

Lesson Plan & Study Guide



Personal Evangelism

Part Three: Getting Decisions

Walking with Jesus

iFOLLOW

The iFollow Discipleship Series

Version 1.0 - 11/23/10



About the iFollow Discipleship Series Pastor's Edition

Categories

The iFollow Discipleship Series is designed to be used in congregations to assist people in their pursuit of God. This assumes that individuals are in unique places in their journey and there is no perfect set of lessons that everyone must complete to become a disciple—in fact discipleship is an eternal journey. Therefore the iFollow curriculum is a menu of milestones that an individual, small group, or even an entire church can choose from. The lessons can be placed in three general categories: **Meeting with Jesus** (does not assume a commitment to Jesus Christ); **Walking with Jesus** (assumes an acceptance of Jesus Christ); and **Working with Jesus** (assumes a desire to serve Jesus Christ).

Components

Each lesson has a presenter's manuscript which can be read word for word, but will be stronger if the presenter puts it in his/her own words and uses personal illustrations. The graphic slides can be played directly from the Pastor's DVD or customized and played from a computer. There are also several group activities and discussion questions to choose from as well as printable student handouts.

Usage

The lessons are designed to be used in small groups, pastor's Bible classes, prayer meetings, seminars, retreats, training sessions, discussion groups, and some lessons may be appropriate sermon outlines.

Credits

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Personal Evangelism, Part Three: Getting Decisions

This is the third in a series of four units designed to provide basic training in personal evangelism.

Learning Objectives

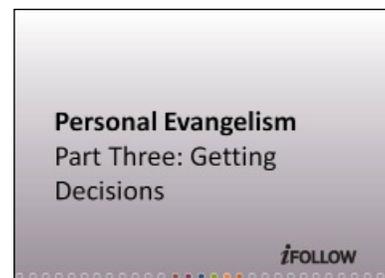
1. Understand the importance of leading a person to decide what they will personally do about the new Bible truths they learn in Bible study
2. Understand the process of decision-making that leads to joining the church
3. Learn specific methods of asking for a decision
4. Learn how to deal with objections and problems
5. Develop a sense of partnership with the Holy Spirit in spiritual ministry

Content Outline

1. The principles of getting decisions
2. How to ask for a decision
3. Dealing with difficult decisions
4. How to discover who is ready to make a decision
5. Additional ways to ask for a decision
6. Seven ways to get a decision
7. Use of the Bible in getting a decision

Background Material for the Presenter

Public evangelism is often the only way we think of evangelism. There is also the evangelism that occurs in the privacy of one-to-one relationships and small circles in the home. Ellen White writes, “of equal importance with special public efforts is house-to-house work in the homes of the people.” In fact, she asserts that “there are certain classes that cannot be reached by public meetings.” She points out that “the work of Christ was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience.”



iFollow
Discipleship
Series:
Walking with
Jesus

Action Plan
& Presenter
Notes

**Personal
Evangelism
Part Three:
Getting
Decisions**

1

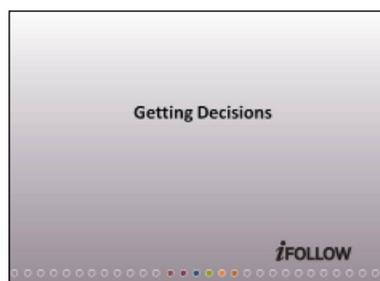
In the end, all evangelism must be personal. Individuals who attend seminars or come forward to make a decision for baptism at a public meeting require personal work in order to prepare them to join the church. A large evangelistic crusade always includes a team of personal evangelism workers.

Getting Decisions

It is not uncommon to hear people say, “If I ever join a church, it will be the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” Often, these are people who have had Bible studies or some other favorable contact with our message or ministries. They believe in the Adventist faith, but have not made a personal decision to accept it.

How can we become more successful in leading men and women to make a favorable decision for Christ and His church? Here are some principles to keep in mind:

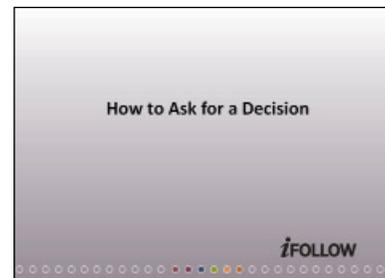
1. Ask for a decision on the key points presented in the summary of each Bible study. It is unrealistic to expect a favorable decision at the conclusion of the studies if you have not obtained progressive decisions at each step along the way.
2. Encourage your student to put into practice each new principle as it unfolds. Light that is not followed turns into darkness.
3. Do not ask for a major decision until your prospective member has sufficient information to enable him or her to make an intelligent decision.
4. Watch for evidence of conviction. Then, you will know that there is a readiness to be asked to make a decision. Signals include questions such as, “What if I can’t get Saturdays off?” Or, “What if my husband wouldn’t let me tithe?” Clues like these indicate that the person has been contemplating a decision and is already considering the consequences of that decision.
5. Ask for a decision on the basis of a choice between two alternatives. For example, “We are planning a baptism on the 15th and one on the 29th. Which would be better for you?”
6. Always expect a favorable decision.
7. Determine the specific barriers to decision, and then work to remove those barriers.
8. Don’t be afraid to ask for decisions. If a person is never asked, they do not have the opportunity to say, “yes.” In fact, some conclude that they are not wanted because there are not asked when they are ready.



