

Developing an *Emotional & Personal* Connection



God may be asking us to **'adopt'**
1-2 of our closest unbelieving friends...



God may be asking us to also do this as
a joint effort in pairs or teams...



For 3 months to 1 year
(or more)...



To intentionally invest in them
relationally and emotionally...
in order to share
the gospel with them spiritually.





Emotionally:

This effort must gradually move into the more emotional or personal aspects of the friendship.



Emotional

By emotional we mean;
positioning yourself to be able to **offer advice, counsel and help** regarding the more personal parts of someone's life.



Emotional

We mean the intentional effort to make the friendship go deeper. That is to begin to talk about the more important aspects of life, death, family etc.

In the emotional connecting phase of the friendship we are in the “**yellow zone**” for sharing the gospel. We have a little wiggle room & can *begin* entering into *basic* spiritual things.

In the emotional connecting phase of the friendship we are intentionally focusing on **guiding** the friendship into the more serious aspects of life and **positioning** ourselves to offer spiritual guidance.

Schedule Activities based on their Interests.

Schedule activities and outings around their interests...find mutual interests that will engage you both on a personal level. Look for creative ways to have them enjoy their interests in a way they never have before (*a new hunting location, a new restaurant*).

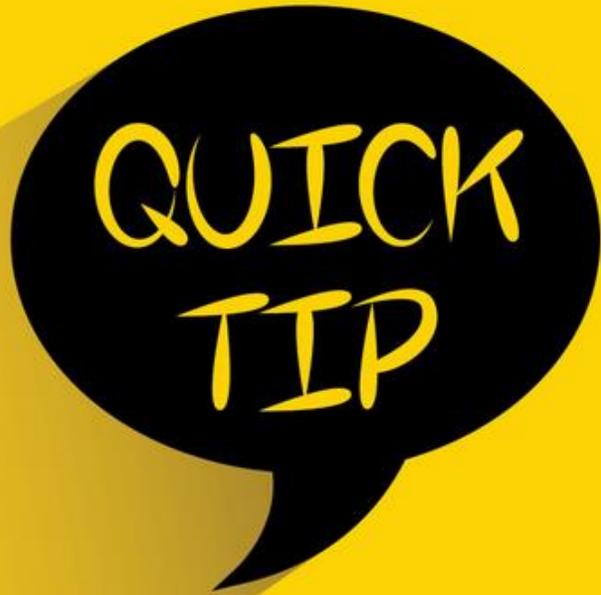


IDEA

If your friend is into the **NFL**, schedule a **fun, relaxed meal** around the game of their favorite team.

Have some pointed questions prepared.

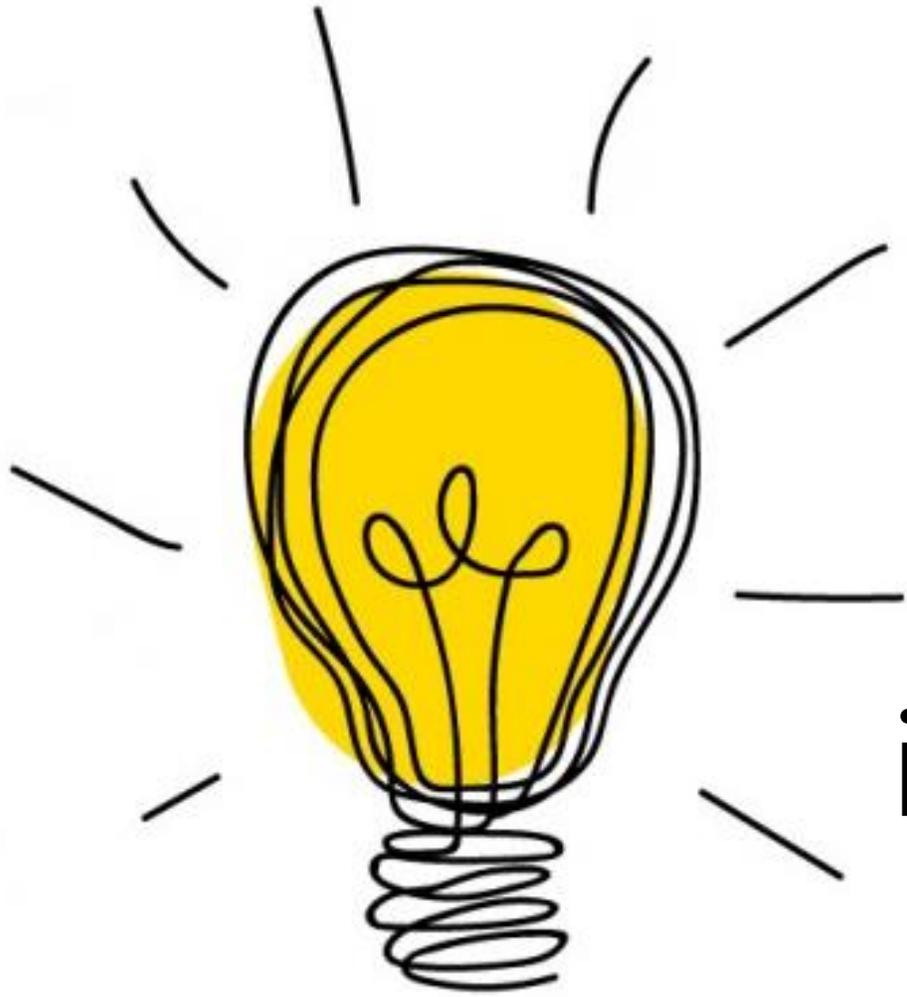
Use the commercial breaks as occasions to ask simple questions about their life. Look for ways to **use the advertisements to discover their worldview** or opinion on some social/moral issues.



