

PERSONAL WITNESSING

As a healthcare provider, if we had a cure for our patient's disease and refused to tell him or her how to be cured, we would consider it unethical and unprofessional. As a healthcare provider, if we had a cure for AIDS and allowed 30 million to die this year without telling even a single person how to avoid death, it would be reprehensible and inhumane. Excuses about difficulty and expense would be irrelevant. Governments would spend their entire budgets to cure their people. As a Christian healthcare provider, we know a cure that would prevent eternal suffering and death for literally hundreds of millions of people. Furthermore, the efficacy is complete; there are no true deleterious side effects, and the tremendous price has already been paid. The disease? Sin. The cure? The death of Jesus Christ in our place, and the resurrection that gives us eternal life.

Sadly, we are often not as good at sharing the Good News as we would like to be. 1 Peter 3:15b commands us that we should *“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”* There are many methods of doing personal evangelism (Evangelism Explosion, FAITH, and others), and you may find taking such a course to be valuable. In order to give some help to those who have not taken such a course and who are not in the habit of sharing Christ regularly, three different ways follow. Find one that you are comfortable with (or make up your own) and use it regularly. The first two have materials that you can order so you can more fully understand the method.

Just remember, you must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and to the person with whom you are talking. Some questions or comments, and their response to them, can give you a clue about whether the time is right to talk to this particular person about what Christ has done for you. There is an expression that you should *“run it up the flagpole and see who salutes.”* The CMDA *“Saline Solution”* calls these comments *“faith flags.”* You can wave a faith flag to determine how ready the person is to receive the

gospel. You are looking to see where God is already working. One way to do this is to mention some spiritual topic that is part of your life—church, an event, a person—and then ask something like, *“What is your religious background? I have never heard you mention a church, and I was wondering about that.”* Other such comments: *“I am glad I don't have to go through something like that again alone,”* *“I am sorry to hear about that. When something similar happened to me, I am not sure I would have made it if I hadn't had my faith to fall back on,”* and, for the more direct, *“I just realized I have never told you about something very important to me, my relationship with Jesus Christ. Would you let me tell you about it?”*

You can never tell what impact your words will have. Remember, you cannot (and should not try to) talk someone into accepting Christ. You are not responsible for their salvation. The Holy Spirit is in charge of that. You are only responsible to tell what you know and what Christ has done in your life. Daniel 4:2: *“It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.”* You are responsible for praying for someone to share with and to have the

courage to share. You do not have to be a biblical scholar or have all the answers to all possible questions in order to share what Christ has done for you.

Consider the following verses:

- ▶ *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”* (Ephesians 2:8).
- ▶ *“I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power”* (1 Corinthians 2:3–4).
- ▶ *“No man can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him”* (John 6:44).
- ▶ *“That is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him”* (John 6:65).
- ▶ *“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us”* (2 Corinthians 5:20).
- ▶ *“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty”* (Isaiah 55:11).

There are two important principles that can guide you in sharing your faith by using verses from the Bible. It is important to have the person read the verse aloud so they can hear it. This principle comes from Romans 10:17: *“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”* It is then also important to ask, “What does this say to you?” or “What does this mean to you?” when the person has finished reading the verse. This principle comes from Luke 10:25–26: *“On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he*

asked, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ ‘What is written in the Law?’ he replied. ‘How do you read it?’”

It is important that you let God do the work. You do not have to hold long theological discussions or give complex explanations of the text. Merely listen in a way that shows you are paying attention. Limit your comments to those that encourage the person to talk, such as “Umm,” or “Uh-huh.”

Remember:

- ▶ The nonbeliever will be doing the reading out loud.
- ▶ The nonbeliever will be doing the talking. Listen in a way that he or she will want to talk.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit will be doing the convincing.
- ▶ God’s Word will bring conviction.

Many people feel that they cannot witness if they have not memorized all the verses they are going to use or might have to use to answer any questions. While you may certainly wish to memorize God’s word for many good reasons, not having memorized the verses is not a reason not to witness. Whatever verses or method you decide to use, mark your Bible beforehand.¹ You should highlight the passages and underline the important words. Write the next verse at the top of the page both right side up and upside down—that way you can know where to go next even if you are sitting across from the person and sharing the Bible from that vantage point. A small card kept in your Bible or your wallet as a crutch is not unacceptable. There is no evidence that people are more likely to be saved from a glib and polished presentation than from hearing the gospel

¹ In marking your Bible, there is a caution. Be sure to know your target audience. There are some groups (in North America and abroad) who hold the Bible to be the HOLY Bible. Writing in it in any form is looked on as defacing that which is holy. To show them a marked

from someone who stumbles through it.

