

EVERY NATION ROSEBANK

CONNECT OUTLINE

topic

**ENGAGING COMMUNITY AND
CULTURE WITH THE GOSPEL**

3 Weeks

SYNOPSIS

The message of the Gospel doesn't change but each new audience grapples with how to apply it, and how to explain its relevance in their context. Should the Gospel become more contextual, or should our contexts become more shaped by the Gospel?

This 3-session connect series invites you to:

- Internalise your role to engage culture and community with the Gospel, and
- Have robust discussions to help you rediscover how the Gospel is the unique solution to any context or culture.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY AND CULTURE WITH THE GOSPEL

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MISSION

EVERY NATION ROSEBANK

WEEK 1

topic

ENGAGING COMMUNITY AND
CULTURE WITH THE GOSPEL

DISCUSS

Same Gospel, Different Audience

LET'S TALK

What comes to mind when you hear the word “culture”? What do you consider as culture?

SETTING THE SCENE:

When Jesus instructed His disciples “*to go and make disciples of all nations*” (Matthew 28:19a), He knew He was sending them into a world that didn't believe, didn't worship nor have the same expression of community (fellowship) as they did. We are current-day recipients of the Gospel of Jesus Christ because it did not remain with the original Jewish audience, but transcended disparate people groups as was Christ's intention.

Same Gospel, different audience. The message of the Gospel doesn't change but each new audience grapples with the relevance and application of this message in their respective contexts.

Same Gospel, Different Audience

Every time the Gospel reaches the ears of a new culture/worldview there are aspects (e.g. values, practices, work ethic, etc) within that culture that the Gospel will celebrate, and aspects it will critique. For our purposes we'll use worldview and culture interchangeably.

Irrespective of the different cultures or worldviews Christians encounter in the modern world, the mandate to “make disciple of all nations” has remained the same. In his book “The New Testament and the people of God”, N.T Wright puts forward that there are four questions any worldview must answer:

Who are we?... Where are we?... What is wrong?... What is the solution?

With poetic liberty, the last question could be phrased: How is the Gospel the solution to what's wrong?

These questions apply whether the audience is a first-century Jew in Israel, or a 26-year-old graduate from Johannesburg in the 2020s. For the follower of Jesus, these questions call us to consider how our identity (or culture) informs the way we show up in the world. Let us consider these questions and from there form the basis to engage our contexts, our cultures, with the Good News of Christ.

SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 5:11 – 21 (ESV)

¹¹ Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. ¹² We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. ¹³ For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; ¹⁵ and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.[a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling[b] the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

DISCUSS

Group Discussion 1

- What practices/traditions does your family or community partake in that the Gospel would celebrate, or critique?
- Through the lens of the Gospel being Christ's transformative work, how would you answer these questions:
Who are we? (identity)
Where are we? (location)
What is wrong? (in our context)
What is the solution?
- How do you think your answers to these questions would compare to someone who isn't of faith, in South Africa today?

Looking At Jesus

Jesus is our greatest example for going over cultural boundaries for the sake of the Gospel. In the famous interaction with the Samaritan women at the well (John 4:6-42), Jesus crosses ethnic and religious lines to reveal that He is the promised Messiah. And it didn't stop there, He engaged cross-culturally and she in turn engaged her culture with the message of the Gospel...

“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (John 4:29, NKJV)

Raleigh B. Washington and Bill McCartney in an excerpt from the Spirit-filled Bible put it this way:

“He calls us to enter intentionally and sensitively into the experiences of other brothers and sisters in Christ, even if they are different from us – culturally, ethnically or denominationally.”

DISCUSS

Group Discussion 2

READ: Romans 1:16-17, Matthew 13:31-33, Matthew 28:19-20, John 17:16

- In light of Romans 1:16, do you consider the message of the Gospel offensive? Why or why not?
- Jesus said that “...the Kingdom of heaven is like yeast”, which though starts small ultimately reshapes the dough’s nature. How do we express the Gospel to influence the transformation of society and culture?
- What stood out for you in the scriptures we referred to in this session? What do they say to you about how the Gospel engages culture and context?
- Which aspects of your culture might draw people closer to the Gospel? Which aspects might push them away?
- Which part of your testimony needs to be shared with someone in your community, campus, workplace or family?

