



Responder Training Manual

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Proprietary and Confidential

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WELCOME

We praise God that you are reading this and working towards sharing your faith with others and we welcome you to Need Him Global Ministries!

Our ministry response team is made up of the ministry staff, interns (Residents), students and Responders who freely offer their time. You are the treasured hands and feet of our ministry and we are grateful you have chosen to serve Him with us. If you are reading the training manual it is most likely because you have already gone through the Need Him Responder approval process and are working towards having conversations to share the Gospel with seekers. We created this document for your benefit. You will find that it covers much of what you will need to be confident meeting seekers online and sharing the Gospel.

This manual along with the resources on our Responder Training Portal has everything you will need to manage conversations and refer seekers that need other types of help. These materials are meant to serve as encouragement for how to do the hard work of evangelism. We review it often to remind ourselves of the principles we hope to display during each conversation. We recommend you do so as well. Remember that both the staff and board of the ministry are praying for you and we are here to support you in your ministry. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or needs.

Section 1 - Ministry Overview

Need Him Global Ministries began in 1996 as a partnership between Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Campus Crusade for Christ, Moody Broadcasting, Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, and several other evangelical organizations. These ministries had just read a report from George Barna that revealed that 35% of all listeners to Christian radio were not Christian.

Need Him was created to provide a safe place that someone could call 24 hours a day and speak to a Responder about beginning a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The mission statement is simple and direct:

Meeting the hurting and broken with the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Since those early days, the ministry has expanded to include delivering the message through various forms of media including secular radio, television, newspaper, the Internet and other social media outlets. We now receive a diverse set of topics from over 200 different countries each month. The methods for responding have also grown to include online chat, text messaging, social media messaging and email.

Our vision is to see a world engaged in conversation about Jesus. Our heart is to be led by God and grow as a world-wide evangelism ministry used by the Holy Spirit through both secular and Christian media. We exist solely to use any and all means possible to share Christ and provide every technological opportunity for people to respond to Him.

We are unique in that we don't use our interaction with those seeking Christ as a means to expand our donor base, solicit financial support, sell products, or add names to a mailing list. We have many partnerships and share resources with several ministries that share our focus and heart for spreading the Gospel.

Need Him Global partners with Christian radio stations and ministries around the world to present the Gospel in various forms of media. Some ministries partner through technology using our response system (Echo) to answer those they reach. Other ministries point people to Need Him through a toll-free telephone number or web site where the seeker can talk, text or chat with someone about a relationship with Jesus Christ.

A. Ministry Philosophy on Evangelism

Evangelism with Need Him Global is different than face-to-face or relational sharing. We receive chats and calls from people demonstrating some level of interest by initiating the conversation. They are coming to us so it automatically removes your concern of finding someone to share with. Secondly, we do this using technology and not through face-to-face interaction. This means some of the things we might use in a personal interaction with a friend are not available to us. We can't see the person's body language or facial expressions to what we are sharing. We also may not be able to pick up on humor or sarcasm as easily if we are not paying close attention.

Despite those differences, we believe evangelism with Need Him still must incorporate the basics that any good communicator and teacher must use. These attributes include:

- Knowing the Gospel and how to share it simply
- Caring about the seeker while demonstrating patience and love
- Being a good listener that empathizes rather than judges
- Recognizing how to adapt the message to make it relevant to the seeker
- Directing the conversation to get to the heart of their issue while being able to present the Gospel in the context of their felt need

A critical element of successful evangelism is to do everything with love. Many people expect us to be judgmental and unforgiving. In fact, they may even be convinced that is how God and all Christians operate. We want you to go into each conversation with the idea that your example may be the only true Christian experience they will ever encounter so leave them overwhelmed by your love, patience and understanding. Where appropriate, reminding seekers that we are all sinners, and that God loves us despite that. Allow others to see that you are humble and not trying to act superior in any way. Get into the habit of saying “we” instead of “you”.

With so many approaches to sharing the Gospel, we simply want to encourage you to always share the essentials no matter how you approach doing so. The Apostle Paul maintained the essentials of presenting the Gospel. He wrote, *“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve”* (1 Cor. 15:3-5). The essentials of the Gospel are:

- Our **sin**
- The **death** of Christ on the cross to pay for those sins
- The **resurrection** of Christ to provide life everlasting for those who follow Him
- The offer of the free gift of **salvation** to all that can’t be earned

We obviously believe the bible to be the inspired and infallible Word of God. We rely on scripture for truth and to share the Gospel. However, as Christians we often tend to assume others know the bible like we do. Many of our visitors are not familiar with testaments, books and chapters. We may even at times further confuse them by abbreviating our conversations and leave them wondering what language we are speaking. If you never opened a bible would you know what 1 Cor 9:16 means? We encourage you to start slowly until you know how familiar a seeker is with the bible. You may share scripture and say things like *“the bible says”*, *“Jesus said”*, and *“God’s Word says”*. If someone wants to know where you find those words, then share specific verses and get them engaged in God’s word. We want you to feel comfortable using as much scripture as you need to but be careful how you introduce it to not make the seeker feel even more lost.

B. Echo System Overview

One of the most significant moments in the history of the ministry was the decision to invest in creating a dedicated evangelism response system. We knew conversations were getting more complicated and we needed a tool built specifically for evangelism. We also wanted a platform that Responders could use easily, safely, and from anywhere in the world. Lastly, we believed this investment would ultimately benefit more ministries beyond Need Him that were dedicated to sharing Jesus.

The very first version of Echo launched in 2012 for online chats and quickly grew to include phone calls and text messages. We were fortunate that several major Christian foundations also caught our vision and offered financial support. Those financial grants allowed us to build out a resources section for Responders to use in live conversation as well as robust reporting that gave us insights into all aspects of incoming conversations including geographical as well as topical data.

Today the Echo evangelism response platform integrates multiple communication applications allowing ministries to engage seekers through Echo. The system also is language neutral meaning we can easily add new languages to the 87 different languages already live in the platform.

It only seemed natural to want to share this response system with other ministries focused on evangelism to get the greatest kingdom impact. We now have over 30 ministries partnering directly with Need Him Global for us to answer conversations they generate and another 36 ministry partners that license this technology in order to respond to their own conversations. A few of these partners include the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Arab Vision, International Mission Board, Christian Broadcasting Network, and Saddleback Church.

Section 2 - Responding At Need Him Global

We do everything we can to keep responding simple and straight-forward. Our goal is to make the technology intuitive and easy to use while providing opportunities for conversation with those seeking to know Jesus.

As you might imagine, there is no way to ensure everyone that responds is actually seeking Jesus. We hear from all sorts of people including those that do not believe in God, have mental health issues, believers or people that simply want to talk with someone and pray. Others are truly lost and confused and either want to make a commitment to Jesus or learn what that means. We also hear from those that want to debate or question our beliefs. And lastly, there are those that are not serious or may have ill intent.

No matter what the intent of the seeker, every conversation is an opportunity to be an ambassador of Christ and show someone how much Jesus loves us and how we are different for having Jesus in your life.

We don't require any Responder to be put in a position to be made fun of or abused in any way. You do not have to endure personal attacks or profanity. We encourage you to set boundaries and be in control (*"if you continue using that type of language I will be logging off from this conversation"*). Our goal is that no matter the outcome of the interaction, we will be gracious and present ourselves as loving Christians to only enhanced someone's spiritual journey.

We encourage all Responders to be bold with sharing the Gospel but also know that you are free to move on to the next conversation if the person is unable to engage in respectful conversation or is unwilling to be serious. Having said all that, do not give up too quickly. We have seen many examples of conversations that were seemingly going nowhere when the Holy Spirit took over and something changes.

Once you have your system credentials you are able to remotely log into the Echo response platform. The system is entirely in the cloud so no software is needed and you can log in from anywhere with internet access. You will be set up to answer phone calls, online chats or text messages. The online training video will demonstrate the process for making yourself ready and answering each type of conversation.

Several organizations partner with Need Him Global and route people to us through one of our ministry web sites or through their own web sites. This is actually quite simple because you will see the name of the ministry below the name of the seeker. These partners should only be sending conversations regarding a saving relationship with Jesus Christ so you do not have to do anything different or special for those conversations. When some other issue or request unrelated to our ministry comes in, you should refer the person back to the organization that generated the request.

A. Our Commitment to Responder

The ministry is committed to loving, protecting, and supporting our Responders at all times. More specifically our commitment to you is:

- To lovingly pray for you and provide encouragement particularly by communicating consistently about what is happening in the ministry and responding to your needs.
- To protect you by building every measure of security necessary into our technology.
- To provide you with every opportunity to share the Gospel and provide all the instruction and resources necessary to be effective in the ministry.
- To always consider the Responder perspective and best interests when exploring changes in technology, partnerships, and staff.
- To provide you support through a direct connection to a staff member who can answer questions, offer guidance and encouragement, and provide resources for improved evangelism knowledge. We want to hear from you.

By consistently serving, we know your walk with Jesus will grow. We are often more blessed by our conversations than those visiting. We pray that you realize that you are growing closer to God throughout this process and that you will see your life starting to change.

- May you come to know the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and God's love for you more intimately, deeply, and personally.
- May you share the Gospel more confidently with others in your daily life and wherever the Lord may lead you.
- May your prayer life explode with greater meaning and purpose leading you to pray more with other believers and minister more effectively to others.
- May you memorize more scripture and learn more about the Bible as you serve with us and study God's word more passionately.
- May you see God use you in seekers' lives and recognize the opportunities for other areas of ministry in your daily life.
- May you trust and depend on the Lord more and more as you encounter difficult situations online and in life.
- May you experience the joy of seeing someone submit to Christ and understand a part of Heaven's joy when the lost is found.

B. Helpful Tips for Conversation

We encourage everyone sharing the good news to follow the example of Jesus. He always validated the lost and loved them where they were before he ever tried to teach or heal them. We also must remember that we save no one. The Holy Spirit is in control and we encourage you to pray and seek his presence during every conversation. We will be regularly praying over you as a staff and implore you to start every time you serve with prayer seeking God's wisdom, patience and love.

In addition to prayer, a couple simple reminders can help you be more effective:

Listening goes a long way – Everyone coming to us has a story and most desperately want to share it. We have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Most people like to hear themselves and letting them lay out their story, within reason, will often help you determine how to best manage the conversation and earn the right to share the Gospel. Listen for the clues as to what their relationship with Jesus is really like.

Keep things Simple - Don't give them more than they need. You do not have to solve every life issue the person has. Stick with the Gospel and how much Jesus loves them. For many that are coming back to their faith, or those that have been running from God, the idea of church is very scary. Give them the main points and allow time, discipleship, and other believers to augment their faith. None of us as new believers were capable of understanding all the finer points of theology, exact Bible references, the cultural background of the text, or the Hebrew/Greek meaning of each term during our first exposure to Jesus or His word. Be patient and know that simply sharing the Gospel is success!

We are all sinners. Satan's great lie is that we are alone in our sin and it is beyond God's forgiveness. Knowing others struggle with the same sin is encouraging. If you are able, connect with people by admitting you share the similar struggles or have experienced the same pain. The words "*me too*" are very powerful and create an opening for more honest and transparent conversation.

Emphasize Concepts over Words - Don't memorize an outline, but rather learn the concepts. Words change depending on whom you're talking to. If you're explaining the dangers of a hot stove or open water to a two-year old, you'll use different words, tones, and illustrations than you would if you're talking to an adult. Get the concepts down, the general direction of what you want to say and the words will come as the Holy Spirit works through you. Know the concepts of Sin, Substitution, and Faith and be able to explain them using different words.

Mirror their Conversation Style - Don't respond with long and overdrawn answers. This is especially true in digital conversations online or via text. Three of every four seekers are "talking" with us through a mobile device. Screens are small and we need to communicate in shorter bites to make sure the seeker is following along. You may want to insert simple

statements such as “does that make sense” or “are you with me”. Simplify your answers to ensure anyone can understand the message.

Don’t assume those who claim to be “Christian” are so – We do not recommend you ask anyone if they are Christian or saved. Many will respond “yes” without knowing what is involved or having a true relationship with Jesus. When you probe about the seeker’s relationship with Jesus, you will often get a response related to going to church or some other activity or status that they mistakenly believe bestows Christianity. Gently ask “where Jesus is in your life and how he has transformed you”. Sometimes simply asking about where Jesus fits in their life can help show what their beliefs truly are.

Many seekers come looking for simple conversation and human connection. They are lonely and want to share their story. The key to managing those conversations is being able to listen well and then turn the conversation towards Jesus. Use simple transition questions such as *...“I am sorry things are so rough right now, where does Jesus fit into your life with all that happening?”*

Don’t judge or argue – We never debate or argue someone into believing. Some visitors will come looking to draw you into such a conversation. If you sense it going that direction, simply ask if the person is seeking Jesus or looking for something else from the conversation. Ultimate faith is directed by the Holy Spirit and we can only pray that we are fortunate enough to play a role in that process. Show love so no matter how the conversations ends, it will leave them appreciating how Christians live and what the Gospel preaches.

Don’t endorse sinful behavior - Many people you talk with will acknowledge or ask about sinful behavior. We are not here to condemn or judge, but we *do not endorse any sinful behavior*. It is helpful to admit your own sin. It is also important to help others recognize God loves us and Jesus died for us despite our sin. However, it is best to comment on sinful behavior using the Bible as the basis for categorizing the behavior as sinful. In this way, it is not you making a personal determination as to what constitutes sin, but rather the Word of God telling us that certain activities are not good for us and are sinful.

