

THE ENGAGEMENT MODEL

What is Engagement?

People beginning or continuing in gospel themed conversation either face to face or digitally.

- leaning-in to conversation
- we know their stage of engagement
- we know their name.

Why a model for Engagement?

- There are things that we've intuitively learned through sharing the gospel over and over again. This model is a reflection of those learnings, and a way for students to benefit from a mental framework that effective evangelists have learned through trial and error.
- Our goal is to help you get to a place of engagement in gospel conversation.

The 5 thresholds (based on the book "I once was lost" by Everts and Schaupp)

1. Knowing and trusting a Christian
2. Becoming Curious about Jesus / God / Christianity
3. Becoming open to change
4. Seeking God
5. Deciding to follow Jesus

Let's not forget...

- faith is a gift, and following Jesus happens as God opens our eyes to see Christ
- We may not get to be part of each threshold. 1 Cor. 3:6
 - I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. (1 Corinthians 3:6 ESV)
- We function as ambassadors for Christ, and can do well or poorly in this role. Paul exhorts Timothy in the attitudes and actions that he needs to adopt as an evangelist

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26

This model should account for anyone from close friends to strangers that you met on the bus.

Objectives for each threshold:

- That we would be able to assess their progress
- That we would be able to help them progress further

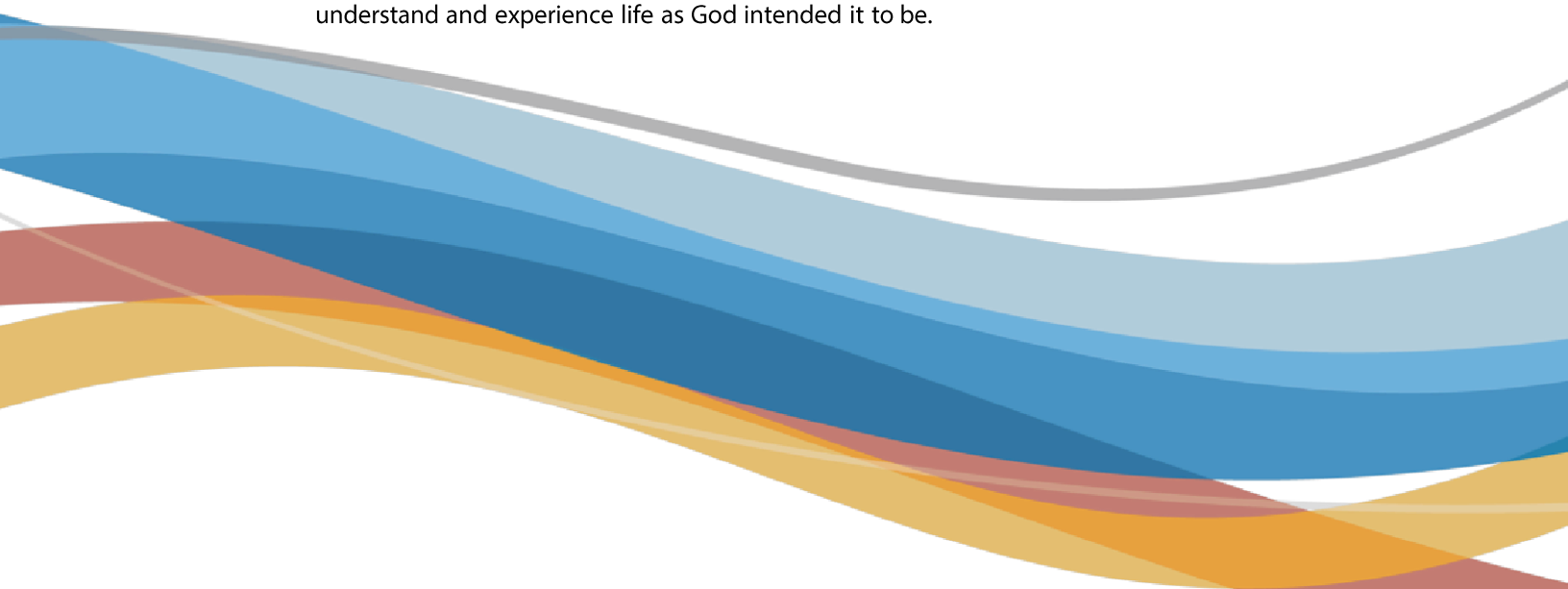
1 . From skepticism to trusting a Christian

