

Tips for distributing tracts

The free Christian tracts from this website have the advantage of having a list of websites and or books at the end, which provides people with the opportunity to find out about Christianity by themselves, and in private. The tracts are free for you to download (or just print), and photocopy for distribution. Some photocopy centres will also cut the paper in half, so all you have to do is fold them. If cost is an issue, the pastor of your church may provide some funding, or make an announcement at church and ask people to support your ministry.

Remember to try at all times to be a good witness, and not give Christianity a bad name. People may be more impressed with your conduct, rather than what you say, especially if you are handing out tracts and they make some smart comment and you are nice to them regardless. We need to walk the talk.

Handing out tracts in person

Before you hand out tracts, I believe that you should pray fervently, and have other people praying for you. You should take your bible with you. You can take a King James Bible with you, but you may find that the modern English of the New King James is easier for people on the street to understand. A notepad and pen may also be useful, if you want to suggest some books or websites to people who have questions or draw a map on how to get to your church. You can hand out tracts to people, and say “did you get one of these?”, or, “A Christian (or gospel) message for you sir/madam”, or similar. This may start a conversation, so that you can explain the gospel to them, and hopefully get a positive response.

Handing out tracts to complete strangers takes courage, and a friendly, outgoing personality. In some places it may not be culturally appropriate. You will need to know the bible, and preferably memorise the Ten Commandments, and verses on sin and salvation, or at least be able to find them in your bible – in other words you will need to know the gospel. You should find Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron’s “What did Jesus do?” presentation helpful – see www.wayofthemaster.com. See also the tract “Eternity”, which is based on their approach. You should preferably also have some knowledge about other religions, evolution, new age philosophy, atheism etc. Having some of our tracts on hand may help you with this. If you show bible verses to people, let them read the verses themselves. It is best if there are two or more people, to improve your chances of being able to answer any questions or objections.

Everyone involved will need good people skills, including empathy, diplomacy, “gentleness or meekness” and good hygiene. Some people may be aggressive and abusive, but don’t be intimidated – stand your ground. Expect negative comments from some people and resist the temptation to reply in kind. Taming the tongue is a challenge. Expect people who may have picked up a bible twice in their lives, to talk to you as if they know better, even though you may have been studying the bible, religion and related topics for decades. It is also equally important that we don’t harass people, or bible bash them. Try not to get involved in long drawn-out arguments, especially if the person is with friends. It then becomes an ego issue, and they don’t want to lose an argument in front of their friends. We want them to get saved,

not beat them in an argument. If someone is argumentative, try to defuse it, and try to convince them to take a tract anyway. They may read it later, and check out the bible or websites in private. They may come around when they are by themselves.

Tracts can be handed out on busy street corners, and in markets and shopping centres (you may need permission from centre management.). Try not to cause problems for nearby shops and businesses. Avoid late at night, as you are more likely to get drunks or people on drugs. Usually, people in such a state cannot be reasoned with, and are likely to make a scene, which may turn out to be a bad witness for you. If you hand out tracts at night, choose a well-lit spot, and try not to look intimidating in any way. We need to be “all things to all men”.

Distributing tracts may be illegal, or dangerous, in some places. You need to decide whether you are going to “obey God rather than men”, see Acts 4:19 and 5:29, and whether you can cope with the possible fines, court cases, jail or whatever the consequences may be. Perhaps keep moving around, don't stay anywhere for long - try to be unpredictable. Alternatively, placing tracts on noticeboards may be safer if you are likely to get into trouble handing them out.

Placing tracts on public noticeboards

This avoids the possibility of bothering people. Some people would view giving out tracts in the street as harassment. The advantage of noticeboards is that people can choose to take a tract or not, as they please.

This is also a good method if you are shy, or not yet confident in explaining the gospel. It is also good if you are a busy person who gets around, so you can keep topping up the tracts. Tracts on notice boards need frequent “maintenance”.

Multiple tracts should be pinned onto the board with a pushpin. I like to put the pin through the top left hand corner. This may spark a person's curiosity – they may open the tract to see what it says. Hopefully they are interested and take one. Alternatively, you can pin a tract to the board that shows the inside pages, and one showing the back, so they can read the whole tract, even if they don't take one. Next to the open tract, use a pushpin to place multiple tracts that people can take.

You may find noticeboards in education institutes, shopping centres, community centres, city centres, medical centres, libraries etc. You may need to get permission to put notices on some of them.

You should expect opposition. Some people may write smart, insulting or offensive comments on the tracts, or continually remove them – see Nehemiah chapter 4, and chapter 6: 15, 16. This may go on for years, and may never stop. Try to put the tracts up at unpredictable times, so that they are there at least some of the time. Do not be discouraged. Keep doing it anyway – “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Galatians 6:9. God has told us to give out the gospel (Matt 28:18-20), and He expects a steward of the gospel to be faithful (1 Corinthians 4:2), even if we do not seem to be very successful at times. Remember, God is in control – see Isaiah 55:11.

Letterboxing

Tracts can be placed in letterboxes. Do not expect much response. If there is a particular day when junk mail arrives in letterboxes, try to avoid that day. In my opinion you should not place them in boxes that say “no junk mail” or similar. We know that the gospel is the most important message in the world, but some people would still consider it junk mail, and we risk giving Christians a bad name if we put tracts into letterboxes that say “no junk mail”.

Leave tracts where people wait

You could leave tracts amongst magazines in the waiting rooms of doctors and dentists, at hairdressers/barbers, coffee shops, laundromats, clubs, libraries, in public telephone boxes etc., although some businesses may not appreciate this. At coffee shops and restaurants, you could leave tracts with a tip, or on the table

Placing tracts under car windscreen wipers.

I think that most people would not appreciate this, and you may contribute to littering.

Door to door

In most cultures knocking on doors uninvited is not appropriate. It also puts us in the same category as some of the cults. In most situations, it is probably a bad idea, but might be acceptable (and effective) in some places.

Conclusion

Whatever methods you choose, the most important thing is to get out there, have a go, and be persistent. Don't be lukewarm – in my experience that is one of the biggest problems of our time. You may get no response, at least none that you know about, and so you will need to persevere, and at times you may even need grim determination. If you struggle with motivation, you may find the story of Mr. Frank Jenner, the man from George Street, by Dave Smethurst, inspirational (see Dave Smethurst's site, otherwise widely available on the internet and youtube).

May God “teach us to number our days”, so that we get as much done for Him as possible in these few last days.

May God bless you in all that you do for Him.

David.

Please contact us if you have any additional ideas, or have found something that worked for you and may be helpful to others, so it can be passed on.