Don’t give out personal information for yourself or any Need Him Global staff member – There is serious potential danger and liability that may arise when communication with a seeker is done outside of the Echo platform. You can direct those seeking information about the ministry to our web site at www.needhim.org and offer the email address of info@needhim.org for any requests for information. Never give anyone your last name, home address, personal telephone number, e-mail or social media links. All follow up communication should always be limited to conversations within the Echo system.

Don’t share information collected from earlier conversations – Some seekers visit us more than once. The Echo system keeps information on those previous conversations. You are welcome to use those to gain a better understanding of the person’s chat history. However, you should never mention that information, or what other Responders may have shared, with the seeker. Treat each conversation as a new chance to share the Gospel.

Don't measure success based on immediate results – God is responsible for salvation and not us. He never fails and simply uses us to proclaim the truth. Therefore, it is important to not equate the number or frequency of people saved with success or failure. Take refuge in the fact that you are part of how someone comes to Christ whenever that occurs. Never underestimate the impact of being a positive and loving example of what it means to know Jesus. We plant seeds faithfully and let God water and harvest at the right time.

Don't assume a conversation will be simple, quick or on the topic the seeker supplies – Many seekers insert a topic and the conversation never goes there. The simple way to start a conversation is saying “hello” and asking how the person is doing. Many will jump in with little prompting. Others may not, and in those cases just asking, “What brings you to chat?” usually get them talking.

Refer those with special needs to qualified organizations – Occasionally, you may talk with someone that has an issue that requires professional help. Examples include threats of suicide, sexual abuse, pregnancy or abortion related questions. You may also talk with those who admit having some type of alcohol or drug addiction. **We are not professionally trained counselors and never attempt to act as one.** We refer to ourselves as Responders and never claim to offer counseling.

Suicide is a difficult issue and increasingly mentioned. We understand these are emotional conversations. We never want to discount someone that puts it into their topic, or claims it is under consideration, although we have learned that some unfortunately will use it to get attention. We have prepared information to help you manage these conversations and know when to involve a third party. This information can be found in Section 3 of this training manual.

We are here to love those who contact us and share the good news of the Gospel. However, if the person's issue reasonably appears to require professional help then our expectation is that you will let them know you are not qualified to help with that and you strongly encourage them to talk with a trained expert or the authorities when appropriate.

We have contact information for several organizations that work in the areas mentioned above and those are listed in the Responder Training Portal. In these cases, it may be more important to get them connected with organizations that can supply the type of professional help required before we try to address their spiritual needs through scripture. In those instances, we encourage you to offer to pray and let them know you are hoping to talk to them again once they have addressed the other issue(s).

C. What does the Average Conversation Look Like?

We receive this question almost every week. While no two conversations are identical, we have gathered some suggestions and lessons learned that we believe will help you.

The answer will be different based on technology (Chat, Text, Social Media, Voice), by depth of topic and by degree of engagement of the seeker. There really is no “average conversation” as the average is nothing other than the sum of wide variety of conversation types and not something we manage to.

The nature of conversations varies depending on the technology used (Chat, Text, Social Media, Voice), the depth of the topic discussed, and how engaged the seeker is. There isn't really an "average conversation" because what we might call average is actually just a mix of many different types of interactions, and it's not something we specifically aim for or manage.

Thus, as Responders, we should focus on the fact that there is no "one size fits all" solution and we should seek to adopt a variety of **“best practices”** that will allow us to maximize our impact with each seeker.

It is important to understand that approximately 85% of seekers are coming to us on a mobile device, thus lengthy complex responses from us will require seekers to scroll and scroll, potentially creating a negative impact.

Online Evangelism differs from **Relational Evangelism**, and we must adapt based on what the situation and type of interaction. Online Evangelism continues to evolve, and we want to share some key concepts in managing online conversations well.

- Be concise and make responses easy to digest
- Mirror communication styles
- Draw Seekers in through good listening and helpful resources
- Be in control and turn conversation towards Jesus

Be concise and make responses easy to digest

We don't want to dilute the Gospel message, but it's essential to present it in a clear and straightforward manner that's easy for seekers to understand. Remember, the longer our responses take to develop, the more likely we are to lose the seeker's attention and interest. Responding quickly, even in brief segments, helps keep them engaged.

Secondly with over 50% of our conversations being international (up to 200 countries and territories each month), we need to understand that English may not be their primary language, so clean, simplistic responses are critical. If you are developing a response with several points, then send them one at a time, keeping them brief and concise.

Additionally, we must recognize that many people have been hurt by the church or are distancing themselves from God. Therefore, it's important to meet them there and avoid

religious jargon or complex church language. Focus on making your message simple and easy to understand.

We have implemented a “character counter” within ECHO, which provides a visual indicator allowing you to gauge the length of your exchange. It counts to 450 characters then changes color (gray to yellow). You can still send larger exchanges, but it is a reminder to be concise and to the point. And lastly, avoid pasting text from long articles into your exchange unless the seeker is asking for it. Share the URL and allow them to open the article on their own.

Mirror communication styles

We recommend that you try to mirror the communication style of the person you're speaking with, considering both the length of your conversations and the level of formality in your language. It's important to take their spiritual maturity into account. Our aim is to connect with them where they are and communicate effectively.

If you're talking to someone who doesn't know much about spiritual topics, it's important to share a straightforward message of hope from the Gospel, introducing them to Christ. The goal is to avoid using complicated church jargon or religious language that might confuse them.

If a Seeker asks a formal question, then respond in a more formal fashion, attempting to mirror them. Conversely, if they are casual in the exchange, then meet them there as well even avoiding capitalizations and punctuations if you like.

It's important to assess how familiar the person is with spiritual concepts and their level of spiritual understanding. If you're talking to someone from another country who isn't fluent in English, and you start discussing complex theological ideas like substitutionary atonement or propitiation, you'll probably confuse them. Instead, begin with a simple explanation of the Gospel. As the person starts to understand more, you can gradually introduce more detailed concepts and expand on the initial message.

Draw Seekers in through good listening and helpful resources

We have learned that asking good questions is a great way to hear the heart of the seeker. Avoid yes/no questions as they leave you no room to expand the exchange. Focus on asking opened ended questions, such as:

“How is Jesus Christ part of your life?”

“Can you share how Jesus is transforming your life?”

“Can you share how you are living out the call of Christ on your life each day?”

“Can you talk about your involvement in small group bible study at your church?”

These type questions will help you listen attentively and offer valuable insights for guiding further discussion.

Further, look to provide helpful resources. We want to avoid being the “Bible Answer People” where all we do is copy and paste resources. Instead, share your story and your heart for Jesus,

guiding them toward the answer while offering helpful resources they can take with them after the conversation.

Be in control and turn conversation towards Jesus

While we want to give the impression that the seeker is guiding the conversation, as Responders, we should subtly lead and direct the discussion. Listen carefully, noting any red flags or hints they may reveal, and look for opportunities to naturally steer the conversation towards Jesus Christ.

Seekers may arrive with a variety of challenges, such as addictions, job loss, breakups, health issues, depression, anxiety, financial stress, and more. No matter what brings them to the ministry, each conversation presents a chance to offer a message of hope and share Christ.

Aim to connect with them on a personal level and show empathy whenever possible. Even if you haven't faced the exact same situation, we all go through difficult times, stress, or pain. Look for common ground where you can relate to their experiences. By establishing this connection, you build trust and enhance your ability to share Christ effectively.

D. Wanting To Do More With Challenging Conversations

One of the many things we love about Responders is your hearts to want to help others. We encounter many difficult conversations that pull at our heart strings causing us to want to become personally involved. These conversations may cover various “life crisis” situations, including persecution, abuse of various types, financial difficulties, or countless other situations of brokenness.

These conversations are obviously complicated, and the ministry must balance legal requirements around privacy and confidentiality especially with so many international visitors. Further, we only hear one side of a story and often have limited reliable information if all we have is an IP Address. The IP Address is tied to a proxy server and not specific to a physical home address along with the fact that some guests connect using VPN Servers which mask their true location.

All that said, we take these situations very seriously and do what we can. It is important to remember that we are not a life crisis ministry and not trained counselors or therapists. Our decades of experience have shown us that many of these situations are not something we can personally insert ourselves or the ministry into no matter how much you desire to help.

We must trust God and focus on our mission of sharing the Gospel, offering hope, praying with those in need and providing them information about available crisis related resources where available (see Responder Training Portal). Further, we want to encourage seekers facing life crisis situations to reach out to local authorities, trusted adults, school counselors, trusted relatives, and pastors to share their situation.

Some situations may merit ministry involvement to reach out to authorities or experts, but these can be complicated and often involve legal issues. *All such follow up should be conducted at the Administrative level by ministry leadership and NOT by individual Responders.* We have consulted local, state, federal officials as well as various type of experts on the different means of handing these conversations.

We encourage you to use good judgement and focus on sharing biblical truth in these difficult situations. We also remind you all conversations must occur within the ministry Echo response system. This mandate is to protect you, the seeker, and the Ministry.

When you have information that you believe warrants additional review, we ask you to (a) note the details in the *Notes* section of the conversation in Echo and then (b) *Flag* the conversation for review by ministry leadership. We look at each of these and will involve the right outside help when available and warranted.

Thanks for caring and being part of the best group of Christian Responders online. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

E. What to do After Someone Accepts Jesus Christ

As believers, we understand that being saved is about a relationship and a journey not just a momentary decision. We must share that message with new believers and encourage them. We also must make sure they don't fall into the traps that the enemy wants to use to discourage new believers. We must be clear that their decision does not remove all their problems and promise perfection in this lifetime. Thankfully, Jesus promises to be with us and help us through whatever lies ahead.

- "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33
- "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12
- "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." 1 John 5:4

Many people want to know what comes next. We encourage people to start this new faith journey with some basics. We want to help them start walking in faith before they can run. We want to encourage them to start setting time aside to be with and talk with God. We want to help them understand what a healthy Bible-teaching church looks like and get connected. We want them to trust God's Word and how it teaches us how to live.

There is a simple acronym using the word **GROWTH** for how to enjoy a new relationship with God.

Go to God in prayer daily (Philippians 4:6)

Read God's word daily (Acts 17:11)

Obey God's commands moment by moment (John 14:21)

Witness for Christ by your life and words (Matthew 4:19)

Trust God for every detail of your life (1 Peter 5:7)

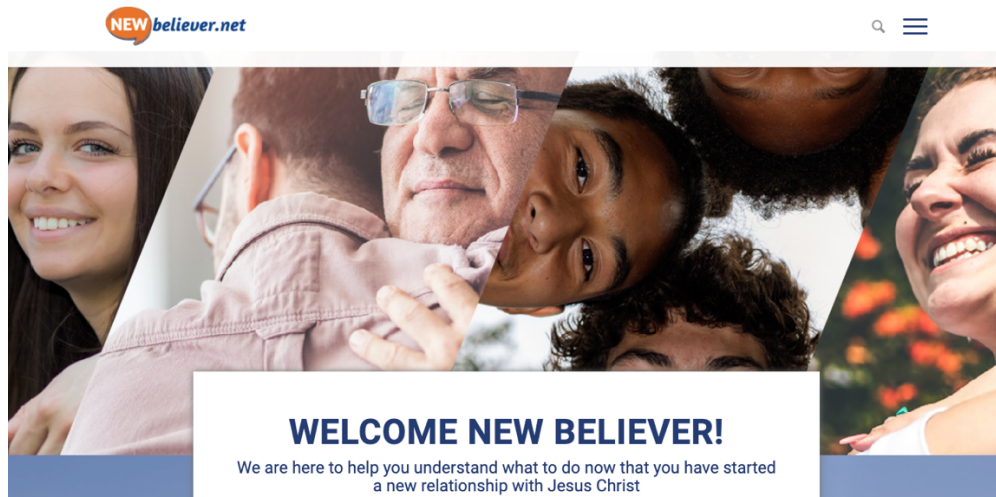
Hand over control to the Holy Spirit allowing him to empower daily life & witness (Acts 1:8)

As for getting connected into Christian community, most new believers know a Christian who will be excited about their decision. Encourage them to own and share that decision. We also want them to understand how God created us for community with other believers and that we should all be connected to a good church and get involved. We each need to be under pastoral authority, grow in the Word, encourage one another and worship collectively. Scripture is filled with encouragement for the body of Christ and a new believer needs to become part of that. You can find more information on how to identify a good Bible teaching church along with a list of church databases and other resources in the Responder Training Portal at www.needhimvolunteer.com

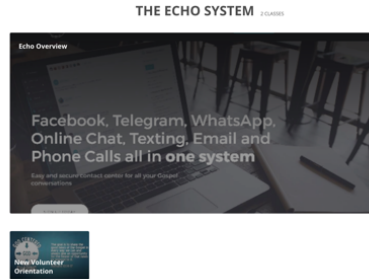
It can be helpful to share a resource that the new believer can lean into as they start their journey. We have created a 7-day reading plan for new believers that we suggest you share with everyone that prays to accept Jesus. The First Steps for New believers reading plan can be found at <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/2838-first-steps-for-new-believers>.