How to Ask for a Decision

When new truth from God's Word comes to the attention of a person who is living out of harmony with God's will, that person is at first perplexed. As new light increases, the person sees that what he or she once believed is contrary to God's truth. As the evidence accumulates, the perplexity grows, and emotions are involved.

The prospective member is confronted with making a decision. To do God's will requires changes, perhaps some major ones. He asks himself, "Shall I change my beliefs and ways to conform to these new truths? To do so means changing my habits of living, my friends, and may even have consequences such as losing my job. Or shall I just forget about these new ideas and go on as I have been?" This person will desperately feel the need of help. He will be receptive to suggestions from a friend whom he feels he can trust, one whom he feels understands and has his interests at heart. This is why we need to build friendship, establish trust and win hearts. We are God's helping hands.



It is your part to make sincere, tactful appeals at the right time. The first decision, the most important one to be made, upon which all other appeals depend, is the decision to accept Christ. At the end of the basic, introductory Bible study, ask, "Is there any reason why you could not ask Christ for this personal relationship with Him right now?" If the individual is visibly hesitant, but does not explain their feelings, you may want to ask, "Have you given your life to Christ at some time in the past? Or, you may want to probe by saying, "It seems like something is keeping you from moving ahead. Can you name the thing you are worried about?"

This same appeal can be made very appropriately at the close of an early Bible lesson that presents the plan of salvation through faith in Christ. If neither opportunity results in the person accepting Christ, then be ready to repeat the gospel presentation at any time. The Holy Spirit will impress you as to the most appropriate moment.

Until this basic decision to accept Christ as Savior and Lord has been made, it is inappropriate to ask for decisions on the doctrines or standards of Christian living. Decisions must be made in Christ's righteousness, not on the basis of human will or strength. Once this foundational decision has been secured, then there are several important steps to gaining decisions for truth.

1. Teach the whole message yourself. Every church member should become expert in presenting the cardinal truths of the Bible. If you "hand off" a prospective member to the pastor or some other "expert" when it comes time to get decisions or present testing truths, it actually makes it more difficult for that person to make a positive decision. Remember that trust is a key element in making a decision for a new viewpoint or lifestyle, and your friend has developed trust in you, not in the other person or persons.

2. Teach with conviction. Much depends on the attitude of the Bible study leader in helping the student to make decisions. If the other person sees that you believe deeply and strongly in the truths you are teaching, it will be impressive to them. If you are open about your own faith relationship with Christ and the other person can see Jesus working in your life, then it will be real for them.

3. Gain progressive assent. Ultimate acceptance of the full message depends upon progressive decisions as each topic is studied. As step-by-step decisions are made, the prospective member is able to deal with manageable pieces instead of a massive, “big” decision that may be frightening simply due to its “size.” When the truths of the Bible are presented in a logical order, they build upon one another. Early decisions become the basis for later decisions. For example, once a person has accepted the authenticity and inspiration of the Bible, then they can also accept the commitment to obey God’s instructions revealed in the Bible.

4. Visit in the home and give attention to family needs. A decision about joining the church is strongly influenced by the family. Ideally, both spouses should be baptized together. It takes a great deal of sensitivity to help prospective members and their families deal with issues such as possible loss of employment due to Sabbath observance or because of an occupation that has ethical problems. Christian principles such as supporting one’s family may be in conflict with other commandments such as the Sabbath, and create a real dilemma for the new believer. Should you feel there is a problem hindering a family’s progress, don’t shirk responsibility. Pray about it with the family, and be confident that the Lord will sustain them.

5. Recall the urgency of obedience. The triple alliance against decision for Christ and His word—delay, procrastination and indecision—gravely threatens in many cases. It is important to remind the person who keeps putting off their decision that when new light comes to a believer, God expects them to take responsibility for it. Picture heaven as such a desirable place that the investment of heart, talent, time and life in it will pay eternal dividends.

6. Share your own experience. Tell the prospective member about your own conversion and particularly stories about decisions that were difficult for you or similar to their own struggle. If you have not had an experience of your own similar to the specific decision at hand, you might share the story of someone else that you know well or invite another church member to come with you and relate their own experience. Give emphasis to the way in which Christ through the power of His Spirit helped overcome difficult situations.

