

The Cycle of Personal Evangelism



Overview: Jesus used the practical illustration of planting and harvesting to describe the process of making a disciple of Jesus Christ (Mark 4:3-8, 13-20; Luke 10:2). In order to make a disciple we need to: (1) Prepare the Soil; (2) Sow the Seed; (3) Cultivate; (4) Harvest; and (5) Preserve & Reproduce. Not until the new disciple is faithfully following Christ and working for the salvation of others has the process been completed. Soul-winning is a cycle, and we must always be planning for the next stage of that cycle in order to see fruit from our labours.

1A. Prepare the Soil – Discussion Questions

- What is the soil that we have the privilege of preparing? *Mark 4:15*

- How are people prepared to receive the seed (God's Word)? *Acts 10:38* _____

- What are some of the characteristics of those who are prepared to receive God's Word? *Matthew 5:6; John 4:9, 11*

- What is the purpose of soil preparation in the cycle of personal evangelism? *Mark 4:3*

1B. Prepare the Soil of My Own Heart

- a. It is critical to personally know the Lord before venturing out into His vineyard.

b. Personal questions that should be asked:

- Do I spend daily, significant time in personal devotion to God?
- Am I harbouring any grudge or unforgiveness toward a fellow brother or sister?
- Is there any unsundered area in my life?
- It is important to address such matters lest we misrepresent Christ while trying to spread His gospel

1C. Prepare the Soil for Others – Notes and Plans

- a. Earnestly intercede for those you are trying to win.
- b. Mingle with people and show an interest in them. Be social and hospitable.
- c. Use FORT (Family, Occupation, Religion, Testimony) or TOPICS (Today’s Situation [how was your day?], Occupation, Place/Partner/Parents, Interests, Current Events [News], Share Testimony) to make friends and become acquainted.
- d. Show sympathy by listening.
- e. Minister to needs by giving gifts, doing kind deeds, relieving suffering, and helping others.
- f. Win confidence by gaining trust.
- g. REMEMBER that preparing the soil for planting does not have to be a lengthy process. In fact, we will often need to test the condition of the soil by moving ahead to seed planting. The process of developing the soil will continue throughout the cultivation process.
- h. Success in soil preparation is not fully determined until the seed is planted and begins to bear fruit.

“As the garden must be prepared for the natural seed, so the heart must be prepared for the seed of truth.” – *Adventist Home*, p.145

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” – *Christian Service*, p. 119

How I plan to prepare the soil of a few potential interests (friends, neighbours, family members, etc):

Name of Interest: _____ Soil Preparation Activity: _____

Name of Interest: _____ Soil Preparation Activity: _____

Name of Interest: _____ Soil Preparation Activity: _____

Name of Interest: _____ Soil Preparation Activity: _____

2A. Sow the Seed – Discussion Questions

- What is the seed we are to sow? *Luke 8:11* _____
- Why is it essential to sow the seed of the Word of God, particularly the Three Angels’ Messages? *Romans 10:13-15*

- Different types of plants grow in different types of soil. How would this principle apply to what we share with others? *Isaiah 50:4; Matthew 24:45*
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- What different ways can be utilised to sow God's Word? _____
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2B. Sow the Seed – Notes and Plans

- Share your personal testimony, but keep it short and interesting.
- When giving literature, consider full message literature and ongoing lessons or DVDs. Remember, the object of sowing is to begin the process of cultivation.
- Scatter tracts and Bible prophecy website cards, etc.
- Give invitations to Bible study groups, Biblical marriage seminars, finance seminars, etc.
- Grip them with the distinct prophetic message of the Seventh-day Adventist Church!

“The light that Christ revealed to His servant the prophet [John] is for us. In His revelation are given the three angels’ messages... In it are warnings against the wickedness that would exist in the last days, and against the mark of the beast. We are not only to read and understand this message, but to proclaim it with no uncertain sound to the world. By presenting these things revealed to John, we shall be able to stir the people.

“The usual subjects on which the ministers of nearly all other denominations dwell will not move them. We must proclaim our God-given message to them. The world is to be warned by the proclamation of this message. If we blanket it, if we hide our light under a bushel, if we so circumscribe ourselves that we cannot reach the people, we are answerable to God for our failure to warn the world.” – *Manuscript Releases*, 19, p. 41.

