

Audience Map



**Your missional guide to
seeing and loving people**

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[The Map](#)

[Open](#)

[Uninterested](#)

[Hostile](#)

[Unaware](#)

[Seeking](#)

[Unclear](#)

[Dual](#)

[Professing](#)

[Growing](#)

[Grounded](#)

[Engaged](#)

[Multiplying](#)

Introduction

How was the Map Created?

Through global interviews, we mapped real faith journeys into clear stages of spiritual movement. By listening across cultures, we uncovered patterns in how individuals might move toward or away from life in Christ.

How can I use the Audience Map?

The map offers a way to better understand the spiritual journeys of others. It can spark reflection, deepen empathy, and provide a helpful framework for strategy. Many find it useful for learning how to connect more meaningfully with the people they hope to reach.

[Jump to Table of Contents](#)

Who should use the Map?

The Audience Map is designed for anyone who wants to love people more thoughtfully. Whether you're leading strategy, involved in missions, or simply walking with others in their faith, the map can help you respond with understanding and care.

Jesus understood his audience.

In a rapidly changing world where the human heart is not easily understood, the Audience Map helps you see and understand how people move on their spiritual journey and provides a framework for positioning what your ministry has to offer them.

Rooted in data but centered on people, the Audience Map equips you to love more like

Jesus: seeing individuals as they truly are and meeting them with truth, patience, and understanding.

The Map



Open

A typically passive default state that non-Christians move into as they become more aware of Christianity.

“Being open-minded is just part of who I am as a person.”


People in the Open stage are typically open because they are naturally curious or they want to be open-minded. Functionally, those in Open are still fairly close to Uninterested in how they engage spiritually.


For those in Open, there is strong interest in growing personally, motivating oneself to achieve goals, understanding possible realities outside oneself, and improving one's mental health. Reading, experimenting, observing others, and interacting with an expert are

common avenues to learning. A community that is accepting, caring, and supportive is desired.


Three variants of the Open stage also presented themselves in the data- **Open Neutral**, **Open-Hesitant**, and **Open-Curious**. There are a few distinctives to each of these sub-variants that you will find in the insights below.


What people in Open say


 *"I just wanted to speak [with my religious leader], and he was very open about everything. I felt like I was being understood, and he was really trying to help me figure my way out of things."*


 *"I care about being open to new experiences, embracing diversity, and not limiting myself based on past goals when*


interesting opportunities present themselves."

 *"I'm willing to discuss anything with anyone because that's how I learn new things."*

 *"I'll listen if you want to tell me about this, but why does it matter?"*

 *"I find it hard to fully believe in god(s) when there is so much bad in the world. At the same time ... part of me would like to believe there is higher power/being(s)."*

 *"I like to live in the present. I prefer to pay attention to my life rather than what is going on in the world."*

 *"My parents pushed their religion onto me up until I started college. If my parents gave*

me a choice when I was younger, I feel like things could have turned out differently.”

At-a-glance

Commonalities between the three variants of Open:

- Want to be happy and prosper financially
- Like to take up fun activities and have new experiences
- Reading and experimentation are among their most preferred learning styles
- Not looking for anything substantial from Christians (except in Open-Wants to Learn)
- Christianity is not seen as significant to them

Insights & attributes

❖ Information > Conversation

For those both in Open-Neutral and Open-Hesitant, they are more likely to engage with information/resources about Christianity rather than with a person talking about Christianity.

❖ Open vs. Uninterested

Functionally, these two stages can look similar but there are some key differences. Those in Open have generally had a more neutral experience with Christianity, whereas those in Uninterested have generally had a more negative experience.

❖ A Happy Life

Functionally, these two stages can look similar but there are some key differences. Those in Open have generally had a more neutral experience with Christianity, whereas those in

Uninterested have generally had a more negative experience.

❖ **Default vs. Choice**

Those in Open-Neutral have generally landed there by default, whereas those in Open-Hesitant have landed there more by choice. It was a movement to that stage after some type of exposure to Christianity and/or Christians.

❖ **Openness to Realities Beyond Themselves**

Another key difference between Open and Uninterested is that those in Open are generally more open to thinking and learning about realities beyond themselves. They also may be slightly more interested in topics that Christians are interested in and more likely to stay in a community if they are treated well, regardless of beliefs.

❖ **Learners at Heart**

Those in Open generally value learning and self-discovery. Learning by reading, experimenting, observing, and interacting with an expert are their preferred methods. However, in both learning and in trying new things, they want to do it in a way that does not require them to become an expert. Those in Open-Curious are more willing and likely to learn from other people, not just informational sources.

❖ **Open-Mindedness is a Value**

Those in Open value open-mindedness and inclusivity when it comes to belief systems. They are open to a diverse range of experiences and viewpoints, not just Christianity. Because of this, they are also more likely than people in other stages to be a part of communities with people who are different than them.

❖ **Dealing with Trauma**

Those in Open are generally aware of and frustrated by what they see happening in the

world around them. They are burdened by it. For those in Open-Hesitant, dealing with trauma and mental health are more significant barriers to wanting to learn more about Christianity. Those in Open-Curious feel a higher need to understand their life purpose amid hardships happening in the world.

◆ **Perception of Christianity**

Those in Open generally do not perceive Christianity as having any significance to them personally or to the world. They may be willing to discuss Christianity if a friend wants to, but they don't have a felt need to do so and they are not expecting anything substantial from Christians.

Where and why people move

Not seeking

In general, those in Open are not looking to talk with Christians about Christianity, join a Christian organization, or explore religions, including with Christians they know. They especially do not want to have a debate about beliefs. Pushing them to do so could cause a move toward [Uninterested](#) or [Hostile](#).

Seeing Hypocrisy

Seeing or perceiving Christian's lifestyle and beliefs as being hypocritical can cause them to become less Open.

Pressure to Belong

Those in this stage want to remain open to diverse experiences and beliefs and, therefore, do not want to belong to a group that limits or constrains them in this. Pressure to be a part of a Christian community will likely move them away from being Open.

Building Trust

Could move toward Open-Curious or [Seeking](#) if they get to know Christian friends better and are able to trust them.

Freedom to learn

Could move toward Open-Curious or [Seeking](#) if they are given the opportunity to learn about Christianity on their own terms without having to interact with a Christian. Especially if through this

learning, they can see how Christianity has changed lives or societies for the better.

Positive Impact

Those in Open-Curious are generally more open to being exposed to Christianity. They generally have a respect for those who are able to bring about positive change in the world. They could move toward [Seeking](#) if they can interact with positive change agents and hear about how Christianity has affected the world.

Engage this stage with authenticity and wisdom.

Pause and Pray

- Remember, Open is a different stage than Seeking!
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you eyes to see ways that He is at work in the life of a person in this stage.
- Pray that God would turn their natural curiosity and open-mindedness to become more spiritually curious and open-minded. Remember that God can use things we might never think of to cause people to consider Him.
- Ask the Lord to allow you to be a trustworthy friend who loves him or her unconditionally. Pray that you will not grow impatient with this person or attempt to pressure them into taking next steps toward following Jesus.
- Pray that you can remain calm and loving as you walk with them in their spiritual journeys. God does not need you to defend him or to

manipulate circumstances to control outcomes.

