



STAND TO REASON  
INTERACTIVE

Short Outline

SESSION 1

Getting You into the Driver's Seat: Learning the "Columbo" Tactic

N O T E S

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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. This course aims to teach you two indispensable skills in apologetics.
B. "Keeping yourself in the driver's seat" means maintaining a certain level of control in your interactions with non-believers.
C. Regardless of your present skill level, you can learn to maneuver almost effortlessly in conversations if you commit to learning the material in this course.
D. We will accomplish four goals in this first session.

II. OUR NEED FOR TACTICS, WHAT THEY ARE, AND HOW TO USE THEM

- A. Our need for tactics concerns our commission to be effective ambassadors for Christ.
B. Tactics are distinct from strategy.

III. LEARNING THE "COLUMBO" TACTIC

- A. The Columbo Tactic is the "Queen Mother" of all other tactics.
B. The Columbo Tactic is named for Lieutenant Columbo, a brilliant detective who appears bumbling, inept, and completely harmless to his enemies.
C. The key to the Columbo Tactic: go on the offensive in a disarming way with carefully selected questions to productively advance the conversation.
D. The Columbo Tactic has three unique applications.
E. The first application of the Columbo Tactic is to gain information.

IV. MAIN POINTS COVERED IN THIS SESSION

- A. First, we learned the value of using the tactical approach when discussing Christianity.
B. Second, we defined tactics and distinguished them from strategy.
C. Third, we learned about the dangers of using tactics.
D. Fourth, we were introduced to the Columbo Tactic.



Stand to Reason exists to equip ambassadors for Christ with knowledge, wisdom, and character to effectively defend classical Christianity and classical Christian values. To further this mission we grant the purchaser permission to duplicate this manual for his students.

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## **SESSION 2**

### **Refining the “Columbo” Tactic**

#### **I. REVIEW**

- A. In the last session we covered...*
- B. In this session we will...*

#### **II. THE SECOND STEP IN THE COLUMBO TACTIC: REVERSING THE BURDEN OF PROOF**

- A. The second application of the Columbo Tactic helps you learn why he thinks the way he does.*
- B. The second Columbo question enforces the Burden of Proof Rule: “Now, how did you come to that conclusion?”*
- C. When using the Burden of Proof Tactic, beware of the “Professor’s Ploy.”*
- D. Don’t sweat it if you’re not sure where to go next.*
- E. The Columbo Tactic can also help keep you out of the “hot seat.”*

#### **III. WHAT MAIN POINTS WERE COVERED IN THIS SESSION?**

- A. First, we examined the second use of the Columbo Tactic: reversing the burden of proof.*
- B. Second, we learned how to avoid the “Professor’s Ploy,” a common move to escape the burden of proof.*
- C. Third, we realized that we don’t need to force a conversation.*
- D. Fourth, we practiced using the Columbo Tactic to keep ourselves out of the “hot seat.”*
- E. The next session will explore the final phase of the Columbo Tactic – exploiting a weakness or flaw in someone’s views – while helping you improve your Columbo skills and defend yourself against the Columbo Tactic when someone else uses it on you.*



N O T E S

**SESSION 3**

**Perfecting the “Columbo” Tactic**

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**I. REVIEW**

- A. *In the last session we covered...*
- B. *In this session we will...*

**II. THE THIRD STEP IN THE COLUMBO TACTIC: EXPOSING A WEAKNESS OR A FLAW**

- A. *Knowing what a person believes and why he believes it allows you to ask new questions that challenge a person’s ideas. This is the final stage of Columbo.*
- B. *The conversation may alert you to some weakness, flaw, or contradiction in the person’s argument that can be exposed and exploited.*
- C. *The key to this step is paying close attention to the answer to the question, “How did you come to that conclusion?”*
- D. *Address any inconsistency you discover with a question, not a statement.*
- E. *This step takes more practice than the others, but in time you will improve.*
- F. *Let’s consider how to respond to the challenges in the Student Interactive.*
- G. *You can soften your approach by first requesting clarification.*

**III. THERE ARE TWO BASIC EXECUTIONS OF THE COLUMBO TACTIC**

- A. *The first approach is the apparently harmless method of Lt. Columbo himself – halting, head-scratching, and bumbling.*
- B. *The second approach is more confrontational and aggressive.*

**IV. YOU CAN IMPROVE YOUR COLUMBO SKILL WITH THREE STEPS: ANTICIPATE, REFLECT, AND PRACTICE**

- A. *Initially you will not be quick on your feet with responses.*
- B. *First, try to anticipate objections and think of questions in advance.*
- C. *Afterwards, reflect on questions you might have asked.*
- D. *When you think of a new idea or approach, practice the questions – and possible rejoinders – out loud.*

**V. LEARN TO DEFEND YOURSELF WHEN THE COLUMBO TACTIC IS USED AGAINST YOU**

- A. *Sometimes your opponent will use the Columbo Tactic against you.*
- B. *You can learn to protect yourself by using two steps.*

**VI. WHAT MAIN POINTS WERE COVERED IN THIS SESSION?**

- A. *First, we looked at the third use of the Columbo Tactic: exploiting a flaw or a weakness in another person’s view.*
- B. *Second, we learned three specific ways to improve our Columbo skill.*
- C. *Third, we learned how to defend against the Columbo Tactic when someone uses it against us.*
- D. *In the next session, we will learn a powerful new tactic: the Suicide Tactic.*





N O T E S

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**SESSION 6**

**The "Steamroller" Tactic**

**I. REVIEW**

- A. *In the last session we covered...*
- B. *In this session, we will learn a tactic called the Steamroller.*

**II. THE STEAMROLLER, A DEFENSIVE TACTIC**

- A. *What is a steamroller?*
- B. *How do steamrollers operate?*
- C. *Deal with the steamroller in three steps.*

**III. WHAT MAIN POINTS DID WE COVER IN THIS SESSION?**

- A. *First, we learned how to recognize a steamroller.*
- B. *Second, we learned three steps to deal with a steamroller and put you back in control of the conversation.*

**IV. FINAL REFLECTIONS**

- A. *First, know your Bibles well enough to give an accurate answer for the faith that is in you.*
- B. *Second, study these tactics.*
- C. *Third, push yourself beyond your comfort zone.*
- D. *Fourth, don't be discouraged by outward appearances.*
- E. *Finally, live out the virtue of a good ambassador.*

**STAND TO REASON, THE ORGANIZATION**

Stand to Reason is a non-profit, educational organization whose goal is to train Christian ambassadors in the art of careful thinking, and to defend classical Christianity and classical Christian values in a winsome and attractive way.

We focus on imparting knowledge (an accurate message), on wisdom (a skillful, tactical, fair, and artful method), and on character (a warm, inviting, and attractive manner). STR takes the life of the mind seriously, while encouraging a deep, personal devotion to Jesus Christ.

Stand to Reason offers seminars, lectures, publications, and instructional material geared towards helping Christians gain the practical tools they need to make a difference for the Kingdom, giving them both the knowledge and the confidence to be players in the world of ideas. If you'd like more information about STR or how you can have a trained instructor visit your organization, please call us at 1-800-2-REASON.

