



SHOW AND SHARE

A D-Group Curriculum

A Note to our D-Group Leaders:

Over the past year or so, our leaders at Fellowship have felt a growing burden for people in Central Arkansas who are far away from God. It's not to say that we were oblivious to this reality before, nor that we felt that Fellowship as a church has been disobedient to this unique mission of the Church. We recognize that at times in Fellowship's past, the Lord has been pleased to use the people of our church family to show and share the Gospel of Jesus with people all over Central Arkansas, and to the ends of the earth. We are grateful and proud of that legacy of faith here!

As we have entered this year with the theme of "Sending Out the One," we said on Vision Sunday in August, "Send Me." Our prayer is increasingly that we will become a church full of people who are saying to Christ, "send me," when it comes to showing and sharing the love of Jesus with the people he brings into our lives.

As a part of this effort, we have written a four-week curriculum for you and your D-Group to walk through that coincides with our January 2022 sermon series called "Show and Share." We hope that this will serve as a great equipping opportunity for you and your group, and that it will spark meaningful discussion as we dig into Jesus' heart for those who are lost.

This curriculum is a small part of what we believe it will take to begin creating a culture at Fellowship where we are aware of the people around us who are far away from God. Our hope is that this awareness leads to a burden for them, that burden leads us to prayer, and that prayer leads us to action. We are praying for transformed hearts and lives, and God's glory on display. Would you join us in this prayer and in these efforts?

In January 2022, you will also find that we have a short introduction video that coincides with each session in this curriculum. In these videos our pastors share the heart behind each session and give you some encouragement as you prepare to lead each week. These videos will be available at www.fellowshipar.com/dgroupleaders.

As leaders, we have provided a copy of the book *Stay Salt* by Rebecca Pippert for you. This book is the basis for the curriculum we have written. We'd like for you to read the book and use it as an expansion of the curriculum we have provided for you. Encourage those in your D-Group to purchase their own copy and read along to prepare for the discussion each week. As you prepare, we encourage you to do so as if no one in your D-group read the book and to be surprised if they do! This will allow everyone to participate in the discussion and to engage with the material.

If we can help you as you prepare to lead, please reach out to your D-Group pastor. We are praying for you, and we are excited to have this conversation as a church family. We always love hearing from you, and the stories of how people's lives are being transformed and how they are living out their faith. You can share those stories with your D-Group pastor or email them to us at dgroups@fellowshipar.com.

A special thanks to our pastors and staff who contributed to this curriculum: Cody Calhoun, Carrie Carter, Katie Hernandez, Cameron Magby, Jericho Jones, Jay McGuirk, Madison Offenbacher, Amy Skrivanos, John Vance, and Alfredo Zuniga!

SESSION 1

The Means

As you prepare this session, read Chapters 1-4 of Rebecca Pippert's Stay Salt, and feel free to add in some of her discussion questions, or create your own.

Sharing the Gospel.

There probably isn't a phrase in Christianity that makes believers more nervous. The good news doesn't feel so good when our hearts are racing, palms are sweating, and our minds are blanking on scriptures we've had memorized for years, all because we're so nervous. If your D-Group drove to your nearest grocery store and your leader said "Alright, everyone go in and share the gospel with at least one person," what would your reaction be? If we're honest, many of us would get *really* nervous *really* quick!

When I (Jay McGuirk) was in middle school, my Sunday School teacher took me and my friend Robby out on a Saturday afternoon to knock on people's doors and to share the Gospel with them. (Don't worry... this is not what we're asking you to do!) Years later, when I was a young youth pastor, the senior pastor that I worked for made us do the same thing. I don't know if this makes me sound like a terrible pastor, but I'd rather die a slow death than to take the approach of bothering people at home on a Saturday afternoon. Especially during college football season!

Are you like this, too? If so, why? Why is the opportunity to share the greatest story ever told such a nerve-wracking thing?

In many cases, it's because we've bought into the lie of self-confidence. We're broken, sinful, self-centered beings, and we can easily get overwhelmed by the thought that it all depends on us.

Some of us believe that if we don't say the right things, the person won't accept Jesus. If we don't know enough Scripture, this person will reject God. If we are awkward or weird, this person will roll their eyes and never become a Christian because we messed up. If they say no to Jesus, then it's all *our* fault.

DISCUSSION

- 1. Talk about a time when you've shared the gospel with someone. What was going through our head? How did that person respond?**
- 2. What are some of the thoughts that have held you back from talking to someone about Jesus?**
- 3. Who told you about Jesus? How did they do it?**

You Are Not the Solution.

Let's get this out of the way now: *YOU* can't perfectly share the gospel in a way that will drive someone to respond to Jesus. That nagging lack of self-confidence is actually a bit of truth, because we *are* inadequate. This is eternity, moving from death to life, and experiencing spiritual salvation; we can't speak eloquently enough to have someone "make a decision." If we are not the solution, then what is? How do we respond to our inadequate self-confidence?

God-Confidence.

We seek to grow in God-confidence and in the understanding that while we are weak, He is strong. Yes, we are all broken. Paul tells us in Romans 3:23 that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” But the God we serve wants to use us *because* we are weak. He delights in our obedience in sharing the gospel, feeble as it is, because He is not limited by our weakness. On the contrary: God’s glory is magnified through our shortcomings.

We should never reject the simple truth that we need God. We are dependent on Him for everything, including sharing the gospel. It’s easy for us to adopt the lies of the culture around us: don’t embarrass yourself and never show weakness. If talking about Jesus is going to do either of those things, we are likely to avoid the issue.

