

HOW TO HELP A SEEKER

Seeker: Someone who's new to God. They don't have established faith in Jesus yet, but they're pursuing truth, open, honest, and willing to experiment.

Navigating This Guide

This guide is a handbook for helping seekers grow to a place of receiving. You can read it all in one setting or just skim through it upfront and read as you go. We can't predict how long it will take, so don't get overwhelmed by thinking that everything has to be done ASAP. It needn't be digested all at once. Just keep walking with your friend and use this as a field guide when you feel like you need to know what's next. Other than that, pace yourself, have fun, and enjoy introducing your friend to a life of freedom.



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So you've got a friend who's a seeker...

They're doing everything they know to find God, truth, the Way, or whatever you want to call it. They may not exactly introduce themselves formally as such, but they're willing to be open, honest and experimental. And they've come to you.

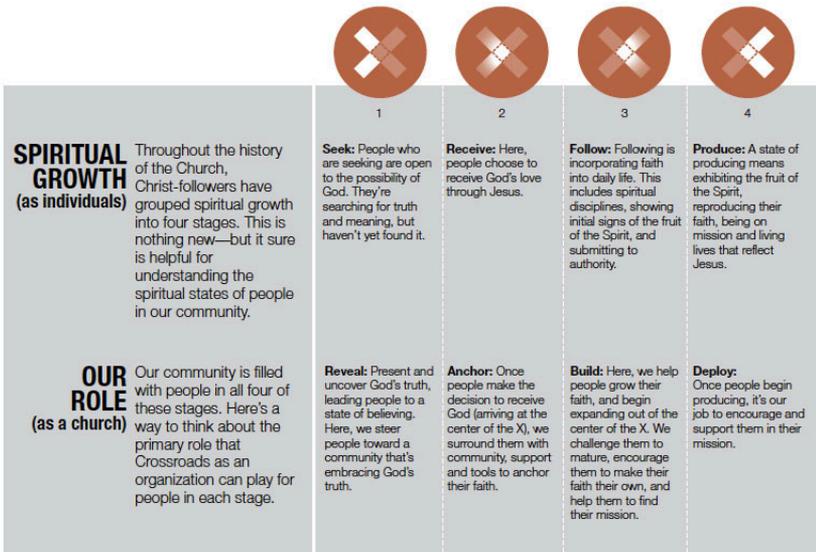
“Can you help me?”

Your answer is a resounding...

“Oh yeah! There's no better person to help you!”

But then you think, “Uh... now what...?” Are you going to do a study of comparative religions? Are you going to try to fake a philosophy overview for them? Can you give them a Hebraic study of the first 5 chapters of Genesis? How do you open the door for them?

This guide isn't for turning someone into a fully-fledged, meat-eating disciple of Jesus, who's making disciples of their own and spitting out scriptures like a machine gun, mowing down demons at every turn. Great as that sounds, that's a big picture goal, not a short-term one. Spiritual maturity is a process that takes a life-time. It's not as clean and clear cut as a four step process, but at some level, we all pass through these stages as we grow.



This guide is for answering the short-term question, “How can I help my seeking friend get to the next place spiritually?” For a Seeker, that next place is what we call being a Receiver. That’s a person who says yes to all that Jesus has for them. A receiver is actively accepting Jesus’ salvation, forgiveness, healing, and deliverance, and growing up as they do. A seeker, on the other hand, says, “Well, maybe. But can you help me answer some questions first?”

(We’re assuming you’re already at least receiving yourself. But don’t worry. We don’t expect you to have all the answers. We’re here to help you help them. Plus as you grow in leading them, you’re likely to grow along the framework too. Pretty sweet gig, if we do say so ourselves.)

Many of us have been trained to believe “God is a mountain, with many roads to the top. Any tradition of faith is okay, and any path will do.” This is not so, according to the Bible. Jesus said, in John 14:6, “I am *the way, the truth and the life*. No man comes to the Father, *except* through me.” (Our emphasis, obviously, but it’s pretty clear.) If one religion teaches that God is singular, and another teaches that God is a million different entities, how can they both be true? One teaches that God is good and truthful; another that God is deceitful and treacherous- again, these are mutually exclusive beliefs. Maybe you could include all other religions in one big lump, but you can’t put following Jesus in that mix. Not only does the Bible consistently and repeatedly present itself as being the story of the one true God, but the stakes of disbelief couldn’t be higher.

