



THRESHOLDS OF CONVERSION

1 Initial Trust

“This is how all will know that you are my disciples: if you have love for one another.” -Jn 13:35

- A person is able to trust or has a positive association with Jesus Christ, the Church, a Christian believer, or something identifiably Christian.
- Trust is not the same as active personal faith. Trust does not indicate whether or not someone has ever really prayed or whether they have ever had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

Ways to help someone cross the threshold:

Form authentic personal relationships.

“We cannot evangelize what we do not love!”

2 Spiritual Curiosity

“Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty, or have to keep coming here to draw water.” -Jn 4:15

- A person finds himself intrigued by or desiring to know more about Jesus, his life, and his teachings or some aspect of the Christian faith. This curiosity can range from mere awareness of a new possibility to something quite intense.
- Nevertheless, a person at the threshold of curiosity is not yet open to personal change. Curiosity is still essentially passive, but it is more than mere trust. This is often mistaken for serious seeking, which is an active step rather than a passive response.

Ways to help someone cross the threshold:

Tell stories about Jesus’ life and your own relationship with Him.

Curiosity needs to be directed toward the person of Jesus Christ.

“You can easily quench inquiries by drowning a teaspoon full of curiosity with a gallon of answers.”

3 Spiritual Openness

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.” -Mt 7:21

- A person acknowledges to him or herself and to God that he or she is open to the possibility of personal and spiritual change. This is one of the most difficult transitions for a postmodern nonbeliever.
- Openness is not a commitment to change. People who are open are simply admitting they are open to the *possibility* of change.

Ways to help someone cross the threshold:

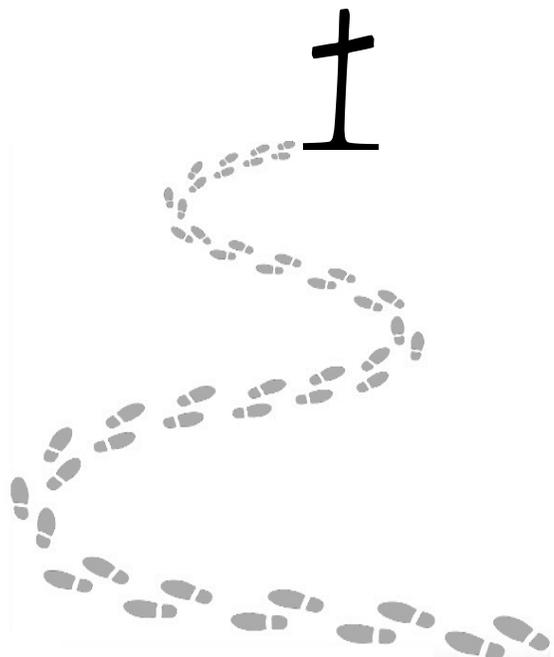
Witness to your own change.

Show them how you see God working in their life.

Have them ask God for a sign.

Ask if you can pray for their openness.

Ask them to pray to become more open.



4

Spiritual Seeking

“Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?” - Jn 1:38

- The person moves from being essentially passive to actively seeking to know the God who is calling him or her. It is, if you will, “dating with a purpose” but not yet marriage. Seekers are asking, “Are you the one to whom I will give myself?” At this stage, the seeker is engaged in an urgent spiritual quest, seeking to know whether he or she can commit to Christ in his Church.
- Although close, seeking is not yet intentional discipleship. A person may be on the boat and have all the equipment, but they are not yet fishing.

Ways to help someone cross the threshold:

Introduce the person to the works of mercy

Teach about different prayer traditions and practices

Help them confront and wrestle with personal sin

5

Intentional Discipleship

“Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God.” -Jn 6:68-69

- This is the decision to “drop one’s nets,” to make a conscious commitment to follow Jesus in the midst of his Church as an obedient disciple and to reorder one’s life accordingly.
- This is not the *end* of anything. Intentional discipleship is the beginning of a long and fruitful journey toward eternal life.

Ways to help someone cross the threshold:

Build virtuous habits.

Try to remove obstacles of personal sin.

Journey through healing and freedom from past wounds.

Threshold Assessment Questions

1. Do you believe in God?
2. What kind of God do you believe in? (Personal or impersonal)
3. Do you believe in the possibility of a relationship with this God?
4. Do you have a relationship with this God? What kind of relationship?
5. Are you a part of a religious tradition? Which tradition? Are you Christian?
6. Do you have a positive association with Jesus or the Faith?
7. Do you have a relationship with Jesus Christ? Do you pray? How do you pray?
8. Is your faith something that causes you to change how you live your life?