

## Training #4

### Leader Guide & Station

#### Conversation Stations:

Tonight we're going to train differently. Instead of having an up-front conversation, peer to peer role-playing... we're going to break the conversation up into smaller skills and practice them individually through what we're calling "Conversation Labs."

The reason we're doing this is because most faith conversations don't fall apart because someone lacks Bible knowledge. Most conversations become difficult because people don't know how to navigate a moment. Sometimes we over-explain. Sometimes we become defensive. Sometimes we miss emotional cues. Sometimes we answer questions that shouldn't be answered the way they were asked.

These stations are designed to slow the moment down and help us practice specific skills intentionally.

At each station, your focus is not to "win" a conversation or impress people with knowledge. Your focus is to become more aware of how to communicate Jesus clearly, calmly, and relationally.

Some stations will challenge you to:

- Redirect conversations back to Jesus
- Reframe difficult questions
- Practice simple invitations
- Avoid unnecessary arguments
- Listen beneath objections
- Respond with gentleness and confidence

# ask me about JESUS

As you rotate, remember: You are practicing habits, not performing perfection.

This is a safe place to try things, stumble through responses, and grow. Some moments may feel awkward — that's normal. Growth often happens in awkward repetition before confidence develops naturally.

When you enter each station:

1. Read the prompt carefully
2. Stay inside the scenario
3. Practice the assigned skill only
4. Keep your responses conversational, not preachy
5. Focus more on curiosity than control

Observers and teammates should help each other improve, not critique harshly. The goal is development, not evaluation.

The ultimate outcome is this:

We want to become people who can engage naturally in everyday conversations about Jesus without becoming argumentative, fearful, overwhelmed, and effective in our approach.

We are learning how to stay centered on Jesus, aware of people, and sensitive to what God may already be doing in someone's life.

## Station 1 Narrative – Church Hurt & Hypocrisy

At this station you're stepping into one of the most common real-world conversations you'll encounter. This person is not primarily wrestling with evidence for God. They're wrestling with disappointment, betrayal, and distrust.

The seeker at this table has likely had some kind of church experience already. Maybe they grew up around faith. Maybe they were involved in youth group. Maybe they trusted church leaders. But somewhere along the way, something broke. Someone hurt them. Someone failed them. Or they watched Christians behave in ways that felt opposite of Jesus.

Now here's what matters: people in this scenario are often not rejecting Jesus as much as they are rejecting what they experienced from people who claimed to represent Him.

The temptation for the leader is going to be to defend Christianity too quickly. You'll want to explain. Clarify. Correct. Smooth things over. But the fastest way to lose trust here is to move past pain before acknowledging it.

Your role is not to rescue the reputation of the church in ten minutes.

Your role is to create safety.

Ask questions. Slow down. Let them talk. Help separate Jesus from the failures of people. Don't minimize their experience. Don't debate whether their hurt was valid. Listen long enough that they feel understood before you ever try to redirect.

And if you share your story, don't use it to one-up their pain. Use it to relate, to humanize, to connect.

The win at this station is not agreement. The win is trust.

## Station 2 Narrative — Science vs God

At this station, you're entering a conversation with someone who sees faith and intelligence as opposites. This seeker may come across confident, sharp, even combative at times. They've likely consumed a lot of online debate content and they may genuinely believe Christianity only survives through ignorance.

Remember: not every intellectual objection is purely intellectual. Underneath all the arguments is fear of...

- fear of looking naïve
- fear of losing identity
- fear of surrender
- fear of being manipulated

This station is designed to train you not to panic when difficult questions arise.

You do not need to answer every scientific question perfectly.  
You do not need to become a professional apologist overnight.  
And you definitely do not need to chase every rabbit trail.

One of the biggest mistakes people make in faith conversations is abandoning the central message of Jesus in order to defend side topics they barely understand themselves.

Stay grounded. Keep bringing the conversation back to Jesus:

- Who was He?
- Why does He matter?
- What has He done in your life?
- Why do you trust Him?

The goal here is not intellectual domination. It's thoughtful curiosity, humility, and calm confidence.

A great leader in this station looks secure enough to say:

"That's a good question."