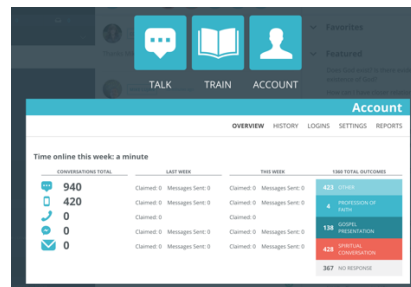
Lastly, we have created a New Believer website to help new seekers understand what it means to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Please share this site with those seekers who have prayed to receive Christ. The New Believer site can be found at <https://newbeliever.net/>



The TRAIN module has a Video demonstrating how to use the system, identify the differences between chats and texts, along with explanations of the different tools for managing conversations.

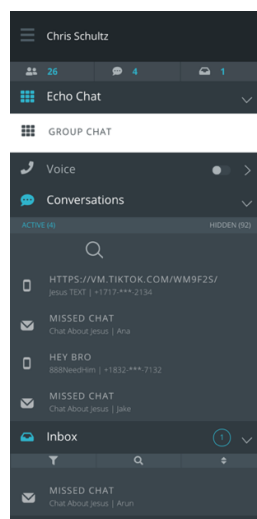


The ACCOUNT module is specific to you and contains your conversation History, Settings for creating an alias, adding a photo and other personal statistics.

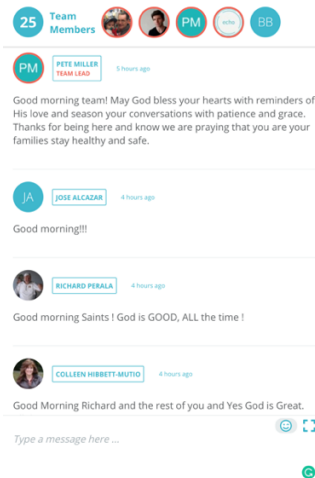


C. System Overview

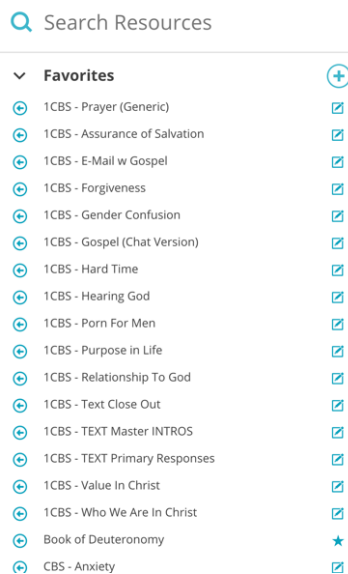
Once you select the **TALK Module** The system is divided into three navigation panels for managing Conversations. The Left Panel with the black background allows you to view the Status Bar, Group Chat, your Active Conversations and the Inbox.



The Middle Panel allows you to enter and read Group Chat Comments or send Private Messages to other Responders. When you claim an incoming conversation, that dialogue takes over the middle section.



The Right Panel allows you to view System Resources. You can also create your own **Resources** on topics, scripture or responses you use frequently, by clicking on the + icon and creating your own resources. The Ministry has a number of “vetted” resources you can use. These have NHG as a lead in. You can type NHG in the search bar and view them, adding as favorites those you are interested in. Further, you can also search by topic (ie: porn, assurance, transgender, etc...).



D. Helpful Conversation Tips

- Listen Well – Earn the “right” to share the Good News
- Keep it Simple – Don’t overcomplicate with religious jargon or confusing concepts
- Don’t Assume - Never assume they are in a right relationship with Jesus as their Savior
- Mirror Conversation Style – Meet them where they are and mirror how they communicate
- Respond with Short Simple Sentences – Making sure they are tracking with you
- Use Scripture Plainly – ie: The Bible Says, God tell us.... Avoid Abbreviations
- Confidentiality - NEVER Share Personal Information with Seekers or Ask for Theirs.
- Keep ALL Conversations within the Echo System.

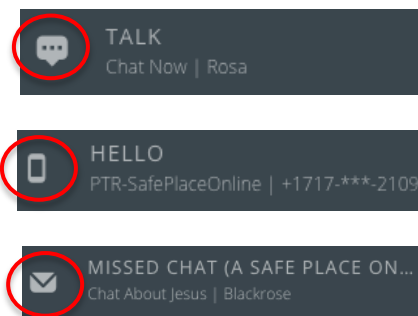
E. Recognizing Conversation Types

Chats are identified by the “Chat Bubble with three Dots”

TEXT MESSAGING conversations have an icon like an “iPhone”

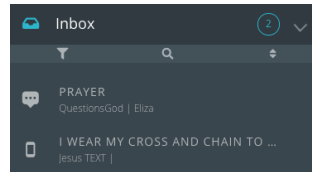
E-Mail conversations have an icon like an “Envelope”

When viewing a conversation in the Inbox, the Topic will be reflected on the Top Line. The Source of the Conversation (Managing Partner it generated from) and Seeker Name on the Second Line.



F. Starting A Conversation

Conversations enter the system through the “**Inbox**”. The Inbox is viewable by all Responders and conversations can be retrieved by any Responder.



To start a conversation, simply click on the item in the Inbox and offer an initial greeting, such as:

“hey, what brings you to chat today”, or “welcome, how are you doing today?”

The Client Summary Details can be seen once the conversation has been chosen from the Inbox and will be displayed in the middle of the screen as you scroll up. You will be able to see certain details, including: IP Location Data, Aliases Used, Prior Topics, Prior Outcomes, Prior Tags, Notes and # of Visits. This information is for your benefit in the event the Seeker has been here before. However, please be sensitive and do **NOT** refer to prior conversation data with the Seeker.

CLIENT SUMMARY

LOCATION DATA

City: Frisco
State: Texas
Country: United States
IP Address: 47.186.17.239

ALIASES

DO NOT PICK UP TEST x2

TOPICS

DO NOT PICK UP TEST x2

FOLLOWUPS

OUTCOMES

Other x2

TAGS

Assurance of Salvation Break-Up Evangelism Faith Islam (Muslim)
Pornography

NOTES

CONVERSATIONS

3

G. Other Helpful Tips for Managing Conversations

The following will provide insight on effectively navigating conversations. By clicking the down arrow, a menu will drop down offering you various options.



Blocking a Seeker for 24 hours - If you feel a visitor is being inappropriate or abusive, you can exercise a 24-Hour Block to keep them from re-entering the system as long as they use the same IP address the next time they try to chat. As always, we want to show grace when blocking an individual, sharing the message of the Gospel where possible before exiting. Blocking should be used sparingly and always be accompanied with a Flag so the Admin team can review and determine if other steps are necessary.

Putting a Block on a seeker:

- Click the drop-down arrow (located at the top right, next to the X)
- Click "Block USER"

Emergency Alerts can be accomplished by using the same drop-down menu and choosing "Emergency: Alert Admins Now!". This will notify System Admins of an emergency situation so they can provide feedback or oversight of your current conversation.

Transferring a Chat Conversation - There are times that it may be necessary to transfer a conversation. It could be that the seeker is requesting to speak with a specific Responder or needs to speak with someone of their own gender. It could also be you needing to transfer because you have to leave. The Transfer function allows a Responder to transfer a chat to another Responder who is online and willing to accept the transfer. Never transfer a conversation to another Responder without first getting their agreement that they are willing to accept the conversation from you. Group Chat or Private Message are the best ways to communicate with other Responders when seeking assistance. You should also clearly communicate with the seeker when you are transferring them. The steps to transfer are as follows:

- Click the drop-down arrow (located at the top right, next to the X)
- Select "TRANSFER"
- Choose a User that has agreed to take the conversation over

- Click Transfer (This is the first step. The other Responder must “accept” the transfer by clicking the check mark before the conversation will be moved.)
- A successful transfer will remove the chat from your active conversations

Flagging a Conversation for Review - During the course of a conversation, you may need to alert the ministry team for different reasons. It could be that the seeker has admitted some type of criminal or harmful activity (i.e.: suicide, harm to another, child abuse, etc). There are two ways to trigger an Admin Review of your conversation.

Emergency Alert: Send immediate notice to Admin of critical situation during the conversation

- Click the drop-down arrow (located at the top right, next to the X)
- Click "Emergency: Alert Admins Now!" which sends a notice to the Administrator
- Continue the chat to the best of your ability
- Never contact Law Authorities as the ministry will do that where appropriate
- Follow-up information that qualifies an earlier Alert:
 - Example: Means, Method, Motive, Intent, Plan, and other details.

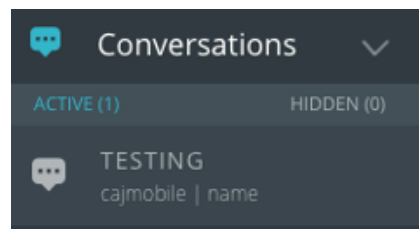
Notification of Activity: Flagging a Conversation for review after it is completed

- During the Closing Process, you have access to a Drop-Down list of Review Flags
- Choose the appropriate Flag (i.e.: review/feedback, immediate crisis/suicide, criminal activity, praise report/testimonial, needs referral, other)
- Notice will be sent to Admin for follow up

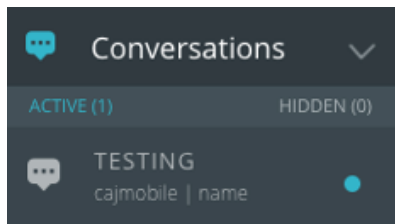
H. Conversation Health Monitor

ECHO has a Chat “Health Monitor” feature which allows you, as the Responder, to be able to better manage Chat Conversations to determine if the Seeker is actively engaged or not. ECHO will ping the Seeker’s Browser periodically to confirm they are still there, displaying “visual indicators” within the system, via Dots (on the Navigation Panel) and Heartbeat Symbol (within the actual chat conversation). There are 4 unique status: Normal (no dot), Unread Messages (blue dot), Away (yellow dot), and Disconnected (red dot).

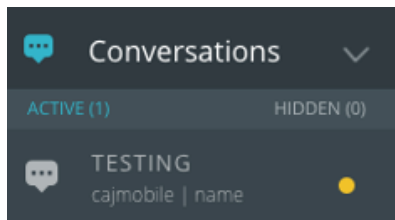
1. **Normal** - No dot is shown if the conversation has been closed, or if the connection is healthy and there are no unread messages.



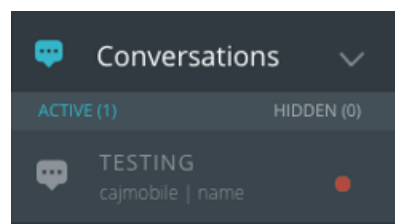
2. **Blue Dot** - The blue dot is shown when the seeker has been gone but has returned or if the conversation has unread messages.



3. **Yellow Dot** - The yellow dot is shown when the chat client has been inactive for a period of time (approx. 15-30 seconds) or if the seeker has hidden the chat widget in some way. The chat widget is considered hidden when any of the following things happen: 1) the chat window has been minimized 2) the chat window isn't the currently selected browser tab. 3) the seeker has switched apps on their phone.



4. **Red Dot** - The red dot is shown when the chat client has been inactive for an extended period (approx. 5 minutes) or if the seeker closes their browser. For this to happen either the chat page has been closed (but the chat itself hasn't been closed), their phone has been locked, their browser app has been closed, or their computer is asleep. If they were to unlock their phone, start their computer, or re-open their chat page then they would be reconnected.



Further, within the Conversation, you will see a corresponding "Heartbeat Symbol" displayed which corresponds with Dot System above.

I. Things To Know

Chat Conversations take Priority over **TEXT MESSAGING** Conversations and are only available in the Inbox for 60 seconds. A chat is similar in essence to a phone call. It is a direct one-on-one exchange which usually moves quickly. All Chats should be Closed and Dispositioned at the end of your time serving that day. The Seeker is only able to view your first name, so no need to introduce yourself.

TEXT MESSAGING Conversations are not as time sensitive and can be responded to throughout your time online and even over a period of days or weeks. When you initially pick up a **TEXT MESSAGING** Conversation, you will need to “Claim” It for it to remain in your conversations. The Seeker may not realize they have reached Need Him Ministries and do not see your name, so please introduce the Ministry and yourself (first name only).

Questions are a good way to drive the conversation.

- “Is this true in your life?”
- “What is your relationship like with Jesus?”
- “Does this make sense?”
- “What has your experience been?”
- “What are your thoughts on this?”

Pray before, during and after each conversation, asking the Spirit of God to lead and direct you.

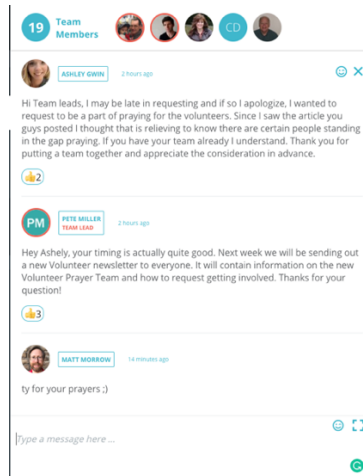
Chats take Priority over **TEXT MESSAGING** Conversations and are only available in the Inbox for 60 seconds.

TEXT MESSAGING Conversations do not have to be closed at the end of your time serving that day and can stay open for extended periods. Let them breathe for at least 24 hrs.