Plan Your Next Steps

- Seek to create opportunities where those in Open can discuss their questions or curiosity without pressure. Think about how you can offer something of value to them before inviting or asking them to engage with you. It can involve cultural influences such as music, art, films, etc. Not everything needs to be an event!
- People in Open like to learn in a variety of formats- reading, observing, interacting, experimenting- and they generally enjoy variety. How could you design your ministry offerings in a way that allow people in Open to explore Christianity in these different ways with no pressure?

- Identify service opportunities in your community that you both care about and can do together. Have a conversation about why these opportunities are important to each of you.
- Listen to them when they share openly about their spiritual journey. Affirm them for their openness and share openly about your own journey.
- People in Open often like to live in the present, and generally care about personal development. If you do get the chance to share about your story or your faith, have examples of how you are seeing God at work in your life in the present, or how you are growing/learning in the present.

Cautions and Encouragements

- The data shows that people in Open are not necessarily eager to talk with Christians about

faith topics or participate in activities with Christian groups. Consider some ways you can enter into their world. How could you move toward them and experience things with them before inviting them into your community or interests?

- People in Open may be particularly aware and burdened by world events and their own personal stories. How can you show compassion for their stories and help them know they are not alone in bearing the burdens of the world?
- Be aware of a temptation to defend Christianity and excuse the bad behavior of other Christians or Christian institutions. It is important to acknowledge our mistakes and failures (not just those of others) and work towards reconciliation and restoration.
- Do not be afraid of criticisms or questions that the Open have. Take a listening and learning posture rather than a defensive,

combative posture. You will reflect the love of Jesus most fully when you can love them, non-anxiously, with patience.

- Again, remember, Open is a different stage than Seeking!


Uninterested


Aware of Christianity in some cultural contexts but do not want to learn more about it. Generally apathetic toward Christianity, not hostile.


**"I know enough about
Christianity, and I don't want to
know more."**


People in the Uninterested stage may have Christian friends but see their friends' faith practices as a way to be a good person. They do not see Christianity as necessary. The Uninterested may not be apathetic or avoidant toward Jesus, but more likely toward Christianity, the Church, or Christians.


What people in Uninterested say

 *"I don't struggle. I don't feel a need to become religious."*

 *"Just because I am not going to church and not baptized doesn't mean I am going to go to hell."*

 *"Nobody has come up to me and told me you need to be a Christian, because you're missing out on this and this...I don't think I am missing out on anything, I hope not."*

 *"People should give to the poor and not to a church or a temple."*

 *"I know enough about Christianity and do not want to know more."*

At-a-glance

Those in Uninterested are typically aware of Christianity on some level but are genuinely uninterested in learning more.

Rather, the goals of those in Uninterested are:

- Be happy
- Prosper financially
- Provide for my family
- Improve my mental health
- Be a good person

Insights & attributes

◆ Religion is Irrelevant

May be disinterested in spirituality/religion in general, and Christianity is a part of that.

❖ **View of Christians**

Tend to have a neutral view of Christians, neither positive or negative. Skeptical of organized religion but may be open to Jesus.

❖ **Spiritual/Religious Questions**

Thinking about spiritual or religious questions is very low/infrequent.

❖ **Christianity is Irrelevant**

No curiosity about Christianity. Nothing unique or fascinating about Christianity (or religion in general).

❖ **Familiarity with Christianity**

Have some familiarity with Christianity through friends/family, shows/movies, media, but may have very little information or misinformation on Christianity.

❖ **Intentional Decision**

Have decided that Christianity is not for them.

Where and why people move

Danger

If someone moves in to this stage intentionally, or is intentionally dechurched, they are unlikely to move out of this stage.

Movement to Hostile

May become [Hostile](#) due to negative interactions with Christians or if they have negative thoughts about Christian worldviews.

Develop Trust

May move to [Open](#) when they can trust their more casual friends who are Christians.

Freedom to Explore

May move to [Open](#) when they have freedom to explore Christianity on their own terms instead of being coerced.

Engage this stage with patience and respect.

Pause and Pray

- Pause and reflect on the insights about those in Uninterested. Ask God to deepen your empathy and love for those in Uninterested.
- Pray that God would begin to spark a curiosity in their hearts in the way that only He can. Pray that this would be the start of them taking a step toward Open.

Plan Your Next Steps

- Those who are in Uninterested are typically there by intentional choice. How could you seek to understand their journey without an agenda and show them respect and care in the process?
- Those in Uninterested are not seeking or curious. With this reality in mind, what offers do you have for this person, or what offers do you need to create that will help this person in their journey?

- Events on topics related to their goals may appeal to them if they DO NOT bait and switch.
- For any movement toward openness to occur, this person seems to need to either know authentic Christians or be allowed to explore Christianity on their own without pressure. How can you help meet this need?
- If they begin to show openness, how can you give them ways to explore their questions independently and in their own time?

Cautions and Encouragements

- It is tempting to think that those in Uninterested are secretly Open or Seeking. They are not, so creating ministry offers assuming that they are seeking will likely not be effective.
- Information and proclamation about Jesus alone will not move the Uninterested.

- Do not get impatient with those who are Uninterested. If they want to stick around, let them. Even when they are not showing signs of moving.
- Continue to engage with the Uninterested with patience and respect. Resist the temptation to get defensive about Christianity. You can acknowledge their lived experience and empathize with them.


Hostile


Aware of the bad things associated with Christianity: socially, historically. Opposed to Christianity passively or actively.


**"Christianity is offensive to me
in multiple ways."**


Hostile people have made up their minds that Christianity is bad news and will say so if asked. They are offended by a worldview they see as restrictive and toxic, especially for minorities, women, and the LGBTQ+ community. They may acknowledge Jesus as a historical person, but definitely do not see him as God.

What people in Hostile say


 *"I mostly find [Christianity] an irrelevant novelty at best and a despicable business at worst."*

 *"As a gay person I felt actively rejected, judged, and condemned...I felt personally attacked and hurt and I resent it."*

 *"[Christianity's] history is very problematic, and it continues to be very oppressive in many places in the world toward many groups (women, [LGBTQ+ community], people of other faiths)."*

 *"My beliefs and research came to unpopular conclusions which were embraced behind the scenes by some but ignored in full by the institutions in favor of control and*

manipulation."

 *"No religion can justify itself in terms of evidence to convince me that there is actually anything behind it...my opinion of [Christianity] has sunk like a stone. In fact, it is a force of evil in my opinion."*

At-a-glance

- Many oppose religion more generally, and Christianity is a part of that.
- Believe Christianity is harmful.
- 50% of those interviewed that fit this stage are Dechurched.
- Least likely stage to ever move out of once someone has landed here

Insights & attributes

❖ **Dechurched**

50% of research participants that fit this stage are Dechurched (meaning they used to be part of a Christian community or identify as Christian).

