

The Ordinary Attempts Guide

My Story

I'm convinced I would've become a Christian when I was twelve if someone had asked. As it turned out almost ten years would pass before I would get that invitation.

It wasn't like my family was looking for God, or even a church. We were simply too busy surviving. My parents survived World War II, but couldn't survive each other, so at the ripe old age of ten, I was informed that they would be getting a divorce.

So, Mom and I and my three sisters headed off down the road to freedom. Now we were free to wonder where our next meal would come from, free to worry about the light bill, and free from being normal. And now my mom was free to go work for minimum wage at the local factory. It was ugly.

Which brings me to age 12. Mom's family lived in Portland, Oregon so we moved there for moral support – and probably a few free meals. Eventually we were able to rent our own house in a working class neighborhood.

Here's where the Christian connection comes in. Unbeknownst to me, our house was situated within walking distance of three of Portland's largest evangelical organizations. One of which was a bible school filled with one would imagine hundreds of "on fire" believers just itching to get the opportunity to tell some *lost person* about Jesus.

I never got the speech, never got the knock on the door, never even heard about these churches. It would be years later before I would piece all of this together and then only because I had become a Christian insider.

They were *invisible* to us and apparently we were to them.

Why was it that the only religious person I remember connecting with at that vulnerable age was a cool, 20-something Mormon guy? At least he took personal interest in me, and if he had asked me to join his church, I would have.

The reality is, evangelism isn't a normal part of our life. It's a program we do once a year when we get pumped up. It's a presentation we make to people because we don't know how to explain the gospel (as if it's a pitch we're supposed to get down).

Traditional evangelism is simply too hard for normal Christians to seriously consider practicing. Evangelism is for extraordinary people, and that leaves most of us ordinary types out of the game.

That's why no one approached our broken little family – they didn't know how.

This booklet is dedicated to all the ordinary Christians who live next door to twelve-year-old kids (and their parents) and have been looking for some way to connect with them *that counts*.

Jim Henderson
January 2003

What if...

It was *normal* for Christians to evangelize?

It wasn't a *program*, didn't cost *money*, didn't take much time and could be done by ordinary people?

Evangelism was just another spiritual *practice* like reading the bible or praying?

You didn't have to be *brave* to evangelize?

Ordinary Christians could evangelize without becoming *evangelistic*?

Evangelism was simply *making a connection* with another person?

Our Beginnings

In 1996, a small group of Christians frustrated with the standard approaches to evangelism resigned from *witnessing* and began researching what it would look like if evangelism were a *normal* part of our lives.

Out of this research emerged a spiritual practice we call ... **Ordinary Attempts** ... *evangelism for the rest of us*.

Over the past few years, hundreds of stories have come from people all over the world who've found a more natural way of connecting with their not-yet Christian friends using Ordinary Attempts (OA s)

What's an OA?

OAs are relational acts of kindness - *free attention giveaways*

They look like this...

- Ask someone "how are you" ... and actually listen
- Pray for someone "behind their back" and tell them later
- Ask a "tip sensitive" server about their life outside of work
- "Listen" to almost anyone and they'll think you're really cool
- Hold the door open for someone
- Give a little money away
- Pray short prayers

Ordinary Attempts are...

Stories chronicling a very nontraditional approach to evangelism

Simple human behaviors already being practiced

Not a program, pitch or presentation

A shift in how we view the people *formerly known as lost*

An attempt to nudge people across the *starting line* toward God

Jesus said “ If you give a cup of cold water to a little child because you are my disciple you won’t lose your reward”
Mt 10:42

Our cultures’ equivalent of a cup of cold water is *attention*

Ordinary Attempts help us *connect* with the people Jesus misses most... *the people formerly known as lost*

Practices and Stories

Programs can be helpful in getting started but they fail in the long run because like diets – they’re someone else’s idea. What we need are **practices**- simple, memorable activities that can be done by ordinary people as part of *their normal routine*. No special training necessary. No unusual courage required.

These practices will help you *angle into* the life of a missing person. Some are overt and some aren’t even detectable. Each of them can be tailored to fit the situation and person you are attempting to connect with.

The basic rule is to be real, not religious. In the same way that pushy sales people turn us off and *we see them coming*, religious people turn missing people off and they see us coming as well. Keep it real!

We learn by doing not simply discussing. In most of life the word *training* means *hands on*- think golf, cooking, computers, swimming or piano. Unfortunately in the church it has too often come to mean a class.

This booklet presents the **OA Practices**. These practices will give you practical experiences that *will change* how you think about and relate to your non-Christian friends.

Ordinary Attempts are the spiritual practices of connecting with *missing** people

Stories are our secret weapon. Jesus used them all the time

Throughout this booklet you will also find many OA stories that have been gathered over the past few years from other OA practitioners.

* *missing* is the OA replacement word for *lost*

Ask yourself this question...

What can I see myself doing five years from now?

If evangelism is going to become *a normal part* of our lives it will have to be something we enjoy doing and can truly envision doing five years from now.

Why act brave now when we know we aren't going to be able to sustain that courage in the long run.

Why not find a way to be brave a little at a time.

What if bravery isn't required to accomplish the mission?

What if listening was more helpful?

OA Values

Think Small... *don't change the world just change something*

Say Wow... *make a big deal out of small stuff*

Do what's doable... *it's all you're going to do anyway*

Count what counts... *many of the things you can count, don't count. many of the things you can't count really count - Albert Einstein*

Be yourself... *it will intrigue people*

Exploit the ordinary... *If ordinary people can't do it, using ordinary means, ordinarily it won't get done - Jim Henderson*

Practice #1 - The Free Attention Giveaway

Choose an *acquaintance*, someone with whom you have regular (at least once a week) encounters. A waitress, espresso worker, bus driver, grocery clerk, nurse, student, teacher or colleague...

Rabbi Jennifer Krause shares an anecdote of how powerful and meaningful "acquaintances" can be. In her article *The Ones Who Turn Up Along the Way*, *Newsweek magazine*, she recounts stories about her acquaintance with Walter, her building super, and Ali, her neighborhood grocery store manager.

"I share these stories because they are part of the puzzle of community. I am well aware that Walter and Ali do not fall into simple categories of family member, co-worker or friend. We are all from different backgrounds, different countries, and we occupy different socioeconomic spheres. We don't go to each other's home for dinner or make plans to meet for coffee, and we probably won't. Our connections are *site-specific and episodic*. And yet they make *real claims on my heart* and mind."

They will become your OA person for the next few weeks.
(Acquaintances are easier to start OA ing with than family and close friends)

This week *intentionally approach them* and ask this question. “How’s it going”?

