

Reach Your Friends

Our part in God's story in the lives of people

What is Evangelism?

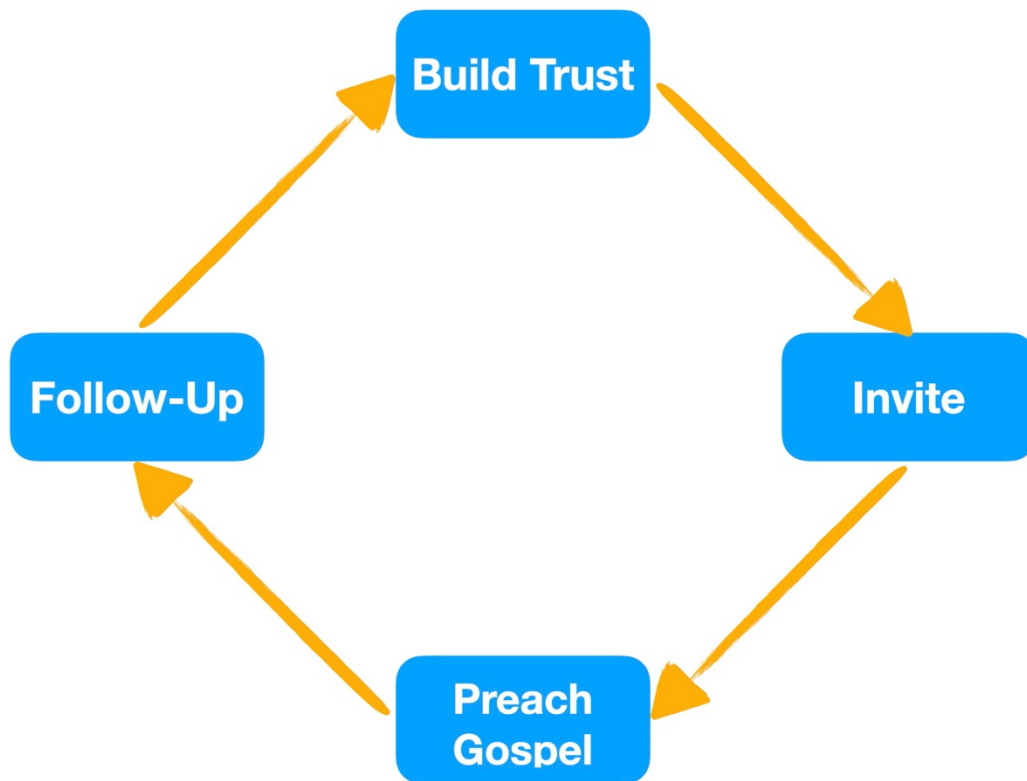
Evangelism is the practice of helping people hear the gospel message of God's love and respond to follow Jesus because of that message. We may have a lot of feelings about evangelism. We might feel scared of offending or annoying people. We may think that evangelism should be left to the professionals or those who are gifted. But God intends that everyone who follows Jesus to become his witness or messenger of the gospel. Billy Graham may have had the opportunity to preach to millions but much of the work of evangelism was in the hands of men and women who invited their friend, family, neighbor, and co-worker to hear a gospel message. Every one of us has the opportunity to invite people to encounter God. We get to be participants in the mission of God. The ultimate goal of evangelism is not to see people converted, but the ultimate goal is to make disciples who make disciples (Matthew 28.19-20, 2 Timothy 2.2). We want men and women who are lifelong followers of Jesus. And that journey may begin with us.

Evangelism has two parts – God's part and our part. For whatever reason, God has chosen us to be the means by which to build the church and call people to faith. God will do his part in opening spiritual eyes and calling people to repentance and transformation. Ultimately, someone needs to have an encounter with the living God and not just have their arguments won over. Like the father in Luke 15, God desires reconciliation and is on the lookout for his children who will come home. However, we also need to do our part to help people interpret God's work in their lives. We get to help people interpret where God is and how God is working in their lives.

God's Part

1. God wants people to repent and believe in the gospel (Mark 1.15).
2. God created a gospel story intended for everyone (Acts 10.34-25).
3. The Holy Spirit does the transformative work (Romans 8.14). It is the spirit that draws people from darkness to the light (Colossians 1.13-14).
4. God offers people an opportunity to be awakened and have a rebirth to know God and to be in the family of God (John 3.3).
5. God calls people to people. He calls, equips, and sends his messengers to do his work (John 20.21-23).

Our Part



Build Trust: Trust is a critical first step to help people encounter Jesus. By building trust, we give people the opportunity to be more open to hear us and God’s voice through us. How do you build trust?

1. *Listen well.* By listening to their story, we have an opportunity to have them feel valued and known.
2. *Do what they do.* Get into their world. What do they enjoy doing? What do they enjoy talking about? It may not be a priority for you, but it is for them.

Invite: In Romans 10, the Apostle Paul asks, “How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent?” As we build trust, we need to then take the important step to invite people to interact and encounter Jesus. We can invite them to:

1. *Church service*
2. *Small Group*
3. *Conference*
4. *Hear your testimony*
5. *Study Scripture together*
6. *Harvest/Outreach event*

Preach the gospel: At some point, we need to explain to people what it means to follow and know Jesus. We can’t assume that people know what it means to follow Jesus or how to follow

him. What does it mean to confess our sins? What does it mean to receive forgiveness? What does it mean to obey Jesus?

The basic message of God is that God loves us even if we don't see it or appreciate it. In part because we live in a broken world with broken relationships with one another and God. The Bible calls this "sin" – it's the thing that breaks relationship and harmony. This was not the original design of humans – we are created by a loving God who wants to have a deep intimate relationship with us. We can try to mend these relationships. But ultimately anything we try doesn't work to connect to God. Instead, God came in the form of Jesus to relate to us and call us back to him. He ultimately gave his life so that we would know him. In his ultimate act of love, Jesus died on the cross for us. Sin has to have consequences otherwise the justice of God is impotent. Jesus took on the consequences of sin for us. By putting our trust in Jesus as our Lord/Leader or Savior/Forger, we are trusting that the work he's done on the cross is enough to pave the way for us to have a right relationship with God for all of eternity.

Follow Up: When people hear the gospel message, they need to be followed up with. Once they have an encounter with Jesus and hear the message of the gospel, we need to follow up with them and ask them if they want to receive that message. If they receive the message positively, we need to help them:

1. **Grow** in their faith by being a part of a Christian community;
2. **Equip** them to go be disciples who make disciples:
 - *Biblical Foundations class*
 - *Small Group*
 - *1 on 1 discipleship*
 - *Membership Class*

If they reject the message, we **continue** the cycle of building **trust** and prayerfully waiting for the next opportunity to **invite** them to **encounter** Jesus.

Three Practices to increase your evangelistic effectiveness		
Pray	Grow	Connect
We need to soak everything we do in prayer. We need to pray for people that God is calling us to, asking God to reveal himself to them in fresh ways. We also need to pray for boldness that we find opportunities to call them to faith	The best baseball players strike out (fail) 70% of the time. But they grow and perfect their craft. Lean in to learn more about how to compel people to engage spiritual matters. Read, study, practice, and resource yourself.	Evangelism cannot be a solo act. We work together as a body. Keep looking for ways to connect people to one another that the body of Christ might work together to help people grow in their faith. You get to be the ultimate networker.