

THE
**connect
cards**



by LAURA KROKOS



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cards

www.theconnectcards.com

Written and Developed by Laura Krokos

Designed by Sarah Kennedy Irwin

Editorial Collaboration: Neil Downey & Rick James



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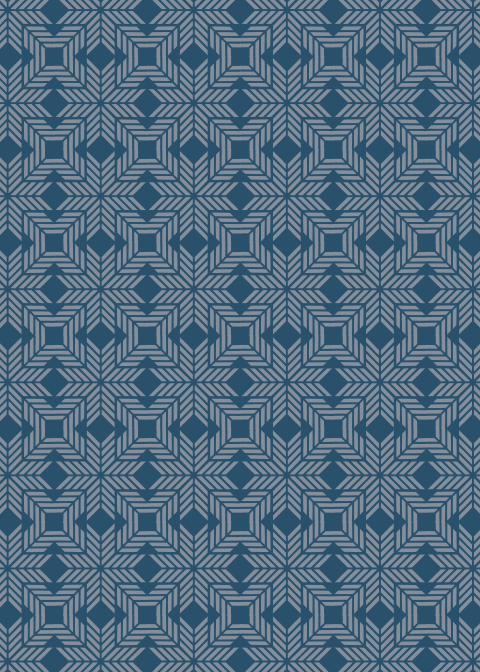
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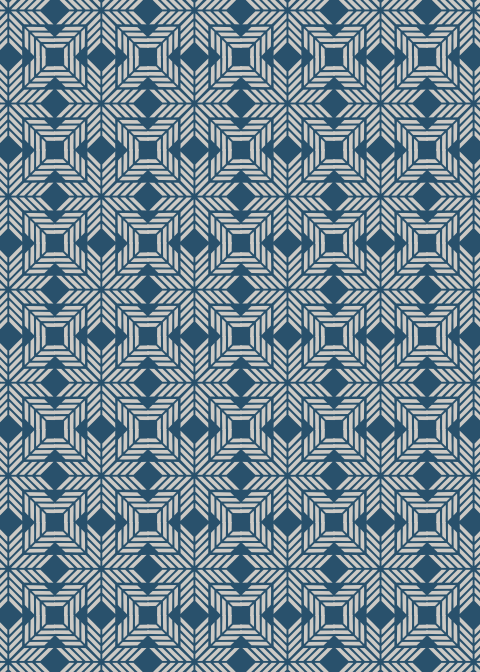
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Why Connect Cards?

Without great intentionality from the leader, Bible studies will digress into merely a hangout time for Christians without a sense of direction.

There's certainly times for hanging out, but a Bible study serves other important functions in "equipping the saints." Bible study is a time to study God's Word, to pray as a community, to connect with one another, and to receive some aspect of equipping in the work of ministry.

Connect Cards ensures that each of these components is addressed and provides ideas to do them well. So you'll find resource cards for each category: Scripture, Prayer, Community, and Mission. Each time you meet, draw a card from each of the four categories, and those four cards should make for a balanced, fruitful study.

When the deck is done? The template will be in your head and you can write your own.

How it works

The Connect Cards are a tool to accompany Bible studies but can be used to supplement many other events or group meetings. The sky is the limit.

The deck has four essential elements: Connect with Scripture (*for the leader*), Connect with God (*prayer*), Connect with Each Other (*group interaction*), and Connect with the Mission (*ministry*).

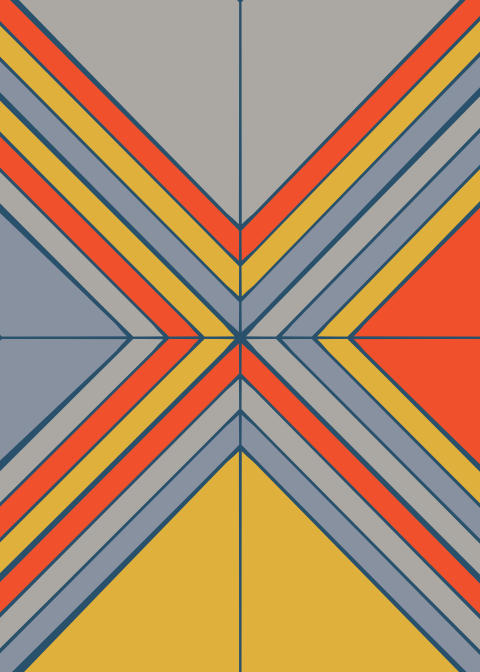
- ▷ First, if you are the Bible Study leader, read through the Scripture cards on your own. These will simply provide you with some necessary skills and perspective.
- ▷ Then, each week during your small group Bible Study, chose one card from each of the remaining sections. You will use these to help teach and train your group.

Here's the approximate time each of the cards takes:

- ▶ Mission (blue): 15 minutes
- ▶ Prayer (orange): 10 minutes
- ▶ Each Other (green): 2-3 minutes per person

Many of the cards refer to **TheConnectCards.com** website. Make sure to read the cards ahead of time and that you have internet access.

If your time is short, just do a couple of the categories (e.g. Connect to Prayer, Connect to Each Other). Keeping consistent with these 4 Bible study components is important, but adapt when you need to.



connect WITH GOD

1

- ▷ Read **EPHESIANS 6:10-18**

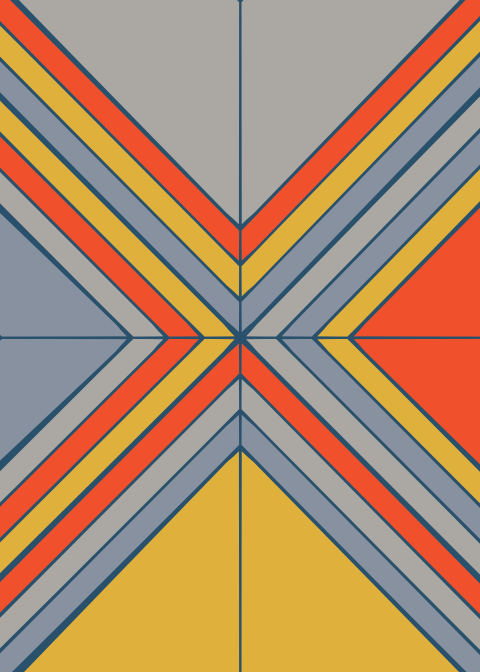
The Greek word for scheme (*methodeia*) literally means a tailor-made plan. Imagine if Satan had an office with a filing cabinet with a folder in it with your name on it. What schemes would be in it? Which ones have and haven't worked on you?

- ▷ Spend some time silently praying for yourself. Use the following verses as specific things to pray for.

EPHESIANS 4:1-3

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-5, 14

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-12



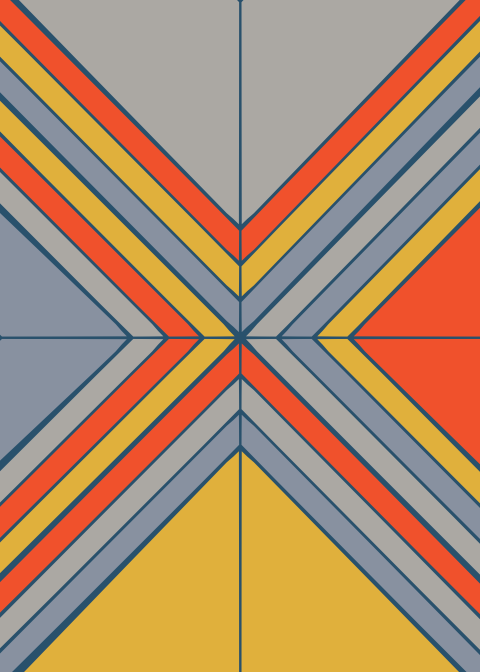
- ▷ Pray together as a group for your family. Use the following verses as specific things to pray for.