"I haven't thought about that deeply."

"I'd love to explore that more sometime."

"My faith ultimately rests in Jesus."

You are not trying to win a debate clip.

You are trying to model trust, peace, and relational presence.

## Station 3 Narrative – The Hell Question

This station is emotionally heavier than it first appears.

The seeker here is asking questions about hell, judgment, and salvation – but underneath the question is usually grief, fear, anger, or confusion about the character of God.

This conversation becomes dangerous when we treat emotional pain like a theology exam.

You may hear emotionally loaded statements like:

‘So you think I’m going to hell?’

‘How could a loving God send people to hell?’

‘My loved one wasn’t a bad person.’

The temptation will be to answer too quickly. But remember something we talked about in training: sometimes the question itself paints an incomplete or distorted picture of God.

Your job is not to dodge truth. Your job is to reframe the conversation toward the goodness, mercy, and rescue of God through Jesus.

Notice the difference between:

‘Yes, because...’

and

‘Can we talk about what kind of God we believe He is?’

This station requires emotional intelligence more than polished theology.

Can you stay calm when emotions rise?

Can you listen without becoming defensive?

Can you hold conviction and compassion at the same time?

The goal is not to soften truth.

The goal is to reveal the heart of God accurately.

And remember:

people rarely remember perfect doctrinal wording. But they deeply remember whether they felt loved while asking hard questions.

## Station 4 Narrative – The Invitation Opportunity

This station is intentionally different from the others.

Not every conversation requires deep apologetics. Not every seeker needs a philosophical discussion.

Some people are simply waiting for someone to notice them, welcome them, and invite them in.

At this station, the seeker is spiritually open already. They may not have language for it yet, but God is already stirring curiosity in them. They're lonely. Searching. Exploring. Wondering if faith could actually mean something personally.

The challenge here is that many Christians miss these moments because they overcomplicate them.

We've spent weeks talking about questions, pathways, and conversations – and all of that matters – but sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is simply say: 'Would you like to come with me?'

That's it.

Simple. Warm. Clear. Confident.

This station trains boldness.

Not aggressive pressure.

Not salesmanship.

Not manipulation.

Just honest invitation.

You are learning how to recognize openness and respond to it naturally.

Some people don't need another argument.

They need a seat saved for them.

They need someone to walk in with.

They need to know they won't be alone.

The win here is recognizing the moment and courageously inviting them toward community and toward Jesus.

## Station 5 Narrative – The Distractor Conversation

This final station is designed to simulate what many modern spiritual conversations actually feel like both online and in public spaces. The seeker here jumps constantly between objections:

- contradictions
- suffering
- church history
- hypocrisy
- politics
- science
- random internet claims

The conversation can feel chaotic very quickly. And that's the point.

This station trains emotional steadiness and conversational focus. The biggest danger here is getting pulled into twenty shallow debates instead of one meaningful conversation. You are not required to answer every objection immediately.

In fact, one of the strongest things a leader can do is gently slow the conversation down and ask: 'Which of these questions matters most to you personally?'

That changes everything. Because often the flood of objections is covering uncertainty, distrust, fear, or avoidance.

Your role is to stay relational without losing direction.

Don't become defensive. Don't match sarcasm. Don't panic when you don't know an answer.

You can be thoughtful without pretending to know everything. And most importantly: keep bringing the conversation back to Jesus. Not because you're avoiding hard questions – but because Christianity ultimately rises or falls on Him.

This station is about learning how to stay calm, focused, curious, and relational in conversations that want to become scattered and argumentative.

The win is not answering everything.

The win is creating a real conversation instead of a verbal ping-pong match.

## Station 1 – Church Hurt & Hypocrisy

### Scenario 1 – “Why are Christians so judgmental?”

**Focus:** Listening before defending Christianity

**Seeker Prompt:** You grew up around church but became disillusioned.

You say: “Honestly, Christians are some of the most judgmental people I’ve ever met.”

#### **Pushing Emotionally:**

- “Church people talk about love but gossip constantly.”
- “Christians act one way on Sunday and another the rest of the week.”
- “I don’t want anything to do with fake people.”