In Matthew 25, Jesus tells a story about sheep and goats. He says that the sheep, who hear his voice and obey Him, go with Him to eternal life. The goats, who are belligerent and disobedient, go to eternal death, separated from God. He tells this parable as a metaphor for believers and unbelievers. And how we approach Jesus (receiving and obeying vs. ignoring and rejecting) makes all the difference. The Bible teaches that every man will stand before God (Hebrews 9:27, for one example) and give an account of their lives- not about whether we’ve been “good” or “bad” (that’s an empty line of thinking we can come back to later), but simply whether we received Jesus’ sacrifice or not.

So why help a seeker toward Jesus?

Because their life is on the line! The compassionate move toward anyone in peril is interceding for them, and people who are unsure about Jesus are in peril. Another huge reason to help someone understand Jesus' words and character is because God loves it. He wants us to share our faith (Philemon 1:6) and talk about how great He is and what He's done (try Psalm 78:7, for starters). This isn't because God's a megalomaniac; it's because He loves truth and love and good. Wouldn't you know, all those things happen to find their greatest expression in Him. Know too that sharing your faith is simply wise (Proverbs 11:30) and comes with rewards (again, Philemon 1). Sweet.

We are all in different places spiritually, and even thinking of people as being on some imaginary continuum like seeker-receiver-follower-producer is inherently artificial. We get that. It's like trying to put a number on how much you love someone. We only use these terms because it can be helpful in considering how to approach people. As with any act of service, the best attitude is one of humility. "Look, I don't know everything, but what I know, you can have. You are welcome to my story, my resources, and my network of believing friends. May they help you toward God!" That's a great attitude to have as you start toward a discipling kind of relationship.

The most important thing a believer can ever offer a seeker is **access** into their life of following Jesus. Know that, however far along you are, you know the world of loving the Bible and loving Jesus better than they do. So don't sell yourself short or think that you could be no help just because "all I know is my experience." Exactly! Your experience is just what they need to know about. So be open about yours as you help grow theirs. You don't have to know everything, you just have to love them and be willing to serve. As you start down this road of discovery with your seeking friend, keep in mind the following:

1. **Your story matters.**

Revelation 12:11 refers to our story of Jesus' involvement in our lives as being powerful enough to defeat the devil. Your lost friend needs to know your story. Specifically, tell them what your life was like before you met Jesus, just exactly how you met Jesus, the decisions you made about Him, and how your life has changed since. This might sound boring to you, but it can be a lifeline for a seeker. Take time to give them your story in detail.

2. **Your life is spiritual.**

If someone gets to know you, they'll eventually hear about your work, your friends, and your hobbies. Similarly, they should hear about what's happening with you spiritually. We often hide this side of ourselves out of embarrassment or because we think people won't care. Well, your seeker friend needs to know what it's like to walk in your shoes, spiritually speaking. Do tell them about how you've been struggling in your

thoughts. Do tell them how great it feels when you've had some time in prayer. Do tell them when you read something in the Bible but have doubts or questions about it, and do tell them how God spoke to you when you humbled yourself last week. Or whatever your story is. Just regularly share your spiritual life with your seeking friend. You're probably the only window they have into a life of following Jesus.

3. Your relationship with them will be spiritual, too.

Your friend is open to your invitations to hang out, or have long talks, or be vulnerable with each other. Hopefully, you've already invested a considerable amount of love and trust in them. But are they open to being challenged by you, too? Are you allowed to ask probing questions about their fears or what you perceive to be lies that they believe? It might be a good idea to have a conversation about what you're allowed to do in this relationship. "If I'm going to help you along spiritually, just know that I want the best for you. That might include challenging you sometimes, or having conversations that might be uncomfortable. Are you okay with that?" I mean, how much can you help them spiritually if you're not allowed to know where they're really coming from? So get this situation settled up front even if you have to bring it up. Maybe they haven't directly asked you for any of this, but you're noticing signs of interest. Just ask. "Hey, it feels like you are asking questions right now. I know I don't have all the answers, but I've asked those same questions and come to conclusions that have made a huge difference for me. I'd love to talk as openly about those as you're interested." See what they say. A humble offer from a trusted friend can't go too wrong, right?

A lot of discipling relationships start as informally as that: just getting coffee or hanging out over beer. Over time, you get to a place where you can say, “Want to make this official?” But for now that’s not important. Just see what permission you have to share so you’re sure to respect where they are. Pray about it often though. Respect doesn’t mean you tip toe or dance around topics you believe can save their life. Relationships that can handle lots of invitations but not lots of challenge are cozy, but they don’t lead to growth. The healthiest relationships always have a good dose of both invitation and challenge. So lean into clarifying conversations and be open to both.

