



EQUIPPING FOR... **EVANGELISM & MISSION**

Evangelism in the 21st Century

Produced by Canadian Ministries

A Video Study Resource

from *Evangelism Connections*

In the spring of 2014, members of the ecumenical *Evangelism Connections* team gathered to discuss why and how evangelism is still relevant and necessary in contemporary North America. The discussion was filmed to create the video *Evangelism in the 21st Century*. For study purposes, the video was divided into a series of nine parts which can be used flexibly: in sequence or in any order; by individuals or to spark conversations; as a devotion to start a committee or session meeting; as part of elder training or other workshops; or even as part of worship. There are no copyright restrictions. The video is available online at <http://www.evangelismconnections.org/evangelism-in-the-21st-century-our-new-video-series/>



Below are the nine topics and their related video segments, a suggested scripture, along with questions and statements prepared for reflection and discussion by Rev. Peter Bush (The Presbyterian Church in Canada representative on *Evangelism Connections*). Please send feedback to Peter at peterwwpres@mymts.net.

Topic One: “As you go”

Read Matthew 28:16-20.

View video Part 1 (1:40 minutes).

- 1 What is the difference between “going and making disciples” and “staying and making church members”?
- 2 Which of the above phrases best describes what your church does? Explain your choice.
- 3 How does this approach align with your church’s mission statement and goals?
- 4 If Christians are “sent people”, where do you think we are being sent?
- 5 “As you go” about your day-to-day life, what are the ways by which you participate in God’s mission in the world?

Topic Two: “Do we actually need to use words?”

Read Mark 12: 28-34.

View video Part 2 (3:16 minutes).

- 1 Jonathan Shively believes it is not enough to evangelize by loving people because people need to connect with the good news. How is “loving others” evangelism? What are some ways that we can connect others to the gospel story?
- 2 David Loleng suggests that the old model for discipleship was based on this sequence: Believe, Belong, Serve. He suggests that the new model emerging is in the reverse order. Think about your own faith story and the faith stories of people you know. How do these two models apply?
- 3 How might opportunities be created for non-church people to serve with church people on community projects?
- 4 How do you and your faith community welcome people into church who don't believe in Jesus?

Topic Three: “Addressing fears”

Read John 3:1-12.

View video Part 3 (10:28 minutes). Note: There are two places to pause this segment for discussion.

- 1 How do you think the old adage “Your walk has to match your talk” is true for evangelism?
- 2 What fears or other emotions or attitudes inhibit you from talking about your faith?
- 3 Heather Lear suggests creating opportunities to practice “telling stories of faith” to one another. What stories do you have? Whose lives would be enriched by hearing your story?
- 4 How can we tell stories without being prescriptive – so that the hearers “receive” and “believe”?

Topic Four: “Technology and evangelism”

Read Mark 2:21-22.

View video Part 4 (6:31 minutes). Note: There is a place to pause this segment for discussion.

- 1 R. Wayne Calhoun tells a story of his daughter live streaming a worship service into her dorm room. How can this be evangelism?
- 2 How can we move from criticizing people whose worship experience is through TV church and internet live streaming to using those

technologies to have conversation about faith?

- 3 Compare interactions that are through social media (e-mail, text, Facebook, etc.) with those that are through a face-to-face situation. How does each foster relationships?
- 4 David Loleng talks about the desire for friends and relationships. How is your church using social media to encourage people to attend events or to find friends? How could the people of your congregation use social media to enhance friendships, deepen relationships and to evangelize?

Topic Five: “Evangelism for today”

Read Mark 7:24-30.

View video Part 5 (9:13 minutes). There are three places to pause this segment for discussion.

- 1 What do you think it means to do evangelism in the 21st century? How might this be different than it was in the 20th century?
- 2 How can you and people of your congregation go out and become friends, and build caring relationships, with people who are not Christians? Why might this be important?
- 3 Jonathan Shively suggests church people understand that new people coming to faith and joining our communities may challenge and change us. Do you agree or disagree? Explain. How might people in your congregation feel about new arrivals participating in congregational life and decision-making?

Prayer

God of all time, all places and all people,
We have found our way to you through Jesus.
Silently we remember experiences
that brought us to you. *(Pause.)*
Silently we remember people
who have nurtured our faith. *(Pause.)*
We are your people and we strive
to follow Jesus in all we say and do.
We speak with love. We seek your way
to bring peace and justice to the world,
knowing that by the Spirit
you are guiding us always. Amen.

Topic Six: “Shifts”

Read Mark 10:35-45.

View video Part 6 (8:20 minutes). There is a discussion question embedded at the end of this segment.

- 1 David Loleng talks about “organizing principle.” What is your congregation’s “organizing principle? How does it focus on institutional survival? How does it focus on being part of God’s mission in the world?
- 2 Jonathan Shively and Heather Lear suggest that congregations need to live generously in their communities with the assets (e.g. money, building, people, skills) they have. How is your congregation living generously in its community? How can a church “free itself” and maintain an outward, missional focus?
- 3 How does your church “make disciples”?