When they start to answer, be sure and listen and don’t interrupt with your own story.

Matthew 10:42 If you give a cup of cold water to a little child because you are my disciple you won’t lose your reward- Jesus

Our cultures equivalent of a “cup of cold water” is attention. People crave it

Ask questions like - How are you? What do you do? What do you think?

Practice listening by quietly counting to three in your mind

Pretend that you are being paid by the minute to listen

Reflect on the word LEARN. Find the three-letter word in the middle

Practice listening. Ask follow up questions and if you don’t know what to say, simply say Wow! People love that.
This process might only take about 1-2 minutes

Think of it like this...

Even if you have no time at all for long workouts, you can still benefit by doing mini workouts. The American College of Sports Medicine recently stated that “exercise lite,” in which a total of 30 minutes a day is broken up into smaller segments, will help maintain, although not build, fitness. Those 30 minutes can be accrued through daily activity, such as walking the dog or taking the stairs instead of an elevator

We call this a *free attention giveaway*

Of course you can OA as many people as you like but you only have to do this *once this week to one person* to stay current.

This isn’t a program – it’s a process

We call it *practicing* because that’s all we’ll ever do

Outcomes

- You’ll create a niche in your missing friends heart
- You’ll grow spiritually as you **resist the urge** to preach
- You’ll create a relational beachhead in your friend’s life
- You’ll wear down their will to resist through kindness

Discussion Starters

- Did this activity “count” as evangelism? Why/why not?
- What did you observe about yourself while OA ing?
- What will you do next with your new OA person?

Pastor Steve's Party OA

Steve from Michigan writes:

My most recent OA episode involves a friend I work with named "woodcutter". He's more than rough around the edges, single and in his upper 40's. I discovered his birthday is December 3rd, so on December 6th we're having him over for a birthday dinner with just my family. I've purchased a shirt from LL Bean and we're going to treat him like a long-lost family uncle. At first he thought I was only joking, but now he's convinced I'm serious and he's really looking forward to that night. In my life before OA I wouldn't have given this idea a seconds thought. In fact I'd have never thought of it at all and *I'm paid to do this* – I'm a Pastor!

If you want to get attention - first give it away

OA for the Follicularly Challenged

Michael from Washington DC writes:

Starting a conversation with a stranger is the hardest part of OAing for me. As a recovering professional Christian/church staff member, questions about what I do for a living are a minefield.

However, my hairline is beating a hasty retreat, and so I have at least one sure-fire way to start a conversation with the increasing number of guys who've shaved their heads

In tribute to Kojak or Mr. Clean. I tell them I'm planning for my future as a bald guy, and ask them if it hurts to shave their head.

That's how I met Rob. Rob is a server at a restaurant my family and I frequent near our house.

One night Rob waited on us, and I asked him about his shaved head. He opened up and I learned that he had started shaving his head when he was in jail a while back. He's a single father of two girls who works two jobs.

The night of September 11, we were back in the restaurant, and I found out that Rob's ex-wife suddenly moved back in with him. I sense in Rob a spiritual openness, and I'm looking forward to more conversations with him.

Andrew is another intentionally bald guy I'm getting to know. At the place I get my hair cut, I usually avoid the male stylists, because they all look like Fabio and he just creeps me out.

But Andrew is a big African-American guy, kind of like a nice Samuel L. Jackson-as-John Shaft. So while he cuts my hair, I ask him how and why he gave up on his.

I learn that he's a single dad with a boy about the same age as my son. We talk day care and schools and teaching kids right from wrong, and I invite him to our church's block party.

anything can be an excuse for an OA

The Electro- Nuclear OA

Erin from Pennsylvania writes:

I recently identified a fellow in my Biology class as an OA target. I don't know... it was something about the dimes stuck in his ears and the way he said, "The only person I have confidence in is *me*." However, God got to him before I could. We were sitting at a picnic table rambling on about something before class when I ACCIDENTALLY "nudged" (excuse the pun) his leg with my foot. "Whoops, excuse me," I said. "Whoa. That was really cool," he exclaimed. "No, kidding, you like being kicked?" I asked. "No, when your foot touched my calf, it sent an electric shock up my leg." "Oh, yeah, I exude energy wherever I go..." Did you know that God was electro-nuclear-charged? What ensued was an illuminating discussion about spiritual energy fields and people choosing their own right and wrong, good or bad. I haven't said anything about Jesus yet, but he did: "I'm spiritual," he mused, "but, I don't buy into that Jesus stuff."

Surprise and mystify people with your attention

Think of it like this...

Before he discovered the joy of OAs Jon used to spend his free time doing DAs, or Driving Attempts. He actually spent his weekends driving specially designed cars up very steep hills. The object was simple; make it to the top. “The rookies would make a run at the hill without adjusting the tire pressure,” Jon told me over coffee. Trying to look cool, they would bang up their jeeps by attempting to use speed to overcome the lack of traction. (Speed Attempts?) Jon explained that the only way to get to the top was to “let some of the air pressure OUT of the tire and drive slowly up the hill.” Even then, it was a challenge, but ignoring this advice guaranteed failure.

Here’s a thought: if it feels like you’re spinning your wheels trying to nudge your friend toward Jesus, slow down, relax, and simply be yourself. You might find yourself getting more traction in their lives than before. Less really can be more sometimes.

Let the pressure OFF

Practice #2 The 4 question Survey

Jesus asked great questions.

What do you want me to do for you?
 Who do men say I am?
 Do you have anything to eat?
 How will we feed all these people?
 Have you caught any fish?

He set up most of his interactions with questions. Many of us lack the skill and confidence for asking questions. Out of our desire to “give people their privacy” we often

say nothing. We keep forgetting how the evangelism question about “If you died tonight... goes and feel that it’s too intrusive and negative anyway. Ask that question now days and it will probably be the last one you get to ask

Here are some questions that are fun and fast. This practice is useful in making a connection with someone you care about but don’t know how to get the conversation going with. It takes about 60 seconds. Do it once this week and then let your group know how your OA person responded, how you felt and what you learned from the experience.

Use your heads as you live and work among outsiders. Don’t miss a trick. Make the most of every opportunity. Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to **bring out the best in others** in a conversation, not cut them down

Colossians 4:3 – The Message

Along with my friend Jon, I began experimenting with new ways of approaching *missing* people. Our target on this particular day was Katy, our waitress at Bob Evans. We had to make it quick so I asked her if she had 60 seconds to answer the following 4 questions with no strings attached.