LUKE 19:17

EPHESIANS 1:18-19

PHILIPPIANS 4:11-12 2

PETER 1:5-7



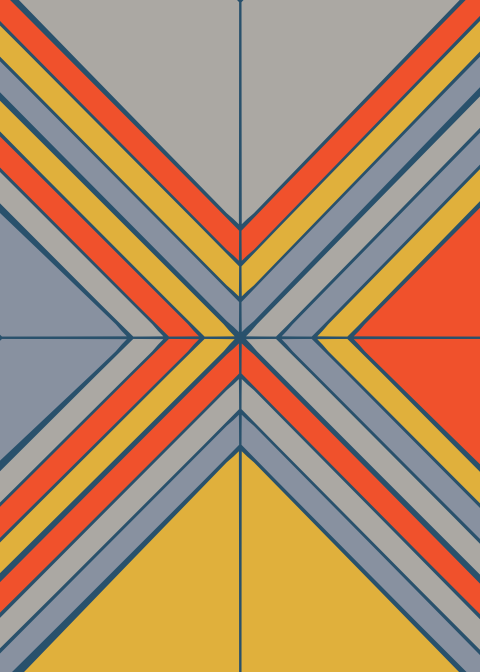
connect WITH GOD

3

- ▷ Write down the names of some friends. Pray for them using the following verses:

EPHESIANS 1:18-19; 3:17-19; 4:1-3

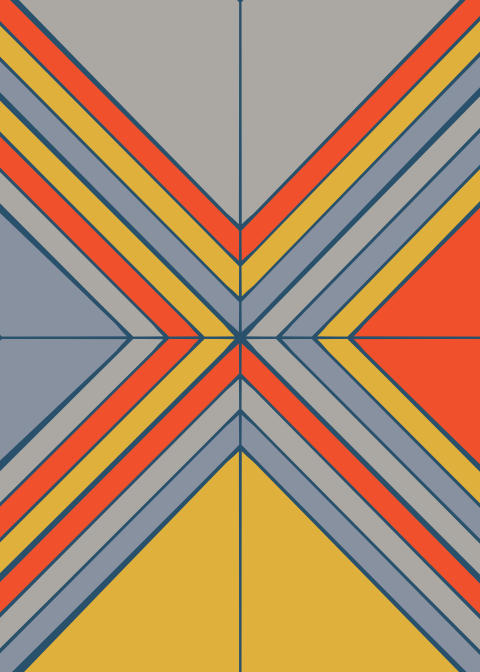
PHILIPPIANS 1:9-10; 2:3-5,14; 4:6,8



connect WITH GOD

4

- ▷ Make a list of the top ten people who you would like to see come to Christ. As a group, spend some time praying for the people on your list.
- ▷ Put the list somewhere you'll see it often and try to pray for them every day.



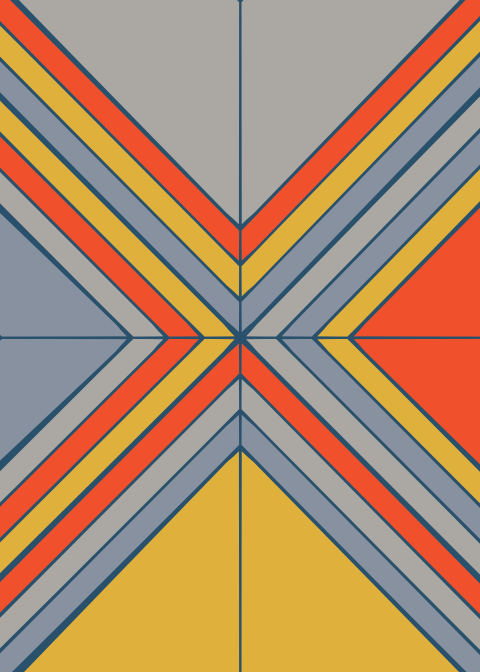
- ▷ As a group spend some time praying for government leaders using the verses below as ideas of specific things to pray for.

EPHESIANS 5:15-18

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-8

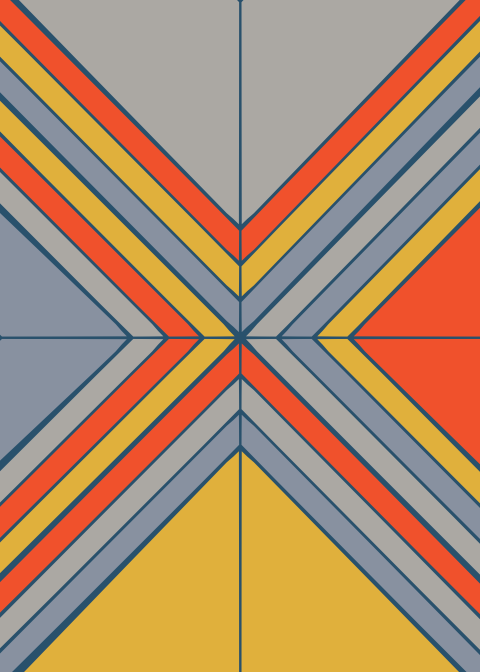
JAMES 1:5

- ▶ **Government leaders to pray for:** World leaders, President, Vice President, Senators, Congressmen, Mayors, Governors, Judges, Attorney General, etc.



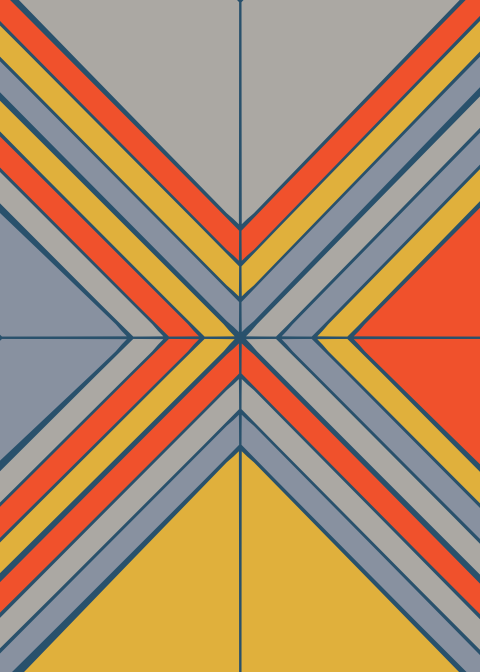
Media has a huge influence throughout the world. One could say that the entertainment industry is disciplining nations. How incredible it would be if the Lord used this industry to broadcast truth.

- ▷ **Pray for Christians in the media:** protection, peace, encouragement, boldness, wisdom, impact.
- ▷ **Pray for non-Christians in the media:** openness to the gospel, desire to seek the truth, friendships with Spirit-filled believers.



Many people have come to know Christ during their high school and college years and gone on to influence society in significant ways. There are also many who walk away from the Lord during these pivotal years.

- ▷ Break into pairs and spend time praying for evangelism and discipleship to happen on campuses.
- ▷ Pray for students, faculty, and administrators on campus to seek and proclaim truth.



connect
WITH GOD

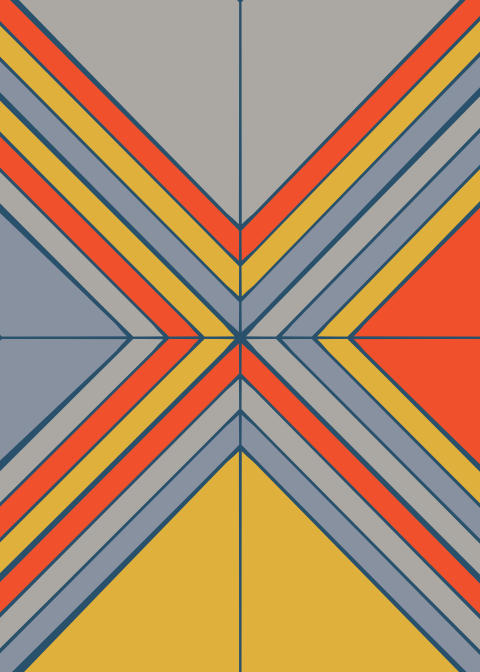
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- ▷ Make a list of spiritual leaders, missionaries, and ministries.
- ▷ Pray for these leaders using the following verses as a guide:

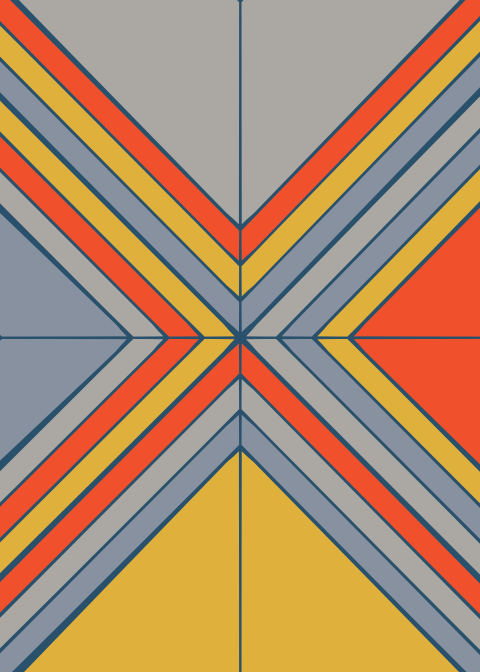
COLOSSIANS 1:3-6

COLOSSIANS 1:9-12

COLOSSIANS 1:28-29



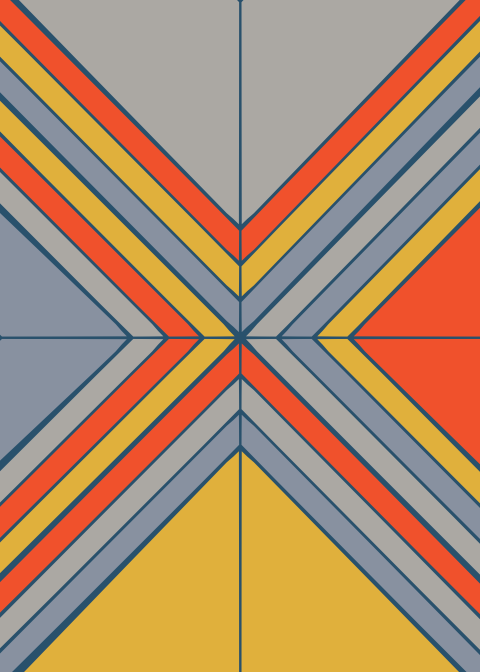
- ▷ Break into small groups. Have each group pick one of the social justice topics below to pray for.
 - ▶ orphans
 - ▶ abortion
 - ▶ foster care
 - ▶ Christian persecution
 - ▶ human trafficking
 - ▶ world poverty



