



Training Manual

Church information web site:

www.jesusallaboutlife.com.au

Response web site:

www.allaboutlife.com.au

Supported by:



1300 650 540
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JAAL Training Day

The '**Jesus. All about Life**' (JAAL) campaign seeks to bring the message of the **Gospel** to the Australian community using the **media** as the **catalyst** for **city wide** evangelistic ministry.

This summary contains five key phrases which help us to understand what the JAAL campaign is all about.

Jesus. All about Life – This phrase is not just the name of the campaign. It contains the key idea that we are seeking to communicate to the Australian community. In John 10.10 Jesus says; “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (NIV). Jesus wants all of us to know about and experience abundant life. Jesus came that we may know life, in this world and the next. Jesus did not come to start an institution or an organisation, he came so that all people everywhere would not have to live under the burden of a broken relationship with God, but know the abundant life of a relationship with God restored.

Our community is under the mistaken impression that the church is about oppressing and restricting our lives. This was not the message or the purpose of Jesus. It is true that living lives which please God will mean that many activities and practices of our community should be avoided, but this is not about restricted lives, but rather knowing an abundant life in relationship with our creator.

Gospel. – JAAL is not a public interest campaign. It is not a public profile or even a public relations campaign. JAAL is about the gospel and encouraging people to come to a personal relationship with God. However the key issue to understand is that the ads are not meant to deliver the Gospel. The response book, the pamphlet, the follow up course and most importantly the local church will present the Gospel to the enquirer.

While the ads may give the impression that they are about public relations, the whole direction and motivation for the campaign is to communicate the gospel and have people come to know Jesus personally.

Media – The JAAL campaign uses mainstream media and prime time television to connect with our community so they will seek to find out more about the gospel message. The media is a key market place in our community but the church has not used the media well. We have seen the media marketplace as too big, too expensive and too hard.

When Paul took the message to the known world of the Roman Empire on his missionary journeys he used the roads built by the Romans. These roads were made up of 80,000 kms of paved highways that enabled the movement of troops to any location in the empire quickly and easily. These ‘toll’ roads were also used for commercial purposes. These were the roads that Paul and those who followed him in

gospel ministry used to carry the gospel to the ends of the known world. They were the 'vehicle' for Gospel communication.

It wasn't until the invention of the movable type press 1455 by Guttenberg press that the Bible and printed word could be distributed in this new way. It has been said that without the printing press the Protestant movement would have been 'still born'. The printing press was like the Roman roads of Paul's day – helping the Protestant movement spread throughout Europe and then the world.

Today, the 'media marketplace' is our Guttenberg press or Roman road. The media is the new 'vehicle' for the Gospel.

In Luke 8:1-15 we read the parable of the sower. Jesus tells his disciples the story of a farmer who walks his paddocks sowing seed by hand. Some of the seed falls into places where it is either lost immediately or sprouts for only a short time before dying. Some however falls on fertile ground and a harvest results. There is no value judgment on where or how the seed is sown only that it is spread across the fields. It is clear from the passage, that the seed is the word of God.

While the seed contained in the media messages for the JAAL campaign is very short and contained it does have the opportunity to be spread in our community so that everyone has to consider the name of Jesus.

Catalyst – We have already stated that the JAAL campaign is about the Gospel. When you see the ads, your response might be that they don't really mention the gospel at all and in fact seem to be very 'low key' from a message perspective. The key word here is that the ads are designed to be a catalyst. They are designed to connect with our community and encourage people to seek our more information. It is in this information that the Gospel is clearly presented. Ultimately we would love for people to end up connected to a local church and be part of a follow up course.

The media campaign has the opportunity to create an environment in which Jesus is considered so that the Gospel can be widely communicated. It's not that the medium of television can't be used for communicating the Gospel message. In countries where this medium is more accessible and affordable the Billy Graham organisation (BGEA) has used television for direct Gospel communication. In South America, the 'My Hope' campaign has seen many people come to Christ. In Nicaragua and El Salvador the BGEA bought three consecutive nights of prime television to broadcast gospel messages of 30 minutes duration. Christians were encouraged and trained to have meetings in their homes where friends watched the program with them. In Nicaragua 35,000 first time commitments were recorded whilst in El Salvador, there were 63,000 commitments. There are more campaigns planned in the near future including India.