“We should do as Christ did. Wherever He was, in the synagogue, by the wayside, in the boat thrust out a little from the land, at the Pharisee’s feast or the table of the publican, He spoke to men of the things pertaining to the higher life. The things of nature, the events of daily life, were bound up by Him with the words of truth...

“So it should be with us. Wherever we are, we should watch for opportunities of speaking to others of the Saviour. If we follow Christ’s example in doing good, hearts will open to us as they did to Him. Not abruptly, but with tact born of divine love, we can tell them of Him who is the ‘chiefest among ten thousand,’ and the One ‘altogether lovely.’ This is the very highest work in which we can employ the talent of speech. It was given to us that we might present Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour.” – *Christian Service*, p. 119.

What seed sowing activity could I use with a few of my potential interests:

Name of Interest: _____ Seed Sowing Activity: _____

Name of Interest: _____ Seed Sowing Activity: _____

Name of Interest: _____ Seed Sowing Activity: _____

Name of Interest: _____ Seed Sowing Activity: _____

3A. Cultivate – Discussion Questions

- *Dictionary Meaning:* ‘to promote or improve the growth of (a plant, crop, etc.) by labour and attention.’
 - Once the seed has been sown, cultivation is needed to develop the growing plant for harvest. Cultivation is the longest of any of the stages in the cycle of personal evangelism.
 - Cultivation involves personal instruction in the Word, nurturing their growth in Christ, spiritual mentoring, and relationship deepening. It is an intensely personal and rewarding work!
 - Discuss the spiritual parallels for the following cultivating activities:
 - **Watering** – Continued prayer for the Holy Spirit to reach their heart.
 - **Fertilising** – Regular Bible study, helping them apply the Word to practical areas of their life, social activities, seminars, etc.
 - **Weeding** – Protecting from false doctrines, extremes, well-meaning but fanatical people, etc.
 - What important decision will lead your interest from the cultivation to the harvest stage?
Acts 2:37-38
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3B. Cultivate – Notes and Plans

- a. Cultivation involves Bible study in some form (personal study, DVD drop-off, correspondence, small group, Sabbath school class, etc.)
- b. Personal Bible studies given by the laity, previously called “Bible readings” in the SDA Church, have a wonderful history in our movement. They are not only part of our beginning but will also play a significant part in the finishing of the work!
- c. Personal Bible studies are perfectly calculated to reach hearts:
 - i. Power of the Word – God’s Word has the power to convert hearts
 - ii. Power of Coming Close – In Bible study you come close to people and thus lower their defenses.
 - iii. Power of Testimony – In a Bible study you have opportunity to share your personal testimony in order to inspire faith in God and His Word.
- d. Many benefits of giving personal Bible studies:
 - i. It is more than information transfer. Those you study with form a deep bond with you because you care about their eternal future.
 - ii. They feel supported as they face challenges in following Jesus and Bible truth.
 - iii. Helps guarantee that they will stay in the church after their baptism because of your love and care for them
- e. The goal of the cultivation stage is to help an interest make decisions to follow Christ and Bible truth. To bring about these decisions: (1) Stir conviction by sharing the Bible; (2) Respond to evidences of conviction (anger, avoidance, joy, fear, etc.) quickly; (3) Heighten desire by sharing the beauty and attractions of Christ, the rewards of following Him, and the consequences of rejecting truth; (4) Minimise obstacles to following the truth by speaking of faith and confidence in Christ (share stories of those who boldly stepped out for Christ – both biblical and modern ones); and (5) Appeal for decisions!

Who can I cultivate through Bible studies and what form of Bible studies will I use?

Name of Interest: _____ Form of Study: _____

Name of Interest: _____ Form of Study: _____

Name of Interest: _____ Form of Study: _____

Name of Interest: _____ Form of Study: _____

4A. Harvest – Discussion Questions

- Baptism signifies the washing away of our sinful past. It is the outward symbol of an inward commitment to follow Christ and the teachings of His Word. When an interest genuinely makes this commitment, it can be likened to being harvested. How can we know when an interest is genuinely ready for the harvest of baptism? *Mark 4:20; Matthew 3:8*

- How would keeping the harvest (baptism) in view affect the way that we cultivate (Bible study)?