Summary

Scripture reminds us that we are in the world but not of the world (John 17:16). And we are also “called to the world”. The goal of engaging culture and community with the Gospel is transformation – individually and collectively.

ACTIVATION: Ask a friend or an acquaintance what they think their lived culture or worldview is. Listen and ask curious follow-up questions about their story. If the opportunity arises, ask them if they can answer the four worldview questions and share your answers with them.

What's Happening At **EVERY NATION ROSEBANK**

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EVERY NATION ROSEBANK

WEEK 2

topic

**ENGAGING COMMUNITY AND
CULTURE WITH THE GOSPEL**

DISCUSS

Good Neighbours Break Down Fences

LET'S TALK

Would you rather live in a gated community where nobody knows your name, or a village where everyone knows your birthday? What are the pros and cons of each?

SETTING THE SCENE

There's a line from a Robert Frost poem, "Good fences make good neighbours," that many people have misused as a way to keep their neighbours at a distance. For the follower of Jesus, the Gospel mandate is the exact opposite of that. We are called to close the distance between ourselves and our neighbours, that they too would move from being outsiders to becoming part of the inner circle. Ephesians 2:13 says it well...

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

Good Neighbours Break Down Fences

Jesus teaches a lesson on being in proximity to those who we are called to reach and build bridges with, even in rebuke of those who questioned why He engaged with “undesirables”:

“For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’” (Luke 7:33-34, NKJV)

So, who is *your* neighbour? Your neighbour is both someone who is around you in close proximity, and also someone whose path or life you have an opportunity to influence, even for a limited time. Your neighbour can be the one you easily hang out with, but can also be the “undesirable” that is a bit harder to connect with.

In our world of high walls and remote working, neighbours can also be people who share similar interests, activities and points of view online. In Matthew 22:39 Jesus states that “loving our neighbour as ourselves” mirrors or corresponds to the greatest commandment, second only to loving God with all our being. That shows us clearly how we are called to value our *neighbours*.

DISCUSS

Group Discussion 1

READ: Read: Luke 10:25-37, John 4:7-35

- What are some of the “fences” (visible or invisible) we use to keep others out?
- How does the concept of “neighbour” differ for those of us living in cities, vs those living in more rural or communal settings?
- Have you had an encounter of reaching out to someone you found challenging, that turned out to be positive?

DISCUSS

Looking At Jesus

We see in Jesus an example of reaching one “neighbour” that may have seemed like a once-off, or random meeting. In John 4, an interaction with a Samaritan woman at the well leads to the city of Sychar encountering the Messiah. For us, we don’t know what engaging one random neighbour could lead to. There are potentially endless possibilities to stepping out in faith. The next “neighbour” you reach out to, could become the greatest evangelist their city, country or continent has ever seen! John 4:35b-36 says...

“Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.”

People are not persuaded with facts; we need to go deeper. The adage goes, “People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care”. The key is to genuinely desire God’s best for that person, and get to know what their story is before launching a repent-or-perish moment upon them! Become genuinely interested in how they see the world; ask them questions about things that are important to them. Trust the Holy Spirit for opportunities to show how the Gospel connects to aspects of their life, whether it’s their love for football, their passion for the environment, or their worries about the country.

DISCUSS

Group Discussion 2

READ: Luke 5:27-32

- How can you use your interests to start spiritual conversations with people?
- How did you come to faith in Jesus: did a friend or relative speak to you about faith; did someone invite you to church? What was it about your relationship with that person that “opened the door” for you to listen?
- Considering the scriptures we used this week, what challenges you in terms of how you relate to your neighbours, whichever way you define that?

REFLECTION

Summary

The Gospel takes us from high fences to open doors, from neighbours to friends, and from friends to spiritual family. Let's break down the fences and welcome others into the Kingdom.

ACTIVATION: is there a neighbour, colleague or peer you have been intentionally avoiding? In light of this session, consider starting a conversation with them.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: Ephesians 2:11-13; Luke 7:33-34; Matthew 22:34-40

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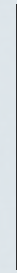
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EVERY NATION ROSEBANK

WEEK 3

topic

ENGAGING COMMUNITY AND
CULTURE WITH THE GOSPEL

DISCUSS

Evangelism: A Culture Of Mission

LET'S TALK

Does Jesus give introverts an “out” or exemption from sharing the Gospel because of their personality? Do you believe that evangelism is only for extroverts?

