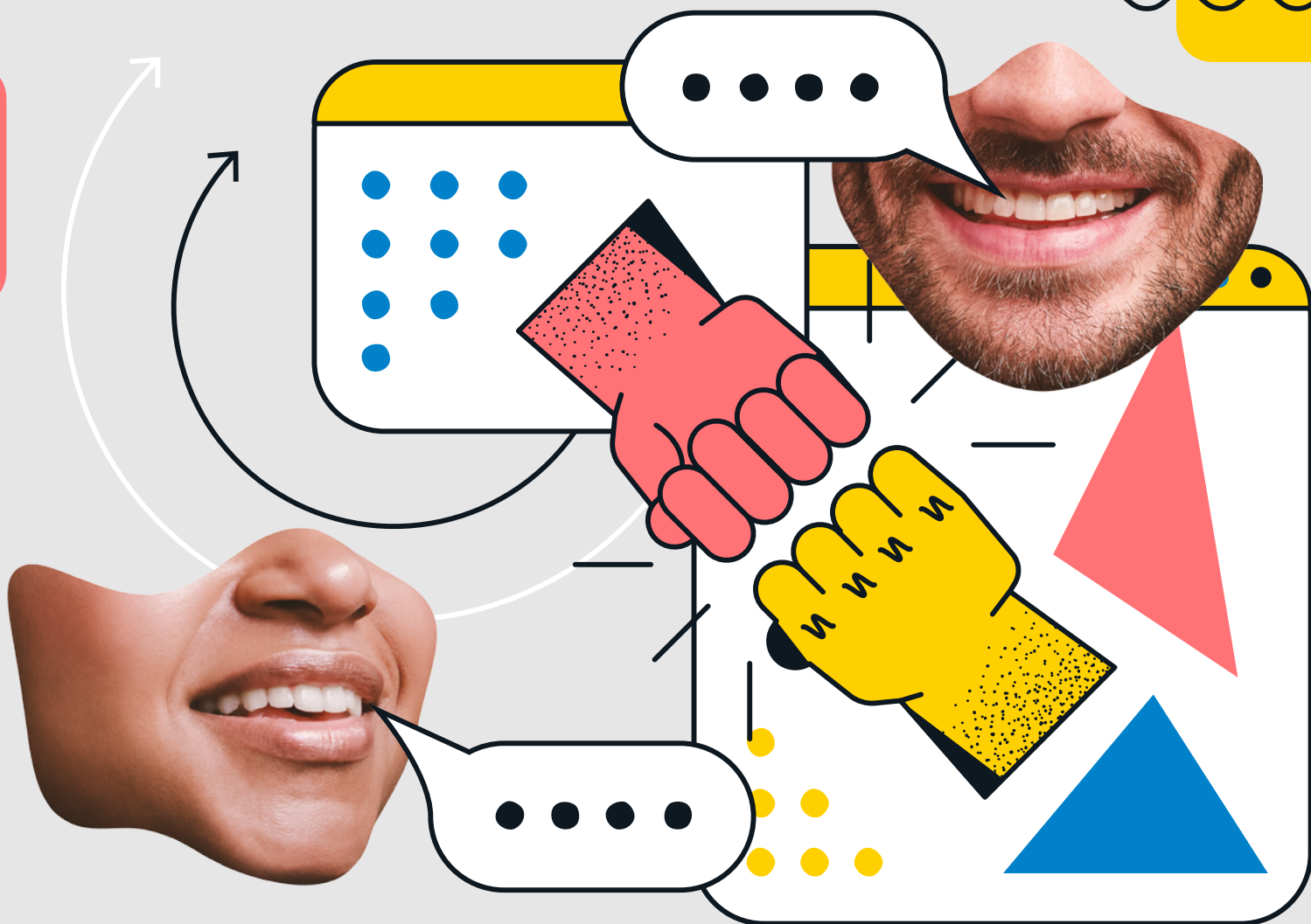


Engaging in Spiritual Conversations



How to Overcome the Obstacles
to Sharing Your Faith





You Have a Story to Share

When was the last time you had a conversation about God?

If it's been a minute, then you're not alone.

