

5 Thresholds of Conversion & Conversation

The "five thresholds of postmodern conversion" are concepts developed by Don Everts and Doug Schaupp in their book, I Once Was Lost.

Below are summaries of the journey people take as they are drawn by Jesus into the kingdom.

Microchurches should be familiar with this journey as you develop methods of outreach, proclamation and discipleship. People are not a project but humans, loved by Jesus, on a journey towards or away from his presence. We, as the people of God, are looking for appropriate ways to join Jesus on his Mission to seek and save the lost. Hopefully this framework helps you engage the lost around you.



THRESHOLD 1: Trusting a Christian

The postmodern journey of conversion usually takes place when a skeptic begins to significantly trust a Christian. Today, Christianity and religion are suspect and distrust has become the norm.

How can we as believers pray rather than become defensive, learn instead of attack, engage instead of avoid, affirm the good rather than judge the bad and welcome instead of argue?



THRESHOLD 2: Becoming Curious

The stage of curiosity tends to blossom over time. It's a subtle shift from being passive to being provoked to think differently. Jesus lived a curious life and asked hundreds of questions in the gospels to provoke curiosity in others.

How can we live strange lives that produce curiosity while engaging with questions instead of preaching?



THRESHOLD 3: Opening to Change

This is the hardest threshold to cross and many people get stuck here instead of moving forward. As friends we must remember the Holy Spirit brings conviction and not us.

How can we walk with others in patience, praying for the Spirit to move, while challenging like Jesus (nudge, mirror illogic and connecting dots)?



THRESHOLD 4: Seeking After God

This threshold is about coming to a conclusion. To follow or not follow Jesus. There may not be a lot of questions about behavioral change here because they are just about to make a decision about Jesus.

How can we help them count the cost of following Jesus and show them the incredible family they will join if they do?



THRESHOLD 5: Entering the Kingdom

This is the point when the person decides to repent and follow Jesus! They have decided they want to cross a real and eternally significant line. They go from flirting to commitment. They look Jesus in the face and say "I do."

How can we clearly proclaim the heart, truth and call of the gospel through an invitation to commitment?

Walking With People Through Questions

Refer to our "5 Thresholds of Conversion" handout before reading.

Questions and conversations help us walk with our non-believing friends as they journey through the thresholds. Below is a framework of gospel-conversation milestones and some key questions to help you intentionally engage those conversations.

As a microchurch, have each member choose a few friends, neighbors, co-workers to engage with gospel intentionality. Take time to discern the threshold they are in and become fluent with the questions that correspond to their journey towards Jesus. This is a great time for peer coaching and contextualizing more questions. Spend time praying and making commitments to engage the nonbelieving world around you this next week.



THEIR STORY (Trusting a Christian)

Ask questions of origin

- What is your family like?
- What was it like for you growing up?
- What do you like or dislike?
- What's your faith background?



THEIR VALUES (Becoming Curious)

Ask questions of purpose

- Why do you do what you do?
- Who is your all-time favorite leader? Why?
- If money was no object, what philanthropic activity would you give to?
- What is the most important thing in your life?
- What type of spiritual experiences have you had?
- What rubs you wrong about the church? about the world?



THEIR NEEDS (Open to Change)

Ask questions of improvement

- What do you wish was better about yourself?
- What would you say is your biggest flaw?
- What is your biggest regret? Fear?
- What would you change about your relationship with God?



THEIR OPENNESS (Seeking After God)

Ask questions of investigation

- If you could ask Jesus for anything, what would it be?
- What do you wish Jesus could offer you?
- Referring to your need, would you like to investigate what Jesus says?
- Would you like to attend a (spiritual event)?



THE INVITE (Entering the Kingdom)

Ask questions of commitment

- Are you ready to call Jesus your Lord?
- What's keeping you from following Jesus?
- Share the gospel