Depending on God, however, isn’t a bad thing. It’s His grace to us! This is revealed in the truth of Jesus’ incarnation on earth. Rebecca Pippert puts it this way:

“The fact that Christ came in utter weakness and vulnerability as a baby has immense significance when it comes to evangelism. Here’s why: Jesus’ birth reveals that God is pleased to dwell in and reveal His glory through human weakness. That is a theme through all of Scripture.”

DISCUSSION

1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Why does Paul say that he can boast in his weakness?
2. What would you say are some of your weaknesses in sharing your faith? How can God be glorified through those?
3. How can you grow in God-confidence?

Dependence on the Holy Spirit.

When we lean into our dependence on God, He moves in us in a very specific way: through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the One who guides us, encourages us, and empowers us to share the good news with others. He is the one who is stirring the heart of the person you are talking to, drawing them to Jesus. Jesus even calls the Holy Spirit our Helper and says that the Spirit will come to “convict the world in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 15:8). We don’t save anyone; it is the Holy Spirit who draws people to Jesus, convicts them of sin, and allows them to see the truth of the gospel that they desperately need.

If you are a follower of Jesus, then you are never alone. Before He ascended, Jesus promised “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). His presence is enacted in each of us by the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit is always moving and always working. Our problem is that we often aren’t looking. We must build an awareness for the spiritual reality that is happening just beyond our physical vision. And that, too, only comes from dependence on God. He has invited us along to experience His redemptive work in the world. We should ask Him daily to open our eyes to where He is already moving and how He wants us to be involved.

DISCUSSION

- 1. What role does the Holy Spirit play in us sharing the gospel?**
- 2. How have you experience the Spirit orchestrating events so you could have a spiritual conversation with someone?**
- 3. Think about people in your sphere of influence right now. Who has God placed in your path that needs to hear the good news?**
- 4. As a group, pray together for God to open your eyes to how He is already moving and show you how you can take part. You can even use these simple prayers:**
 - a. God, where are you already moving?**
 - b. Give me wisdom to know who to speak to today about You.**
 - c. Open my eyes to the spiritual needs of the people around me.**

SESSION 2

The Message

As you prepare this session, read Chapters 5-10 of Rebecca Pippert's Stay Salt, and feel free to add in some of her discussion questions, or create your own.

In Session 1, we talked through some of the barriers we feel when it comes to showing and sharing the Gospel. We also dispelled the myth that successfully sharing our faith is dependent on us—the solution is God-confidence and a trust in the Holy Spirit, and not a self-confidence. In Session 2, we look deeper at the message of the Gospel, and how clarity on the story of salvation gives us the heart and content we need to share His good news with others.

Good News.

When I (Jay McGuirk) was younger in my faith, and even new to being a pastor, one of my biggest fears was summed up in Luke 17:2. Jesus tells his followers that it's a bad idea to lead other people into sin and disobedience. His exact words are, "it would be better for him if a millstone was hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea." In my mind, I applied this when it came to sharing the Gospel with others. As we talked about in the first session, I was convinced that leading people to Christ depended on me (not that I would have admitted it that way.) I was so afraid that I would get a small detail wrong in sharing the Gospel, and in turn, I would lead that person to embrace a false gospel condemning them to Hell. It took me a long time to gain enough confidence to where I believed that I would not say, "If you'll just give your life to Satan...NO WAIT! JESUS! I MEAN JESUS!" But, the more I truly came to understand the Gospel, the Holy Spirit used it not just to save me. He used this good news to *transform* me. In that transformation, I have gained more and more confidence in sharing this with others.

Believers are not just won to Jesus with this Good News, we're compelled to share it. When we know WHAT the Good News is and WHY the lost need to hear it, then we can't help BUT share it to a lost and dying world. It's our plea to those headed towards danger. It's our proclamation that God loves you and wants to save you from your sin. It's the best news you and I could ever share with anyone.

What Matters Most.

A newspaper headline has the most important part of the whole paper. As Christians, that is what we have. The Gospel means Good News! It's news of who God is, who we are and what He has done for us!

Through the narrative of Creation and the Fall, we see the nature of God and the condition of Man. In His Word, He describes Himself as Creator. All that is good about our world and universe came straight from His creative work. God also describes Himself as holy, blameless, and perfect. He is right in all He does and His very character is perfection.

A perfect Creator created a beautiful world, and the triumph of all creation was humanity. Man and woman were formed in the image of God, given life and dignity. God enjoyed this incredible relationship with Adam and Eve. They walked in the garden with him. They had an intimate, personal connection to His creation. But all of that changed.

The serpent Satan approached Adam and Eve in the Garden. His lies began to take root in their minds: "Did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?" (Genesis 3:1). He's lying about the command and switching their attention to the forbidden tree. Satan tempts them to be like God, having their own way. They eat. Humanity falls. Sin enters the world.

In this moment, Adam and Eve valued something more than God and more than obedience to God. Tim Keller defines sin as, *“a distortion and dislocation of the heart from its true center in God. This distortion is the heart desire of every person to be his or her own savior and lord.”* That’s all of us. Since the garden, we are all born with sin all over us. That sin separates us from our perfect Creator for eternity.

DISCUSSION

- 1. Why is it good to draw on God’s character first in sharing the gospel?**
- 2. Why do we need to give the bad news before the good?**
- 3. How would you describe sin to someone not familiar with the term?**

Bad News/Good News.

