

Starting a Fishing Team: A Guide



1. Find some Fishers-of-Men

The first step is to find people who want to fish... this means finding like-minded believers who understand the importance of Biblical Evangelism. You can do that by using this website (www.myfishinghole.com) to post a request for other Fishers in your area.

Don't forget to also look for Fishers in your local church. If you haven't really asked around much, you may be able to find some others in your local congregation that want to get out and be obedient to our Lord's Great Commission. Don't be too discouraged if you can't. This is a common problem. Churches often have so many programs and activities going on that the real work of the church, that of evangelizing and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected.

If this seems to describe your church, perhaps you could consider trying to "create" some Fishers. You could volunteer to buy the materials and teach through the 8-week [Way of the Master Foundation Course](http://www.livingwaters.com/Merchant2/merchant.mv?Screen=PROD&Product_Code=600) (http://www.livingwaters.com/Merchant2/merchant.mv?Screen=PROD&Product_Code=600). This course is designed to stir a Christian's sense of responsibility to share the Gospel with the unsaved, while also instructing them step-by-step on simple Biblical Evangelism. Pastors and teachers can often get exhausted from teaching so many months without a break... perhaps the idea of stepping aside to let you teach for a few weeks would be a welcome relief.

Another alternative is to hold a one day [Evangelism Training Event](http://www.livingwaters.com/m_events_doityourself.shtml) (http://www.livingwaters.com/m_events_doityourself.shtml). If you can't get a slot to teach for 8-weeks, perhaps you can arrange to hold a one day event at your church... perhaps on a Saturday. We provide quite a few free resources to help you get this event underway... including a planning guide, promotional materials, and a student handbook that you can download right from our website to get started. Make sure you advertise the event to your congregation for at least 3 weeks prior to it.

If you can locate or "create" at least two other Fishers who will commit themselves to sharing the Gospel, you can consider your Fishing Team off to a great start!

2. Make sure your Fishing Team is trained

Once you've assembled a group of people, you need to make sure they are properly trained in Biblical Evangelism. Not only is it essential because you don't want your team members to be preaching "another gospel," but it's also necessary because training will give them confidence and courage.

If you assembled your Fishing Team from those who attended the 8-week Foundation Course, or the one day Evangelism Training Event that you held at your church... then this task is hopefully behind you.

If you've just met your team members online, you need to make sure that each one has completed the [Required Learning section](http://www.myfishinghole.com/required.shtml) (<http://www.myfishinghole.com/required.shtml>) on this website. The Required Learning has two messages that need to be listened to. It takes less than 3 hours to complete, and it provides the essential foundation for Biblical Evangelism. Even though it's not "required," you may also like to encourage your online team members to go through the free downloadable [30 Day Devotional Journal](http://www.spiritualthirst.com/downloads/devotional.pdf) (<http://www.spiritualthirst.com/downloads/devotional.pdf>) we provide. It's designed to focus the mind on evangelism and the heart on pleasing God.

If you've recruited new team members at your church since your training event, or if you meet potential team members in some other setting, you need to make sure that each one gets "ready" by directing them to www.MyFishingHole.com/ready. This page is worded a little more "softly" than our online Required Learning section. It puts more emphasis on the fulfillment that will come as a result of obedience to the Great Commission (see Philemon 1:6). However, the page contains the same material that's in the Required Learning Section.

You may also like to check out [The School of Biblical Evangelism](http://www.biblicalevangelism.com/) (<http://www.biblicalevangelism.com/>). This is **not** something you would want to try to complete *before* starting to witness, but it could make for a wonderful ongoing study for your team. (Scholarships are available for those in financial need.)

3. Scout your local Fishing Hole

Drive around your city and look for places where people are milling about. You don't want a place where people are rushing from one place to another – you can't carry on a casual conversation with someone who's trying to get somewhere in a hurry.

