

Adult Study Guide

Introduction

Slide 1: Opportunity to Give so Others Will Hear

The Mary Hill Davis Offering® for Texas Missions provides funding for over 70 ministries across Texas. When you give, you are providing opportunities for people across the state to share the love of Jesus with those who need to know Him as Savior. This lesson will focus on the [un]Apologetic Evangelism Conference, a ministry of the Center for Church Health.

Bible Verse

Slide 2: Focal Bible Verse

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.” – Matthew 5:13-16

Background Information

Slide 3: Ministry Partner Spotlight

Eric Hernandez is the Apologetics Lead & Millennial specialist at Texas Baptists. He works with Texas Baptist churches and institutions to plan the [un]Apologetic Evangelism Conference. There are three conferences planned annually in partnership with churches and institutions. This partnership allows for the church or institution to assist in planning topics that would be specific to the demographics, age groups, and topics of interest for sharing the Gospel with others. The Conference provides opportunities for participants to engage in conversations and to equip individuals and churches with tools to tackle issues with Biblical truth. Issues include topics such as the deconstruction movement, faith and science, gender identity and

sexuality, the problem of evil and suffering, Biblical reliability, the existence of God and the truth of Christianity. When looking at this list of issues, one might become overwhelmed with the weight of these topics. However, these are topics that are vital to understanding how to build relationships and have conversations with non-believers in a Post-Christian culture.

Slide 4: S.A.L.T. Ministries

Funding from the Mary Hill Davis Offering® for Texas Missions is used to plan, promote, and provide workshop leaders and keynote speakers. S.A.L.T is an acronym used to categorize ministries: Serve Ministries, Advance Missions Leadership, Love the Least of These, and Tell Ministries. The [un]Apologetic Conference is a SERVE Ministry that opens the door for more effective ways of sharing the Gospel.

Preparation

- This study is designed around the use of a PowerPoint presentation. Download the PowerPoint to your computer from iamtexasmissions.org/downloads. Find out if the room that you are using has a projector to connect to your computer.
- If it is not possible to project the PowerPoint, print the slides on 8 ½" x 11" paper to use to guide the participants in discussion.
- See the article about how Hajir came to know Jesus in the appendix section.
- Print a copy of the discussion slides: 1 and 2.
- To learn more, check out the Texas Baptists Apologetics website. txb.org/apologetics

Teach

Slide 5: What is Apologetics?

What is Apologetics? I Peter 3:15, provides a clear mandate for the Biblical task of Apologetics.

But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. ESV

The Greek translation for the word defense means to give an answer. The definition of Apologetics is giving a defense for **what** we believe and **why** we believe it. It is not suggested but required that every believer in Jesus is ready with a response, a reason for the hope that is in **you**. This Biblical mandate is for all believers. All means all.

Slide 6: Apologetics: The What

It is imperative that we, as followers of Jesus, know what the Bible says about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. To be able to offer a defense in what we believe, we must trust the authority and reliability of the Bible. Therefore, we must be students of God's Word. We must be able to provide responses beyond, I believe the Bible. The Bible says it and I trust the Bible. While these statements are the very foundation of our faith, our conversations need to allow for questions and dialogue.

Slide 7: Questions are Essential to Growth

Tim Barnett, an apologist, points out that **asking questions** is a crucial part of Christian discipleship and that doubts are a normal part of this journey.

Slide 8: Questions Lead to Solutions

Studies on the brain reveal that a certain part of the brain is activated when questions are asked. This article, "The Neuroscience of Asking Insightful Questions" states:

When you ask a question instead of giving the answer, the entire brain gets active as it reflects, releasing serotonin (allowing it to relax). This encourages gathering intelligence from all areas of the brain, allowing for more insight than would happen if you provided solutions to others. New neuronal connections begin to be made as the brain moves closer to finding solutions.

Slide 9: Turn and Talk

Discuss this quote on how the brain works when engaged with questions.

What has been your experience with individuals who are deep thinkers and have many questions about Christianity and theology?

How can the church respond to individuals who are questioning or doubting Christian practices, ideology, and theology?

Slide 10: The What: Foundations

To engage with others about foundations of Christian faith, here are some questions that need to be addressed within the church.

- What do we believe?
- What are the foundations that are essential to Christian faith?
- Do we know why we believe what we believe?
- Can we articulate our beliefs with others?
- How does **defend** differ from **debate**?

