

# Building Bridges to People of Other Religions



## MISSION OBJECTIVES

- A. I will ask effective questions that will help me listen to and understand people's needs, values, and beliefs.
- B. I will draw closer to people of other religions by affirming the areas we have in common.



## TEAM CARE AND ACCOUNTABILITY (20 MINUTES)

1. Tell us about your one-day retreat. In what ways do you feel it helped you and what did you learn?
2. What other experiences have you had in following up on your cross-cultural friendships. (Keep using and referring to your *Contact Log*).
3. What did you learn from study #5 in *My Favorite Missionary* and the video clips?
4. What needs or challenges are you facing that we can pray for?
5. Pray together, especially for each other and the friends from other cultures whom you have met.



## PRESENTATION (17:06 MINUTES)

**WATCH:** *Building Bridges to People of Other Religions*. Take notes using the following outline.

1. Four steps for witnessing to people of other religions:

**STEP #1** (a)\_\_\_\_\_.

**STEP #2** Affirm (b)\_\_\_\_\_.

**STEP #3** Share (c)\_\_\_\_\_ through (d)\_\_\_\_\_.

**STEP #4** Invite to (e)\_\_\_\_\_.

2. (a)\_\_\_\_\_ with the people on every point where you can consistently do so. Let them see that you love their souls, and want to be in (b)\_\_\_\_\_ with them so far as possible. If the love of Christ is revealed in all your efforts, you will be able to (c)\_\_\_\_\_ the seed of truth in some hearts; God will water the seed sown, and the truth will spring up and bear fruit to His (d)\_\_\_\_\_ (White 1946, 140).
3. Areas of the first angel's message that have similarities with other world religions:
4. The term 'Babylon' is derived from 'Babel,' and signifies (a)\_\_\_\_\_. It is employed in Scripture to designate the various forms of false or apostate (b)\_\_\_\_\_ (White 1911b, 381).
5. Areas of the second and third angels' messages that have similarities or points of contact with people of other world religions:



## DISCOVERY AND DISCUSSION (35 MINUTES)

1. What are your thoughts and feelings after hearing *Building Bridges to People of Other Religions*?
2. The Gospels record Jesus asking over one hundred questions. People like to be asked questions and have someone listen to their answers with true concern and interest. How can you tell from the eyes, posture, and words that someone is really listening (remember it can be different in various cultures)?
3. Listening is the best first step in witnessing because you can learn the person's values, beliefs, and needs. This will enable you to care and share in a relevant way. In groups of two, practice listening well as you ask your partner one or two of these questions. Make sure both of you ask and answer:
  - A. What do you most appreciate of the **values** your parents lived and taught?
  - B. What **beliefs** and practices are especially important to you in your religion?
  - C. What challenges are you facing in your life right now (**needs**)?
4. Individually choose one of the five scenarios below and imagine that you have just asked the three questions above to the person in the scenario. Read the description and write down his or her **values, beliefs, and needs**.  
(Make sure that the members of your team choose different scenarios from each other).

### SCENARIO #1: ANIMIST TATTOO ARTIST

*Teng is Hmong from the mountains of Laos in Southeast Asia working in Oroville, California as a tattoo artist. He often wears strings wrapped around his wrists. He explains to his friends, "We are a very close-knit community. The elders in my tribe put them on me and blessed me. This protects me from bad spirits." He complains about how expensive Hmong weddings and funerals are: "We have to make sure we do all the rituals just right, so we don't have problems with evil spirits. Of course, we also have to make everybody happy with good food and lots of it!" He frequently talks about the movies and television programs that he likes to watch. Most of them deal with magic, witches, and spirits. "These things are real," he says, "But most people think they are just pretend." He has two sons he loves very much. "I can't imagine if anything bad ever happened to them," he tells you. "Their school is not safe. I worry about them whenever they are out of my sight."*

**Values:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Beliefs:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Needs:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### SCENARIO #2: BUDDHIST MONK