Asking their opinion about a certain product or ad style can easily transition into their opinion about a moral/ethical issue.

Engage their Family.

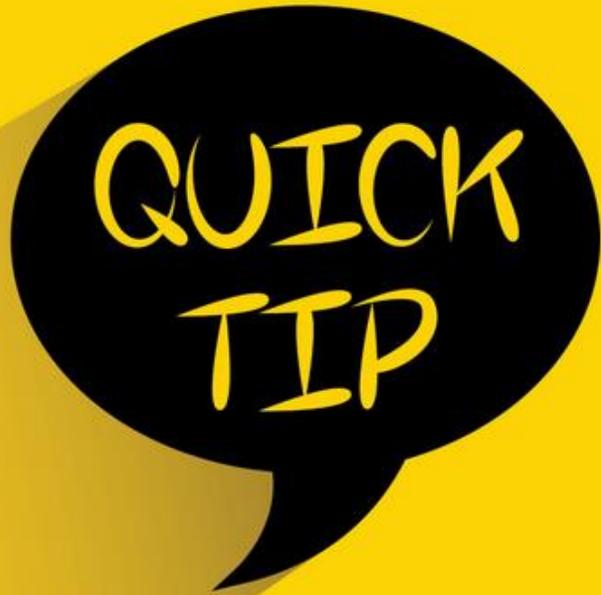
The sooner you can engage with and connect with someone's family in a meaningful way...the sooner you will be on your way to a deep & personal friendship. In some situations it is more important to connect initially with the family, than the person!



IDEA

Discover the sports
that your friend's
children or
grandchildren are
involved in and **attend**
one of the games,
performances or
recitals.