Bloodshed is demanded. The payment that must be made for God’s wrath toward sin is a sacrifice. God’s people used animals, in particular a spotless lamb on an altar and shed its blood. This points towards the ultimate sacrifice.

Lost in our sin, God sent us a Savior, His Son. Jesus came, lived a sinless life (spotless) that we could not live, and died upon a cross shedding His blood for the forgiveness of our sin. Buried in a tomb, Jesus rose from the grave defeating death. Our sin would have separated us from God for eternity. For His glory, Jesus suffered and died to pay our ransom from God’s hatred of sin. This is the greatest act of love ever accomplished.

DISCUSSION

- 1. How can we emphasize grace in the story of the cross?**
- 2. By including the resurrection, what are we trying to convey to a lost person?**
- 3. By showing people that their only contribution is their sin that necessitates salvation, how can a free gift like the Gospel persuade hearts that may lean towards good works?**

Respond.

The response is simple. “Repent and believe.” When we repent of our sins, tell God we are sorry for what we have done, believe in the finished work of Jesus and surrender our lives to Him as our Lord, we go from outcasts to God’s own children. This free gift that can’t be earned by a good life or good works, gives us forgiveness and the intimacy with God our hearts have always wanted. And one day, whether we die and go to Him or He returns, we will be with our Creator forever. That is Good News! That’s the Gospel!

That’s what you and I are called to be: obedient to share. We don’t save. Salvation is the Holy Spirit’s job. He is the One who convicts and calls. I (Cody Calhoun) have had those moments of rejection. I have had people tell me, “I’m not interested.” Yes, it was hard, but I remember that I’m planting seeds and rejection isn’t about me. They are the ones who accept or reject Christ. I’m just the messenger bringing the Good News.

DISCUSSION

1. How would you describe to someone what repentance is?
2. In your own words, how have things changed for you once you received Christ?
3. Think about people in your sphere of influence right now. Who has God placed in your path that needs to hear the good news?
4. Our responsibility is to persuade others to consider Jesus through the message of the Good News, but the end result of salvation and transformation is up to the Holy Spirit. Thinking back to Session 1, how does this impact our evangelism?

SESSION 3

The Method

As you prepare this session, read Chapters 11-14 of Rebecca Pippert's Stay Salt, and feel free to add in some of her discussion questions, or create your own.

In Session 2, we looked at the most important thing that happens when we share our faith—the message of the Gospel. This week we will discuss what it means to share that message with people who are far away from God—the ones He puts into our lives and into our paths.

Showing and sharing the gospel of Jesus with love, grace, and courage is the responsibility and privilege of every follower of Christ.

Did you catch that word “every?” How does that make you feel? Do you see yourself as an “evangelist?” Do you think much about what it would actually be like to share the Gospel with someone who does not know Christ? If surveys are correct, it appears that very few Christians see this as their responsibility, much less something they feel compelled to participate in.

Sharing the Gospel can certainly be very challenging at times, but we serve a mighty God. As we talked about in Session 2, knowing and believing this allows us to show and share the gospel with confidence. We serve a God who has authority over everyone and everything (Matthew 28:18).

Why?

There are many places in the world where you could lose your life for being a follower of Jesus and sharing the gospel. Eight years ago, I (Jay McGuirk) was detained briefly in a foreign country where it is illegal for foreigners to share the Gospel with the people of that country. They suspected I was there for this purpose, and for a few minutes, I was concerned that it was going to be a problem for both me, and the Christians who had invited us to come and work with them! Fortunately, I kindly answered their questions honestly (I was never asked “are you to here to share about Christ?” fortunately), stood my ground, and was allowed to leave.

Thankfully, in our country we don't face the same restrictions. By God's grace, we have the freedom to share the gospel without fear of imprisonment or death. But even with this freedom, there are still many Christians who don't share the gospel, and many who have *never* shared their faith. Although there are various reasons why Christians don't actively share the gospel (lack of equipping, apathy, busyness, etc.), the primary reason is because they are afraid. Many of us are afraid of being rejected, afraid of offending someone, or afraid of what others might think about them. If this sounds like you, how do we overcome this fear?

Maybe for you, you feel equipped, you have the time, and your heart does break for those that do not know Christ. Maybe what hinders you from sharing the Gospel is something else, something you can't quite control as much. My husband and I (Madison Offenbacker) have a close friend in our D-Group that

recently stepped out of full-time church ministry to work a secular job. His wife made a similar decision to work outside of the church so that she can represent Christ in the workplace. They both wanted to be around more non-Christians, so they literally took jobs where they can show and share the Gospel. They have more passion for sharing the Gospel than most people we know! They are intentional, thoughtful, and Spirit-led in how they share Christ with others.

After our friend stepped out of his ministry job and adjusted to his secular job, he shared with us, “I realize that many times when pastors say, ‘share the Gospel with people at work,’ they might have never worked outside of the church. To stop and have a Gospel conversation would mean I’m not doing my job – the job I’m paid to do – with excellence.” The roadblock some might feel is not that you don’t have the heart, feel equipped, or have the time, but that you aren’t in a space where you can pause to have those conversations. For these friends of ours, they have discovered ways to share the Gospel that still enable them to do their jobs with excellence.

They represent Christ in how they work, even in small ways like being on time.

They get to know their coworkers and clients with a deeper intentionality.

They engage in conversations with people outside of work hours.

Although they might not have space in the work day, they have been mindful of how God can still use them despite these hindrances to still reach the people God has them around.

Greater is He...