4. They (probably) won’t get there in a day.

Think of how you put your faith in Jesus. Was it just by hearing something one time? Probably not. Most likely, someone invested in you over a long period of time and gave you the space to investigate and experiment a little bit. Give your friend the same benefit. Keep challenging, but give them the time and space to struggle through the ideas you’re presenting. Also, they will have beliefs, language, and habits that you know are wrong. Don’t sweat those right now. We can’t expect people who don’t know Jesus to live like they do. Jesus said to concentrate on the inside, then the outside will take care of itself. Help them brush shoulders with Jesus as often as possible, and let him work on their character and behavior over time graciously (like he does with us).

Frequency

How and when to meet is up to you, but if you're really going to go after this thing together, in addition to the normal hang-out time you get together, a predictable pattern of purposeful connection is really important. Set a time and place. Should it be weekly? Every two weeks? That's really up to you. (Although, if you meet any less often than that, you're probably going to lose momentum. Try to meet no less frequently than bi-weekly. If you run into difficulty here, you might be running into the difference between someone who's actively seeking and just kindly curious. The active seeker will be very interested in a chance to pick your brain, hear your story, ask questions, and they'll make time for it. The kindly curious type might seem interested because they're polite about it, seem open and ask questions here and there, but they're not in any rush to get those questions answered. The kindly curious type is OK, but you won't be able to use this guide as strategically. Just keep it in your back pocket for the days they do ask questions, and **intercede** for them often.)

Intercede: To go before God on behalf of someone else, to continually plead or petition through prayer, to attempt to mediate differences or reconcile sin through spiritual warfare.

Getting Started

When you meet up, start your time with a prayer. Something like, “God, you know that we’re here to meet with you and to find you. Please reveal yourself to me and to (Susan? Sure, it’s Susan) as we read and talk about You. We really do want the truth- help us to find it!”

Listening & Processing

After that short prayer, start digging into whatever you’re investigating (see “Content”, below). Note this section is called “Listening and Processing.” It’s not called Q&A time with the guru or advice from you. Sure, there will be some Q&A times, and you might even want to give advice sometimes, but there’s something a lot more powerful than those, because both of those scenarios are quick fixes that don’t last. They’re incomplete because they teach your friend to listen to you instead of training them to hear directly from God. Instead, we want to look for places where something’s being “revealed” to your seeking friend. We call these “aha moments.” It’s a light bulb coming on about God’s truth.

“I see that God is love.”

“I think I’m realizing that I’ve assumed God would leave me like my father did.”

“I’m getting it: Jesus says that He’s the only way...”

When a moment like that happens, write it down. (Journaling this journey is a good idea for both you and Susan).

As someone starts down the road to truth, these revelations will happen regularly. They're a big deal! And the best way to capitalize on them is to follow up with a simple question: What are you going to do about this? So, if the revelation is "God is love", and you ask, "What are you going to do about that?" a natural homework assignment would be something like, "Well, if God is love, that's a good thing that seems worth replicating. Maybe I could be more loving to my roommate. I know, I'll bake her cookies tonight..." Or "God is love, huh? Interesting. That's different than what I've understood before. Does that Bible say that anywhere else? Maybe we could look for more evidence of that this week." That step of **action after revelation** is forming a habit of submission and response that's incredibly healthy, and will serve your seeking friend for the entirety of their faith.

So, you've started with prayer, you've dug into your content, and you've tried to unearth revelations. (If you strike out on Hot New Revelations for the week, then just take some time to pray for fresh insight, and for persistence for your friend. Seeking friends might not realize how much of their life—all of it, really—is spiritual. Just ask what's going on like you would with any friend, and see where God takes the conversation. Topics like how they're feeling about work stresses, resting, dealing with conflict, celebrating and raising kids may not feel spiritual to them, but they can all be easy on-ramps to investigate faith.)

Don't forget - your regular meeting time will be a great place for you to share some of your inner journey with your friend. What have you been reading in the Bible lately? What is God showing you? How have you responded and obeyed? Again, you're their very best picture of what faith in action looks like. Show them how good (or frustrating) it is to walk with Jesus. Be honest and vulnerable. Go ahead, confess sin to them, too. (It won't burst their bubble about you being perfect. If anything, it'll convince them that you don't have to be perfect to love Jesus, and that God has grace for our mistakes. That's a good thing!)

If it seems that, through your joint study, or through your talking about what God's been doing in you, there's a theme for (Susan...or Bob!) to own, see if there's a good memory verse for him/her to meditate on in the coming week. (Planting God's word in your heart is a great way to grow faith, according to Romans 10:17: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.") Lastly, agree together on what you're both going to do about what God's saying. And you're off! (Be sure to start the next meeting with a report on what happened when you did what you said you would.)