In the Australian environment this sort of television Gospel ministry is not possible. Stations are not interested in selling large blocks of prime-time television – no matter how much money you might offer them. What is possible in our media environment is the opportunity to use the media as a catalyst to create an environment in which local churches can connect with their community and communicate the gospel.

City Wide – The key to the JAAL campaign is that by using the media as a catalyst for Gospel ministry, every home will receive this message. Not just those who come to your church, or those who know a Christian or those who happen to get something in their letterbox, but every person in every home. Each time I look across the lights of one of our Australian cities, Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth or Sydney I think, every home. Every home has a television and so every person will be given the opportunity to consider the claims of Jesus.

Here is the heart of the JAAL campaign. The opportunity to use the medium of prime time media to have Australians consider the person of Jesus and encourage them to get more information, which will contain the Gospel message. At the same time churches are encouraged to get involved by running their own events and programs and follow courses to connect with their local community and communicate the gospel.

The Training Day.

The aim of the training day is to introduce participants to the campaign, help them understand the response book and the attached smaller booklet and give them the tools to help friends find a relationship with God. We will also show the ads and explain the target audience for each of them.

1. Introduce the campaign

Aim - This session is to help participants understand the background to the campaign and how it will work. Key to this session is reviewing Acts 17 and looking at what Paul set out to achieve with his meeting with the Greek philosophers in the Areopagus or market place in Athens.

Taking the message of Jesus into the Australian community is a challenging task. Every Christian who has attempted to share their personal faith on a regular basis will have experienced negative responses that vary from disinterest to hostility. The church in Australia has continued to seek to bring the message to our nation. This has varied from personal evangelism, house to house visiting, distributing the 'Jesus' video, the massive Billy Graham crusades of the past and the more recent festivals with Franklin Graham, as well as the growth of courses such as Alpha.

One area the church has struggled to use is the 'media marketplace'. Whilst the various Christian television agencies produce programs, they are usually on early morning or late at night. Prime time media is expensive and complex to manage. The JAAL campaign is seeking to bring the message of the gospel to the Australian community using the media as a catalyst for city wide evangelistic ministry.

The first challenge is to try to understand how Australians view Christian faith so that we can be wise in our communication of the message.

The following is a summary of what we discovered in our research.

Research summary:

The research revealed that Christianity is widely rejected by most non-Christians as an anachronistic and undesirably rigid set of doctrines, while the Church is widely regarded as an old-fashioned organisation that is guilty of failing to live up to its own ideals of tolerance, forgiveness and humility.

While we may wish to present Christian faith in God as a distinct and intrinsically good idea, it is practically impossible to make any reference to Christian faith, Christ's teachings or the Bible without immediately eliciting negative associations surrounding the Christian Church and its doctrines.

Most non-Christians believe that they already live in accordance with essential Christian values, and do not need either to accept articles of Christian faith or participate in Christian worship to fulfill the basic requirement that qualify someone as being 'a good person', such as 'do unto others' and 'love thy neighbour'.

The commonly and often unwittingly accepted principle of secular humanism is that individuals need to look inwards in search of personal meaning and fulfillment, a never-ending search directed towards realising your full potential, rather than a process that leads to some final, 'ideal' state of consciousness.

At a more fundamental level, non-Christians tend to reject the idea of 'one truth' as a divisive concept that is to blame for much of the conflict in the world today, and that clashes with the secular humanist ideal of taking personal responsibility for lifestyle choices and interpersonal values.

Against this background of attitudes and beliefs, the response to 'born-again' Christian testimonials tends to be overwhelmingly negative

- *to accept Christ as the only way to find meaning in life represent a failure to accept personal responsibility or realise self-awareness*
- *to accept Christian beliefs as the ultimate truth is to reject contemporary ideals of multicultural tolerance and openness to new ideas*

(Angus Kinnard – Futurebrand)

Our research shows that sharing the Gospel in the Australian community needs to be done thoughtfully and carefully, connecting with people and stirring them to consider the message. It is not about pandering to them or watering down the message or humanising the gospel, it is about being thoughtful in how we communicate.

