

Meaningful Conversations

The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.
(Proverbs 20:5, NIV)

Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

Do you want to learn how to have meaningful conversations that lead into spiritual topics? This handout is designed to help you learn about your friends, share your life with them, and introduce spiritual topics. With these ideas, you'll never run out of things to talk about, and you can grow closer to your friend in ways that are easy and fun. Some conversation questions are specifically designed for internationals. In this way, you can also use these topics for leading a conversation class in your city or neighborhood! Here are a few tips to get started:

Conversation Tips:

- Pick a topic below and start the conversation.
- Remember what your friend says:
 - Write what you learn about your friend on a notecard, in a journal, or on your phone.
 - Using your notecard, pray for your friend regularly.
 - Research your friend's country and find more interesting things to talk about!
- Identify your friend's greatest needs and concerns (physical, emotional, and spiritual) so you know how to serve and pray for them.
- Look for areas to unpack and go deeper.
- Ask one or two spiritual questions and then move on to another topic. If a person has a negative attitude toward spiritual discussions, ask them to explain their views – Tell me more about that. What's your story? Don't push the topics, but interweave them into your conversations if your friend is open and interested.
- Plan for the next conversation.
- Finally, be a good listener. 😊

Conversation Topics

Fun

What are your hobbies and interests?

What do you do for fun on the weekends? (What days do you take a weekend?)

What do you like to study or learn outside of school?

If you had a day off, what would you do?

Discuss traveling, movies, books, music, art, games, etc. (See also Culture)

Personal connection:

Share your personal interests.

If you're able, check out a movie or a book that the person likes and talk about it next time you meet.

Spiritual connection:

Do you think religion is interesting or boring? Talk about why.

Do you ever watch spiritual movies or listen to spiritual music? (Watch a spiritual movie together or share with your friend an inspiring spiritual song.)

Have you spent time studying philosophy or spiritual books – Quran, Torah, Bible, etc.?

Do you ever take time to pray or spend time with God? What does that look like?

Have you ever been on a pilgrimage or spiritual retreat?

Share something personal and spiritual about yourself. Share your story.

Share how Jesus changed how you have fun in life.

Skills and Talents

Do you have any hidden skills and talents?

How did you get interested in these skills and talents?

How have you developed them?

How do you use or want to use these skills or talents now or in the future?

Personal connection:

Share your skills and talents.

Talk about how you use them right now, and how you want to use them in the future.

Set up a time for them to show you their skill or talent.

Spiritual connection:

Who do you think God has created you to be in this world? Do you feel you have a special purpose?

Do you ever connect to God using these skills or talents? (if applicable) Explain.

Share about a person in ministry or in the Bible that uses a similar skill or talent for God.

Ask if they would ever want to use their skill or talent to serve God or people. Describe.

Share how you connect spiritually through your skills or talents.

Share how you use your skills and talents for God.

Schedule and Availability

What's your daily, weekly, monthly, semester, yearly schedule?

How do you start and end your day?

Do you consider your routine a busy one? Why?

Would you like to have a different routine? Why?

Do you like routine? Why?

How long do you plan to stay in this city? Explain.

Personal connection:

Share your schedule and availability.

Spiritual Connection:

Do you spend time with God or attend worship? Tell me about it.

Have you ever been to church or Bible study? Would you like to come?

My Connect the Nations or church friends are having an event. Would you like to come?

Share how you include God in your schedule and challenges you face with making that time.

Education

If they're in school:

What classes are you taking?

What are you learning?

What's your favorite class and why?

Tell me about your professors.

What assignments do you have this week?

When are your exams?

Where's your favorite place to study?

If studying English, how is that going and what are your needs?

How's your stress level? Do you have any challenges in school these days?

If they're not in school:

Describe Elementary, Middle, High School, and College

What did you enjoy learning?

What were your favorite and worst social memories (most awkward moments!)?

What were your favorite and worst educational / teacher experiences?

Did you make friends in school or college that you still have in your life? What are they like, and how do you stay connected?

Personal connection:

Share your answers to these questions.

Laugh!

Spiritual connection:

Explore if they were spiritual in the past and something happened or changed that.

Identify areas needing healing and share personally how Jesus has helped you in that area.

Take a journey or healing together or help your friend with scriptures, spiritual books, inspiring Christian movies, or a Connect the Nations class that fits their need. Share a few verses from

[My Identity in Christ](#), found on Transform page.

Childhood / Teen Years

What were your hobbies and interests as a child?

What was your personality as a child? How has it changed or stayed the same?

What events in your childhood have shaped your life or the way you see the world?

What are your best and worst memories as a child?

Ask the same questions about teen years.

In what ways did you change as a teenager?

Personal connection:

Share your answers to these questions.