BIG MAJOR TIP: You don't really know what your friend needs. God does. Be in constant conversation with God before and during your meetings. "What do I say next, Lord? Help!" is a great prayer that God likes answering. You are the one directing your friend's path, but God is directing you!

As for the “digging in” part above, what you’ll study should be a function of what’s happening in your friend’s heart. A basic, and perhaps process-guiding conversation would be asking them basic questions, then just start taking notes. “What’s your life story, from a spiritual/religious perspective?” or “What do you think is keeping you from faith?” Maybe offer to pray for them to receive God into any wounds that stand in between them and faith in Christ. The way they describe their spiritual story could supply you with your whole direction. You already know that God’s on the scene: the mere fact that Susan/Bob is seeking God is evidence that God is already at work. (John 6:44 says that nobody comes to God unless the Spirit is already drawing them). Our strongest recommendation would be that you study the Bible together and seek to hear God’s voice through it.

TIP: Make sure they have an easily understandable version of the Bible, like The Message, NIV or the New Living Translation.

However, many people want to hear about God from outside the Bible. This is totally understandable for someone who doesn't believe yet and not out of bounds. Investigate what your friend wants to know more about, or what's keeping them from following Jesus. Try to connect with them there. Their issues might fall into the following groups:

Philosophy:

If you're hearing "I can't prove God exists" or "Is the Bible true?" kind of questions, do a joint study of books about apologetics (a rational defense of the faith).

Here's a great list worth checking out:

- C.S. Lewis' [Mere Christianity](#)
- Josh McDowell's [More Than A Carpenter](#)
- Lee Strobel's [The Case For Christ](#)
- Ravi Zacharias' [Can Man Live Without God?](#)
- David Pawson's [Unlocking the Bible](#)
(an easy-to-read overview)
- In the Bible, Paul also addressed this in Acts 17 and Colossians 2.

Distrust in God:

“I’ve seen so much suffering. How could I trust a God who’d let these things happen?” The Church has done a lot of damage with pithy, churchy statements about “God’s will” or his goodness even in suffering. It’s led to this question being a huge and very legitimate one.

Try some of these:

- Kay Arthur’s book LORD I Want To Know You as an overview of God’s character
- C.S. Lewis’ The Problem of Pain explores the strange relationship between faith and pain
- Greg Boyd’s book Is God to Blame? asks the same question your friend is probably asking and explores how a God who is supposedly relentlessly opposed to evil himself can be trusted in a world filled with so much pain
- In the Bible, Romans 1-2, Hosea, Job, or Hebrews 12 also talk about suffering.

Ignorance about Jesus:

“What does Jesus want? What’s his angle?” Study Jesus’ claims about himself in the book of John. Or, if the question is more “Is Jesus the ONLY way?,” go to Ravi Zacharias’ Why Jesus?

Burned by religion:

Lots of people have problems with Jesus because of religious abuse or any manner of un-Christlikeness in his alleged followers. If that’s the case for your friend, Greg Boyd’s Repenting of Religion or The Myth of a Christian Religion were written just to address these kinds of problems.

Need for power:

Some people have the opposite need of the “philosophy people.” They don’t want to hear more theories, they want to know if there’s actual spiritual power in Jesus. Maybe they’ve even read the book of Acts and discredit faith because they don’t see the followers of Jesus representing the power of Jesus the way you’d think they could. If that’s the case, consider:

- Darren Wilson’s documentaries [The Finger of God](#), [Father of Lights](#), and [Furious Love](#) are helpful here
- James Rutz’ book [MegaShift](#)

Experiencing guilt and struggle to receive:

For those who aren’t sure how God feels about messed up people, [The Ragamuffin Gospel](#) by Brennan Manning is a great book about coming into relationship with Jesus as a loved son.

It would be great, if you can, to contextualize any of the above books for them. Each of these books do a great job addressing a specific characteristic of God or the way his presence plays out in our lives or our world. But it’s just one glimpse of the story. Walk with them through these books if they’re helpful, but tell them how the points made in these books serve the bigger picture of God’s story as revealed in the Bible. (If that sounds too daunting, then erase it from your mind and just drive through to the next window.)

If your friend doesn't have questions, per se, but is interested in "understanding the big picture," that is awesome. Consider coming together to The God Experiment or Story Formed Life. They're conversational discovery groups that meet with a goal of learning God's story. They're perfect for establishing foundations of faith, and you don't have to carry the whole load yourself. If you're interested in learning more, email cg@crossroads.net.

