:15-34.** What are the different groups of people that Paul has discussions within this passage?
4. Looking at the three different groups that Paul conversed with, what ‘conversation level’ do they appear to be on. Why do you think that might be the case?
5. While it is not a “conversation” as such (it’s only Paul’s words that are recorded), Paul’s speech in the Areopagus displays a masterful way of moving from “interests” to “values” before landing at a “worldview” statement. Look at v.22-34 and discuss how he does this.
6. In v.29, Paul challenges the mindset of the day that was caught up in idol worship. The people of the day could almost be said to “collect gods”. What do you think are the idols that people are most likely to get caught up in today?
7. How might we paint a picture of a God who is bigger than these idols?

Discuss and Apply

8. Where are the areas in your week-to-week life where you have regular “coffee” type conversations? How could you take the next step with these people towards “dinner”/“values” conversations?
9. Brainstorm some questions you could use to encourage people to talk about values/beliefs?
10. Hospitality can be very helpful in ‘going deeper’ with people? How did Jesus use hospitality as an evangelistic tool (see e.g., Mark 2:15-17)?

Pray for opportunities to have deeper conversations with people, and that we would be prepared to speak of Jesus, when the opportunity arises.

Space for notes



Extra Reading

How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy) by Sam Chan

Pages 43-45

The Secret Sauce of Evangelism

As an Asian kid, when I was growing up, I never noticed roof racks on cars. That's because Asian parents aren't big on roof racks. They have no need to own roof racks because they don't go surfing or camping. [...] But once I took up surfing and found myself in need of a roof rack, I realized that roof racks are everywhere. Why hadn't I noticed them before? Because I wasn't looking for them. It's the same with hospitality. It's everywhere in the Bible

[...] But what's the big deal about hospitality? The three simple steps of evangelism--coffee, dinner, gospel--are actually hospitality in disguise. Hospitality provides the space and permission for gospel conversations to occur. In almost every other area of life, it's difficult to have a conversation deeper than small talk. Sometimes deep conversations are inconvenient--your friend has a bus to catch. Sometimes deep conversations are inappropriate - your friend should be working and not talking to you. [...] But the whole point of eating together is providing a space to talk together. Eating together isn't about the food; it's about connecting, relating, and talking.

[...] by far our most fruitful universe has been the *playgroup* universe at our local church. At 10:00 a.m., the parents drop their children off at the playgroup at one end of the church fellowship hall. Then they sit down at the opposite end of the room to have coffee and enjoy small talk for an hour. Because an hour of adult conversation is not enough, my wife then invites the parents to our house for lunch. Now that they're engaging in adult conversation in the privacy of our home, the conversations drift toward values. People linger.

Study 3 | Tell a better story

THE BIG IDEA

The ideas in this study emerge from the fourth and fifth tips in Sam's book.

Tip 4: Listen (The Golden Rule of Evangelism: Evangelize the Same Way You Want to Be Evangelized). *This tip reminds us of the crucial importance of listening to others before we speak. People want to (and should) feel heard. Listening is essential to understanding other people*

Tip 5: Tell a Better Story (Make them Wish That Christianity is True) *The life changing grace and power of the Christian message addresses all of our deepest needs. We ought to work hard to show that Jesus is the solution to the longings of our non-Christian friends. Stories of changed lives, i.e. personal testimonies are very powerful.*

Discuss

1. Who is the best storyteller you know and why?
2. Sam Chan quotes author John Thiessen, saying: "Evangelise the same way that you want to be evangelised. Probably the most important way we can do this is by listening to the other person talk first." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
3. Thinking about someone you know well who is not a Christian, do you think you could explain what their belief system is well enough that they would agree with you?
4. Why might listening and understanding someone else's perspective be a valuable first step for both you and the person to whom you are speaking?

Read and Investigate

5. **Read Acts 26.** This chapter is largely taken up with the story of how Paul became a Christian (and why he finds himself in the position he is in). If you were to break up Paul's testimony into sections, what would they be?
6. Research shows that most successful stories follow a similar pattern:

Introduction - the main character is introduced.

The Mission - a mission is defined so that a goal can be achieved

Bridge - The hero has an "aha! moment" when they redefine the goal and recommit to the mission

Climax - The hero achieves the mission

Conclusion - We glimpse the hero in their new normal life.

How does Paul's story fit into this kind of structure?

