

Lesson 9: Point to Christ in Conversations



Let Jesus Pour Out of You

Say Hi!

Speak Genuine God-Speak

Connect and Be There

Introduction

The most frequent place women share the message and love of Christ is in everyday conversations. Conversations often happen naturally and are delightfully refreshing! As a Christian you want your conversations to be filled with grace, truth, and encouragement. You know what is important: Jesus and people. You want to be purposeful about connecting with people—and genuine in sharing God’s love. New acquaintances and dear friends provide ample opportunity for women to share their hearts and love with others.

When you meet a new person at church or in the community, you have an opportunity to create a friendship and demonstrate God’s love. Whether it is in the back of church or at a park, if you see someone you don’t know reach out to say hi! Start a conversation and be nice!



Community Involvement

Your participation in community groups or events is a great place to meet other people. Sign your child up for soccer, get involved with your local library, or take a cooking class so you can build relationships with others. Help out at your public school, host a book club, or have a neighborhood party. Volunteer at the local hospital or hospice program—or visit elderly patients at a nursing home. Be intentional as you actively look for opportunities to share the grace of God.

Other times, conversations deepen the bonds of a long-time friendship. In ongoing friendships, women have opportunities to share Scripture, offer God's wisdom, and nurture spiritual growth. Make time for those relationships and recognize their importance.

This lesson helps you continue conversations that point to Christ and build friendships that will nurture faith in others.

SAY HI!

Start the Conversation

Introduce yourself to a stranger. It might seem scary to start a conversation with someone you don't know, but the more you do it the easier it gets!

Be proactive by being aware of how you present yourself. When you smile at people and stand or sit with inviting confidence, people are often eager (or at least willing!) to talk with you. This is part of being welcoming to others. If you sit with your arms crossed and a straight-face, people won't see you as approachable. Posture and present yourself as someone who would be pleasant to talk to.

Of course resuming a conversation with a good friend is just a continued conversation from the last time you talked! You are richly blessed if you have friends that can pick up a conversation right where you left off! Many of these conversations get deep quickly because of the trust and understanding that have been nurtured in the relationship.



Fundamental Communication Skills

There are several basic communication skills that help you be effective and stay engaged in conversations.

1. **Be an active listener.** Pay attention to what someone is saying. Smile or nod to affirm what they say. Think about what they are saying—not what you are going to say next.
2. **Paraphrase.** In a casual conversation this will be less concise than in conflict resolution, but it is still a helpful skill. Let the other person know you are listening to what they say. For example:
 “It sounds like you have a beautiful family!”
 “Oh, you have your plate full!”
 “Your job sounds awesome, I hope that continues to go well!”
3. **Eye contact.** Make eye contact throughout the conversation, but be aware that constant eye contact may seem a bit intimidating to some. If you don’t look directly in their eyes, you can look at their face—this is less direct but still shows engagement.

Ask a Prompting Question and Expand the Thoughts

The easiest way to continue a conversation is to ask questions about a person and then get them to expand on those thoughts. Prompt them to tell you more about something. Ask how or why questions.

- Tell me more about that.
- How did that work out?
- Why did you make that choice?

Practice these skills when you're in conversation. After you walk away from the conversation, ask yourself how well you think you did on those skills. Continue to practice them in conversations, and you will improve those skills.

Find Common Ground and Follow Up

Listen for experiences, interests, or values that are similar to your own. This will make conversation easier and form a connection. Listen for things that you can relate to (or have wanted to know about) and share your thoughts on the common ground you share. This is a great place to develop the conversation and start building a relationship.

In the conversation, you may hear a person talk about a need they have. They may identify the need directly, or it may become clear to you as you listen to them talk. Make a mental note of their need and think about whether there is something you can do to help them. Helping people where they have a need is a beautiful act of faith and Christian service.