Jesus looked at the people around Him and had compassion on them. Then He told His disciples to pray for the Lord to send out laborers because the harvest was ripe. Essentially, he said that there are many people willing to trust Christ but few people willing to share the gospel with them.

- ▷ Pray for people to be equipped and willing to share the Gospel and for laborers to be sent to the harvest.
- ▷ Pray also for the unreached and unengaged people of the world, the ones who have never heard the Gospel.

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|------------|
| ▶ China | ▶ India | ▶ Sudan |
| ▶ Chad | ▶ Indonesia | ▶ Laos |
| ▶ Nepal | ▶ Nigeria | ▶ Ethiopia |
| ▶ Iran | ▶ Iraq | ▶ Syria |
| ▶ Afghanistan | ▶ Somalia | ▶ Yemen |



- ▷ Spend time praising God for who He is and what He has done. Feel free to use the following verses as a guide:

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

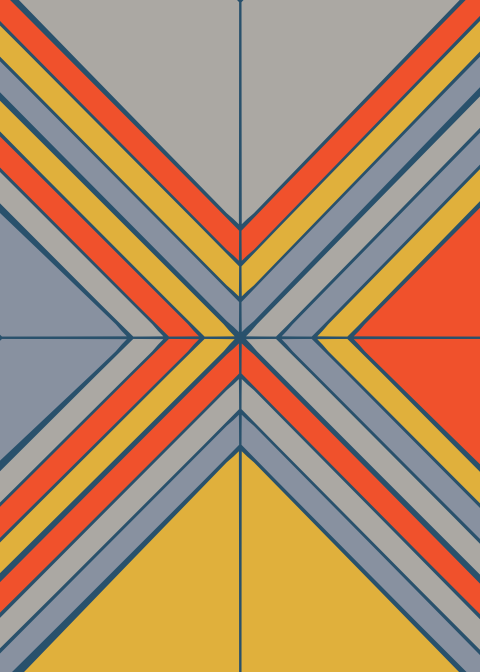
COLOSSIANS 1:13-20

1 TIMOTHY 2:4-6

TITUS 3:4-7

HEBREWS 1:1-4; 4:14-16

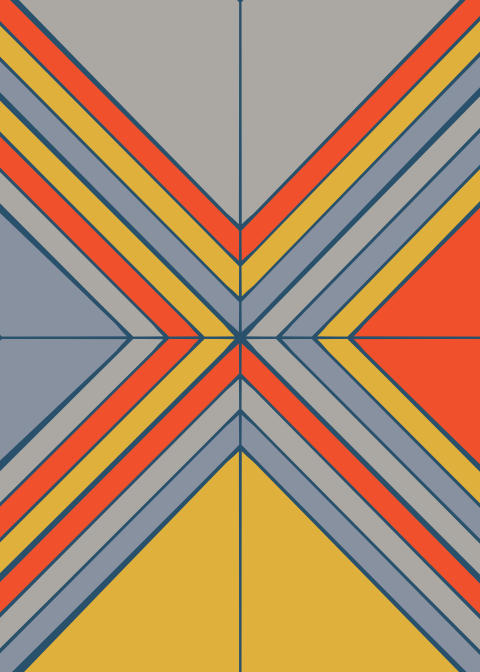
1 JOHN 3:1,16



connect WITH EACH OTHER

1

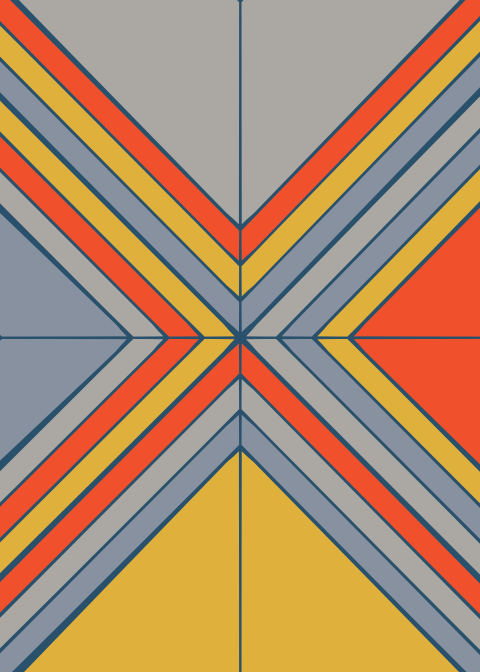
- 1.** What is one characteristic you received from your parents you want to keep?
- 2.** If you could do anything to glorify God and knew you would succeed, what would you do?
- 3.** What causes you to see your need for the Lord?



connect
WITH EACH OTHER

2

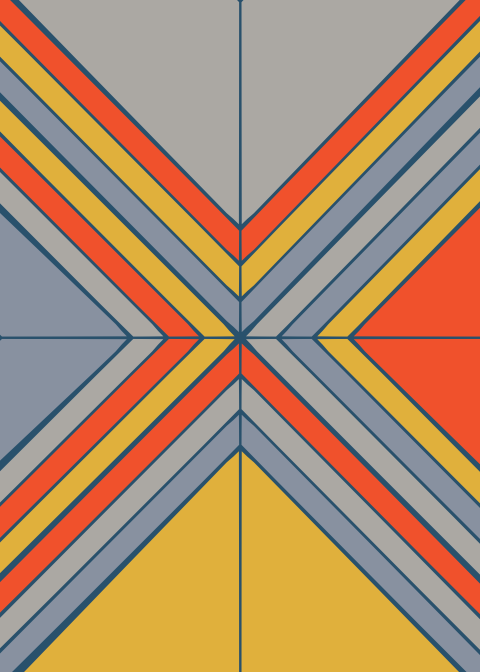
- 1.** If you could have any view from your back porch what would it be?
- 2.** What discouragement did you face this week?
- 3.** What holds you back from living wholly for the Lord?



connect WITH EACH OTHER

3

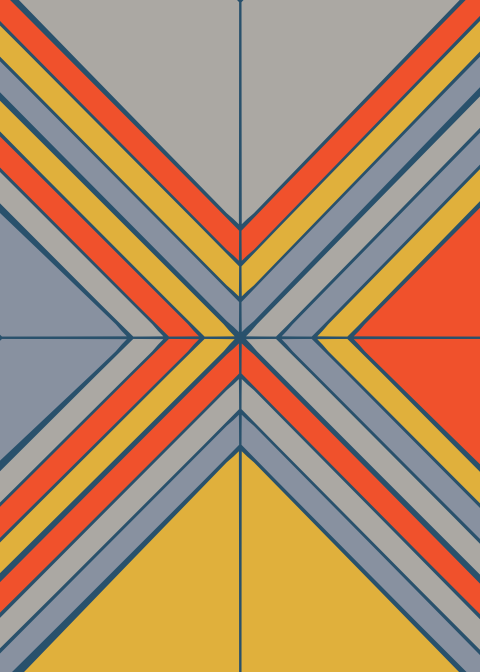
- 1.** What is something you've done that you're proud of?
- 2.** What remains undone that you have wanted to get done for years?
- 3.** Do you feel significant? Why or why not?



