



FAITH *Shared*

SESSION 1: WHAT IS EVANGELISM?



Session Activities

Aim: To explore what Evangelism is, how we have traditionally viewed it, and whether we need to rethink it and our approach to it.

INTRODUCING

Evangelism is...

See below the statements about evangelism and what it is.

Read them out and get people to indicate whether they think the answers are true or false. The idea with this is not to find the right answers, but to get a feel of where the group is in its thinking. You don't need to use all of them, but try and use a variety so that you can get to grips with your groups thinking.

Alternatively you could run this as an agree/disagree activity, and if you have the space label one end of the room as agree, and the other as disagree and explain there is a sliding scale as below between them.



Statements

- 'Evangelism is pushing my faith on others'
- 'The only Evangelism worth doing is knocking on doors'
- 'Evangelism is just telling the gospel'
- 'Evangelism is about our actions more than our words'
- 'Evangelism is sharing God's love with other people'
- 'Evangelism is the sharing of the Good News of Jesus'
- 'Everywhere you go evangelise, and if you have to, use words.'
- 'Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.'

If you feel it is right, it could be good to dig into what the members of your group think you mean by these statements. For example. If evangelism is sharing God's love with others, what does that mean in practice, or if it is sharing the Good News of Jesus, what do they mean by the Good News?

- The aim of this is to get the participants to think about the assumptions they bring to evangelism.

EXPANDING

Video exploring what evangelism is and why evangelism matters.

EXPLORING

Group activities

The E word:

- What do you think the wider world thinks of evangelism? Ask the groups to discuss this and then share your answers together. Are there elements that they have in common or are they widely disparate?
- Why does your group think the world sees evangelism that way? What experiences have the group had that has shaped their thinking on this?

Reflect as a group on the statement below:

- Elli says, 'I really like the idea of evangelism, but I worry that people think I am judging them when I try and share my faith with them.'
- What is the statement getting at?
- What might we be implying about the way other people live when we try and speak to them about faith? What challenges arise because of this?

Read Acts 8:26-40 together.

Putting aside Philip's miraculous travel within the story, there are some key ideas about the practice of evangelism in this story;

1. Philip is open and aware of the leading of God.
2. Philip starts where his listener is, and takes the ideas forward from there.
3. Philip understands his own faith, so he can communicate it to his listener.
4. Philip knows that a response on the part of his listener is needed.

Do you see anything else that could/should be drawn out of the story?

Do you think any of the above don't come out of the story?

Over the next few weeks we will be exploring some ideas around evangelism, our own story of faith, why Jesus is significant, and why and how we should invite people to become part of our church communities.

PRAYING

Using the audio prayers on the Faith Shared webpage, give the group some time and space to reflect on the ideas that you have been exploring through this session.