Slide 11: Turn and Talk

Which of these questions stands out to you the most?

What other questions or thoughts would add to this list?

Slide 12: Why Apologetics?

We live in a Post-Christian culture. In the past 25 years, over 40 million people have left the Church and have abandoned Christianity. That number is more than those who came to faith in Jesus during the Great Awakening and all the worldwide Billy Graham Crusades. Not only are people leaving the church and faith in Jesus, but there is a movement to tear apart the very foundations of Christianity. This movement has a name: deconstruction.

Deconstruction is a process of critically examining and questioning long-held beliefs, potentially leading to a rejection or re-evaluation of beliefs. However, in the

deconstruction movement, most individuals do not reconstruct their beliefs but are in a never-ending cycle of deconstructing. A characteristic of deconstructing is that it never ends.

Slide 13: Turn and Talk

Have you heard about the deconstruction movement?

Do you know someone who is in the process of deconstructing their faith?

Has the deconstructing process affected your relationship with this individual?

Slide 14: Impact of a Post-Christian Culture

Consider the impact of a Post-Christian culture on children and students.

- 3 out of 4 college students (70%) abandon Christianity during college
- 3 out of 5 students disconnect with the church by age 15

Slide 15: Turn and Talk

When you read these statistics on how students are leaving or rejecting Christianity, what is your response?

Followers of Jesus and the church must consider the impact culture has on shaping not only the worldview but also a Biblical worldview for today's students (children and youth). Our response must be one that is proactive rather than negative. Understanding the influences that are shaping the minds of individuals of all ages and demographics is necessary.

Slide 16: The Influence of Influencers

Social Media: About 25 years ago, social media began to make its way into our everyday lives. Today, individuals scroll through many kinds of social media daily. On average, adults spend about 2 hours and 24 minutes, daily, on social media. Gen Z individuals spend about 6 hours and 27 minutes, daily, on their phones with about 2 hours and 43 minutes on social media platforms that offer short videos and reels found on Tic Tok, Instagram, YouTube, and specific podcasts.

Deconstruction Movement: This movement began about the time social media began to enter our lives. As technology advanced and news stories of abuse, scandal, and inappropriateness within the church were flashing across our screens, the view of the church shifted from hopeful to harmful. Prominent pastors, musicians, and ministry leaders began talking boldly about leaving the faith, choosing platforms to share their journey of deconstruction. At the same time, consumer Christianity was on the rise with the “you do this and God will bless you with that” message.

Individuals began to develop a worldview from an early age and are constantly refining it based on life experiences. This is also true of the development of a Biblical worldview. Some individuals have a zero Biblical worldview and others have developed one that is inconsistent with Biblical truths.

Slide 17: Turn and Talk

What do you know about social media

platforms? How is the content viewed by individuals shaping their worldview as well as their Biblical worldview? How can the church respond to faith deconstruction and the influence of social media?

If you have a large group, divide into three smaller groups and discuss each discussion prompt. If you prefer, you can discuss each one as a large group.

Slide 18: Discussion 1

A young adult scrolls through a platform and sees a caption relating to a lingering question about faith. She stops and listens. The comment of the influencer affirms her doubts about the Bible being true and trustworthy. She wants to hear more and clicks on subscribe. Every time the influencer posts a new video; she gets a message. As she listens to the videos, she begins to shift her thinking to agree with the poster who has left the church and no longer believes that the foundations of Christianity are true. She starts looking for others who are deconstructing their faith. This young adult is your daughter, your granddaughter, or maybe even yourself. What are some next steps with this person (or yourself)? Identify the questions or doubts concerning Biblical theology. Dive into the Word of God to determine passages to read together. Avoid giving the “right answers” and allow the Holy Spirit to guide conversations. Be very patient as the process of reconstructing one’s faith may take a long time.

Slide 19: Discussion 2

A friend tells you they believe all roads

lead to God and there is no one right way. Everyone's truth is true. How might you proceed in conversations with this friend? What are some next steps to present the Gospel of Jesus in a non-threatening way?

Slide 20: Discussion 3

Distribute copies of the story about Hajir. Discuss his journey to faith in Jesus. Identify the factors that led him to decide to follow Jesus. How can we be like those individuals in his life?