The three methods that follow have been tried and true for many people but may not be right for you. Feel free to

adapt any of these as best fits your personality, your needs, and your situation.

It is not so important *how* you do it. Just do it!

METHOD ONE: THE BRIDGE PRESENTATION²

One method that works well in informal settings is the “bridge presentation.” Practicing this so you can do it smoothly is helpful; however, it is not designed to be a sophisticated, highly polished presentation. Because of the visual component and the small number of verses, this works particularly well in a cross-cultural situation.

► Wave the flag. Ask the sort of questions mentioned above. If they express interest, then . . .

► Tell your story. It is a good place to start. Others are usually interested. They can relate to it and they will find it hard to dispute. The best evidence for your story is your changed life. They may doubt your particular set of beliefs and they can criticize your church or denomination, but they cannot avoid the fact that *something* changed your life! You are not setting yourself up as a model Christian, only giving glory to God. The principles of giving your testimony (see Chapter 15 and Appendix I) are helpful in enabling you to learn the principles of how to tell your story in a brief, clear, and concise way.

► You need to convey (without necessarily using these particular verses) the following truths about the four points of the gospel message.

Truths About God: God is loving and giving (1 John 4:10), holy (Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15–16), and just

(2 Thessalonians 1:6–9).

Truths About All People: We are sinners (Romans 3:23), the just result of sin is death (Romans 6:23a), and in God’s eyes we are unclean (Isaiah 64:6).

Truths About Jesus: He is God with all of His attributes (John 1:1, 14). He gave His life as our substitute (1 Peter 2:24). Salvation comes not because of our works, but because of grace—the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8–10).

Truths About Us: We (you and I) must believe to receive Jesus and become children of God (John 1:12). We must ask Jesus to be our Savior and Lord (1 John 1:9).

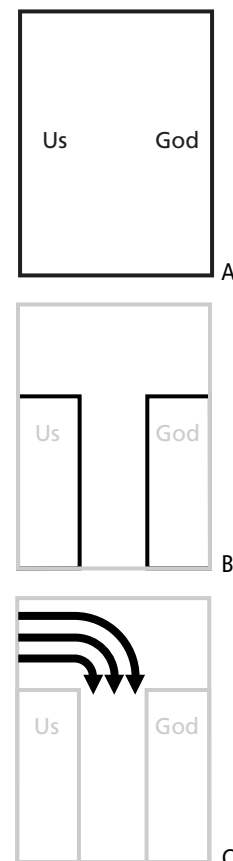
► Use the “bridge presentation” to actually share these ideas. There are seven steps. You can use a blank piece of paper, a whiteboard, or a dirty windshield.

A. Write “Us” and “God.” Point out that we matter to God and He wants a relationship with us. At this point, draw the box around the two words to suggest that God wants “us” included in a relationship with Him.

B. Draw the lines that show the separation between us and God. Explain that we have rebelled against God (either actively or passively) and that our sins have therefore separated us from Him.

C. Describe the things that we do to try to please God to get His favor (e.g.,

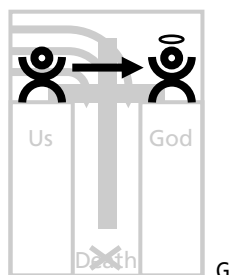
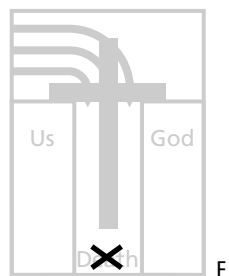
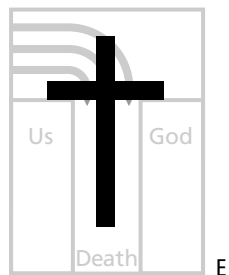
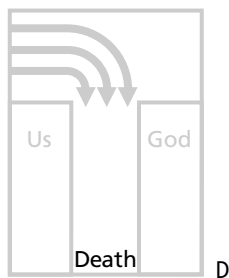
THE BRIDGE PRESENTATION



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Bible will successfully cut off any opportunity for you to witness to them or to get them to believe that you really do honor God’s Holy Word. For example, some old German groups hold this belief. Muslims put their holy book on a stand as a mark of reverence and usually

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attend church, read the Bible, give charity, good works). Point out that the Bible says it is never enough. Draw lines that try to bridge the gap, but all fall short (Romans 3:23, *“For all have sinned but fall short of the glory of God”*).