SETTING THE SCENE:

“I don’t know enough”, “I’m afraid I don’t have the right answers” and “my personality type doesn’t allow me to” are some of the reasons people give when explaining why they don’t feel they can evangelise.

That said, when Jesus charged his disciples to go to the ends of the earth; He did not promise them that they would “know everything”, have all the right answers or have the speaking skills to talk to crowds. He simply told them that He would be with them:

“And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say” (Luke 12:11-12, ESV)

Evangelism: A Culture Of Mission

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20, ESV)

To the introvert reading this, guess what, you're the introvert that is needed today! There are scores of other people, like you, who are willing to serve God and step out. They too have grappled with the feeling that their personality may be a hinderance, but actually it's their "superpower", and it's yours too. There are those whom loud-speaker evangelism may not reach; but an open heart, a willing and obedient posture to partner with God will bring you into contact with people who desperately need an encounter with Jesus, and know that they too are seen and wanted by Him.

Evangelism: A Culture Of Mission

Our modern world means that our proximity to people of influence is smaller than what would have been the case 40 years ago. The Gospel is for the downtrodden, the outwardly happy but inwardly struggling, the manager at your local supermarket, the JSE listed CEO and even high-ranking politicians. It's for everyone. Psalm 138 doubles down on this universal message...

⁴ All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O Lord,
When they hear the words of Your mouth.

⁵ Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
For great is the glory of the Lord.

DISCUSS

Group Discussion 1

READ: 1 Corinthians 1:17 - 2:5

- Have you ever met a “famous” or influential person before?
Did you ever consider asking to pray for them, or if you had the chance would you?
- What aspect of your personality is helping, and what’s hindering you from sharing the Good News with others?

