

External Focus Tools

How can we best impact our communities for Christ? This question has occupied church leaders' minds and hearts for many years, and the primary method North American churches have used over the years to reach people for Christ has been the "attraction" model. We have created wonderful "bridge-building" events that we hope will be appealing to those who do not know Christ yet – musical events, theatrical productions, dinner theatres, special lectures or evangelistic meetings, conferences, themed movie showings, etc. While these events have certainly engaged some people within our communities and introduced them to Jesus, they have depended on people coming to the church.

There is a growing recognition among evangelical Christians that we cannot rely solely on inviting people to church events to expose them to the gospel. We must also go into our communities and bring the gospel to the people by being the hands and feet of Jesus and serving others in practical ways.

The following tools are intended to introduce you and 2-3 friends to what it means to be "externally focused" as followers of Jesus, and then challenge you to go into your neighbourhoods, schools, streets, offices, malls, and embody Jesus' gospel in whatever ways Jesus leads you to do so. Read, listen, watch and learn from these tools ... and then go out and serve people in Jesus' name!

Level 1

Option 1

Read the section on "Service" in Adele Calhoun's book [Spiritual Disciplines Handbook](#) (pages 144-146), and then do at least two of the spiritual exercises. Share with 2-3 friends what you learned about yourself and serving others.
<http://www.cschurch.ca/mediafiles/toolboxservicehb.pdf>

Taken from *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. Copyright(c) 2005 by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press PO Box 1400 Downers Grove, IL 60515. www.ivpress.com.
<http://www.ivpress.com/cgi-ivpress/book.pl/code=3330>

Option 2

Watch or listen to Rick Rusaw's sermon "Life on Loan: Living to Make a Difference"* , which was preached at CSC on January 25, 2009. Ask 2-3 friends to watch or listen to it with you (or on their own), and then meet to discuss together how you feel God is leading you to apply this message to your life.

Level 2

* Most resources are available through the Applesseed Resource Centre (library or bookstore).

Meet with 2 friends for three weeks in order to view the “Cross the Street Challenge”* DVD material and work through the accompanying small group discussion guide (30 min. viewing plus discussion time). Decide on what you will do in response to what you learned, and keep each other accountable.

Level 3

Find 2 friends to go through The Externally Focused Life material written by Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson. Two of the ways you can use this material:

- The kit – six sessions
Follow the discussion questions in the back of the book and use the DVD material. It works best to read the book as well as watching the DVD, so you may want to take more than one week on some sessions.
- The book – nine sessions
Read a chapter a week and use the discussion questions in the back to process what you are learning

Decide on a service task or project that you will do together in order to apply what you have learned, and then do it! Tell your Small Group Leader or another spiritual leader at the church what you did and how you grew through this.

Going Deeper Resources

The Externally Focused Life by Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson

Conspiracy of Kindness by Steve Sjogren

Increase Our Faith by Claude Houde

“Cross the Street Conference 2009” – DVD of 4 plenary sessions (speakers are Dave McFarlane, Henry Schorr, Claude Houde and Eric Swanson)

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