In the U.S., most followers of Jesus rarely talk about God, faith, religion, or spirituality. A recent study by Barna Group, a church research firm, shows that a good three-quarters of Christians in the U.S. have fewer than 10 spiritual conversations a year. That means most of us talk about topics of faith less than once a month.

But here's the thing: **Everyone is seeking answers to the big, existential questions of life.** More than any other topic, these are the questions that matter most—even to die-hard agnostics, secularists, and atheists.

So why do we as Christians feel reluctant to address these topics? If following Jesus really is the best decision we've ever made, then how can we overcome the obstacles and share the good news with a world that desperately needs to hear it?

In this guide, you'll learn how to **overcome some of the biggest barriers to sharing your faith**—so you can find a renewed sense of joy and fulfillment in talking about Jesus with people who need him most.

Ready to get confident and prepared to talk about your faith?
Let's go!



Common Barriers to Sharing Your Faith

We are busy people.

Our day-to-day lives are demanding. Maybe we've got jobs, kids, budgets to balance, and schedules to juggle. We experience sickness or weather woes.

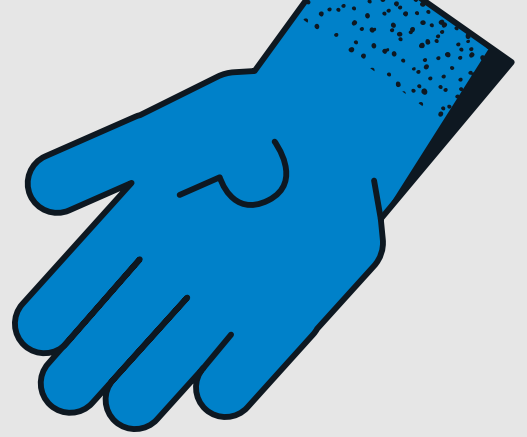
That's OK. And normal. But at the same time, most of us aren't intentionally connecting our everyday experiences with our faith.

Or if we do, we aren't talking about that faith connection with others.

Let's dig into why.



We Do Want to Talk About Jesus



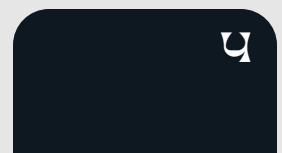
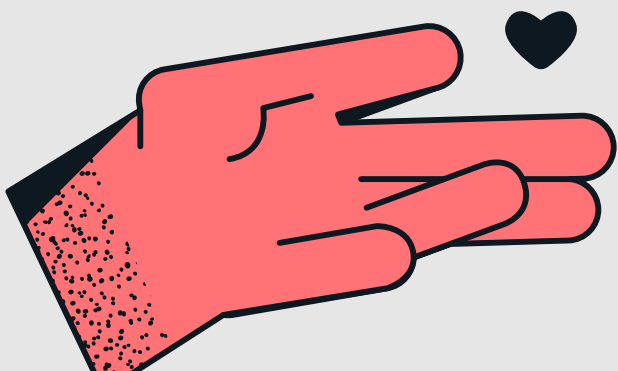
It's not that we don't want to engage in conversations about God. We really do want to talk about spiritual matters.

Despite our poor track record in talking about our faith, Barna uncovered some surprising insights about our attitudes toward spiritual conversations:

- ✿ More Christians feel a strong personal responsibility to share their faith.
- ✿ Plus, we're having more digital conversations about spiritual matters through social media.

On top of this, Barna's research revealed that Christians who share their faith feel joyful and energized to tell even more people about Jesus. Sharing leads to more sharing, even in these rapidly changing times.

So what—besides busyness—holds us back?



3 Cultural Trends That Make Sharing Jesus Hard

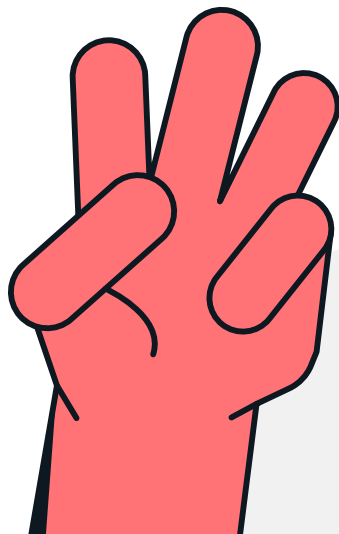
Let's take a quick look at three big cultural trends that grow our reluctance to share Jesus.