Spiritual connection:

Identify areas needing healing, and share personally how Jesus has helped you.

Take a journey of healing together or help your friend with scriptures, Biblical stories (i.e. Joseph), spiritual books, or inspiring Christian movies.

Pray with your friend over areas where they need healing.

Work

If they're looking for a job

What kind of job are you looking for?

Do you need help with your resume?

Do you need help with interviewing?

If they're working

Tell me about your job.

What projects are you working on?

Tell me about your coworkers. Are you close to any of them?

What do you like about your job and what do you wish were different?

Is speaking or understanding English ever an issue at your job? Tell me about that.

How's your stress level? Do you have any challenges these days?

Personal connection:

Share your answers to these questions.

Share how you deal with stress and issues through your faith.

Spiritual connection:

Pray with your friend over areas where they need help.

If they are in leadership, study what Jesus and the Bible teach about leadership, or get a spiritual book to help you and read it together.

Goals and Dreams

What are your relationship goals and dreams regarding marriage, dating, friends, and family?

What are your academic and career goals?

What personal goals do you have for this year, in 5 years, in 10 years, for your life?

Did you set any New Year's resolutions?

Do you have any personal ways that you want to grow this year?

What are your greatest distractions?

What things keep you from achieving your goals?

What are three things you want to do in this life? What's your plan to do these things?

What do you want to be about in this life?

What things in life matter to you the most?

Personal connection:

Share your top priorities, both secular and spiritual.

Share your goals and dreams.

Share your personal growth needs and what you are working on.

Set up a time to help your friend with any of the areas discussed.

Spiritual Connection:

Do you have any spiritual goals? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

What is your purpose for your life? Why are you alive?

What if you knew you were going to die before reaching your dreams? How would that affect you?

How could you live this life without regrets? Where do you find your hope? Share about yourself.

Pray with your friend over an area that he or she values.

Share scriptures or stories from the Bible that relate to your friends goals and dreams.

Find a spiritual book to help your friend, and read the book together.

Share a scripture about God's purpose for us, i.e. Genesis 1, Acts 17:24, Jeremiah 29:11-13, Matthew 28:18-20 how this scripture has shaped your priorities.

Share personally about how your priorities changed after you found Jesus.

Personality

How could you describe yourself emotionally?

What makes you happy? Sad? Angry? Fearful? Explain.

Are you more passive or aggressive? Explain.

Are you a people pleaser or are you too honest? Explain.

Do you have trouble sharing your true feelings? What do you do instead?

Are you a peacemaker or stick stirrer? Explain.

Are you artistic or analytical? A rule follower or rule breaker? A counselor or an attorney? Explain.

Are you a planner and goal setter or are you free flowing and organic? What does planning and scheduling look like for you?

Are you easily distracted or focused? What things distract you?

Are you a dreamer or a doer? Explain.

Do you prefer structure or no structure? Schedule or no schedule? Explain.

How do you process feelings? Give an example and discuss.

What do you like about yourself? What would you change?

What do you want to be known for after you die?

What core traits do you admire most in others?

Personal connection:

Share your answers to these questions.

Share areas of your character you are working to change and what you are doing to improve those areas.

Find a way to help your friend in an area they want to grow or change.

Spiritual connection:

Share about a person in ministry or in the Bible who had the same personality traits. Tell their story.

Share a scripture, spiritual book, or story in the Bible to strengthen your friend in an area of weakness or challenge.

Pray together over an area that your friend wants to work on.

Share personally about how Jesus is helping you to overcome weaknesses or grow in your personality.

Personal needs

How is your personal health? What do you do to stay healthy? How do you want to grow in this area?

How's your stress level these days? What areas of your life cause you the most stress?

How do you manage stress? In what ways do you want to grow?

Do you have many close friends here? Who do you feel is your greatest support? Do you ever feel lonely? If so ,why?

What concerns occupy your mind? School? Family? Health? Finances? Career? International news? Relationships?

Do you need to practice your English-speaking skills? How can I help?

Personal connection:

Share your answers to these questions.

Be a good listener.

If you are able to serve them in some way, do it!

Spiritual connection:

Pray with your friend about their needs.

Share with your friend how Jesus, the Bible, the church, or a spiritual resource has helped you or others with one of these areas.

Share and discuss a story from the Bible about someone with the same need, or share a verse that gives you strength when you're stressed.

Study a spiritual book together to strengthen your friend in a particular area.

If English conversation is a need, practice conversation using this handout or the [TalkEnglish Program](#).

You can also use one of the Connect the Nations studies, spiritual books, or even spiritual movies.

Share a need in your life. Allow your friend to serve you in some way if they ask.

Family

How do you enjoy time with your family?

What types of things do you do together?