Getting Started

The 4 Question Survey

- 1) Can you name one of the gospels?
- 2) Who was the Apostle Paul?
- 3) What does the term “born again” mean?
- 4) Has a close friend ever told you that they were “born again”?

Instructions:

- Ask the person if you could do a quick survey “no strings attached”
- Tell them it will take about 60 seconds
- Ask the questions and *don’t react* to the answers
- Say thank you and “let them go” without preaching
- Write down their answers and pray a short prayer for them

Here’s how Katy responded...

- 1) Can you name a gospel – no
- 2) Who was the Apostle Paul- don’t know
- 3) What does *born again* mean – not sure
- 4) Has a close friend ever told you they were born again- yes

Here’s how we responded...

Thanks Katy that was really helpful. See ya.

Here’s what happened a few minutes later...

Katy returned to refill the coffee and asked,
“What are you guys into?”

“We’re just trying to figure out what people know about Christian stuff,” Jon responded.

“Why? “

“Well, we want to help Christians learn how not to be jerks,” at which point she laughed with that knowing laugh saying...

“Yea, that would be helpful.”

Here’s what happened over the next couple of months...

After several more visits to the coffee shop Katy actually volunteered to appear with me on stage for one of our Off The Map events. You can see the entire interview by going to www.off-the-map.org and ordering “3 Lost People Cincinnati” Katy later emailed to inform me that “I would be proud of her because she started reading the bible, to which I responded “ what gave you that idea?” she laughed. She also invited me to her college recital, which I attended.

Jesus *asked* great questions .

Jesus engaged the Samaritan woman in a dialog and when she attempted to turn it into a debate he resisted and continued asking questions. Finally when the time was right he made his point by asking another question. Go get your husband. (A Jesus question). She began to open up even more and eventually returned to her village saying, “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did.”

When did he do that?

It must have been his questions.

referential questions: These questions often take the form of wh-questions (who, what, where, when, why, and how), but are primarily identified by the fact that neither speaker knows the answer, and that there may be a variety of possible answers. Moreover, referential questions are usually asked in order to *sustain a conversation*.

It also tells us something about Jesus tone of voice and approach.

Who introduces their friends to someone that’s been *mean* to them?

Communication experts tell us that content comprises a mere 7% of our communication while tone of voice carries 70%. Jesus was preaching, he was just using questions to do the heavy lifting.

As with Katy and the woman at the well, *evangelizing with our ears* is often more effective than words when it comes to getting through to others.

evangelize with your ears

Outcomes

- You’ll experience how far we are from missing people
- You’ll think of some of your own questions
- You will create an opportunity to “continue the conversation”

Discussion Starters

- Tell your 4 question story
- How did you feel, what did you learn, What did they do?
- What will you do next with your OA person

The Zippo OA

Chris from Cincinnati writes:

While attending seminary, I worked weekends at a video store. One night, a man came into the store to return a video. He had long black hair, tattoos on every portion of his viewable skin, wore mostly black clothing, and reeked of cigarette smoke. While checking his movie back in, he asked me an unusual question: “What kind of Zippo do you have?” Most seminary students might not have gotten this question correct but I knew that Zippo is a popular brand of cigarette lighter that comes with different designs. I informed him that I didn’t happen to have one but was eager to see his.

His Zippo had a family of four seated around a dinner table, but they were all skeletons. He then said, “This is how I see things. We’re all dead already – just waiting to die.” Taking his lead, I decided to “be myself” and see how he

would react to a contrasting viewpoint. “That’s interesting,” I said, “but I’m a Christian and think that God has more for us in this life.”

I waited for him to turn around and dart for the door at the mention of “God,” but just the opposite happened – he was receptive. He said, “I just got out of prison for 16 years for attempted murder, ‘doing my own thing’ is all I’ve ever known, and I let my son do ‘his own thing,’ and he just dropped out of school.” I responded, “You know I might have ended up the same way if someone didn’t come alongside me and help me through some difficult times. In fact, that’s one of the reasons I’m a Christian, to help others find more in this life.”

He said, “I never had that in my life; can you help my son? Could he come to your church sometime?” I let him know that I would be glad to hook up with him and give him a ride to church. Wow! A God conversation from a Zippo question! Who would have thunk it?

be unusually interested in people

The Facial OA

Darci from Woodinville writes:

I went with my friend downtown and we treated each other to a facial (such a cool gift for a Mom with kids hanging off her all day). I asked the gal who was slathering stuff on my face how she was doing, about her job, etc., and she said “we really aren’t supposed to tell about our sad lives to clients.” Still, I could tell she had sad stuff going on, so I said “oh, man go ahead, it helps to talk about your stuff, I process my stuff better when I get to talk about it.” She opened up and talked the whole hour about the sadness in her life: being separated, wanting kids and being 34, feeling like she’s in a dead end job, feeling like she needed some spirituality in her life. I just listened and asked questions. When I left, I left a tip in an envelope along with a note encouraging her to call out to God – He digs it when we seek Him and says we will find Him if we seek Him with all our hearts.

Serve someone by listening to their story

The Saturday Night OA

Jim from Cincinnati writes:

Tonight Barb was shopping for a dress. As she tried on different dresses I struck up a conversation with the saleswoman who was waiting on her. I noticed she was from Latin America, so that’s where I started. One question led to another and I found out this was a second job for her. Her real job was as a sales manager for a large hotel here in Cincinnati. It turns out that she is divorced and her son is with his dad on weekends so she looked for something to keep her occupied on weekends. She took an extra job.

Now here is where being myself comes in. The thought crossed my mind: *She doesn’t have enough to keep her busy on weekends – she works to kill her loneliness. I should invite her to church.* You know that drill...

What do you do at that point? If we didn’t think *Wow they’ll think I’m a Jesus freak or some crazy fundamentalist if I ask them to come to church* – if we were just being ourselves – who knows? We would invite someone to church who is lonely and working to find a social life – wouldn’t we?

Why don’t we? Why do we leave that type of activity to pushy – and often improperly motivated – people? Tell me what you think about this. What stops you from just naturally inviting people to church or to know Jesus, or what stops you from asking someone if you could pray for them when they express a need? Why do we find it so darn hard to be ourselves – to be Jesus’ people?

Want to know what I did? Well because I am a committed OA er, I really had no choice but to invite her to church.

Know what else? Several of her friends had already invited her to our church, and she said: "There's something there for me!" We gave her our card, and will drop by and see her again in a couple of weeks to take her to church with us.

Don't leave evangelism to the pushy people

Think of it like this...