7. Let God’s Word answer excuses. Instead of arguing with a reluctant person, ask them to read an appropriate text and then describe what it means. An example is the person who agrees with the Bible teaching about the Sabbath, but says, “I don’t see how I can manage to be free from my job on Saturdays. I have a family to support, and we are in difficult economic times. I will have to wait and see what happens.” Don’t argue. Just say, “The Lord certainly has an answer. Trust Him. He will never ask you to do the impossible.”

At the next study say, “I happened to read a passage in Matthew that made me think of you. Could you do me a favor and read Matthew 6:24-32 and tell me how you understand these words of Jesus?” There is a Bible answer for every excuse. (Mark Finley in *Studying Together* deals with most of the difficult decisions that prospective church members face and includes suggestions for texts of this type relative to each.)

8. Pray about each decision. The most important decisions should be made in the context of prayer. When you present a specific decision question at the end of each study, and there seems to be reluctance to agree on the part of the non-member, it is best to spend time in prayer rather than argument. Let your Bible student hear you pray for them to make the decision that God wants them to make. Continue to pray for them as often as you can as they struggle with their decision.

9. Discuss the situation with your pastor. It is important to protect the confidentiality of your Bible student, but your pastor is your spiritual director in soul-winning and can help you to better understand how to handle difficult situations. Your pastor may have had experience with the same kind of case in the past or provide some useful insights.

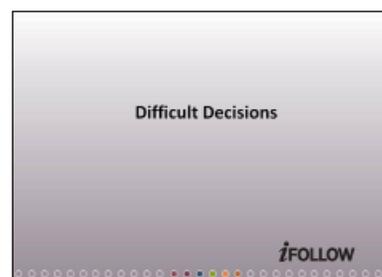
10. Demonstrate the basics of Sabbath-keeping and church fellowship. When a non-member makes his or her first visit to your church, sit with them, introduce them to some of the other people, and answer their questions. Invite them to the church fellowship dinner and other activities where they can make friends. When a prospective member accepts the Sabbath, join them in ushering in their first Sabbath. Conduct Sabbath vespers in your own home, or take your spouse and children to their home and begin the Sabbath together, both families united. When a new believer can actually see new concepts in practice, these new ideas become much more practical and less bizarre. This also provides an opportunity for you to stress the best aspects of church fellowship and Sabbath-keeping, making the event a “high day” filled with spiritual blessings for the new believer.

Difficult Decisions

There are four basic areas of decision that are the most difficult for prospective church members to deal with. These involve more than simple assent to a new idea. Each is an essential step in full surrender of one’s life to Jesus Christ. Each may involve some delay while a person makes up his or her mind.

First, there is the decision to accept Christ as one’s personal Savior and Lord. This is the foundational decision.

Second, there is the Sabbath. This is a decision to keep all of God’s commandments. For some new believers there may be related issues such as cursing, adulterous relationships or a lifestyle that involves criminal activities, or gambling, or the use of firearms.



Third, there the decision to live a disciplined Christian life. This involves the health principles and standards of the Adventist Church.

Fourth, there is church membership. This is a decision to join the Adventist Church by baptism or Profession of Faith. It may involve cutting ties with another church in which the person already has membership.

In gaining decisions it is important to get to the bottom of whatever is holding the person back. When you know that a person has accepted Christ and believes the doctrines, yet hold back, an approach such as this might help: “I sense there is something holding you back. Could you share with me what it is?” Or, “I know you believe what we have studied together but something is troubling you. What is it?”

Once you discover the nature of the problem, you then have an opportunity to help your friend find a solution. This phase of personal evangelism can be quick and simple, or it can be lengthy and complicated.

“Many are convinced that we have the truth,” writes Ellen White, “and yet they are held as with iron bands; they dare not risk the consequences of taking their position on the side of truth. ... Just at this crucial period Satan throws the strongest bands around these souls.” The “iron bands” Mrs. White refers to—the forces that hold a prospective student back from making a decision—include the following kinds of issues:

1. Practical issues such as the fear of losing a job, family financial situation that makes it difficult to start tithing, and addictions such as smoking and alcohol.
2. Family issues such as strong opposition from a spouse, fear of conflict in the family, the influence of parents, or the need to face situations such as a couple that is living together outside of marriage.
3. Relational issues such as the prestige of belonging to a popular church in town or a sentimental tie to a family church, the fear of losing friends, pressure from ridicule and opposition from a pastor in another church.
4. Cultural issues such as traditional ties in the ethnic group to a particular religion, or concerns about joining a congregation in which the new believer will be in an ethnic minority group.

Each of these issues require careful, supportive help in resolving dynamics that are not directly related to the spiritual issues of accepting the Adventist message. As you work with people it is imperative to keep both “push” and “pull” forces in balance. The “pull” of Bible truth and a relationship with Christ must be kept before the person, and the “push” of your supportive friendship and listening skills must be kept behind the person.