❖ **Appear Uninterested**

Hostile people are often quietly hostile. They may appear to be similar to Uninterested, but when digging deeper, they are not the same.

❖ **No Need for Religion**

People in this stage typically believe that as a society, we have progressed past the need for religion.

❖ **Trauma**

If Dechurched, they may be experiencing trauma and oppose Christianity due to negative past experiences with churches or Christians.

❖ **Beliefs**

People in this stage typically believe that Christianity is harmful and that the church is an institution used to exploit people.

❖ **Christians as Hypocrites**

People in this stage typically believe that Christians clearly compromise on the main things that Christianity teaches.

Where and why people move

No Movement

People in the hostile stage are very likely to stay there.

Trauma

Trauma and deep hurt or abuse from churches or Christians keep people in this stage.

May Not Be Hostile to Jesus

Many people in this stage are opposed to religion more generally. They may not be hostile toward Jesus, just to Christianity, the church, and Christians. (Although they still might be hostile toward Jesus.)

More Research Needed

More research is needed on this stage to understand better where and why people move out of Hostile.

Engage this stage with patience and respect.

Pause and Pray

- Take a moment to empathize with their pain. Remember a time when someone from a particular, identifiable group hurt you. It takes work to forgive, love by faith, and experience healing. It takes time and intentionality to restore trust.
- What role is God asking you to play in this person's life? It might be consistently, quietly praying for their healing. If they are ready to share their experience, maybe God is calling you to listen with compassion and weep with those who weep.
- Ask God to free you from any tendency to find your identity in winning them over. Pray

for the ability to love them selflessly, by faith, and leave the results up to God.

- Pray that you can forgive them for any ways that they have hurt you with their hostility.

Plan Your Next Steps

- At this point, we can typically observe two sub-groups within hostile: those who are more actively hostile and those who are more passively hostile.
- We see in the research that those who are in the actively Hostile subgroup and are not open to discussing religion will likely not move out of this stage. But, if you decide to focus on this subgroup, ask yourself: What are some common values we both share? For example, helping those in need. How can you show compassion in a way that is meaningful to them? (It may be easier than you think). They are more likely to change their views

about you if they constantly see you act sacrificially in areas that they value.

- With the second group, how can you talk with them in a way that shows that Jesus is different from institutionalized (or even political) Christianity? You may have some common traumas from Christians or the church - if they listen, feel free to share your experience with them, as well as why you did not arrive at the same conclusion as they did.

Cautions and Encouragements

- As a community of anti-Christians with no reservations, Hostile individuals give us a sort of raw commentary on the church, including her blind spots.
- Actions speak louder than words. As 50% of this stage is dechurched, they probably think they know what you will say. Past

experiences may have led them to believe that Christians are hypocrites.

- Be prepared to being misinterpreted when you speak about Jesus. Avoid the temptation to see this person as your opponent - even if they see you as their enemy.
- Patience and empathy is key - but this is an opportunity to be Christlike.
- There is probably no trust. Lovingly rebuilding trust is crucial.

Unaware


No awareness of the gospel or of Christianity

"Who is God? Where does he live? Why can't we see him? From where we came, and where do we have to go?"

All people are born Unaware, but those who are in Unaware as adults were likely brought up with a non-Christian worldview (e.g., Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist) and may have never heard the terms "Jesus" or "Christianity." They may have never met a Christian. If they have spiritual questions, the questions are not based on a Christian understanding. "What animal was I in a previous


life?" or "Why do we worship dead saints?" are the kinds of questions they might ask.


What people in Unaware say


 *"It [Christianity] might be another religion that worships a common wise man or saint with their own religious text."*

 *"What is Jesus?"*

 *"Everything in the universe is God..."*

 *"'Christian' might be a belief system, like Sikh. They also might have a God or many Gods to worship."*

 *"I'd say the universe has some energy that sustains us. I call that energy, GOD."*

 *"I had never had an identity within religion, I try not to think about it too much as it makes me sad knowing there is no known end. it makes me even more scared to ask and checkout what is really out there. This feeling is quite bad... Can you please explain why this is important to you? I am interested! :)"*

At-a-glance

- Have never knowingly met a Christian
- Have not heard of Christianity
- May follow another religion/worldview
- May be open to Christianity but have no context

Insights & attributes

◆ Little Online Presence

It was challenging to find truly Unaware people. Hypothesis: this stage may not be highly represented in online spaces.

◆ Unfamiliarity

Christian terms are foreign and questions about religion will not come from any familiarity with a Christian worldview or belief system.

◆ Involved elsewhere

May identify as Sikh, Hindu, or Buddhist. May or may not "practice" as religious.

Where and why people move

No Exposure

Exposure to Jesus and Christianity never happens so they stay in this stage.

Negative Exposure

First exposure to Christianity does not put it in a positive light. Likely movement to [Uninterested](#) if this happens, which could eventually lead to a movement to [Hostile](#).

Unintentional Movement

Most Unaware people have an initial, unintentional move to [Uninterested](#), [Open](#), or [Professing](#) early in life.

Meaningful Understanding

People in Unaware need to learn something meaningful or positive about Jesus or Christianity to move in a growth direction.

Engage this stage with patience and respect.

Pause and Pray

- We all start here. Knowing that can help us grow our empathy for those in the Unaware stage. How does this description help you pray for those in this stage?
- What Bible verses come to mind when you think of those in Unaware? Take a minute to pause and pray through those verses.

- Some people believe that God put signposts about Himself and the Gospel into every culture - pray that you would see what they can be in your context. As you listen to a person in Unaware, ask God to show you ways He has been revealing himself to them in their own culture.

Plan Your Next Steps

- The need to "go" to those in Unaware is huge. An Unaware adult is most likely not going to come to a Christian organization because they don't even know what Christianity is. The Unaware highlight what a missional gap is, perhaps more clearly than any other stage.
- Christian terms will be completely unfamiliar to someone in Unaware. How can you introduce them to Jesus in a common language that doesn't make them feel like an outsider?

- What might you need to learn about their worldview to know how to build bridges between what they might already know and to introducing the Gospel to them? What might you need to learn about their culture to relate well and love them, so that you can have open doors for talking about Jesus?
- Look at the ministry resources and materials you already have. Do you have resources that are geared for this audience based on the data and insights above? Or are your resources written assuming a level of understanding about Christianity? What might you need to change or adapt so that you can meet the Unaware where they are?
- Consider: is it possible that you think someone is uninterested when they are really unaware?

Cautions and Encouragements

- Kindness and good experiences with Christians can go a lot farther than information or arguments with Unaware. They can be quite receptive if they have had a good experience.
- Use common language that doesn't make them feel like an outsider.
- Be aware of the fact that you may think that you are talking about the same thing when in reality you use the same words to describe spiritual reality but mean something totally different.
- You might be the first or only Christian the Unaware person has ever met! This is a huge privilege and opportunity to invest in their life.


Seeking


Actively seeking answers about spiritual things. Exploring Christianity and other belief systems.


