

**IT'S
NOT
WHAT
YOU
THINK!**

**IDEAS &
INFORMATION**

WHY It's Not What You Think!

For many years in the church we have used a range of courses and resources to engage others with the good news of the gospel. Each of these approaches emerges from a specific setting and tries to speak the gospel back into it in a form and language that fits.

The church in the Western world is overwhelmingly third level educated, professional and middle class. Speaking out of, and back into, our natural worlds, we have a tendency to package and deliver our gospel presentations for people who are most like us.

But what about those who aren't? Those who don't inhabit a world of books? Who lack the confidence to participate in formal discussion settings? Who are used to processing their thoughts by way of today's high-speed, visual reality? Who don't have a readymade handle on the basics of the gospel?

How can we begin to gospel effectively in their world? What might cause them to stop and take stock of their view of life and God? What sort of resource would help us start a conversation about faith that syncs with their patterns of everyday life and forms of thought?

It's Not What You Think sets out to begin in that other world.

- The world of the non-reader who is intimidated by print, struggles with comprehension even of a short passage and never has to 'handle a text'. It's a world where even a contemporary gospel leaflet or evangelistic course booklet seems alien.
- The world of the everyday, ordinary, post-church generation. It's a world in which people have formed their own ideas that seem to make the gospel unlikely, untrue or unnecessary. Our set piece gospel presentations often don't start where they are and only re-enforce existing stereotypes of Christianity as something that's not for the likes of them.

If, however, we listen carefully to the God-related talk that goes on in that other world we can pick up places to start. Talk of 'the man upstairs', the judgment that 'I'm not that bad', or that 'it's not fair', are all invitations to begin a conversation that can lead to Jesus.

That's what these postcards do. Big on image, light on text, linked to further clips, they enter that other world to begin a conversation leading many of those who seem furthest from the church and it's message to reflect that it may not be what they think.

HOW It's Not What You Think! *(Some ideas for using the resource...)*

PARENTS OUTREACH

The postcards are ideal for leaving around in those areas where parents gather to pick up their children after youth organisations. If you have the facilities, you could show the video clips over three weeks. Make sure you tell the parents that you plan to do this. Don't spring it on them. Why not provide some food, invite them to come earlier than normal pick up time for a more structured chat about the theme?

INVITATIONAL SERVICES

You could plan three invitational services and preach around the themes. The postcards could be used as invites, or given out at the close of the service.

Some suggestions of texts to preach:

The Man Upstairs: Romans 11:33-36

Not That Bad: Luke 18:9-14

It's Not Fair: Luke 13:1-5

Remember to give a realistic explanation to the congregation beforehand of some of the ways in which they could go about inviting others along, for example, members could host friends for breakfast before church or lunch afterwards. These simple ideas make inviting friends and family more natural and relational.

EVANGELISTIC MEN'S BREAKFAST

Men on the fringes of church may not come to a Sunday service. A cooked breakfast may prove a more attractive first approach! The postcards are an excellent way to get conversations going around the breakfast table. Leave them at each place setting. Make sure you have plenty of Christian men sitting among the guests to get the chat going. Finish by showing the appropriate clips.

QUIZ NIGHT

It is sometimes difficult to make the transition within what is essentially a bridge building exercise to moving towards an appropriate evangelistic epilogue. Imagine introducing the "final round" of a quiz night by giving out one of the postcards to each participant. The questions on the postcard could be used to begin some conversations around each table. Then follow it up with the clips to conclude the evening.

SOCIAL MEDIA

A conversation might not mean a face to face chat. It might spring out of linking this material to your social network feeds. The clips can be easily linked to Facebook, Twitter and Blog. You could try adding a provocative statement to get things started such as, "I don't believe in the man upstairs". The conversation would then take place on your comment thread.

STREET OUTREACH CONVERSATIONS

If you are planning on using the cards as a form of evangelistic literature, remember they lend themselves to asking questions. Don't just give them away, try to create conversations by asking people's views about the questions on the cards. You could watch the videos beforehand and let the animation and the testimonies act as a guide to your own conversation technique. You may be able to show people the clips on a tablet or smartphone, or you could simply direct them to the details on the card for them to watch when they go home.

AFTER ALPHA OR CHRISTIANITY EXPLORED

Sometimes after an enquirers course there are people who could benefit from further conversations and follow up. The postcards might provide a reason for you to meet again.

SMALL STEPS IN MOVING RELATIONSHIPS ON

You could use the cards to move existing relationships that you have developed through a group within the church like Parents and Toddlers in the direction of conversations about faith issues. Do so on a one-to-one basis, or invite a group along to an informal setting and let them know that you plan to have a conversation based around the topic on the card.

UPLOAD TO YOUR CHURCH WEBSITE

Add the clips to your church website to inform visitors about what Christian's believe.

A NOTE ON USING THE VIDEOS:

It's Not What You Think is made up of three postcards and six video clips. For many people accessing the video clips will come as second nature. For some it will not. If that sounds like you, here is a quick guide that might make it a bit simpler.

The Website

All the clips are available via www.itsnotwhatyouthink.net. You can go there to link them to your church website or social network, just click on the different icons beside the videos. If you want to download a video and show it in church you can also do that from there. Again there is a download button that lets you do that.

Smart Phones and Tablets

You can access the clips from the postcards via the little square graphic contained on each card. This black and white square is a QR code. If you have a smart phone or tablet device, you should be able to install a free QR code reader from your device's app store. Simply search for "QR reader" and you will find a number of free readers to choose from. This QR reader app will allow you to scan the graphic on the card and that will take you straight to the clips connected with that card. You can also save the site to your phone or device's home screen to make sharing easier.