

3. CONNECTING SOUTH ASIANS TO JESUS

Starting Points

- **Pray for your South Asian friends and pray with them.** Expect God to answer. When He does, you have an open door to share more about the love and power of Christ. Invite your friends to ask their Creator to reveal Himself to them.
- **Use open-ended questions.** Asking good questions and carefully listening to the answers will build bridges of trust. Resist the urge to immediately correct every misunderstanding and explain every concept about the gospel. Rather, allow some loose ends and questions for your friend to think about. Here are some good beginning questions:
 - Do you believe in God? (If so, why?)
 - Can you tell me about your spiritual journey?
 - What do you think is the purpose of a person's life?
- **Address misconceptions** such as “Christianity is a Western religion” and “All Americans are Christians.” After you shed light on these topics, it may become easier to discuss deeper questions.
- **Offer truth in bite-sized pieces.** Present spiritual content in proportion to your friend's level of interest and in response to his or her questions. Do not rush to bring someone to a “point of decision.” Be sure and wait until the person is ready (John 6:44)

Further Suggestions

- **Invite your friend on a spiritual journey** to discover who Jesus Christ is in the Bible and through prayer.
- **Start with a belief in one God** and point to Christ as God's self-revelation as a Man (Acts 17:23). Most Hindus believe there is one supreme God - whether personal or non-personal - who manifests Himself and is worshipped in different forms.
- **Begin by looking into the Bible and address apologetic questions as they arise.** Most consider the Bible a holy book and give a basic degree of authority.
- **Use stories and analogies to explain spiritual truth.** The Gospel of John is good for the philosophically-minded and The Gospel of Luke for the scientific-minded. Parables are helpful, for they connect the gospel with practical issues of real life (family, work, money,

etc.).

- **Be aware that “sin” is understood in many ways by Hindus** - ignorance, moral failure or even ritual pollution (such as eating the wrong foods). Note that sin is rarely considered an offense against God but rather against others or one’s self, and it is automatically tied to consequences (karma). Most Hindus have a vague sense of falling short in their lives, so you can begin by explaining that, no matter how hard one tries, one cannot be good enough to reach God’s level of purity.
- **Share how Jesus is our perfect priest and once-for-all sacrifice for sin** (Hebrews 10:11-14). Hindus may readily grasp this truth since ritual sacrifices (fruit, sweets, flowers) are a part of temple worship and originated with animals—a fact that has often been lost or obscured.

Care for New Believers

- **When someone chooses to trust Christ, this decision needs to be handled with care.** One of the great fears of Indian families is that their child will “be converted to Christianity”. Such a perception of faith in Jesus is seen as turning one’s back on one’s family and crossing over into a non-Indian way of life. It is seen as bringing shame on the family, and thus typically results in a negative response from family and friends.
- **Don’t assume your friend understands a “prayer of decision.”** If your friend expresses interest in a commitment to Jesus, make sure this person truly believes the gospel and is not just trying to please you. Take time to patiently explain and answer questions. Our role is to walk alongside our friend as he or she begins to follow Jesus.
- **Don’t broadcast your friend’s decision.** If friends or family members hear this news from anyone other than the new believer, this could do great relational damage. Let your friend speak of his or her faith at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.
- **Introduce a new believer to others from a Hindu background.** Those who have previously made the journey from Hinduism to faith in Jesus can help your friend navigate the emotional ups and downs and the resulting issues with family and friends.