"I am still looking for answers!"

People in Seeking are constantly looking for answers to spiritual questions, which are often about something other than Christianity. They are exploring Christianity as well as other very different belief systems.

What people in Seeking say

 *"If someone is super anti-Christian, they might see a demon; if they are super Christian, they might see an angel. They get what they put into it."*

 *"There are multiple religions in this world with each religion having its own god. But I believe God is one be it Jesus, Allah, Buddha, or Shiva. I want to find out the true meaning of life and understand what God is and where does he live. Is he close to us or is he far away?"*

 *"My boyfriend is a Christian. Since we started dating, I've been looking into Christianity more...to understand his belief system..."*

At-a-glance

- Usually has experienced a positive Christian influence
- Typically exploring multiple belief systems; Christianity may just be one of them
- They seek Christianity or spirituality for themselves, not just out of curiosity
- Unlikely to be “de-churched”

Insights & attributes

◆ How They Explore

Typically they explore by talking with a Christian friend or by using an online search engine.

◆ Sources of Truth

Logical reason, personal experience, and science are the typical sources of truth those in Seeking rely on.

❖ **Likely Know a Christian**

Usually have experienced a Christian who was a positive influence on them.

❖ **Seeking Broadly**

They are seeking potentially many belief systems, and Christianity is just one of them.

❖ **Actively Seeking**

Those in Seeking are actively and consistently looking for answers to spiritual questions. They are not passively seeking.

❖ **Difference in Religions**

Typically seeking answers in a variety of belief systems and do not see a big difference between Christianity and other religions or belief systems.

Where and why people move

No Christian Community

Not having access to a healthy Christian community where they can ask questions and explore.

No Freedom to Explore

Not having access to safe spaces where they can explore Christianity on their own terms.

Move to Professing or Growing

Typically move to [Professing](#) or [Growing](#) when they become Christians.

Meaningful Community

Movement toward [Professing](#) typically happens within the context of a loving, trusted community setting.

Engage this stage with authenticity and wisdom.

Pause and Pray

- People in Seeking actively seek the truth, but they do it on their own terms. Ask God to give you wisdom and patience.
- Ask God to lead them to reliable sources in their search for truth.

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal the truth of the gospel to them. Express to God that you believe that their faith journey is ultimately beyond your control, and you believe that you are free from having to manipulate them.
- Pray that God would lead you to these people in your community - they may be found in unexpected places.

Plan Your Next Steps

- Offer a safe environment to hear about their journey. What are they learning? What questions do they have? What are the deeper needs at the root of their questions?
- If they are open to it, offer a book or resource from someone who went through a similar process of spiritual exploration in their journey to following Jesus.

- As one important source of truth is their own experiences, ask them if they ever had an experience that they could only explain with God's intervention. It gives you a good starting point.
- Be ready to vulnerably, yet appropriately, share the difference that Jesus makes in your life today. Following Jesus doesn't solve your problems, but He is with you in the midst of your failures and life's challenges.
- Online search engines are often one of the first places a person in Seeking will go to look for answers to their questions about spirituality. How can you make sure your ministry's offerings for this stage are findable and accessible in a way that makes sense to them?
- Do your own research - what are the results for searches they are doing online? What can you learn about them and their process from this?

- What are some resources that helped you explore your own faith? How could you freely offer these without adding any pressure on them? (curation)
- Consider how you might give them exposure to a safe Christian community where they can experience positive relationships with Christians.

Cautions and Encouragements

- Remember, people in this stage are likely seeking out multiple worldviews, and Christianity may be one of them.
- Be aware of the tendency to try and control the outcomes or to be impatient with them in their journey. Do not try to force them to take the step of faith to follow Jesus. Be aware of the tendency to feel insecure or center yourself in your ministry efforts. You can trust the Holy Spirit's timing.

- If they share a negative experience with Christians, resist the urge to respond defensively or in a way that diminishes their experience. Use it as an opportunity to talk about the love of God, our mistakes, and God's grace.
- Be tactful, but at the same time, do not be ashamed of the Gospel - this is the power of God for their salvation.
- Many times, these people may be found in places that we tend to avoid (e.g., New Age conferences or other spiritual but non-Christian places). You may need to connect the dots for them how Christianity answers their very questions.
- People who do not follow Jesus are not our enemies. Resist the urge to speak negatively about people they are learning from even if they are "leading them astray."
- We can have a tendency to believe that everyone we meet is in this stage. As you

have spiritual conversations with people, be sure to love them where they are and not where you wish they were. Don't engage them as Seeking if they are not here. It will not communicate love to them.

Unclear


Welcome to the Unclear Island


Many people identify themselves as either “definitely not a Christian” or “definitely a Christian,” but the world today includes those who do not place themselves into one of these categories. In fact, they may not relate to either label at all. That’s why the Audience Map includes the “Unclear” region. It’s not a stage of spiritual growth, but a distinct region that reflects a different kind of spiritual identity marked by ambiguity, complexity, or evolving views. By exploring how people in this region see themselves, we can better discern how to walk with them toward Jesus.


[Jump to Table of Contents](#)

This region is still under construction with new research coming soon.

What people in Unclear say

 *"I was a Christian in church for many years. However I don't feel I was treated very well at church and it has led me to question my religion, so I would say I am not too sure. This is why I say I align with Christianity and a non-religious belief."*

 *"I do not know the truth of the matter, so I'm withholding my judgment, even though I have some idea which belief systems make more or less sense."*

 *"I am a follower and believe [in] Jesus, but I'm not going to the church"*


anymore. I just follow the [values]. [I decided to be agnostic because I] believe there's a greater power, but it doesn't need to be labeled as Christian, Catholic, Buddhist or [anything] else."


Dual


Identify both with Christianity and another world religion and/or a non-religious belief system.

More research coming soon.

What people in Dual say

 *"One thing is for sure, there is a higher being/God. And we as men have [blocked] the right teaching because of our own tainted thoughts and struggles. The truth has been lost, and it is up to us to find it for ourselves before our time is up."*

 *"While I do believe in God and that's one god...I also identify as roughly pagan...practicing Wicca and certain magical practices as well as divination...I have no idea what will happen once you die."*

 *"I practice [both] Christianity and other belief systems, as I feel that [they all have] something in common that reaches my heart and I feel that [that is the] right thing to do."*

At-a-glance

- Identify as Christian but typically pray independently and do not attend church.
- More active in privately practicing another religion or belief system.
- If or when they do attend a church, it is to become a better, more moral person.

Insights & attributes

◆ Being Good

View Christianity as a help to being a good, moral person who is respectful of others.

◆ Exclusivity in Identity

Genuinely identify as a Christian. The differentiator is that they don't **exclusively** identify as a Christian.

◆ More Research Needed

More research is needed to better understand this stage.

Where and why people move

No Christian Community

Not having access to a healthy Christian community where they can ask questions and explore.

No Freedom to Explore

Not having access to safe spaces where they can explore Christianity on their own terms.

Move to Profession or Growing

Typically move to [Professing](#) or [Growing](#) when they begin to identify exclusively as a Christian.

