

# How to help someone make a (further) commitment to Christ.



## AIM

Some notes to help you think through how you will accompany a friend as they take the next step closer to God.

## INTRODUCTION

If you have used the resources provided for the evangelism year of Vision 4 Life you will have already realised that we are not portraying conversion as a one-off, crisis experience. Our belief is that there can be many points of commitment on the journey to a fully formed Christian faith. There may well be one or more crisis points on the journey but rarely is there only one life changing experience that creates the perfectly-formed man or woman of God.

The approach, here, therefore is that you, a fellow traveller on the journey of faith yourself, are working as an agent of the Holy Spirit to help someone else get closer to God in Christ.

This might be a big step of faith – a very clear “conversion” experience associated with statements of faith in Christ – or it might be something much less significant in faith terms – I need God’s power to help me control my temper.

Whatever the issue, your role depends on what your friend wants, not on what you want.

## WHAT TO DO

Imagine you are in a one to one conversation about Christianity with a friend. S/he has initiated a conversation about her/his relationship with God and asks if s/he can talk with you.

1. Get comfortable.

Remember, you are helping a friend take another step towards God. You are not trying to force anything to happen. You are co-operating with the Holy Spirit and making yourself available so that he can accomplish what he purposes. This means that pious language or a religious setting are quite unnecessary. You can relax and be natural – you can also put your friend at ease – they don’t have to “perform” either.

Do what you are doing with a coffee in your hand and a smile on your face rather than on your knees with your best pious look.

2. Find out where your friend is coming from and where s/he wants to get to  
– ask questions and listen carefully.

“You wanted a chat about something between you and God – what’s on your mind?”

Then, listen carefully and ask appropriate questions in order to draw out your friend’s beliefs and concerns. Your aim is to find out what they want from God? Here are some questions you could ask:

- What kind of God do you believe in?
- Where does Jesus fit into your thinking?
- Who do you think Jesus is?
- Where do you want Jesus to fit into your life?
- What do you know about the Holy Spirit?
- What do you think God’s attitude is to you?
- What is it you want from God?

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This is by no means an exhaustive list. In fact all these are faith questions and you may be dealing with a specific issue. Then all your questions will be related to that issue until you get to questions about how God can help with the problem and what the person wants from God.

You can't prepare for every eventuality, you are exercising your own faith in the Spirit's guidance whenever you counsel others. However, you need to have thought through your own answers to some basic questions of faith and you need to know where you stand about God's ability and desire to be active in someone else's life. In other words you need to have a good idea about what's on offer. Having said this, if you find yourself in a totally unprepared situation and way out of your depth – just go for it. And don't be afraid of saying, "I don't know" and/or "We'll find somebody else to help us."

3. If at all possible don't put words into people's mouths. When the conversation has gone full course it is time to get your friend to do something - to pray for themselves. The last question in the list above – "What is it you want from God?" – is crucial. You may need to rehearse their prayer. Repeat back to them what they have said to you. Ask if that is what they want to say to God or ask of God. Get them to repeat it again to you, if necessary.  
THEN GET THEM TO SAY IT TO GOD!
4. Again, listen carefully and then you pray for them. Repeat the content of their prayer in your own words. Ask God to bless and guide them. Ask the Spirit to be with them. Speak out any aspect of God's love that you think they need to hear. Speak out any promises that God has made and that apply directly to the situation. For example, forgive their sins in the name of Christ if that is what they have asked for.
5. When the prayers have finished, try to give your friend something positive to do to reinforce the commitment they have made. Arrange to have another chat within a week. Suggest the next step if you are clear that there is one - but don't make something up for the sake of it. Your continuing friendship and availability are the most important things.
6. Have another coffee.

In "exploring evangelism" there is a prayer of commitment on page 40. It reads:

O God, Father of Jesus,  
I freely turn to you now and away from everything in my past  
That has diverted or distracted me from following you.  
I commit myself to you now and in the years to come.  
Please accept me as I am.  
My I become the person you made me to be,  
So that other people may benefit, grow in your love,  
And live together in peace. Amen.

A classic prayer of commitment when a person comes to faith in Christ as saviour for the first time is something like this:

Lord Jesus Christ.  
I am sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life (take a few moments to ask his forgiveness for anything particular that is on your conscience). Please forgive me. I now turn from everything which I know is wrong.  
Thank you that you died on the cross for me so that I could be forgiven and set free.  
Thank you that you offer me forgiveness and the gift of your Spirit. I now receive that gift.  
Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit to be with me forever.

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Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen  
(Taken from Why Jesus? By Nicky Gumbel)

Written prayers like these can be a great help – but only when they are wholly appropriate to the situation and only when they are well understood by the person praying. You can read the prayer together with the friend you are counselling if necessary. Always make sure you give them a written copy, ask them to read it again, later, at home and talk with them about it again, at a later date.

Our prayerful aim, as people on the way ourselves, is to help others come to that place where:

1. They know God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit – as loving creator, as forgiving redeemer and as powerful re-newer of life.
2. They are knowingly in the process of re-aligning their lives to that of Christ and, therefore, representing his kingdom on earth.

## EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

## THE NEXT STEP

If you want more material for evangelism year please revisit the website.

## Acknowledgements

This material has been provided by John Hall who chairs the Vision4Life Evangelism team.

## HOW TO FEEDBACK TO VISION4LIFE?

If you wish to offer any feedback – brickbats and bouquets are equally welcome! – you can do so in various ways.

You can email the Vision4Life steering group and the coordinator about general issues via the website or at [admin@vision4life.org.uk](mailto:admin@vision4life.org.uk)

Website issues can be dealt with through [web@vision4life.org.uk](mailto:web@vision4life.org.uk)

If you want to make contributions or ask questions about other V4L years you can email: Year 3 – Transformed for Evangelism: [evangelism@vision4life.org.uk](mailto:evangelism@vision4life.org.uk)