Secularism

America is increasingly post-Christian. This rise in secularism, coupled with growing skepticism toward the Bible and the removal of Christianity as a cultural authority, creates a climate where it feels neither relevant nor comfortable to bring up matters of faith.

Relativism

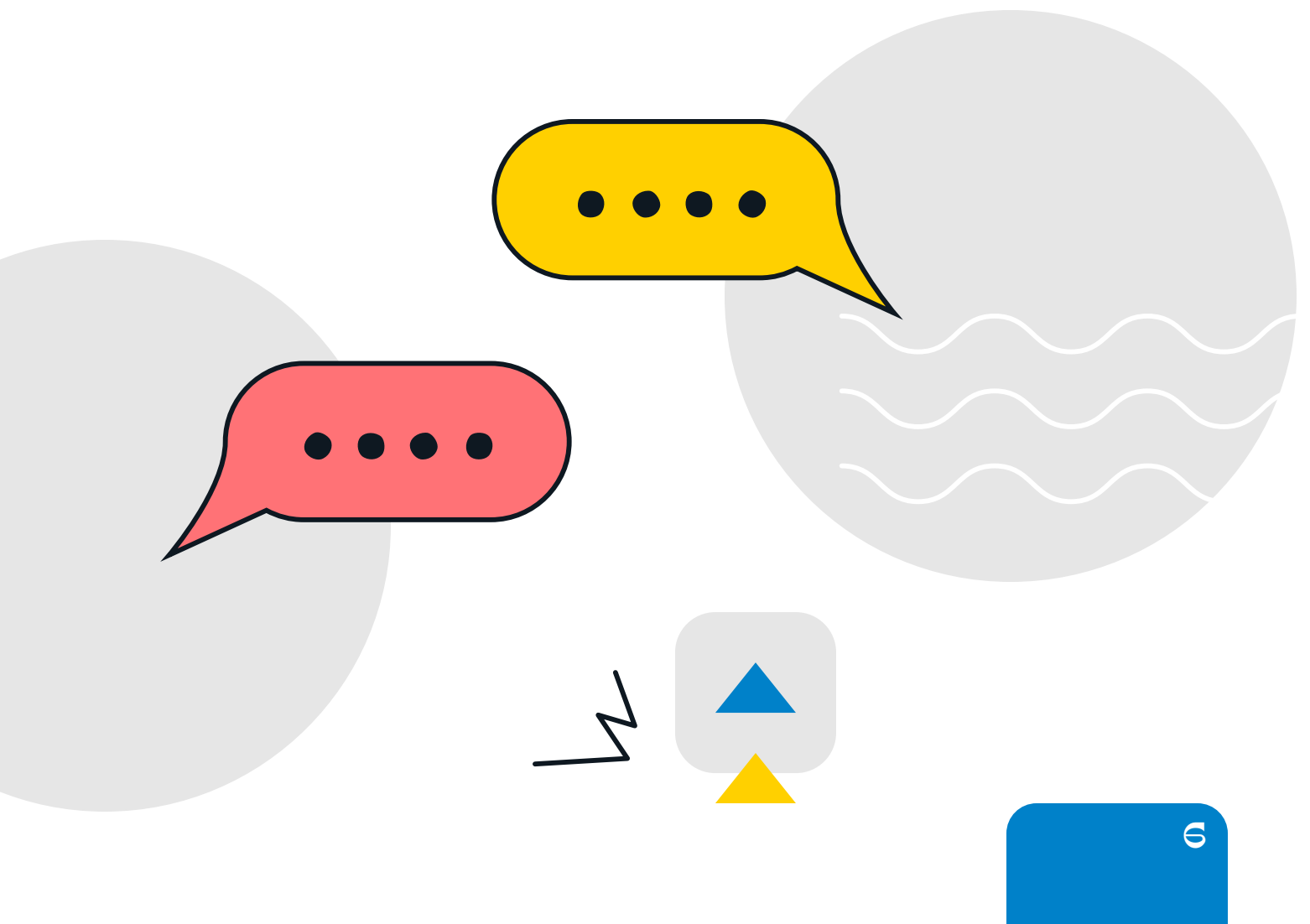
“You do you” neatly sums up the pervasive question: “Who am I to judge what you do with your life?” In our hyper-individualistic culture, belief in objective truth is waning, and the majority of Americans believe the best source of truth is found by looking within themselves. In a society where everyone can believe whatever they want and that it makes no difference, it becomes harder and harder to engage in spiritual conversations about objective truth.



