



“Say What?” Leaders Council Training Resource

Introduction

As CBS leaders, we want to be clearly understood and communicate the message of God’s love in language and through methods that successfully reach those we shepherd. The primary goal of this training resource is to examine the way we speak and listen to be sure we are most effectively communicating the Word of God and the love of God.

Who are the people in our communities?

A recent Barna Research study showed the following:

- 78% of Americans describe themselves as Christians
- In the last three years, people fitting “post-Christian” descriptors rose by 7% from 37% to 48%
- Post-Christian means that these people
 - Do not consider their faith important
 - Have never made a commitment to God nor do they pray
 - Believe there are inaccuracies in the Bible
 - Have not attended church or any religious activity in the last year
 - Do not read the Bible
- In spite of their self-description of 78% as Christian, 48% of those around us are living secularly in all beliefs and practices
- 45% of all American adults are completely unchurched and have little or no exposure to church, God, and Jesus

We can lament these statistics or become energized about reaching the people in our communities.

Part One: Christian Speak

We use many words and phrases that are completely misunderstood by those who have no Christian experience and by those believers who have come out of this type of background. Familiar words like fellowship, repentance, sin, grace, Savior, Lord or faith. Words like “non-Christian” or “believer” hold no meaning or a very different meaning for those outside our churches and classes.

Many phrases Christians use sound like a foreign language to those we encounter. Consider these:

- That was a divine appointment.
- It was a God thing.
- Have you put on your armor?
- They are still drinking milk, not ready for meat.
- I’m praying the blood of Jesus over that.
- His words are anointed.

God gave me the words I needed.
I know that His word will not return void.
We want your name to be written in the Lamb's book of Life.
I'm sure the Holy Spirit led me
Are you a child of the King?
I'm praying a hedge of protection around you.
God works in mysterious ways, He's still on the throne.
We are walking the walk and talking the talk.
Need to be sure everything is in moderation.
I know God is leading me in this direction.
Are you in the Word?
Justification, exegesis, dispensation, conversion

Activities

1. Ask leaders to add to that list other phrases or words that can be misunderstood.
2. Give small groups one of the following scenarios (or create one) and ask them to discuss how to communicate in words all would fully understand.
 - Scenario #1 – Four friends meet for coffee, two are believers, two are not. The two friends who are not Christians begin to ask questions about why the others spend so much time on things related to their faith? Why is it so important? Isn't Jesus just a good man?
 - Scenario #2 – A core leader meets a group member for lunch. The group member is very confused about some of the words from last week's lesson – sanctification, justification and grace.
 - Scenario #3 – Two new friends are getting to know each other. One has just been through a personal tragedy. The other can't figure out how he/she is continuing to believe and rely on God in the midst of these terrible circumstances.
3. After the groups have discussed how to respond in understandable language, do some role-playing. Have members of each group come forward and demonstrate how the conversations could go. After each role-play, ask the audience to offer additional suggestions.

Part Two: Generational Speak

Technology has changed the way that all of us communicate regardless of our age. As leaders, we are called to love and speak truth to all of those around us whether they are 8 or 80. How do we find the most effective ways to be in touch, share information and develop relationships with those we shepherd? What is the solution when most people no longer answer their phones? How can we use the tools available to us to most effectively reach out?

Meaningful communication requires intentionality, sometime takes more work and embraces the use of newer tools—social media, texting, messaging. It requires that we take time to understand what communicates best to each generation. Different age groups need each other – for the energy, wisdom, creativity and experience that each brings. Do we love each other enough to communicate in the way most meaningful to the other? Are we willing to take the time to think about each communication, its purpose and the best tool to send it?

Activities

1. Ask leaders to openly discuss the ways they most like to receive communication.
2. Ask leaders to shout out situations where they have difficulty communicating with those they shepherd. Let the group respond to each situation recommending different ways to be in touch and develop relationship.
3. Discuss as a group the sensitivity that is required when communicating with different generations. Consider the fact that GenXers and Millennials have an overabundance of interaction through texting and social media yet are the two generations that long most for authentic, meaningful relationships. How, as leaders, do you reach them?

Conclusion

The greatest resource in caring for the members of any CBS class isn't Facebook, Twitter, texting, emailing or phone calling – it's you. Be the CBS leader who takes the time to understand those you shepherd. Communicate the truth of Scripture person to person in the most effective ways possible.