GETTING STARTED

Questions, a Great Way to Get Started in Sharing our Faith

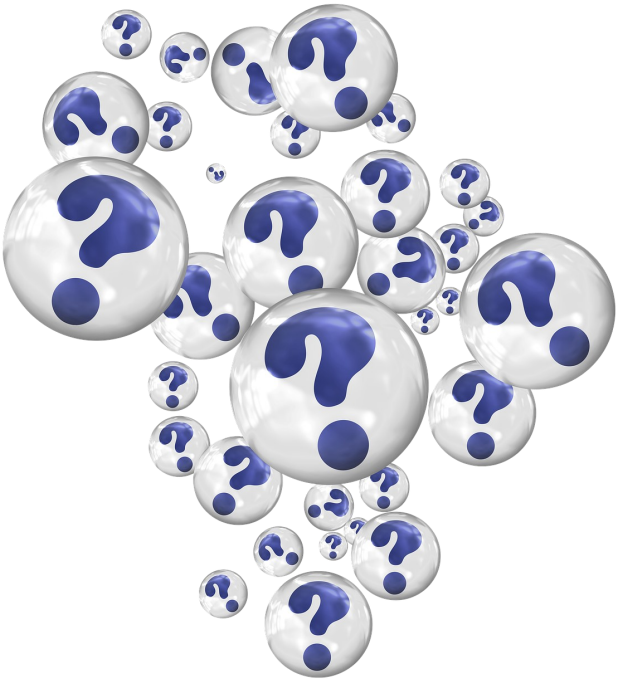
Questions

Asking good questions is key to sharing our faith.

- **It's what Jesus did** In the gospel accounts Jesus is asked 183 questions, but asks 307 back.
- **It's how we find out where people are at** Imagine all the people you know who are not yet disciples of Jesus lined up in front of you. Out of all of them, which ones are open or seeking? We probably don't know, indeed we can't know unless God prompts us or we find out. How do we do that? By gently and graciously asking questions.
- **It help us get started** In our research we found that the third biggest obstacle to people sharing their faith was how to get started. Questions are a great way to overcome that obstacle.
- **It engages people** Genuine interest in another person shows respect for their story, and also helps them open up a little (most people don't mind talking about themselves) and engages them in a conversation about spiritual things.

People come to a conversation about faith with a **background**, a story of their own experiences up until that point in time, with **beliefs** they have distilled from their life experience so far, and also with some **blockages** about the Christian faith. With this in mind we've offered questions for each of these realities. In addition, we have also included some pandemic specific questions. Generally it is best to ask open questions (ones which require more than a yes or no answer), but occasionally a closed question is an appropriate way to bring sharper focus.

The idea behind these lists is not that we work our way through all the questions with a person, but prayerfully discern what might be the most helpful question to ask at this point. Use them as a prompt to come up with your own questions.



Five Questions to Ask During COVID

1. What has your experience been of the pandemic? (What are you grateful for? What have you struggled with?)
2. What do you think you have learnt through this experience?
3. What has been your source of strength or hope through this time?
4. How do you want things to be different post pandemic?
5. Have you found yourself praying during this time?

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LEAD ON

Background Questions

- What most excites you about life?
- What is the source of happiness that can see you through the ups and downs of life?
- When have you experienced turning or crisis points in your life?
- When in a crisis, where do you turn?
- Where do you seek perspective and help with your inner questions, doubts and struggles?
- How do you make sense of the world we live in today?
- What is the most significant thing to have happened to you in the last month?
- Have you ever had a spiritual experience? What was it like?
- How has your belief or disbelief in God affected your life?
- In what ways do you think God is actively involved in this world?
- What do you hope is true about God?
- Would you describe yourself as near or far from God?
- What do you think God is like? Who do you think Jesus was? Why?

Basic Need questions

- **Security** What is it in your life that you are confident to base your life on? Won't let you down?
- **Significance** Where do you find recognition that isn't based on your performance?
- **Self worth** Where do you find your sense of self worth that sees you through the inevitable ups and downs of life?
- **Guilt** What do you long to be free from?
- **Love** What is the greatest expression of love you have ever encountered?
- **Meaning/purpose** What provides meaning for you?

Belief Questions

(A) WHAT PHILOSOPHY THEY LIVE BY

Chester suggests everyone has a gospel they live by. If you want to access it, ask:

- What do you want in life? What will make you happy, fulfilled, accepted?
- Why does it matter so much?
- What do you have to do to achieve that state?
- How is it working out for you?

Or another way:

- **Creation** What do you think the world should be like? What kind of person would you like to be? Who are your heroes? What would have to be in place to make you feel happy?
- **Fall** How would you describe your inner battles and struggles? What is your most pressing problem? What do you feel you lack? Who is responsible?
- **Redemption** What will make life better? What provides a sense of escape or release? Who or what will deliver your hopes?
- **Consummation** What are your hopes? What long term project are you working towards? What are the dreams you have that you are prepared to make sacrifices for?

(B) WHAT THEY ALREADY BELIEVE ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

Randy Newman (Questioning Evangelism) has four great questions to explore what people believe:

- **'Really? Do you really think that?'** When people are not really awake/thinking about spiritual things, e.g. in response when someone says 'It doesn't really matter what you believe as long as it works for you.'
- **'Can you explain that to me?'** When people who are repeating things they have heard but don't stand up to scrutiny e.g. in response to 'All religions are basically the same.'
- **'Why do you think that?'** When questions aren't really a question but an attack e.g. 'Are you telling me only Christians go to heaven?' Or 'I don't believe in God.'
- **'How do you know that?'** For example, in response to 'There in a better place now.'

Blockage Questions

Things that prevent people from moving on with exploring Jesus. Ask:

- What would prevent you from taking seriously the possibility that God might exist? That not only God might exist, but that he might also be interested in you?
- How could God become relevant for you?
- If you had one question to ask Jesus what would it be?
- What is the biggest blockage for you when it comes to faith?

And for those close to becoming a Christian:

- Is there anything stopping you become a Christian?
- Is there any reason why you couldn't ask for Jesus' forgiveness and leadership of your life right now?
- Are you open to joining Jesus's community and cause to transform you and your world? Is there anything holding you back?