

Help New Believers Overcome Struggles and Tell Friends about Christ

Let love lead the way

The task of helping new believers become strong and active in their faith requires more personal attention than doctrinal teaching. New believers normally grow in Christ rapidly, proving more able to meet challenges, when they remain part of an interactive, loving, small group.

Their small group may be their own family gathered for daily devotions, other believers of the same congregation who form a permanent small group, or a special group geared to the needs of new believers.

Put new believers to work

Newly reborn Christians sense their true identity in Christ more readily, when they work together with other believers who love them. Simply listening to good teaching provides little help, and new believers quickly become passive listeners, if they are not an active part of a body. So, give new believers specific things to do for Christ, such as:

- Accompany an older believer on prayer walks or witnessing to friends.
- Hold joyful parties to which they invite friends, to tell them about Christ, in a non-preachy way.
- Visit friends and relatives to share about their new faith.
- Do some kind of work that is common in maintaining healthy church life.
- Serve needy folk nearby, in some practical way.
- Visit the sick, prisoners, or anyone else who might be suffering, or who needs a friend.

Let new believers express their hopes, fears and feelings in a safe environment.

New believers often need to talk freely about their problems in a loving group that is not judgmental, that does not deal with issues merely in a philosophical or doctrinal way.

Assign a “big brother” or “big sister” to every new believer.

Sooner or later, all new believers have struggles with living out their new faith in a hostile world, where Satan is often in control. At such times, struggling believers must have a sympathetic, understanding “big brother or sister” who meets regularly with them.

So, provide to big brothers and sisters a short, simple checklist of things the new believer should learn to practice. Such a list makes it possible for any conscientious believer to serve as a big brother or sister.

Be patient with new believers’ inevitable shortcomings.

Most new believers still have bad habits, lack spiritual maturity, and remain unable to defend their faith logically. So, allow them time to grow, helping them take their own “baby steps.”

- In close fellowship with other believers who are full of joy, new believers will share their experiences and feel a sense of forgiveness, knowing that Jesus is real and that his promises prove true.
- Let even the newest believers tell others what they have discovered about Jesus, along with any testimony of having joy, of a healing, or of an answered prayer. Even if such testimonies may seem to older believers to be simplistic and void of depth. Nevertheless, older believers should be rejoicing at these early signs of growth.

Remember your own early experience as a new believer, and the ways in which you tried, failed, succeeded and grew strong in faith.