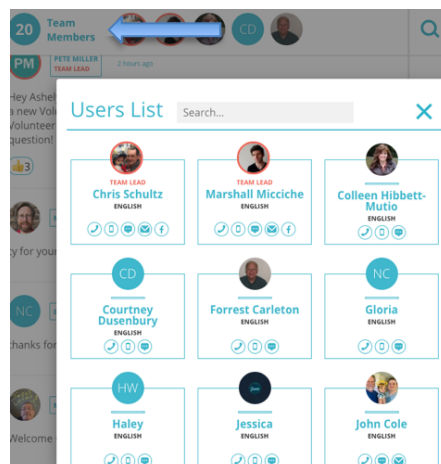
Present the Gospel - No matter what the apparent attitude or experience of the seeker ***we should always seek to turn the conversation towards Jesus and present the Gospel before the conversation is closed.***

J. Group Chat / Private Messaging

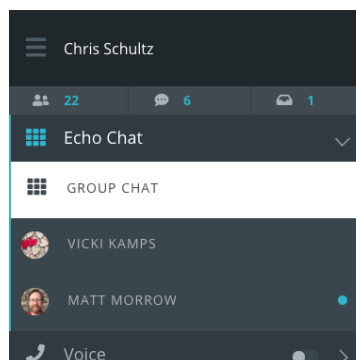
When choosing Group Chat on the Left Panel, the entire center of the system will reflect Group Chat Activity. This is a great place to share prayer request, seek resources and to communicate with the Responder Community.



For those times you would like to interact with another Responder privately, please use the “Private Messaging Feature”. You can access private messaging by clicking on “Team Members” and choosing the respective Responder you wish to communicate with.



Once chosen, you will be able to have a private dialogue. Such messages will be one-on-one and will display on your left navigation panel. A blue dot will appear when a private message is waiting for you. *This is the preferred way to communicate when you are having a one-on-one conversation with another Responder.*



K. Closing Conversations

There are five components to completing the actual conversation and closing the record of the conversation within Echo.

1. **Closing** the Conversation
2. Coding the **Outcome** of the conversation
3. Selecting the appropriate **Tags** to describe the topical nature of the conversation
4. Adding relevant **Notes** regarding the conversation
5. **Save** the conversation in Echo

1. **Closing** the Conversation

One of the things you may not have considered is how to determine when to wrap up a conversation with someone and move to the next seeker. Often the seeker will make this choice and it is not something you need to decide. The best scenario is someone gives his/her life to Christ and you are able to then walk through “What’s next for a new believer” and share all our resources.

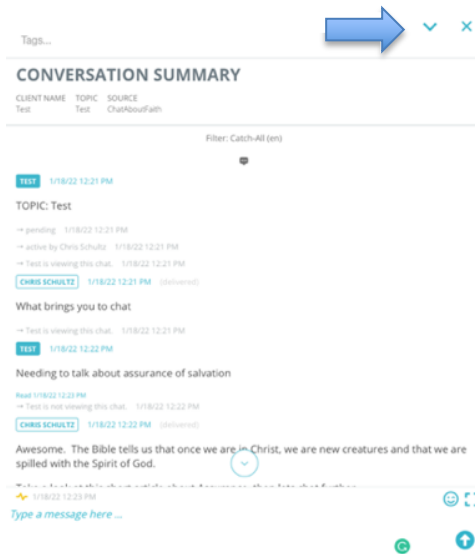
In other cases where the seeker is not ready to commit, and the conversation is no longer progressing, then you may simply want to ask how you can pray for them while also encouraging them to come back with any questions.

You will also encounter some people that simply want to talk, debate or argue and show no signs of listening to what you say. We always want to be patient and show love but that does not mean at the expense of being “held hostage” by an unreasonable guest. It is acceptable to tell these types of people that you are serving to share the Gospel with those seriously interested in having a relationship with Jesus Christ. If there is no indication of interest in that then letting them know you are going to help others and thanking them for calling or chatting as well as wishing that person all God’s blessings may be the only way to end the conversation.

Lastly, you may get a person filled with hate who simply wants to disrupt what we are doing. This may be someone using profane language or making outrageous claims while not engaging you in a serious or reasonable manner. Like any prank, you are encouraged to be firm and quickly end the conversation. You can flag the conversation in the system so the ministry team can investigate and track that information going forward.

If you have other commitments and need to end your time online, it is always good to let people know 10 minutes before you need to leave that your time serving today is coming to a close and you will need to wrap up the conversation soon. If someone really wants to continue talking, then you can ask if they mind you transferring the conversation to another Responder.

Conversations are closed by clicking on the **X** button as seen in the upper right-hand corner of the screen shot below. This closes the dialogue and leads to a few more steps before the conversation is closed in the system. You should complete these final steps before moving on to your next conversation or logging out of Echo for the day.



2. Coding the **Outcome** of the conversation

Every conversation requires an Outcome be attached to it. As seen below, there are six different Outcomes available with a description for each. No Response should only be used if the seeker never types anything. If they respond at all, even if it is simply hello and nothing more, then the conversation moves up the ladder to at least Other. This step is required so the ministry has a sense of the depth and coverage of conversations and helps ministry partners modify their web sites and/or invitations to chat when necessary.

3. Selecting the appropriate **Tags** to describe the topical nature of the conversation

Tagging is required for every conversation that goes beyond No Response or Other. You are asked to select a tag from the list of ministry topics. Some conversations will cover multiple topics and you may select up to three tags from the list in those cases.

The ministry has done a large research project to evaluate thousands of conversations in order to create a Master Tag List with numerous Sub tags to be used going forward. This new Master Tag List covers 99% of conversation topics and includes Other as an option for those topics that are extreme or unexpected. This means **you should now choose the most appropriate topical tag(s) describing the primary topic(s) of the conversation** from the Master Tag List. We encourage you to select the most specific tag possible (ex: choosing Hinduism over simply Religion). You should look at the complete Master Tag List in the Training Resources & Videos section of the Responder Training Portal to familiarize yourself with all the options and the various sub words that feed into each Tag.

The screenshot shows the 'REVIEW CONVERSATION' interface. At the top, there's a header with 'REVIEW CONVERSATION' and buttons for 'Test' and 'EDIT'. Below the header, there's a dropdown menu for 'Flag Conversation'. A blue arrow points to the 'Assurance of Salvation' tag in the list. The list includes: 'Assurance of Salvation', 'Doubt (Assurance of Salvation)', 'Doubting (Assurance of Salvation)', 'Feel saved (Assurance of Salvation)', and 'Loss of Salvation (Assurance of Salvation)'. Below the list are two radio button options: 'Other' (Please describe in notes) and 'No Response' (Select if no real conversation was had). To the right of the tag list is a large text area labeled 'NOTES'. At the bottom right is a 'SAVE' button.

4. Adding relevant **Notes** regarding the conversation

The next step to closing a conversation is optional. This involves entering additional information in the Notes section of Echo. This is for helpful information for Responders that may talk with the seeker in the future. It might include things they said that add a different color to the conversation and that you would want to know if you were speaking to this person for the first time. This could include things like a history of abuse or currently under a licensed counselors care. *These Notes would not be repeated in future conversations but would give the next Responder a more complete picture of the seeker.* This section is not for repeating how the conversation ended or restating the topical nature of the conversation since those will have already been recorded in the Outcome and Tag sections of the final screen in Echo.

The screenshot shows the 'REVIEW CONVERSATION' interface. At the top, there's a header with 'REVIEW CONVERSATION' and a dropdown menu for 'Flag Conversation'. Below the header, there's a dropdown menu for 'Tags...'. A blue arrow points to the 'NOTES' section, which is a large text area. To the left of the 'NOTES' section is a list of radio button options under the heading 'OUTCOME': 'Profession Of Faith' (Seeker received Christ as his/her savior), 'Gospel Presentation' (You presented the gospel during the conversation), 'Spiritual Conversation' (Conversation about prayer, sin, bible, or life issue in context of God's word), 'Other' (Please describe in notes), and 'No Response' (Select if no real conversation was had). At the bottom right is a 'SAVE' button.

Conversation Example:

You have a conversation with someone struggling with marital issues and they admit this has led them to get stuck in a pattern of sin involving pornography and masturbation. The seeker speaks to having a genuine relationship with Jesus although they admit that is clearly broken at the moment. You end up discussing various aspects of the marriage and being honest with the spouse. You also discuss the sin nature of pornography and masturbation and share some resources that might help this person see how to start changing their behavior. They agree to start by setting up a meeting with their pastor to get help going forward.

Once the conversation with the seeker has been closed, you would first choose an Outcome such as Spiritual Conversation or Gospel Presentation depending in whether the Gospel was clearly shared. You would then select Marriage, Pornography and Masturbation as the three tags best describing the topics included in the conversation. Any other relevant facts can then be added into the Notes section if they would be necessary and helpful to anyone else speaking to this seeker in the future. In this case, a Note might be added indicating the seeker plans to meet with their pastor.

5. **Save** the Conversation in Echo

The final step to closing a conversation in Echo is saving the conversation. You should close all non-text conversations before the end of your time online each day. This involves simply clicking selecting the SAVE key at the bottom of the conversation record.

L. Logging Off the System

Make sure to fully log off the system at the end of each day. You do this by clicking the Three Dashes next to your Name in the Upper Left Corner of the Black (left side) Panel.

This will bring you back to TALK, TRAIN and ACCOUNT scree. Scroll to the bottom of this screen and select the YES icon for logging out of the system.



M. Responder Training Portal

You can access the Responder Training Manual and an assortment of resources on our Training Portal. It can be found at:

<https://needhimvolunteer.com/>

Password: NHGresources



The Site offers the following:

- Responder Training Manual
- Internal Training Updates
- 3rd Party Referral Information
- Church Connection Tools
- Ministry Reading Plans
- Approved Resources to Share
- Most Common Seeker Questions
- Gospel Training and Tips
- Ministry Partners in Echo
- Responder Newsletters
- Key Bible Verses in Evangelism
- Ministry Identity Statements

Section 4 – Managing TEXT MESSAGING Conversations in Echo

TEXT MESSAGING Conversations are not as time sensitive and can be responded to throughout your time online and even over a period of days or weeks. When you initially pick up a **TEXT MESSAGING** Conversation, you will need to “Claim” It for it to remain in your conversations. The Seeker may not realize they have reached Need Him Ministries and do not see your name, so please introduce the Ministry and yourself (first name only).

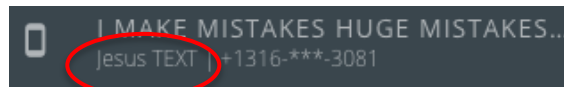
With more and more young children having access to TEXT MESSAGING, to protect yourself and the Ministry, we want to introduce who we are and assure they are at least 18 years of age or have parental consent to be engaging with us. Even if the Seeker has been here many times, please use the prescribed introductions as outlined below. *For more information on managing conversations with Minors, please review that section of the Training Manual.*

Tips For Managing “Jesus Text”

Incoming **TEXT MESSAGING** Conversations come from a variety of sources, including those who text 53787 (which spells JESUS). Jesus Text Seekers come to us from Social Media Campaigns, Movie Trailers or simply by Texting a prayer to Jesus. Those praying may not realize they are reaching a ministry.

These are NOT spam and should be viewed as a great opportunity to share. Regardless of how they find us, we should properly introduce the Ministry and ourselves with a simple introduction as follows:

“Hi, you actually sent your text to JESUS and have reached a Christian ministry here to share hope. My name is Paul and I would love to hear your story and talk BUT also want to respect your privacy and not engage with minors on inappropriate or sensitive topics. Feel free to message back if you want to talk and are at least 18 y/o or have parental permission to talk.”

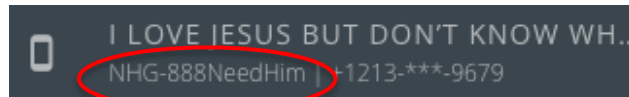


Tips For Managing “All Other TEXT MESSAGING Conversations”

Incoming **TEXT MESSAGING** Conversations can come from a variety of sources, including Ministry Partners, Missed Chats or Phone Calls as well as those using one of the Ministry TEXT MESSAGING Numbers.

Regardless of how they find us, we should properly introduce the Ministry and ourselves with a simple introduction as follows:

“Hi, you have reached needhim.org. We are a Christian ministry here to share the hope found only in Jesus. My name is Paul and I would love to hear your story and talk BUT also want to respect your privacy and not engage with minors on inappropriate or sensitive topics. Feel free to message back if you want to talk and are at least 18 y/o or have parental permission to talk.”



As with all **TEXT MESSAGING** Conversations, if a Seeker fails to immediately respond, give the conversation time to breathe, leaving it open for at least 24 hours. Even if the Seeker never responds, please embed a Gospel Message before closing. Text Conversations are a great way to walk with or to mentor a Seeker for an extended period.

The following tips provide some good reminders of those differences and encouragement how to manage these type conversations:

- Chats always have priority over TEXT MESSAGING Conversations. We have 60 seconds to answer a chat and no limit on a TEXT MESSAGING Conversation. Do not panic or worry if a TEXT MESSAGING Conversation sits in the Inbox until you are available to answer.
- There is NO need to close TEXT MESSAGING Conversations quickly. Let the conversation breathe and give the seeker at least 24 hours to respond.
- Manage the conversation to a natural ending. If you start walking with someone that may mean it lasts for weeks or months. We have open TEXT MESSAGING Conversations that have been ongoing on for over a year.
- Get comfortable with a larger number of personal conversations. We have had individuals successfully managing over 40 text conversations at a time. That is not your target but meant to encourage you that you will get more comfortable managing a larger number.
- Don't worry about missing someone's response. It is ok to answer a TEXT MESSAGING Conversation many hours later if you do happen to miss one as the nature of the exchange allows less frequent responses. It is always best to apologize for the slow response as most people never mention it after that.
- Try to end each exchange with a short question, to encourage a response and get the seeker engaged in conversation. Use things like "Is this true in your life?", "what is your relationship like with Jesus?", "does this make sense to you?", "let me know your thoughts", and "what has your experience been?".

