

## **THE ACT Principle**

### ***How to Start a Conversation about Spiritual Things***

©1997 West Texas A&M University's Baptist Student Ministries/ Revised 2007

Written by Dr. Buddy Young

- The **ACT** approach to evangelism is designed to give the believer tools that will enable them to make a connection with non-believers by finding common interests or similar struggles.

The acrostic **ACT** will help the participant remember the three aspects used to turn a conversation toward spiritual matters.

### **Getting the Conversation Started**

This may sound simplistic, but many students don't know how to get a conversation started with a stranger. Evangelism is all about talking to people. If you don't know how to get a conversation started it will be hard to tell someone about Jesus.

---

**ASK** questions about the person.

---

The easiest way to talk to someone is to ask them questions about themselves. People generally love to talk (brag) about themselves.

- You can use the standard **5 W questions** listed below or something similar:

What's your name?  
Where are you from?  
Where do you go to school?  
What's your major?  
Why did you come here?

Believe it or not, these questions are very effective at BeachReach and on your campus, because everyone is interested in meeting new people sharing their stories. Be creative and develop other questions that will help you get to know the person. Look for logos on their clothing (or pictures and posters in their dorm or apartment) that you can inquire about.

---

**CONNECT** with the person by finding common interests.

---

We all have something in common with the people around us. If you're a college student, you have many things in common with other college students. You can find common interests by asking questions.

- You can use the **4 F questions** listed below or something similar:

#### **Facebook :**

Are you on Facebook?

What do you have listed as activities?

What do you have listed as interests?

**Family :**

Are you the only one in your family in college?  
Where does your family live?

**Friends :**

Did you come down with some friends?  
Do you have a lot of friends around here?

**Finances:**

Do you have a job? How are you paying for college?

Keep asking questions until you find something in common with the person.

---

**Opening the Conversation to Spiritual Matters**

---

The goal is to turn the conversation toward a discussion of spiritual issues and ultimately about having a relationship with Jesus. As you listen to the person, pray that the Holy Spirit will make you aware of the right moment to begin talking about spiritual things.

---

**TURN** the conversation toward spiritual issues with a transitional question.

---

A transitional question is the easiest way to turn the conversation toward spiritual issues. Your questions should promote discussion, rather than a simple yes /no response. You should never present an "I'm right; your're wrong" argument. The idea is to get the non-believer to talk about what they know about Christianity and help them to put aside false ideas in order to enter into a relationship with Jesus.

There are many transition questions that can be used in evangelism.

---

**SELECTED TRANSITIONAL QUESTIONS**

---

These were taken from class notes in Evangelism taught at Wheaton College by Dr. Timothy Beougher during the Summer 1994 session of the Billy Graham School of Evangelism . ©1997 West Texas A&M University's Baptist Student Ministries Revised 2004 with additions by Dr. Buddy Young

---

- Do you think about spiritual things often? Are you interested in spiritual things?
- Have you met Jesus or are you still looking?
- Have you come to know Christ in a personal way or are you still unsure about Him?
- What do you think the Mel Gibson movie *The Passion of Christ* is about?
- Have you read the Left Behind series of books? If so, would you be left behind or be taken away with the Christians?
- In all of history, who do you think has affected history the most? Why?
- In your personal opinion, what is a Christian?
- Do you know what the Bible says about eternal life?
- Has anyone ever shared with you how to have a personal relationship with God?

- May I tell you how I know for sure that I am going to heaven? Why should God accept you into heaven?
- Do you know any reason why you would not want to invite Jesus into your heart right now and become a real Christian?
- Do you take your religious beliefs more seriously now or less seriously than when you were younger?

You say you don't believe in God. What led you to that conclusion? Have you studied ALL the evidence that is given to show that God exists? If not, isn't there a chance that you might be wrong? Do you really want to know the truth or are you close-minded?

Isn't it amazing that Jesus actually said so many narrow things? Wouldn't it be intriguing to study Him to discover why He made such 'egotistical' claims?

Is your current lifestyle taking you closer to God or farther away? Are you satisfied with your answer?

- Did you grow up around Christians?
- Do you expect that God will be more real to you in the future than He is now? (Or, has God been more real to you in the past than He is now?)
- Why do you think so many people avoid a personal walk with God and settle for just rituals and church membership?
- What do you think makes the difference between being a religious person and a true Christian?
- To someone who claims they are an atheist: "You don't look like an atheist. An agnostic maybe, perhaps a skeptic. But you look too intelligent to be an atheist. Surely you know that it is intellectually impossible to be an atheist?"
- Do you believe that one day man will have to give account for his actions?
  - c. If today were that day, would you be ready to give account for yourself?
  - d. Do you know what the Bible says a man must do to be ready for that day?
- "You know, I heard the best message in church yesterday!" Share about the message briefly, then say, "By the way, are you interested in spiritual things?"
- If you came across an auto accident, and you were the only one there, and one person asked how to become a Christian, what would you say?
  - a. Do you ever give much thought to spiritual things?
  - b. What would you say is man's greatest spiritual need?
  - c. God tells us that man's greatest spiritual need is an experience of salvation. Was there ever a time in your life when you seriously thought about your need of salvation?