connect
WITH EACH OTHER

4

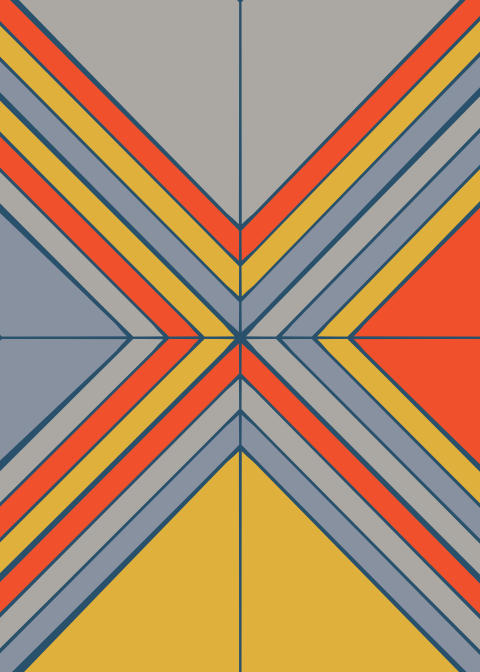
- 1.** Share something about yourself not many people know.
- 2.** What event in the past, present, or future would you like to witness in person?
- 3.** What thing in your life (good or bad) has the most potential to distract you from God or from serving him?



connect
WITH EACH OTHER

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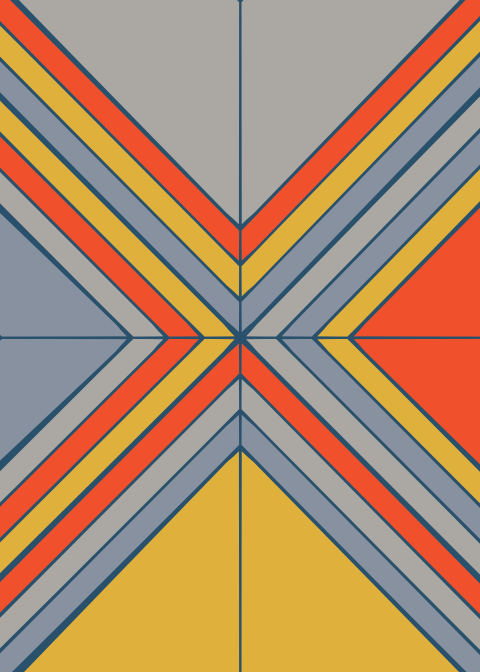
- 1.** What caused you to get into the most trouble when you were young?
- 2.** In which activity would you like a lesson from an expert?
- 3.** Is it difficult for you to trust people? Why or why not?



connect WITH EACH OTHER

6

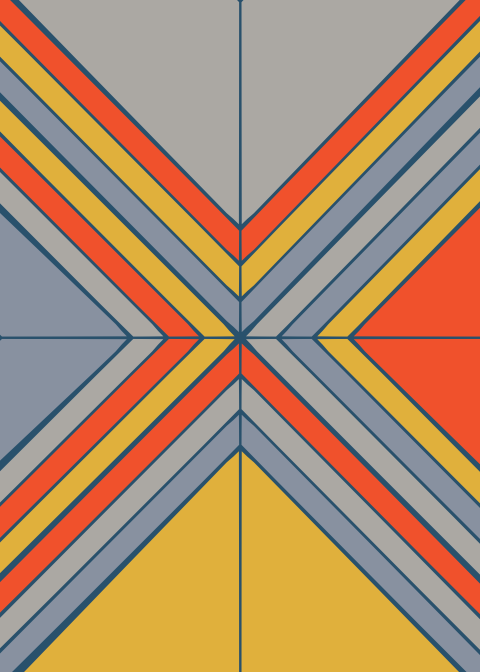
- 1.** What are the most important qualities you look for or appreciate in friends?
- 2.** If you could do something dangerous (with no risk of serious injury), what would you do?
- 3.** Are you intentionally pursuing people in your life? If not, what gets in the way?



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WITH EACH OTHER

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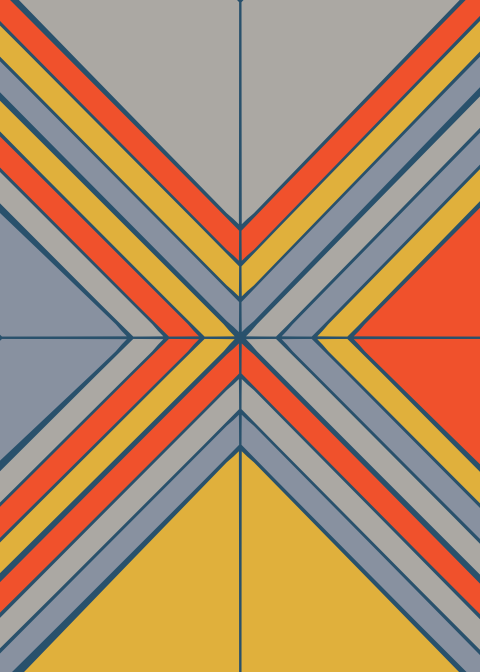
- 1.** What has been your most serious physical injury?
- 2.** What life experience has strengthened you the most?
- 3.** What do you most desire out of conversations with people?



connect WITH EACH OTHER

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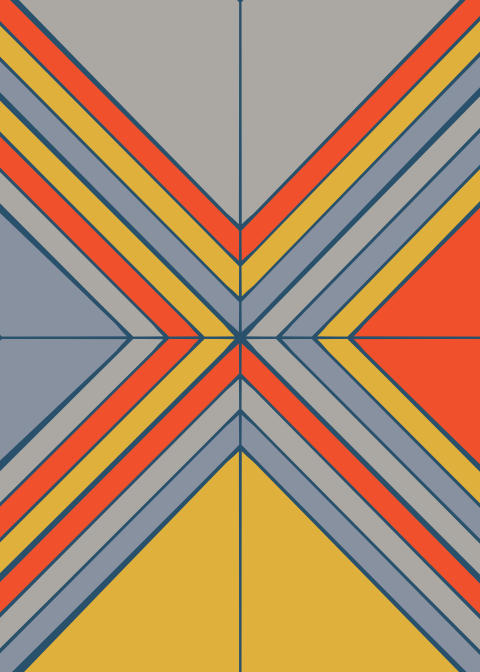
- 1.** If you could give all human beings one virtue, which would you choose?
- 2.** If you could be brilliant in one subject, which would you choose?
- 3.** Is it difficult for you to move past small talk with people? Why?



connect WITH EACH OTHER

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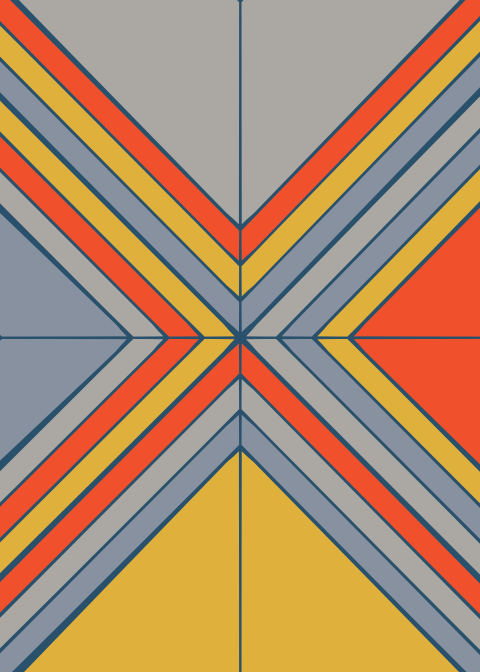
- 1.** If you had enough money to hire one employee, which would you choose: a housekeeper, cook, gardener, or personal secretary?
- 2.** Share about a time when you felt that the Holy Spirit was leading you.
- 3.** How did you see God at work this last week?



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WITH EACH OTHER

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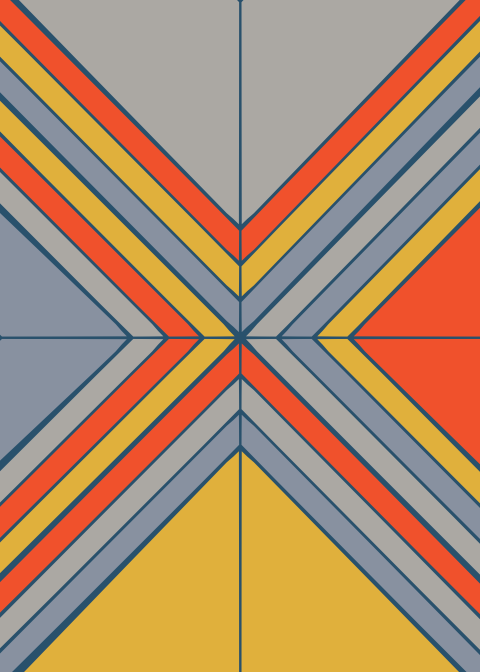
- 1.** What's the most amazing weather you've ever seen?
- 2.** Where's the most beautiful place you've ever seen?
- 3.** Describe a time you were convinced that God was in control of your life.



connect
WITH EACH OTHER

11

- 1.** Would you rather meet your great-great-grandparents or your great-great-grandchildren?
- 2.** What's the hardest thing you've ever done?
- 3.** What are you passionate about? How was this passion birthed in your life?