#### **Leader Goal:**

- Resist defending the church too quickly
- Validate pain without affirming bitterness
- Separate Jesus from imperfect people
- Build trust before redirecting

#### **Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “That sounds really disappointing.”
- “Was there a specific experience that shaped that?”
- “I think a lot of people have felt that tension.”
- “Can we separate Jesus from the people who failed to represent Him well?”

## Scenario 2 – “The Church Hurt Me”

**Focus:** Creating emotional safety

**Seeker Prompt:** “When I was struggling, the church made me feel ashamed instead of helping me.”

### **Pushing Emotionally:**

- “They treated me differently after they found out.”
- “I felt judged instead of loved.”
- “Church was the last place I expected to feel rejected.”

### **Leader Goal:**

- Slow the conversation down
- Listen carefully
- Don’t minimize the experience
- Avoid trying to “fix” the pain immediately

### **Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “That must’ve hurt deeply.”
- “Thank you for being honest about that.”
- “What impact did that have on you?”
- “I don’t think Jesus intended people to experience that from His followers.”

### Scenario 3 – “Pastors Only Care About Money”

**Focus:** Avoiding defensiveness

**Seeker Prompt:** “Every pastor I see online is rich, manipulative, or caught in some scandal.”

**Pushing Emotionally:**

- “Churches just want people’s money.”
- “Religion feels like a business.”
- “Why should anyone trust church leaders?”

**Leader Goal:**

- Acknowledge legitimate concerns
- Avoid excusing corruption
- Keep conversation centered on Jesus
- Stay calm and non-defensive

**Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “Some of that frustrates me too.”
- “I don’t think abuse or manipulation should ever be defended.”
- “What keeps me following Jesus is actually who He was, not the failures of people.”
- “Jesus confronted religious hypocrisy constantly.”

## Scenario 4 – “Christians Pick and Choose What to Judge”

**Focus:** Responding with humility instead of argument

**Seeker Prompt:** “You Christians always talk about certain sins while ignoring others. It feels hypocritical.”

### **Pushing Emotionally:**

“Church people condemn others while hiding their own issues.”

- “Why are some sins treated worse than others?”
- “It feels like Christians care more about rules than people.”

### **Leader Goal:**

- Avoid becoming defensive or argumentative
- Lead with humility and honesty
- Acknowledge hypocrisy without abandoning truth
- Re-center the conversation on Jesus’ heart toward people

### **Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “I can understand why that would feel frustrating.”
- “I think Christians have sometimes represented Jesus poorly.”
- “Jesus actually challenged self-righteousness very strongly.”
- “What has your experience with Christians been like personally?”
- “I think following Jesus should produce humility, not superiority.”

## Station 2 – Science vs God

### Scenario 1 – “Science Disproves God”

**Focus:** Staying grounded instead of debating endlessly

**Seeker Prompt:** “I just think science has made belief in God unnecessary.”

#### **Pushing Intellectually:**

- “We used to blame God for things science now explains.”
- “Religion filled gaps in knowledge.”
- “Faith feels outdated.”

#### **Leader Goal:**

- Stay calm and thoughtful
- Avoid panic or over-explaining
- Keep returning to Jesus
- Ask thoughtful questions

#### **Suggested Response Prompt:**

- “Do you think science explains meaning or just mechanisms?”
- “That’s an interesting perspective.”
- “For me, faith ultimately centers on Jesus.”
- “Can I ask what specifically makes belief feel difficult for you?”

## Scenario 2 – “The Bible Contradicts Science”

**Focus:** Avoiding unnecessary rabbit trails

**Seeker Prompt:** “So do you literally believe the earth was created in six days?”

### Pushing Intellectually:

- “That completely contradicts modern science.”
- “You can’t take Genesis seriously.”
- “Christians ignore evidence.”

### Leader Goal:

- Avoid getting trapped in secondary debates
- Keep focus on the resurrection and Jesus
- Respond humbly and calmly
- Don’t pretend expertise

### Suggested Response Prompts:

- “Christians have wrestled with those questions for a long time.”
- “My faith doesn’t ultimately rest on creation timelines.”
- “For me the central issue is Jesus.”
- “The resurrection is the foundation of my faith.”