- a. What is it / isn't it?
 - i. Not just trusting you, but trusting you as a Christian.
 - ii. If you get to the end of a conversation on campus, and they don't yet know that you're a christian, you haven't really established their trust in you as a christian.
- b. How do I build it?
 - i. Listening and asking lots of questions; engaging as a learner
 - ii. establishing common ground (cravings?)
 - iii. Honesty about the challenges of life (Life isn't always rosy!)
 - iv. Not hiding the vital role that faith plays in your life.
 - v. Choose to recognize the good. (common grace)
- c. How do I recognize it?
 - i. They ask you deeper questions
 - ii. Laughter in the conversation
 - iii.
- d. What kills trust?
 - i. Defensiveness, argumentativeness
 - ii. Lecture mode
 - iii. Snap judgments
- e. Discussion
 - i. Are you effective at building trust in relationships?
 - ii. What have you observed about how to build trust?

2. From indifference to curiosity about Jesus / God / Christianity

- a. What is / isn't it?
 - i. Curiosity reflects a genuine desire to make sense of Jesus / Christianity.
- b. How do I build it?
 - i. Vulnerability and transparency. Living out your faith in a real way in front of others
 - ii. By asking lots of questions, and not necessarily answering all of theirs.
 - iii. By openly sharing about the place of God in our lives
 - iv. By planning / thinking about how to answer questions in a way that creates more questions.
 - v. By inviting them into Christian community
- c. How do I recognize it?
 - i. By the questions that your friends ask you: (often in response)
 1. How do you handle questions of meaning and purpose? What works for you? What do you crave?
 2. "Why" questions -- why do you go to church, why are you involved with P2C, why ...
 - ii. By their genuine interest in your story
- d. What kills it?
 - i. Only giving out answers
 - ii. Living out their expectations of a Christian stereotype
 - iii. Failing to engage meaningfully with the big questions of the day.
- e. Discussion
 - i. What are some ways that you answer the "why" questions?
 - ii. What questions have you used to build curiosity?

3. From curiosity to opening up to change

- a. What is / isn't it?
 - i. A growing realization that they are not satisfied with life as it is. A willingness to understand and experience life as God intended it to be.
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- b. How do I build it?
 - i. By gently showing them what their worldview lacks
 - ii. By showing them some of their “false hopes”, things that they’re looking to for satisfaction that inevitably leave them empty (Tim Keller’s idols of the heart)
 - iii. By asking them about what makes them truly happy, moments of great happiness.
- c. How do I recognize it?
 - i. Through their willingness to take advice / ask for advice
 - ii. Through them exposing their brokenness to you
 - iii. Through their desire to learn from your life experiences
 - iv. Through their desire for “help”
- d. What kills it?
 - i. A sense of superiority on our part
 - ii. Answers that only point to our actions and not our hearts

4. From openness to seeking God

- a. What is / isn’t it?
 - i. A desire to begin actively seeking final answers about God.
- b. How do I built it?
 - i. By challenging them to prove God’s existence by seeking after Him
 - ii. By inviting them to join a discussion group
 - iii. By challenging them to begin praying and asking God to reveal himself.
 - iv. Alpha, Connections, etc.
- c. How do I recognize it?
 - i. They are interested / willing to study the bible, join a group, meet up again to “figure this out”
- d. What kills it?
 - i. Lack of follow up on our part!
 - 1. ex. not making the time to meet up again! It’s far easier to just do one-off randoms in the cafeteria rather than intentionally building a relationship with a spiritually-interested non-believer. It takes time to plan and organize.

5. From seeking to following Jesus

- a. What is / isn't it?
 - i. Challenging them to make a decision to follow Jesus.
- b. How do I build it?
 - i. By inviting them to do so.
 - ii. By helping them realize the place of faith in the process (they don't need to have it all figured out)
 - iii. By sharing about how you made the decision to follow Jesus.
- c. How do I recognize it?
 - i. They have begun to read the bible / pray on their own initiative.
 - ii. They are counting the cost
 - iii. They are beginning to talk about God as a person and not just a concept.
- d. What kills it?
 - i. Never challenging them to make a decision
 - ii. Always challenging them to make a decision.

6. Caveats!

- a. The gospel could be a vital part of any of these thresholds!
- b. This is not always a linear process. Sometimes we meet people who are already curious, but have never known / trusted a Christian.
- c. Could cover 5 thresholds in 1 meeting!
- d. We don't always get to walk through all 5 thresholds with people, but have an important role to play in helping them to engage with the message of Jesus at different points in their journey.