Paul in Acts 17

Our challenge is not a new one. This difficulty has always faced the church – even the earliest church. Paul experienced the same issues in the first century.

Paul, as the Godly committed and intelligent evangelist, gives us a great example of how to sow the gospel to a pagan secular society. In his second missionary journey, Paul found himself in Athens, waiting for Timothy and Silas. As he walked through the city, he saw hundreds of idols. Paul's response was not the interest of the tourist but the heart of a missionary – “he was greatly distressed” (Acts 17:16).

After talking with the locals he was invited to speak at the Areopagus, the intellectual marketplace of Athens. So how does Paul respond to this opportunity? When Paul gets to sow the seed of the gospel into the heart of the Athenian marketplace his approach is very instructive.

Paul does not start with criticism but with connection. He reflects that they “are very religious” (17:22). He takes one of their objects of worship, “an altar with the inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD” (17:23) and says that what was unknown, “I am going to proclaim to you”. After Paul begins with connection, he builds on the relationship by using their own philosophical foundations to draw them to the gospel. Paul quotes their own poets and thinkers (17:28).

After building bridges with those at the Areopagus, Paul moves on to speaking about God as revealed in Jesus, without mentioning Jesus' name. He finishes by warning of coming judgement and proclaiming that God has raised Jesus from the dead. Paul does not attack his listeners but sows the seed of the Gospel in such a way that while some reject Paul out of hand, others said “we want to hear you again on this subject” (17:32) with some eventually coming to faith in Christ (v34).

Paul's method is helpful for us. We can use the media to connect with people so that they take further steps. Those who express interest can be given carefully prepared material. Finally seekers can be referred to individual churches and Christians who put a personal and individual face to the message.

What is our audience like?

Paul first understood the Athenian audience then used that knowledge to express the message in relevant terms. We have sought to understand our three audiences in the most general terms and have then built the ads around this understanding. Remember this is not about the content of the gospel message but about connecting with people so they will engage with the Gospel message. The content of the Gospel message will be communicated in the events run by local churches, the JAAL response book, the website and the follow up courses. The ads are designed to make the first and important connection.

Our researchers have given us the following as broad summaries of the various issues relating to the three specific audiences for the ads.

Emerging Young Adults

These young adults are defined as 16-24, non practicing in regards to Christianity. They lead busy, active lives. They might be finishing high school, attending University or College, traveling and/or starting out in their careers. They appear to be on “auto pilot” – working, socialising and studying but with no great responsibilities.

There is not really anything in their lives that at this stage has prompted them to ask the “big questions” about themselves and the meaning of life. They may not be making conscious decisions about their values, but they are certainly forging an identity and trying to find their place and meaning in this world.

Social researcher Hugh Mackay has mentioned that one defining characteristic of this generation is a belief in the power of friends and the security of the herd. With the erosion of the family, members of this generation are turning to their friends like extended surrogate families. In regards to spirituality, this generation has been passed a baton from their parents that say “you work it out for yourself; you choose; you decide”. Mackay believes they are responding to the challenge with a rising interest in the concept of spirituality and a search for meaning and purpose in their lives.

New Family Creators.

New Family Creators are aged approximately 25-34 with children five year or under and are currently non-practising in regards to Christianity.

A common desire amongst this group of people is to raise happy and successful people. Having a child has forced them to re-evaluate their lives and they are open to guidance and information to help them to be the kind the parents they want to be. Many have grown up in a Christian household or had some kind of Christian teaching (Sunday school or Christian education).

They have emotional empathy towards children.

Mid-Lifers

Mid-Lifers are defined as age 40-55, non-practising in regards to Christianity, who may have experienced a major life event in the last few years: children leaving home, children getting married, divorce, becoming grandparents, retirement, unemployment, personal illness or friend/family death/illness. The mid-lifers are part of the Baby Boomer generation.