We can conquer this fear by remembering who God is, what He has done, and what He is going to do. He is the merciful God of the universe who desires none to perish, but for all to reach repentance (2 Peter 3:9); He is the gracious God of universe who makes us new and empowers us by the Holy Spirit to be His ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:17-21); and He is the sovereign God of the universe who is responsible for drawing sinners to faith in Christ (John 6:44). We can have confidence that “he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4).”

DISCUSSION

- 1. What are some things that have previously kept you from sharing the gospel with others?**
- 2. Knowing that Jesus has authority over everyone and everything, and that He promises to be with us always (Matthew 28:18-20), how does this strengthen you in your evangelism going forward?**

How?

Our paradigm of evangelism shifts dramatically when we begin to see people the way Jesus sees them: not as projects, but as people who were created to know God and enjoy Him forever.

Jesus was deeply committed to meeting the lost and lowly where they were to demonstrate His sincere love for them. He allowed himself to be interruptible. He showed and expressed compassion for them by listening carefully, asking sincere questions, and responding to their urgent physical needs. Jesus also expressed His love for the lost and lowly by making it clear that He is the Messiah whose primary mission is to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Just as he did these things, he commissions all of His followers to go and make this good news known to all people (Luke 24:44-48). We share this good news not just in our actions, but also in our words because *faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ* (Romans 10:17).

Asking Great Questions

Many of us would love to have spiritual conversations with the people who are in our lives. For most of us, however, we are not quite sure how to get into those conversations without making an abrupt shift in the conversation—which can feel awkward and weird! What does it look like for us to naturally guide conversations to the Gospel, while still genuinely caring for and being interested in the people in our lives?

When it comes to communicating the Word of Christ in a relatable way, questions have immense power. Not only does asking questions reveal that we're truly listening, but asking good, sincere, open-ended questions can challenge skeptics to rethink and re-evaluate their position, without sounding combative or argumentative. This is where the power of God's Word comes into play: asking various questions gives us the opportunity to point people to what the Bible teaches about God and the condition of man. At the same time, we pray and trust the Word of God along with the power of the Holy Spirit who is able to reveal to them their need for Jesus. While our testimony can certainly be a helpful tool when it comes to steering conversations in a spiritual direction, we must remember that our testimony is an *example* of how Christ can transform lives. It is not a substitute for the Word of Christ.

In the pages following this session, there are some great examples of questions and conversation starters. These resources are helpful to know how to get to know people in a more in-depth way, and to understand their thoughts and opinions in relation to the Gospel. Discuss these resources with your D-Group and give them out or send them out before or during this session. Encourage them to find the questions they are most comfortable with and to try them out with people they know.

In 2014, I (Jay McGuirk) attended a conference in Nashville on the Gospel, homosexuality and same-sex marriage. After one of the sessions, I noticed that the editor for LGBTQ issues for ThinkProgress.org was sitting behind me. He was there covering the conference for their news website. I introduced myself, and asked him if he'd let me buy him a cup of coffee. I told him that I wanted to hear more about their news coverage of the conversation at the conference, and get his thoughts. We spent two hours together in a robust discussion around our beliefs! Rather than just launching into what I thought about the conference, I spent most of our conversation asking him questions. I learned about where and how he grew up, how and when he "came out" as a homosexual, what that experience was like, and his upbringing in an evangelical church and student ministry. I was able to share the Gospel with clarity through our conversation, though he did not respond in faith. What did happen, though, is that one of the questions I asked him made him stop and think hard about what he believes.

The question was this: "What is the foundation of what you believe, and how do you know that this foundation is morally right? What is 'true north' for you that guides you into your beliefs, and how do you know that this foundation is solid?"

His answer was "science, and my gut!"

So, I asked him, "what do you do when new science overturns the old science that you once believed? Do you believe that there are things you adamantly hold to today that science will overturn in 10 years? And what about your gut? How do you know when your gut is correct, or if it's just some bad pizza you ate last night?"

He laughed at that last one! And after thinking a minute, he said, "you know, I haven't really thought about that. It's a good question."

Even though the conversation didn't lead to a salvation experience, it had him concede a belief he firmly held. Since then, I've prayed that the Lord would use that question like a rock in his shoe—something that was just uncomfortable enough so that the Lord could use it to continue to pursue Him. Questions can be powerful!

DISCUSSION

- 1. We often find it easy to *show* the love of Christ through acts of service, but have fear when it comes to *verbally proclaiming* the gospel that has transformed our lives. Why do you think this is?**
- 2. Who are some people in your immediate circle (family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc.) that don't know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, and what are some ways you can begin to meet them where they are to share the gospel with them?**

What?

Before sending out his disciples to share the gospel, Jesus tells them to pray earnestly for the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers, because the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few (Matthew 9:36-38). This means there are still millions and millions of people who don't know Jesus. Does this burden your heart? What would it mean if our church family intentionally planned to daily pray for the people we know who are far away from God? What would it take for you to choose one person and commit to praying for them daily? If you are already doing this, would you consider sharing that person's name with your D-Group so that we can join you in praying for them?

To start this session, we talked about fear. As we wrap up, let's be clear about opposition to the Gospel. Opposition is inevitable. It likely won't look like the same opposition that our Christian brothers and sisters face in Iran, China, Afghanistan, or other countries who are openly hostile to Christians. But, when we face those moments of rejection or hostility as we lovingly, graciously, and courageously share the gospel, we can rest with confidence in the sovereignty of God and the power of His Word to do a radical work of grace in the hearts of those we share with. As we said earlier, the one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world. That is our peace and confidence!