How often do you talk or get together as a family?

What makes you close (or not close) as a family?

Does your family have any needs right now?

Parents

Do your parents live here or somewhere else?

How did your parents meet? Are they still together?

How often do you talk? What do you usually talk about?

Are you close or not close to your parents? Explain.

What are their traits and personalities?

What do you admire about your parents? What's challenging in your relationship?

What are some of the best memories that you have with your mom or dad?

Do you have any bad memories? Explain.

Do you have any funny or meaningful stories about your parents? Explain.

Who are you closest to and why? Explain.

Are you more like your mom or dad? Explain.

What do you enjoy about the relationship? What do you wish were different?

Are your parents healthy? Do they have any health needs? If yes, how are these challenges affecting you? How are you feeling about this?

What do your parents do to stay healthy?

Are your parents working? What do they do?

Do they have any stresses these days? If yes, how are these challenges affecting you?

How's the economy in your country these days? How has the economy affected your parents?

Siblings

Do you have siblings? What are their names?

Where do they live?

Ask the same type of questions for siblings as parents.

Extended family

Ask the same type of questions about aunts/uncles, cousins, or grandparents, if they are close to them.

Personal connection:

Answer the same questions about your parents.

Share about your relationship with your parents and areas where you want to grow the relationship.

Identify areas where you can help each other.

Spiritual connection:

Pray with your friend about the needs of their family members.

Use scriptures, Bible stories, or spiritual books to help your friend grow in their family relationships.

Watch an inspiring Christian movie about family relationships.

Friends

Who are your two closest friends?

What do you enjoy about them?

What do you wish were different?

How often do you talk or get together?

What are their traits and personalities?

What do you admire about your friends?

What are some good and bad memories that you've had with your friends?

What are some funny or meaningful stories about your friends?

Personal connection:

Have an event where your friends can meet each other, like a chat party.

Share about your relationships with friends.

Spiritual connection:

Invite your friend to Bible discussion or event to meet your friends.

Culture

Food

What are your favorite foods?

What do you eat for breakfast, lunch, or dinner?

Do you have any dietary restrictions or rules?

What are your favorite local restaurants?

Clothing

What's your favorite outfit or style of clothes?

Where do you like to shop for clothing?

What do you wear to work?

For internationals:

How is clothing different in your country vs. my country? Or How do people dress in your country (at

school, work, weekends, etc.)?
What type of jewelry do you prefer?
What type of jewelry is normal in your culture?
Describe the traditional dress in your country and tell me about its history.
Do you like the clothing in your country – why or why not?
How is clothing changing in your country?

Videos / Podcasts

What are some of your favorite videos or podcasts? Why do you like them?

Poetry / literature / Non-fiction

Do you read mostly fiction or non-fiction?
Which pieces of literature have impacted you or your people the most?
Who are some famous writers in your country?

Movies

What is your favorite movie and why?
What are some famous movies in your country? Tell me about them.
How are movies in your country different from or similar to movies in my country?

Music / Dancing

What type of music do you like?
What are your favorite songs from your country?
What are some famous songs from your country?

Customs

What are the customs or expectations in your country about gift giving, hospitality, shaking hands, hugging, friendships, elders, etc.
What customs in your country are similar or different from mine?

History

What are your favorite parts of the history of your country? Tell me more.
What's the history of your hometown?
What is your hometown famous for?
Who is your favorite leader in the history of your country? (Or another favorite historical person – sports figure, singer, movie star, etc.)
If you could change any part of your country's or the world's history, what would it be and why?

Holidays and Traditions

What are your favorite holidays? Tell me about the traditions of these holidays?
What do these holidays and traditions mean?
Which holidays are religious? What do these holidays mean to you?

Personal connection:

Share your favorites in these areas.
Share about your own culture in these areas.
Compare and contrast each other's culture.

If possible, eat at a restaurant that serves food from your friend's country and share your experience.
Ask your friend for a good recipe from their country and try to cook it.
Study the history of your friend's country and hometown and learn more. Share with your friend what you learned.
Share another piece of culture together – music, movies, writing, dancing, etc.

Spiritual connection:

Discuss food in the Bible, how restrictions changed over time, and Matthew 15:11 where Jesus talks about our hearts that make us unclean.
Share the value of modesty in Christian clothing, and how you try to practice modesty, a value in many other countries.
Ask your friend if they've been inspired by any spiritual literature or poetry from their country outside of their holy books. Discuss.
Discuss the positive and negative impact movies can have on us. Share your convictions about the types of movies or television shows you watch and why.
Learn the spiritual history of their country, including the history of Christianity there, and share what you learned with your friend.
Study any connections to their country that are found in the Bible, and share what you learned with your friend.
Share about Christian holidays, what they mean to you. Send a message to your friend on their holiday!