Like the Emerging Adults, the changes that Mid-Lifers are experiencing are probably bringing them back full circle to face questions and feelings about their identity and purpose.

According to Professor Tom Miller of Griffith University, it is possible that as Baby-Boomers enter mid-life, they are experiencing the following 5 kinds of transformation:

- 1. feeling of greater control of one’s life*
- 2. greater maturity and a better grasp of realities, including the ability to see the world in finite shades of grey*
- 3. keener self-understanding – know who they are and what they like/dislike*
- 4. introspection – reflecting on their life, their past and their contribution*
- 5. desire for self-fulfillment – how to make the most of the years ahead of them (to make amends, enrich their life, make sense of their past, etc)*

The ads

As we've already said, the ads are not meant to bring people to Christian commitment but to connect with these three different audiences and encourage them to find out more. When people respond to the 'call to action' in the campaign (via web site, call centre or SMS) they will be sent the JAAL response book and attached booklet. The aim of the campaign as a whole is to raise the issue of Jesus' teachings and Christian faith and build an environment of discussion.

The release of the movie "The Passion of the Christ" is the best example of the impact this campaign can have. The movie attracted lots of comment and discussion in the wider community. Jesus and His death on a cross was a topic of conversation for many weeks. Churches used the movie by renting out theatres and inviting friends to watch it with them. Here is the local church and a high profile media event working together. This is what we are seeking to do with JAAL.

Every person in a participating church is crucial to making this campaign work. In section five we will give very specific ways in which people can be involved, but we want you to understand that while the media campaign creates the environment it is the local church and individual Christians that will make the campaign effective.

2. Introduce the JAAL book.

Aim– Introduce the contents of the JAAL book and attached booklet to the participants, helping them to understand its motivation and content.

The book is based on the knowledge that there is wide acceptance of Jesus as a person in our community. However He is generally viewed as just another option in a crowded spiritual supermarket.

Our community has a wide variety of ideas about the person of Jesus. The book seeks to help the community understand who Jesus actually is. The following outline of the chapters of the book give a picture of key ideas.

- Different views on the person of Jesus
- Where did Jesus come from, prophecy, birth and early life
- What did Jesus believe about himself
- What did Jesus do in his life? The power over nature, spirits and human illness
- Why did Jesus go to the cross and what happened at the first Easter
- The first steps
- Myths stereotypes and misconceptions.
- Bible crash course
- Luke's Gospel.

The book leads the reader from the life and work of Jesus, to the point of personal commitment, into a short chapter on what to do next and finally to respond to some current issues impacting the community's view of the church.

The chapter on "Myths stereotypes and misconceptions" deals with issues raised in the research rather than the usual apologetic questions such as those dealt with in the appendices of this training booklet.

3. What is the Gospel Message

Aim – This session seeks to outline the gospel message so that the participants will be clear about the content of the gospel and even encourage them in their own commitment.

The JAAL book on pages 40 – 43 gives a good explanation of the gospel while avoiding the normal Christian jargon that we often use. In these pages of the book you will see that the message of the gospel is explained via four key ideas.

1. The institution of communion.

The first Passover occurred when the people of Israel were slaves to the Egyptians. They asked to be set free, but the Egyptian rulers refused to let them go. Eventually God said that he would take the life of every first born throughout the whole land of Egypt. The Israelites were told to kill a lamb as a sacrifice to God and using the blood of the lamb – mark their door frames. This would be a sign to God's angel of death to 'Passover' the houses of the Israelites and spare their children.

In instituting communion, Jesus said that His life is given in the same way that the lamb's was at the first Passover (Exodus 12:1-30).

This concept of the sacrifice continues through the Old Testament. In fact the term "scapegoat" comes from the Day of Atonement when a goat carried the sin of the people away from the camp (Leviticus 16:1-34). The people of Israel were to be regular in their sacrifices to God to atone for their sins. The word atone means to "make right", the act of fixing a broken relationship. Jesus' role was spoken about in the Old Testament as the one who would make the ultimate sacrifice for our actions which constantly disappoint God (Isaiah 53:4-6).