- No matter what the apparent attitude or experience of the seeker ***we should always be able to present the Gospel before the conversation is closed.*** You should create a brief Gospel presentation in your personal resources that you can use for most conversations. If you have not shared the Gospel, then you should take one last opportunity to do so before closing the conversation.
- Sometimes praying for the seeker gets them re-engaged if they seem like they are losing interest.
- If you decide to close a TEXT MESSAGING Conversation, then let them know you are doing so. Adding a message that they are always welcome back and that their future messages will go back into the Inbox and not to you.

As with all TEXT MESSAGING Conversations, give them time to breathe, at least 24 hours. If they fail to respond, insert the Gospel and mark as Gospel Presentation.

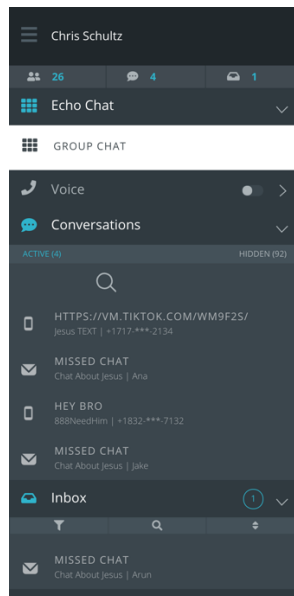
“You may have decided not to talk but make no mistake that Jesus loves you and wants to be part of your life. We are here to share the good news ... that we can each be forgiven and reconciled back to God through a relationship with Jesus Christ. You can learn more and talk with us any time at **www.chataboutjesus.com** I will be closing this now so goodbye and God bless.”

Section 5 - Managing Voice Conversations in Echo

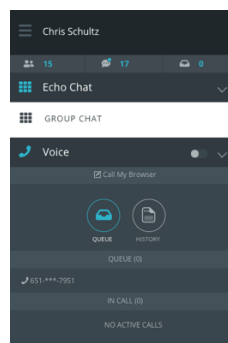
A. Voice System Overview

Once you select the **TALK Module** The system is divided into three navigation panels for managing Conversations.

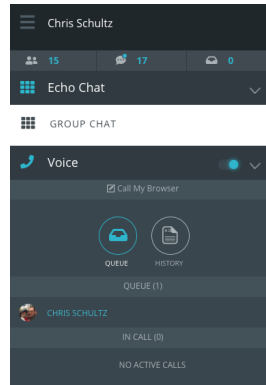
The Left Panel with the black background allows you to view the Status Bar, your Active Conversations and the Inbox.



To access the Voice Module, open the down arrow to the right of the Phone Icon. The module will open up showing you which method of taking calls you have selected (Browser, Cell, Land Line, etc...). Further, the system will display which Responders are in the Voice Queue, Active Incoming Calls, etc...



To become “active” in the Voice Module, you must click the “grey slider” turning it blue. This step triggers you into the Active Voice Queue. Please note, phone calls cannot be transferred once accepted and all calls are domestic.



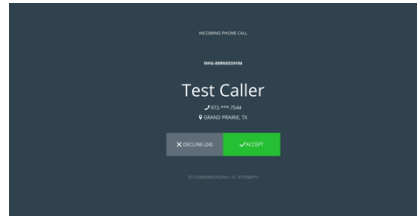
Once in the Module, you have the ability to manage calls via your Browser with appropriate headset (including mic) or by having the incoming calls transferred to your personal device (cell or land line). To add a line, click the Edit Box next to Call My Browser and follow the instructions to add a line.

Once you hit “verify”, the system will display a 4-digit numeric code and a computer will call your device. Answer and input the 4-digit code. This will pair your device to the ECHO System.

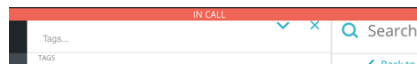
After pairing, simply click the grey slider (turning it blue) and you will be ready to take incoming calls.

This is an actual “queue” so the next incoming call will come to the Responder in the order they appear in the module.

You will receive a notice on-screen to either Accept or Reject the call.



While in the Active Call, you will have a Red Bar across the Top of the ECHO System indicating "In Call"



After completing the Call, click the "X" in the right-hand corner to close out of the call.

B. Closing The Call

Close in accordance with prior instructions regarding Closing Conversations.

Section 6 - Help With Hard Topics

Many people connect with us in the midst of incredibly difficult life issues. Others come having been judged or knocked down by someone claiming to be Christian. When these hard topics come along, we do not have to leave them unanswered and forsake them by only offering a cookie-cutter presentation of the Gospel essentials that does not resonate with the seeker. As Christians, we have the very best and most accurate answers to all of these questions because we have the true Word of God. We always want to show love towards someone no matter how angry or confused they may be.

This section covers some topics that make Responders more nervous and are difficult to respond to for various reasons. Some are emotionally charged and others receive push back due to rapidly changing social acceptance of certain behaviors.

The information shared for each topic below is meant to share a high-level explanation of our ministry position on these issues and ensure we are all on the same page theologically. Some have guidelines to use and others offer more background. ***Although you are free to lean on this information appropriately within a conversation, these are not meant to be copied and pasted as complete answers.*** As you gain experience, you will become more comfortable and develop your own voice in responding to these difficult conversations and we are always here to help when needed.

This section includes different resources with information on the following hard topics:

- A. Information for Conversations that Mention Suicide
- B. Handling Conversations with Minors
- C. Handling Conversations dealing with Criminal Activity
- D. Handling Conversations of a Sexual Nature
- E. Same Sex Attraction / Homosexual Lifestyles / Same Sex Marriage
- F. Gender Confusion and Transition
- G. Divorce and Remarriage
- H. Managing Difficult Conversations with Repeat Visitors
- I. Managing Conversations Dealing with Abortion

A. Information for Conversations that Mention Suicide

Suicide is an obviously difficult topic. It has become something young people mention more casually and is more frequently mentioned within a topic or greeting. These conversations also are difficult because some truly require a professional counselor to get involved so we have to determine when we should refer someone to that option.

In order to help prepare you for your next conversation where this topic arises, and when to refer someone to outside help, please read and become familiar with the following tips for how to handle conversations about suicide:

1. Don't let the topic overwhelm you. Take a deep breath – you can do this. Pray for strength and be yourself. The right words are not as important as your attitude. If you are truly concerned then your manner will show it.

Remember that the person is talking to you as opposed to anyone else that they know, and that this means that they trust you to help them more than any of these other people right now. There is a reason for that trust being placed in you. Even if you don't think that you can help them, or don't know what to say, they have faith in you and you should take confidence from this.

2. Listen attentively. Learn what this person's problems really are and let the person unload despair and ventilate anger. Let their emotions come out and he or she will feel better as you talk through things. No matter how negative the person seems it is a positive sign that they are talking with you and even crying out for help.

No one who is suicidal is expecting magic words that will instantly take the pain away. As best you can, ignore the need to "cheer them up" or give quick fixes to make them feel better. Many simply want someone to listen and accept that they are in a lot of emotional pain.

A lot of advice giving isn't necessary or even wanted up front. Just let them talk. This is not to say that you can't ask appropriate questions or make comments. But try to only say enough to keep the conversation moving while letting them open up in more depth about their problems.

3. Find out their first name if you don't know it. Be kind, sympathetic, non-judgmental, patient, calm, and accepting. It is ok to ask a probing question if you need clarity on what is going on. It is good that they have gotten in touch with another person.

Someone who is suicidal will have very low (or no) feeling of hope for a better future. Their problems will overwhelm them even more than normal and their issues seem insurmountable and like they will never end. Be nice. Don't tell them that their problems aren't enough to feel suicidal over or make belittling comments about their emotions. Accept that even though you may be able to see "clearly" that their problems will go away someday, right now they cannot, and you should try to be sensitive to that.

It is ok to gently remind someone that there is still hope for the future to improve -- because it's something that they need to hear. But leave this until later in the conversation, after they have had a chance to vent and release some of their emotion.

4. Simply talking about their problems for a length of time will often give suicidal people relief from loneliness and pent up feelings, awareness that another person cares, and a feeling of being understood.

At some point during the conversation, you may notice some changes in their behavior. The biggest give-away is that they start to talk more slowly, and sound less noticeably upset. If they were crying, they may stop. This is not the time for advice or "closing speeches", it's the signal to encourage and pray for them if they will allow that.

5. Avoid arguments, problem solving, advice giving, quick referrals, belittling and making this person feel that he has to justify his suicidal feelings.

*This is about their perception/reality and not yours. Remember this sentence if you feel judgmental or can't understand why they are so upset. **"It is not how bad the problem is, or appears to you, but how badly it's hurting the person who has it."***

6. Look for answers to four critical questions as you are listening:

- Are they actually saying they are going to kill themselves?
- Have they said how they will do it?
- Do they have everything they need to do it?
- Have they given a time when they will do it?

*The more details they have around these questions, the more dangerous this becomes. **If they seem to have a plan and the means to follow through then you want to let them know they need professional help and you want them to talk with a trained counselor. In those cases, the National Suicide Prevention Line (800-273-8255) is the place to refer them. This should be done as soon as you come to that conclusion. You want to make this a strong suggestion without cutting them off or talking over them.***

7. If they have mentioned suicide in the topic or early on but never really get into the details, then don't bring it back up. If there is no apparent reason to send them to another resource, then look to transition the conversation to Jesus. Once have a good understanding of the issues, then summarize those back to him or her. This helps to preclude misunderstandings and demonstrates to them that you are being attentive.

This does not need to be a detailed summary with all the bad stuff they could do but rather a quick summary of all the issues they are fighting.

8. Don't become a therapist. However, it is acceptable to say that you believe certain things. Speak biblical truth as your encouragement and keep it simple.

- God loves them.
 - There is hope in God.
 - God has a plan for them and can help through anything.
9. Before you let the person go, emphasize that there may be other causes for how they are feeling and they may want to consider finding help through professional counseling for those issues.
 10. Always try to ask if they know Jesus Christ and if you could pray for them. We want to be true to our call to share the good news, but we also want to apply good judgment where circumstances require us to understand if someone is so hurt that they are not listening. Avoid making this your first response or going into “auto-pilot” and presenting the Gospel when the person is clearly not in a position to hear it.

This list is not the answer to every conversation, but the basic principles will help you manage these difficult conversations well. Please remember to flag these conversations for review if the suicide topic comes up and also tag it as such. We love you and are praying for you.

B. Managing Conversations with Minors

Conversations with Minors are increasing in numbers and becoming more complex. Children are getting access to computers and phones at younger ages. They are also getting exposed to mature content and topics earlier in life.

The ministry wants to share Jesus and speak truth into all seekers, but we also have an obligation to adhere to the various rules and regulations that relate to conversations with Minors and privacy laws. For instance, in the U.S. there is the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) that is a federal law prohibiting certain types of communication with children 13 years or younger. There are similar laws in Europe that apply to children under 16 years of age. As such, **WE HAVE RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED A TERMS OF SERVICE AGREEMENT IN CHAT CONVERSATIONS WHERE THE USER MUST AGREE THEY ARE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE OR THEY HAVE RECEIVED PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT TO CHAT.** We are working in a similar solution for text messages.

There is nothing illegal about simply answering one of our conversations, even with someone under 18 years old, but we want to offer direction and protect you as well as the ministry in this time of growing complexity.

We want to guide your conversations with Minors with some Conversation Management Reminders and then provide direction and guardrails on how to proceed with 4 different conversation types

Conversation Management Reminders

First Reminder - The ministry does not seek to collect any personally identifiable information from any seeker. So, in addition to avoiding full names and addresses, the ministry does not ask seekers their age. However, there are occasions when the seeker will offer such information, or you will be able to ascertain during the conversation. Use your best judgement when speaking with someone that sounds like they are a Minor.

Second reminder - We recognize that conversations with Minors can be complex. As Responders, we **do not** want to shy away from them, but we want to be conscious of who you are speaking to and what they are looking to discuss. Some of you may feel like walking with this young person over time would help but this is never allowed with a Minor.

Third reminder - As with all conversations, you should be evaluating the details the seeker shares. We are NOT asking you to determine each seekers age. We encourage you to simply evaluate the information you are presented. If words like school, my teacher, kids, my parents, and other phrases that are not commonly used by adults are used then that would be a red flag. In these obvious cases, proceed cautiously determining what the guest is looking to discuss. Determine whether they have someone they trust so you can encourage that connection. You should always use discretion and avoid getting pulled into personal details that are not relevant to the conversation.

We are not asking you to manage any conversation that you are not comfortable with having. If during conversation, you feel the specific details merit additional review then please flag the conversation for review by the ministry staff.

Conversation Types

Once you suspect or realize you are talking with someone under 18 years of age, we encourage you to determine the type of conversation they are seeking and follow these guidelines for each type of conversation.