Space for notes

Discuss and Apply

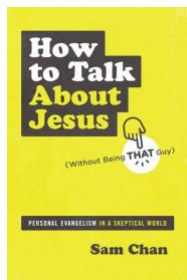
7. When we want to share the story of our own faith, whether we grew up in a Christian household or came to faith later in our lives, it is good to think of it as a story. Spend 5-10 minutes and see if you can frame the story of your faith in terms of the story framework above.

Optional extra: Listen to Sam explain his own testimony in his interview with Mark Hadley Episode 5 – Tell a Better Story in “Evangelism in a Skeptical World”, from around 6.50 (see page 6 for details of additional materials)

8. This may be the moment where someone says to you: “yes, but what is a Christian?” Can you clearly explain what a Christian/what the gospel is? What Christian jargon words should we be careful to avoid if we’re speaking to an unbeliever?
9. Imagine you tell your story, and someone responds warmly, but says they’re happy for individuals to approach spirituality in whatever way which suits them, but they have a problem with the church. How would you respond to this?

Pray that we’d develop confidence and clarity in sharing our own story of following Jesus!

Space for notes



Extra Reading

How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy) by Sam Chan

Page 87

But What If I Grew Up in a Christian Family?

People often ask me, "Were your parents Christian?" When I answer yes, they immediately stop listening. They are thinking, Oh, that's why you're a Christian. You grew up in a Christian family, and it invalidates whatever I'm about to say next.

So I like to reply that, yes, I did grow up in a Christian family, but that makes it harder to be a Christian. Because nobody wants to inherit their identity from their parents. Teens go out of their way to be the exact opposite of what their parents want. In the same way, when I grew up in a Christian family, there was no way I wanted to be a Christian because that's what mommy and daddy told me to be. I needed to believe the claims of Jesus and the Bible on their own merits, and not because of what my parents told me.

Study 4 | Be their unofficial chaplain

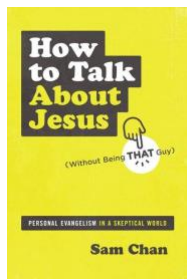
THE BIG IDEA

The ideas in this study emerge from the seventh tip in Sam's book.

Tip 7: Become their Unofficial, Defacto Chaplain (You are their connection with the sacred) *We might not have our lives all together, but if we're known in our networks as someone who is wise, caring and calm we will earn the trust of others to speak about serious and spiritual matters.*

Discuss

1. Who is the person you turn to when life is difficult?
2. What do you think it means to be a "Chaplain" to people?



Essential Reading

How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy) by Sam Chan
Pages 107-108

Wisdom as the Key to Believability

Wisdom provides an entry point into conversations about our faith. But it's more than that. Our wise way of life also makes what we say more believable.

When we in the West were part of a Christianised culture, we used to argue and teach in this sequence: (1) what I say is true; (2) if it's true, then you must believe it; and (3) if you believe it, you must live it.

It's TRUE → BELIEVE it → LIVE it

While that may be the correct logical sequence, the way our post-Christian friends discover it is often the reverse sequence: (1) what you see is a wiser way to live; (2) but if it's a wiser way to live, then it's also more believable; (3) but if it's believable, you need to consider that it might also be true.

I can LIVE it → I can BELIEVE it → it must be TRUE

Optional extra: Listen to Sam explain things in his interview with Mark Hadley Episode 6 – Become their go-to chaplain in "Evangelism in a Skeptical World", (see page)

Space for notes

Read and Investigate

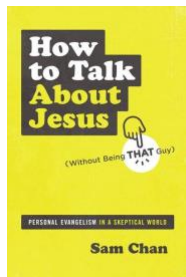
3. **Read Psalm 1.** Where does this Psalm see the source of wisdom being?
4. What do you think the Psalmist means when he says this type of person will be “Blessed”? What kind of blessing do you think that might be?
5. If we experience this kind of blessing, how might this encourage/challenge people around us?
6. **Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.** In this passage Paul contrasts the ‘wisdom of the cross’ and the ‘wisdom of the world’. Modern, worldly wisdom defines our value through what we achieve, or the success of attaining personal freedom. How does the message of the cross shape our identity?
7. How might this be a comfort/encouragement to people who struggle in the modern age?