Atonement and the celebration of Jesus' work on the cross at communion are important because we all need to know and experience forgiveness. It's not that we are all bad, in fact many who don't call themselves Christians live very good lives. It is that we spend our lives ignoring God and that puts us at odds with God. The Christian understanding of our need for forgiveness comes from the story at the beginning of the Bible.

a) We were created by God in his image to live in a relationship with him (Gen 1:27-31)

- b) The Fall is all about humanity's breaking of our relationship with God leaving us distanced from our creator (Gen 3:1-19).
- c) The Bible makes it clear we are all in the same position as Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. (Romans 3:23, Rom 5:14)
- d) Only through the work of Jesus can we experience a personal relationship with God (John 14:1-7)

2. Jesus words – “Father forgive them”

The cross is all about forgiveness. Jesus' words were not just for the soldiers putting him on a cross but for all of us across the ages who sin and need forgiveness. BB King in the U2 song “When love comes to town” grasps this with the words...

*I was there when they crucified my Lord
I held the scabbard when the soldier drew his sword
I threw the dice when they pierced his side
But I've seen love conquer the great divide*

*When love comes to town I'm gonna catch that train
When love comes to town I'm gonna catch that flame
Maybe I was wrong to ever let you down
But I did what I did before love came to town*

© BB King. *When Love Comes to Town*

As the book makes clear, all of us are at the place where we need forgiveness from God and Jesus takes that forgiveness on himself for us.

3. Jesus words – “Today you will be with me in paradise”

Jesus' words to the second thief on the cross indicates two very significant truths. Firstly that forgiveness and a right relationship with God are available now and secondly that eternal life is also available.

Our relationship with God only occurs as we respond by believing prayer and personal repentance before God. While many people use a formulated prayer for this, the story of the thief on the cross and Jesus' acceptance of his approach to be “remembered” reminds us that God is more interested in the attitude of our hearts, then the form of our words. A prayer of response to God is found on page 53 of the JAAL book.

Jesus promises the thief that that day he will be with Him in paradise. Here is the promise of eternal life and a place with God. While heaven may be hard to explain and even harder to imagine given the constraints of our “human” lives, Jesus makes it clear that we can expect to be with Him in paradise.

4. The temple curtain torn from top to bottom.

Finally we have the story of the tearing of the temple curtain. This curtain separated the Holy of Holies, where God was present, from the ordinary people in the Jewish Temple. The tearing of the curtain on the day of Christ's crucifixion was God's way of demonstrating that Jesus has opened the way for us all to know God. We can now all have a relationship with God and while the church can help and has a specific role we don't have to go through the church and its leadership to be in a relationship with God.

Once we have come to God, as the thief on the cross did, and sought forgiveness via the sacrifice of Jesus, we are forgiven and able to approach God individually and personally. We don't have to be in church or in the presence of Christians and we don't need a priest, minister or pastor to go to God for us. God accepts us, hears our prayer and promises us eternal life with Him (John 1:12-13, John 14:1-7).

4. Sharing your faith with others

Aim – To give participants some tools to help the process of sharing personal faith with friends, family, community or work contacts during the campaign and beyond.

There is no guaranteed method of talking about personal belief that will give a positive outcome every time. The following are tools to help you in the task of sharing faith with others.

- a) **Know your own story of faith** – Our personal stories are key in sharing faith in today's environment. While intellectual argument can go back and forth the power of your personal story often breaks through. We are now in a culture where people may fully accept your arguments of logic and yet respond, "I'm glad that you believe that but it's not right for me".
In other words the intellectual argument is not as persuasive as it once was. This is partly due to the general attitude that truth is now relative, so who knows what is right? Your own story of faith may actually make a greater impact than clever arguments. The questions to consider are: How and why did you become a Christian? How has being a Christian changed your life? What does it mean for you to live daily as a Christian? See the appendix for an outline on how to write your own story of faith.

- b) **It's a dialogue not monologue** – Listen more than you talk. Learn the art of asking thoughtful questions and listening to the reply. Be ready to either, ask for clarification, answer with care and grace or ask for more time to find the answer.

