



Guidelines for short evangelistic talks

One of the best ways to learn to give evangelistic talks is by giving it a go! Therefore, as well as hearing sample evangelistic talks from experienced evangelists, one of the key parts of the FEUER conference will be the opportunity for every delegate to present a short evangelistic talk and receive constructive feedback.

The talk will be between **12-15 minutes in length**. This may be shorter than the length of time you would ordinarily speak for but please prepare accordingly and don't try to squeeze a longer talk into the shorter time. It is important that we keep to time when we speak. Going on longer than you have been asked is never good, especially in an evangelistic context.

It will help you as you prepare to have a **specific context** in mind where you might deliver such a talk. Obviously, it should be appropriate for students, but more specifically you might want to think about what type of event you would be speaking at? A lunch time talk? An evening meal? A Christmas celebration? etc. Please tell the small group about your intended context at the start as this will help them give feedback.

The more time you spend preparing the talk the more helpful the time will be for everyone. So please commit time to this before the conference. The program will be busy so don't expect time to do it when you are there.

Feel free to adapt something you have already done. Don't feel pressured to try to imitate others, we want to hear your unique style coming through your own personality.

It is always good for an evangelistic talk to have a **clear title** on the publicity. Often phrasing this as an **open question** will intrigue people. Therefore, please state the title of the talk to your small group so they know what you will be addressing. Pick a title that you think would intrigue students in the context that you work with? E.g. Is there any purpose to our pain? Is there more to life than being happy? Where can we find security in an uncertain world?

While the talk may not start with a Bible reading, we would like you to **engage with a Biblical text** somewhere during the talk. Often a good way to do this is by opening up the topic / question in a more general way before landing in a specific verse of passage to explain the gospel.

To help give feedback on the talks the groups will be asked to evaluate each talk according to **three categories**. It is therefore important to bear these in mind as you prepare the talk and ask how you will make sure that you are doing each.

- **Identification** – how well have you identified your intended audience (ie mindset, worldview, interest etc)? This can be done in many ways, for instance:
 - Anticipating the objections and questions of your audience.
 - Showing you understand your audience's worldview / beliefs and concerns
 - Using appropriate illustrations / quotes that would connect with your audience.
 - Avoiding Christian jargon and theological terminology.

- **Persuasion** – how effectively have you persuaded your hearer, rather than merely made assertions? There is both a destructive and constructive aspect to persuasion.
 - We want to deconstruct / critique alternative belief systems and show how they are neither true nor good. People need to see that their own belief systems don't account for and explain what is really important.
 - Constructively we want to present the gospel in a way that helps people to see that it is both true and wonderful.

- **Invitation** – how clearly and attractively have you invited the hearer to embrace the Christian position and make a practical step forward, eg talk to you afterwards, fill in a form, pick up literature, pray a prayer etc? Please make sure you allow time for this. We would like to hear you actually do this part of the talk rather than simply tell us what you would have done. This is a key part of the talk yet is all too often neglected.

In addition, we will comment on **structure**. It is vital that you create a clear structure for your talk. It does not have to be 3 points but the whole thing must have a shape and a sense of movement. Not only will this make listening easier, but it will be easier for you (subsequently) to alter your talk, add illustrations etc, if you have a clear structure in the first place.

Following each presentation, we will role-play as non-Christians and ask the speaker questions that he/she has generated during the talk. Therefore, you may want to try and anticipate what kinds of questions your talk may generate and how you would respond. Responses to questions should be short 1-2 minutes max.

This will be followed by peer comments on your talk according to the three categories a described above.

It can feel a little scary to do a talk when you know you will receive feedback in this way. It can also feel a little false as we know our audience are already believers. In fact, it can actually be easier to do it to people who are not Christians! However, please remember that however the talk goes, the ultimate approval we seek and need is not from our peers but from the Lord. He loves us however well or badly the talk goes and this should free us from some of the fear involved.

Feedback will both point out what we did well and where we can continue to grow and improve. We are all learning together so we shouldn't fear this but appreciate the opportunity to grow and develop in this key skill.

Many delegates find that this is one of the most enjoyable and profitable parts of the conference and we believe you will find it helpful too.

- Michael Ots 21/10/20