**Case Study: Small Group Calls to Faith**

Last spring April, a 3rd year staff member, led her leadership team in making small group calls to faith. She did this after I shared what I had learned about small group calls to faith and coaching students. April took the method and put it to the test. During one of the leaders’ meetings, she told them that their application assignment for what they were learning about the 5th threshold this week was to do a call to faith in their small groups. Just as she anticipated, the students responded first by thinking she was joking. But when they realized she was serious, their concerns poured forth.

**Imagine that you were April and were doing the same thing with your leadership team. What sorts of objections do you think your leaders would raise?**

**What are some possible ways to respond to those objections?**

April’s students had real fears and concerns that needed to be addressed, but that doesn’t mean that they shouldn’t do a call to faith.

April cast some vision: “Many people are ready to become followers of Jesus-- but they don’t because we never ask.” After having them reflect on the ways calls to faith had impacted them she said “The win is taking a risk for your faith. We don’t know how our faithfulness may help someone later on down the road. God is in charge of response-- we are just in charge of asking. Let’s just focus on doing our part to the best of our ability.”

From there April helped assuage their fears by giving her leaders a guide for a call to faith. She had each of them reword it to make it sound like them-- but making sure that they didn’t avoid the gospel or the call to faith. Then she had them practice in groups and she went to each group and helped her students role play what they would do if their groups responded in various ways.

She gave them lots of positive feedback and modeled what they could say in different scenarios.

* When someone becomes a Christian: *I’m so excited for you! I truly believe that this is the best decision that you’ll ever make. I’d love to grab coffee with you this week to talk more about what this decision has meant for you.* (We have told our leaders that we don’t count people as “converts” until they have met with them 1 on 1 to confirm that the new believer really wants to follow Jesus.)
* If no one responded: *That’s totally okay-- I’m just really excited that we were able to do this as a group. If, as we’ve been talking, any of you have more questions about Jesus or if you just have other questions, I would love to talk with you. Please let me know*.
* If someone has a strong emotional outburst, I told my students to say, “*Considering faith can be very personal, Kelsey is obviously having an intense moment right now and I want to create space for her to continue processing. Let’s wrap up our small group time now so she can continue to process*. *Kelsey, if you want to talk about what’s happening, I’m here for you, but I want you to feel free to continue thinking on your own if you wish.”*

After helping them actually practice each response, they were ready.

So, what did God do?

* All 12 did the call to faith!
* They had a positive response in 5 groups.
* They had no apparent response in 7.
* Overall, they had 19 students come to faith in those 5 groups, which is amazing!

They even had another student, Emmi, who wasn’t a small group leader, decided that she in turn could do the very same thing. So she got coffee with two friends to talk about where they are at with Jesus. Want to have coffee? They did, and they brought all their questions, and she closed with a call to faith right there. They both said yes to Jesus.