While watching TV I caught a program about a surgeon who has developed a very simple procedure that enables him to perform open-heart surgery "while the heart is still beating". This type of operation normally involves the use of a heart-lung machine, a large complex piece of machinery. This surgeon took a different tack. Utilizing an ordinary soup spoon, he drilled an opening about 1" square in the spoon. Laying the spoon opening over the section needing repair he was able to operate without shutting down the heart. A small change – an ordinary item is making a big difference in someone's life. How? A person who cared got motivated and discovered a simple approach to a complex problem. It appears that major changes can be made in people's hearts using something as small as your life and mine.

People who care think small.

Practice #3 – Prayer Attempts

In his military classic-The Art of War- Sun Tzu instructs his troops with the following words-
When you are near-make them think you are far away.

Traditional evangelism depends on overpowering those we are trying to reach with information and logical arguments. It is the military equivalent of a frontal assault which no self respecting General would try unless they have overwhelming firepower.

In this post Christian era we simply cannot count on the power of religious reasoning or arguments to *win* them to Christ. People don't want to be *conquered* or even *convinced*. They want friends. They want to make a connection.

If you enjoy spiritually "sneaking up" on people, then the practice of **prayer attempts** (PA) is for you. They will be surprised and mystified by the Holy Spirit.

Getting Started

Pray Behind Their Backs

Sharon is a young mom. She likes to walk with her three little kids around a nearby lake. Hundreds of other people walk there, everyday. Sharon, being a charter member of CFJS (Cowards for Jesus), realized she really wasn't going to "witness" to her fellow walkers but she wanted to do *something*. So rather than feel guilty for not witnessing, she got busy praying for people "behind their backs." That's right. Without their permission she actually asked God to get personally involved in the lives of those walking all around her. Her kids participate as well. She's got them believing that it actually counts!

Pray behind someone's back.

Pray in Front of Them

Rose from Washington writes:

My 21-year-old daughter has a friend who at times has lapses of looking for faith. She has visited church and while she doesn't actively explore, she has times when I sense the Holy Spirit is pursuing her and she seems open to faith.

She was over with my daughter last night. The two of them had been house hunting for days. They are roommates and need to be in a new place the first of next month. They came in to tell me about a house they found that they really liked and wanted to rent. They said the guy was going to let them know on Friday and that they couldn't wait

and hoped he would let them rent the house.

As they went on and on I sensed the Holy Spirit challenging me to offer to pray for them. I actually had a small conversation with the Holy Spirit (in my mind), telling Him that if I put Him on the line like that and they didn't get the house it would not be a good thing for Him or for her. He said He could handle that, so I asked them if they wanted me to pray. My daughter said no, and her friend immediately said YES. My daughter said to her friend, "You don't even believe in God," and her friend said, "Yes I do, I'm just not sure what I believe."

So, I asked my three-year-old son to pray with me, asking that Jesus would help them get the house. I led him in the prayer and we prayed that God would show them that he was paying attention to their needs and that he would give them favor with the landlord, and they would be the first choice for this house.

I just got a call from my daughter and her friend saying they couldn't believe it. The landlord called them today (he told them he would call on Friday) and said he had so many calls on the house and he didn't want to mess with a bunch of people. He told them he had a good feeling about them and they could have the house...

My daughter's friend was very excited. She called to thank me because she believed that God answered my (and Alex's) prayer and gave them favor. She couldn't believe it happened so fast.

I love it when God does that for those trying to figure out who He is.

Coincidences increase when we pray

The Commercial Prayer Attempt This is mostly for guys.. The next time you run into a commercial while watching TV push the mute button and pray for someone who needs Jesus, for the duration of the commercial .My friend Mike made this suggestion and we think this may be our most realistic chance to change the world. Try it once this week and see how it works.

Blame your success on prayer

John from Mount Vernon writes:

13 years ago my wife and I moved to Portland for a job. We didn't have a place to move to, but my older brother lived there, and offered to put us up while we looked for a house. We arrived in Portland in the afternoon, and decided to go look for a place that very day.

My brother didn't sound too hopeful, especially since my job didn't start for a couple of weeks. We went out anyway, and fell in love with the first place we visited. The landlord was inside painting, and talked to us about the place. He asked me about the job, and also asked if I had ever done that type of work before (I hadn't). He was very skeptical, but accepted an application anyway, telling us he had several other applicants, all of which he said were better prospects as tenants. I wasn't working yet, he noted, and he wasn't sure I would pan out at the job. Taking applications for rentals wasn't a common practice where I came from and I was quite intimidated by the whole process.

Anyway, we had a feeling about this, so Jeanette and I prayed that God would bring us to this man's mind every time he looked at the applications. The next morning we received a call; it was the landlord telling us he had decided to rent to us. He set up a meeting for later that morning. The kicker is coming:

When we arrived, he said we would have to make arrangements for the first month's rent and deposit. He didn't even realize we had money to meet those requirements! Then he told us that each time he looked at the pile of rental applications, he was drawn towards ours, even though he was inclined against it from a logical point of view.

I told him that we had prayed that very thing would happen. My landlord, it turned out, was something of an agnostic, but laughed and told us that took the responsibility off him, he guessed.

Anyway, we visited our landlord and his wife when we were down in Portland last summer. They invited us in for a meal, and prayed beforehand. It seems they had left some of their agnosticism behind.

missing people prefer prayer to preaching

Think of it like this...

At www.the15secondprinciple.com you can learn more about how “really” small amounts of time strategically placed can make a world of difference. In a nutshell, here’s their thing: The first 15 seconds of any project are the most important. Think exercise, dieting, praying etc. They suggest that we should approach the thing we want to change in 15-second increments. Some of their beliefs are not OA approved, but this practice is. Pray short prayers or write down the name of one person to whom you want to give some attention away this week. Neither of those practices should take more than 15 seconds.

Penny Prayers

For the next 7 days whenever you find a penny pick it up and as you do pray a *short prayer* for the *missing* person of your choice. Name them and ask God to bring them into his Kingdom. Don’t save the pennies just remember how many you found. Ignore dimes and quarters. *Do this while you think of a more spiritual way to remember to pray*

Outcomes

- You will run into God more frequently than you imagined
- You will provide non-evangelistic people a way to play
- You will be able to *give* lost people something they already understand – prayer
- You will notice an increase in coincidences

Discussion Starters

- Does it “count” when we pray behind someone’s back?
- Which prayer attempt did you practice? Why
- What kind of coincidences did you experience/notice?