Sometimes a conversation becomes comfortable very quickly and you see opportunities to talk about spiritual things. It might be as simple as "My faith is important" or "We go to church down the street." You could share how God helped you through a similar situation or what your thoughts are (on a particular topic) as a Christian. Hopefully you can talk more about Christ or invite the person to church, but many times you are just building a relationship.



Moments to Mentor (from WELS Women's Ministry)

- Every relationship is one that God intends for you to impact with his grace
- Sinner and saint is the common thread we all share
- Simply pass on what was shared with you
- Talk about what is on their mind, don't feel like it has to be "spiritual." God works in and cares about every part of our lives
- Listen carefully—do they need to hear warning or comfort?
- Are you sharing God's opinion or yours? Pray to speak the words of Jesus.
- Trust that God works through his Word.

At the end of the conversation, repeat their name to help you remember, "Thanks for chatting Sue, I look forward to talking to you again!" Let them know how much you enjoyed visiting with them.

Though it takes time to nurture relationships, look for ways to follow up with someone soon after you chat. Figure out how you can continue to connect with them. Are they on Facebook, or did you get their phone number? You want to lead the way and be proactive in reaching out. Ask if they would like to go out for coffee sometime or go on a walk. Could your common interests provide an opportunity to meet again? Work to create that connection.



Activity: Say Hi!

It's your turn to Say Hi!

Step One: List three places where you have opportunities to meet people, and identify how can you be approachable in those settings.

Step Two: How might you give a silent witness to others? What is hanging on the walls of your home, or what is on your desk at work? What clothing or jewelry do you wear that reflects your faith? Is that something you would like to do better so others become aware of your faith?

Step Three: What coffee shop or restaurant near you has a place to meet someone where you could have a quiet or personal conversation?

SPEAK GENUINE GOD-SPEAK

Whether a friendship is new or old, there are lots of things to talk about with a friend. One blessing of friendship is the honesty and openness that happens in conversations. Not every conversation has to be about Jesus, but if you know that your friend needs a Savior, his name will not be far from your lips.

As conversations continue, you will have more and more opportunities to mention the peace of forgiveness or the comfort of God's Word. Move toward spiritual topics as you are able with a desire to share God's Word with your friend. This will happen quickly in some friendships—other times it takes a while. Be patient.

Once the friendship has developed to a place of trust and encouragement, suggest getting together to discuss a devotion, the sermon from Sunday, or a section of Scripture. There won't be a "magic moment" to suggest this, and your friend may initially be hesitant. If she isn't comfortable yet, look for another way to encourage her with Scripture. There are lots of ways you can do this, and you want to wait for her to be ready.

Share Scripture with One Another

Meet with your friend regularly if you can. If your friend lives nearby or is attending your church, you can meet to talk about something from a recent worship service. You could talk about the Scripture readings, the sermon, or the hymns. You might get together to read and discuss a devotion book or a Bible study book. You could read sections of Scripture that would be especially helpful if your friend has a particular struggle. You might need to start by simply sharing some of the things you have been learning as you study the Word. Lesson One: Stand Secure in Grace and Truth will continue to direct you in studying Scripture.

If you are nurturing a relationship from a distance you might find the YouVersion app helpful! You can begin a Bible reading or devotion plan together. You can share a Christian song or devotional podcast. Be intentional about including Scripture in your conversations together.

Remind your friend of God's promises and unfailing faithfulness.



Resources to Help You Share Scripture With Others

The YouVersion app will allow you to begin a Bible reading or devotion plan together.

The Bible Promise Book published by Barbour and Company Inc. or Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling published by Baker Books provides a list of Scripture verses to help in various situations.

Pray With Them and For Them

Spend time praying with your friend. At the close of your time together, pray about the things you talked about. Pray for any situations in your lives that need the strength and comfort of God. Pray about the Scripture or devotion you read, and thank God for your time together to talk about the Word.

Continue to pray for your friend privately at home. You may want to send her a text or note to let her know you are continuing to pray, especially if she is going through a difficult time.