There is a pattern of basic questions that is helpful for you to use during a time of decision to “unpack” issues of this kind: Is everything clear? Do you know what you should

do? What keeps you from doing it? You do plan to do it sometime, don't you? Why not do it now?

Remember that like the decision to marry, decisions on spiritual matters are based on a love relationship. "The love of Christ ... is the only power that can soften the heart and lead to obedience," states Ellen White. Your success depends "upon your ability to find your way to the heart. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts." She points out that "kindly words [and] Christlike sympathy" are powerful tools to "open the door to hearts."

Never lose sight of the fact that it is the goodness of God that leads to repentance. "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19) We must make God's love real to people if we expect favorable decisions.

"There is power in the exaltation of the cross of Christ," states Ellen White. Discussions about difficult issues can lead us off the track and away from the most important reality in Scripture. We must constantly work to keep the process of gaining a decision focused on the centrality of Christ and His righteousness. The prospective member will, after all, be saved through the power of Christ and not their own willpower.

When it appears that a person has no power to resolve an issue that is keeping them from making a decision, the prayers of others interceding for them can make the difference. Christ can overcome what no human being can summon sufficient strength to overcome! If the prospective member trusts in Jesus and a circle of believers intercede on their behalf, the power of Christ, won on the cross, and the faithfulness of His followers will bring victory.

The decisions made during individual conversations or in the family circle need to be confirmed in the fellowship of believers. Providing the person who has made a commitment to Christ with an opportunity to go forward at the close of the worship service is an excellent way to reinforce the decision made privately. The pastor should be told whenever a person who has made a decision during the week is in the congregation. Just before the closing hymn the speaker of the day or the pastor can invite any who would like to publicly confess their faith in Christ to come forward during the singing of the hymn.

In some cases it helps if the one who has led the person to Christ during the week will walk forward with the new believer. It is always appropriate for that person to join the newly committed individual at the front and stand with him or her. The pastor should greet those who respond and have prayer with them after the congregation is dismissed. Each one should be given the opportunity to fill out a decision card. Sometimes visitors of whom no one is aware will respond and make a decision that leads to baptism.

Expression deepens impression. It is always easier to go back to the old ways when only one or two people know of the decision to change. A man who, with his wife, accepted Christ on a Sunday evening during a visit in his home by a Lay Bible Minister, told the men he worked with, "I became a Christian over the weekend." He later told the Lay Bible

Minister that he did this because he knew it would be harder for him to go back on his decision if the men on the job knew he had made it.

How to Discover Who is Ready to Make a Decision

Look for people who are regularly attending church or the Pastor's Bible Class or a small group Bible study. Generally, people who are ready are not debaters. They ask intelligent questions and are satisfied with your answers. They have a positive, not a negative attitude. They are not critical of the Bible studies or the meetings. They have a desire for truth. They want to do what God wants them do. They are open to change and willing to consider new ideas. They are making progress in spiritual growth; they have accepted new ideas from the Bible studies and made changes in lifestyle.

To evaluate the level of readiness ask a series of questions that are non-threatening, that leave people open, friendly and receptive. "Are you enjoying the Bible studies? Have you ever studied the Bible like this before? What has impressed you most about these Bible lessons? Have you learned anything new? Have you been thinking about making any changes in your life?" If you listen carefully, the answers to these questions will tell you what is going on with the person and their degree of readiness.

There are three specific types of information that will help you to decide the level of readiness of a potential new convert:

Previous knowledge—What does this person know; what is their background? "Were you brought up in a Christian family? Have you always been a Christian?"

Present understanding—Does this person see themselves as a Christian or someone who is outside of Christ? "Is it clear to you that Christ is more than a great man, more than a prophet? Do you understand that Christ is the divine Son of God? Is it clear to you that Christ has offered eternal life to you personally?"

Positive commitment—Has this person made a commitment to Christ? "Is there any good reason why you would not like to surrender your life to Christ now?" Or, "Would you like to tell Jesus that you are giving Him your life and that today you want to receive the gift of eternal life? Is anything standing between you and this decision?"

This same pattern of "three Ps" can be applied to decisions for key things such as the Sabbath, the Second Coming, etc. If you take the decisions one at a time, then the prospective member will eventually come to the decision to join the church.



Asking for a Decision

I would like to emphasize that appeals must be close and pointed in order for them to be maximally effective. They will move men to decide for Christ only as they are positive, unambiguous and used by the Holy Spirit. Many soul winners are excellent in the art of persuading men for Christ until they reach the point of causing the other person to act. Here fear of rejection or fear of failure causes many to postpone asking for the decision or weakens them into a half-hearted appeal that invites a turndown.