OA Yourself

Here’s how you can make a big deal out of something as ordinary as your life! My wife, Barb, developed a spiritual discipline. She calls it: “Momentology,” which is simply the practice of making a big deal out the moments one experiences in life. I experience a “moment” whenever I get all of the bills paid for the month (especially the mortgage). In “Momentology,” we learn to not let those moments slip past unnoticed, but rather to “milk them for all they’re worth.” Take a breath, sit back, relax, and feel peace and contentment. Say “thank you” to God for helping you get through the challenge, and call another “Momentologist” to ask them to celebrate with you.

Jesus said: Why worry about tomorrow, today is bad enough

Practice # 4- Get “Lost ” for a day

More than ever, business leaders are including their frontline employees and customers in product design. From airplanes to jeans, manufacturers are trying to get inside the minds of those they are trying to reach with their products and services.

The President of Levi Strauss – the designer jean makers- wanted to know what people really thought about his company’s products. Eschewing the typical “focus group” he headed straight for his local department store and volunteered to work as a salesperson for a day. He watched customers handle Levis and then pick up his competitors product and buy them instead. Without revealing his identity, he packed the competitions jeans for them and asked customers why they chose those jeans over Levis. He returned to his office a changed man with a much clearer understanding of what people really wanted in a pair of jeans.

How do ‘lost’ people experience the Church and Christians? How do they “see” the messages we put out to them or each other? Are these messages welcoming to them or are we creating unnecessary barriers? What if we were actually trying to reach lost people and they were our top priority? What if we saw ourselves as being in competition with a host of other soul-service

providers? What if we went to the actual customer and asked them to tell us what they thought about our products and services and what if we asked them to tell us how we could improve our approach toward them? What would they tell us? Could we actually listen?

In Control your Destiny or Someone Else Will, Jack Welch former CEO of General Electric recounts how upon taking leadership of GE he approached the presidents of GE’s 13 divisions and gave them a new standard by which their success would be measured. “ If you are not first or second in your market we will fix, sell or close your business”. GE went on to become one of the most successful companies in history. What business are we in?

Getting Started

Watch An Interview with 3 lost people

Visit www.off-the-map.org and watch an interview for free in our Media Center or order one from the Store. Watch together and discuss how it relates.

Call 5 churches, tell them you are “gay” or less dramatically someone who has lots of doubts about Christians claims about God. You want to know how they feel about that and if you would be welcomed to attend

Read the church advertisements in several papers (go to the library and check church pages in other parts of the country too. Saturday is the best day), write down word usage you suspect only Christians would understand. Photocopy some of the more interesting ads Ask a couple of non- Christians to tell you what they think of the ads

Photograph 5-7 church signs (Polaroid or digital are best for fast communication) show the photos to several non-Christians and ask them to tell you what they think the signs mean. Write down their responses

Outcomes

- You’ll experience Christianity through the eyes of lost people
- You’ll laugh and cry at how far removed we are from them
- Your missing friends will wonder about you *in a good way*

Discussion Starters

- Which way did you choose to get lost- Tell your story?
- What kind of feedback did you get from your lost friends?
- What was the funniest thing you experienced?
- How will you reconnect with your new missing friends?

The Yard Sign OA

Out in the Midwest there has been a campaign going on where people place signs in their yards stating that they are in favor of having the Ten Commandments reinstated in public schools.

Not a bad idea I suppose, but it made me start to wonder. *Why are Christians so willing to appear radical when it comes to issues that put them at odds with their culture but so slow to advertise their willingness to connect with their culture.*

Leonard Sweet asks: “Why are we more prone to send the culture hate mail than love letters?”

What if we started a movement of yard signs that had the following messages printed on them instead

- FREE PRAYER INSIDE
- NEED SOMEONE TO LISTEN- KNOCK ON THE DOOR
- HONK IF YOU THINK CHRISTIANS NEED TO LIGHTEN UP
- FREE FOOD ANYTIME YOU NEED IT

Why are we so quick to coalesce around things that we feel threaten our cultural security? It appears disingenuous and self-serving (as it should) by outsiders (a.k.a. “lost” people), yet when it comes to taking risks to try anything to connect with people who need Jesus we suddenly hit the safety button and slow things down till we meet with a committee to see if “God is leading” us to take a risk that other Christians might view as being a little outside the box.

we’re more willing to be misunderstood by those who are lost than by those already found

Dance for God OA

Bill recently received his Ph.D. To celebrate this austere accomplishment he decided to join a couple of street musicians from his church, onto the campus of his alma mater. Putting out an odd mix of worship songs as well as movie music, “Don’t know much about history,” a group of students stopped to listen. Bill, seeing an opportunity to be himself decided to DANCE in front of his fellow students. Utilizing international steps he had picked up in Kazakhstan, he amazed the crowd with his bravado and footwork. Later an onlooker said to Bill, “It sure looked like you were having fun out there.” Bill agreed and prayed for the guy behind his back. If you ‘re going to be a Christian, OA suggests that you be yourself and have fun. It’s a lot more attractive.

Be yourself- it will intrigue people

The Gambling OA

I recently performed an OA that is quite interesting. My dad is addicted to gambling, and he frequently invites me to tag along to the casinos. It’s his way of “hangin’ with his daughter.” Not wanting to encourage his addiction, I’ve consistently refused. After learning about OAs, however, I decided to try something different, so I recently accompanied my dad to the local casino.

Once there I gave myself a \$20 allotment to bet. Being a Christian, I decided to pray: “God, if you help me win, I will give the money away.” I won \$70 and promptly put it in the mail to my friends. I don’t know what impact all of this had on my dad, but I did learn that when you attempt to love people, the God of Love will always make something interesting out of it.

Do what’s doable

The Woman at the Store OA

Pam from Oregon writes:

I continue to visit people when I go to Seattle (my old home) for the holidays. This person is in a trade which I choose to use when I am up there, so I can continue to connect and be a presence of God's love to her.

As we were chatting, she told me about a relative who is a Christian and is struggling with her husband. My friend questions the way this woman is treating her husband. She also talked about how she took my friend to church a couple of times, and how my friend, who stated that she isn't uncomfortable or afraid anywhere, felt both of those things when she went to this particular church.

I told her I thought she should check out a different church, and she asked me to describe it. I used words like "broken people," "have made mistakes," "know life can be messy," "not all together," ...you would have thought that God had sent an angel right in our midst by looking at her face and her body language.

She just stopped, and said, "That's it, that's it! My life isn't together, it is messy...you have hit on what I am feeling. So it's okay to be like that at this place? It's okay with God?"

I think all of us – those who follow Christ and those who are still seeking – want to know that it's okay to have bumps, warts, bruises, and cuts. That it is okay with God *and* okay with other followers. This has been a two to three times a year relationship for five years, and now it seems like its time.