P.S. SAYING, "I have no CLUE how to answer your questions or solve your problems. Maybe we can pursue the answers together?" is totally in bounds.

There are myriad tools and resources for helping people know more of God and get past questions and doubts. A little research will go a long way for finding the right content to fit your relationship. Regardless of how you attack the problem, though, the reality is that your friend is lost without Christ. So whatever you walk through with him/her, make sure you cover the following topics at some point, either through your book study or apart from it.

These are questions that *need* to be answered to move beyond seeking and into receiving.

A few pointers though:

Don't just ask these questions and answer them.

Definitely don't wait for them to ask and then read this tiny little belief column off the chart. (Because let's be honest, that would be a super anti-climactic way of relaying the truths of the story of God that change our lives forever.)

Continue that whole "listening, processing, exploring together" thing we've been talking about. When we just tell someone something, they have a chance to either agree with us or disagree, and sometimes the conversation is over. When we work through it together, we both grow and both have the chance to find the answers in a way that builds ownership and deeper understanding.

Find ways to embrace the process of answering these questions conversationally and relationally. Don't just throw out Bible facts. Explore the passages together. Keep sharing your story about how these truths changed you.

- How were some of these hard for you to absorb at first?
- What did it look like for you to count the cost?
- What past hurts did it surface for you that you needed healing on?
- What scared you?
- What comforted you?
- What ultimately made you believe?

Embrace follow up questions and doubts that come your way. Don't be discouraged if some of these truths are hard for your friend to absorb.

Jesus looked at seekers, loved them, said *really* hard things and gave them space to wrestle. Our job isn't to try to make this story *easier*. It's to follow Jesus' example: communicate love and help make the truth clear.

	QUESTION	BELIEF	VERSE
1	What did God originally intend for mankind? Did he want us to suffer like this?	God's intentions for mankind are good and generous. He created us to be in relationship with him because he loves us. He intended to be in harmony with man, but true relationship requires trust, and he asked us to trust from the very beginning.	Genesis 1:26-31, Genesis 2:4-17
2	How did it get so messed up? What happened to man after sin entered?	Mankind "fell" in the Garden when we didn't trust God. The relationship was severed when we chose our own way and the consequences are dire.	All of Genesis 3 and Romans 3:9-20
3	What is God's attitude toward sin? What difference does my sin make in the big picture?	God is holy and that means set apart from evil. Our sin separates us from him. As a Judge, he must condemn the evil of sin, specifically by shedding blood. It's an uncomfortable but necessary truth for your friend. At some point, Susan and Bob need to understand that without Jesus we are separated from God, and God will someday <i>have</i> to condemn those separated from Him.	Exodus 12:6-7 and 23-27, Romans 2, Hebrews 9:22, Romans 6:23

Sin simply means missing the mark. If we think of the center bullseye of a target as perfection or Jesus' holiness, anything outside that center is sin. That means, we don't have to murder someone to have sinned. We sin all the time. We're regularly imperfect, apart from Jesus and separated from God (which is why we all need him.)

	QUESTION	BELIEF	VERSE
4	But I'm a pretty good person. Why isn't one person's efforts to "straighten up and fly right" good enough?	Man's efforts to "live right" in order to appease God are vain. Our options are to be perfect like Jesus was or accept his death in our place. There's just no such thing as "pretty good."	Isaiah 64:6, Mark 10:17-29, Luke 15:11-31, Romans 3:10-12, Romans 3:23
5	How is Jesus uniquely qualified to satisfy God?	The gap between God's holiness and our sin needed a bridge. Someone who was perfect and holy and who could walk among us. God sent Jesus to be our substitute, to literally absorb God's wrath and judgment in our place offering us grace and freedom in return.	Jeremiah 31:31-34, Genesis 22:1-2 and 5-8, Isaiah 53: 1-6, 9-10, Romans 5:8, 1 John 4:9-12
6	How does dying on a cross impact me? Why does believing that really happened matter?	The death was only part of it. Jesus died <i>and rose again</i> . The death was a transaction that reconciled our sin and God's goodness giving us access to him again through Jesus. That impacts us big-time because it was an introduction to the grace we can now experience every day. The resurrection was proof Jesus was who he said he was and had the power to make things right. If he had the power to raise from the dead, he really is God. If he really is God, he's not only worth following, but it's crazy not to follow him.	Luke 23:33-34, Romans 10:9-11, 1 Corinthians 15:1-20