Discuss and Apply

8. For many of us, we might feel like we’re struggling for answers ourselves let alone being available to be the ‘unofficial’ chaplain to others. Why do you think the gospel might both challenge that mindset and empower us?
9. Can you think of other ways that Christians can be an effective Chaplain/supporter to friends in need?

Pray for particular individuals in your circles who you could care and support? Pray for opportunities to serve them and engage deeply with them.

Space for notes



Extra Reading

How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy) by Sam Chan

Pages 113-4

Be Jesus

Every morning when I drive my boys to school, we take turns praying for the day ahead. When it's my turn, one of my usual daily prayer requests is, "Heavenly Father, help us to be Jesus to those around us today."

Our goal in being a chaplain to those around us is to be Jesus to them. Like Jesus, we are the calm, non-anxious presence. We are patient, gentle, gracious, generous, forgiving, and loving. We have wisdom.

Sooner or later, your friend will have a crisis. They will come to you, expecting you to speak on behalf of God. They will ask you to provide meaning and clarity. By coming to you, they are hoping to connect with the transcendent. And they will ask you to perform sacred rituals and prayers

Study 5 | Lean into disagreement

THE BIG IDEA

The ideas in this study emerge from the eighth tip in Sam's book.

Tip 8: Lean into Disagreement (For such a time as this) *The thrust of this tip is not that we want to pursue arguments, but rather in order to tell our friends about Jesus – we have to make ourselves vulnerable to disagreement. When we make room for disagreement we demonstrate the kind of unconditional love God shows us. Moreover, we can be confident that the logic of the Christian message, and its implications for life holds up under scrutiny!*

Discuss

1. Have you ever had a tense discussion or disagreement about Christianity? How did it make you feel?
2. What do you think the best thing is to do when you come across someone who disagrees with Christianity, or a particular part of Christianity?
3. In 1975, the Pepsi company first ran a new campaign called the “Pepsi Challenge”, where they would encourage people to do a “blind taste test” of both Pepsi and Coca Cola (over 40 years later, they ran the same campaign in Westfield Miranda!). They were confident to do so, believing that when people tried both drinks side-by-side, Pepsi would reign supreme. **Are we this confident about our faith in Jesus Christ?**

Read and Investigate

4. **Read Luke 20:20-40.** Is there anything in this passage that stands out to you?
5. In this passage, Jesus faces two questions, one from a group of “spies” hoping to catch him out, and the second by some Sadducees. What appears to be the purpose behind the questioners?
6. How does Jesus avoid the trap each group of questioners tries to set for him?
7. What can we learn from Jesus, through the manner in which he answers these questions?

Discuss and Apply

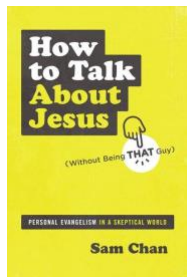
8. Often Christian's won't be asked about detailed theological ideas. Rather, the questions will be about the moral or ethical positions we take. Sam suggests that a helpful response to lead with, in these scenarios, might go something like: “I hold the same view that Jesus does?” Do you think this is a helpful approach? Why or why not?

Space for notes

9. What are some possible 'counter questions' to the following common questions?
 - a. Isn't religion just a crutch for people who can't hack it?
 - b. If God really exists, why is there so much pain in the world?
 - c. Isn't it arrogant to say that Christianity is the only way?
10. Sam says that more than answering tough questions which make it hard for people to believe the Christian faith, what's needed is to show our friends why they need, or want Christianity to be true? What are the best things about belonging to Jesus? How could you communicate that to an unbeliever?
11. Skim through the last 5 studies. Pick one thing that has stood out to you, in terms of developing in personal evangelism? What will you do to try to put this into practice?

Pray for God's help in light of your answer to question 12

Space for notes



Extra Reading

How to Talk About Jesus (Without Being That Guy) by Sam Chan

Pages 122

Gently challenge their worldview

I once heard a bi-vocational Christian pastor say that when he was in his secular work, he was constantly being bombarded with questions. He answered these questions as best he could in order to explain the Christian faith, but eventually he grew tired of always being on the defensive. So one day he switched it around. He started asking his work friends questions. Suddenly they were the ones having to defend and explain their positions.

Everyone is only two "why" questions away from not being able to give a rational answer. If we start asking questions, our nonbelieving friends will realize that much of their worldview is based not on rational arguments or evidence but on brute-force statements that they believe at face value without evidence.



JANNALI

Anglican Church