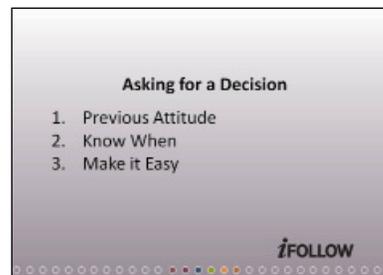
The success at the close will be directly dependent upon how well we have done in convincing people of the truth, arousing desire to obey, and implanting conviction that they should take action immediately. There is no sense in asking a person to be baptized if he is not convinced of the truth of our doctrines or if his love for Jesus is not strong enough to create a motivation to obey at any cost.

However, certain principles make clinching decisions easier, and we owe it to prospective converts to make it as easy as possible for them to put their wills on the Lord's side. Three important principles will help soul winners to clinch favorable decisions. They are: (1) Have a positive attitude. (2) Know when to clinch the decision. (3) Make it easy for prospects to act.

Positive Attitude—Believe that with the Spirit's help you can get this person to make the right decision.

Know When—The time to try for a decision is when you are satisfied that the person believes the truth and is motivated to accept it as part of his life. This means that the person must have passed through the stages of conviction and desire. Because no two persons are the same, no two prospects will go through the steps to decision at the same rate of speed. There are physical indicators of readiness that you can watch for. The person may take a deep breath and sigh, or scratch his chin and smile, or pull his ear and smile, or lean forward to listen attentively, or lean back in a relaxed manner.

Make it Easy—Have several different ways of asking for a decision. If the person does not decide when you use the first method, then you have other ways of asking again.



Seven Methods of Getting a Decision

1. The green light method—Ask a question that tells you whether the way is clear to move on to ask your prospect to kneel in a prayer of surrender: “Don’t you think the Lord will be pleased to see you baptized on Sabbath?” Or, “Based on what you have told me, don’t we

agree that you should follow the example of Jesus in this matter?" An affirmative reply is a green light for you to pray and confirm their decision.

2. The challenge method—This is especially effective with young people. "A decision for baptism is a big and a wise decision. Is it too hard for you?" If he or she says, "No," then hand them a decision card or baptismal certificate to sign.

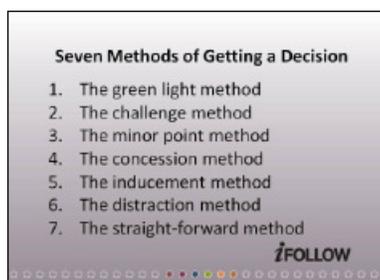
3. The minor point method—Ask for a decision on a minor point: "Would you like to go into the water alone or with your spouse?" Or, "Would you prefer baptism in the morning or evening?"

4. The concession method—This is a potent method for use with self-assured individuals who do not want to think that anyone can persuade them of something. "I am not sure I will be permitted to baptize you. The church board will have to approve your baptism, and I am not sure they will. I will promise to do my best for you. If the board should approve you, you will be happy to follow the Lord and be baptized, won't you?"

5. The inducement method—"After you are baptized, you will receive a beautiful certificate of baptism. Write your name here the way you want it spelled on your certificate."

6. The distraction method—In this method you distract attention from the topic of baptism and focus it on some related subject. "How many people are you planning to invite to your baptism?"

7. The straight-forward method—"Several people are planning to be baptized on Sabbath. I would be very happy to baptize you at the same time. Just write down your decision on this card."



Handouts in this Package

1. How to Make an Appeal
2. Ten Key Decisions to Become an Adventist
3. Ellen White on Getting Decisions
4. Bible Texts to Use with Objections
5. What You Should Know About the Other Faith



Additional Resources

Finley, Mark (1994). *Persuasion: How to Help People Decide for Jesus*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association.

Kleuser, Louise (1949). *The Bible Instructor in Personal and Public Evangelism*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Norman, R. S.; Dossman, Craig and Jones, J. A. (1997). *Gaining Decisions: A Quick Reference for Soul Winners*. Nashville: South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Torres, Louis (2001). *Gaining Decisions for Christ: A How-to Manual*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Wiggins, K. S. (1975). *Soul Winning Made Easier: The Psychology of Getting More Decisions*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association.

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Discussion Questions

1. Why is it so important to ask for a specific decision from non-members in Bible studies?
2. What negative feelings do you have about this topic?
3. How does it make you feel when you see a new believer in the baptistry being baptized and then welcomed into the congregation?
4. Why have so many different ways of asking for a decision? Is there one best method?
5. What motivations are involved in the decision to become a member of the Adventist Church? Why are people pulled for and against this decision?
6. Have you personally been involved at a moment when someone made a decision to join the church? Can you share that story; you don't need to use real names or identify location, etc.

Group Activity

Purpose: To practice the specific steps involved in getting a decision. This will help the participant feel more confident that they can actually do it in their Bible studies.

Preparation: It is best to have a room equipped with movable chairs, not fixed pews. It is also good to have some tables as well as chairs because some of the most self-conscious participants will feel more comfortable sitting at a table. It is important to have a supply of decision cards. Participants should also have their Bibles at hand.

