

Helping Your Student at the Point of Decision

Helping Your Student at the Point of Decision

If your student seems to be struggling about this matter of choosing a relationship with Christ, you might talk about your relationship with your spouse or your best friend as an illustration. What makes your relationship especially meaningful is that this person had a choice to love you or not, to be committed to you or not. Ask your student: What would happen if you tried to force someone to love you? Your student should be able to answer that the person runs away, turns into an enemy, or becomes a robot, puppet, or slave. If someone “loves” because of fear, or in a relationship where strings are attached, can it truly be love? Arrangements can be made so there is obedience. But without choice, there can be no love.

God has not made us to be robots, puppets, or slaves. Only by giving us the ability to say “no” to Him could God have a truly loving relationship with us. Only in this way could He fulfill His purpose for us. So He will not force Himself upon us. He waits for us to respond to Him with a “yes.” Review Jesus’ words in Revelation 3:20.

Prayer at the Turning Point

As you use the *Knowing God Personally* tract to share your faith, you and your student will probably reach a pivotal moment. At this point you must be particularly sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as He works in the heart of your student, and in your own as well. This is where you give your student an opportunity to receive Jesus as his or her Savior.

It is important that you don’t rush boldly ahead of the Spirit and press your student into a decision before he or she is ready. Equally you must not timidly lag behind the Spirit when He has prepared the student to face this most important decision of his or her life. For these reasons, your silent prayers at this point are critical. Ask God to give you insight into your student’s heart and wisdom about the appropriate words to say and words to avoid. Ask Him also to tell you when the student needs silence in order to think and wrestle with God.

Likewise, ask the Holy Spirit to give your student the grace to understand the Gospel, the conviction of sin in his or her heart, an openness to receive God’s forgiveness, and a willingness to turn his or her life over to Jesus Christ as Lord.

If the Student Is Not Ready

- ◆ Demonstrate how you can have a life like Jesus.
- ◆ Don't push or crowd the student.
- ◆ If the student is open, gently help sort through his or her objection(s).
- ◆ Assure the student that this is a very big step and that it is good that he or she wants to be sure before taking it.
- ◆ Remind the student that this is a decision that affects his or her life forever, including life after death.
- ◆ The student needs to be sure that he or she is delaying for a good reason. Remind him or her that none of us knows for sure if we will be alive tomorrow.
- ◆ Assure the student that you will continue to be his or her friend regardless of whether he or she receives Jesus or not.
- ◆ Encourage the student to take the tract and review it on his or her own.
- ◆ Offer to meet again to answer any additional questions he or she may have.
- ◆ Provide other helpful literature or a Bible for the student's further investigation.
- ◆ Invite the student into a seeker Bible study or an opportunity to watch the *Jesus* video with you.
- ◆ Pray for your student daily. Whether or not you should pray openly with him or her about this decision depends on your sense of where he or she is spiritually.
- ◆ Be prepared to go ahead with the response section of *Knowing God Personally* whenever your student is ready.
- ◆ Also be prepared to learn that the student has received Christ on his or her own. In this case, rejoice with the student, review the response section to make sure the decision is genuine, and take him or her through the "Beginning With Christ" panel of the tract to help establish and launch the new believer in his or her just-started relationship with the Lord.

When the Student Is Ready

If the student says there is no good reason not to invite Jesus into his or her heart:

- ◆ Ask if the student would like to do so right now.
- ◆ Direct the student to the example prayer in *Knowing God Personally*.

- ◆ Explain that prayer is just talking to God, simply telling Him what is on your mind and in your heart.
- ◆ Encourage the student to pray in his or her own words. Just make sure that your student's commitment includes all the elements of the example prayer.
- ◆ If the student hesitates, suggest that he or she say the words of the example prayer. You can even offer to say each part of the prayer first and have the student repeat it afterwards. But stress that the words are not a magic formula. It is the understanding and commitment of his or her heart that is important.
- ◆ If the student still hesitates, then follow the advice in the previous subsection on "If the Student Is Not Ready."

Follow-Up Guidelines

- ◆ Pray with the new believer.
- ◆ Tell him or her that doubt is not unusual for new believers.
- ◆ God says that we can know that we have eternal life. Review John 5:12–13.
- ◆ Testify to the faithfulness of God and His Word in your own life.
- ◆ Review with the student the "Walking with God" list at the end of the *Knowing God Personally* tract.
- ◆ Commit to discipling your student, including going through a Bible study for new believers with him or her. See the "ISI's Evangelism Pathway and Other Resources" subsection on page 26 for suggested Bible studies. If you are not in a position to disciple the student, be sure to make suitable arrangements for someone else to do so.
- ◆ Arrange for your student's participation in Christian worship.
- ◆ Help the student evaluate how much and in what way his or her decision should be made known to others. His or her family or home country situation might require great prudence. Quietly get advice from other Christians experienced in such places as China and Muslim countries.
- ◆ Make a copy of the **Profession of Faith Form**, fill it out, and give it to your Church Team leader.
- ◆ Ask your Church Team to pray for your student, emphasizing confidentiality when necessary.
- ◆ If the new believer is leaving for a new location, including going home, ask permission to arrange follow up for him or her. Make sure that the student understands that this means that a Christian member of the ISI network will get in touch with him or her at the new location. Assure the student that this person will take as much care in making the contact as the new situation requires.

- ◆ If the student consents, then fill out a photocopied **Student Transfer Form or Returnee Information Form. You fill out the form, not the student.** Mailing instructions are on the forms.