	QUESTION	BELIEF	VERSE
7	What are the implications, if Jesus is the only way to God?	It means Jesus is it. We can't follow two (or more) masters (ourselves included) or pretend all roads are the same. It means not making a choice is the same as denying him, so Jesus tries to make it really clear for us. He's a good King, and he's <i>the</i> King. He demands a response not just because he loves us and wants us to choose him (although that's pretty amazing), it's also because it's <i>good</i> for us. He wants to save us from sitting on the fence, because he knows life apart from him leads to death. He's the only way to experiencing true life and freedom, so he makes the choice hard and clear enough we can receive it in full.	John 10:9-11, John 14:6, and Acts 4:12, Acts 17:30-32, Luke 14:25-35
8	How does God feel about those who put their faith in Jesus? What happens then?	Salvation through Jesus restores our relationship of peace with God. Jesus saves, heals and delivers. From the lies that hold us down to the pains of our past to the limited access to who we were meant to be, receiving him begins to reverse it all, back to the good intentions he had for us in the first place.	Romans 5:1, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, John 8:28-36, Romans 8:14-17

Salvation: A lifelong process of being saved from the eternal consequences of sin, healed from disease, and delivered from the power of the enemy by Jesus Christ. It is a process that begins by being born again and continues as long as one lives in Christ.

9	But I still mess up a lot. Does it all start over again? What do I do with this guilt?	Subsequent sins no longer condemn us, but God's kindness draws us to agree with Him about that sin and to cast it off. As we struggle to live like Jesus, God has patience with us as beloved children. He knows that we fail, and always offers His hand to restore us and clean us off. Living in Him is living in His forgiving grace, and dealing with our own weakness is part of the journey.	Romans 8:1, Romans 2:4, 1 Peter 4:1-5, John 14:12, 16-18, 23, 26
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The above concepts are the foundations of faith in Christ. Again, they can be arrived at in any number of ways, but whatever the method, do get these 9 questions answered. You could even do a study of just these concepts together, if you wanted, pursuing the referenced scriptures and talking through them. What beliefs are challenged here? What “aha moments” do they produce? And what is the response of action that arises out of these revelations?

So you've talked and talked, read and read, discussed and prayed and responded to revelation and maybe memorized a verse or ten along the way. (Or maybe they zoomed through this, and it's clear they're all in.) What's next when someone says yes to everything so far? We said up front that our goal was to help our seeker friends become receivers. That "graduation" is called conversion, or Jesus called it being born again. Jesus described this event in John 3:3-21, and said that putting one's faith, actively, in Him, is "passing from death to life" (John 5:24, 1 John 3:14). This is both an internal change of belief (i.e., "I didn't believe Jesus' claims before, but now I do") as well as an outward expression of that belief (i.e., obedience). You've been helping them establish this habit of belief-then-action in your weekly meetings where you practice reveal-action-accountability. Great job, you! They'll follow this pattern the rest of their life, because you set the precedent for them which is super awesome.

Anyway, back to that "born again" moment: The basic gospel message is that Jesus, God in the flesh, lived perfectly and died innocently to make a way for sinners to be reconciled to God, then He rose from the dead as the Victor over every other spiritual power. And if we, as an act of faith, receive his sacrifice through belief and action, His Spirit moves into our souls and is a living guarantee that we belong to Him. That means that we can hear His voice in our hearts during this lifetime, and that we'll be with Him when this life is over. And when He moves in, He starts the process of saving our souls (changing our habits), healing our diseases, and delivering us from the enemy. Basically, life everywhere. It's a sweet deal!

Being born again is an event that comes from belief and confession. Belief is not a mystical, magical process of being inexplicably overwhelmed so that voila! you just find yourself believing. Changing one's belief is a conscious choice and can happen whenever you want. "I decide to believe X" happens all the time, and it's the same regarding spiritual matters. When talking to someone who feels that they want to put their faith in Jesus and be born again, it's helpful to ask them a series of questions to be sure they know what they're saying:

Who was Jesus? (Look for something about him being God, and a perfect sacrifice)

Why did he die? (Well, the Pharisees murdered him. But in a big picture sense, he died because our sin requires death for God's justice to be served.)

What happened after He died? (Something about him rising from the dead is pretty important here. Perhaps that He now sits at the Father's right hand in His heaven.)

What's your attitude toward Jesus? (Something like "I love him, need him and am devoted to Him! I believe he's God and worth following" would be swell.)

At this point, you can pray for your friend. That's often very meaningful to people when they come into faith. It's also really helpful to hear another person say, "You're born again! Welcome to the family! You are now are a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)."

