

The Compass

a tool for disciplers



Equipping Believers for Ministry

Transitions to the Gospel

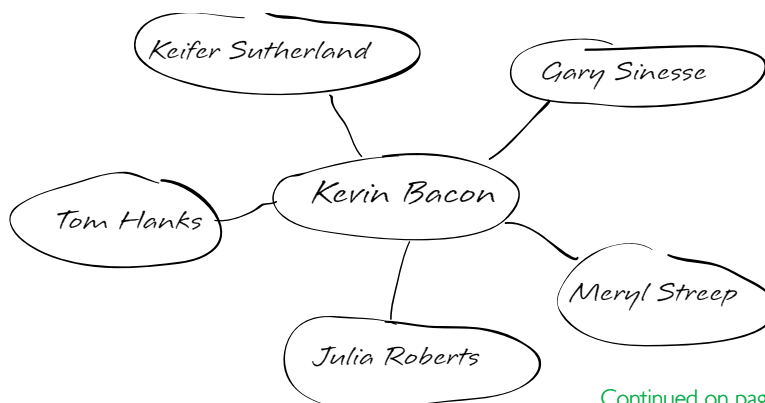
Conversation On the Journey

For a lot of people one of the hardest things about talking to someone about Jesus is just getting started. How do you bring it up? Awkward transitions feel forced and make a scary situation even more so. That problem might even be the #1 reason your disciple doesn't like to share her faith. But I bet if you yell at her, and ridicule her, you can get her to fall in line and just do it. Discipleship by coercion is vastly underrated.

Actually, no. Don't do that. That would make you a jerk and your actions cultish. I have a better idea. How about if you communicate a simple concept based on a game called "Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon," and then help her think through key connection points in her life? Yes, that would be much better.

The game mentioned above is based on the idea that every person is connected to every other person through a surprisingly small number of intermediaries. The game works by trying to find a connection (based on films that both parties starred in) between any actor or actress and our hero, Kevin Bacon. For instance, let's say we start with O.J. Simpson. He was in *Naked Gun* with Priscilla Presley. She in turn was in *Ford Fairlane* with Gilbert Gottfried, who was in *Beverly Hills Cop II* with Paul Reiser. Finally, Reiser was in *Diner*, with, you guessed it, Kevin Bacon. If you can get there in six steps or less, you win.

An experienced player, however, knows that it's not really six degrees of Kevin Bacon that you want to play. Rather, it's five degrees of a bunch of other people. Specifically, it's five degrees of Tom Hanks or Gary Sinesse (who co-starred with Bacon in *Apollo 13*), or five degrees of Julia Roberts and Keifer Sutherland (*Flatliners*) or five degrees of Meryl Streep (*The River Wild*). And on and on. This way you get a much bigger target to aim for. If you can get to Hanks or Roberts or Streep (or Nev Campbell or John Lithgo or Elizabeth Shue), you are a step away from victory.



This Week's Excursion

This lesson is designed to help you teach your disciple how to move a conversation towards spiritual things, and ultimately to the Gospel, in a way that is natural and comfortable.

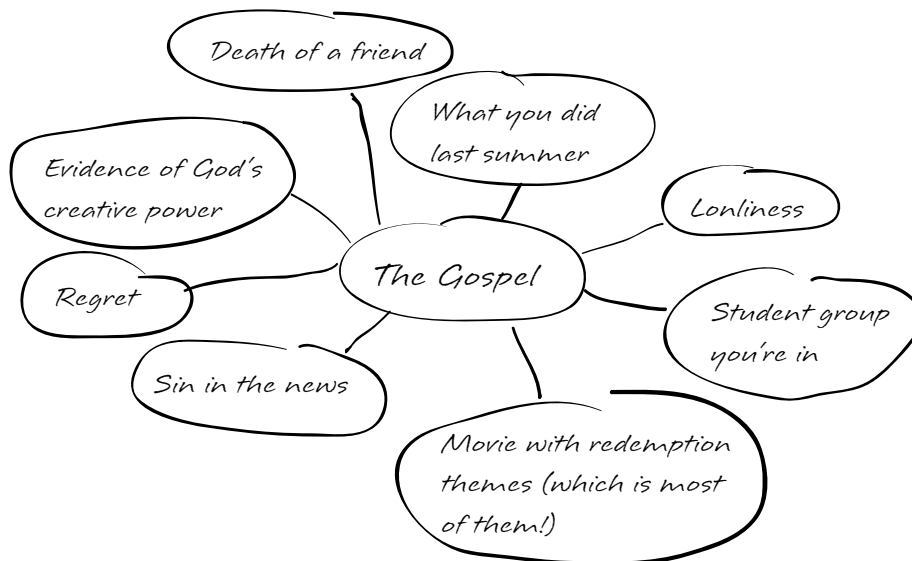
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By playing this game with your disciple and teaching this strategy you can illustrate a way they can prepare to move a conversation to the Gospel. The key of course is not to figure out how to move a conversation to the Gospel, but rather how to move the conversation to any one of half a dozen or more pre-conceived topics that put you a step away from the Gospel. Many of those connections will be about your life, and provide a bridge to your testimony. Others might connect directly to a need that you know Jesus alone can meet.

For instance, anytime I am talking about my weekend plans with someone it's easy to talk about the people that I hang out with and what we have in common (Christ). If we're talking about our jobs being stressful I can communicate that Christ is my source of peace. If we talk about international travel, I've been overseas a couple of times on mission trips to East and Central Asia, which aren't exactly common vacation spots. It's not uncommon for people to ask me what I was doing over there. Since they ask, I tell them.



What are those key connection points for you? How about for your disciple? After playing a round or two of the game to illustrate the concept, explain to her the significance of the principle and how it applies to gently moving a conversation towards the Gospel. Then help her think through the key connection points, that are only a step away from the Gospel. If she can leave that time armed with five or six topics, and the knowledge of how to move to the Gospel from them, you will have given her a great help in reaching out to others with the love of Christ.

End 

Next Steps

Once you've played the game, the main application is for your disciple to think through the connection points in her life to the Gospel. Help her come up with five or six topics that she could reasonably expect to come up in conversation (or toward which they could naturally direct a conversation) and from which it would be easy to talk about spiritual things. Have her look for opportunities this week to talk about Christ in conversation using this principle.

Side Trails

Some of the best transitions to the gospel can be found in:

Becoming a Contagious Christian. Bill Hybels. Zondervan.

Also see *Evangelism Outside the Box*. Rick Richardson. IV Press.

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