Pam's story reminds us how doable evangelism works

1) it takes time.

Pam has been approaching this woman for 5 years. Obviously this wasn't the first time God had come up in their conversations, but it was the first time the woman heard in a way that made sense to her

People move at the speed of sense making – not the speed of sound

2) It takes pain.

Jerry, a business consultant and fellow OAer was a championship wrestler in high school. He and his teammates were the perennial champs in their state. His coach taught them the importance of the "little things" in winning. He taught them how to apply pressure in little ways that would increase their opponent's pain ever so slightly. Their motto was "pain pins."

In other words, if you want to win you will have to identify the pain points and accentuate them in your sport. Jesus used this principle in his work with the woman at the well when he asked her about her husband (knowing of course that she was unmarried). Pam used it in her work with the "Woman at the Store" when she discussed her feelings of having a life less than perfect.

Traditional Evangelism focuses attention on "ultimate issues" like Heaven, Hell, right and wrong, Republican or Democrat. Ordinary Attempts focus more on the "middle issues" of life – marriage, work,. Money and health. The things normal people (just like us) think and worry about. Stay there and you will be touching the pain points.

Talk about their stuff – not your stuff

3) It takes reality.

Pam suggested to this woman that she ought to go to a church where there were people LIKE her vs. not like her. Pam told her that Christians have the same struggles and need the same kind of acceptance she is looking for. Pam's point that her friend needed to know not only that God accepted her as she was but perhaps more importantly to her friend that Christians accepted her in the same way is a critical issue in our work.

People "infer" Gods acceptance and care through us.

This is what Jesus meant when he said they will know you belong to me because of your love for one another. He wasn't speaking philosophically but quite practically.

Religion never saved anyone- keep it real

Practice #5 – Be Unusually Interested in Someone

Similar to practice #1 but with a slight (and important twist)

People like to be loved specifically not generally. If you are married you know what I mean.

“You looks nice” may get a shrug or an unsatisfied look while, “your hair goes really well with that top” does wonders.

When our kids were small (and even now) their birthday parties varied except for one tradition. Whoever was the birthday girl or boy had the distinct pleasure of having everyone at the table tell them what they liked about them “specifically”

“You have a nice smile “ wasn’t an acceptable birthday present. We waited until they could find something a little more detailed to say about their brother or sister. “ I saw you be kind to that guy at school” was a good present.

Everyone looked forward to their birthday and learned that even brothers and sisters can find something good to say given enough time.

We crave attention- especially specific attention. Think about the times in your life when you have received this kind of attention. Not many memories are there? But the ones you do have stay with you and persist.

Remember that teacher, your friend’s mom or your friend in college? Why do you still remember them, it’s probably been years since you’ve either seen or talked with them?

Value depends upon two simple premises, demand and scarcity. When you can bring something to market that meets these two criteria you have “something of value”. Attention is like that, it is scarce and in high demand. That’s why you still remember that person who *paid* attention to you.

Getting Started

- Identify a lost person that you like.
- Tell them what you have noticed about what they do well
- “Catch them” being successful at their job or as a parent
- Ask them to coach you in how to improve in those areas
- Talk about your struggles and how God helps you.
- Don’t preach- just be unusually interested in them
- Don’t try to convert them too soon.
- Make them ask the questions.
- Shift the conversation back to them if it gets too spiritual
- Say WOW a lot!

Jim's first OA

I was in the check out line thinking about wanting to be unusually interested in someone for Jesus when I noticed a button. You know, one of those buttons people wear to support a political candidate. Only the button the checker had on said; "We want to adopt"

The grocery belt was humming and I was thinking. Adopt? Why would she be willing to wear that button in public? They're really on a mission! I was impressed and touched by her humility. When she asked, paper or plastic, I asked if her button was for real? Yes!

I told her I had friends who had recently adopted – the bags were packed, I suddenly realized that it would be completely natural for me to tell her I would pray for her success in adopting. Not the boldest witness but pretty good for me and best of all – it connected with her.

She stopped, looked and said thank you. I think that counted, as a spiritual nudge- it was better than nothing and it was real.

I ask people who challenge my "invisible math" two questions

What does it hurt?

What are the odds that anyone else ever offered to pray for her?

I was simply being unusually interested in someone who was part of my little world and giving her a little attention. She seemed to appreciate the fact that I noticed a detail about her life that was of great importance to her.

People crave attention – give it away

The People Love questions OA

Paying specific attention basically means listening and asking questions.

Tonight, while Barb and I were browsing one of our favorite bookstores, I overheard two servers talking about the "church" crowd coming into their restaurant on Sunday. I asked them to elaborate on their experiences for me.

"I think they go to church where somebody makes them feel bad and then they come in here and take it out on us" reported one of the young women. "Are you guys just making this up," I asked? "No, they really are that grumpy!"

I knew they were speaking truth because my wife and kids, who were all servers, experienced the same treatment from the church crowd when they worked in restaurants.

Maintaining my cover, I asked if they would answer the 4-question survey found in Practice #2 (yes it's ok to mix them together)

Q: Can you name one of the four gospels?

A: John (one right - she had gone to church as a kid).

Q: Do you know who the Apostle Paul is?

A: Blank

Q: Do you know what it means to be "born again?"

A: A really bad person decides to stop it and do the God thing.

Q: Are you guys "saved?"

A: No

Q: Would you want to be? (Ok, I asked an extra one)

A: “No – I don’t get this thing about someone’s life changing overnight responded the other young woman. “I’m sure,” were her exact words.

Neither of them questioned my intentions as to why I was asking them these questions. I think they were so excited to have someone *pay attention* to them and ask them their opinion that they didn’t want to interrupt the flow.

I realized that they represented the feelings of many – if not a majority – of people. They know just enough about Christians to have a negative view. Consequently, when we use a frontal and obvious approach, they are ready to counterattack.

The OA way of "nibbling your way into someone’s heart through questions" seems to be one of the approaches they have no defense for. I am sure that if more of us attempted to become someone’s Christian Consultant rather than their Confessor we might have more open doors.

be unusually interested in people- they’ll find it hard to resist

Outcomes

- You will develop the spiritual practice of *noticing*
- You’ll surprise and mystify your lost friend
- You’ll swear off “preaching at people” forever

Discussion Starters

- How has someone “specifically” paid attention to you?
- Talk about how this practice effected you?
- How are your ideas about God changing?

THE PARALEGAL OA

Suzanne from Portland writes:

Nine months ago I started a paralegal class. On the first day I met woman who looked really scared so I prayed for her (behind her back!).