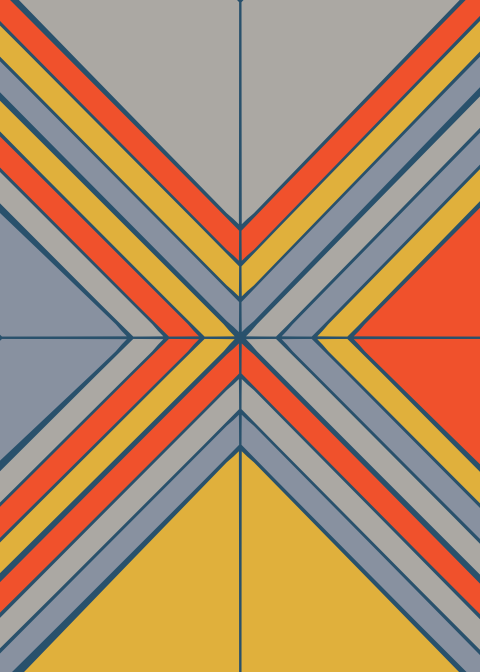


Spirit Filled

- * What is the danger in thinking you can do something that you actually have no ability to accomplish?

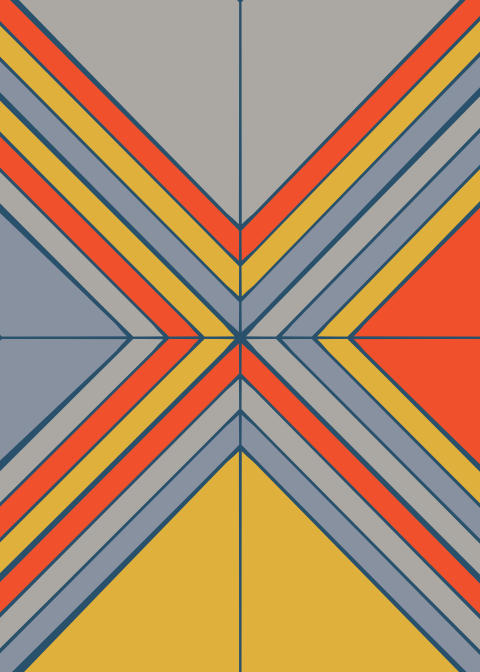
Living the Christian life is what God desires of us but it's impossible to accomplish on our own. It's only possible by yielding to Him and letting Him do it through us.

- ▷ Read article together about being Spirit filled: Go to **cru.org** and enter Spirit Filled Life in search bar. Use any one of the short articles.
- ▷ Take a minute to do a throne check and then write down a way you can practice doing throne checks this week.



Gospel Tools

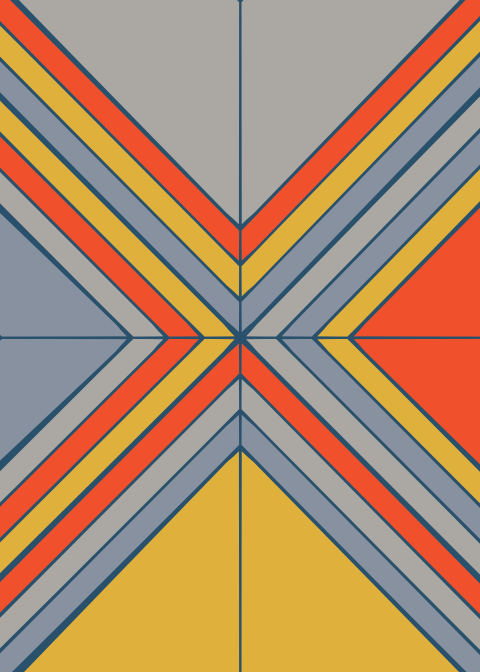
- * How would you summarize the gospel message?
 - ▷ Read through the “Knowing God Personally” booklet (as a group or individually)
- * What are the advantages of using the KGP? The disadvantages?
- * Why is it important to give someone the opportunity to respond—right then and there—to the gospel?
- * How did you personally come to the point of decision?
 - ▷ Who is someone in your life you can share this with this week? Take a minute to pray and find a time to invite them to get together this next week.
 - ▶ Additional Resource: Pick one of the training videos to watch at **TheConnectCards.com**



Starting A Spiritual Conversation

One obstacle to meaningful spiritual conversations is the transition from surface-level topics to matters of substance.

- * What was the most meaningful conversation you had recently with someone who wasn't a Christian? What did you talk about?
- * How do you bring conversations to a deeper level?
- * Which of these transitions would be most natural for you to use?
 - ▶ What is your religious background?
 - ▶ Where are you now on your spiritual journey?
 - ▶ Do you find yourself moving toward God, away from God, or staying about the same?
- ▷ In conversations this week, try asking one or two of these questions and see how it goes.

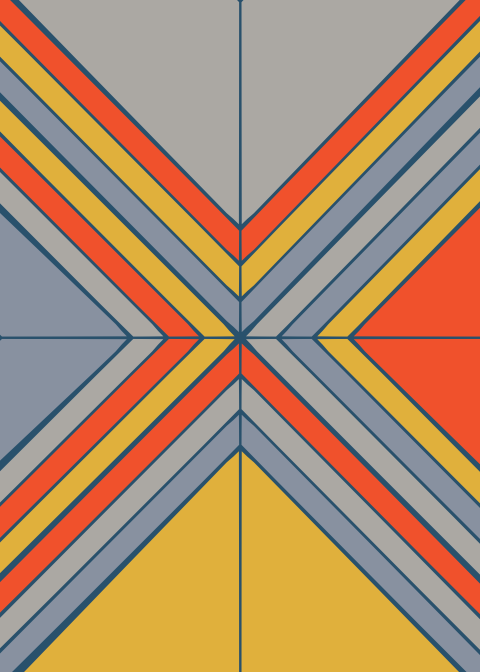


Gospel Transitions

- * What caused you to see your need for Christ and give Him control?
- * Who shared the Gospel with you? How did they broach the subject?
- * Can you think of a greater decision than surrendering to Christ?

In order to lead someone to Christ there are four hurdles to overcome in a conversation.

1. Get into a normal conversation.
 2. Transition to a spiritual conversation.
 3. Transition to sharing the Gospel.
 4. Ask for a decision.
- * Which hurdle is the hardest for you to overcome?
 - ▷ Come up with a question to help you jump each hurdle. Memorize your questions and try to use it this week in a conversation.



Avenues To The Gospel

These four relational avenues give us opportunity to share the Gospel.

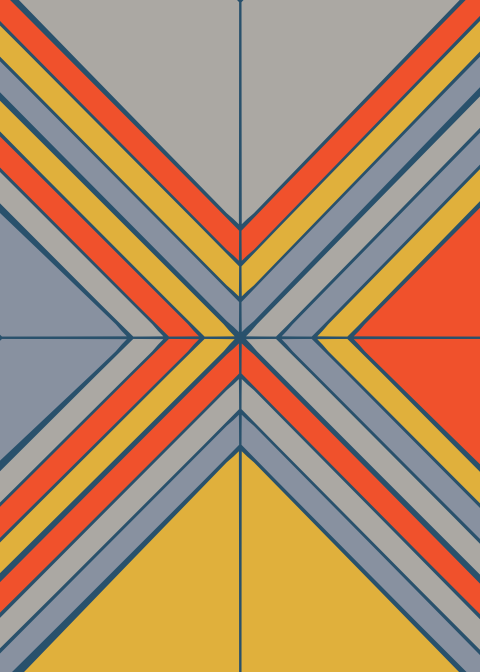
Natural/Organic: Taking the initiative to share the Gospel in the natural course of life.

Body/Communal: Inviting non-believers into your believing community.

Ministry/Missional: Starting conversations with people you don't know.

Social: Sharing the gospel through social media.

- * Through which avenue did you come to Christ?
- * What are pros and cons of each?
- * Which is the most challenging for you personally?
- ▷ Try to initiate this week through one of these relational venues.