DISCUSSION

- 1. If God were to answer all your prayers within the last 2 months, how many people would be saved?**
- 2. The Apostle Paul's heart was burdened for those who didn't know Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:1). How can you begin to cultivate a burden for those who don't know Jesus?**
- 3. How can you prepare yourself to share the gospel with those you are praying for, when God opens the door for you to share the gospel with them (Colossians 4:2-4)?**

CONVERSATION STARTERS

That BRIDGE To THE GOSPEL

1. The CHURCH Bridge

- ▶ “Were you brought up in a particular religious tradition?”
- ▶ “Do they talk about heaven much in your church?”
- ▶ “What does your church teach about the way a person becomes a Christian?”

2. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE Bridge

- ▶ “Through the years, have you come to know Christ in a personal way, or are you still on that journey?”
- ▶ “Are you interested in spiritual things?”
- ▶ “Do you think about the meaning of life, or our purpose in life? If so, what are your thoughts on those things?”

3. INTELLECTUAL Bridge

- ▶ “Is there a specific question or concern that is hanging you up on your spiritual journey?”
- ▶ “Has anyone ever shared with you what the Bible teaches about...?”
- ▶ “Has anyone ever shared with you about how you can have peace and a personal relationship with God?”

4. PERSONAL OPINION Bridge

- ▶ “In your opinion, what does it mean to be a Christian?”
- ▶ “What do you think of...(God, Jesus Christ, religion, the Bible, the meaning of life, etc.)?”
- ▶ “When someone says, “God bless you,” ask “who is your God that you are asking to bless me?”

5. CURRENT ISSUES Bridge

- ▶ “Would you like to know what the Bible has to say about this issue?”

6. SPORTS BRIDGE

- ▶ “Did you that (name of athlete) is a Christian?”

2. FELT NEEDS Bridge

(used to show how the Gospel answers our deepest needs)

- ▶ “You know, I still have my share of problems, but my faith in Christ and my relationship with him has made all the difference in how I handle them. I used to worry myself sick; God is teaching me how to have peace even when my life is tough.
- ▶ “Yes, I have experience loneliness in my life. I used to wonder if anyone would miss me or even care if I died. But, I have learned and experienced Christ’s love for me just the way that I am, and how he’ll never leave me.”

8. PRAYER Bridge

- ▶ “Is there something I can pray about for you?”

9. RELATIONSHIP Bridge

- ▶ “We’ve been friends for awhile now. We’ve talked about so many things, but I don’t know if I’ve ever told you about the most important thing in my life—my faith. Would you be OK if I shared some of what I’ve been through in my spiritual journey?”

The FIRM Method

Taken from *People Sharing Jesus* by Darrell Robinson

F

Ask about people's **family**,
or their family of origin

I

Interests...

ask them what they are interested in: hobbies, sports, their work, how they spend their free time

R

Religious Bridge...

ask them about something spiritual, like “Do you ever think about...” or “what do you think about...?” Sometimes there are stories in the news that relate to religion or spirituality that can serve as conversation starters.

M

My story...

talk about your spiritual journey, and the message of the Gospel.

The Columbo Tactic

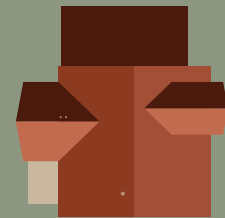
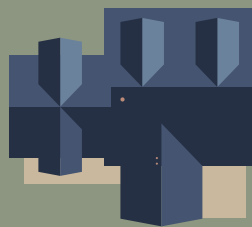
Taken from *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* by Gregory Koukl

1. When someone makes a statement about spiritual things (like “It’s not rational to believe in God,” or “Christianity is the same as all other religions,” etc.) you have a 10-second window to draw the person into a conversation in an intentional way.
2. The best response is to ask clarifying questions in order to understand the person’s view, and it’s consequences, so that you do not distort this view.
 - The purpose of these questions is also to gather information about what they are saying.
 - Asking questions instead of making statements can help to advance the conversation in an inoffensive way.
3. After you understand what the person is saying about their beliefs, ask them, “How did you come to that conclusion?”
 - This helps us understand *why* they think what they think.
 - You will often find that many people are not prepared to defend what they believe. Instead they are exercising a faith in their own beliefs and not in actual facts.
 - Good questions to ask when people offer beliefs that are contrary to Scripture:
 - ▶ Is that possible?
 - ▶ Is that plausible?
 - ▶ Is that probable?
4. Ask leading questions that you believe will get the person to agree with you on where you are leading them.
 - When you talk with people about Jesus, make sure WE are clear on the Gospel. We have to know why Jesus is the Way before it’s helpful to tell people that he is the Way.
 - Find any common ground of agreement that exists between you and the other person.
 - The most powerful and persuasive questions are the ones that help people recall what they already know.
 - ▶ “Is the world as it should be? Or do you think that there is brokenness and evil in the world?”
 - ▶ “Do you believe that people who do things that are morally wrong should be punished? Have you ever done anything morally wrong?”
5. If you come to a place where your questions have caused the other person’s beliefs or worldview to collapse on itself, ask them if you can share with them what you believe and why.

*For more information on how to ask great questions that help undermine many current popular beliefs that contrast what the Bible says, read *Tactics* by Gregory Koukl.*

SESSION 4

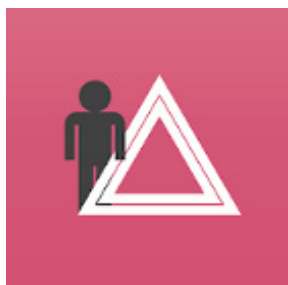
The Model



In Session 1, we saw that it is the work of Christ on the cross and the power of the Holy Spirit that brings about salvation in people's lives. In Session 2, we saw the clarity of the message of the Gospel that we communicate when we are sharing the love of Jesus with others. Session 3 encouraged us to show Christ's love in the way we share the Gospel with others by caring about them and asking good questions.