Meaningful Community

Movement toward [Professing](#) typically happens within the context of a loving, trusted community setting.

Engage this stage with curiosity and humility.

Pause and Pray

- People in Dual may not understand the real and exclusive gospel of Christ - ask God to open their eyes.

- It may be easy to get frustrated with a person in Dual because they identify as Christians and something else. Ask God to be able to see them with His eyes and love them.
- This person is relying on their own understanding as they make sense of the complex world around them. Pray that they would experience the limits of their ability to make sense of the world apart from the Holy Spirit.
- Pray that they would be overwhelmed by the wonder and mystery of the gospel and recognize that Jesus is the one, true God.

Plan Your Next Steps

- As you talk with someone and sense they may be in Dual, it will be helpful to find ways to clarify that. The gospel and its implications are not clear to a person in the Dual stage.

- In addition, a person in Dual may engage in activities and practices that a Growing or Engaged Christian would. If you engage with them as if they're in Growing while they're actually in Dual, there will be a miss.
- Look for ways to help them understand the exclusivity of Christ and His desire that all would be saved through Him.
- Look for opportunities to engage in conversations about the incompatibility of their contradictory belief systems. You may be able to tactfully help them see what the gospel says about Jesus being the only way. However, avoid a posture of combativeness or forcing a conversation they are not ready to have.
- Remember, this may be a short or long process!

Cautions and Encouragements

- By definition, a dual person misunderstands the exclusivity of the Gospel. While it is easy to judge them for that, it is usually better to patiently and lovingly show them that Jesus is the only way, not just one of the ways.
- Be patient - they may know the information, but believing it may take a long time and prayers.
- A person in this category may be compelled by his or her misunderstanding that a "loving God" would not exclude or condemn anyone. Look for ways to help them understand the heart and character of our loving God.
- Be aware of the temptation to take on a posture of argument and debate with a person in this stage. Make sure that your approach is motivated by love and communicated in a way that they can experience the love of God through you.

Professing

Professing to be a Christian, but little or no desire to grow spiritually.

"I've identified as a Christian for as long as I can remember, but I haven't been pursuing a closer connection to God recently."

People in the Professing stage identify as Christian only, but they show no intentionality toward growing a relationship with God. In fact, they likely do not think that Christianity is about knowing God. Though they might have been to the Growing stage before and may practice Christianity outwardly, such as praying about

their health or attending a Christmas service at church, motivation is very low when it comes to being in Christian community, reading the Bible, or seeking in other ways to grow spiritually.

Four variants of the Professing stage also presented themselves in the data:

Professing-Cultural, Professing-Moralist, Professing-Non-Practicing, and Professing-Guarded. There are a few distinctives to each of these subgroups that you may find referenced in the insights below.

Those in **Professing-Cultural** see Christianity mainly as a part of their cultural or family identity. Their participation in faith is most often through traditions and holidays. They have a desire to be good people but have not recently focused on spiritual growth.


Professing-Moralists hold strong moral beliefs and want to do what is right. They may have an interest in growing but lack the motivation. People who are in Professing-Moralist feel a responsibility to be good examples and often express stronger spiritual interests than others in Professing.


The **Professing-Non-Practicing** subgroup consists of those who still identify as Christian but their religious identity is not connected to church or faith life. They may view religion as something from their past or childhood and tend to feel disconnected from God or frustrated with the church.


People in **Professing-Guarded** have very low spiritual interests. They sometimes attend church or faith activities to please family and friends, but they feel generally negative toward church and


view it as unnecessary. Compared to the other subgroups, Professing-Guarded people more consciously avoid growing spiritually.

What people in Professing say


 *"I try to live as a good person with good morals and instill those morals in my children."*


 *"If I would want to grow spiritually, I perfectly could. Nothing stops me, apart from not being interested."*

 *"I used to practice more my faith before because of my catholic school. My faith didn't reduce, just my participation."*

 *"I do good things for people and I am always willing to help people. I feel that is the way I practice my religion."*

 *"[Being a Christian] does have to do with treating others with respect. Jesus did that."*

 *"I don't want to push religion on anyone... Religion is a personal thing for me and my family only."*

 *"I feel like culturally my age group doesn't make church a big part of their lives. It seemed like everyone growing up attended church, but these same types of peers now don't. I'm not sure exactly why- stale, boring, more interesting commitments. No deep and intense faith stuck from the early days of just sitting through church."*

At-a-glance

- Identify as Christian but are not actively involved in a church or Christian community.
- Desire to be a good person and do what is right.
- May have outward faith activity, but not recent spiritual growth.
- Not particularly interested in interacting with other Christians.

Insights & attributes

◆ Being Good

View Christianity as a help to being a good, moral person who is respectful of others.

◆ Identity

"I have always been a Christian" is a common viewpoint. Most Professing people do not have a specific point in time when they decided to

become a Christian. Those from certain faith traditions may point to baptism or confirmation as a starting point or milestone in their faith. Christianity is a part of their identity rather than a belief or practice.

❖ **Past Growth**

For those in Professing, previous moves to Growing are very common. Professing-Moralists are the subgroup most likely to have been in Growing before. The majority of Professing-Non-Practicing have never moved to Growing.

❖ **Evangelism & Discipleship**

The vast majority of those in Professing have never shared their faith or disciplined another Christian. Many cannot define evangelism or discipleship, and most believe evangelism is wrong and that trying to disciple someone would not go well.

❖ **Faith Activity**

A majority of Professing people do practice their faith in some way. They might pray or help less fortunate people, and a few read the Bible or attend church. But it is not clear that these activities affect their lives.

◆ **Currently Feeling Stressed**

Stress is the most common emotion currently felt across all Professing subgroups. It is most common in Non-Practicing.

◆ **Interests**

The top two interests for Professing people are personal growth and improved mental health.

Where and why people move

Likely to Remain

Very likely to stay here long-term due to apathy unless something shakes them out of it and helps them grow.

Move back from Growing

Many who are Professing have previously spent time in [Growing](#) but returned to Professing due to negative life circumstances, loss of relational support, or because they chose to start prioritizing other things over spiritual practices.

Move to Unclear

People in the Professing group might shift to [Unclear](#) when they begin questioning their faith.

This is often a result of experiencing trials, encountering alternative worldviews or disagreeing with what they see in Christianity or church.

Move to Growing

When movement into [Growing](#) does happen, these factors are most often involved: Bible reading, prayer, trials, curiosity or a desire to learn, and meaningful Christian community, including church involvement.

Move to Engaged

It is uncommon, but some Professing people move directly into [Engaged](#) by sharing their faith. This happens most often when they are young in age or very new to faith and accompany their parents or other Christians who are doing evangelism. However, these individuals tend to

lack the foundation needed to remain in Engaged long-term.

Engage this stage with relationship and encouragement.

Pause and Pray

- Ask God to move in their hearts, motivating them to follow Jesus and not merely identify as a Christian.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help them see that following Jesus is a response to his love for them.
- Sometimes people in Professing just slipped into where they are at right now, and need a nudge to get back to growing in faith. Ask God to let you be that nudge for them.