Review Lesson Two: Respond With Fruitful, Christian Living to develop your prayer life.

Share Your Story

Talk about how God has worked in your life. You don't have to be afraid to admit that you also have struggles or hardships. You will likely have experiences where God has shown his faithfulness in your life or times that his Word has brought exceptional comfort. Share your story as a testimony of God's goodness.



Mentor for a Lifetime (from WELS Women's Ministry)

- Open your Bible. Open your life. Show others how God lives in his people.
- Share struggles, failures, triumphs and insights; point to God's faithfulness .
- Listen openly to understand what they feel and see.
- Continue to ask questions and restate, "Tell me more..." or, "It sounds like..."
- Discuss similar situations in Scripture and find helpful passages.
- Be together casually and intentionally; genuine caring builds trust.
- Transformation happens on the inside, that's your focus.
- Pray with them and be patient, growth takes time for all of us.
- Live the relationship infused with Christ, he is their greatest need.



Activity: Speak Genuine God-Speak

It's your turn to Speak Genuine God-Speak

Step One: Look for a Bible app on your phone that will help you easily share Bible verses or share a devotion. If you don't have one, try YouVersion.

Step Two: Start a journal of prayer requests for others so you remember to pray for them and keep track of what they need.

Step Three: Write down several verses that have been helpful to you in times of suffering or sadness.

CONNECT AND BE THERE

Faithful companionship is a powerful affirmation of friendship. Some friendships need more consistent connections—other friends can pick it right up after a year of no communication. Learn what is best for each friendship.

Reach out When They Are On Your Mind

There will be times that your friend comes to mind as you are going through your day. Maybe she will come to mind in your prayer time, or you notice her name in your prayer journal.

Reach out to your friend at those times with a call, text, or e-mail. You can simply tell her that you thought of her or prayed for her. If you prayed for her, tell her what you prayed about.

Send Encouraging Texts and Notes

Scripture passages and notes of encouragement are always a blessing. Share those as often as you can! Make a note in your day timer to remember who might need texts, prayers, or notes at a particular time.

Be There For Your Friend

There are times in this life when it feels like things are falling apart. Those times of suffering look different in each person's life, but everyone faces hardship.

As a sister in Christ, you want to support your friends through difficulty. If something comes up and you are able to drop everything to be at her side, it is a great blessing. Show her your love and support by being there. You don't always need a lot of words in those moments—your presence will speak volumes of love.

Unfortunately, it may be hard to get away and be by your friend. Do your best to express your love and support. Send her Bible passages or write a prayer to send her. Pray with her over the phone, send flowers, or just cry with her. Tender moments of friendship come naturally from hearts bound in faith and love.

Trust that God will comfort your friend with his love. Remember that the Holy Spirit dwells within her and the Word will strengthen her. Continue to keep her in your prayers but entrust her to the Lord who never fails his people.



Activity: Connect and Be There

It's your turn to Connect and Be There

Step One: Do you have phone numbers and e-mail addresses handy for your friends?

Step Two: Take several pictures of Bible passages that are underlined in your personal Bible that you could send to your friend for encouragement.

Step Three: Do you have notecards or something to send a friend if they come to mind? Have something handy for those times (don't forget stamps!).



Notes: How To Point To Christ In Conversations

Lined area for taking notes, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.

Your Turn to Point to Christ in Conversations

It's your turn to Point to Christ in Conversations

Review and Exercises

Items flagged with arrows require action on your part. If you are uncertain how to proceed, reread the appropriate section in this lesson.

Say Hi!

- List five things that are important to you and may be good connection points for conversations with others.

Share Scripture with Others

- Look for a Bible app on your phone that will help you easily share Bible verses or share a devotion. If you don't have one, try YouVersion.

Connect and Be There

- Do you have notecards or something to send a friend if they come to mind? Have something handy for those times (don't forget stamps!).