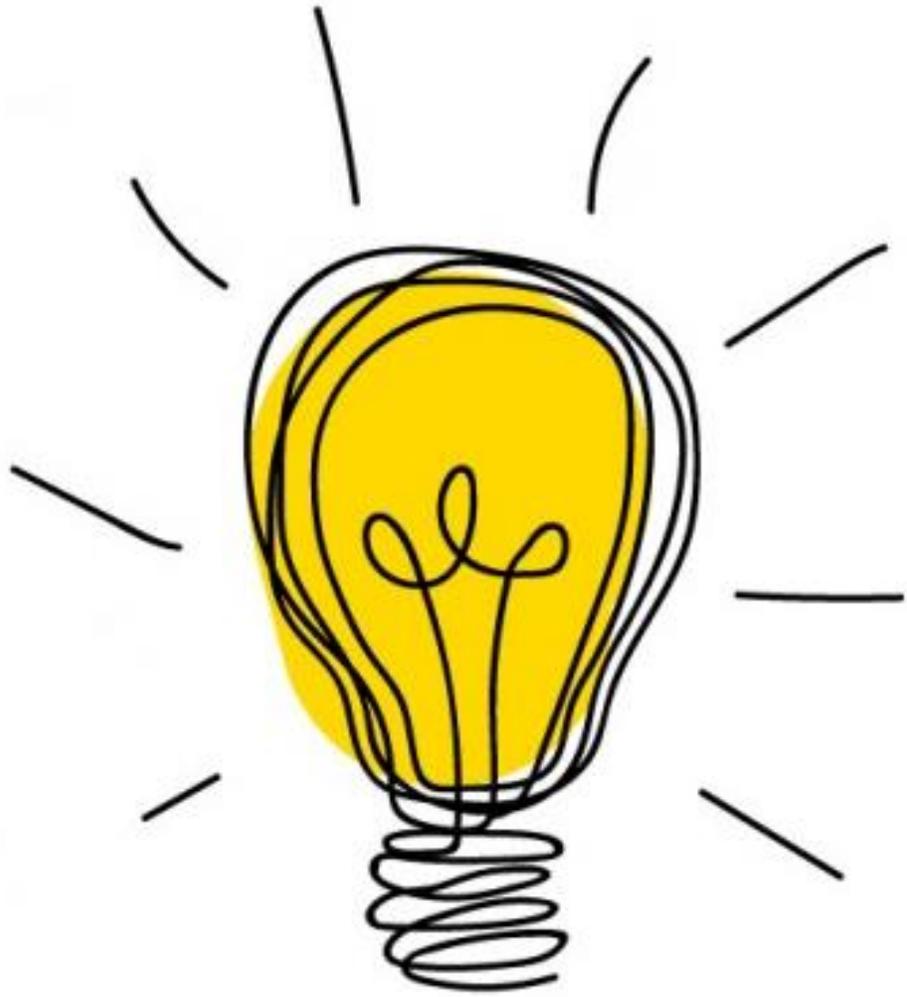
Make note of specific interests that their children have. A certain skill or talent, a certain hero or favorite TV show. Use these observations later to start conversations.



Affirming a strength in a child, often opens up a parents to willfully discuss a frustration or weakness with that child.

Get on their Turf. Especially their Home!

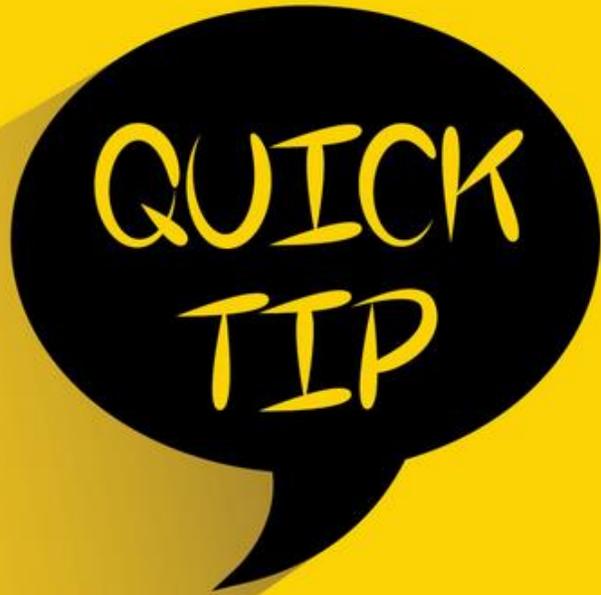
The sooner you can get into someone's home...the sooner you will be on your way to a deep & personal friendship. It is amazing how many walls come down once you are in someone's home, especially if there is food involved!



IDEA

Schedule a dinner or family game night at your house. Keep it light and fun the first few times.

Make note of special meals/food that they or their children really like. Inviting them over for that specific meal helps the initial get together feel not so out of place. *"We'll have to have you over for that..."*



The more interactive a meal can be the better. 'Make your own pizza', 'Ice Cream sundae bar', 'Taco bar'. The movement helps reduce formality and tension.

Wherever you are going, take them with you!

Maybe you have to run to Sellinsgrove to get a chair off Craigslist. Maybe you have to drive to Philly for a work project. Maybe you're taking your kids to the park in the evening.

TAKE YOUR FRIEND WITH YOU!!!

Whatever they are doing, do it with them!