*In the mall in Adelaide, Australia every week there is a Buddhist monk named Suphaap. He asks for donations to help his monastery pass on the dharma, or words of truth. He tells people that his beliefs are very simple. Life is full of suffering and suffering comes because we want things. We desire what is bad, and it messes up our lives. We want what is good, but nothing lasts forever. That's why we suffer. Suphaap has done all he could to get rid of his desires, bad and good. He gave away all his possessions, chose to be single, and stopped eating each day by noon. He spends his time doing good works and meditating on what he calls the "true reality." This, he tells you, is the way to find peace. Suphaap is overweight and does not feel very good. In fact, he has diabetes and has not been able to lose weight because of all the delicious meals people feed him as part of earning merit for themselves. He really wants to become a vegetarian, but he finds it too difficult.*

**Values:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Beliefs:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Needs:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**SCENARIO #3: HINDU APARTMENT MANAGER**

*Aarushi immigrated years ago to England from northeast India. She manages the community programs for a chain of apartment complexes. She loves vegetarian cooking shows and she says she does not eat meat because she believes in reincarnation and does not want to destroy any life and have it affect her with bad karma in a future life. At her house, she has a shrine that includes an image of a god that looks like a mythical elephant. Aarushi worships this Hindu god, Ganesh, hoping she will be blessed enough to own her own apartment complex someday. Prayer is an important part of her life, and she asks for help before she does any new business venture. She knows that the picture of Ganesh is just a symbol of his power and his desire to bless those devoted to him. She says that although there are many gods in India, they really are all one. In fact, everything is one, and our duty is to enter into that harmony. Though she is very busy, it is still important to her to go to the temple and offer incense and various gifts, seeking blessing and protection. Aarushi admits, "In my busyness I am often impatient with my tenants. They are so careless with the apartments that I have several times lost my temper and then lost my customers. I have to find a way to cool down my heart."*

**Values:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Beliefs:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Needs:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**SCENARIO #4: JEWISH TOURIST**

*Azarel is a Jewish tourist visiting Yosemite National Park in California. He is quite devout in his religious practice and is headed out of the park on Friday to find a city where there is a synagogue so that he can enjoy the Sabbath. He has been having a hard time finding places to eat because he must have kosher food. Azarel is in the United States visiting his children and grandchildren, whom he loves very much. He is disturbed that while most of his family members still follow the traditions they grew up with, one of his sons no longer believes in God. He and his son have not spoken for six years because of a serious argument. "Our traditions are important," he says. "Our laws are essential, but it is the knowledge of Adonai, the Creator God, that matters most." Azarel mentions his concerns about the hostility between Jews and Muslims and wishes that everyone could just live in peace. "Maybe that's why my son doesn't believe anymore," he wonders sadly. "There is too much fighting between religions, but what can we do?"*

**Values:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Beliefs:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Needs:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SCENARIO #5: MUSLIM COUPLE**

*Mudaser and M'saom are a Muslim couple living in Vancouver, British Columbia. She always wears a head covering. He often also dresses in a traditional outfit. When he talks about his religion he emphasizes that he believes in one God who created everything and is the only true God. He prays five times a day and fasts at Ramadan. He does not eat pig or drink alcohol. Mudaser says, "We are living in the time of the end and everyone should listen to what the prophet Mohammad taught about being prepared for the last days. I think everyone should live their life surrendered to this one true God." Mudaser and M'saom always offer tea to their guests and usually convince them to stay for a wonderful lunch of flat bread and curry. One day M'saom confides, "I have not told almost anyone else, but my husband lost his job and our credit cards are maxed out. I don't know how we are going to pay the rent."*

**Values:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Beliefs:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Needs:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. After listening to people, we want to communicate warm care. What we say can open or shut the door to more conversations. Why does affirming our similarities open the door for the gospel?

6. While you may or may not feel comfortable affirming anything about someone’s religion, there are likely some important values that they hold which you can affirm. Similarities draw us together and make our relationships strong enough to discuss differences. Read these examples:
- A. I love how your culture **values** being at peace with everyone.
  - B. I also **believe** there are things we cannot see that are real.
  - C. I too struggle to forgive my enemies (**need**).