The Gospel Message

ROMANS 6:23 is a concise summary of the gospel message: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Here is a simple outline:

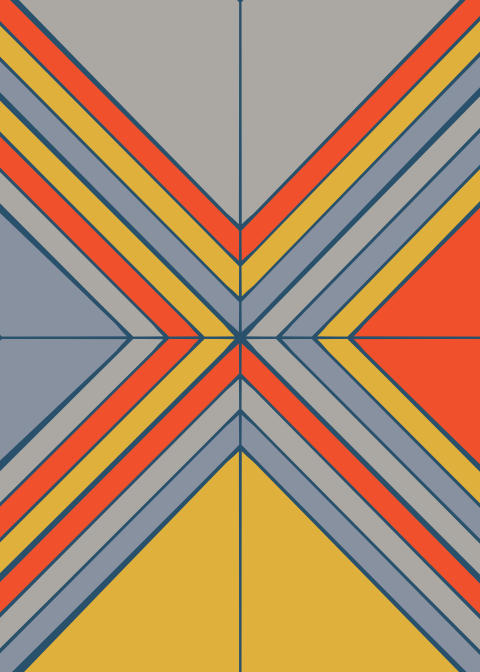
Problem: *For the wages of sin is death* (we all have sin, and the result of our sin is spiritual death).

Provision: *but the gift of God* (God gives the solution, we don't earn it).

Promise: *is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord* (if we personally receive Christ, we have eternal life).

- ▷ Using **ROMANS 6:23** write out the Problem, Provision and Promise.

Congratulations, you can share the gospel. Who is someone you can share this with this week?



Answering Objections To The Gospel

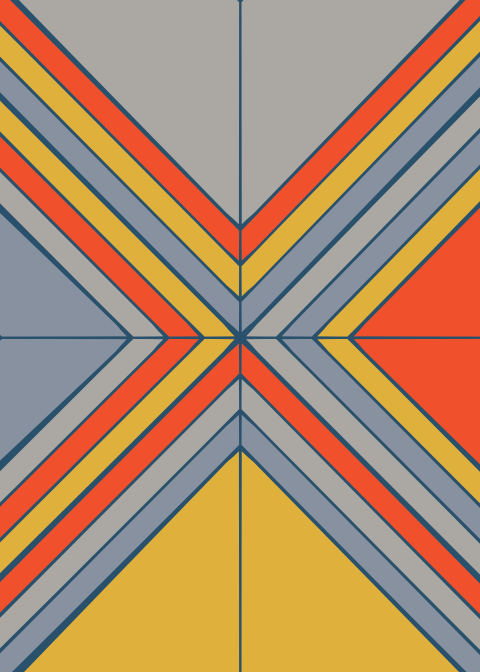
In spiritual discussions, people usually raise the same handful of questions:

- ▶ Why does God allow evil and suffering?
- ▶ How can you trust the Bible?
- ▶ What happens to people who have never heard about Jesus?
- ▶ Why would a loving God send people to hell?
- ▶ How can Jesus be the only way?

*** Providing answers to objections to faith is called apologetics. Has anyone been asked any of these? What did you say?**

▷ Each person choose a question and come up with a helpful response to share with the group.

- ▶ Recommended resources:
EveryStudent.com, carm.org,
GotQuestions.org, ReasonableFaith.org



CoJourners

Everyone is on a spiritual journey, and as believers we can assume one of the following roles with just about everyone:

The Explorer initiates significant conversations to discover the spiritual journey of others.

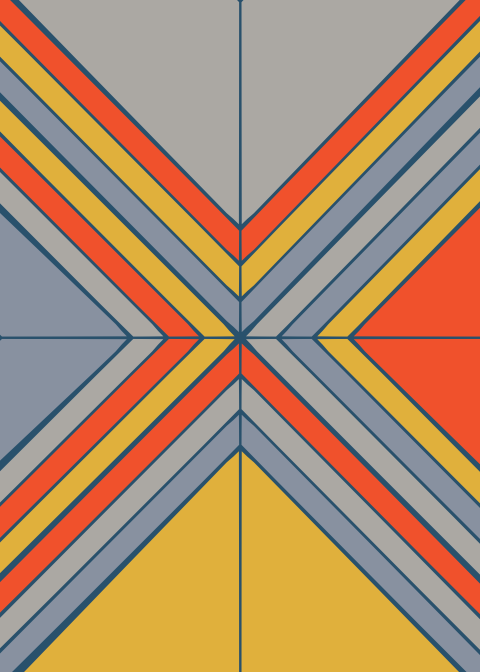
The Guide shows the way to faith in Christ through sharing the basic gospel message.

The Builder bridges over issues and obstacles that hinder others in their journey to Christ.

The Mentor encourages others to grow in their relationship with Christ.

- * **Who has served these roles in your life?**
- * **With whom are you assuming these roles?**

▶ **Additional Resource:** Hand out a copy of the *CoJourners Transferable Concept*



The Great Commission

▷ Read **MATTHEW 28:16-20**

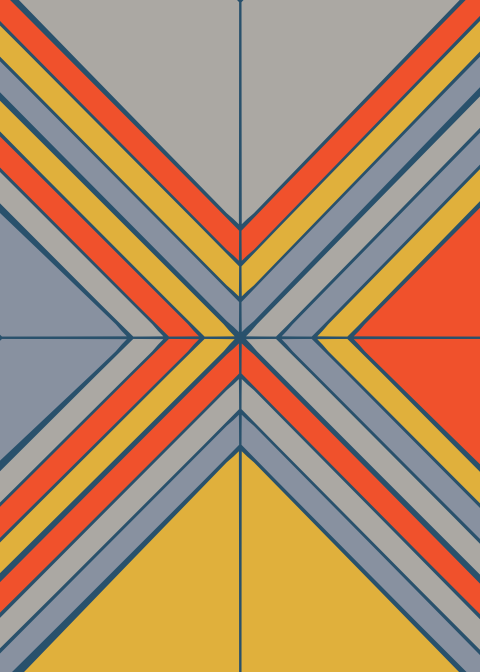
* Why has this passage been called **The Great Commission**?

▷ Divide the group in half. One half watches the "Living on Purpose for the Glory of God" video while the other half watches "The Great Commission in our Daily Lives" at **TheConnectCards.com**

▷ After watching the videos, have someone from each group explain the video to the other group. Then discuss the following questions:

* How can you live out the **Great Commission** in your daily life?

* How can you continue to grow in your ability to share the gospel and disciple others?



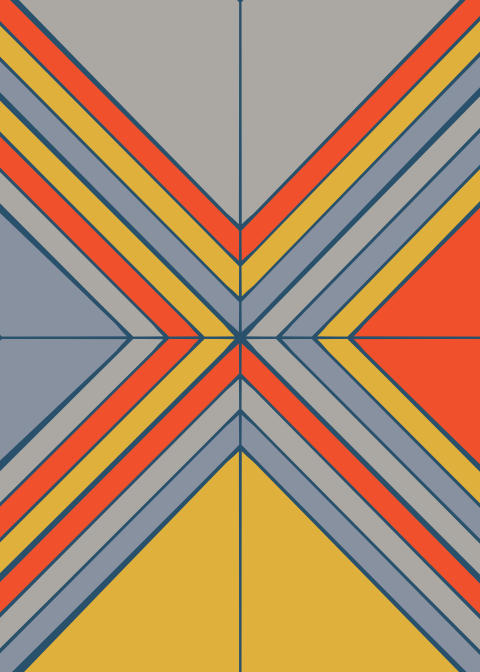
Sharing Your Story

- ▷ Read **JOHN 4:27-42**

Reaching out to the village, the woman simply shared her experience of coming to know Jesus. Our personal story can be a powerful ministry tool.

A simple way to tell your story is to think of three key words: one that summarizes your life before Christ (addicted, manipulative, etc.); one that describes how you came to know Christ (friend, Bible, etc.); and one that describes your life now, after coming to know Christ (forgiving, hopeful, etc.).

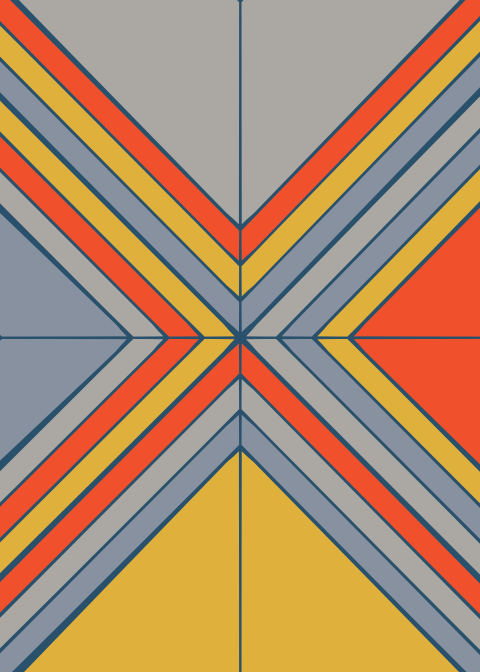
- ▷ Write down your three words.
- ▷ Write a two-sentence explanation for each.
- ▷ Pair up and practice telling it.
- ▷ Look for an opportunity this week to share it.