Assignment: Work in teams of three. Decide who will be the Bible worker, who will be the prospective convert and who will be the observer. The purpose of the exercise is for the Bible worker to practice asking for a decision.

Agenda: First, take three to five minutes for the participants to pair off in teams of three, find places to work together out of direct ear-shot of the others and decide who will be the Bible worker, who will be the prospective convert and who will be the observer. The Bible worker and prospective convert should sit facing each other and the observer should be out of their line of sight, perhaps standing a few steps back.

2. Announce that the first practice round will begin and they will have two minutes. Monitor the teams without intruding and allow a little more time, if needed.
3. Bring the first practice round to an end and give the observer two minutes to join the circle and give feedback to the practice Bible worker.
4. Ask the participants to rotate roles within their team and go another two minutes so that another person can practice.
5. Again, monitor the time and announce time for the observer to give feedback.
6. Ask the participants to rotate roles one more time and go another two minutes for a third practice round so that everyone has the opportunity to practice.
7. Bring the whole group together again and spend at least 15 minutes for everyone to share what they have learned and answer questions they may have.

Time: The whole exercise can be done in 30 minutes. It is more comfortable to take about 45 minutes so that everyone has plenty of time to practice and discuss their feelings, etc.

Handout 1

A Basic Bible Study that Introduces Christ

Each Bible study should end with an appeal for a response from the student(s) based on the Bible truth just presented. You should use only one kind of appeal in each study. Here is a menu several different kinds of appeals:

1. Show that this is a life and death matter. Make plain in your Bible study and in your appeal that the decision made will be for life or death. It is not a decision primarily to join a church, it is a decision for truth or error. It is a decision for Christ or the world.
2. Picture the love of God. Emphasize the thought that Jesus loves the student as an individual. Christ died on the cross for him or her. The decision should be made out of a response to God's love.
3. Present the danger of delay. Life is uncertain in this world. The door of probation may soon be closed. Among saddest words recorded in the Bible are those spoken by Jesus in Matthew 25:10, "and the door was shut."
4. Emphasize that each individual must make his or her own decision. Read carefully Ezekial 14:14, 16, 18, 20. Each verse teaches that even though one's parents are believers, that fact will not assure the children's salvation.
5. Stress their influence on family and friends. Remind your Bible student that no one lives to himself alone (Romans 14:7) and each person exerts an influence for Christ or for the world. In making decisions an individual must think of the example they set for others.
6. Point out that there will be only two kinds of people at the end. There will be the saved and the unsaved. In God's sight there are only these two categories; there is no intermediate group. No one can straddle the fence on the issues of salvation. Christ says in Matthew 12:30, "He that is not with me is against me."
7. Accentuate Christ as our example. In 1 Peter 2:21 we are told to obey what He has said. What He did we are to do. The reason we observe the seventh-day Sabbath is that Christ was a Sabbath keeper. We also follow Christ in baptism. That which makes us members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is Christ's example and teaching.
8. Assure of Christ's care and interest. Remind your Bible student that if God cared for her even before she was converted, God surely will not forsake her now that she

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has decided to follow Christ. Most assuredly, the Lord will keep His promises to bless in a special way those who obey Him explicitly.

9. Underscore our need for Christ's approval. Believers in Jesus want His approbation. His approval is given, not to those who know to do well and do not do it, but to those who obey. Christ "became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

10. Remind that it takes courage to be a Christian. A person cannot be a vacillating "jellyfish" and be a real Christian. It takes moral backbone. A real Christian will stand unflinchingly like Daniel for what he knows to be truth and right.

