

Equipped for Service

Part 4: How to Share the Gospel (part 2)

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SPECIAL AGENDA for reading

Read Part 1 (below)

This will be a start-to-finish gospel presentation. The goal is that after reading it as a group, we will practice in pairs (as a group) sharing the same message in 90 seconds, 45 seconds and less than 30 seconds.

Rehearse the Gospel Message (in rotating pairs)

In rotating pairs, share the same message in 90 seconds, 45 seconds and less than 30 seconds:

- Round 1 (90 seconds for first person to share the message; 90 seconds for second person)
- Round 2 (45 seconds for first person to share the message; 45 seconds for second person)
- Round 3 (30 seconds for first person to share the message; 30 seconds for second person)

Read Part 2 (below)

This will be just a short summary of each of the three testimonies you've heard so far.

Discuss Part 2 (as a whole group)

Your goal is to discuss the examples with the purpose of seeing what stood out or inspired ideas.

Part 1 (for reading as a whole group)

Genesis 1-3 (Adam and Eve)

I am sure you know about Adam and Eve - is that right?

(This is a great way to start because nearly everyone knows about Adam and Eve and it helps the person feel more comfortable hearing the Gospel starting with a familiar account from the Bible)

Now, do you remember that there was something they weren't supposed to eat?

(They usually say "Oh yeah — The Apple!" Now they are excited because they realize that they've heard some of what you are about to share before!)

Do you remember what God told Adam and Eve about the fruit on the tree?

(They will usually interject "He said 'don't eat it!'")

Well God actually said these words in particular: "In the day that you eat of it (the fruit of that tree) you will surely die."

(They will usually recall this. If so, give them a chance to express that they remember ... this continues to help them connect what they already know to what you are sharing. If they do not recall this part, just state it as a fact from the Word of God and keep going.)

So what did Adam and Eve do?!

(They will usually exclaim or volunteer "They ate of it!")

Did they die?

(They say ... "Well, no.")

So Did God miss it? Was God wrong? He said they would surely die in the day they ate of it. Did God make a mistake?

(You get one of two responses here: (1) "I don't know, but I don't think God made a mistake." or (2) "Did they die spiritually?" It is amazing how many of people will pull that revelation right out!)

Adam and Eve died spiritually! Notice, that they kept living for many years physically, but they died spiritually in that moment.

(Give them a moment to realize the gravity of this.)

That was the first sin and they got disconnected from God like a rose cut from the bush — they were separated from their source of spiritual life — God. And because a dead thing can't make an alive thing, spiritually-dead people cannot make spiritually-alive people. Adam and Eve were spiritually-alive. They sinned. They became spiritually-dead and now all of their children (all mankind) for all time are born spiritually-dead just like them.

(Everyone I can recall seems to track with this very well ... especially since the Holy Spirit is witnessing to your words! At this point you will start to notice a gravity in the conversation - that's good. No lack of joy, but some gravity.)

Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, 1 Cor. 6:9

So, we were all born spiritually dead ... and I don't know about you, but I took care of adding some sins on top of that myself.

(Usually they will nod knowingly and admittedly or say "Yes, yes, I did that too.")

Well that's exactly what the Bible says. "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." It wasn't just Adam's sin and Eve's sin. It was your sin and my sin too. We've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

And just like it says in Genesis, the wages of sin are death.

In fact, the Bible is really clear, when you are spiritually-dead, when you are unrighteous before God, you cannot inherit Heaven - you can't go to Heaven. God's perfect. Sin can't make it in Heaven.

(At this point, we've painted that Adam and Eve sinned and because of them everybody is born spiritually dead ... and if that wasn't enough we've all added our own sins on there! Original sin and our own sin have separated us from God and the wages of sin are spiritual death. If you are unrighteous you cannot inherit Heaven)

John 3:16-17, John 3:3, John 14:6

(At this point, I like to open to John 3:3 and hand them the Bible to read it for themselves. If you don't have a Bible with you, it is not as good, but pull it up on your Bible app on your phone. HAVE THEM READ IT FOR THEMSELVES!)