Social Media And The Gospel

We live and share the gospel in a very different world from 1st century Christians and technology is a big part of that difference.

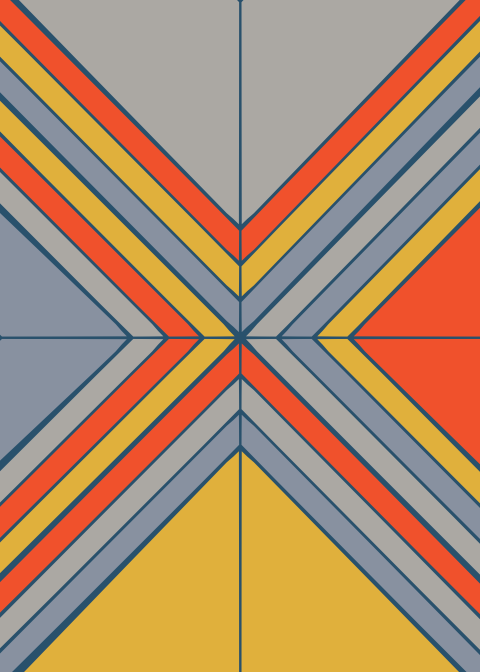
- * What sort of evangelistic media have you seen? What was effective about it? What wasn't?
- * Have you ever sent a link to a video, sermon, or article to someone? How did they respond?
 - ▷ Have the group go to **EveryStudent.com** on their phones, browse the site, and share their thoughts.
- * How could you make better use of social media in sharing your faith?



Study The Passage Yourself

The most prepared you'll be for leading a Bible study is if you've studied the passage for yourself. Here are the sorts of questions to ask as you study a passage:

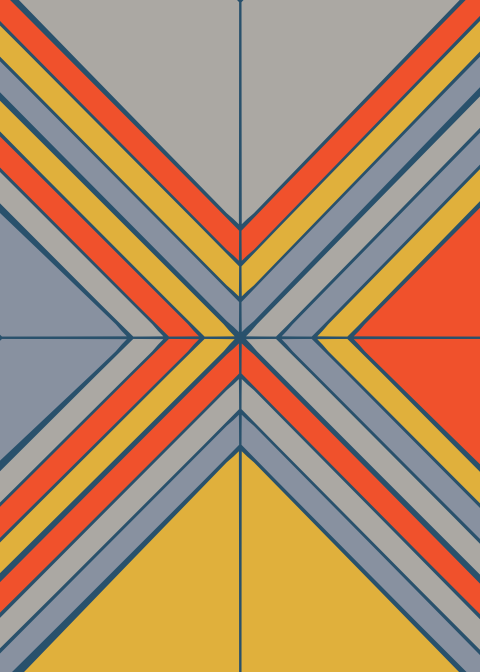
- * What are the key words and phrases?
- * What is the context? (What was said just before and after the passage?)
- * What are some key application phrases? ("so that you might...", "in order that...")
- * Define spiritual jargon: What is really being said here?
- * What is the background? (Original audience, purpose of the book/letter. Try the NIV Study Bible on biblica.com)
- * What statements are confusing? (Look up at biblegateway.com)



Fallen Condition

Bible studies are most fruitful when they uncover God's redemptive purpose in the particular text. Through Scripture, God intends to restore aspects of our brokenness and so you want to ask this about your passage:

- * **What is the spiritual problem being addressed? Is it an issue of disobedience? A need to persevere and endure? A way in which we are not trusting Jesus? Something other than Christ that we are turning to in order to meet our needs?**
- ▷ Try to spend some time reflecting on whatever aspect of our fallen condition is exposed.

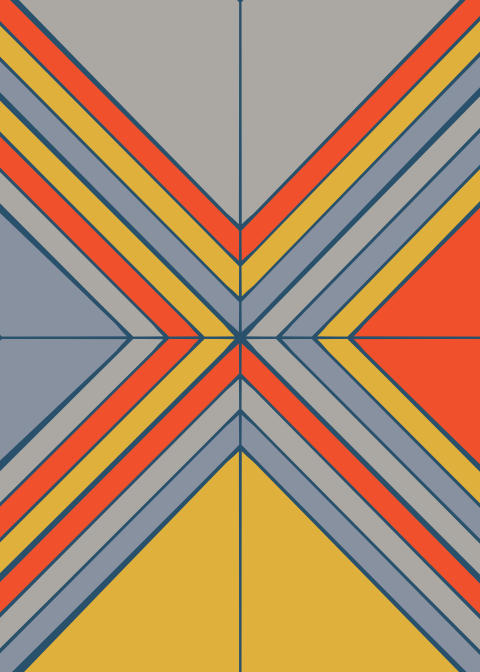


The Sin Beneath The Sin

You've no-doubt noticed in your walk with God that the Spirit prompts you to confess your sin. You've probably also noticed that God's Spirit takes it one step further:

* "Yes, you were being impatient, but **WHY** were you being impatient?" "Why were you critical?" "Why don't you trust me in this area?" "Why were you sensitive to that comment?" Typically there is a deeper, underlying heart issue that He wants to bring to your attention.

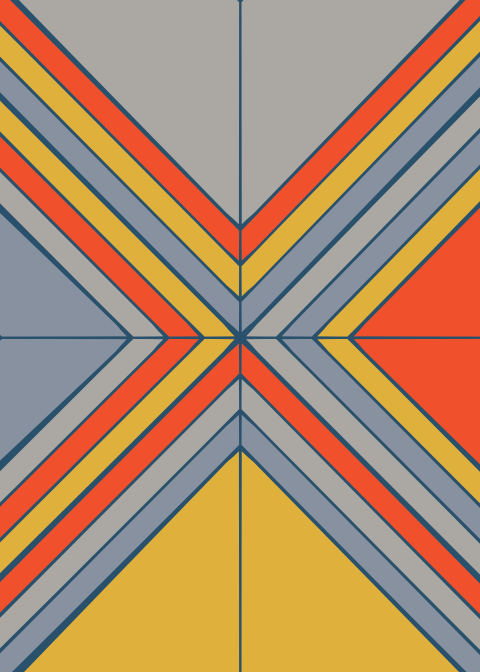
- ▷ Keep this idea of "the sin beneath the sin" in mind as you prepare and lead the study. You'll find that there are times where God's Spirit prompts you to ask that important follow-up question, that "why?" that gets to the heart of the issue.



Christ Solution

As you prepare application questions for the Bible study, ask yourself, "How is Jesus a part of the answer?" In other words, you want to consciously point people toward Jesus and greater intimacy with him, not simply to behavioral change.

- * **What aspect of who Jesus is, what He has done, or what is now true of us in Christ does the group need to believe and embrace?**
- ▷ While preparing, pray and ask, "Lord, how are you central to this study?" Allow him to lead and guide your preparation.

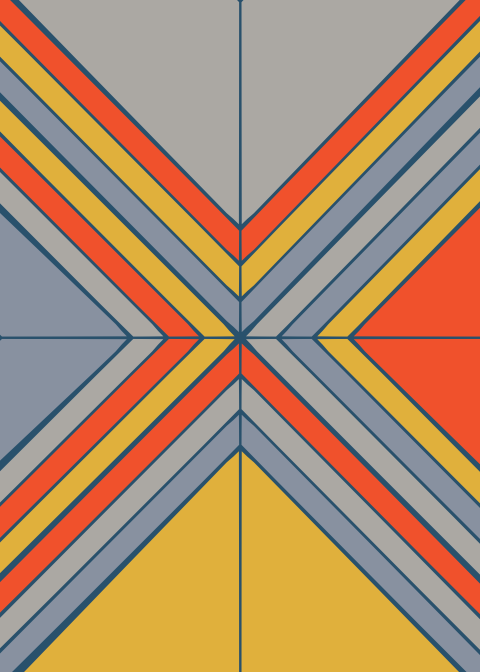


Scripture Memory

A simple way to communicate the importance of Scripture is to make memorization one of the applications of the study. At some point you also want to show the group a system for consistent Bible memorization. At the most basic level:

- ▷ Keeping a list of the memory verses
- ▷ Reviewing the list as a regular part of a devotional time
- ▷ Adding a new verse weekly
- ▷ Dropping off the daily rehearsal of those passages that are now memorized.

