

Spiritual Conversation Starters

While we often want to have spiritual conversations with people, sometimes it is hard to know how to begin them. We want to share the Gospel and our stories, but we fear being intrusive, domineering or causing others to feel disrespected in the process. Because of these fears, and concerns about damaging relationships, we stay silent when many people would actually welcome a genuine conversation with us and the opportunity to have a deeper relationship.

What follows are many questions people have found helpful when they desire to start a spiritual conversation. However, for these to be effective, before asking any of these questions reflect on them ahead of time. Pick one and think through how you might answer the question in a way that enables you to share genuinely, from your heart, how the Gospel and/or how your relationship with God has changed because of the theme(s) or issues(s) the question raises.

For example, look at the first question. It helps you understand what another person's personal goals or hopes are for the year, and what is important to them. After they share their answer, there is a chance they might want to know how you view success and what you are shooting for this year. You can share a personal or professional goal and then add, "but I also would like to be more like Jesus. He responded in _____ ways (add something about Jesus that you admire), and I also want to be more like that this year." Then if the person is interested you can talk more about that aspect of Christ's character or things you've learned about Him in the gospels.

You can pick one question from the list and use it many times until you feel comfortable with it, and then transition to a new question. Or, since a list of many questions can seem overwhelming, they have been arranged by month based on seasons or holidays that provide natural pathways for spiritual conversations. Practice with one or two questions each month, and by the end of a year you will have become comfortable asking 12-24 questions that can easily lead to spiritual conversations! And, you can keep adding new ones along the way!

Meaningful questions form natural ways for opening avenues of spiritual conversation without causing people to feel pressured. As you dialogue with people, be praying that God would lead the conversation. There might be times God wants you to simply listen and not respond. That's perfectly normal. Sometimes just listening is what someone needs before they are willing to be influenced by your perspective in the future.

Questions assembled from a variety of public sites in 2020 and new questions added. Permission granted for use in training others.

January: (Building Upon The New Year Holiday)

- What does success in 2020 (or this year) look like for you? What are you shooting for?
- What is the one thing you hope happens this year more than anything else?
- Do you sense you are growing personally? What helps you to grow?
- What single thing would you like to make absolutely certain you do (if at all possible) during your lifetime?

February: (Building Upon Valentine's Day)

- What do you think is behind peoples' infatuation with romantic comedies or movies with happy endings?
- What do you think people need to stay in love for a lifetime?
- What do you believe helps people through hard times when their hearts are broken?
- In the Bible Jesus taught about love and forgiveness. In what ways does that seem relevant or irrelevant?

March: (Building Upon March Madness)

- Do you like to bet on basketball games or join basketball pools? Why or why not?
- Who is your favorite sports legend? What do you most admire about that person?
- Have you ever had a coach or a friend who pushed you to be better? What was that like?
- Do you prefer watching sports or being on the field playing? Why?

April: (Building Upon The Easter Season)

- What do you think about the Easter season?
- Do you think religion makes society better off or worse off? Why?
- Based on what you've seen and experienced, do you think religion contributes to, or detracts from, being a good person?
- Are you more likely to trust or distrust a religious person? Why?
- What would be the first three questions you would ask God if you met him in person?
- What do you find most attractive about Christianity or Jesus?
- What do you find least attractive about Christianity or Jesus?

May: (Building Upon Mother's Day)

- How would you describe your mother and the impact she has had on your life?
- Have you ever had a mentor? If so, what was his/her impact on your life?

- How do we know what is right and what is wrong?
- Do you think there is anything inherently right and wrong in all cultures?

June: (Building Upon Father's Day)

- How would you describe your father and his impact on your life?
- Why do you think people do what they do?
- Do all people deserve to have good experiences in life? Why or why not?
- Tell me about two of your closest friends and the impact they've had on your life. What made you choose them as your friends?

July: (Building Upon Summer When People Slow Down And Reflect)

- What do you most value or cherish?
- What are you living for?
- What do you think would probably surprise most people about you? Why?
- Where are you in your spiritual pilgrimage if you sense you are on one?

August: (Building Upon Summer When People Slow Down And Reflect)

- What do you consider to be the major turning points in your life?
- What are 2 or 3 major truths upon which you have based your decision-making?
- What is your favorite way to celebrate when something you deeply care about goes well?
- What have you found to be the best way of navigating disappointment and discouragement when something you deeply care about doesn't go well?

September: (Building Upon Schedules That Are Intensifying)

- How do you handle pressure? When the pressure is really on, what do you need?
- What is your greatest strength, and what are you doing to develop it?
- How do you think a person can keep from becoming a workaholic?
- What is the key to maintaining balance in your life?

October: (Building Upon Halloween)

- What character can you imagine yourself to be? (any period of history)
- Horror movies are big this time of year. What do you think would be the best ways to die? What do you think would be the worst ways to die?
- What do you think happens after you die?

- If you died today, do you think you would go to heaven? Why or why not?

November: (Building Upon Thanksgiving)

- What are you most thankful for?
- What would you do if someone gave you \$10,000,000? In what ways, if any, would it change your life?
- How much money do you think is enough?
- Have you ever struggled with a season in your life when you have not been thankful? What was that like?

December: (Building Upon Christmas)

- Has anything ever happened to you that caused you to be certain there is a God who personally cares about you?
- In your opinion, how does someone become a Christian?
- In your opinion, who was/is Jesus Christ?
- If you could know God personally, would you be interested? Why or why not?

Additional Spiritual Questions If Someone Seems Open To Talk More:

- Do you consider yourself a seeker of the truth? Why or why not?
- What is your spiritual background, if any?
- What is your philosophy of life?
- Have your views on religion changed since you were a child? If so, how?
- Have you ever read the Bible? If so, what has that experience been like for you?
- Have you ever discussed with someone what Biblical Christianity is?
- If Jesus was who He claimed to be, how would that affect your life?
- If your questions could be answered in a way that would satisfy you, would you believe in Jesus if you do not right now?