In Stay Salt, Rebecca Pippert gives us numerous examples of how she shares the Gospel with the people she's encountered in her life. What sticks out about those encounters is that no two conversations are the same. She utilizes a knowledge of the Gospel (The Message—Session 2), a care for the person she's talking to (The Method—Session 3) and a complete dependence on the Word of God and the Holy Spirit (The Means—Session 1).

Sometimes people are hesitant to share the Gospel because they feel like they don't know how to explain it easily and succinctly to others. In Session 4, we want to present a model of sharing the Gospel that is both clear and easy to explain. You might have seen this presentation called "The Bridge" or "One-Verse Evangelism." Our prayer is that this will be either the first, or another tool for our toolboxes that we can pull from when it comes to showing and sharing the good news of Jesus with others.



The Bridge

An easy way to prepare to use The Bridge is to download the app for your smartphone:

- ▶ Click [here](#) to download it for your iPhone.
- ▶ Click [here](#) to download it from the Google Play store.
- ▶ Or, go to your app store and search for "The Bridge Share the Gospel" and you should see the app with the icon above.
- ▶ Once you've downloaded the app, open it. In some cases, the app will open in Spanish. If so, click "English" in the top right-hand corner and you're all set.

Have everyone in your D-Group download the app beforehand, or while you're meeting—it doesn't take long. Use the following guide to walk through the app together so that you can see how it works.

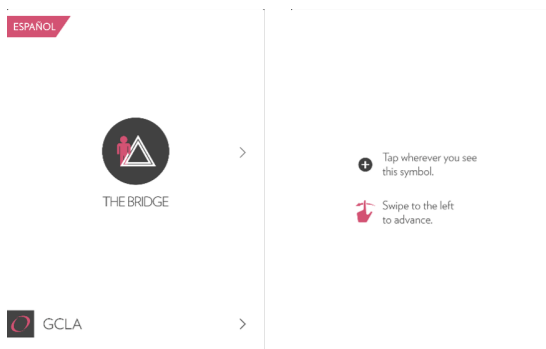


Image 2

Image 3

In **Image 2** and **3** is a guide that will help you use the app to walk through this model of sharing the Gospel with someone else. The great thing about The Bridge is that you don't need the app to use this presentation. It can just as easily be drawn out on a napkin or piece of paper.

One Verse to Explain it All

When I (Jay McGuirk) was a Student Pastor in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, we primarily focused our outreach efforts towards students at James Madison University. I had a unique opportunity to get to know and share the Gospel with dozens of students who were not Christians. Many of them had some ideas about Christianity, but very few of them had ever heard the complete truth of the Gospel.

Whenever we would begin talking about spiritual things, or when they had questions about the Bible or Jesus, I would often lead in with this: “if you want me to, I can show you what the entire Bible is about in one verse.” That usually provided enough intrigue for the student to say, “OK...show me.”

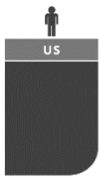
On a napkin (this was before smart phones!), I would write down the words from Romans 6:23, and I would use those words to lead into The Bridge illustration. I can't remember how many times I sat at the Starbucks off of Interstate 81 in Harrisonburg, and used those brown napkins to share this truth—but I remember a few of the names, faces and conversations. There was Laura, who came to know Christ—and who would go on to accept Christ, become a volunteer at one of the largest churches in the country, and who would then go on to have a major role working for one of the best Christian charities in the world. There was Sammy, who was still counting the cost of committing to Christ when I moved away 13 years ago—mainly because he was from Afghanistan, and his uncle was a part of the Taliban. For Sammy, turning to Christ meant he likely could never return home without facing a death sentence. And there were many others, some who were transformed by the Gospel, and some who were not interested.

This simple tool became my go-to when it came to simply and clearly sharing the Gospel. We wanted to share it with you for two reasons:

1. If you don't have a go-to model for sharing the Gospel yourself, you'll now have The Bridge available to you to use.
2. If you do have a model or some method you've been trained in, it's always advantageous to have more tools in your toolbox for any given situation.

As a challenge to your D-Group, have them commit to memorizing Romans 6:23 (ESV):

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

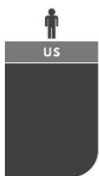


This is Us.

As humans, the Bible tells us that we are created in the image of God. The first book of the Bible, Genesis, tells us that when God created the universe, He finished by creating the first two people—Adam and Eve. God created them in a state of perfection. They were righteous, holy, and had no fear of God or shame. We are told that Adam walked with God in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day, and that he and Eve had full and absolute access to God in their relationship with Him.

This is God.

Speaking of God, let's talk about who He is. He is the Supreme being of all the Universe. He is the Creator and Sustainer of life, and of all things. The Bible tells us that people everywhere have a deep sense that God exists (Romans 1:19-20, Ecclesiastes 3:11). He is the final standard of everything that is "good." There is no standard of goodness or holiness that is higher than God's character and the things that He declares are good. Scripture also tells us that God is the definition of love (1 John 4:8).



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For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Romans 6:23⁽¹⁹⁾

Separation.