### Scenario 3 – “Faith Is Irrational”

**Focus:** Responding without insecurity

**Seeker Prompt:** “I think religion mostly exists because people are afraid or need comfort.”

**Pushing Emotionally:**

- “People believe because they can’t handle reality.”
- “Faith seems anti-intellectual.”
- “Smart people grow out of religion.”

**Leader Goal:**

- Stay emotionally steady
- Avoid becoming combative
- Respond personally and thoughtfully
- Keep confidence without arrogance

**Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “I understand why people feel that way.”
- “I don’t think faith and intelligence are opposites.”
- “Following Jesus didn’t require me to stop thinking critically.”
- “Can I share why Jesus became convincing to me personally?”

## Scenario 4 – “Why Doesn’t God Prove Himself?”

**Focus:** Curiosity over combat

**Seeker Prompt:** “If God is real, why doesn’t He just prove Himself clearly to everyone?”

### **Pushing Emotionally:**

- “Why leave people confused?”
- “Why make faith so difficult?”
- “A loving God would make Himself obvious.”

### **Leader Goal:**

- Acknowledge the emotional weight
- Avoid shallow answers
- Keep conversation relational
- Point toward Jesus thoughtfully

### **Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “That’s actually a really honest question.”
- “I’ve wrestled with that too.”
- “I think God wants relationship, not forced compliance.”
- “What kind of evidence would feel convincing to you?”

## Station 3 – The Hell Question

### Scenario 1 – “You Think I’m Going to Hell?”

**Focus:** Reframing emotionally loaded questions

**Seeker Prompt:** “So because I don’t believe in Jesus, you think I’m going to hell?”

#### **Pushing Emotionally:**

- “That sounds judgmental.”
- “Why would a loving God do that?”
- “So Christians think they’re better than everyone else?”

#### **Leader Goal:**

- Do NOT answer defensively
- Reframe the question
- Keep focus on grace and Jesus
- Stay gentle and calm

#### **Suggested Response Prompt:**

- “Maybe a better question is...”
- “Why does anyone need grace?”
- “Can we talk about what Jesus came to do?”
- “Christianity isn’t about Christians thinking they’re superior.”

## Scenario 2 – “A Loving God Wouldn’t Send People to Hell”

**Focus:** Communicating God’s character accurately

**Seeker Prompt:** “I could never believe in a God who sends people to hell.”

### **Pushing Emotionally:**

- “That sounds cruel.”
- “That doesn’t sound loving at all.”
- “Why would God create people knowing that?”

### **Leader Goal:**

- Keep tone compassionate
- Avoid cold theological answers
- Reframe toward rescue and mercy
- Emphasize the heart of Jesus

### **Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “I understand why that feels difficult.”
- “When I look at Jesus, I don’t see someone eager to condemn people.”
- “The story of Christianity is about rescue.”
- “Can we talk about what Jesus actually came to do?”

### Scenario 3 – “My Loved One Wasn’t Religious”

**Focus:** Handling grief with compassion

**Seeker Prompt:** “My grandfather wasn’t religious, but he was one of the best people I knew.”

**Pushing Emotionally:**

- “Are you saying he’s in hell?”
- “That would make God seem unfair.”
- “Good people shouldn’t be punished.”

**Leader Goal:**

- Prioritize compassion over precision
- Avoid making declarations about individuals
- Stay emotionally aware
- Speak carefully about God’s character

**Suggested Response Prompt:**

- “I can tell you loved him deeply.”
- “I’d never want to talk carelessly about someone you care about.”
- “I trust God’s justice and mercy completely.”
- “Conversations like this are deeply personal.”

## Station 4 – The Invitation Opportunity

### Scenario 1 – “I’ve Been Thinking About Faith”

**Focus:** Recognizing openness

**Seeker Prompt:** “I don’t know why, but I’ve been thinking more about God lately.”

#### **Pushing Gently:**

- “I’ve just been searching lately.”
- “Life feels different recently.”
- “I think I’m missing something.”