Over the past nine months we’ve developed a friendship and I discovered how much she has suffered over the years. I wanted for her to get to know Jesus, but I wasn’t sure how to approach her. I just decided to be real with her and be myself (which includes my relationship with Jesus).

Jesus is famous for having walked on water but the fact remains that most of the time he took a boat. 700 years before Jesus came to earth a prophet predicted that when he appeared no one would notice him. He would look like everyone else and act like them much of the time. Perhaps it was his ordinariness that attracted sinners. He was quite popular with them. In fact, they sought him out. Being ordinary also got him in trouble. The religious types didn’t think it was funny when he would do a miracle and then disappear into the crowd. But then when you’re God and ordinary that’s what you do.

Most of the time he took a boat

Last week, much to my surprise, she asked if she could come to church. As I was sitting there with her, I suddenly realized that it wasn’t my boldness or evangelistic fervor that got her there – it was simply me being me. She enjoyed herself and got a lot out of the experience. So did I.

When all else fails... try being yourself

Practice #6 Become a Spiritual Advisor

They couldn't have been more different. Leigh was a veteran Christian and Diane a committed New Ager. They worked together and sparred spiritually periodically. Eventually the steamroller called life caught up with Diane and she asked Leigh some questions.

Diane was "hiring" Leigh to be her "Spiritual advisor" they were about to develop what Brian McLaren calls a "spiritual friendship."

You may already have someone in your life who's "hired" you to be his or her spiritual advisor or Christian consultant. Here's how you can tell.

They come up to you at work or call you on the phone and say something like. Hey. Did you see that TV preacher the other night? What was that all about? Or did you read what Falwell said in the paper or wasn't it cool that the Dali Lama came to town?

For some reason, they've decided to **trust you**. We don't know why. Maybe it's because you don't swear or maybe it's because you do. Maybe you let slip once something authentic and non arrogant about God or Jesus and they overheard you. Maybe they've been watching you for years and finally decided they would take the risk of revealing a personal struggle or perhaps they're so lonely they just forgot that you were a Christian and talked to you anyway.

Whatever the reason- they're offering you a job as their spiritual advisor.

If ordinary people can't do it using ordinary means- ordinarily it won't get done

The Cohabitation OA

An anonymous OAer writes:

I'm working with a woman who isn't a Christian; she edits and preps a newsletter I help create. She's been attending our church for about three months and hasn't had the most positive Christian examples in her life. She is living with a guy.

A month ago she asked me what she should do about that. "About what?" I asked? "You know, the living-with-the-guy thing." I asked why she was thinking about that, and she said because she was seriously thinking about going for God and thought He probably didn't like the arrangement. I asked, "Who told you that?" (I hadn't (yet).) She said her mother! She also mentioned the Catholic Church (her previous religious vendors).

I laughed and told her that God probably agreed with them, but if she was considering changing her life so dramatically she might want to look in the bible to see what God really did have to say about it. I also asked her if she saw her decision to break up with her live-in as a requirement to getting started with God. She wasn't sure. I asked her if she had noticed from the few times she had been to church that when the pastor guy made the invitation to invite Jesus into your heart he never added any stipulations. She said yes.

I asked her why she thought he never did that. She wasn't sure. I suggested it might be because experience has taught us that in order for us to even attempt changing our lives and getting serious with God we would need his help. In other words, God and she were in agreement that she needed to walk away from the live-in, but He knew she wouldn't be able to do it on her own. She needed to include God in her decision. She needed to invite him to

help her change. She needed to see him as her partner – not the one she performs for and is then rewarded by with a happy face.

God isn't afraid of our sin, our humanity, or our mess. We need to coach people to include Him in a real way as they change. Maybe it's a little messier, but it will save people from starting off on the wrong foot.

We aren't in the religion business– we're in the reality business. In spite of her lack of biblical understanding she “got” what I was talking to her about and felt respected, even while taking responsibility.

I love having the opportunity to “get a hearing” from people on their journey back to God. I consider it an honor when they “hire me” to be their Spiritual Advisor.

Get trust

Getting Started

- Identify your new spiritual friend
- Ask them about their spiritual interests
- Ask them what they think of Christians
- Ask them what they think of Jesus
- Ask them to pray for you
- Ask them what they would like prayer for
- Offer to read the bible with them (if appropriate)
- Don't invite them to church (right away)
- Find a way to have coffee with them
- Practice being your spiritual (but non religious) self
- Ask lots of questions- people have lots of opinions
- Resist the urge to spiritually fix them

The Burned Car OA

Ruth from Seattle writes:

Over the past 6 months I've come to know a co-worker really well through being vulnerable about gunk in my life and listening to gunk in hers. I work in higher education so the defensive walls regarding anything Christian are pretty thick, but I always slip in statements about God being faithful, how lost I'd be without Him, and examples of the power of prayer in my life. She's even started asking casual questions now and then.

Well, three weeks ago her car caught on fire (electrical) at 3:00 a.m., leaving her stranded. The next day at work she was understandably distraught, so I was listening to her vent, when right out of the blue she asks, "So how does this prayer thing work? I mean, do you just talk to God just like a person or what?" "Yeah, you do," I say. "You just talk to Him like we're talking now... anytime anywhere." She continued: "Because I was up last night worrying about the car. I've always just sort of prayed or meditated to the universe or whatever..." "Nope," I reply, "God is real and you can pray to Him." One or two more questions from her about prayer and then she switched the subject. Real low key, but the door is definitely opening. I guess all that groundwork over the past six months of just being real and loving her was about establishing trust so she could ask.

Become someone's spiritual advisor

Eric gets hired

Eric Pederson is national director of Lifebuilders a Campus Crusade ministry focused on one on one disciple making. He's also an ardent OA'er. You can find out more about them at www.lifebuilders.net

I met Paul & Mike four years ago through another friend named Ray. Ray introduced me to them at Skip's Bagels, a local breakfast hangout. Paul was spiritually "warmer" than Mike. As I got to know Paul more, I talked with him about a relationship with God and even gave him a Christian book to read. (He told me recently that his dog ate the book!)

Two years later Paul became a believer through another Christian, and this past fall, Paul and I began going through our Life Builders Real Faith discipleship process.

Shortly after Paul and I began meeting, I walked into Panera Bread (another one of our breakfast hangouts) and bumped into Mike. Mike had a concerned look on his face as he told me that Paul had had a heart attack and nearly died! I was blown away! I had seen Paul recently, and he was fine.

Everyone at Panera (believers and non-believers alike) were talking about Paul. People expressed their concern & their shock, and prayed prayers for Paul and for one another.

