

Dealing with objections and questions in witnessing encounters

Why?

Dealing with objections and questions is an important part of the witnessing process. However, dealing with these hesitations should not cause reservation about your ability to witness. After this session, you will know how to respond when objections and questions arise.

What?

This session will help you understand the principles of dealing with objections and questions during a witnessing experience. You will be able to recite the complete Model Presentation Outline and talk your way through the Model Presentation.

How?

You will achieve this goal by:

- Writing in your own words two principles to use in answering objections and questions.

- Recalling five essential guidelines for facing a negative response.

- Identifying the four-step procedure for dealing with objections.

- Writing the appropriate response to a given situation.

- Writing your response to frequently stated objections by non-Christians.

- Identifying appropriate Scriptures to use in response to objections and questions.

- Recalling selected objections.

- Reviewing the Model Presentation Outline and the Model Presentation Dialogue found in Appendices 3 and 5 of this manual.

It is important in the witnessing process that objections and questions be dealt with as they arise. It is equally important to remember that the Holy Spirit who empowers during the witnessing experience will also guide at this point.

Objections and questions are not encountered frequently. Some objections and questions that occur in actual witnessing experiences are discussed. Principles for dealing with these are given. Dealing with objections and questions is a learned skill.

Objections and questions may be answered even before they are stated or asked. At least two principles may help in this situation.

IF A LISTENER HAS AN HONEST QUESTION, THE GOSPEL PRESENTATION WILL PROBABLY ANSWER IT

Some objections and questions are reactions, not against the gospel but against the spirit and attitude of the witness. Some are actually negative reactions from the lost person's heart against the challenge of the gospel, or they may be resentments against what is interpreted as pressure or intrusion.

Five guidelines will help deal with objections and questions arising during the gospel presentation.

1. NEGOTIATE-DO NOT ARGUE

Handling objections and questions is not the same as trying to win an argument. It is more like negotiating. Negotiation seeks to avoid a win-lose situation and strives for a win-win situation.

For instance, what if the witnessing situation with Bob and Jack had gone something like this:

Jack: Bob, have you come to a place in your life that you know for certain that you have eternal life and that you will go to heaven when you die?

Bob: I don't believe in heaven.

Jack: Bob! You know there is a heaven. Don't be so defensive.

Bob: No, I really don't, and I don't think anyone can prove there is.

Jack: OK, I'll prove it to you right out of the Bible.

Bob: Don't be absurd. I don't believe the Bible. I don't necessarily accept it as proof for anything

As you can see, Bob succeeded in sending the conversation off on a tangent, and the gospel presentation was deserted. The conversation could have gone something like this:

Bob: I don't believe in heaven.

Jack: I can understand how you might feel that way, but I think we can both agree that many other important matters are involved. If there were a heaven, you would want to go there when you die, wouldn't you?

Bob: I guess I would.

Jack: Would it be all right if I told you how I gained an understanding about this and several other important related matters?

Bob: I guess so, if you want to.

Jack: Thank you. (Jack proceeds with the gospel presentation.)

Jack allows Bob to "win" by acknowledging that he can understand how he might think the way he does. He did not argue with him, but neither did he agree with him. The conversation did not get off track.

Bob doesn't have to believe in heaven at this point. The important thing is that Jack be able to present the gospel. Bob's statement may be just an attempt to divert the conversation.

Read the account of Jesus' witness to the woman at the well in John 4:6-29. Describe how she tried to divert the conversation and how Jesus responded.

2. AVOID EMOTIONAL CONFRONTATION

Because a person's faith is very personal, some people may be sensitive about these matters and become emotional when the conversation turns to personal faith in Christ. If an emotional confrontation occurs, the witness should make every effort to calm the situation.

When emotions become negatively strong, do not push the situation. People in this frame of mind do not listen to reason and are in no condition to listen to the gospel presentation.

These situations are rare. But if you find yourself in an emotional confrontation, stay calm and leave graciously.