#### **Leader Goal:**

- Recognize spiritual openness
- Ask a few curious questions
- Invite naturally
- Avoid overcomplicating the moment

#### **Suggested Response Prompt:**

- “What do you think’s stirring that?”
- “That’s really interesting.”
- “Would you ever want to come with me sometime?”
- “You definitely wouldn’t have to walk in alone.”

## Scenario 2 — “I’ve Never Been to Church”

**Focus:** Making church feel approachable

**Seeker Prompt:** “I honestly wouldn’t even know what to do at church.”

### **Pushing Anxiously:**

- “I’d probably feel awkward.”
- “Church people seem intimidating.”
- “I wouldn’t fit in.”

### **Leader Goal:**

- Reduce anxiety
- Make invitation feel personal
- Normalize uncertainty
- Be warm and confident

### **Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “Most people feel that way at first.”
- “You don’t need to have anything figured out.”
- “I’d sit with you.”
- “I can meet you outside so you don’t walk in alone.”

### Scenario 3 – “Life Has Been Heavy”

**Focus:** Inviting without pressure

**Seeker Prompt:** “This year’s just been really hard honestly.”

**Pushing Emotionally:**

- “I’ve felt alone.”
- “I’ve been struggling mentally.”
- “I’m tired.”

**Leader Goal:**

- Listen empathetically
- Don’t immediately preach
- Offer community naturally
- Invite with gentleness

**Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “I’m really sorry.”
- “That sounds exhausting.”
- “One thing that’s helped me is not trying to carry everything alone.”
- “Would you ever want to come with me sometime?”

## Scenario 4 – “Maybe I Should Visit”

**Focus:** Boldness and clarity

**Seeker Prompt:** “I mean... maybe I should come check it out sometime.”

### **Pushing Lightly:**

- “I’ve thought about it before.”
- “I’m just nervous.”
- “I wouldn’t know anyone.”

### **Leader Goal:**

- Don’t miss the opportunity
- Be direct and warm
- Offer practical next steps
- Make the invitation easy

### **Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “You absolutely should.”
- “I’d love for you to come.”
- “I’ll save you a seat.”
- “I can introduce you to people so it doesn’t feel awkward.”

## Station 5 – The Distractor Conversation

### Scenario 1 – “Rapid Fire Objections”

**Focus:** Boldness and clarity

**Seeker Prompt:** “I mean... maybe I should come check it out sometime.”

#### **Pushing Lightly:**

- “I’ve thought about it before.”
- “I’m just nervous.”
- “I wouldn’t know anyone.”

#### **Leader Goal:**

- Don’t miss the opportunity
- Be direct and warm
- Offer practical next steps
- Make the invitation easy

#### **Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “You absolutely should.”
- “I’d love for you to come.”
- “I’ll save you a seat.”
- “I can introduce you to people so it doesn’t feel awkward.”

### Scenario 3 – “Constant Topic Switching”

**Focus:** Maintaining conversational direction

**Seeker Prompt:** “What about dinosaurs? Other religions? Politics in church? Suffering? Bible contradictions?”

#### **Pushing Chaotically:**

- “There are too many issues.”
- “Everything about religion seems messy.”
- “How can you believe all this?”

#### **Leader Goal:**

- Stay emotionally steady
- Avoid getting scattered
- Refocus conversation gently
- Prioritize relationship over performance

#### **Suggested Response Prompts:**

- “You’re asking a lot of meaningful questions.”
- “Can I ask which one matters most to you personally?”
- “I don’t want to just throw random answers at you.”
- “What’s underneath all of this for you?”

## Scenario 4 – “Aggressive Skepticism”

**Focus:** Responding with calm confidence

**Seeker Prompt:** “So you seriously believe a dead guy came back to life?”

### Pushing Sarcastically:

- “That sounds insane.”
- “Modern people don’t believe that stuff.”
- “You really think miracles happen?”

### Leader Goal:

- Don’t react emotionally
- Stay calm and thoughtful
- Keep focus on Jesus
- Speak confidently without arrogance

### Suggested Response Prompts:

- “I understand why that sounds unbelievable.”
- “The resurrection really is the center of Christianity.”
- “If Jesus rose from the dead, everything changes.”
- “Can I share why I find the resurrection compelling?”