Nothing spurs others on to memorize Scripture like seeing someone consistently quote verses from memory. It makes people think “I want to do that.” So be a good role model: start memorizing scripture and see what happens

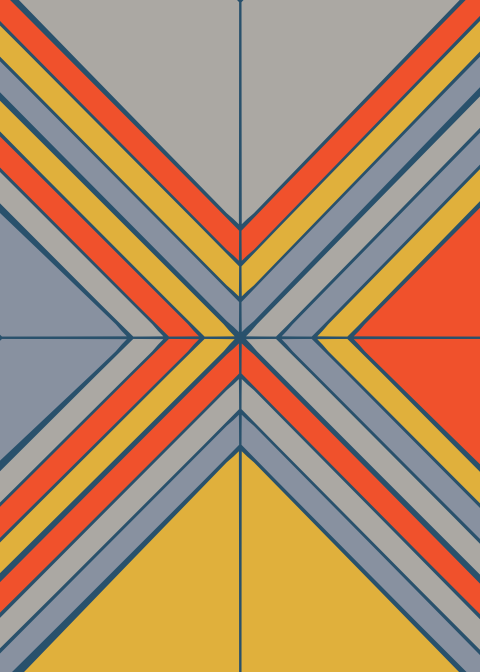


Bible Translations

When you're studying Scripture, it can be helpful to see the passage in a variety of translations. However, in leading a study it's more helpful to be—literally—reading off the same page.

Try to stick with either the NIV (New International Version) or the ESV (English Standard Version). The ESV is translated word-for-word and so more accurately reflects the manuscripts that were originally written in Greek. The NIV is more of a thought-for-thought translation, so it's easier to read and understand.

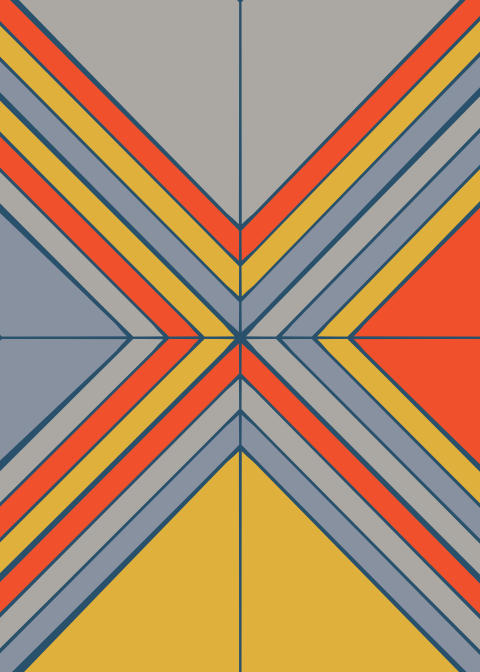
- ▶ Generally, use the NIV for a younger group and the ESV for a more mature group. Whichever Bible you choose, try to bring extras (the cheap paperback kind). Because, yes, people will forget to bring their Bible to a Bible study.



Study A Book

Bible studies are usually structured around a particular topic (worry, finances, leadership) or a particular book (Luke, Romans, Philippians). While topical studies are helpful, a book study is generally best, because you're studying the Scripture in context—verses sit within paragraphs, which sit within chapters, which sit within books. In understanding the fuller context, you better understand and apply the particular verse.

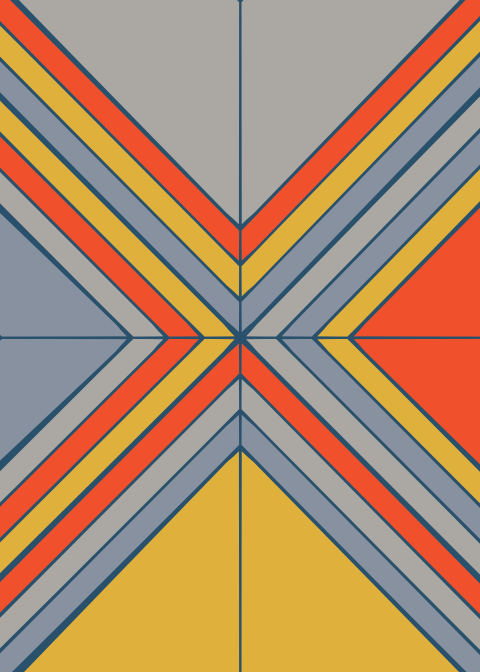
- ▷ There is, however, a nice middle ground. Choose a book of the Bible that covers some of those topics you want the group to explore. If you feel the group needs to focus on community, study Philippians. If members of the group are experiencing trials, studying 1 Peter would be perfect. That way, you get the best of both worlds: context and topical relevance.



Problem Passages

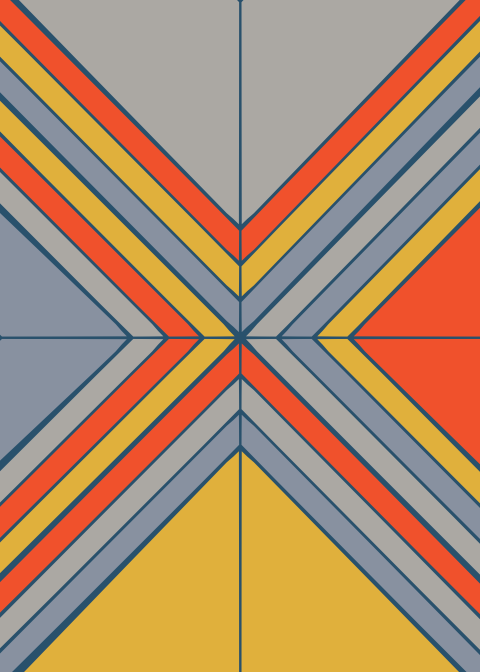
A problem passage is one that raises questions that could be distracting or unhelpful for your group, or one you're not prepared to answer. For example, you or your group may not be prepared for a discussion about spiritual gifts, gender, hell, or God's foreknowledge.

- ▷ Don't get caught off guard: look over the passage beforehand with an eye toward potential problems; you want to anticipate the sorts of questions that might be prompted from the phrases or verses in the text.
- ▷ Aware of a potential issue, try to think through a brief response. You want to know beforehand how you're going to handle the question if it comes up, and how much time (if any) you want to spend on it.



Community: Cru's Bible Study Content

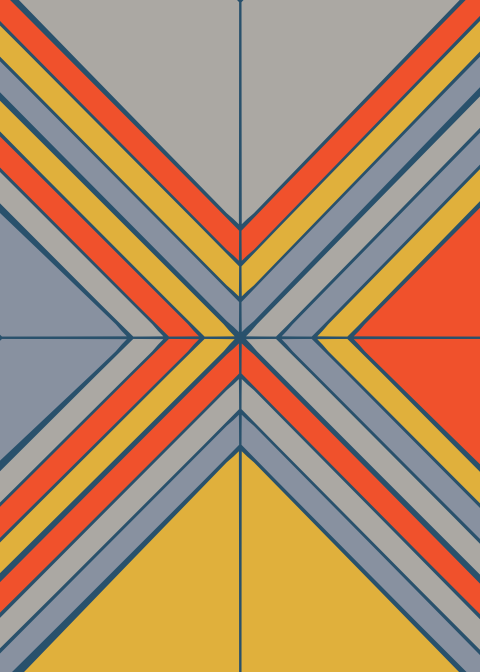
1. First, make a list of every biblical topic a growing Christian would absolutely need to know.
 2. Then, because you value the context of scripture, find books of the Bible that will best convey those topics.
 3. Next, do comprehensive study and research on the books, passage-by-passage.
 4. Then, gather the best questions from the best Bible studies in circulation.
 5. Last, attach a follow-up article to each study covering any additional content that couldn't be squeezed into the study.
- ▶ If you did all of this, what you would have created is Cru Community bible studies. Four years worth of studies. It's the best of the best of the best, and it's free online at **cru.org**. You should try using it. Or you can go with the plan described above. It's up to you.



Here are some essential Bible Study tools that will equip you to be a serious student of scripture.

- ▶ **commentary:** a series of explanations of each verse in the Bible
- ▶ **lexicon:** a dictionary of Greek and Hebrew words
- ▶ **concordance:** an alphabetical index of words found in the Bible

- ▷ Pick one of the online resources below and find your way around. What did you like or dislike about each tool?
 - ▶ **BibleStudyTools.com**
 - ▶ **BibleGateway.com**
 - ▶ **BibleHub.com**
 - ▶ **OpenBible.info**
 - ▶ **BlueLetterBible.org/study**



As we are constantly exposed to attacks on the reliability of Scripture, we need to know the solid foundation on which our confidence rests. We have every reason to trust in the authority and inspiration of God's Word.

- * What particularly has strengthened your confidence in Scripture?
 - * How would you respond to someone who said: "You don't really believe all the stuff in the Bible do you?"
 - * When we say that Scripture is "inspired" what does that mean?
- ▷ As a group, read and discuss a short article on the reliability of Scripture
- ▶ Resources: "The Reliability of the Bible" at **TheConnectCards.com** (search "reliable"). A search ("reliable") at **CruPressgreen.com** will bring up multiple articles you could use.