3. ACCEPT THE OTHER PERSON AS AN EQUAL

Lost people tend to think that “church people” are goody-goody or self-righteous. The lost person may tend to feel insecure about his spiritual well-being and sensitive to the attitude of the witness toward him. Treat the lost person with utmost respect. Regardless of his social status or lifestyle, treat him with respect and dignity. The lost person will probably return that respect and dignity.

4. EXERCISE GENTLENESS.

If the lost person thinks you are trying to run over him or force him to do something, he will react with resentment and sometimes bitterness. This can be expressed in objections and questions. If you treat the person with gentleness, a negative reaction is less likely.

5. CHECK YOUR MOTIVATION.

While this does not require excessive self-analysis, remember that motivation often determines attitude and approach to others. Your motivation in trying to answer questions and objections should be love-not pride, obligation, or reputation.

Love is the only motive that will adequately express Christ’s mind. If Christians love through Christ’s love, the lost person will not be dealt with harshly or unkindly. If a problem arises in the witnessing discussion, and you are operating with a love motivation, you will seek the best solution without embarrassing the other person.

The Bible, in 1 Peter 3:13-16, deals with attitudes and motivations. Read the verses carefully and make any notes you feel will help you handle objections and questions.

Two principles have been discussed that can help you answer objections and questions in a witnessing encounter. Write the two principles in your own words.

1. _____
2. _____

(Refer to the earlier discussion to check your answers)

Five guidelines to remember when faced with a negative response have also been discussed. Recall these guidelines by looking at each key word below and writing the guideline it suggests.

1. NEGOTIATE _____

- 2.AVOID _____
 - 3.EQUAL _____
 - 4.GENTLENESS _____
 - 5. MOTIVATION _____
- (Refer to the earlier discussion to check your answers.)

We may assume that if a lost person understands the situation and has all the facts, he will accept Christ, but often this is not true. Even if people know what is right and best, they do not always do it. Why do people make excuses? Because they are sinners. Objections stem from a desire to cover up for self.

Unfortunately, no pat answers will satisfy every objection and make every lost person quickly accept Christ. However, these steps can be helpful in dealing with objections.

- Step One** Transition statements.
- Step Two** Convert the objection to a question.
- Step Three** Answer the question.
- Step Four** Continue with the gospel presentation.

Step One

Jack: I appreciate your frankness. Bob. You've obviously given this some thought. (This statement cushions the objections and allows the discussion to continue on a win-win basis. Jack shows that he accepts Bob although he has raised an objection. He has not challenged him or started an argument.)

Step Two

Jack: We could spend the next 50 years debating the validity of the Bible and still not agree. But, if we could both assume, for the sake of discussion, that the Bible is 100 percent true, what do you think it teaches about gaining eternal life?

Bob: Well, it teaches that you have to keep all those rules-like the Ten Commandments-and, I guess, live a life that deserves going to heaven.

Step Three

Jack: You know, Bob, a lot of people think that. But if only the people who keep the rules go to heaven, no one will make it. (This step carefully moves away from the objection and comes back to the message.)

Step Four

Jack: Bob, just for the sake of discussion, suppose you were standing before God right now and He asked you, "Why should I let you into My heaven?" What do you think you would say? (In this case the objection actually led into the gospel presentation. This often happens.)

Do you remember the four steps in our procedure for dealing with objections? Draw a line connecting each step with the correct answer.

Step One Answer the question

Step Two Transition statements

Step Three Continue with the gospel presentation

Step Four Convert the objection to a question

(Refer to the earlier discussion to check your answers. If you had problems, review the procedures.)

It is one thing to memorize an outline and another to use it in a witnessing experience. Pretend you are witnessing to a person who says, "I just couldn't live a Christian life. There are too many things I don't want to give up." Write the appropriate response you would give as you follow the four steps discussed previously. Supply what you think the lost person would say.

Step One

Transition statement:

Response of the lost person:

Step Two

Convert the objection to a question:

Response of the lost person:

Step Three

Answer the question:

Response of the lost person:

Step Four

Continue with the gospel presentation:

Since as many objections exist as there are people, no set of answers will magically fit all objections. To conclude this session, five of the most frequently stated objections will be identified, possible answers considered, and related Scripture verses suggested to help in your responses. These objections and verses should be written in the front of the Bible you use during witnessing visits. Read these verses before using them in answering objections; you need to know what each verse says. You are not expected to memorize answers to these objections; however, you should study and be able to respond to them in your own words. You should also know at least two Scripture references for each objection.