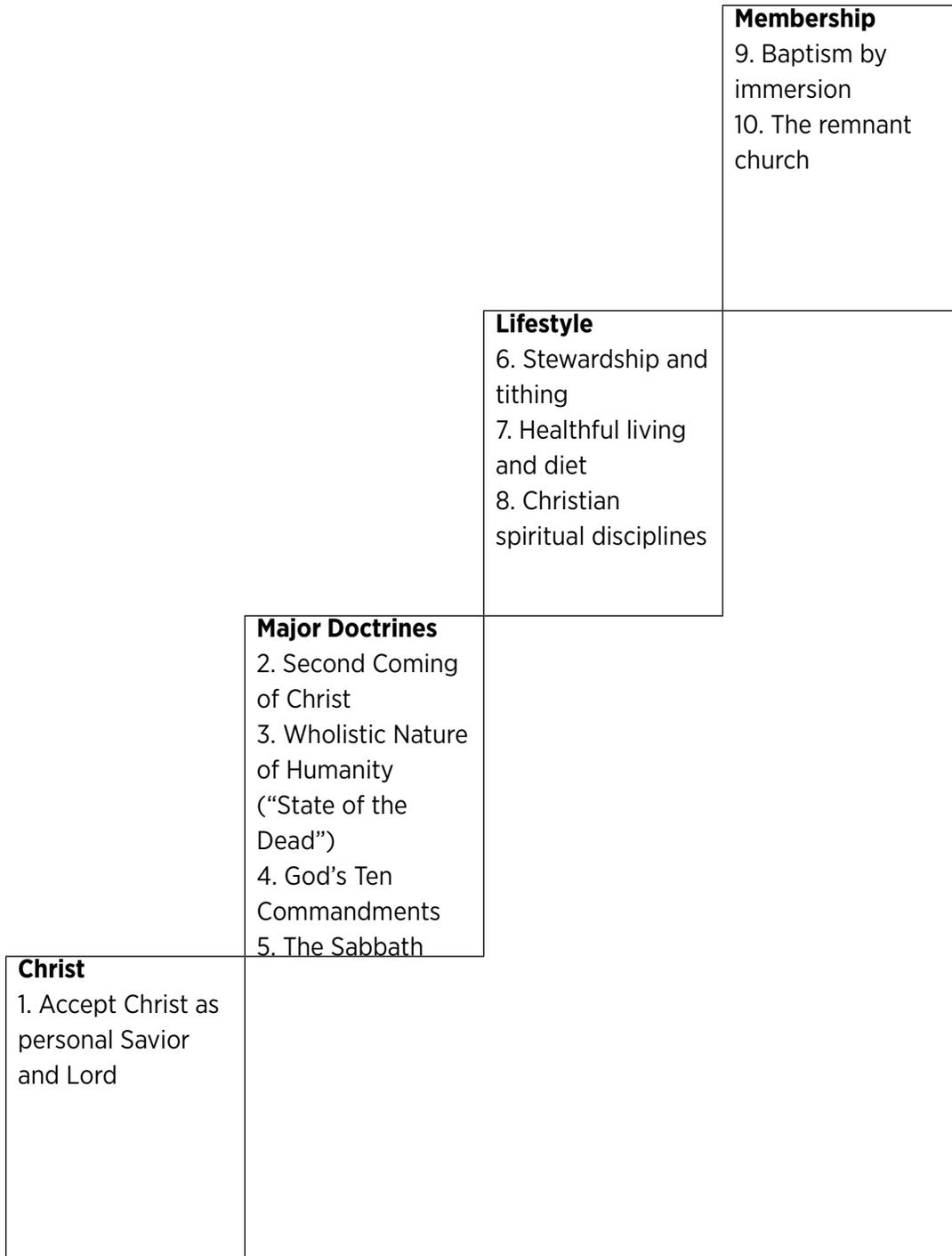
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Handout 2

Ten Key Decisions to Become an Adventist



Source: Norman, Dossman and Jones, *Gaining Decisions*

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Handout 3

Ellen White on Getting Decisions

A quick summary of key ideas published in the compilation *Evangelism*.

Methods (pages 281-311)

1. “Declare the whole counsel of God.” Do not appear provoked or speak “in a harsh un-Christlike manner.”
2. “Lift up Christ before his hearers. Christ’s claims upon them are to be made plain.”
3. “Make scripture explain scripture. ... A plain Thus saith the Lord” will impress people.
4. “No unnecessary words.”
5. “Direct the mind to Him who guides and controls all things.”
6. “Lead the people to think that there is life or death in these solemn questions, according as they shall receive or reject them.”
7. “As you presenting testing truth, ask often, who is now willing ... to consecrate their hearts and minds, with all their affections, to Christ Jesus.”
8. “Jesus Christ should be presented distinctly. ... Christ, Christ, Christ is to be in it everywhere.”
9. Personal inquiry should be made. “Each one should be asked how he is going to take these things, if he is going to make a personal application of them.”
10. “Put away evil speaking and selfishness, and continue in prayer and humble yourself before God.”
11. “Make men to know how much Jesus loves them, and what evidences He has given them of His love.”
12. “Cultivate earnestness and positiveness in addressing the people.”
13. Speak “with such certainty that those who hear may know that the truth is a reality to you.”

14. “Pray with these souls, by faith laying them at the foot of the cross ... and fix every eye ... upon Jesus.”

15. “They should be **led** along.”

16. “Be very careful how you handle the Word.”

17. “Hold to the affirmative.”

18. “Avoid any severity of speech that might give offense.”

Conversion (pages 287-292)

1. All people are not alike. “Often souls have been drawn to Christ when there was no violent conviction, no soul rending, no remorseful tears.”

2. “The conversion of the human soul is of no little consequence. It is the greatest miracle performed by divine power.”

3. “The conversion of souls to God is the greatest work, the highest work, in which human beings can have a part. In the conversion of souls God’s forbearance, His unbounded love, His holiness, His power, are revealed.”

Problems (pages 286-306)

1. “Satan’s [weapons] will be opened upon those who advocate the truth, and the standard bearers must expect to meet many sneers and much reviling that is hard to hear.”