Malls, flea markets, parks, beaches, perhaps even the front area of your local movie theater... these are all places where you will likely be able to find people that are not in any rush, and are therefore more likely to talk to you.

Try to note the days of the week and times when there are lots of people present. Evenings and weekends are probably going to be your best times to find lots of people either window shopping or just waiting around.

4. Pick a day and time

With the information you collected about the best times and days to find lots of people at the Fishing Hole, talk to your Team to set a day and time you can all agree on. It's a good idea to make a Team commitment to fish there on a weekly basis. (You don't need to be legalistic about this, but you do need to be serious.)

5. Plan your Fishing Trip

Plan your regularly scheduled weekly fishing trip by making sure everyone on your Team knows what to expect. For first-time fishing teams we suggest the following "schedule:"

1. Meet and pray (about 5 minutes)
Always commit the time to the Lord. Ask the Lord to send you to people who have been prepared to receive the Gospel.
2. Fish (we recommend starting at 1 hour)
On the surface it may seem like not much time is being devoted to fishing, but for brand new groups, the thought of talking to stranger after stranger for only an hour can seem completely exhausting. If you don't want a discouraged team, at least at first, you might like to keep the time somewhat short.
3. Meet to discuss and pray (about 30 minutes)
It's also a good idea to have a debriefing / fellowship time afterwards. Just drop in to a local restaurant to discuss the experiences you had, and to pray for those you spoke with. This helps everyone to leave with an uplifted attitude and an encouraged heart. Even if things didn't go so well for them personally, hopefully they will get to hear at least one encouraging story from another team member.

6. Further tips

Fishing Buddies

Whenever possible, those who are new and nervous should be paired with those who are more experienced. The more experienced person can do the talking for the first several times, and then begin encouraging the new Fisher to take the lead. It's comforting for a new Fisher to have an "old pro" standing by just in case they feel like they're suddenly in over their head.

Practice Casting

You can't catch any fish unless you can cast. A friendly smile and a courteous greeting are often all you need to start a conversation. Teach your team members to practice greeting strangers everywhere they go. Tell them to begin looking strangers in the eyes, smiling, and saying a simple, "Hello." For many people, this can be a very difficult step. However, if they begin to just practice being friendly, it will get easier and easier.

Pack your Tackle Box

Every good Fisher needs some fishing "tackle." By this we mean that you need a way to break the ice with strangers. One of the best pieces of "tackle" is unique Gospel tracts. Gospel tracts that are truly unique can be used to quickly and easily break the ice with strangers, while also swinging the conversation to the spiritual.

[LivingWaters.com's online store](http://www.livingwaters.com/store/) (<http://www.livingwaters.com/store/>) has tracts so unusual that unbelievers will chase you down asking for more—we're not kidding.

It's also a great idea if you can learn a little sleight-of-hand. [Simple tricks](#) are great for breaking the ice with strangers. Ray also carries several [silly pictures](#) (<http://www.livingwaters.com/icebreaker.shtml>) in his wallet for the same purpose. If you have a graphic program on your computer, you may be able to create your own silly pictures.

What to do With a Nibble

When we talk to someone who seems sincere, we like to give out copies of [Save Yourself Some Pain](#) (<http://www.livingwaters.com/store/>). It contains a review of the Gospel, and ten steps for new and growing Christians. And it's also a good practice to keep several [New Testaments](#) in the trunk of your car. If you find out the person doesn't have a Bible, you can easily walk out to the parking lot to get one for them.

If you'd like some advice on the use of the "sinner's prayer," why not check out [this article](#) (<http://www.livingwaters.com/witnessingtool/sinnersprayer.shtml>).

Fishing Clothes

We usually do not encourage people to wear t-shirts with Christian sayings or slogans on them. A t-shirt that "shouts" may have the effect of scaring the fish away before you even get to open your mouth. Your team may come to another conclusion on this issue, but no matter what you decide to wear everyone needs to be sure that their clothing is in keeping with Christian modesty.