

Friendship Evangelism

Training Program



CROSSROADS
NAZARENE CHURCH

EDITION: September 2022

Introduction

Friendship is a relationship between people, based on care and commitment. It is an expression of love. Friendship also is an effective and dynamic way to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the good news of God's love and commitment to us. God is our Friend (*John 15:14*). Indeed, Jesus said love is a primary testimony of His Church.

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35)

Friendship Evangelism is based on love for your unsaved friends. It deploys God's love outside the walls of the Church, through friendship, to the world. God loves the world (*John 3:16*); He expects us to do the same thing. This is exactly what Jesus did. He reached out to strangers, befriended them, shared His love for the Father and the Father's love with them, and gave Himself up for His friends, which includes you. We follow Jesus' example when we befriend unbelievers and share our faith with them. But friendship often incurs a personal cost — a price we must be willing to pay. Jesus said, *"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his **friends**."* (*John 15:13*). In fact, it's a price we are commanded to pay! It's one of purposes of your life in Christ. It's your Life's Mission.

Your Life's Mission

*Then Jesus came to them (His followers) and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore **go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**" (Matthew 28:18-20)*

The concept of "Friendship Evangelism is nothing new; it is demonstrated and modeled throughout the New Testament. Somehow, the phrase "Friendship Evangelism" has become controversial to some people, probably because it is misunderstood. To be clear, this is what "Friendship Evangelism" does **NOT** mean in the Crossroads training program.

- It does **NOT** mean that you should avoid sharing the gospel with total strangers. If the Holy Spirit gives you this opportunity, you should obey Him.
- It does **NOT** mean that friendship ALONE is a sufficient testimony of the gospel. The gospel message is shared through BOTH words AND deeds — and these must be consistent with one another.
- It does **NOT** mean that friendship is merely a means to an end. Friendship is based on love for your "neighbor"; it is not a method to manipulate, persuade, or "convert" unbelievers to Christianity. "Friendship Evangelism" asserts that we do our part by sharing God's love through friendship and God's Word through our testimony and the gospel message. The rest is up to God and to your neighbor.

The “Friendship Evangelism” Program consists of three (3) main parts. Each part usually takes about two (2) group sessions to cover. More time can be used, if needed.

Part I: Friendship: This part of the program shares the power, purpose, and price of friendships in evangelism

Part II: Your Story: This part helps you develop and refine your personal testimony of faith in Jesus Christ.

Part III: Jesus’ Story: This part helps you friend understand God’s plan of salvation, through faith in Jesus alone. It also trains you to share this good news (“gospel”) with others.

Instead of learning a lot of Christian theology in this program, you should expect to work on developing the skills you need to share your faith in an increasingly secular world. The words, concepts, and phrases of Christianity have become more alien — even offensive — to some unbelievers these days. You must share your faith in ways that they can hear rightly. To do this, you will be practicing communicating essential components of your faith with other people in your group with this goal in mind. Also, there are six (6) basic Scripture verses that you must memorize. God’s Word has supernatural power to birth faith in other people. As the Bible says, *“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ.”* (Romans 10:17) Finally, you also will have to work on these materials on your own, at home, during this program. This is your investment in your own training and equipping for your life’s mission. You will make progress in it by

- **Praying frequently.**
- **Learning God’s Word.**
- **Remaining engaged in church.**
- **Doing what He says.**

So, what does the **Crossroads Friendship Evangelism** program intend to teach? The goal of this program is identical to that described the Apostle Paul’s summary of the gospel message.

“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” (1 Timothy 1:5)

. . . and sharing the good news of redemption and reconciliation with God, through faith in Jesus Christ alone. It’s nothing less than your Life’s Mission, given to you by Christ Himself. It’s about love. And it can start with friendship — to God’s glory.

*Richard Jacobs, M.D.
September 2022*

PART ONE: Becoming a friend

What You Will Learn In PART ONE:

- How to understand the world and life view of your unsaved friend.
- How your faith can become a barrier to sharing Jesus.
- How best to communicate your faith so that it can be heard and understood.
- How the Holy Spirit can use friendship to deploy God’s Love and begin to reforge a connection between your unsaved friend and the Lord.

Friendship Evangelism proposes a process of sharing your faith with others that usually begins with friendship (see **Introduction**, pages 2-3). **Diagram 1**, below, provides a brief graphic overview and explanation of this proposed process, however, the Lord can lead you in ways that are different from this model. You must obey the Holy Spirit and follow His lead. Having this model in hand, however, will help you understand one of the most natural, Biblical processes by which unbelievers can learn about Jesus. Let’s review **Friendship Evangelism**, one step at a time.