Questions which may help to open discussion.

What do you think of the ads?
Do you ever think about the spiritual side of life?

Have you ever had an experience that you believe was God's action or work?
What holds you back from considering personal faith?
How would you describe your beliefs about God?
What would stop you following Jesus?

c) Be ready with some answers to the most common questions

There are many questions people have which they believe no one else has ever thought of or that no one can answer. While there is an endless list of possible questions there are some basic ones that come up on a regular basis. Learning answers to these questions will help you in the process of dialogue.

It is important to remember that you are not seeking to argue someone into being a Christian. It is all about relationship and dialogue as you explore together the questions of faith. You may be able to answer all their questions but this will not bring someone to the point of accepting Christ. The older method was one of using logic and piling up all the answers so that the person would just give in under the weight of argument. Younger generations and our community now, want personal relationships and to have a deep sense of connection rather than simply believing something in their heads. It seemed more usual in the past that people 'believed' then 'belonged'. Now it is the other way round. People want to 'belong' before they can 'believe'.

Questions that come up regularly are:

- Has science disproved God?
- What about Genesis and Evolution?
- How do we know the Bible is historical?
- Is the New Testament reliable?
- Is the Bible made up?
- Is the resurrection of Jesus myth or miracle?
- How can there be a God of love when there is so much suffering?
- Why doesn't God stop all the suffering?
- Don't all roads lead to God?

We have included detailed answers to these nine questions on our web site and on the enclosed CD.

d) Are they ready to respond?

If the discussion is very positive and the individual is open to the concept of personal faith and response to Jesus, then it is both right and responsible to ask if they are ready to pray a prayer of personal commitment. It is important that each person makes this decision free from pressure and only constrained by the Holy Spirit.

There is a short and helpful prayer on p 53 of the JAAL book. The wording of the prayer is not as important as the attitude of the person praying. As we have already indicated the important issues are.

- 1) Sense of genuine remorse in turning to and seeking God
- 2) Taking responsibility for ignoring or rebelling against God
- 3) Asking for forgiveness
- 4) Accepting Jesus' death and resurrection for themselves
- 5) Putting their life into God's hands

5. What to do during the Campaign

Aim – To give practical and clear encouragement of what the participants should focus on during the campaign.

The four key areas of activity are to– Pray, connect, invite and follow up.

a) Pray

Commit people you know to prayer. List at least five people you would like to see impacted by the Gospel on the JAAL prayer card provided. Pray that God will touch their lives. Pray for opportunities to speak with them. Pray that they will attend an event during the campaign where they can hear the gospel. Pray for an opportunity to give them the JAAL book and that in reading it they will be moved to seek God.

b) Connect

We have said that the campaign is to raise interest in Jesus and Christian faith so that people will take steps to find out more. During the campaign there will be many people who will be moved to consider Jesus but not moved enough to act. This is where the Church has to be proactive in connecting with people and using the opportunity that the campaign brings to talk about Jesus.

As people consider the campaign some of the responses will be negative, that doesn't matter, it still gives the opportunity for discussion. The media campaign is there to create the environment and it is up to every Christian in every church to take the concept of the media campaign and make it personal for their friends, families and work colleagues.

c) Invite

Invite those you are seeking to impact to a suitable event. If your church is running such an event invite them along and go with them. If your church does not have a suitable event go to the website www.jesusallaboutlife.com.au and review the churches events section and look for a suitable event at a local church to take these people to.

Don't just invite your friends to events. Invite them along to your church and help them become part of the Christian community. As we have already said, many people find it easier to belong than believe and the Christian community is on most occasions the best place to nurture personal faith.

d) Follow up

Follow up will occur in two ways.

Firstly there is follow up you can do with your own contacts. As well as inviting people to events, it will be very important to invite them to one of the many follow up courses which will be run by the participating churches.

Be sure you attend with those you invite. There will be 'Jesus. All about Life' courses in several churches which will be five weeks in length. There will also be other churches running courses such as Alpha, Lifeworks and Introducing God. While these courses may be a little longer they are all great opportunities to help people come to personal faith.