In Session 2, we saw Tim Keller's helpful definition of sin. Wayne Grudem gives his definition of sin as *"any failure to conform to God's moral law in our acts, attitude, or nature."*² Because of what Adam and Eve did to disobey God in the Garden of Eden, all of humanity has been separated from our loving and holy God by what the Bible calls "sin." This means that we are born with a sinful nature. It's from this nature that we "sin, and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)" Romans 6:23 sums up both the bad news and the good news about our sin.

Let's look together from this verse to see both the problem our sin nature brings, and the gracious solution that God in His mercy offers.

Wages.

We all know what a wage is—it's something you earn for the work that you've done.



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For the **wages** of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Romans 6:23⁽¹⁹⁾



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For the wages of **sin** is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

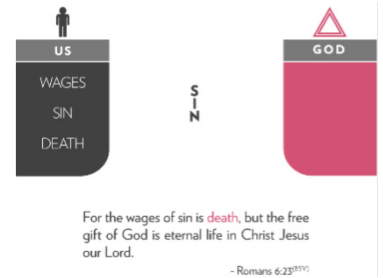
- Romans 6:23⁽¹⁹⁾

Sin.

The Bible shows us that our sin nature, and the sins that we commit out of that nature are a work that earns us a wage. The Bible describes our sin as being so great that "there is no one who does not sin (1 Kings 8:46)," and "there is no one who does good, not even one (Psalm 14:3)." One of our pastors at Fellowship says that when he uses The Bridge illustration, he will take the figure of the person on the left and draw him/her laying down. This shows that our sin not only separates us from God but that we are, in fact, "dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1)!"

Death.

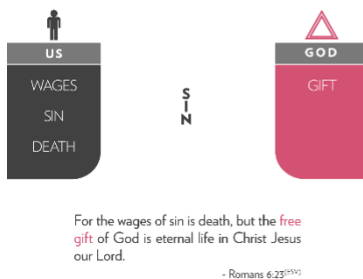
The wages that our sin has earned us is death. In the Garden of Eden, God told Adam and Eve that the penalty for eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was death. This is more than just a physical death. It is a spiritual death that has separated us from a loving and holy God. That's what you see in the illustration above—sin has created a chasm between us and God.



When you drive out of eastern Arkansas, and you cross the Mississippi River, you see just how wide this great river is on our border. At the I-55 bridge, a narrower point in the river, it's almost .5 miles wide. That's over 2200 feet!

Imagine if you (in all your athletic glory) decided that you were going to stand on the Arkansas bank and attempt to jump all the way across to Tennessee. How far out into the river do you think you'd make it? 5 feet? 10 feet? The world record holder for the Olympic long jump, Mike Powell, would make it less than 30 feet. It doesn't matter how good of a long jumper you are. The fact is that this is a gulf too wide for you to make it across.

This is like our attempts of trying to "get to God" or to achieve a standard of righteousness that is high enough to be on par with God. But even this example breaks down because, as we said earlier, we are dead in our sins. And in our deadness, we can't give ourselves the life we need to even attempt to cross this chasm of sin that separates us from God.

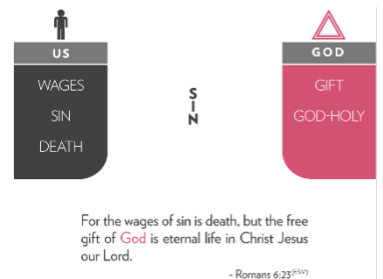


Free Gift.

Do you know what the opposite of a wage is? It's a gift. Wages are earned. Gifts are freely given, and true gifts come with no strings attached. This free gift that we are offered stands in contrast to the wages of sin: death.

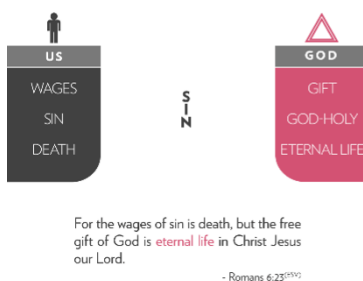
God is holy.

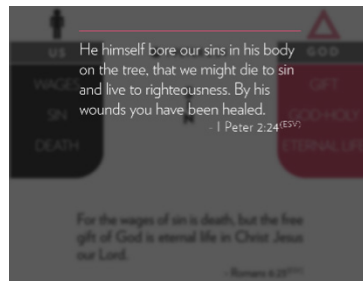
"The Lord our God is holy," says Psalm 99:9. He stands at an eternal distance from our sin. This is the main reason we are separated from Him, because in our sin, we do not meet His standard of holiness. Too often in our culture, "holiness" is used in a negative way to say that someone is self-righteous or condescending. This is not what we see in God's holiness. His is a pure, righteous, joyful and good holiness that serves the highest standard over Creation.



External life.

The opposite of death is eternal life. The wages of sin earn us death... but God's free gift to us is eternal life, both in this lifetime, and in the presence of God once we experience physical death. Even though we still experience the results of our sin through this physical death, when we take our last breath in this life and step into eternity, it will be into the presence of God (Luke 23:43). This is a place where there will be no more tears, mourning or crying and there will be no more death (Revelation 21:4). It is, as Tim Keller says, "everything sad is going to come untrue and it will somehow be greater for having once been broken and lost."