Pluralism

In a pluralistic society, religious tolerance helps us live alongside one another. Many people, however, have experienced the message of Christianity wielded without grace, and they feel like they know more about what Christians are against than what they're for. For sensitive, conscientious Christians, this leaves them walking a fine line between tolerance and sharing a message of conviction.

This cultural trend can leave us feeling afraid of offending people. We might think that spiritual conversations create tension or arguments. And so to avoid offending others or being rejected, many of us steer clear of faith topics altogether.





Talking About Jesus Has a Positive Impact

Despite your fears about sharing Jesus, your faith story does matter.

Take a look at these realities:

- * One-third of adults in the U.S. say they've made a significant life change because someone talked to them about faith.
- * 1 in 3 Christians says they've seen someone come to believe in Jesus after they shared about their faith in him.
- * Millennials and Gen X are more likely than Boomers to agree that sharing one's faith is the responsibility of every Jesus follower.

Engaging in spiritual conversations bears good fruit! As you share with others, you'll experience the joy of seeing God work through you to draw others to him.

Now let's discover practical tips, tools, and principles for overcoming the obstacles so you can feel more prepared and confident in telling others about Jesus.

How to Overcome Barriers to Engage in Faith Conversations

To start having more conversations about spiritual matters, you need the right mindset, and you need the right tools.

Let's dive right in.

Grow the Right Mindset

1. Know Your Role

As a representative of Jesus, you're not called to convince, cajole, or convert. Your role is to revere Christ as Lord and be prepared to gently and respectfully give the reason for the hope that lies within you (1 Peter 3:15–16).

The more you free yourself from the false responsibility of “converting others,” the more you can share with freedom and joy, knowing that the Holy Spirit will do the rest.

2. Be Open, Honest, and Approachable

In a world where personal perspectives rule, you can gain a hearing by engaging in spiritual conversations that are open, vulnerable, and nurtured within the warm light of friendship.

This makes you approachable and helps others feel more curious about your faith, which opens the door for God to do his work.

3. Connect Your Story to Jesus' Story

Learn to see and narrate your everyday life through the redemptive lens of God's grace and the story of salvation in Jesus. This involves the daily practice of reflecting on what God has done in your life and what he's doing in the day-to-day. After all, following Jesus isn't a belief system... It's a way of life.

4. Share What You Know

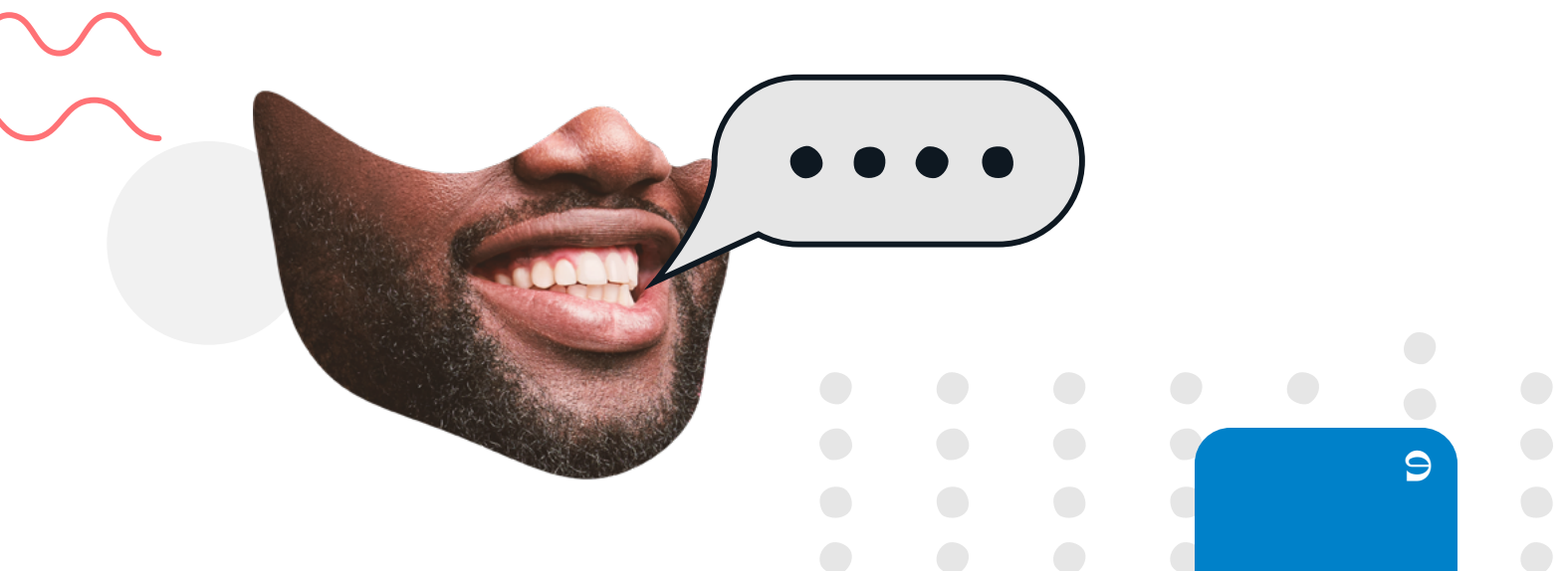
To engage in spiritual conversations, you don't need to be a brilliant Bible student. And you certainly don't need to have your faith 100% figured out. Simply share what God has done and is doing in your life.