Plan Your Next Steps

- The best starting point for engaging with a Professing person, after you find out they identify as a Christian, is to empathetically ask, "What are the main reasons you identify as a Christian?" If their answer primarily deals with being born into a Christian family, be curious and seek to learn more about how their faith experience has impacted them personally.
- The main thing that sets this group apart is their lack of desire to grow spiritually. Take the time to find out why. Is it due to boredom, a wrong view of Christianity/God, personal issues, problems with churches, or something else?
- Create strategies that help overcome different barriers you uncover.

Cautions and Encouragements

- Remember, this map is how people identify themselves, which may mean that people in this stage do not fully understand the gospel and do not recall a specific point in time when they decided to start a personal relationship with Jesus.
- On a similar note, you may find that you use similar words but might not be saying the same thing. Many in Professing grew up in a church setting, so they know the right words or the right things to say. This can be misleading as you seek to understand them.
- Emphasize grace and faith over works. We are not trying to get people to simply change their behaviors; we are trying to engage them at a heart level, which will motivate true life change.
- Those in Professing may be really open to you if they see you as a "fellow believer" who can help them. Or they could be hostile if they

see you as a threat to their version of “Christianity.” The way you approach and talk to them can make a difference between the two.

Growing

Actively, willingly practicing their faith and experiencing inward heart change.


“I am now working on my relationship with Jesus, getting to know him better.”


People in the Growing stage can look back on their life — or at their current relationship with God — and know that growth has taken place, even if they cannot point to one moment when it started. They see their faith as personal and their desire for a closer relationship with God may share priority with things like improved mental health and personal growth.


Three variants of the Growing stage also presented themselves in the data:


Growing-Intentional, Growing-Struggling, and Growing-Nurtured. There are a few distinctives to each of these sub-variants that you may find referenced in the insights below.


What people in Growing say


 *"I've always believed, because that is how I grew up. As I got older I was able to identify God's presence in my life."*

 *"The biggest moment was the time when I was facing actual difficulty in real life. I had learnt to have faith in God 'by theory,' but to actually act it out I had to experience it personally. I must say the process was hard."*

 *"My relationship with Jesus is very personal to me. Not something that I outwardly share unless asked about, but I know that he is with me always. More recently I have felt closer to him than I have in a very long time, but I think this is because I need guidance in my life."*

 *"I will set goals, and after that I will pray and ask for guidance. I believe that even if I plan it perfectly, God might plan something else for me."*

 *"I feel that over the last few years I have had more desire and need for prayer, especially in stressful situations. I wouldn't say I have the closest relationship and understanding, but I do feel there is a connection."*

 *"For the most part, I do have everything I need [to grow]. But it would be nice to find more like-minded people who I can share life experiences with and whom I can learn from."*

At-a-glance

- Faith is very personal
- Might not attend church regularly
- Interested in self-improvement and caring for others
- Not currently doing evangelism or discipleship

Insights & attributes

❖ Church Involvement

Growing people are most likely to go to church with the motivation to worship God — if they go to church at all. They are more likely to be formerly in community with other Christians than they are to be currently in community.

❖ Pursuing Jesus

Growing people have been trying to improve their relationship with Jesus — even if they would currently describe it as distant.

❖ View on Evangelism

Receptive to some types of relational evangelism, like building a friendship intentionally or having an open conversation. They are almost universally opposed to direct

evangelism — especially door-to-door or preaching in public.

❖ **Faith is Personal**

Growing people have a tendency toward practicing their faith alone and sometimes with other Christians, and the Nurtured subgroup was far less likely to practice their faith outside their family.

❖ **Prayer vs. Bible-reading**

Growing people are not all reading the Bible, but they are praying on their own.

❖ **Faith Community**

Growing people are more likely to know Professing Christians than they are to know other Christians who are seeking to grow in their faith.

Where and why people move

Negative Influence

People in the Growing stage can be negatively impacted by the wrong friends or by the failures of their church leaders. They can also lose interest in their faith. This can cause them to move back toward [Professing](#) or even [Uninterested](#).

Trials and Hardships

Trials can affect people in the Growing stage more deeply than those in the [Grounded](#) stage. This is especially true of the Struggling subgroup and can cause movement prompted by doubt, pain or stepping back from community.

Move toward Grounded

Growing is typically not an end stage. Most people tend to move toward [Grounded](#) by being involved in Christian community or by having their faith become stronger through trials.

Move toward Engaged

Some people in the Growing stage move directly to the [Engaged](#) stage by trying evangelism, or less commonly, discipleship. This is a more common movement than Growing to Grounded.

Engage this stage with empathy and interest.

Pause and Pray

- People in this stage have a growing relationship with God - thank God for them!
- This stage is also one of potentially hard spiritual warfare and a time of many new milestones and forks in the road. Pray that they would continue to grow to maturity and have a resilient faith, trusting in the character and goodness of God even when they may not understand their circumstances.
- People in this stage may be exploring the Holy Spirit's role in their faith. Pray that they grow in their understanding of the Spirit-filled life, with an increasing sensitivity in all areas of their life to follow his leading and rely on his power.
- Pray that people in this stage will grow in their ability to experience God's grace when they mess up and extend forgiveness and grace with others.

- People in this stage often hold their faith personally and internally. Pray that God would bring trustworthy and safe community into their life to help them move closer to God and share his love with others.

Plan Your Next Steps

- Consider ways you can give them a solid foundation in the character of God and the basics of the faith so that they have deep roots to weather the storms of life.
- Help them understand the Spirit-filled life and the importance of relying on God in all that they do.
- Think about how you could spend time talking about their secure identity in Christ that is not dependent on their works. Help them grow in their understanding of God's great love for them, which will compel them to follow him.

- Give them the right challenge at the right time. We typically have a lot of strategies for this group, the question is not what to do next, but rather what is effective in truly helping them.
- Grace and truth given in love over time are both essential for spiritual growth. How can you help this person accept loving grace and truth and extend loving grace and truth to others?
- Finding solid community at this stage is key and can also be a challenge. Consider how you could help a person in this stage get connected to a healthy community of believers so that they can experience the growth and encouragement that happens when we walk with God in community instead of just on our own. Remember that some people in Growing have had negative experiences with church or community in their past.

Cautions and Encouragements

- People in Growing have great potential - no one knows the limits of their growth.
- Sometimes accelerated growth in the beginning can come from wrong motives (e.g., people-pleasing or legalism). So it may be better for them to "slow down." Consider ways to show how the Christian life is a marathon and not a sprint.
- Many people in Growing have moved through different experiences of faith and life struggles. Do not respond defensively when someone in this stage shares their doubts, questions or painful church experiences. Rather, listen empathetically.
- Even when you have answers that address their questions and doubts, do not rush them as they work through what they're experiencing. Offer answers if they want

them, reassure them of truth and the trustworthiness of Jesus, but be patient as they process their thoughts and feelings.