1. **Spiritual Nature** - Conversation purely spiritual in nature. These could be focused on questions about the Bible or concerning forgiveness, faith, how to be saved, or changing their relationship with God. These should be handled like any other legitimate conversation. Feel free to pray with them but also set boundaries and do not get pulled into an ongoing or repeated conversation.
2. **General Life Discussion and Connection** – Many young people come to the ministry just looking to talk or connect. They may bring up issues like friendships, school, loneliness, purpose, parents, identity, and feelings (anxiety, worry, depression). These should be handled directly with biblical direction. We want you to be intentional in leading this conversation to a positive close. Feel free to pray with them but also set boundaries and do not get pulled into an ongoing or repeated conversation.
3. **Serious Life Issues** - If the conversation relates to a serious life issue such as teen pregnancy, gender confusion, homosexuality, premarital sex, abuse, bullying, etc. then we want you to be intentional in leading this conversation to a positive close. This includes sharing biblical truth while at the same time encouraging the Minor to get help and speak to their parents, Youth Pastor, School Counselor or other trusted adult. Feel free to pray with them but also set boundaries and do not get pulled into an ongoing or repeated conversation.
4. **Inappropriate Nature** - As with any aged person, when the conversation is of an inappropriate nature, then we encourage you to graciously bow out and close the conversation quickly. Always show grace but be guarded with your words and encourage the minor to talk with their parents, Youth Pastor, School Counselor or other trusted adult.

We recognize it is hard to fit every possible conversation into one of four categories, but the reminders and guidelines above should provide you with a safe framework for having conversations with Minors.

A few additional requirements as you manage these conversations:

- **Do NOT schedule or agree to ongoing conversations with a Minor.** If you happen to come across a repeat seeker in conversation, that is fine. Do NOT agree to connect in the future or schedule another time to continue the conversation via chat or keep the

conversation open via text messaging when you know the guest is a Minor.

- Use the Notes section in Echo to share the details of a conversation with a Minor. You do not have to type out the entire story but include the most pertinent details about their age and nature of conversation so the next Responder will be aware of what you learned about their age.

It is imperative that all conversations with Minors (Chat or Text) be closed and dispositioned the same day the conversation begins. Please ensure that all conversations with Minors are closed when you finish your time on-line that day. This means if you have an ECHO Text Conversation you should send a closing message and then close it in the system.

C. Handling Conversations Dealing with Criminal Activity

The number of conversations of a criminal nature seem to be increasing as culture supports a less biblical view of moral right and wrong and as people devalue Absolute Truth. These conversations can be very sensitive and difficult for both the Responder and the guest. Many guests will have guilt over past / current criminal activity or may be contemplating future acts of violence. Others may be sharing their experience as a victim or someone that has been the subject of inappropriate activity. If you learn of such actions or behaviors, please alert a Team Leader/System Administrator for evaluation and potential action.

There are three broad-based categories of criminal activity the Ministry uses in evaluation:

- **Property Crimes** – Includes crimes involving property (damage, theft, destruction, etc.)
- **Personal Crimes** – Includes crimes against or involving other individuals (assault, murder, abuse, rape, incest, etc.)
- **Terror-Related Crimes** – Includes threats of violence or death against property or individuals.

It is important to look at context as each of these types may involve a heightened level of scrutiny or action.

What To Look For:

- **TIMING** - Determine whether the conduct in question is a past action, a recent action or something being planned.
- **AUTHORITY INVOLVEMENT** -Ascertain whether the conduct has already been addressed by law enforcement authorities, is currently being handled or is yet to be reported.
- **VICTIMS** - Look to understand whether other persons were or will be harmed versus the conduct being self-inflicted.
- **DETAILS** - Determine whether specifically identifiable information about the person and conduct has been shared. This includes information such as full names, accomplices, specific addresses or locations, and dates or details of the conduct.

We are NOT asking you to play investigator or determine the appropriate legal response to any reported conduct. You should NOT dig for details but should use common sense to collect information as you have the conversation. All Terror-Related threats, regardless of how much information you glean, should be reported to Administrators for evaluation and potential action.

We encourage you to use great discretion as many Seekers may confess or share a past activity (abuse, rape, criminal actions, etc....). It is important to ***gently probe*** to determine if they are simply sharing their past for personal context. Many will share a past pain as they are seeking hope for the future. As you listen to their story, you need to evaluate the TIMING, AUTHORITY INVOLVEMENT, VICTIMS and DETAILS. If you are uncertain, please feel free to reach out to a Team Leader/System Administrator.

What To Do Next:

- Don't make assumptions about the conversation. If a seeker simply asks about God's ability to forgive an action, don't assume the Seeker has engaged in criminal activity or is planning to do so. Many may be asking because of a close family member who has fallen into bad decisions or for other innocent reasons.
- Do NOT promise you will keep the information confidential. You can let people know we may have a legal obligation to report information in some cases. If pressed, you can simply say the ministry leadership makes that determination.
- IN CLEAR CASES OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, you should note personal and relevant information (full names, places, dates, time of day, plans or detail of the crime, etc.) but you should always adhere to the Code of Conduct and not seek to collect any personal information. You are not asked to "build a case" or collect all the information. **YOU SHOULD NEVER REACH OUT DIRECTLY TO ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT.**
- Select the Criminal Activity Flag in Echo from the drop-down menu when closing the conversation and the ministry team will be alerted.

Responders should always be in control of the conversation. You are never asked to put yourself in a position where believe this could be dangerous. If at any time, you feel uncertain, please feel free to transfer to a Team Leader/ System Administrator for review.

Conversations related to potential criminal activity that do not meet these criteria should be managed according to normal ministry conversation guidelines with no need to report to Administrators. Examples of these include:

- A non-violent crime (such as shoplifting or stealing) in the past where the Seeker is simply working through guilt.
- A crime where the local authorities have already been involved and the issue has been resolved (through punishment or no charges being sought).

A closing thought on conversations about potential criminal activity with minors. There are instances when we know the seeker is a minor. We remind you to be extra careful and cautious when speaking to them. Encourage them to talk with their parents, teachers, school counselor or youth leader for additional help.

D. Handling Conversations of a Sexual Nature

The number of conversations of a sexual nature seem to be increasing as culture supports a less biblical view of sex and people become less anxious about talking about discussing these issues. These can be very sensitive and even embarrassing for both the Responder and the seeker. As we see more and more men and women bringing issues of pornography, masturbation, extra-marital affairs and pre-marital sex to the conversation, we are reminded that a majority are coming with an appreciation that these things are wrong and desperately seeking help. In those cases, we do not need to spend a long period of time explaining God's perfect design for sex but rather need to help them approach these issues with honesty, transparency and accountability.

Conversations of this nature are often highly sensitive and emotional topics. We also often are speaking to someone who has never shared this information with anyone else. We unfortunately also may be speaking to someone that has a deeper issue and is not seeking help or Jesus Christ but some perverse enjoyment from such a conversation. This means we have to be that much more discerning about what is being said. We encourage you to look for and see the difference between someone broken, hurting and in need of help and someone pushing the bounds of common decency and respect.

The ministry never wants to put you in a situation where you are feeling manipulated or harassed.

Please know that you are in control of every conversation that you have. You should always be prepared to set clear boundaries and let the seeker know you are unwilling to continue if those boundaries are not respected. The first sign of any sexual harassment or sexually inappropriate language should be met with a strong response letting the seeker know that you will not engage or remain on line if they continue to use such language. You should never feel as if you are being held captive in an inappropriate conversation of any type. You can immediately end any conversation if it crosses the line of common decency.

Here are a few additional helpful tips for managing these conversations:

- Feel free to transfer someone of the opposite gender to a Responder of the same gender if the topic requires or you simply believe it would be more appropriate.
- If you know you are speaking with someone under 18, be extra careful and encourage them to reach out to their parents, school counselor or youth leader for a more appropriate source of help.
- Remember that we have resources you can send to help those with specific sin issues like pornography. These reading plans can be very helpful in bringing change, but they are a starting point and do not substitute for real accountability. We want you to encourage people to not just read the plan but do each step.

- Recognize that Satan likes to use shame and guilt to keep people buried in this type of sin. He wants us to try to manage our own way out of these sin issues and knows we are more likely to fail without the help and encouragement of others. Let seekers know this is a recipe for failure and being honest and transparent with someone in their life is necessary no matter how difficult that may be.

If a conversation crosses the line, then you can alert the ministry team through two different methods (**Flag Conversation** or **Block this User**). You will first still go through the normal steps of closing a conversation by selecting an outcome, adding topic tags and including comments where helpful. Before selecting **Save** and closing the record, you can also do two more things.

You will see two different drop-down menus available. The first is under the section **Flag Conversation**. You can click on that and select **For Review/Feedback** and this will send the ministry team an alert and copy of this conversation so we can see what occurred.

The second drop down can be found by clicking the down arrow/carrot at the top of the screen and the first option is **Block this User**. If you select this option, then the IP address used to have that conversation will be blocked in Echo from chatting again for 24 hours. We review those blocked conversations to determine if a longer block is necessary. You can also send us an email or text message in those cases so we can act on those even more quickly.

We recognize that some of these conversations can be awkward. Our prayer is that you would approach them with a light touch and after listening well turn them back into how Jesus can help us live in a way that honors Him and is good for us. As with all types of conversations, the more you handle, the more equipped you will feel about engaging seekers. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions or desire to discuss this further.

E. Same Sex Attraction / Homosexual Lifestyles / Same Sex Marriage

The Nature of the Challenge

As culture more readily accepts same sex behavior, it is important to understand if the person is simply experiencing same sex thoughts or desires versus being involved in a homosexual lifestyle. Either way, homosexuality is a very real, emotional and personal issue. We understand that people can have very strong and genuine attractions and desires; however, that does not mean those feelings are from God or that He wants us to act on them. It is not about having those feelings, as God loves each of us even as we are all sinners. However, it does matter what we do with those feelings and how we choose to act on them. It is always harmful when we substitute our own feelings or desires for what God tells us is best for us.

The Biblical Response

Fundamental to our understanding of human sexuality is that God created sexual relations as a gift to be shared between a male husband and female wife, always within the confines of a covenant marriage relationship. Any sexual activity outside that perfect design is sinful, whether that be homosexual, heterosexual, pre-marital or extra-marital. That said, we live in a fallen world, a world gripped by sin. We face temptations all around us as the evil one wants to kill, steal and destroy. The Bible tells us that the temptation is not in itself sin, however, it is what we do with that temptation that can result in sin. So, having a “feeling” toward something that is outside of God’s perfect design may not be sinful in and of itself. However, if we act on those feelings we are living outside his perfect design and that is a sin that ultimately hurts us and our relationship with God. The Bible is ultimately clear that all sexual activity outside God’s perfect design for marriage is sin.

A Loving Approach

We should always view these conversations as an opportunity to minister to people and speak biblical truth in grace and love. We need to avoid the common trap so many Christians falls into of making homosexuality into some special category of disobedience that hurts God more than all other sin. We encourage you to listen well and share with the one true source of hope found only in Jesus. That hope in Jesus is for everyone, including those who battle same-sex attraction. God loves them and wants them to experience the transformative power of His presence and grace. God wants each of us to become the child of God that He created us to be and not someone that identifies themselves simply by their perceived sexuality.

F. Preparing for Gender Identity Conversations

The Nature of the Challenge

We live in a world broken by sin. The result is that confusion extends everywhere including into such things once considered obvious. Now culture is speaking into those once settled ideas and telling us to change everything we thought we knew. We have seen this change occur regarding the definition of marriage and gender identity seems to be the next such topic.

Transsexualism, also known as transgenderism, Gender Identity Disorder (GID), or Gender Dysphoria, is a feeling that your biological / genetic / physiological gender does not match the gender you identify with and/or perceive yourself to be. Transsexuals / transgenders often describe themselves as feeling “trapped” in a body that does not match their true gender. This confusion may result in them doing different things to act on their feelings such as cross dressing, practicing transvestitism, or seeking hormone therapy and/or gender reassignment surgery to bring their bodies into conformity with their perceived gender.

The world is becoming more and more filled with messages of confusion. Children are growing up being told gender does not matter and the regular stream of messages about gender-neutrality, unisex restrooms and sexual identity being a choice is leaving them more susceptible to being lost and confused.

Culture is moving toward normalizing such behavior and activity, calling for special protections under Civil Rights Protections. Culture is also pressing to teach young children that gender is a choice they can make. It is reported there are up to 72 different Gender Designations with 78 Gender Pronouns.

We live in a confused and fallen world, and that confusion extends everywhere, so that even the most basic questions, like “what gender am I?” become difficult for some people to answer. Some people claim they were born as the wrong gender, or at least in the wrong body. A man may believe he is actually a female, but his soul is “stuck” in a male body. Such claims receive support from those who advocate a “gender-neutral” society. But those who view gender distinctions as nothing more than arbitrary labels or a “box” to be broken out of are actively rejecting God’s design in creation.

As culture more readily accepts transgender behavior, it is important to understand if the person is simply experiencing gender dysphoria or confusion versus having completed steps for transition or reassignment. Either way, transgenderism or gender dysphoria are very real, emotional and personal issues. We understand that people can have very strong and genuine attractions and desires; however, that **does not mean those feelings are from God or that He wants us to act on them.** It is not about having those feelings, as God loves each of us even as we are all sinners. However, it does matter what we do with those feelings and how we choose to act on them. It is always harmful when we substitute our own feelings or desires for what God tells us is best for us.

The Biblical Response

The Bible nowhere explicitly mentions transgenderism or describes anyone as having transgender feelings. However, the Bible has plenty to say about human sexuality. Most basic to our understanding of gender is that God created two (and only two) genders: “male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27).

All the modern-day speculation about numerous genders or gender fluidity—or even a gender “continuum” with unlimited genders—is foreign to the Bible. The closest the Bible comes to mentioning transgenderism is in its condemnations of homosexuality (Romans 1:18–32; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10) and transvestitism (Deuteronomy 22:5). The Greek word often translated “homosexual offenders” or “male prostitutes” in 1 Corinthians 6:9 literally means “effeminate men.” So, while the Bible does not directly mention transgenderism, when it mentions other instances of gender “confusion,” it clearly and explicitly identifies them as sin.