After Paul was discharged from the hospital he began showing and telling his faith with renewed intensity! Every time we met for our discipleship appointments at Panera, his friends and acquaintances would come to our table to see how he was doing.

He let them all know that having your heart stop for 20 minutes puts everything into perspective.

One day when I walked into Panera to meet Paul, Mike waved me over to his table. He asked me more about my life and my work than he had in the previous four years.

Then he made two comments I'll never forget:

First he said, with all that has happened to Paul...
It really makes a guy think

Then he added, I see all these people reading the Bible...
Maybe I'm missing something . . .

When Mike invited me to his table; he "hired" me as his Christian consultant. No, he's not paying me, but I'm someone he feels comfortable enough with to talk to about God. Sometimes he jokes with me about being "religious," and I tease him back by telling him that he will be "converted" soon!

I gave him something to read that explains what it means to have a relationship with God. He agreed to read it over and tell me what he thought of it. He hasn't become a follower of Jesus yet, but he's getting closer . . . it's just a matter of time!

Who's watching you?

Outcomes

- You'll be surprised at how easy it is to have a spiritual discussion when you don't have to "steer" it
- You'll discover that you will need to re-think how you "follow-up" with your new friend
- You'll feel honored and humbled when your friend confides in you.

Discussion Starters

- Watch and discuss the movie "The Big Kahuna"
- How did you find your spiritual friend- in what context?
- How has this relationship helped you grow spiritually?
- What new questions has this experience provoked in you?
- What will you do next with your spiritual friend?

Practice # 7- Pay them for their opinions

This OA is for either the desperate or the daring. If you really want to make a connection with a missing person and you're willing to have some Christians laugh at you – then try this OA

Hire a lost person to critique your church, bible study or spiritual support group. This is lots of fun and is sure to cause your friends, lost or found to wonder what you're thinking. But it works, lost people will gladly tell us their opinion of our "services" (we even call it a service don't we) with or without money as long as we take them seriously and don't use it as a bait and switch.

The questions in the survey are designed to

- Make the missing person feel in control
- Provide you with valuable insights as to how your "product/service" is being experienced by the people we say we are primarily in business to reach.
- Create an entrée/ onramp for you into the life of a person who might be willing to keep the conversation going
- Send a message to the people in your church that evangelism can be doable and fun

Getting Started

- Handpick the *missing person* you want to do this survey
- Find someone you or someone else already has a relationship with It could be a waitress, bartender, barista, schoolmate or co-worker
- Approach them "playfully" – I often open with something like this...

Hey Debbie, I'm involved with a group of people who are trying to figure out why folks don't like church. You know what I mean? We're tired of sitting inside our buildings and discussing it, so we decided to approach some people we liked who don't regularly attend church and get their feedback. It might sound kind of funny but we took a hint from business and discovered they actually paid people for their opinions. So I was wondering if you would be interested and willing to do a survey for me. Do you go to church regularly? No? OK – here's the deal .I'd like you to come to our church some Sunday and tell us what your experience was like. You'll have to fill out a survey and it will take about an hour BUT you don't have to participate (you know – stand up, kneel or sing if you don't feel like it) all we ask is that you simply answer about 10 questions. And we'll pay you \$25 for your help! It's a real job and your insights are really valuable to us so it's worth it.

- Go to www.off-the-map.org, click on Ordinary Attempts go to OA resources and download the Church Survey- make as many copies as you like. Follow the instructions and email us your story

Think about it like this...

Russian soldiers at the Rzhev front, working at night in freezing waters, built a secret bridge *under the river's surface*. When darkness covered the moon and snow shrouded the river, strong Russian swimmers silently worked chest-deep in the freezing waters. Their bodies were bloodied by the ice floes.

Then one morning, to the utter shock of the Nazi's, Russian tanks, whitened for winter war, came charging down the bank, crashed through the thin ice and stormed across the river on the hidden bridge built beneath the water. Squadron after squadron roared across toward the stupefied Nazis, opening the Rzhev offensive.

build a bridge to someone without them knowing it

Outcomes

- You'll get first hand feedback from your primary customers
- You'll be surprised at how seriously they take their work
- You'll surprise and mystify your missing friend with kindness.
- They'll have a hard time not liking you

Discussion Starters

- Why did this seem like such a strange idea?
- What does that tell us about ourselves?
- What's the most surprising information you discovered?
- What was the funniest part of this experience for you?
- What was the most touching part of this experience?

OA Practice Group

This is a practice group. Without doing, or trying OA approaches there won't be much to talk about.

We learn by doing not (just) discussing.

This booklet is practice guide into OA approaches

Too Many Meetings – Not Enough Meaning

This is a storytelling group.

Stories are our secret weapon. Jesus used them all the time.

The most important part of this meeting is to hear your stories.

The next most important part is to help each learn to think differently about how to connect with the missing people in our lives.

None of us need another meeting – we do however need more meaning

Meeting Format

We suggest that the **OA Practice Group** commit to initially meet together 6 weeks. This will give those participating enough time to accurately measure the effectiveness of *Ordinary Attempts* in their daily lives. The group experience is essential to making Ordinary Attempts a normal part of our lives.

Sample meeting format

The group leader will collect several OA stories from the group prior to the meeting. These stories can be gathered via email or phone. Many of us are shy and don't feel that our OA stories will be significant enough. We find it easier to first "run them by" someone in private. The leader will ask you to share your story

Use a timer. No one should talk longer than 5 minutes when telling his or her story. The group members can ask follow-up questions, which will help focus, the conversation and enable more effective learning to take place.

The meeting needs to start and end on time and should not last more than 60 minutes. Meet in a coffee shop or some other public place. It will help you to stay in touch with the need to make it real for those we are trying to nudge closer toward Jesus.

In the beginning, do the same OA together each week so you can learn from one another. For example after the introductory meeting, do Practice #1 together- The Free Attention Giveaway. Then come back next week and share your stories.

How to keep OA s going in your church

1. If you are the pastor do OA s yourself and use your "attempts" to illustrate doable evangelism
2. If you aren't the pastor ask him/her for "stage time"- a public opportunity to tell short stories
3. Hold an OA party every few months – buy pizza for people and invite them to come and hear cool stories
4. Form an online OA support group and disseminate OA stories in your church via your website.
5. Visit www.off-the-map.org and connect with other OA practice groups
6. Send your OA stories to info@off-the-map.org and we'll share them with others.
7. Read Brian McLaren's "More Ready Than You Realize" and give copies to your friends.
8. At www.off-the-map.org you will find free online resources in our Media Center