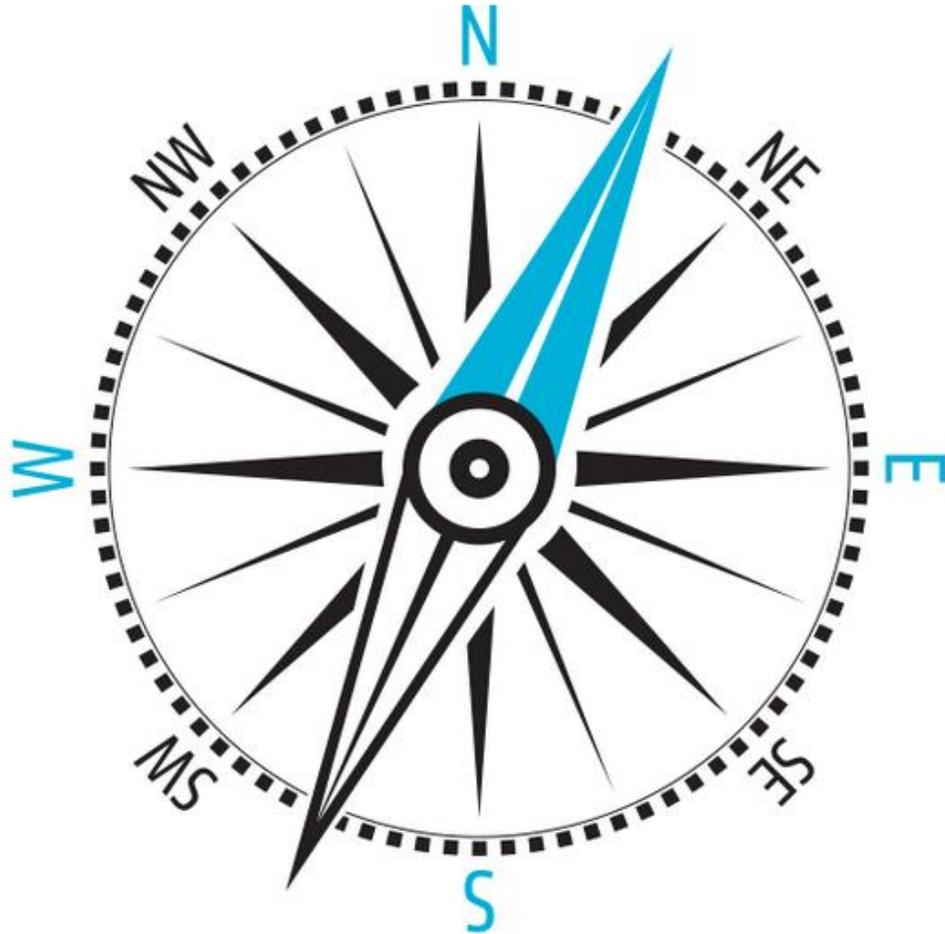
Maybe they have to clear out their basement.

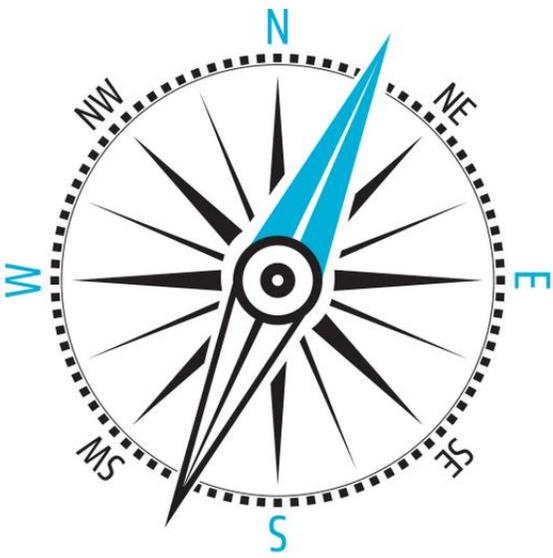
Maybe they have to paint their Mom's apartment. Maybe they are remodeling a room or rebuilding a car. Maybe they sit on their deck in the evenings and have a beer.



In the emotional connecting phase of the friendship we are intentionally focusing on **guiding** the friendship into the more serious aspects of life and **positioning** ourselves to offer spiritual guidance.

1. Guiding the friendship into the more serious aspects of life.





***Our 1st goal in this stage
of the friendship;***

***Is to steer the conversation and focus of the
relationship more and more towards
things that really matter. Things like
marriage, parenting, finances, feelings,
conflicts, illness, death etc.***

Look for launching points in the conversation, culture & media.