Don't be afraid to answer questions with "I don't know" and "Let's find out together." This level of transparency will help others see you as an honest, genuine source.

5. Invest in Your Friends and Family

Life-changing conversations don't come out of the blue. They usually happen with people you know.

In other words, intimacy matters. You have a profound influence on the people closest to you. Don't be afraid to push past your comfort zone with friends and family to bring up your faith.



3 Practices for Increasing Your Confidence



We've covered the key principles to guide your mindset. Now let's dive into three practical tools that can grow your confidence and prepare you to share your faith.

Build an Intentional Rhythm of Spiritual Disciplines

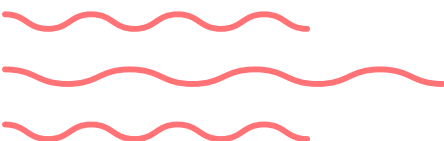
The more you do something, the more you talk about it.

That same principle also applies to your faith. If you engage in a rhythm of faith practices, you're more likely to talk about those practices with others.

This involves regularly thinking about your faith, connecting it to your daily life, and seeking God's purposes in your activities. It's about keeping your faith top of mind so that spiritual matters naturally seep into your daily conversations.

So how do you do this? Start by fostering a rhythm of **three essential spiritual disciplines**:

1. Time in prayer
2. Reading the Bible
3. Attending a church worship service

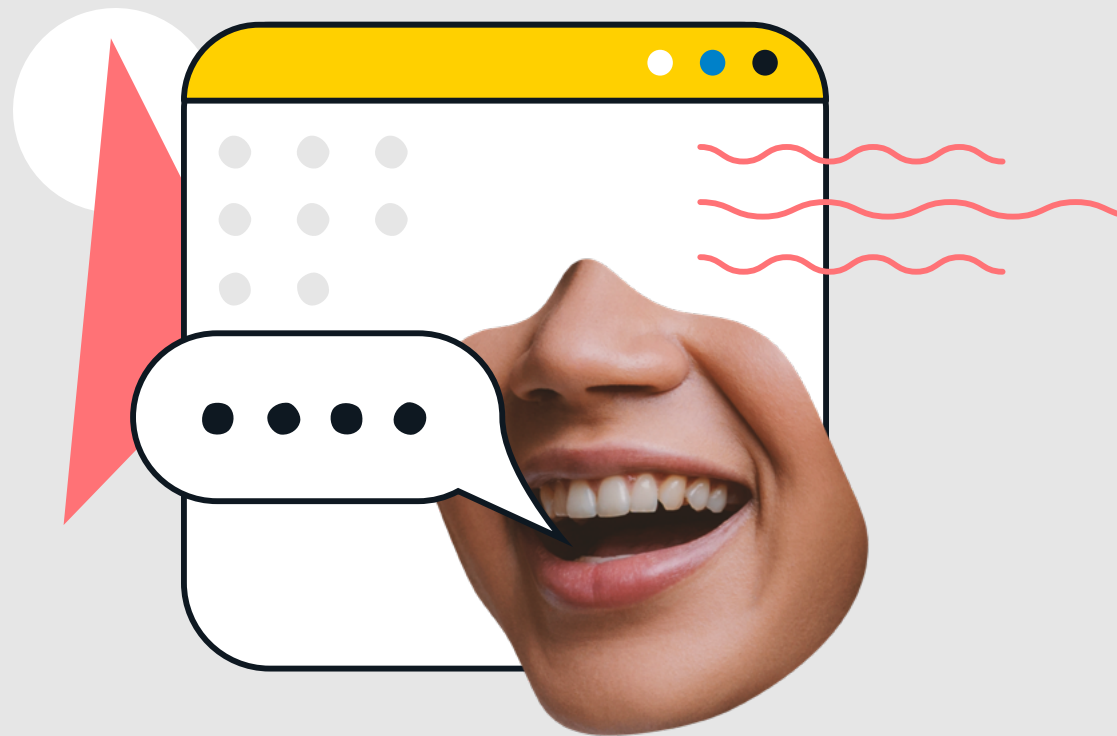


Keep in mind, however, that people often need to be exposed to spiritual ideas multiple times for faith conversations to bear fruit.

What about sharing with strangers? You can still have a big impact on people you don't know too. Be ready for God to open doors to talk about your faith with people you've never met before. You may not ever know the impact of your words, but God can use you to move them several steps closer to belief in Jesus.

6. Don't Be Afraid of Tension

Spiritual conversations can sometimes feel tense. Maybe the other person feels conflicted. But don't write off tension as entirely bad. Focus on being gentle and respectful. Try to use the conflict to better understand the person and the wounds and worries they carry. Find a source of common ground in the conversation where you can both laugh, take a pause, and move forward in genuine dialogue.