1. "I DO NOT KNOW ENOUGH TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN."

God does not expect a person to know everything about being a Christian. Although a person must know basic truths before becoming a Christian, these can be understood easily and accepted by faith. Salvation is not a matter of education, but willingness to acknowledge and confess sin, to repent and commit oneself to Jesus Christ. Share the simple steps involved in salvation and ask him to act on this knowledge.

2. "I DO NOT FEEL LIKE IT; I DO NOT HAVE ANY FEELING."

Many who use this excuse are from denominational backgrounds that equate conviction with an emotional feeling. Read John 16:8. The word "reprove" is translated "convince" in some translations and means that the Holy Spirit will help one to understand sin, righteousness, and judgment. If a person knows he is a sinner, he is already convicted and needs to come to Christ for salvation.

Feelings are not trustworthy guides. Feelings fluctuate from day to day, and feelings do not constitute truth. Feeling follows fact, which follows faith. You have faith a chair will hold you. You sit on it, and it holds you up. Now, you feel "held up" and secure. The act of faith, which placed you in the chair, produced feeling.

3. "I AM NOT READY-NOT NOW; I HAVE PLENTY OF TIME."

Even if a person could be sure of salvation at a future time, he and those people around him would be forever poorer for having waited. Why not accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior now? Delay is dangerous. It is disobedience to God's call to be saved now (2 Cor. 6:2). It leads to hardened hearts (Heb. 4:7). "Not now" is the present tense of "never." There is no guarantee of tomorrow (Prov. 27:1, Jas. 4:13-15).

4. "I HAD TOO MUCH RELIGION AS A CHILD."

As children, many people were forced to do things they did not want to do. However, what they were compelled to do may have been right and helpful. Children are told to go to bed, eat meals, and take baths. While we resented these things as children, we continue as adults to do them because they have proved beneficial. The Bible admonishes parents to "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6). Also read 2 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 6:1-4. Those, who had bad experiences

as children should not let these experiences prevent them from having the joy and freedom found in Jesus Christ.

5. "I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A CHRISTIAN."

Physical birth into the most religious family is no substitute for spiritual birth (John 3:1-16). We "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Becoming a Christian involves receiving Jesus Christ by a direct act of faith (John 1:12).

Take time now to review the five most frequently used objections.

In light of the previous discussion, how would you respond to the objection, "I don't know enough to become a Christian?" Write your answer in the space provided.

Read the following Scriptures and connect each verse to the objection it addresses.

Proverbs 27:1

John 16:8 "I have always been a Christian."

2 Corinthians 6:2 "I had too much religion as a child."

John 1:12 "I am not ready-not now; I have plenty of time."

Ephesians 6:1-4 I don't feel like it; I don't have any feeling."

2 Timothy 3:15

Romans 3:23

(Check your answers with the previous discussion.)

Write a letter to an unsaved friend who has written you saying he is not ready to become a Christian and he has plenty of time. Base your response on our previous discussion, including appropriate Scripture references.

Dear _____:

Read the following Scripture verses. Under each reference write the frequently offered objection and, in one sentence, your response. Please note the key word in parentheses.

John 16:8:

Objection: (feel)

Your Response:

John 1:12-13
Objection: (always)

Your Response:

(Refer to the previous discussion to check your answers.)

As long as Christians witness to lost people, they will be confronted with excuses.

Witnessing is much more than answering questions. Thus, answering excuses must always be secondary.

Remember to recite from memory the entire Model Presentation Outline. Enlist a friend or family member to listen as you share the dialogue. Use your personal testimony in the introduction.

Note: See Appendix 6 for further study. Nineteen additional objections are identified, possible answers considered, and related Scriptures suggested to help in your response.

In preparation for the time with your equipper, you will want to review, review, review each objection, your response, and Scriptures related to your response.