The problem with '**sanitizing**' the relationship of all possible '**unclean**' '**offensive**' or '**unchristian**' elements is that you will have less and less material to use as a catalyst for deeper spiritual conversations. These immoral or ethical quandaries give you incredible material!!

Example: A bad movie scene.

While watching a movie, a graphic scene occurs, either sexual or violent in nature. By fast-forwarding the scene and subsequently discussing briefly why you did so, will make an incredible worldview impact...much more than not watching the movie itself.

Start physical, get personal.

Start with talking about the important physical things that occur. A **news story**, a **cultural event**, a **job related issue**, a **family predicament** and take the time to listen and address the issues, but look for ways to **ask specific questions** that force the conversation into the more personal!

Ask the right questions...

What is your opinion about...?

What would you do if...?

How does that make you feel?

Have you ever thought about it this way...?

Example: Boston Bombing

What would motivate someone to do that?
Can you imagine how those families must feel?

What would you do if you were there?

Can you imagine your child dying?

Ever wonder what happens when we die?

Question reality, expectations and values.

One of the major goals in this stage is to get our friends **to question reality** and **to question their expectations of life** and **for their value system/worldview to be challenged/rocked.**

Model your worldview.

We must constantly look for ways to model our worldview. We must look for ways to **give our opinion** of the topics/events at hand, in subtle and gracious ways. We must constantly be ***leaning on them mentally***.

Share openly.
Admit weaknesses.

One of the best ways to get more personal and take the conversation deeper & to model your worldview, is to admit failures. When you fail, you have fallen short of your worldview, your standard (God's standard) and when you talk about it, things happen.

Have the goal of discussing something personal every time together.

A major goal that I have is that in every encounter I have, whether over a game night, a movie night, a football game, a road trip, a bike ride...I want to have gotten personal at least once about one issues, no matter how big or small.

*Create an environment of safety
through similarities & empathy.*

We want to get closer and closer relationally, personally and emotionally to our friend in this stage. And one of the best ways to do that is to put your similarities; likes, dislikes, struggles, emotions on display.

Example statements:

My wife and I struggle with that as well...

I know how you feel...

I am scared of that as well!

I've made that mistake 1,000x!

2. Positioning ourselves to offer spiritual guidance.





Our 2nd goal in this stage of the friendship;

Is to position ourselves within the relationship to be able to offer welcome advice & counsel and to position ourselves to help them actually consider spiritual realities.

*Share openly.
Admit weaknesses.*

Admitting a weakness is one of the best ways to get someone else to share a weakness.

By 'falling on your sword' you are show them that it is safe to be vulnerable. And socially, it is very normally for someone to feel that they must reciprocate by sharing a weakness.

Look for parallel weaknesses and use your successes to project.

If you are strategic in which weakness you share; by finding a mutual weakness in your friend, you will subtly be able to address their weakness and provide solutions to a problem they otherwise wouldn't have opened up about!

Use your own weaknesses and victories to influence change.

Again, by discussing your own weaknesses (which parallel theirs) you will be modeling in your sharing how they could overcome their own weakness, without sounding condemning or judgmental.

Look for opportunities to give practical/logical advice, which has its roots in the Bible, that you can point to later.

One of the **best cases for Christ** and for the **validity of the truths in the Bible** are when those truths and prescriptions **come true in reality**. When we give sound advice that works out, and then point to the Bible as it's source, the Bible becomes more convincing.

Look for opportunities to give practical/logical advice, which has its roots in the Bible, that you can point to later.

The opposite is also true. When society fails, because they didn't follow God's prescription that is a great time to point it out, that God had it right. These happen most often in marital situations, parenting, finance, business etc.

Look for spiritual parallels in the conversation, culture & media.

In this stage in the friendship we are looking hard for anything that has a **'spiritual cause'**.

That is anything in a **movie**, a **song**, a **crisis**, an **event**, that has spiritual significance...so that we can discuss that spiritual significance.

Tragedies, illness, suffering, loss, death, disappointments are all great opportunities.

Put God on display. Display his design, his desire and his will.

In this stage in the friendship we are looking for anything that can put God on display.

We are looking for chances to say:

“This is God’s design for marriage...”

“Here is God’s purpose for money...”

“The Bible says this is why we get sick & die...”