2. “The work for our time is attended with the same difficulties that Jesus had to meet, and that the reformers of every age have had to overcome.”

3. “There is in the heart of man that which is opposed to truth and righteousness.”

4. “Every teacher of the truth, every laborer together with God, will pass through searching, trying hours, when faith and patience will be severely tested.”

5. “Some are weary of sin, but do not have the courage to claim themselves to be children of God. Others claim to be children of God, but do not show true conversion.”

Baptism (pages 306-320)

1. “Repentance, faith and baptism are the requisite steps in conversion.”
2. “The new converts to the truth should be faithfully instructed in the plain, Thus saith the Lord.”
3. “When they give evidence that they fully understand their position, they are to be accepted.”
4. “The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have newly come to the truth.”
5. “Parents are to be instructors and guardians of their children, to bring them to Jesus and baptism.”
6. “Show that true conversion is a change of heart, of thoughts and purposes.”
7. “Evil habits are to be given up. The sins of evil-speaking, of jealousy, of disobedience, are to be put away.”
8. “Before baptism, there should be a thorough inquiry as to the experience of the candidates.”
9. Bible workers “should not feel content, nor that their work is ended, until those who have accepted the theory of truth realize indeed the effect of its sanctifying power, and are truly converted to God.”

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Handout 4

Bible Texts to Use with Objections

Not today. I will make my decision later.

“Choose you this day.” (Joshua 24:15)
“How long halt you?” (1 Kings 18:21)
“Boast not of tomorrow.” (Proverbs 27:1)
“Why do you wait?” (Acts 22:16)
“Now is the accepted time.” (2 Corinthians 6:2)

It is too late. I have waited too long.

“If the wicked turn ... he shall live.” (Ezekial 33:10)
“Those who come to Me.” (John 6:37)
“Whoever calls upon the Lord.” (Romans 10:13)

I tried once to be a Christian. I am afraid to try again.

Christ is able ...
“to deliver” (Daniel 3:17)
“to fulfill promises” (Romans 4:21)
“to guard your treasure” (2 Timothy 1:12)
“to save to the uttermost” (Hebrews 7:25)
“to keep you from falling” (Jude 24)

How do I know my sins are forgiven?

“If we confess ... He is faithful ... to forgive.” (1 John 1:9)
“Whoever confesses and forsakes.” (Proverbs 28:13)
“Sins that are scarlet [are made] white as snow.” (Isaiah 1:18)
“Sins [dropped] into the depths of the sea.” (Micah 7:19)

Some things are not yet clear.

“The mysterious things belong to God.” (Deut. 29:29)
“You will know in the hereafter.” (John 13:7)
“It is not for you to know.” (Acts 1:7)
“Now we see through a glass, darkly.” (1 Cor. 13:12)

I'm not so bad!

“He that does not believe is condemned already.” (John 3:18)

“He that does not believe ... the wrath of God is focused on him.” (John 3:36)

“All have sinned.” (Romans 3:23)

“The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23)

God is love. He will save me anyway.

“Cast him into outer darkness.” (Matthew 22:13)

“Except you repent, you shall ... perish.” (Luke 13:3)

“God spared not the angels.” (2 Peter 2:4)

There are too many hypocrites in the church.

“The hypocrite’s hope shall perish.” (Job 8:13)

“Judge not, or you will be judged.” (Matthew 7:1)

“Everyone ... shall give account for himself.” (Romans 14:12)

It will cost me too much.

“What shall I give to the Lord?” (Psalm 116:12)

“What shall it profit a man ...?” (Mark 8:36)

“No one who has given up everything shall not receive much more.” (Luke 18:29-30)

“Christ ... took our sins on His own body on the cross.” (1 Peter 2:24)

I cannot leave my family and friends.

“You should not follow ... to do evil.” (Exodus 23:2)

“He that walks with wise men shall be wise.” (Proverbs 13:20)

“Wrong talk corrupts.” (1 Corinthians 15:33)

I am afraid I will be pressured and put down.

A blessing is connected with persecution. (Matthew 5:11)

It lifts the soul to the same level as the prophets. (Matthew 5:12)

All godly people expect it. (2 Timothy 3:12)

It leads to a crown. (Revelation 2:10)

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Handout 5

What You Should Know About the Other Faith

1. How this religion was founded: When? By whom? Where?
2. What beliefs or theological dispute led to its organization?
3. What has been its influence on world religions? ... on Christianity at large?
4. How is this religion categorized today?
5. How large is this religion? Where is its headquarters? What are some of its largest congregations and strongest institutions?
6. What are the key ceremonies of this faith? How often do local groups gather? (Weekly, less often, etc.) What does a typical gathering or worship event look like?
7. How is this faith organized at the local, regional and national levels?
8. What activities do they have for children and youth? Do they sponsor schools or colleges?
9. What is the attitude of this religion toward the Adventist Church?

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