Country

What's the latest news in your country? How do you feel about this? What would you like to see happen?
Tell me about the political system in your country.
What identifies you as a nation? (i.e. American = democracy, freedom, constitution) What has influenced these ideals?
What do you enjoy the most about your country? What do you miss the most?
If you could, what would you like to change?

Personal connection:

Share about your country and the answers to these questions.
Share what you admire about their country.
Learn the political system of their country.
(Tip: To avoid heated political discussion, empathize with people's frustrations and feelings and pray together about the issues. Ask about why people feel the way they feel – try to get to the root, i.e. fear, hurt, shame, justice, etc.)

Spiritual connection:

Pray for the needs of their country.
Pray for their leaders.
Pray for the relationship between your countries.
Share verses about how Jesus loves all nations or how God has a plan for their country and all those that turn to Him.
Share scriptures of how Jesus handled difficult situations or stories in the Bible of where people turned to God in times of distress, if the need arises.

Language

How did you learn English? What strategies work best for you?

What are some proverbs in your culture? Discuss their meaning.

What is the history of your language? What languages are most similar to yours?

What languages do you want to learn?

Can you speak other languages than English and your native language?

Personal connection:

Find similar proverbs in your culture.

Learn words in their language.

Teach your friend colloquial phrases and new words in English.

Discuss the meanings of roots in English.

Discuss how you learn a language.

Spiritual connection:

Share similar proverbs from the Bible.

Research the best translations of the Bible in your friend's language. Introduce your friend to an app with a Bible in their language, i.e. YouVersion, or buy a Bible in their language. (Tip: Consult with believers from their country to discern the best translation.)

Share the *Jesus* movie or *The Gospel of John* movie with your friend in their language (or other Christian resources in their native tongue).

Take your friend to a church that speaks their language or introduce them to other believers with their background.

In some cultures, language plays a role in spiritual thought. For example, the concept of a sacrificed lamb for righteousness is found in a Chinese character. If you find any of these, share these with your friend.

The history of Martin Luther and why he translated the Bible is an interesting bridge to topics surrounding the translation of the Quran.

Religion and Beliefs

Are you a spiritual person? In what ways? If not, are there reasons why? Did something happen that made you feel that way?

Who is God to you? How would you describe Him?

Do you believe in one God or many gods?

Do you have a personal God/god? Tell me about Him.

Have you ever experienced Him? How?

How important is knowing God to you? (1-10) Explain. If the importance is high, how do you show that importance? If not, then what keeps God from being a 10 in your life?

If you could ask God anything, what would you ask Him and why?

If you could understand something about God, what would you want to understand?

What other beliefs do you have about God? Prophets? Spiritual leaders?

Do you follow any holy books or spiritual documents? What other spiritual books have shaped your beliefs? What do they teach?

How are your personal beliefs different from your religion of culture?

How do you personally practice your religion or beliefs?

What rules do you have in your religion?

How do you view sin in your religion? How do you personally view sin?
How is a person saved (or go to heaven) in your religion? What do you believe personally about this?
Do you believe in an afterlife? Tell me about that.
What sins or aspects of your life affect your conscience?
How have your beliefs been formed? (identify major influences)
Have you ever had a bad religious experience? Explain.
Have you ever had any religious experiences? Dreams, miracles, signs, visions, encounters with demons or ghosts?
If there was a motto to live by, what would yours be?
Have you ever had a positive or negative encounter with Christians?
What is your view of Christianity? Christians? Jesus? The Bible?
Do you believe the Bible is the Truth? Why or why not?

Personal connection:

Share books that have impacted your walk with Jesus.
Share your journey to God and testimony of how you came to Jesus.
Share significant spiritual experiences and events in your life.
Share the sins of your past and how Jesus has been transforming you.
Share how Jesus has changed your life (your views, relationships, areas of healing).
Share your daily walk with Jesus and how you stay close to Jesus.
Be humble but open about who you are spiritually, and let your friend know this part of your life.

Spiritual connection:

Share the Gospel!
Read scriptures related to salvation or other topics discussed.
Share what it means to seek God wholeheartedly and ask your friend if they want to seek God in this way (Jeremiah 29:11-13).
Ask your friend if they would like to read or study the Bible with you. Read a Gospel, do [TalkEnglish Program](#), or one of the Connect the Nations studies!
Share scriptures about God's love for us and what it truly means to love God.
Look at scriptures about sin in the Bible and discuss how these sins affect us. Share personally and ask your friend to share.
Share prophecies in the Old Testament about Jesus and their fulfillment in the New Testament.
Share studies that relate to the questions your friend has about God, Jesus, or the Bible.
Watch a movie about Jesus together.