D. Point out that the Bible says the sins we have done require punishment and that punishment is death (Romans 6:23a, *“For the wages of sin is death; . . .”*) Write the word “Death” on your diagram.

E. Explain that God did for us what we could not do for ourselves. He built a bridge between us and Him. That bridge is His Son, Jesus Christ. He took the penalty for us by dying on the cross (John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”*). As you talk about this, draw first the horizontal line over the gap and then the vertical line to finish the cross.

F. Place an “X” over the word “Death” and explain that when Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, death was cancelled out as a result of sin and He gave us eternal life (2 Corinthians 5:21, *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we*

might become the righteousness of God”).

G. Explain that in order to receive this gift of peace with God and the eternal life that results, you have to cross over to the other side by personally choosing to accept Christ (Romans 10:9, *“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”*). As you explain this, draw the stick figure on the “Us” side and a line with an arrow to the other side. Draw a second stick figure on the other side.

When you are finished, check your friend’s understanding of what you have shown him by asking:

- ▶ Does this make sense to you?
- ▶ If you use this illustration, where do you think you are now?
- ▶ Is there any reason you wouldn’t want to cross over to the other side?

If the person agrees to accept Christ, then help that person pray a prayer of confession and acceptance. If he or she is not ready or not sure, don’t press. Ask if you can clarify any points and answer any questions or concerns they have. Tell them to think about it and offer to talk again later about any questions they may have.

METHOD TWO: SHARE JESUS WITHOUT FEAR

The following notes are adapted from a book by William Fay and Ralph Hodge, *Share Jesus Without Fear* (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1997). This book and a guide and kit will enable you to learn more about this way of sharing about Jesus without fear. Order

them by calling 1-800-458-2772.

- *Share Jesus Without Fear Workbook* by William Fay and Ralph Hodge
- *Share Jesus Without Fear Leader Guide*
- *Share Jesus Without Fear Kit*

do not even touch it with their left hand. Some people carry an unmarked Bible just to witness or minister to such people.

²Modified from material presented at the Billy Graham Training Center at the Cove

Prepare your Bible by highlighting the following verses and writing the next verses at the top of the page (remembering to do it right side up and upside down).

- ▶ Romans 3:23
- ▶ Romans 6:23: Circle the words *sin*, *death*, and *in*.
- ▶ John 3:3: Draw a cross in the margin near John 3:3. Draw an X beside the cross. Alongside the cross you have drawn, write the question, “Why did Jesus come to die?” The X reminds you that this is the only exception in the process. You don’t want to ask, “What does this verse say to you?” after the person reads this verse. Not many non-believers know the answer to this question. You would be applying undue pressure. He or she may feel unfairly placed on the spot.
- ▶ John 14:6
- ▶ Romans 10:9–11
- ▶ 2 Corinthians 5:15
- ▶ Revelation 3:20

Having marked your Bible or New Testament, you are ready to share Jesus without fear. To do so, you simply follow these three steps:

Step One

Use questions like those below that determine where God is working.

- ▶ Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?
- ▶ To you, who is Jesus?
- ▶ Do you believe there is a heaven and a hell?
- ▶ If you died right now, where would you go? If heaven, why?
- ▶ If what you believe were not true, would you want to know it?

If the answer to the last question is “Yes,” then open your Bible and proceed to Step Two.

If the answer to the last question is “No,” do nothing but thank the person for their time.

Step Two

Let the Bible speak. Ask the person to read the verse aloud. Then ask, “What does this say to you?” Listen to the person.

- ▶ Romans 3:23: “*All have sinned.*”
- ▶ Romans 6:23: “*The wages of sin is death.*”
- ▶ John 3:3: “*You must be born again.*” (Remember to ask, “Why did Jesus come to die?”)
- ▶ John 14:6: “*I am the way.*”
- ▶ Romans 10:9–11: “*If you confess . . . you will be saved.*”
- ▶ 2 Corinthians 5:15: “*No longer live for themselves.*”
- ▶ Revelation 3:20: “*I stand at the door, and knock.*”

Now you are ready to use the closing questions in Step Three.

Step Three

Close with key questions.