Now they start the journey of being grown up and refined by the Holy Spirit. At this point they are also part of the Church, which is the body of Christ on earth (Romans 12:12, 1 Corinthians 12:27). It's okay to make a *really* big deal out of this change in their heart and life - their eternal destiny just changed! That's huge!

If your Seeker friend has become a Receiver, then you have something worth shouting about. But, exciting as that transformation is, it's not the finish line-- it's the starting line toward all God has planned for them.

In the long run, as a Receiver, your friend now needs to be taught the basics of life in God, the big-picture story of the gospel, more about the character of God, and basic skills like repentance, forgiveness, obedience and spiritual disciplines. Wow! I wonder who might can help them through this process... (Hint: He/she is holding this guide...)

In the short term, throw a party or host a BBQ where he/she can share his/her **testimony** in their relational network. This is powerful and most likely will encourage other seekers to step forward, thus starting the process again. (At this point, the new believer is totally qualified to help their friends just like you helped them!) You should be at the party, too, for support! Yeah! Also, bring brownies.

Testimony: Simply, this just means sharing your story. Originally the word meant "to do again." That means when we share our story of how God has changed us, we get to relive that experience (which brings new life and refreshment to us) and bring new people into it. Sharing our stories is a *powerful* way to share what God has done.

For you:

Know that a significant amount of Fumbling Through will be normal. The mere fact that you're trying and want to obey God in this relationship makes God happy. This document doesn't exist so that you'll be "perfect" at it. (Um... that ain't happening.) We just want to provide some guidelines to send you on your way. Don't worry if you don't know the answers, or feel foolish, or keep thinking, "Where is this going, again? What is happening, here?" It looks a lot more clean and pretty on paper compared to what you'll really experience. This is just the way that relationships work, and you're going for it! Good on ya. You're never going to know all the answers, and even the "Content" section above is really just a starter to get engaged in Bible-based learning.

As more of our community becomes fluent and skilled at discipleship, there may be a cultural pressure to take people on as projects, as if leading someone to Jesus is a badge of approval that we've made it as a follower of Jesus. That is yucky. For each of us, our relationship with Jesus begins and ends with personal intimacy and devotion to Him. External things (like leading seekers to Jesus) aren't prerequisites to some kind of a spiritual promotion. They're side effects of having a living devotion to our Savior. So don't ever let pressure or guilt motivate you in "winning someone for Jesus." We do these things out of a motivation of love for Christ (1 Corinthians 5:8), and if that motivation isn't there, we ought not do them. Simple as that.

For your friend:

Your friend is almost certainly not going to get all their questions answered (ours aren't all answered yet)! The point is just to address the big ones:

Yes, Jesus is God.

Yes, He's the only way.

He loves us, and we need him.

Questions like what to do with suffering, how the enemy functions, the intricacies of the end times and more are questions that are worked out with God after coming into relationship with Him. If your friend feels unready without all sorts of other questions being answered first, remember that at some point, we relinquish our quest for knowledge and just obey our King. (If knowing God were about our intellect, becoming a believer would be like getting into Harvard.) It's not a test or an academic mountain to climb. Knowing God is more often compared to being a kid. Simply believing that God loves you like a perfect father, then trusting Him enough to follow is really all it takes. That's good news for all of us!

It won't be crazy or unusual if they hit some roadblocks early on in their faith. Like a kid, we grow through lots of seasons of immaturity and rebellion before we're mature. As kids, our parents seem great when they want to provide for us, but become questionable somehow when they ask something of us.

“You want to feed me? That’s awesome! Oh...there’s vegetables on this plate. Uh, I’m suddenly less interested...”

“You want to buy me clothes? Yes! You’re so generous! Oh, but now you’re saying I have to put on a coat when I go out? Uuuggghhhh...”

This is the kind of inconsistency that will get ironed out during this season of receiving. The more we receive from God, the easier it is to obey, because we’ve increasingly internalized his love, grown to understand our identity and want to obey because we love him, too. We need this season of soaking as we learn to trust and obey, or otherwise things can get religious (doing things by rote instead of out of a genuine love of our Father). Your newly believing friend will need consistent grace while the kinks are getting worked out!

Lucky for them, you might still be around to keep walking with them through it all. (Right? If so, check out the How to Help a Receiver document for further instructions.)

SUMMARY

God *loves* your wanting to help your seeking friend know Jesus!

You do *not* have to be an expert or know all the answers.

Stay open and *authentic* about your spiritual journey as you help your friend.

Invitation *and* challenge are both necessary in your relationship.

Create and maintain predictable patterns of meeting.