Now before you read it ... know that Jesus is about to talk to Nicodemus who had come to find Jesus at night. Do you know why he came at night?

(Nearly no one knows this ... but questions engage the imagination and they are now ready to hear the answer from you!)

Nicodemus had to come at night because he was a big-time religious leader and the other big-time religious leaders did not like Jesus ... so Nicodemus needed to sneak to see Jesus at night. Now look what Jesus said to Nicodemus — a big time religious leader: "Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

What does that mean?

(Sometimes I need to use an analogy here ... If someone said to you "Truly, truly I say to you unless one drives on I-71 North, he cannot see Cleveland. What would that mean?")

So, here's a religious leader and what does Jesus tell him straight away? "Nicodemus, I'm telling you, unless you are born again, you cannot go to Heaven! You think you're right with God, but you're not right with God!"

(Usually at this point, they are putting pieces together ... oh yeah, original sin ... Adam and Eve ... unrighteous before God ... no access to Heaven ... not even if you are a religious leader. John 3:3 is a hinge verse. It is the one that makes it clear that you need to be born again and that you CAN be born again!)

Do you see that Nicodemus was confused here? He asked Jesus how he could get back into his mother's womb!

(The person will usually laugh. I take this as an opportunity to make sure they are understanding that Jesus is talking about spirit, not about flesh ... referring them back to Nicodemus being spiritually dead - just like Adam and Eve.)

OK, go ahead and scan down to verses 16 and 17 and read those for me.

(“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”)

Are you part of the world? Did He send Jesus for you too?

(They will usually show acknowledgement verbally or otherwise ...)

That’s what it means to be born again - when you believe in Jesus, you receive eternal life and go to Heaven when you die.

(Usually at this point I will know if this is something they are going to want to pray that day or if they are just really glad that they’ve heard the message.)

Romans 10:13

(Don’t chicken out at this point ... for their sake ... they don’t know what to do. Even if they’ve believed, we need to show them how to be born again!)

If you could be born again so that you knew TODAY that you were right before God ... if you could know TODAY that you would go to Heaven if we both passed away ... would you be interested in praying with me to receive the Lord?

(NEVER NEVER NEVER coerce ... but do not fail to offer to lead them in this prayer where possible! If they want to pray, lead them in a prayer. Before doing so, I turn to Romans 10 and ask them to read verse 13 “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”)

You’ve already believed in your heart about Jesus, so now all you need to do is confess Him with your mouth. So, let’s go ahead and do that. I will lead you in a prayer and you can simply repeat after me.

Father, in the Name of Jesus, I confess that my own sin has separated me from You. I acknowledge that you sent your very own Son to die for my sin in order to reconcile (restore) me to You! And I now, by faith, receive that reconciliation that Jesus provided on the Cross. I repent of my sin. I willingly choose to make you Lord of my life. And I now by faith declare “I am born again!”

(No formula necessary here, but you get the idea)

(I turn back to Romans 10 and ask them to read verse 13 “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” and ask them “Are you a whoever???” Thus reemphasizes that it is by faith, not by sight, that we are saved.)

Scriptures (the backbone of what you share!)

Romans 3:23 *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*

Romans 6:23a *“For the wages of sin is death”*

1 Corinthians 6:9 *“the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God ...”*

John 3:16-17 *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”*

John 3:3 *“Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

John 14:6 *“I am THE way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me!”*

Romans 10:13 *“For ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”*

Part 1 REHEARSAL

Reminder

Lean on the scriptures! With only 90 seconds or less, you cannot have a back and forth conversation as shown above. The purpose of reading the fully fleshed out conversation above is to see how flesh can get put on the bones of the 6 or 7 scriptures listed above. When you share, all you need to share is the scriptures. There is power in the scriptures. If you can link them together a bit as you share them ... icing on the cake.