What about the possibility that those suffering with transgenderism have a brain that functions as one gender while the rest of the body is biologically the other gender? The Bible does not even hint at such a possibility. However, neither does the Bible mention hermaphroditism (a condition in which a person has both male and female sexual organs), which undeniably occurs (although extremely rarely). Further, people can be born with or develop all kinds of different brain defects or malfunctions.

With hermaphroditism as evidence, it cannot be said that if the Bible does not mention something it does not occur. So, it might be possible for a person to be born with a brain wired in such a way that it contributes to gender dysphoria. This could also be an explanation for some instances of homosexuality. However, just because something might have a biological cause **does not mean** embracing the effects is the right thing to do. Some people are wired with a sexuality on hyper-drive. That does not make it right for them to engage in sexual immorality. It is scientifically proven that some psychopaths / sociopaths have brains with severely weakened impulse-control mechanisms. That does not make it right for them to engage in every deviant behavior that crosses their minds.

Why did God choose to make men *and* women?

*God didn't have to make two different kinds of human beings. He didn't have to make us so that men and women, on average, come in different shapes and sizes and grow hair in different places and often think and feel in different ways. God could have propagated the human race in some other way besides the differentiated pair of male and female. He could have made Adam sufficient without an Eve. Or he could have made Eve without an Adam. But God decided to make not one man or one woman, or a group of men or a group of women; he made a man and a woman. **The one feature of human existence that shapes life as much or more than any other—our biological sex—was God's choice.***

In an ultimate sense, of course, the world had to be made the way it was, in accordance with the immutable will of God and as a necessary expression of his character. I'm not suggesting God made Adam and Eve by a roll of the dice. Actually, I'm reminding us of the opposite. This whole wonderful, beautiful, complicated business of a two-sexed

humanity was God's idea. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). The whole human race is, always has been, and will be for the rest of time, comprised of two differentiated and complementary sexes. This perpetual bifurcated ordering of humanity is not by accident or by caprice but by God's good design. And why? What is at stake in God making us male and female? Nothing less than the gospel, that's all. The mystery of marriage is profound, Paul says, and it refers to Christ and the church (Eph. 5:32).

"Mystery" in the New Testament sense refers to something hidden and then revealed. The Bible is saying that God created men and women—two different sexes—so that he might paint a living picture of the differentiated and complementary union of Christ and the church. Ephesians 5 may be about marriage, but we can't make sense of the underlying logic unless we note God's intentions in creating marriage as a gospel-shaped union between a differentiated and complementary pair. Any move to abolish all distinctions between men and women is a move (whether intentionally or not) to tear down the building blocks of redemption itself. (1)

Fundamental to our understanding of human sexuality is that God created sexual relations as a gift to be shared between a male husband and female wife, always within the confines of a covenant marriage relationship. Any sexual activity outside that perfect design is sinful, whether that be homosexual, heterosexual, transexual, pre-marital or extra-marital. That said, we live in a fallen world, a world gripped by sin. We face temptations all around us as the evil one wants to kill, steal and destroy. ***The Bible tells us that the temptation is not in itself sin, however, it is what we do with that temptation that can result in sin.*** So, having a "feeling" toward something that is outside of God's perfect design may not be sinful in and of itself. However, if we act on those feelings we are living outside his perfect design and that is a sin that ultimately hurts us and our relationship with God. The Bible is ultimately clear that all sexual activity outside God's perfect design for marriage is sin.

This we know, we are involved in a spiritual battle for our souls. The world seeks to conform us to its mold, which is why we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1–2). Satan attempts to deceive us and urges us to question God's plan. One of the devil's ploys is to make us dissatisfied with how God made us. To some he whispers, "You're fat and ugly." To others, "You're stupid and clumsy." And to still others, "You look like a boy, but you're really a girl." In each case, the underlying message is the same: "God messed up on you."

A Loving Approach

No matter if the gender distortion has a genetic, hormonal, physiological, psychological, or spiritual cause, it can be overcome through faith in Christ and continued reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit. Sin can be overcome, and lives can be changed, through the salvation that Jesus provides. If a person feels they have been born as the wrong gender, the answer is not gender-reassignment surgery, hormone therapy, cross-dressing, etc. Those are simply worldly ways of acquiescing to the lies of Satan. God does not make mistakes. The one who feels they were born in the wrong body needs, first and foremost, to experience the transformative power of Christ. When we "participate in the divine nature," we escape "the corruption in the world caused by evil desires" (2 Peter 1:4).

Healing can be received, sin can be overcome, and lives can be changed through the salvation that Jesus provides, even if there are biological / physiological factors. The Corinthian believers are an example of such a change: “And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). There is hope for everyone, transsexuals, transgenders, those with gender identity disorder, because of God’s forgiveness available in Jesus Christ.

Christ sets us on the path to victory. Hebrews 12:1–2 states, “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The cross is key. Jesus pioneered our faith, and He will perfect it. His victory will be ours as well.

We should always view these conversations as an opportunity to minister to people and speak biblical truth in grace and love. We need to avoid the common trap so many Christians fall into of making transgenderism or gender dysphoria into some special category of disobedience that hurts God more than all other sin. ***We encourage you to listen well and share the one true source of hope found only in Jesus.*** That hope in Jesus is for everyone, including those who battle gender dysphoria or confusion. God loves them and wants them to experience the transformative power of His presence and grace. God wants each of us to become the child of God that He created us to be and not someone that identifies themselves simply by their perceived sexuality or gender.

Footnotes:

- (1) Crossway Publications – Kevin DeYoung
- (2) GotQuestions – Contributions of Material for Article

G. Divorce and Remarriage

The Nature of the Challenge

Much of the world now treats marriage like some sort of social contract where if it is not working as expected then we change the terms and void the contract. It is now readily accepted in many circles when someone ends a relationship because they are unhappy or think there is something better. A person facing a divorce (either wanted or unwanted) may find themselves with many questions about God's plan and His perspective on both divorce and remarriage. This is a complex issue with many variables and there are different positions taken by Christians that are sincerely seeking to follow God's Word. There are four schools of thought on divorce and remarriage:

1. No divorce and no remarriage except when the spouse has died
2. No divorce and limited remarriage
3. Limited divorce but no remarriage unless the spouse has died
4. Limited divorce and limited remarriage

It is important to understand where the person you are speaking with resides within this complex issue. Some are seeking guidance on getting a divorce. Others on getting remarried after a divorce. Finally, there are others looking to determine if their remarriage is biblical.

There is not a one-size fits all approach. God knows the type of damage that divorce causes and hates what it does to us spiritually and psychologically. He knows we are deeply hurt when it happens and how much it affects those around us – especially our children.

God values the marriage Covenant, but we don't want to treat anyone that has experienced the pain of divorce as if it is the unforgiveable sin. This is especially true in cases where a former spouse pursued divorce or abandoned the marriage. In those cases, God does not hold us accountable for the sins of our spouse. God loves each of us and Jesus' death offers forgiveness for all sin including those that come from a broken marriage.

The Biblical Response

Genesis 2:24 says that a man should leave his father and mother and become one flesh with his wife. This passage gives several points for understanding God's design for marriage. First, marriage involves a man and a woman. Second, is that marriage is intended to last a lifetime. And third, that God's design for marriage is monogamy.

We believe that marriage is a Covenant relationship meant to last a lifetime. God's design for marriage is a holy covenant between a man, a woman, and God himself. This is an irrevocable agreement to love, honor and respect your spouse. The Bible is also clear that God hates divorce and His desire is for us to do everything possible to work through our differences. When we break this Covenant relationship, we find ourselves outside the perfect plan of God. God is not just being dogmatic and simply focusing on sin when he looks at divorce. He understands that marriage goes much deeper than that and his reasons for not wanting divorce

are much more intimate and based on His love for us. He knows that divorce creates deep wounds for all impacted. We also see cases in scripture where divorce was allowed. This does not mean people with similar situations should proceed with divorce without doing everything possible to heal the marriage.

A Loving Approach

We should always view these conversations as an opportunity to minister to people and speak biblical truth in grace and love. We need to listen and understand all that is at work with this person's life. It is also critically important to understand that there may be abuse or safety issues at play with the spouse and/or children. In those cases, we want to encourage people to get those at risk into safe situations. The marriage relationship and divorce discussion should be put on hold until all affected are safe and the issues creating an unsafe environment are fully addressed. We encourage them to seek help and counsel from their local Pastor (and local police authorities where necessary) to help navigate these complex and difficult issues.

Our approach is centered on the power and hope found only in Jesus. That hope is for everyone, including those who may be involved in a divorce or separation. God loves them and wants them to experience the transformative power of His presence and grace. We want to encourage people to seek God's help in rebuilding their marriage reminding them how He specializes in healing and redeeming the broken hearted. There are also cases where separation may be required but that can also a path to healing.

If they have gone through divorce, we want them to know that God still loves them. He does not agree with our man-made reasons for divorce, but He loves us and is able to redeem us and use our worst experiences for his glory. We hope they will trust God so He can help them move forward knowing he loves them and forgives. They should seek counsel from their home church regarding remarriage and remember that God wants each of us to become the child of God that He created us to be.

H. Managing Difficult Conversations with Repeat Visitors

You will eventually encounter some people that want to debate, argue or simply demean. Many of these people are frequent visitors and do not always show a desire for real conversation. This attitude may be from confusion or being hurt so we always want to treat these people with love and respect even when it is extraordinarily hard to do so.

We encourage you to be patient and show grace in order to share the Gospel but that does not mean at the expense of being “held hostage” by an unreasonable visitor. You should use wisdom in seeking to understand the objective of the conversation and whether it is appropriate for the type and nature of conversations we offer.

We also ask that you never share information displayed in the system (location, number of conversations, prior topics, aliases, etc.) or comments you see in Group Chat with these visitors.

It is always important to do our best to understand the perspective of the visitor and what type of conversation they are seeking. Many of these difficult interactions come from three different types of conversation:

Serial Seekers - These people are often battling a mental health issue or some type of social phobia. They usually have a very limited circle of people in their lives and are looking for community or conversation. They may come with a list of questions or the same questions each time. They also at times struggle to understand the appropriateness of some of their questions even though they are usually polite. Feel free to draw clear topic boundaries, set time restrictions or even tell them when things are busy and you can't talk for a long period of time. One day we will meet them in their heavenly bodies as God intended them and we pray that we can each celebrate that reunion having treated them well.

Agenda-Driven Visitors - Some visitors come seeking to make a statement or criticize our beliefs. Unfortunately, many of these visitors often don't do that up front or with any transparency. They prefer to come online and rapidly ask a series of questions aimed at making you justify your faith. Others want to take scripture out of context and claim something it does not say or mean. Lastly, others will want to criticize Christianity and/or make a case for some other religion. Start by taking a breath. Remember that you are always in control and have the ability to graciously end any inappropriate conversation. Slow things down and ask if you can ask them a few questions. It is always a sign of an agenda if people are unwilling to engage in simple two-way conversation. Pray for wisdom and guidance. Know you can respectfully end the conversation if there is no reasonable or respectful exchange of answers and ideas. Tell them it seems like they are here for some type of debate or argument and that you serve to share the Gospel with those seeking information and not conflict.

Angry Visitors - Some of the most difficult conversations are with people who are well-educated and know how to control a conversation. You may get a person filled with anger or

hate who simply wants to disrupt what we are doing. Some of these folks have no sincere desire to talk and may actually want to demean, use degrading language or even insult you simply because you are a Christian. We obviously have no way of knowing what is in someone's heart, but these visitors often make no effort to hide their anger or intentions. Some use profane language and make outrageous claims while not engaging you in a serious or reasonable manner. Like any prank, you are encouraged to be firm and quickly end the conversation.

Lastly, you should be aware that some of these visitors regularly change their IP address and do everything possible to hide their true identity and keep us from blocking them. You should flag the conversation in the system so we can track that information going forward and determine if further action is required. Pray for their souls and move forward in the freedom of knowing God loves them and can one day use any positive truth you share with them.

I. Managing Conversations Dealing with Abortion

The Nature of the Challenge

Abortion has always been an emotional topic for both our guests and Responders. As the laws around abortion are continuing to change in the U.S., we want to encourage you to have these conversations with grace and love.

An unwanted pregnancy can be a frightening experience for someone who is not emotionally, physically, or financially prepared for such a responsibility. Someone coming to us for discussion is an opportunity to share truth and hope. We must be extra-sensitive with conversations about abortion as guests can come to us with one of several different perspectives:

- those considering abortion
- those struggling with a past decision to abort
- those to debate the political or biblical issues around this topic.

The Biblical Response

Jeremiah 1:5 tells us that God knows us before He forms us in the womb. We see in Psalm 139:13-16, God's active role in our creation and formation in the womb. We also read in Exodus 21:22-25 that the same penalty—death—is prescribed for someone who causes the death of a baby in the womb as for someone who commits murder. This law and its punishment clearly indicate that God considers a baby in the womb to be just as much a human being as a full-grown adult.

For the Christian, abortion is not a matter of a woman's right to choose to have a baby. The baby is already present and living. Abortion is a matter of the life or death of a human being made in God's image.

We believe taking that life is murder, but we always want to be sensitive in how to frame that explanation. We always want to encourage people to trust God and honor all life created in the image of God.