Topic Seven: “Making changes”

Read Mark 7:1-13.

View video Part 7 (9:44 minutes).

- 1 How has the community around your church changed in the last 15 years? How has your church responded to that change?
- 2 Who are the Christians of other ethnicities, languages or denominations that your church could connect with?
- 3 What would your church’s “conversion” look like? In conversion, one turns one’s back on a way of life or pattern of life, and turns toward a different way of life. Think about your congregation and conversion. What does your congregation need to turn its back to? To turn itself toward?



Topic Eight: “Death and resurrection”

Read Mark 8:31-37.

View video Part 8 (1:26 minutes).

- 1 What is dying in your church? How are people trying to keep that part of your church alive? Why do you think they are doing this? What do you think will happen if these parts die?
- 2 Peter Bush points out that we believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and asks “If we believe that individually, why can’t we believe that corporately?” How would you reply? Reflect on why death and resurrection in the church is “scary” and “trusting” God so difficult.

“Preach the Gospel at all times.
Use words if necessary.”
–St. Francis of Assisi

Topic Nine: “Being different”

Read Mark 10:17-22.

View video Part 9 (1:01 minutes).

- 1 What might a church that is being different from the surrounding community look like? What might that church be doing?
- 2 At a personal level, how are you as a follower of Jesus different from the people around you? How might the people around you become aware of that difference?

The Call to Evangelize

The World Council of Churches (WCC) 2012 statement *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* has 112 affirmations. Read the following four. Check out the scripture references. Consider how this might change the way Presbyterians serve (mission) and tell others about their faith (evangelism). Reflect on the questions provided, which are from the study guide prepared by The Rev. Dr. Ron Wallace for The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). Both the WCC

statement and the PCC study are available at <http://presbyterian.ca/canadian-ministries/evangelism/>.

Affirmation #81. “Evangelism is the outflow of hearts that are filled with the love of God for those who do not yet know him.” At Pentecost, the disciples could not but declare the mighty works of God (Acts 2:4; 4:20). Evangelism, while not excluding the different dimensions of mission, focuses on explicit and intentional articulation of the gospel, including “the invitation to personal conversion to a new life in Christ and to discipleship.” While the Holy Spirit calls some to be evangelists (Eph. 4:11), we all are called to give an account of the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15). Not only individuals but also the whole church together is called to evangelize (Mark 16:15; 1 Pet. 2:9).

Question

Christians believe that there is no greater gift we can offer others than the willingness to share our faith in Christ. Why then do so many members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada find it difficult to share their faith and are reluctant to do so?

Affirmation #83. Evangelism is sharing one’s faith and conviction with other people and inviting them to discipleship, whether or not they adhere to other religious traditions. Such sharing is to take place with both confidence and humility and as an expression of our professed love for our world. If we claim to love God and to love our fellow human beings but fail to share the good news with them urgently and consistently, we deceive ourselves as to the integrity of our love for either God or people. There is no greater gift we can offer to our fellow human beings than to share and or introduce them to the love, grace, and mercy of God in Christ.

Affirmation #85. “Evangelism,” while not excluding the different dimensions of mission, focuses on explicit and intentional articulation of the gospel, including “the invitation to personal conversion to a

new life in Christ and to discipleship.” In different churches, there are differing understandings of how the Spirit calls us to evangelize in our contexts. For some, evangelism is primarily about leading people to personal conversion through Jesus Christ; for others, evangelism is about being in solidarity and offering Christian witness through presence with oppressed peoples; others again look on evangelism as one component of God’s mission. Different Christian traditions denote aspects of mission and evangelism in different ways; however, we can still affirm that the Spirit calls us all towards an understanding of evangelism which is grounded in the life of the local church where worship (*leiturgia*) is inextricably linked to witness (*martyria*), service (*diakonia*), and fellowship (*koinonia*).

Questions

What is “authentic” evangelism? What forms of evangelism are not authentic but rather are betrayals of the gospel?

Affirmation #86. Evangelism is sharing the good news both in word and action. Evangelizing through verbal proclamation or preaching of the gospel (*kerygma*) is profoundly biblical. However, if our words are not consistent with our actions, our evangelism is inauthentic. The combination of verbal declaration and visible action bears witness to God’s revelation in Jesus Christ and of his purposes. Evangelism is closely related to unity: the love for one another is a demonstration of the gospel we proclaim (John 13:34-35) while disunity is an embarrassment to the gospel (1 Cor. 1).

Canadian Ministries wants to hear from you!

What parts of this resource are most useful? Share your story of evangelism and mission. Recommend a resource! Make a suggestion or ask a question!

Contact us at canadianministries@presbyterian.ca or call 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301 ext. 271. Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/pccconnect](https://www.facebook.com/pccconnect).