- Remember that faith is very personal to many of those in the Growing stage. They may be unfamiliar with practicing their faith with other people or outside of their family. Don't assume that someone who seems to be growing in their faith is already comfortable jumping into community groups and activities.

Grounded


Motivated to follow Jesus and want to grow, yet experience barriers in practicing evangelism and discipleship as a lifestyle.


"Living in today's society is not easy, but my faith keeps me grounded and secure."


People in the Grounded stage want to grow spiritually in community and maintain a strong relationship with God. Growing spiritually and serving others is what they think makes a mature Christian. They are not doing evangelism or discipleship yet or were once doing so and now no longer are for whatever reason.

Further research is needed on this stage.

What people in Grounded say

 *"If I've been given this 'second life' [after a car accident], I should use it to the glory of God."*

 *"[A mature Catholic] is not a cafeteria Catholic. They understand the profoundness of the Mass and what a gift it is."*

 *"Jesus is the best thing that has happened to me...He is our Savior."*

At-a-glance

Three main desires for their spiritual growth:

- Maintain a strong relationship with God
- Grow in community
- Serve others

May have formerly been in Engaged doing evangelism and discipleship but have intentionally stopped.

Insights & attributes

◆ Definition of Maturity

Define spiritual maturity as growing spiritually and serving others.

◆ View of Evangelism

Unlikely to do evangelism because they see this as forcing their beliefs on others.

❖ **View of Discipleship**

Do not disciple others because they don't feel ready and they don't see opportunities for discipleship.

❖ **View of Community**

Growing spiritually in the context of community is important to them.

❖ **Dechurched**

If Dechurched, are following Christianity on their own terms outside of community. May display clear signs of growing closer to God, but also may display characteristics of "Professing".

❖ **Formerly Engaged**

Some people in this stage were formerly in the Engaged stage but have stopped doing evangelism and/or discipleship for whatever reason.

Where and why people move

Danger

Grounded can become an end state for those who have been Christians for a longer amount of time or after a certain point. They stop growing toward [Multiplying](#).

Sin and Trials

Those in the Grounded stage can succumb to sin or be affected by trials in a way that causes them to move back to [Professing](#) or [Growing](#).

Involvement & Opportunity

Can move to [Engaged](#) when they try evangelism or discipleship (usually evangelism). This typically follows increased church involvement,

intentionally getting to know non-Christians, clearly seeing opportunities, being asked to join an evangelism or discipleship ministry, and (rarely) learning it as part of a calling to full-time ministry.

Renewed Passion

Occasionally, a person moves from Grounded back to [Growing](#), but this is not ultimately negative. This movement tends to come from a renewed passion, curiosity, or love for Jesus.

Engage this stage with conviction and vision.

Pause and Pray

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would give them a desire to participate in the Great Commission.
- Pray for insight into how to cast vision for them in ways that do not confirm their misunderstanding of evangelism as “forcing their beliefs” on others.
- Pray that you can trust God with their spiritual growth and avoid the temptation to pressure them to take next steps in your timing.
- Many times a defining experience moves these people beyond this stage. Pray that God would give them such an experience.
- For many of them, starting to do evangelism and/or discipleship means going back to a painful place they have been before, which is hard. Pray that they would take this step of faith!

Plan Your Next Steps

- For those in Grounded, distinguish between motivation and skill as the source of their lack of involvement in evangelism/discipleship. If skills are needed, consider ways to offer training; if they lack motivation, consider ways to encourage them.
- Help them understand God's heart for the Great Commission and see evangelism and discipleship as a way to express his love for them.
- If they have chosen to grow apart from a church community, help them practice God's love and forgiveness and take steps of faith to enter back into Christian community.
- Be patient with them. Pray consistently for them and encourage them. Listen to them as they process their fears and the pain they may have experienced from other Christians. Help them move towards extending grace and forgiveness.

- Invite them to do life with you so that they can see evangelism and discipleship as a way of life and participation in church as an essential part of their faith journey.

Cautions and Encouragements

- These people may feel intimidated or judged by people who do evangelism and discipleship, so approach them with empathy.
- Many of these people feel the desire to do God's work, so the right approach can release great potential!
- Be aware of a tendency to give up on them because they are not growing as quickly as others or as quickly as you want them to. At the same time, do not hold back on your own evangelism and discipleship to match their pace. Continue to engage them with grace and patience while inviting them to join you in ministry.

- Avoid shaming and manipulation to get them involved in E/D.
- You will need discernment from the Holy Spirit to know when to exhort them to take steps of faith to move past their fear and pain.
- Helping the dechurched go back to a church community may be a long process. This will require building trust with them first and may take time. Do not give up.


Engaged


Has done evangelism or discipleship within the past year.


**"I helped someone else know
Jesus a little better."**

People in the Engaged stage typically came to their faith after being raised in Christianity or after being evangelized by someone else. They usually have strong orthodox Christian beliefs. Nearly all have done evangelism at some point, and most continue to do it today to some degree.


What people in Engaged say


 *"It's [Christianity] my compass and Jesus has set the example. Many times I struggle, but He has given me the direction to follow, which is Him."*


 *"The practice of my faith has varied with different stages of my life. For instance, in university, I was more involved with student groups and evangelising on campus. The spiritual disciplines I practiced and how I read my bible also differed."*

 *"Trying to follow God's plan totally affects my life in terms of what I want and why I want that. Also, I'm confident knowing he's taking care of me. In a practical way, I pray every day, I go to the church when I have the chance, and I try reading and*


worshiping every day."


 "I believe in preaching and sharing faith in ways that reflect and align with my personality, it isn't my personality to preach or do to door to door activities so I would be uncomfortable with the idea and would not feel it is authentic or God speaking through me."


 "I try my best to live out the teachings of the Lord. It changed because of certain things that happened in my life that made me realize there is a God guiding me all throughout my journey."

 "Finding the right people who shares the same goals may be a challenge but I do enjoy when it

happens."

 *"I'm reluctant to class [people I mentor] as always being less mature than myself. As members of a body, I need the 'weaker' member as much as they need me, so it is always for mutual edification. I'm not currently 'mentoring' but I attend a bible study where in a sense we teach and mentor each other. Sometimes I teach, and sometimes I am taught."*

 *"Sharing my faith and testimony with others and help them to follow the path of light. ... It made my life more meaningful and helping others gave me happiness."*

 *"I would love to share the gospel with people but I'm not very gifted at*

doing so. I pray for God to work in those around me and also desire an open door to do so well."

At-a-glance

- Nearly all have done evangelism at some point, and most continue to do it today both proactively and reactively.
- Typically have experienced some positive outcomes from their evangelism.
- Most have at least tried discipleship.

Insights & attributes

❖ Evangelism Style

More free-flowing evangelism, which is entirely informal and usually spontaneous.

❖ Positive Experience

Have typically had at least some positive experience with evangelism, or received a positive outcome from it.

❖ Christian Community

Was involved in Christian community during their most significant period of growth. This was generally not an immersive Christian community though, like a Christian college.