If that feels like a lot to take on all at once, then choose one spiritual discipline to start with, and **identify a realistic, measurable goal you can accomplish within a set amount of time.**

Here are some ideas to get you started nurturing your spiritual disciplines:

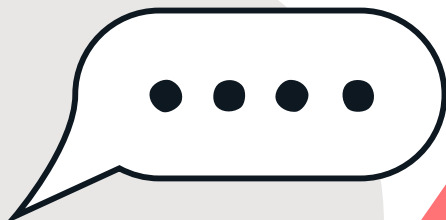
- * Commit to spending 5 minutes in prayer every morning for a week
- * Choose a Bible chapter to read during your weekend
- * Ask a friend to attend church with you this month

This isn't about checking off boxes on a spiritual to-do list. It's about letting God's redemptive narrative shape your own identity—so his story becomes the story you tell others.

Pray Without Ceasing for Opportunities to Share

In addition to growing your spiritual rhythm of regular prayer, ask God to open your eyes to natural opportunities to talk about him with others.

Think about your typical day for a moment. Where are the places you often go, what are the online communities you engage, and who are the people you encounter there? Now imagine each



interaction as a potential opportunity to share how God has touched your life.

Try this exercise: Before you start your day, simply pray, “**God, give me an opportunity to engage in a spiritual conversation with someone today.**” Then go about your day with a hopeful expectation to see God answer your prayer.

Now imagine your life if you did this every day. How many more spiritual conversations do you think you’d find yourself in on a regular basis?



Tips and Guidelines for Engaging Online

Most people—whether they’re followers of Jesus or not—prefer to talk about matters of faith in person.

But in the near future, more and more digitally mediated spiritual conversations will take the lead.

For meaningful, transformative conversations to happen online, here are some practical steps.

1. Be a Listener

No one likes a know-it-all. If you set out to prove a point, you burn your chances at having a genuine dialogue with spiritually curious people. Or worse, they may decide they don’t want any part of your Jesus at all. Lead with a posture of listening. Approach the conversation with a non-competitive, everyone’s-welcome mindset. Ask people what they think and why they think it, then listen without telling them whether you think they’re right or wrong.