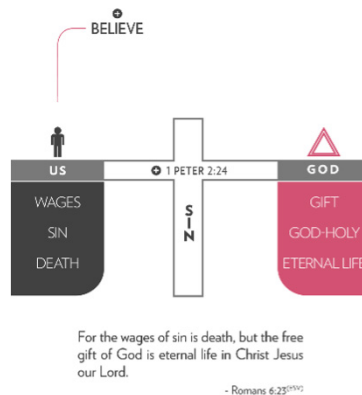
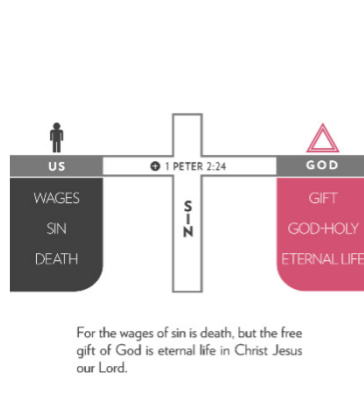




Solution.

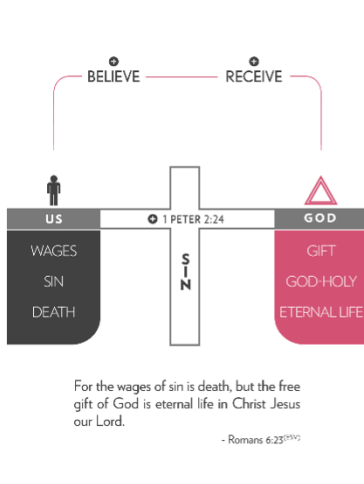
What is this solution that will bridge the gap between us and God? It is the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He came to earth, born of a virgin, existing as completely human and completely divine. He lived a perfect and sinless life, and was crucified on the cross. On the cross, he took our sins upon himself.

Because of this, God punished Jesus for our sin so that we would not have to suffer His wrath. It is the work that Jesus did on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead three days later that gives us the ability to experience salvation and peace with God.



The Bridge.

Jesus is who bridges the chasm between us and God. Because we could never be good or holy enough to meet God's standards, Christ met them for us. And in his grace and mercy, he took our sins on, and took our punishment for us. When we understand what Christ has done for us, our response should be to repent and believe. Repenting is when we confess that we are sinful, and that we have no ability to fix the consequences of our sin on our own (1 John 1:9). We then repent, or turn away from those sins and turn to Christ as our solution. Believing means that we actively put our faith and trust in Christ and what he has done for us as the Son of God/God Himself, in order to be saved from our sins. Romans 10:9 says, "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." John 6:47 says, "whoever believes has eternal life."



Receive.

When we repent and believe, we then receive this free gift of eternal life through salvation. It is then that we move from being only created in the image of God, to now being called a child of God (John 1:12). At this point, we are a new creation with a new heart and a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17). We have moved from spiritual death to eternal life, and the same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to us through the Holy Spirit, God's presence within us. It is from this relationship that we now have with God through Jesus that He begins to transform us bit by bit into the character of Christ. The more we grow in him, the more we become like him.

Will you receive?

Above is a prayer that can serve as a model for someone who is turning to Christ for salvation for the first time. There is nothing magical about the words above, which you may have heard referred to as “The Sinner’s Prayer.” It’s not necessary that someone repeats the words of this prayer, but rather that they understand the Gospel and respond to what Christ may already be doing in their heart. It may not be necessary for them to pray anything at all! As you lead someone to faith in Christ, it’s OK to ask them if they understand the Gospel, and if they are ready to repent and believe. We should never feel the need to pressure them or force them into a decision. It is the Lord who saves, not our presentations and tactics. If you do sense that Christ is working in someone’s heart and they are receptive to the Gospel, you might simply ask them if they are ready to do just that—turn from their sins, and trust Christ, his death on the cross, and his resurrection as the Son of God to save them and give them peace with God. w and share the good news of the Gospel with them!

Pray to receive Jesus as savior:

“Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that I am a sinner and that my good works cannot save me. Thank you for dying for me on the cross to pay for my sins. I believe You rose from the dead to give me eternal life. I receive You in my life, trusting in You alone as my Savior.”

If after reading this guide, you are still unsure in your conversations, please feel free to reach out to one of our pastors and we’d be glad to help you and talk things through with you. We’re also available to help you in your conversations and relationships where you are sharing the Gospel.

Any time you or someone in your D-Group uses this tool, or has any other opportunity to share their faith, we love hearing about it. We’d like to celebrate with them, encourage them, and even pray for the person with whom they’re sharing. Let your D-Group Pastor know or email us at **dggroups@fellowshipar.com** with the story. It’s always a great encouragement when we hear that our church family is living on mission.

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

1 John 5:13^(ESV)

When you lead someone to Christ.

Remember, this is the starting line to a new life in Christ, and not the finish line. Make sure to guide them towards our church, or a church where they will hear the Gospel and have an opportunity to grow in their faith. Talk with them about the next step of baptism, help them connect with your D-Group or another D-Group where they can grow, and encourage them to attend NEXT or our Membership Class at Fellowship where they can learn more about what it means to grow in their faith. We have excellent resources we can provide for you and them too as you walk with them in their first steps of faith, so let us know how we can help.

We are praying for you and the people in your D-Group as this study ends, and as we continue to encourage each other as disciples who make disciples. Let’s pray to the Lord of the Harvest that he puts

people in our path who need to hear the message of Christ, and that He finds us faithful to show and share the good news of the Gospel with them!

An easy way to put this into practice through an online website.

Need Him Global is a website where people from all over the world come to hear about Jesus. They have created an online platform where, after a short training on the basics of the Gospel, they will help you connect with people where you can share the Gospel through text and chat in real-time. For more information and a better explanation of how this works, visit <https://needhim.org/get-involved/#volunteer> and offer the opportunity for those in your D-Group to do the same.