❖ Discipleship

Discipleship style is similar to evangelism style. Typically didn't start with discipleship until they had already experienced some growth in their

faith. Were motivated to start with discipleship at least partially by the influence of other people.

◆ **Started Early**

Typically started doing evangelism after only learning the basics of it. Did not need more than that to get started. Typically shared first with their family or friends.

◆ **Dechurched**

A little less than 20% of Engaged Christians are also de-churched. They are either intentionally de-churched or no longer attending church due to circumstances outside their control.

Where and why people move

Lack of Fruit or Interest

Can slip back into [Grounded](#) after seeing a lack of positive fruit in evangelism or after losing genuine interest in doing evangelism.

Busyness or Trials

May move back to [Grounded](#) after facing trials or when they have too many other responsibilities or activities to manage.

Movement to Multiplying

Someone in Engaged needs to be doing discipleship and have at least one disciple who has discipled someone else in order to move to [Multiplying](#).

Sustainability

A person in Engaged is (often) doing evangelism already, but they could face challenges in moving toward [Multiplying](#), especially if they live in a place without many Christians. So, for them, it's more about continuing what they are already doing, but in a sustainable way. This could include avoiding burnout and discouragement and/or not tying their evangelism to a church/community activity that might end.

Engage this stage with inspiration and support.

Pause and Pray

- Pray that their lives will be lived out a deep motivation to love Jesus and follow him—even when it is hard and fruit does not come quickly.
- Pray that they grow in their sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and their willingness to obey his leading in their lives and in their relationships.
- Pray that they do not get distracted prioritizing their lives around worldly values and expectations.
- Pray that God would encourage them to continue doing the things that only a small percentage of believers do.
- Pray that if they desire to disciple others, that God would put people into their path to disciple. Especially in places where there are very few Christians.

Plan Your Next Steps

- People in this stage are typically already a part of a community. As a humble learner, ask more about their community and discern if there are any ways you can help them in their current community, rather than trying to move them out of that community in to a different one.
- Sometimes these people may feel lonely doing evangelism and discipleship even in their community. Be careful not to take them away from their own community, but think about ways how they can be encouraged by others who also are actively involved in the Great Commission.
- Think about why they are not in the Multiplying group - is it a lack of motivation? Skill? Opportunity? Lack of positive responses in evangelism? Depending on the reason, make your plan according to their needs to help them move forward.

Cautions and Encouragements

- Be aware of the temptation to try and motivate them to do evangelism and discipleship in order to please you or other Christians rather than out of a love for Jesus.
- Do not minimize their questions or concerns around taking the initiative in ministry. Look for ways to help them grow in their faith as they take courageous steps.
- It can be tempting to use their new steps of faith in ministry as a public story to be celebrated. This can unintentionally communicate that they are valued for what they do and for outward appearances more than for who they are in Christ and what God is doing in and through them.
- Many of these people started doing evangelism with only minimal training. Be encouraged, that people can start sharing

their faith with people they care about even after only learning the basics.

- Find ways to share about evangelism or discipleship experiences you are having. Many were encouraged by people around them, so they will likely be encouraged by your real-time influence and stories.

Multiplying


Highly engaged in the Great Commission, making new disciples who make disciples.


"My goal is to become more like Christ and help others become more like Christ (and come to know Christ if they don't already)."


People in the Multiplying stage think Christian maturity includes a wide range of disciplines and so regularly participate and lead in a variety of spiritual activities. With a desire to be used by God to reach their community and church, they regularly share their faith in different settings. This happens relationally and also directly. They want to help their disciples have a better life, and they often train them to disciple others.

What people in Multiplying say

 *"If we are not making disciples, then can we really call ourselves Christ followers?"*

 *"Everyone has cancer, and I have the only cure. It would be incredibly selfish of me not to get the word out."*

 *"I also encourage [young men in my small group] to share their faith with Christians, but I tell them if they meet someone who is not a believer, try to make them think and discover God."*

 *"Sharing Christ with others and seeing them touched by the gospel and the love of God has deeply blessed me. I always thought that going for mission trip is about being a*

blessing to others but without fail, I [have] always felt more blessed when I came back."

At-a-glance

- People move to the Multiplying stage when they know that at least one of their disciples has discipled someone else.
- Are regularly involved in a variety of spiritual activities, both as leaders and participants.

Insights & attributes

◆ Spiritual Maturity

Believe Christian maturity includes a wide range of disciplines. They are actively involved personally, as participants, and as leaders, in a variety of spiritual activities.

◆ Motivation

Desire to be used by God in their church and community. Also motivated to help their disciples experience a better life.

◆ Evangelism

Actively share their faith in a variety of settings, both relationally and directly with people they don't know.

Where and why people move

Movement to Grounded

May move to [Grounded](#) if they stop doing evangelism and discipleship for whatever reason. Multiplying is not necessarily an end-state. Just because someone is in the Multiplying stage does not mean they will stay there forever.

Ongoing Evangelism & Discipleship

A person needs to continue doing evangelism and discipleship to stay in the Multiplying stage.

Engage this stage with encouragement and resources.

Pause and Pray

- Pray for these people by name - they are specific targets of spiritual warfare. Also, thank God for them and pray for perseverance.
- Some of the reasons why people in this stage move back to Grounded is because of life circumstances. Pray that multiplying disciples will grow depth in their relationship with Jesus that will help them withstand trials and difficulties in life.
- Rather than feeling like failures when they are not able to dedicate as much time to ministry activities, pray that they will continue to make the most of every opportunity to share how Jesus is meeting them in their circumstances.

Plan Your Next Steps

- One big challenge for people in this stage is doing the same thing for a long time - is there a way to introduce variance (e.g., challenging them for international missions) that could give them a new way of seeing God work in and through them?
- Help people in this stage to consider their circles of influence and ways that they could intentionally expand that so as to continue to multiplying.
- Think of ways you can put them and their stories in front of others. Nothing is more encouraging than seeing someone embody the Great Commission in today's context.
- Sometimes these people can be silos - is there a way to link them to others like them? Are there partnership opportunities that they can lead/be part of? Can you expose them to

other parts of the ministry to give them new experiences and opportunities to take steps of faith?

- It is likely that a person in Multiplying is not being actively disciplined themselves. This could be a ministry opportunity or an opportunity to provide encouragement.

Cautions and Encouragements

- There can be a tendency for multiplying disciples to judge others who are not multiplying. How can you avoid reinforcing this misconception and help them see others with compassion and empathy rather than judgement?
- Once people arrive at this stage, our ministry metrics measure activities rather than personal, spiritual growth it will take intentionality on your part to emphasize the importance and celebrate with them things

that we do not measure with numbers. Engage them on the depth of their intimacy with Jesus. Make this a priority in your conversations with them. Introduce them to spiritual practices and encourage them to make heart-surrender and spiritual depth a priority.

- Some cultures may have a value for smaller, deeper relational circles. Multiplying disciples may have shared their faith with everyone in the natural circles. How can you encourage them to take steps beyond their natural relational networks and engage people in missional gaps beyond their normal reach?