4B. Harvest – Notes

- a. Preparing for baptism is about:
 - i. The Heart – Is there a genuine love for Jesus and His Word?
 - ii. The Mind – Is there an accurate understanding of the fundamental teachings of God's Word?
 - iii. The Life – Is the practical life in harmony with the teachings of God's Word?
- b. Use a baptismal preparation card to ensure that all topics are covered.
- c. When preparing someone for baptism, Bible truth should not only be understood but practised. Instead of simply asking if your candidate understands a Bible truth, ask if they have begun practising that truth. For example, after reviewing how the Bible teaches we ought to keep the Sabbath, you might say, "Have you begun keeping the Sabbath in this way?"
- d. Sometimes however practical decisions to follow Bible teachings are not made until preparing for baptism.

"The test of discipleship is not brought to bear as closely as it should be upon those who present themselves for baptism. It should be understood whether those who profess to be converted are simply taking the name of Seventh-day Adventist, or whether they are taking their stand on the Lord's side, to come out of the world and be separate and touch not the unclean thing. When they give evidence that they fully understand their position, they are to be accepted. But when they show that they are following the customs and fashions and sentiments of the world, they are to be faithfully dealt with. If they feel no burden to change their course of action, they should not be accepted as members of the church. The Lord wants those who compose His church to be true, faithful stewards of the grace of Christ." – *Pastoral Ministry*, p. 164.

"Public opinion favors a profession of Christianity. Little self-denial or self-sacrifice is required in order to put on a form of godliness, and to have one's name enrolled upon the church book. Hence many join the church without first becoming united to Christ. In this Satan triumphs. Such converts are his most efficient agents. They serve as decoys to other souls. They are false lights, luring the unwary to perdition." – *Evangelism*, p. 319.

“God would be better pleased to have six thoroughly converted to the truth than to have sixty make a profession and yet not be truly converted.” – *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 104.

5A. Preserve & Reproduce – Discussion Questions

- When Jesus gave the Great Commission to go and make disciples, who was He speaking to? Who is the “them” in Matthew 28:18?

Therefore, the _____ were called to make _____.

- Baptism (harvest) is a symbol of being born of the Holy Spirit. What does the Spirit make someone when He comes upon them? *Acts 1:8*

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- What happens to a newly baptised member if the special attention given them in the cultivation and harvesting stages suddenly ends? How does the new member suffer? How does the work of God suffer?
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5B. Preserve & Reproduce – Notes

- a. Those newly baptised are new disciples in God’s church, called to walk with Christ and serve with Christ. They need to be mentored in how to do this.
- b. Mentoring a newly baptised disciple can be facilitated by the *Discipleship Journey Log*. This log tracks the process of developing the new disciple in personal spiritual growth, Bible doctrines, family life, Christian lifestyle, Adventist history and organisation, and biblical ordinances. It will also guide the training of the new disciple in personal soul-winning labour and in how to labour within the church.

“New converts will need to be instructed by faithful teachers of God’s Word, that they may increase in a knowledge and love of the truth, and may grow to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. They must now be surrounded by the influences most favorable to spiritual growth.” – *Evangelism*, p. 337

“The new believers are to be carefully instructed, that they may have an intelligent knowledge of the various lines of work committed to the church of Christ.” – *Evangelism*, p. 338

“When men and women accept the truth, we are not to go away and leave them and have no further burden for them. They are to be looked after. They are to be carried as a burden upon the soul, and we must watch over them as stewards who must render an account.” – *Evangelism*, p. 345

“When souls are converted, set them to work at once. And as they labour according to their ability, they will grow stronger. It is by meeting opposing influences that we become confirmed in the faith ... Teach the newly converted that they are to enter into fellowship with Christ, to be His witnesses, and to make Him known to the world.” – *Evangelism*, p. 355, 356

Jesus said to them, “Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.: Mark 1:17