

Friendship Evangelism

1. **Friendship Evangelism is simply bringing others to Jesus by being friends with them.** In one way that is easy and natural (a lot easier than knocking on doors cold turkey), but on the other hand it is hard because it takes being a **genuine** friend (regardless of the outcome), love, and commitment. Exciting!
2. **Most people come to Jesus through friends or family.**
3. **The only danger** in friendship evangelism is if someone does not have a strong enough faith and is led away from Jesus by the friend! It is important for us to have our most meaningful relationships among fellow Christians (Psalm 1) and not depend on non-Christians for our support. This is especially important with children and teenagers.
4. **The key to friendship evangelism is to Build Bridges.** Find things we have in common with the other person. **Hobbies and interests** we share in common, or something they can teach us or we can teach them, are especially helpful. Playing sports together is a common one. Inviting someone to play a sport with some of your Christian friends, is another example. Food (getting together to eat) is a common bridge! We can always find ways to do acts of kindness to someone else, whether it be to bake our neighbor a pie, work out at the Y, or to listen to them when they need to talk about their pain.
5. Although we must be kind to everyone, and love everyone, friendship evangelism works best with those we find we **like**. It is more fun for us to do this, and bridges will likely be there. Invite someone to come along with you when you do something you already like to do, such as going to a football game, going fishing, or a church/community work project. Enjoy the variety and bigness of God's world with them.
6. Whenever you can, **share your ministry with a Christian friend.** Then you can not only brainstorm together, and your non-Christian friend will be getting to know other Christians besides you. That is especially important in light of your friend coming to church. You want to have Christian friends he/she already knows ready to meet them, talk with them, and be prepared once they come in the door. If they are ignored, they will likely not be back.
7. Be a good listener, and **be interested in their world.** Ask questions, let them see you are really interested in their world. Don't have a holier than thou attitude. At the same time you can have fun sharing and talking about your mutual interests! Invite your neighbor over for dinner around your table.
8. **Sooner or later invite them to go to a church service, or special church event,** a small group Bible Study, **your pastor,** or another *entry point*. Church is very important. Jesus calls us not only to himself, but to his community. It may be a humbling experience, as well as scary, to meet all those people who are not perfect Christians. Whenever I have to define church to the non-Christian, or explain why I go, I simply say, "Church is for those who really take following Jesus seriously." The Bible tells us that if we do not meet together regularly, we will get weak in our faith." (Hebrews 10:23-25) Jesus calls us not to follow him alone, but in community. We must not only love *him*, but love *one another*. If there is a small group they can come to, this may be better than a worship service. Note that if you talk down your church in front of people, you will have a tough time ever getting someone who hears that talk to come to your church! Be sure to share positive things about your church.

THINK:

- **List 2 or 3 people that are either not Christians, or they are unchurched.** Which one would work best to be a friend to? Which one could you like being around? Choose one person. How could you go about getting to know more non-Christians, if you don't now?
- What **bridges** to this person do you have, or could you build? How can they help you?
- **Put them on your prayer list, daily.** Decide on the next step, what will you do? An act of kindness, visit at their house or your house, go out for coffee, help them out in some way.