Pursue content that will meet them where they are.

Discuss the broad scope of the Gospel (points 1-9) with them.

Help them through a “born again” experience.

Contextualize their new start and the need for further growth.

Most of all congrats, and thanks. The Kingdom just got a little closer because of your loving service to your friend. Keep it up!

Glossary

As we pursue a consistent culture of discipleship, we've found that it's helpful to understand what we all mean with our words. Lots of spiritual lingo gets thrown around, and often people don't know what it means exactly. So here are some basic terms, along with our working definitions

BORN AGAIN (aka, CONVERSION)

The name of the moment when someone comes into relationship with Jesus as Savior and Lord for the first time. It happens only once, and at this moment, 1) a person receives new life, 2) the Spirit of God comes and dwells in him/her, 3) their spirit is transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God, 4) they become part of the Body of Christ, also called the Family of God, or the Church. It is the initial moment of crying out to Jesus for help and acknowledging who he is.

COVENANT

An eternal bond God makes with people, guaranteed by his name. In the Old Testament, covenants were common. It was a permanent union between a stronger and weaker party that united them guaranteeing shared identity, resources and relationship.

DELIVERANCE

The process of Jesus taking full command of a soul, whereby He unties the lies of the enemy, releases a soul from spiritual bondage, and conquers the enemy (the devil).

FAITH

The activity of living dependently on Jesus. It has been said that faith isn't "believing" that the chair will hold you up; faith is standing on the chair. Similarly, faith is the name of the decisions one makes that only make sense if Jesus is who He says He is.

FATHER

A name one calls God only if one has entered into the *covenant* God made with man by being *born again*. Calling God "Father" (or Daddy) insinuates a new identity for the child of God, and a heart to submit and *obey*. This Father/son relationship is the channel by which grace and love flow to God's children.

FOLLOWER (also DISCIPLE)

A person who has committed to pursue Christ with every part of their life. This person has "died to themselves", meaning that their chief objective is now to serve and please the Lord Jesus Christ. This person is distinguished from a *receiver* by virtue of this "death to self" (and water baptism, which marks death and resurrection into new life as a disciple).

INTERCEDE

To go before God on behalf of someone else, to continually plead or petition through prayer, to attempt to mediate differences or reconcile sin or brokenness through spiritual warfare.

KING (also, LORD)

A name one calls God only when one has *repented* of his/her broken thinking (and actions) and now submits in *obedience*. It is the way the *follower* relates to God, as one who has transferred his/her allegiance solely to the Kingdom of God, and is ready to take orders.

OBEDIENCE

The activity of doing God's will. A necessary component of life in Christ, it hinges upon submission and the subordination of one's will.

RECEIVING

An internal posture demonstrating need and desire for God. This is a basic and necessary skill for anyone who want to become mature in Christ, as all *salvation*, healing, and *deliverance* comes by it.

RECEIVER

A person who has called out to Jesus for *salvation* and been *born again*. This person is distinguished from a *seeker* in that they have cried out for Jesus, and from a *follower* in that they are still immature and new to faith and so despite good intentions haven't really committed themselves fully. You might find them still testing God a bit or negotiating with him and they work out the implications of his lordship. They are simply in a place of being *saved*, healed, and *delivered* by the power and sacrifice of Christ.

REPENT

To turn away from one's sin. This activity includes identifying specific thoughts, words, or actions, and agreeing with God that they fall outside His Kingdom. The throwing out of these sins is coupled with an eviction of the enemy and a request of the Spirit of God to enter into that previous brokenness. It is necessary before becoming a *follower* of Jesus.

SALVATION

A lifelong process of being saved from the eternal consequences of sin, healed from disease, and *delivered* from the power of the enemy by Jesus Christ. It is a process that begins by being *born again* and continues as long as one lives in Christ.

SIN

Originally the word means “to miss the mark.” It's not limited to only universally agreed upon wrongs like murder. It refers to anything outside of God's perfection. That means sin even includes the times where we disagree with God by choosing insecurity and decide to believe things like we're not good enough. Even that is sin because God says otherwise. He died for us to see ourselves as he does and live as Jesus did. Anything outside of those is known as sin, because we've missed the mark of God's intentions for us, and he has more freedom in store.

SAVIOR

A title of Jesus Christ, often associated with being *born again*. This name for Jesus is so valuable because it reminds us that we actually *needed* him to save us. Using that name states that we receive his power to do what we could never do for ourselves.

SEEKER

Someone who's new to God, doesn't have established faith in Jesus yet, but pursues truth and is open, honest, and willing to experiment.