90 Seconds

- Find a partner.
- After finding a partner, decide which of the two of you will practice sharing the gospel first
- Person 1 shares
- Time is called and everyone is given a couple seconds to finish up
- Person 2 shares

45 Seconds (Same protocol as 90 seconds, but with 45 seconds)

30 Seconds (Same protocol as 90 seconds, but with 30 seconds)

Debrief: How did it go!?!?

Part 2 (for reading as a whole group)

This will be just a short summary of each of the 3 testimonies you've heard so far. Your goal in conversation will then be to discuss those examples for the purpose of seeing what parts of them gave us ideas. NOTE: please refer to the Jan. 29th and Feb. 5th sermons to hear the whole stories ...

Example 1: North Carolina Bed and Breakfast Waitress (5 Questions)

Peter and Megan had just had a late night with a sick kiddo. That morning, after breakfast, Peter asked a waitress at the bed and breakfast for a cup of water (like in John 4). Seeing that they had a moment to talk, he asked her about her background and then eventually asked "I'm curious, were you raised in any kind of spiritual background?" Following the list of 5 questions from Brad that respectfully start a spiritual conversation, Peter was soon able to ask her about her views on heaven and hell. After hearing her explanation, he said "Would you like to hear what the Bible says about that?" She readily accepted that invitation and Peter was able to share the Gospel with her - start to finish. The Holy Spirit was clearly witnessing to the Word and Peter was able to follow up by giving her a Gospel tract for her later review.

Example 2: New Father on the DeWitt's Porch (Personal Testimony)

It was Saturday family day and a salesman knocked on the DeWitt's door. While Peter does not normally talk with salesmen, he felt differently about this one so he went and checked on the kiddos in the backyard. The salesman noted he was soon to be a father for the first time and invited Peter to share any advice he may have about parenting. Peter shared how his relationship with Christ is the most important key to his parenting. Asking the new father, Peter found out he grew up Catholic but did not know if he was born again. Peter asked if he would like to know how to be born again. Peter shared the whole Gospel (including a special mention of the need for the virgin birth because of his Catholic background). The young man earnestly received the Lord on the DeWitt's porch!

Example 3: Thanksgiving Day Car Ride (Deliverance / Emotional Healing Prayer)

On a previous year's Thanksgiving Day, a young man walking on a sidewalk caught Peter's eye. Feeling like it was the lead of the Lord, Peter quickly turned the family van around and zipped through some parking lots to cut the man off! Not knowing why he was supposed to talk with him, Peter was honest "I am a believer - a Christian - and when I saw you, I felt like I was supposed to talk with you. Is there anything we can help you with?" It turns out he could use a ride to his distant workplace. Upon providing that, it turned out that he had a history of depression and even perhaps an expectation that he would struggle with suicide

(because of some family history of that - if Peter recalls correctly). Peter realized THIS was the reason he was supposed to talk with him and faith rose up in him. Peter said “If I pray for you, that depression will GO today.” The young man said “Really!?!” Peter shared how he had been set free from anxiety by God. When Peter was about to pray, the young man said “This is so weird ... just as I walked out of my apartment today, I said ‘God, PLEASE help me somehow!’” Peter said “I am the answer to your prayers!” Peter then prayed for the young man who noticed a real peace come upon him. After that, Peter said “There is something so much more important than even being set free from depression.” As the young man gave his attention, Peter asked him if he was born again. He could not remember if he had been ... so Peter shared the gospel in the 10 minutes they had left. The young man received the Lord right there in the DeWitt’s van and Peter exchanged contact information with him and sent him along with a gospel tract for his review of the message he had just heard.

Points for Discussion (about the testimonies)

- What about the first example of sharing the gospel with the 5 questions stood out to you?
- What ideas did you have as you listened to the second example of sharing the gospel through a personal testimony?
- What were some takeaways you had from listening to the third example about praying for the young man who had to work on Thanksgiving?