2. Be Unoffendable

A key to having meaningful online interactions is developing the ability to be nearly unoffendable. When someone responds with figurative arms flailing and fists flying, your best approach is to respond with grace. Remember that they are probably responding out of a history of hurt. Let them be mad. Listen with patience, show empathy, then invite them to give this Jesus thing another shot.



3. Be Kind

As you engage in spiritual conversations online, treat others as if they were right in front of you, face to face. Would you pummel someone with statistics, churchy language, or guilt-ridden comments? Would you cram Bible verses down their throat? Probably not. Follow the same guidelines online.

4. Be Authentic


Let your online interactions be marked by authenticity. So much of social media is about the appearance of success, and people go to great lengths to curate an online presence that seems 100% positive and invulnerable. Be different. No one will be impressed by you pretending to have all the answers. Your honesty will add depth and richness to the quality of your online interactions.

5. Think the Best About Others

Among the people you might have spiritual conversations with online, there's a good chance many have been hurt by the church or have a skewed image of Christians. They may be spiritually curious, or they may be in the middle of what's been a long and painful spiritual journey. You won't know all the details, so receive whatever they offer and respond graciously.

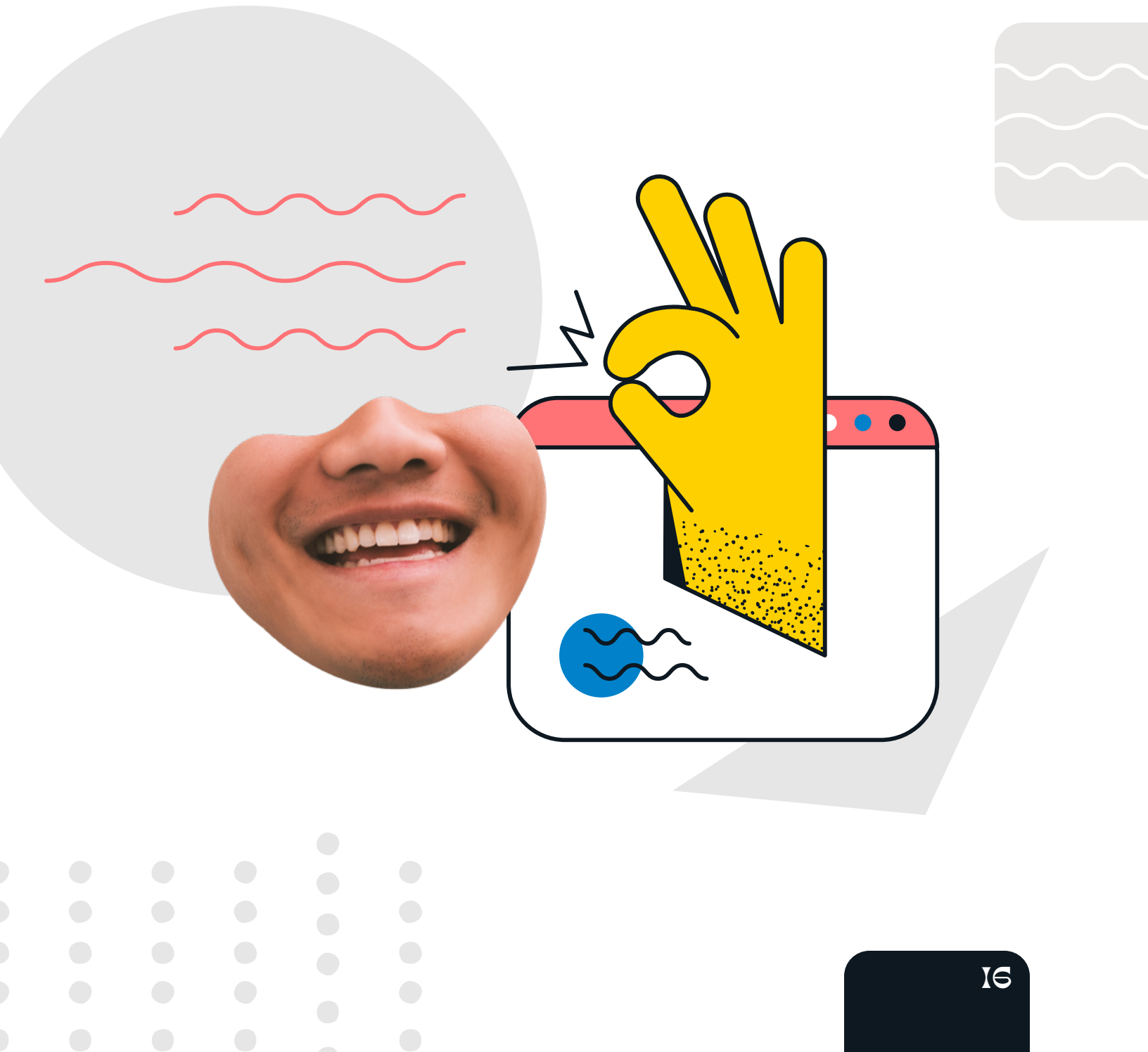
6. Get to Know People