- ▶ Are you a sinner?
- ▶ Do you want forgiveness for your sins?
- ▶ Do you believe Jesus died on the cross for you and rose again?
- ▶ Are you willing to surrender your life to Christ?
- ▶ Are you ready to invite Jesus into your heart and into your life?

After you have asked these questions, just be silent . . . and pray. Do not push. If the person answers affirma-

tively, offer to pray with them in a prayer for confession of sin and acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord. If

not, offer to answer any questions they have at the time and then offer to speak with them again if they wish.

METHOD THREE: THE ROMANS ROAD

There are many variations on the so-called “Romans Road,” but every one leads to the throne of God. As you use this method to show Christ to unbelievers, you may find it helpful to underline these verses and then, at the top of the page, write the next stop in the road. Write them right-side up in case you are sharing a Bible and write them upside down if you are seated across from the person and sharing the Bible. Have them read the verses so there is no mistake what the Bible says. The suggested “conversation” is not a script but is an example of what might be said to make a smooth continuation to the next point. Obviously, their questions and the leading of the Holy Spirit may change things considerably, but try this approach:

“King David, the psalmist, wrote that the fool has said in his heart that there is no God. For those who do not consider themselves to be fools, God says that His existence and His qualities are evident if we just look around us. If there is indeed a God, then we must either accept Him as God or deny that He is God. There is no meaningful middle ground. If there is a God—an eternal, totally good but totally just, all-wise, all-present, all-knowing God—then we must seek to know more about Him. If we do not, then what we become by following our own ideas is not a pretty picture.”

Romans 1:20–21

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”

Romans 1:28–32

“They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.”

“Many people think they will go to heaven because they have lived a good life. Perhaps they treat all of their neighbors fairly. Maybe they do charity work, have never broken the law, were baptized, or go to church regularly. But the Bible, God’s Word, says that no one can live up to God’s standard of righteousness.”

Romans 3:10–12

“As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.’”

Romans 3:23

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God . . .”

“If all of us have ‘missed the mark’ and since God is totally without sin and cannot tolerate the presence of sin, what can we do that will ever make us good enough to be with Him? The answer is “nothing.” But fortunately, that is not the end of the story. God could, and did, do something. Not because we were good enough, not because we deserved it, and certainly not because we were on His side! If we got what we deserved, it would be death—eternal death. God gave us what dead people need—life. It was a gift, freely given, but like any gift, it must be accepted.”

Romans 5:8–10

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“Salvation cannot be earned. Everyone is a sinner and deserves death, but God gives eternal life. So how can we receive God’s gift of eternal life?”

Romans 10:9–10

“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

“Is just accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord of your life all you have to do? Is confessing honestly that Jesus will be Lord of your life and believing that Jesus lives again after being crucified all you have to do? Yes. There is nothing else we *can* do; no works that will add to the work that Jesus has already done on our behalf, nothing of value that will add to the price He paid for our sins. Are you a sinner? Do you want forgiveness? Do you believe Christ died for you and rose again? Do you want to accept Christ as your Savior?” (If they answer yes, help them pray to accept Christ and go over the following verses to give them God’s promises to them. If they decline, offer to answer any questions they may have. Do not press. Offer to talk with them in the future if they wish.)

If they accept Christ, then go on to the following verses. (Writing them down so they can reassure themselves in the future may be helpful):

Detour to Ephesians 2:8–9

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast.”

Back to Romans 8:1–2

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”

“There is no boasting in heaven because we will be there due solely to the work of Jesus Christ. But now no one can condemn us either! We are set free from the consequences of death because Christ has brought life.”

Detour to 2 Corinthians 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

“But how do we know that we are now saved? God has promised it and He keeps His promises, but the Holy Spirit deals directly with our spirit, testifying that we are now God’s children and then He ‘seals’ us, making sure we are always God’s children. Once we are children of God, nothing can separate us from God’s love!”

Romans 8:16–17

“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs— heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

Detour: Ephesians 1:13–14

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the

redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

Romans 8:38–39

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“As a new Christian, we are to be ‘living sacrifices.’ In other words, we are to no longer follow our old desires, dreams, and inclinations. Rather we are to have a new way of thinking, a new set of priorities, and a new center of our life. In doing so, which we can only do because Jesus Christ has paid the price of sin for us and because we are willing to accept His free gift, we can now have something we have never had before: joy and peace despite the trials and troubles that may come our way.”

Romans 12:1–2

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Romans 15:13

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”