Secondly you may be asked to follow up contacts that come to your church via the media campaign. When doing this it is important to keep the following in mind.

- 1) They have expressed interest in the book and campaign, but have not committed to become a Christian. You are there to connect with them and encourage them into the next step of either an event or a follow up course.
- 2) Be sure to ask and listen. Find out the level of their interest, ask questions about their present belief, discover what it is that has led them to ask for more information
- 3) If the opportunity comes up and you sense it is right, share the gospel message in the conversation and help them understand what it is to become a Christian.
- 4) Invite them to consider coming to one of the many follow up courses, as mentioned above, that will be available.

Your overall aim in this follow up is to help connect those who are interested to both information about faith and people of faith so that the seed of the Gospel has the best opportunity to bear fruit.

Appendix

Contents:

- Writing your own faith story.
- How to access the papers that address nine of the most common questions people ask about Jesus, the Bible and why they don't believe.
- Powerpoint slides – copy of handout sheet
- CD. The enclosed CD contains this document and all nine apologetic papers as PDF files. It also contains the Powerpoint presentation used in the training.

Writing your own story of faith

Your Journey

A personal testimony creates the desire for a person to hear God's Gospel. You should never doubt the power of your journey with God. It doesn't matter if you have been a follower of Jesus all your life, or just part of your life. Your journey with God is important and God will use it.

God has called you into an intimate relationship with himself. The Apostle Paul highlights this for us by stating, "*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be Holy and blameless in his sight*" (Ephesians 1:4)

Your testimony is powerful, because it is the reality of God behind your journey that makes it powerful.

The first step is to decide between an "always believed model", or a "before and after model"?

Always Believed

This is for a person who has come into a friendship with God from a young age. Answer the following questions **honestly**:

What does my friendship mean to me today?

Reflect on what it means to journey with God. Jesus said, "*I have come that you may have life, and have life to the full*" (John 10:10). Communicate how being in a relationship with God is Life to the Full. Fullness of life can be expressed in your attitudes, values, actions, relationships, how God gives you strength, significant, intimacy, friendship, defeat or anxiety, inner-satisfaction, guidance etc.

Illustrate what your friendship means to you.

Use specific examples that will bring the above information to life.

Include this statement, '*the best thing about my relationship with God, is that I am certain that when I die I will be in God's heaven*'.

You don't have to say this but Jesus does say in John 6:47, "*he who believes in me has eternal life*".

"*May I ask you a question?*" It is really important that you ask for permission before you share God's Gospel.

Before and After

This model is for those who can remember a time when they were not in a friendship with God. This means that they have a “before and after” experience of God.

What was life like before I entered into a relationship with God?

Reflect on your values, direction in life and lifestyle. Be careful not to get into too much detail, how you felt etc.

Illustrate with a specific example, what life was life for you

Then I entered into a friendship with God! How did this happen?

What does my friendship mean to me today?

Reflect on what it means to journey with God. Jesus said *“I have come that you may have life, and have life to the full”* (John 10:10). Communicate how being in relationship with God is Life to the Full. Fullness of life can be expressed in your attitudes, values, actions, relationships, how God gives you strength, significance, intimacy, friendship, defeat or anxiety, inner-satisfaction, guidance etc.

Illustrate what your friendship means to you.

Use specific examples that will bring the above information to life.

Include this statement, *‘the best thing about my relationship with God is that I am certain that when I die I will be God’s heaven’*. You don’t have to say this, but Jesus does say in John 6:47, *“he who believes in me has eternal life”*.

“May I ask you a question?” It is really important that you ask for permission before you share God’s Gospel.

(Adapted from ‘Finding Your Voice’ by Paul Summers, Gymea Baptist Church)

Answering the tough questions

Our web site has nine papers that deal with the following topics. Rather than include them here – there are more than 30 pages in total – our web site gives you two options.

- (i) View the paper on-line
- (ii) Download the paper as a Word document

Here is the index off the web site. To get to the Downloads section you will need to be registered. Then go to ‘Church Log-in’ enter your user name and password and the Resources page is on the left hand side menu.

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