The Question of Life - The question of when life begins has been falsely used to support abortion for years. Science has come a long way and is in almost universal agreement that human life begins at the time of conception. The official position of the American College of Pediatricians is as follows:

The predominance of human biological research confirms that human life begins at conception—fertilization. At fertilization, the human being emerges as a whole, genetically distinct, individuated zygotic living human organism, a member of the species *Homo sapiens*, needing only the proper environment in order to grow and

develop. The difference between the individual in its adult stage and in its zygotic stage is one of form, not nature.

From the moment fertilization takes place, the child's genetic makeup is already complete. Its gender has already been determined, along with its height and hair, eye, and skin color. The only thing the embryo needs to become a fully-functioning being is the time to grow and develop. It is simply false to claim anything other than life begins at creation when a human being is made as soon as he or she is conceived. Therefore, the question that abortion supporters must answer is ... If there is a living child in the womb, is there anything that justifies killing a living person?

The Question of Rape or the Mother's Life in Danger - A common argument against the Christian stance on abortion is "What about cases of rape and/or incest?" This is less than 1% of all abortions. As horrible as rape is the murder of the baby is not the solution. Two wrongs do not make a right. Every unborn child, including those who are a result of rape or incest, are loved by God as is the woman who was sexually abused. Regardless of how or why a child was conceived, he or she is as fully human as any other child. The circumstances of conception have nothing to do with the viability of the infant and they should not be punished for the evil act of his or her father. The answer may be offering the child for adoption, but it is not death.

Another argument often used against the Christian stance on abortion is "What about when the life of the mother is at risk?" Honestly, this is the most difficult question to answer on the issue of abortion. This scenario is equally rare with less than 1% of all abortions being performed to save the mother's life. Some medical professionals claim that we are now at a stage that abortion is *never* necessary to save the mother's life. We should also remember that God is a God of miracles. He can preserve the life of a mother and her child despite all the medical odds being against it. Third, even in the small percentage of abortions performed to save the life of the mother, most of those abortions can be prevented by an early induced delivery of the baby or a C-section. It is extremely rare that a baby must be actively aborted to save the life of the mother. Ultimately, if the life of the mother is genuinely at risk, the course of action can only be decided by the woman, her doctor, and God.

The Question of Care - Many mothers become pregnant unexpectedly or their circumstances change radically during pregnancy. They may feel like they do not have the financial, emotional, or physical capabilities to raise this child. As scary as that may be, the answer is not to take the life of the child.

There are multiple resources available to this person. There are organizations that will pay for and shepherd the mother through all the doctor visits and health-related issues. There are adoption agencies willing to help and many have couples waiting to adopt new-born children. There are also churches that will walk with women through this journey to ensure the child is cared for well. Every one of these options should be pursued without choosing to end a life.

A Loving Approach

We must always remember that many come to us with difficult stories. They may have been lost, pressured, or never fully understood the magnitude of their decision to abort. They may

now believe their choice was sinful and unforgivable. We want to share with those tortured souls that abortion is not the unpardonable sin. Abortion healing and recovery is possible through Jesus. Jesus died for all sin including abortion. When we come to Jesus in faith, confessing our sin and turning away from it, God offers a full pardon and all His love.

Even when the sin of abortion has been washed away by the blood of Jesus, the effects can remain. Women who have had abortions, and men that encouraged them, often suffer years of shame and regret. They may live every day with the knowledge of what they have done and are haunted by thoughts such as, "He would be six years old today," or "She would have graduated high school this year." We have all fallen short and need God's grace. Share God's love with every person enduring the pain of that choice and acknowledging their sin.

The ministry has a very direct position on life beginning at conception and scripture speaking clearly against abortion. However, we never seek to engage in political debates with those that simply want to advance a personal narrative or agenda. Our goal is to always share the Gospel. We want to help others understand how precious life is and that God loves all life including the unborn and the struggling mother-to-be. Share hope and grace without condemning past choices. Encourage every guest that God wants to walk with them through this difficult season and has a plan and purpose for every life including the unborn child and those who have chosen abortion in the past.

If you want to go deeper on this sensitive topic, we encourage you to read the following article - <https://www.jimdenisonlibrary.org/abortion-and-the-mercy-of-god/?all=1>

Section 7 - Most Common Responder FAQ's

The Most Commonly Asked "System Related" Questions from New Responders

1. *Can seekers see my full name or profile picture?*
2. *Is the Inbox my personal Inbox or shared with everyone online?*
3. *Can Responders see the resources that I create in my favorites list?*
4. *Can "team leads" see my chat conversations?*
5. *Am I a part of a specific team of Responders or can I see everyone online?*
6. *Are the Team Members online all vying for the same incoming conversations?*
7. *Is It normal for there to be points in the day with no traffic?*
8. *What happens to an incoming chat if no one answers it?*
9. *How long does a chat conversation take?*
10. *How long do you keep a chat open if they are not responding?*
11. *Can other Responders view the "notes" I insert as I am closing a conversation?*
12. *Can I share the client history "to call-out a troll"?*
13. *Can a Seeker see if a Responder activates a system block?*
14. *Why do some seekers come in from multiple sites at once and keep coming back?*

1. Can seekers see my full name or profile picture?

Seekers only see your first name even if your full name is listed in your view of Echo. Your profile picture is ONLY visible to other Responders and Admins. Your first name is the only thing Seekers will see or know about you. If you have a unique name, you may choose to create an "alias" within the system. This can be set up under your User Account.

2. Is the Inbox my personal Inbox or shared with everyone online?

The Inbox is the general queue where all new conversations (Chat/Text/Social Media) initially come. Please pay attention to the type of conversation you are claiming. Once you claim the conversation, it will move to your Conversation section of Echo.

3. Can Responders see the resources that I create in my favorites list?

No, the personal resources you create can ONLY be viewed by you. However, you are able to view all Ministry Vetted Resources (starting with NHG) and even mark as "favorites".

4. Can "team leads" see my chat conversations?

Yes, the team leads are able to see conversations live and review completed conversation for quality assurance purposes.

5. Am I a part of a specific team of Responders or can I see everyone online?

The Responders you see at the top of the page are all part of Need Him Global. They may come from different ministry partners, and only answer certain conversations, but you have all gone through the same process to become a Responder.

6. Are the Team Members online all vying for the same incoming conversations?

yes. The conversations that come into the inbox are first-come first-serve.

7. Is It normal for there to be points in the day with no traffic?

Conversation traffic definitely ebbs and flows throughout the day. There may be periods where it seems very slow, but this rarely lasts for more than a few minutes. Make sure to keep your Inbox opened and center on your navigation panel so you can view all incoming activity.

8. What happens to an incoming chat if no one answers it?

Incoming Chat Conversations remain in the Inbox for a specified period of time (60 seconds). If no one picks up the conversation, it will “time out”. The seeker is given the opportunity to Chat or Text in again, or to send an E-Mail with their question. All Incoming Text Conversations will remain in the Inbox until they are answered.

9. How long does a chat conversation take?

Every conversation is different. The average tends to be 15-20 minutes although some will last less than 5 minutes and others well more than 45 minutes. Listen well but take control of the conversation in order to share the Gospel within the context of the seeker’s story. If the conversation is stagnant, and not working towards something spiritual, then feel free to end it appropriately.

10. How long do you keep a chat open if they are not responding?

General rule is if the conversation has gone stagnate and there is no response in 2 minutes, follow up with a question “Are you there?”. If there is still no response after 5 minutes or so, then you are free to send a closing message. Example (Convo Close-Out with Gospel) such as the following: “Looks like you may have changed your mind about wanting to talk. I’m going to close this out but please feel free to come back. We want to help you learn more about how Jesus loves you, what He has done for you and how He wants to be part of your life. May God bless.” You would then close the conversation and select No Response as the Outcome.

11. Can other Responders view the “notes” I insert as I am closing a conversation?

All “notes” input by Responders are viable the next time a Seeker comes in. Notes should NOT be a regurgitation of the conversation, rather, should be pertinent information that will help the next Responder have a fruitful conversation. For instance, if you determine relevant information (ie: loss of loved one, experienced prior abuse, mental health issue, etc...), then inputting this information into the Notes Section will be helpful to the next Responder.

12. Can I share the client history "to call-out a troll"?

We encourage you not to share any History and treat each conversation as if it is their first and you know nothing about them. We don’t need to call anyone out as we can simply manage the conversation with wisdom and move on when there is no serious desire to discuss Jesus.

13. Can a Seeker see if a Responder activates a system block?

No, System Blocks are internal processes only. A System Block will last for an initial 24 hours, however, can be extended by Administrators if deemed necessary. Certain Seekers, using VPN Servers can work around the System Block and return to the Inbox in a new conversation.

14. Why do some seekers come in from multiple sites at once and keep coming back over and over?

There are some people that will do anything to distract and discourage truth. They are in some cases part of a group that wants to tie up the system resources and share false messages. You are free to ignore those conversations when you see the same troll in the Inbox from multiple sites at the same time.

The Most Commonly Asked “Conversation Related” Questions from New Responders

1. *What denomination is Need Him Global?*
2. *Can we connect with seekers outside of Echo?*
3. *How do I stay connected with an international seeker?*
4. *What do you do after leading someone into a relationship with Jesus?*
5. *Do we send bibles?*
6. *Does the ministry recommend counseling or support groups for addicts?*
7. *How do you handle underaged seekers?*
8. *How do I handle Spanish speaking conversations?*
9. *What do I do with a suicide conversation?*

1. What denomination is Need Him Global?

Need Him Global is not affiliated with any denomination. We are a Christian ministry and our Statement of Faith can be found on our web site. Identifying ourselves with any single denomination tends to alienate people and is not helpful to sharing the Gospel. We encourage you to do the same and call yourself a follower of Jesus Christ that attends a good Bible teaching church.

2. Can we connect with seekers outside of Echo?

As the Training Manual highlights, you are not allowed to share personal information or have contact outside of Echo. This is meant to protect the ministry, you and the seeker. You can offer chatters in North America the text number and have them start a text conversation which you can answer and keep open for an extended conversation that does not need to end at the end of your time online that day.

3. How do I stay connected with an international seeker?

The only option for staying “connected” is to let them know the next time you plan to be online and set up a soft meeting where they chat asking for you by name.

4. What do you do after leading someone into a relationship with Jesus?

See page 17 of the Responder Training Manual

5. Do we send bibles?

The ministry does not send Bibles as there are various issues with this approach. Everyone contacting us has some technology so we are encouraging people to download a free Bible online and get connected to a local church that often will provide a physical Bible.

6. Does the ministry recommend counseling or support groups for addicts?

We are not counselors, so we encourage you to recommend those that are in need of professional help to seek that help. There is a list of third parties on the Responder Training Portal. We also recommend they look into Celebrate Recovery or other local Christian organizations that provide such help.

7. How do you handle underaged seekers?

See page 41 of the Responder Training Manual.

8. How do I handle Spanish speaking conversations?

We do not offer assistance in any language other than English. If you speak the language a seeker is coming in under then you are welcome to respond. If you speak no other languages, then you are free to ignore those conversations and allow other Responders that can help to respond.

9. What do I do with a suicide conversation?

See page 38 of the Responder Training Manual.

10. Are you a Bot or AI?

The growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in our world is accelerating. The most common application for AI in many of our lives is the ever-present chat bot. This has led more of our guests to question us as we meet seekers online.

We encourage you to use the question as an opportunity to connect with the guest and “break the ice”. Often simply sharing your name and a simple descriptor of yourself such as husband, daughter or parent helps the guest move past the bot question.

You can also remind them that we are a Christian ministry made up of a diverse group of volunteers that are here to meet people, listen to their stories and share the Good News of Jesus. You may also want to use words that help assure people of your humanity such as:

*I'm here to listen
I hear your concern
I have felt
in my experience*

*I want to talk with you
in my life
let's discuss what's on your heart
I'm not a fan of bots myself*

These simple phrases reflect your humanness and a desire to connect. These are not phrases that most chat bots use and should help convince the guest to move forward trusting you. If they want to continue down this path then you can simply share that we are a ministry that for 28 years has been about live conversation to meet people with hope and we do not believe in using bots to help someone know, trust, and obey Jesus.

Section 8 – Ministry Contact Information

Ministry web site

www.needhim.org

Responder Training Portal

<https://needhimvolunteer.com>

Password: NHGresources

Other ministry evangelism web sites

Chat About Jesus www.chataboutjesus.com	Does God www.doesGod.com
Chat About Christ www.chataboutchrist.com	Chat About Faith www.chataboutfaith.com
1 Question for God www.1question4god.com	Real Answers to Life www.realanswerstolife.com
Finding True Hope https://www.findingtruehope.com/	New Believer.Net https://newbeliever.net/

External Questions about staff or regarding the ministry

Email: info@needhim.org

Internal Responder Questions

Coordinator of Evangelism – Ryan Lowe

operations@needhim.org

Chief Operating Officer – Chris Schultz

chris@needhim.org

How to Serve as a Responder

www.needhim.org/get-involved/

Facebook

www.facebook.com/NeedHimGlobal

<https://www.facebook.com/ChatAboutJesus>

<https://www.facebook.com/RealAnswers2Life>

<https://www.facebook.com/Finding-True-Hope-102458778347186>

<https://www.facebook.com/doesgod>

Text Numbers for the Ministry

[888-633-3446](tel:888-633-3446)

[800-633-3446](tel:800-633-3446)

[320-345-3455](tel:320-345-3455)

[JESUS \(53787\)](tel:JESUS53787)