Slide 21: Scripture Application

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."
– Matthew 5:13-16

We recognize the preservation function of salt. If salt is applied to the meat and the meat spoils, the first question might be, what was wrong with the meat. If the process is repeated with different meat, and the meat again spoils, we must then consider the salt. What is wrong with the salt? Has the salt lost its purpose?

We are the salt.

If we keep doing the same thing hoping for different results, our efforts are futile. We,

as the salt, become useless. The thoughts and actions of others trample on us. The phrase, "Don't let 'someone' walk all over you" comes to mind. The overpowering messages of the world overtake us and we have lost our influence, our purpose, and our mission.

We are the light.

The numbers of those leaving faith in Jesus will increase. The number of individuals who say no to Jesus will increase. The number of individuals who have no firm Biblical foundation on which to stand will increase within the church. The number of persons responding to go to every tribe, every language, every culture, every community, every family, every individual will decrease.

Darkness will increase within our Post-Christian culture. Our light must increase as we increase our understanding of the world in which we live. We must be the salt that is useful and purposeful in a world that is rejecting the basic foundational truths of Christianity.

Slide 22: Scripture Challenge

But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.
– 1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)

What will you do to prepare a **defense** to someone who asks you the reason for the hope that is in you?

Slide 23: Suggestions & Pray

- Attend the [un]Apologetic conference at First Baptist Church, Richardson on October 18, 2025. txb.org/events
- Study apologetics by selecting a resource found on the Texas Baptists website. txb.org/apologetics
- Listen to a podcast by an apologetic.
- Gain an understanding of the deconstruction movement that is rapidly growing globally.

Pray

- Pray for opportunities to share Jesus.
- Pray for confidence in sharing your faith and hope in Jesus.
- Pray for a gentle spirit and humbleness when engaging in conversations with those who have differing beliefs about God, Jesus, and the Bible.
- Pray that you can defend, not debate, Biblical truth and authority.

WRITER

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About Mary Hill Davis

**Mary Hill Davis**

Mary Hill Davis, president of Texas WMU from 1906 to 1931, saw Texas as a rich harvest field with its mixture of Anglo, Black, European, and Mexican populations. In 1910 she led the Baptist women of Texas to set aside a week to pray for the needs in the state and to take up an offering as was done for foreign and home missions. Following her death in 1934, the Texas missions offering was named in her memory.

Story: A Recent Muslim Convert to Christianity is Emboldened to Grow and Share Christ

[un]Apologetic Evangelism Conference: El Paso, TX
FBC El Paso. Sept 14th



My name is Nadeem Hajir and this was my first ever evangelism and apologetic conference. I honestly didn't really know what to expect. I am halfway through Reading Nabeel Qureshi's Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus and I actually converted from Islam to Christianity. I became a follower of Christ about a year and a half ago... I grew up knowing reverence for Allah. That's all I had known. I knew that we had to follow Allah because that's all we knew. I never

really questioned why, but now I'm actually coming to understand. When I met my girlfriend, I began to want to read the Bible. I had never heard of the Bible until I was 21 years old, and when I started to read the Bible for myself I started to see how much love was in the scriptures. How much love that Jesus and God the father and the Holy Spirit— it's just that love was something that was never taught to us or shown to us in Islam. Now that I'm in now that I'm a follower



of Christ I'm starting to see the deficiencies in my [life] and how much I actually need God.

And coming to a conference like this helps me understand how to share that with others in a way that is that you can break it down so that people can understand, and develop a deeper and better understanding of who God is. And I think that it [apologetics] is something that is not just requested or suggested that we defend our faith, but it's actually commanded to us in the scriptures because we are to make disciples of all Nations. So, coming to a conference like this really has just made me a lot more passionate, and now I'm excited to go back to the scriptures and keep studying and understanding who God is. He's faithful, he's merciful, he's good. And slowly but surely we'll be able to break down those barriers

that are keeping Muslims and other faiths around the world from Christ. So all in all, I'm just really excited to continue to learn how to defend my faith, because I think that it's one thing to live for yourself and it's another thing to live your life for others, and that's what we're called to do: to lay down our life for others. This was such an awesome conference. Thank you to Eric and, I'm just so grateful for Texas Baptist. I want to keep following up with these events. Like I said, it was the first that me and my girlfriend had experienced. My girlfriend has a lot of experience with the BSM. That's how she got saved and it's been so awesome to hear her stories. I'm just really really excited to continue to learn about the love of Christ.