Invest a little time in studying the online presence of the person you're engaging with. This helps you develop empathy toward them. Find out what others post on their social media feed. Look at the photos they share. Learn about what they do for a living. You don't need to become an expert on the person. But you'll have a better sense of how to meet them in conversation if you can get a glimpse of who they are.



7. Understand How You Fit in Their Journey

You aren't called to be someone's savior. You simply need to be open and available to be used by God. He's the one who works on people's hearts. Your role is to be a compassionate guide along the way. Be faithful in meeting them where they're at by listening, showing genuine concern, and praying for the Spirit to guide you.



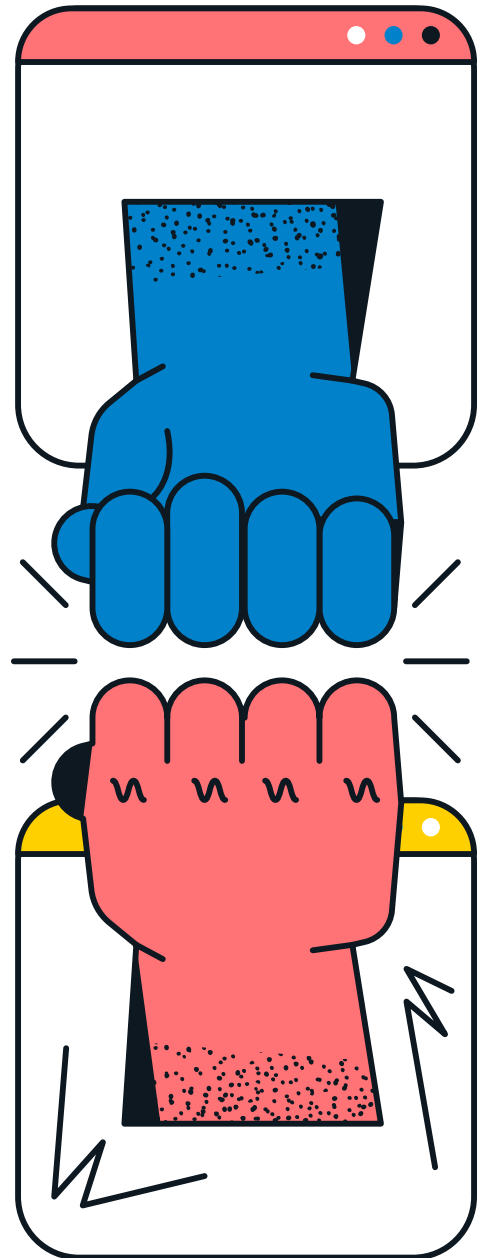
The World Needs the Hope You Offer

We live in a time when transcendent hope seems hard to come by.

No matter where you encounter them—online or in person—people everywhere are seeking the hope you have in Jesus.

The key to offering it to them is to think more about God... so you'll talk more about what he's done for you. The stronger your rhythm of spiritual disciplines, the more you cultivate a context that naturally turns your attention to God's work in your life so you can share about it with others.

Grow in your spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, and fellowship with Christians, and you'll become more confident and prepared when God gives you an opportunity to share your faith.





Discover Practical Tools for Digital Ministry

Learn to use your story of faith to offer hope and engage others in more authentic, meaningful digital conversations.

THRED is an online community that offers free resources that empower, equip, and inspire you to share your faith with confidence and purpose.

Discover how to cut through the digital noise to make a positive, spiritual impact on others.

Find free resources at thred.org