REFLECTION

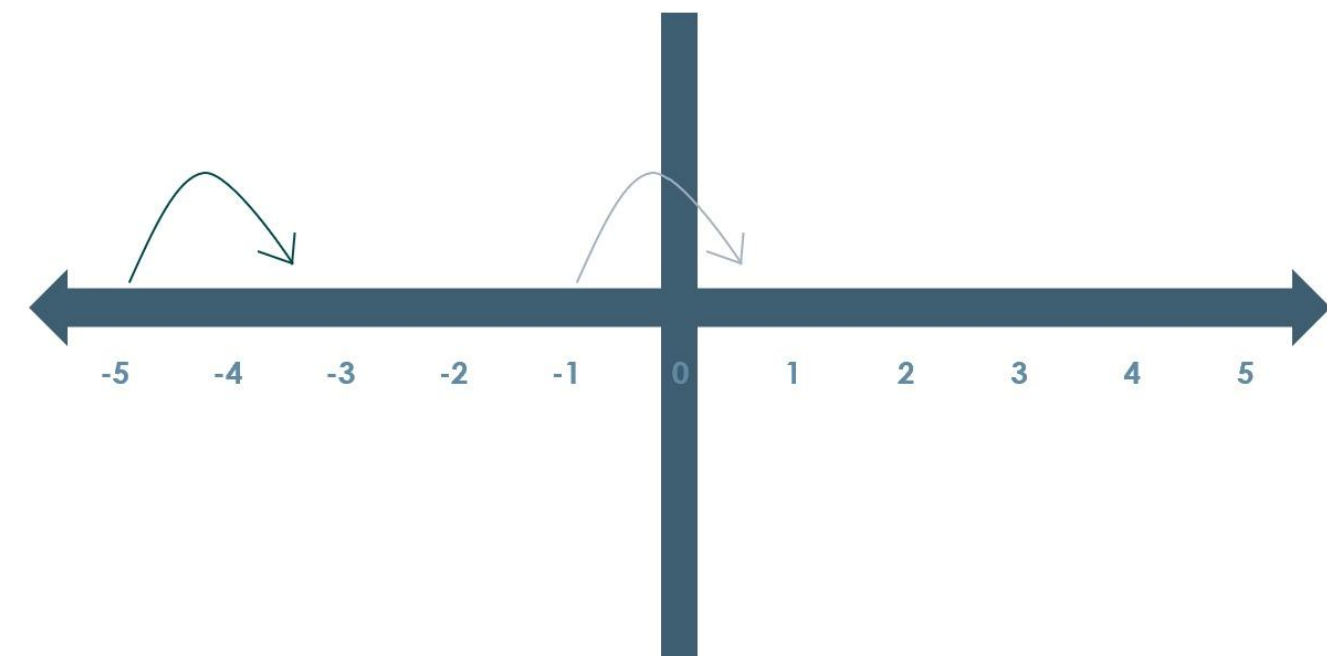
Going With Jesus

Evangelism isn't just a hit-and-run experience; it's not a once-off event. Evangelism is a process where, "some plant, some water, some harvest" (John 4:38 & 1 Cor. 3:6-9) and God receives the glory. The important thing is to be faithful with whatever part you enter a hearer's evangelism continuum.

Evangelism is not separate from discipleship. Joey Bonifacio, Senior Pastor of Every Nation Church Singapore, uses this image to illustrate this point.

Discipleship can start before someone makes the decision to follow Jesus. We help move people in steps closer to the decision towards salvation and then in steps from the decision of salvation to growing in Christlikeness. Discipleship is relationship.

Sowing and Watering



Going With Jesus

Scott McNamara, founder of Jesus at the Door likens evangelism to shaking an apple tree: “We share, the Holy Spirit shakes”. Every time you share the Gospel with someone, you are partnering with the Holy Spirit. If apples fall down, a new disciple comes into the Kingdom. If someone doesn’t respond there and then, we trust that the apples have been loosened for the next Gospel-sharer to “shake”. Scott goes on to say...

“It removed the pressure of feeling I had to know everything and convince everyone. It wasn’t about how good, bad or able I was.”

Partnership with the Holy Spirit is the key.

We grow our desire to evangelise like we grow our appetite and palettes for different foods and experiences – it is all a matter of what we are feeding on and exposing ourselves to. There are a number of readily available tools that can help you to do evangelism in your context, like the **Jesus at the Door** card, **The God Test** and coming to one of our Making Disciples trainings and outreaches at Every Nation Rosebank. All personalities are welcome!

DISCUSS

Group Discussion 2

READ: 1 Corinthians 3:6-9; Luke 12:8-12

- When was the last time you shared the Gospel with someone? How was that experience?
- Have you ever been on a local or global mission trip? Have you ever been on a mission even to some part of your neighbourhood or community? Share about it.

Summary

This year (2026), as the global Every Nation family of churches, we are focusing on The Mission: the unfolding story of God's redemptive purpose. We believe it is our call as followers of Jesus to share this saving Gospel to the ends of the earth. Join us as we partner with God to fulfil the Mission 2029 objective of planting 20 campus-reaching churches in Southern-Africa and Africa and 20 globally.

If you are a Christian today, you form part of a 2000-year lineage of men and women who have been saying yes to Jesus and advancing the Kingdom through the Gospel. Psalm 145:4 says...

“One generation shall commend Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.”

You are part of the plan to tell the next generation!

REFLECTION

Prayer

Lord, thank You for choosing to partner with us to extend your Kingdom and family. Help us to grow a heart and desire to see others put their trust in You, Jesus. We pray that You would redeem our time going forward and forgive us where we neglected to prioritise sharing the Gospel. Whether we are married or single, shy or charismatic, Father, would you use us for your glory. May we consider whichever season we are in as holy. We lay our distractions and worldly desires at your feet, and we pray that they become energy for creativity and purpose for Your will. Amen.

ACTIVATION: What one commitment can you make this year to engage the world with the Gospel? Perhaps it is praying for your colleagues, going on a mission trip or starting a friendship with a neighbour. Share those commitments as a group, and continue to revisit them and encourage each other towards this goal.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES: Luke 12:11; Matthew 28:19-20; Psalm 138:4-5; John 4:38; 1 Corinthians 3:6-9; Psalm 145:4-6

EVANGELISM: A CULTURE OF MISSION

Additional Resources



WATCH: HOW TO USE JESUS AT THE DOOR

<https://youtu.be/ONCX9wLJTpE?si=FBYX7yy5lDBsjNYi>

WATCH: THE GOD TEST OVERVIEW

<https://vimeo.com/73244477?fl=pl&fe=sh>

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