

*Just Walk Across the Room:
Simple Steps Pointing People to Faith*

Bill's Introductions for Campaign Components

JWAR Campaign Implementation Guide

Dear Leader:

Ever noticed that when you get laser-like about achieving a goal, interesting things happen? Something powerful—even supernatural—occurs when you say, “Everything else has to take a back-seat because I’m on a *mission* here!”

But take that power and multiply it exponentially—say, by a factor of a hundred, a thousand, or even ten thousand—and now you’re looking at what unfolds when an entire congregation gets serious about taking ground for the kingdom. As your church implements the *Just Walk Across the Room Four-Week Experience*, I believe God will bless you in profound ways for raising the evangelistic temperature in your environment.

Evangelism can be a sticky subject, I admit—all sorts of oddities have floated in and out of Christendom along the way. But here’s an unchanging reality: if your congregation cares about people, then they have already taken the first step toward pointing people to faith. Evangelism, fundamentally, is about caring for people...and then, with the full enablement of the Holy Spirit, putting some action behind that care. This is what the *Just Walk* paradigm is all about.

Friends, all of heaven is cheering you on as you expose your entire congregation to the mission God’s on in our collective midst—to turn us *all* into walk-across-the-room people. Ready to get moving?



Bill Hybels
Founding & Senior Pastor
Willow Creek Community Church

A Word to Small Group Leaders

JWAR Leader Guide

How does anyone wind up getting saved?

The question plagued me the entire time I wrote the talks that now serve as the foundation for the *Just Walk Across the Room* campaign. *If only we could strip away all of the mystique, all of the fear, all of the formulae, that typically surround the topic of evangelism, I thought, and simply address this one question, then we could do some serious kingdom-building damage here on Earth.*

During the past several years, I've made it a point to ask folks I come across at Willow Creek, the church I pastor, how *they* got saved. Their answers have been interesting.

In almost every case when they described their salvation experiences, they pointed to a time when some guy or gal in a normal, everyday situation chose to take a risk and approach them... just to see what God might do. There were assorted motivations. Sometimes the person reached out to them to introduce themselves...nothing more. Sometimes it was to offer a word of encouragement or ask a stimulating question. Sometimes it was to engage in a few minutes of conversation or extend an invitation to a social or business gathering.

The locations where this "reaching out" occurred were also varied. They included gym locker rooms, conference rooms, grocery stores, neighborhood cul-de-sacs, ski lifts, junior high hallways, post office lines, the occasional airplane, and so on.

But here's what struck me: with few exceptions, the people I surveyed admitted that the "way they got saved" could be traced back to one person who one day decided to take one walk across a room.

A walk across a room. It's almost always the way a person winds up getting saved. And over the next four weeks, you have the opportunity to point your entire congregation toward a powerful truth: evangelism can be as simple as a walk across a room; something anyone can do

Friends, I wonder what might unfold around us if Christ-followers like you and me would agree to take walks like these with increasing frequency, just to see what God might do in our spheres of influence. I wonder what would happen if we started living out the *highest value* in personal evangelism, taking things only as far as the Holy Spirit wanted us to take them. Nothing mechanical—just reliance on the mystical realm of life. Nothing fussy or fancy or formulaic—just true teamwork with the Spirit of God.

I believe every Christ-follower must come to the place of declaring a profoundly personal, covenantal arrangement with God. Are you going to be a heads-up, others-first kind of person, or will you allow your Christian faith to digress to that point where it's all about you? God invites each of us to join him in his mission here on Earth to reclaim his people for his glory. And my personal guarantee to you, should you say "yes" to his invitation, is this: The joy that awaits you when you take these walk-across-the-room risks will absolutely startle your soul—it will keep

your prayer life vibrant, your perspective broad, and your heart soft.

You can do this, friends, whether the Evangelism Superhero cape hangs in your closet or not. You can learn how to behave with relational intelligence, how to speak with grace-filled words, how to act within the parameters of the Spirit's promptings. And you can show everyone in your small group how to get it done too.

Just Walk Across the Room: The Four-Week Experience is a wake-up call for Christ-followers of all ages and experiences: If we declare that we follow Jesus, then it's time to start planting our feet in the footprints of our leader, agreeing with him that the most important steps we'll ever take are those that help point another person toward faith in God.

In light of that, let's get moving!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill".

Bill Hybels
Founding & Senior Pastor
Willow Creek Community Church

JWAR Participant Guide

Dear Small Group Participant:

Shortly after Jesus' resurrection, he appeared to his wide-eyed disciples on a mountain in Galilee. They sat with rapt attention as he delivered a few standing orders that were to be carried out until he returned. Remember what they were?

Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:18-20a, MSG)

You probably recognize that passage as what's commonly called the "Great Commission." And if you're like many Christians, the next thought that crosses your mind is smothered with obligation...or worse yet, with guilt. *I know I should be accomplishing the Great Commission, but I can't seem to get past that first word... Go.*

We *go* all the time. We go to work, go home, go out to eat, go shopping, go to sporting events, go to bed. But something deep inside us knows that Jesus' "go" carries with it a very different connotation.

His "go" means our feet have to get unstuck from where they're currently planted. It means we have to agree to action. It means we've got to accept a little risk and stick one foot in front of the other to engage with another human being...having no idea where it all will lead.

A daunting task for some, to say the least.

Friends, if your desire to "go" and reach out to the people around you is strong, but you find yourself perpetually stuck in "stay" mode, this study is for you. Statistically, only ten percent of *any* congregation would raise their hands if asked who has the formal gift of evangelism or who does any evangelizing on a regular basis. Which means there's a substantive number of believers sitting all around you each weekend who are all locked up when it comes to taking action to point those outside the faith toward God.

Just Walk Across the Room: The Four-Week Experience is a church-wide campaign designed to raise the value of evangelism for everyone in your church. This means that at the end of four weeks' time, every man, woman, boy and girl will have a fresh understanding of what "evangelism" really means, as well as a dose of inspiration regarding how to get it done. In addition to having some unexpected fun this month, I think you'll come away from the experience anxious to "go" in ways you've never before dreamed.

One closing thought before you dive in: Jesus' mountain-top speech to the disciples that day didn't end with the memorable series of commands you read before. Probably detecting a little nervous energy in the audience, he concluded things with a single promise, (and aren't we all glad!):

I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.
(Matthew 28:20b, MSG)

As you work through the material over the coming weeks, remember that evangelism isn't something you have to "gear up" for. Fundamentally, evangelism is about submitting to God's agenda in a social situation, in a conversation, in your moment-by-moment life. And, like Matthew says, he will be with you until the very end.

I cheer you on as you take the first steps!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill".

Bill Hybels
Founding & Senior Pastor
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