

Defending The Faith Series

The Apologetics Pyramid

GOSPEL

JESUS CHRIST

REVELATION

THEISM

WORLDVIEWS

TRUTH



A Game Plan For Defending Your Faith

Introduction

- We need some basic knowledge to defend our faith.
- Knowledge, however, is not enough. Our knowledge must be tempered with wisdom and character.
- Matthew 10:16 ... “be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”
- How do we discuss these Christian convictions with those who have questions?
- Basis of tonight’s lesson - “Tactics: A Game Plan For Discussing Your Christian Convictions” by Gregory Koukl, Zondervan, 2009
- Tactics involve the art of navigating through the conversation itself.
- Use the Columbo Tactic! [based on TV series Columbo]

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THE COLUMBO TACTIC: “Never make a statement, at least at first, when a question will do the job.”

Why is “asking questions” such a good habit?

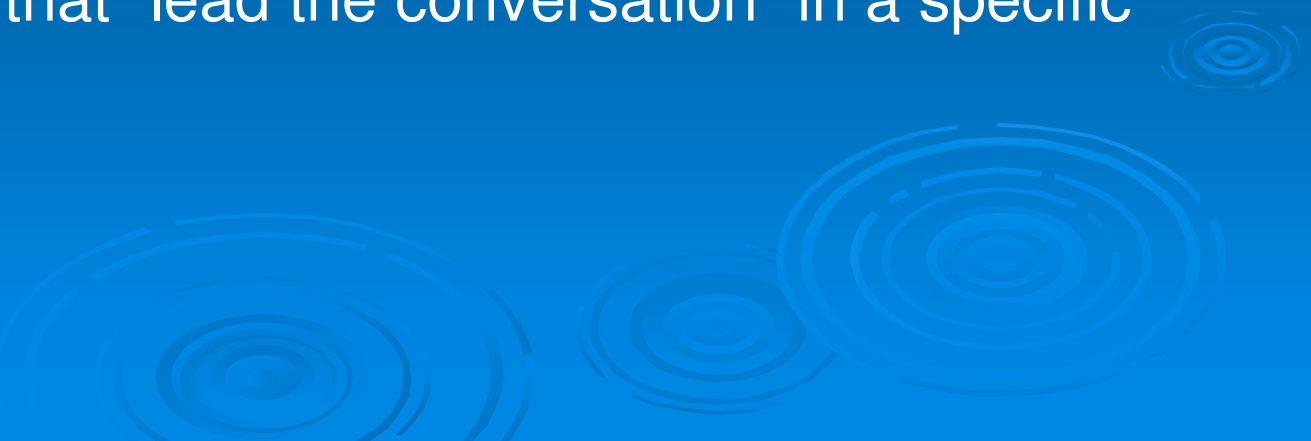
1. Sincere questions are friendly and flattering.
2. You’ll get an education.
3. Questions allow you to make progress on a point without being “pushy” or “preachy.”
4. Carefully placed questions put you in the driver’s seat.

Who in the Bible used this tactic?

Jesus used the “Columbo tactic.” ... examples ...

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There are three basic ways to use Columbo:

1. Ask questions that “gather information” ... i.e. what exactly are they thinking?
 2. Ask questions that “reverse the burden of proof” ... i.e. to encourage the other person to give the reasons for their own views ... i.e. why they are thinking that?
 3. Ask questions that “lead the conversation” in a specific direction
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STEP 1 – Gather Information

MODEL QUESTION: “What do you mean by that?”

First, this question engages them in an interactive way.

Second, this question helps you know what a person thinks.

Third, it may challenge the lack of clarity in they're own thinking.



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Step 2 – Reverse The Burden Of Proof

The burden of proof is the responsibility someone has to defend or give evidence for their view.

PRINCIPLE TO REMEMBER: Whoever makes the claim bears the burden.

MODEL QUESTION: “How did you come to that conclusion?” ... or ...

- Why do you say that?
- What makes you think that’s the right way to see it?
- Why would that idea seem compelling to you?

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Recognize the difference between an “assertion” and an “argument.”

Don't let people off the hook with ... “you could say that ...”
... “it could have happened ...” ... with no evidence provided.

Watch out for “the professor's ploy” ... i.e. they try to reverse the burden of proof back to you.

PRINCIPLE TO REMEMBER: Refuse to shoulder the burden of proof when you have not made a claim.

When you find yourself overmatched keep yourself in the fact-finding mode.

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STEP 3 – Use Leading Questions

In this third step you need to know the direction you want the conversation to go.

- Do you want to clarify a point?
- Do you want to convey new information?
- Do you want to expose a flaw in their thinking?

In this step you may need to expose a flaw in their thinking or convey information that counters their opinion.

There are several ways that you can cushion the third step in using Columbo.

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Ways to cushion the third step in Columbo:

- 1. Preface your question with ... “Have you ever considered ...?”*
- 2. Preface your concern with a request for clarification ... “Could you clear this up for me?” OR “Can you help me understand this?”*
- 3. Use statements that counter with respect*

Let me give you some examples of leading questions that clarify a point, convey new information and/or expose weakness in someone’s thinking ...

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Perfecting Columbo

Usually the best time to develop something is when the pressure is off and you can think clearly ...

1. Before the conversation begins
2. After the conversation is over

1 Peter 3:15 – “... be ready ...”

Three specific things you can do to be ready:

1. Anticipate beforehand what might come up
2. Reflect afterward on what took place
3. In both cases ... practice the responses you think of during these reflective moments

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There are two things that will generate courage:

1. Being prepared will give you confidence
2. Interacting with others face-to-face

Let's look for opportunities to present the Gospel and use what we have learned in this series.