Write similar sentences that you could use to respond to the person in the scenario you chose, affirming a value, a belief, and a need.

**YOUR SCENARIO:**

A. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. Share in twos or with your group about the person in your scenario and how you would affirm what you have in common.
8. What have you learned today and how will you use it this week?



**TEAM PRAYER** (10 MINUTES)

Pray together for God to give you divine appointments with people He is trying to reach; for Him to put a burden on your heart if there is a specific religious group He wants you to reach out to.

**PROMISES TO CLAIM:**

- ✔ *Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him (Psalm 126:5-6).*
- ✔ *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God (2 Corinthians 3:5).*

- ✔ *When we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to cooperate with One who knows no failure* (White 1900, 363).
- ✔ *Through much prayer you must labor for souls, for this is the only method by which you can reach hearts. It is not your work, but the work of Christ who is by your side, that impresses hearts* (White 1946, 342).



## ASSIGNMENTS (5 MINUTES)

1. What do you plan to do to follow up on any of the friendships you have developed? Stay diligent on updating the *Contact Log*. You will find it more and more useful for prayer and follow-up.
  
2. Visit the place of worship of another religion like a temple, synagogue or mosque. Fill out *Lesson 6 Field Activity: Worship and Beliefs* and be ready to share your experience with your team.
3. Mobilize and Multiply. Share with a friend or family member what you learned about listening and affirming areas that we have in common with people of other religions. Encourage him or her to join you as you visit a temple, synagogue or mosque.
4. Complete study #6 in *My Favorite Missionary* and focus your prayers on people of other "World Religions" in *Praying for the World Next Door*.
5. Watch at least one of the following video clips:
  - A. Elder Bryan Gallant shares the power of the gift of time; Mr. Luran Merginio tells about his experience in refugee ministry.
  - B. Elder Stephen Po tells what it was like to be a young refugee moving to America and how to help refugees thrive
6. Complete the form: *Field Report #6*.

## LESSON 6 FIELD ACTIVITY: WORSHIP AND BELIEFS

Choose a religion that you would like to know more about. It needs to be one that has a place of worship near you. Preferably it should be the religion of an international with whom you are becoming friends. You can ask him or her if you could visit and observe during their time of worship. You can also find places on the Internet by searching under your city or town for “places of worship,” and “Buddhist,” etc. You may be able to have someone meet you and help you understand more if you call in advance to ask about visiting.

Ask to be able to interview someone about the religion and worship practices. Then seek for answers to questions such as the following. Write at least a two-page summary of what you learned.

### OBSERVATIONS

1. The name of the place and the type of religion:
2. Describe the outside and inside of the worship place:
3. What did you observe people doing?
4. Of the things that were said, what did you understand?
5. What similarities did you see or hear to your own beliefs and style of worship?
6. What differences did you see or hear to your own beliefs and style of worship?
7. Describe your overall reaction, feelings and thoughts about this experience.

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What beliefs and practices are especially important to you in your religion?
2. What are the most important things that anybody who says they are a part of your religion should know and do?
3. How did your religion start?
4. Are there any important holy places in your religion and where are they?
5. What important holidays or ceremonies does your religion have?
6. What are the scriptures like and do people read them very much? (Do they understand what they read or chant?)
7. Do you believe in a God, gods, angels, ghosts, or spirits? Please tell me about it.
8. What do you think happens when people die?
9. What do you think people can do to help themselves have a better future life?



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FIELD REPORT #6  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date Due \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Church \_\_\_\_\_ Team Number \_\_\_\_\_

## BUILDING BRIDGES TO PEOPLE OF OTHER RELIGIONS

1. These are the people I spent time with this last week and what I did with them (begin or update a *Contact Log* for each person or family and keep the sheets in a binder):
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What I plan to do in the next week with my cross-cultural friends:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. The friend or family member with whom I shared what I learned and invited to do the same:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Someone or something I would like us to be praying about:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Things I want to remember or share with my team from the video clips, my completion of study #6 in *My Favorite Missionary*, and my focus on prayers for people of other "World Religions" in *Praying for the World Next Door*.