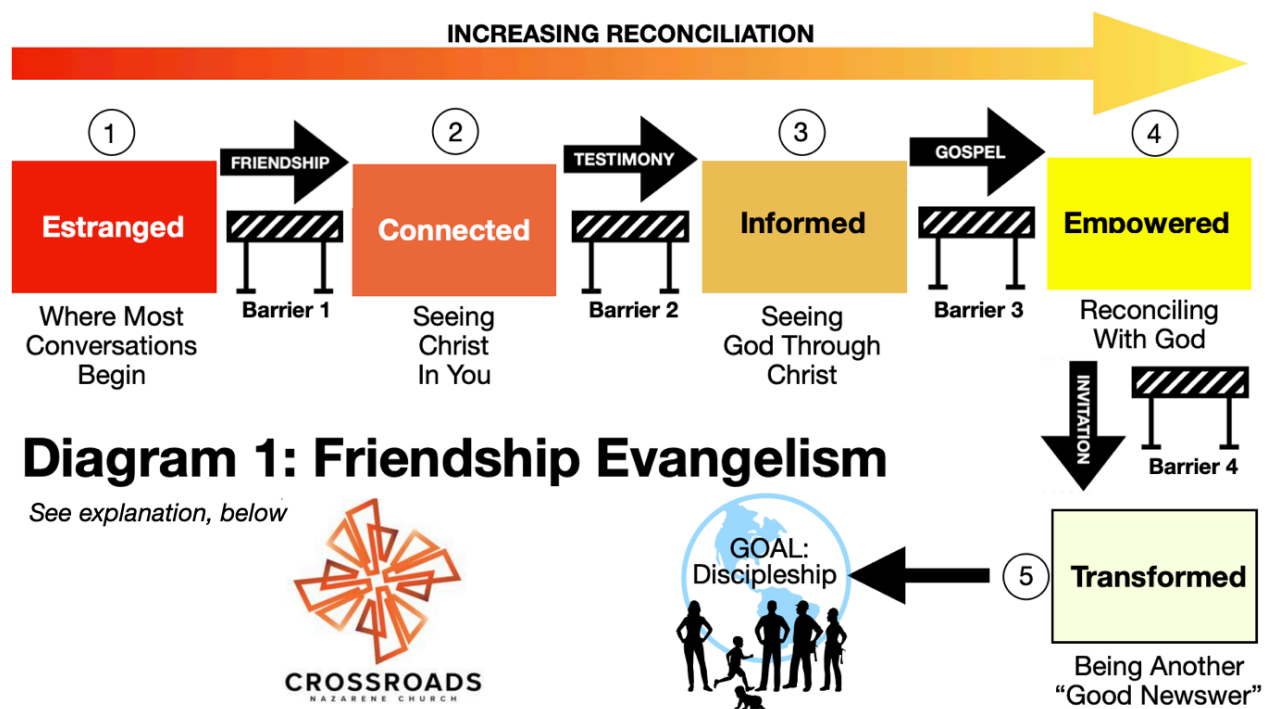
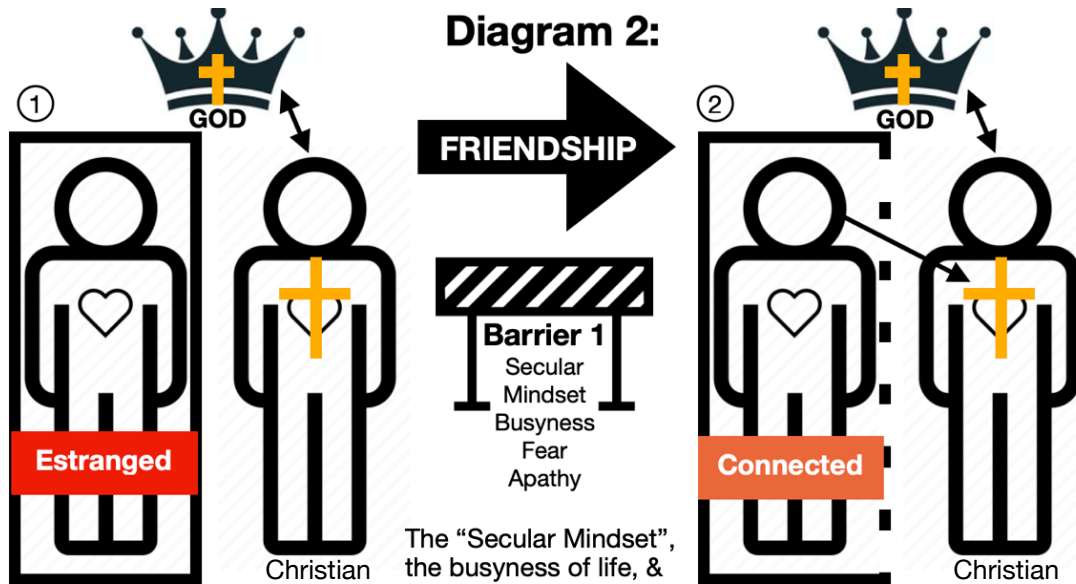


Diagram 1 illustrates a model of how we can share our faith with other people, beginning with friendship. When people have no relationship with God, they are **estranged** from Him and from other aspects of life. Your friendship begins to **reconnect** them to God, through Christ and God's love, in you. The intimacy and transparency of friendship often enables your friend to hear your story of faith in Jesus. They see the difference Jesus makes in your life. They become **informed** by your testimony of faith that Jesus is alive and can be part of their life, too. When the Holy Spirit creates the opportune moment, your friendship and testimony can help your friend hear the Good News of Jesus Christ, God's gospel plan of salvation. The gospel message, along with God's grace, **empowers** your friend to choose to submit to God's love and direction, through faith in Christ. Often, we must invite them to make this decision, but when they do so, they are **transformed** and become "born again". This model proposes increasing stages of reconciliation between God and the unbeliever, through increasing faith. This becomes a life-long process of discipleship.

STEP ONE: FRIENDSHIP

① ESTRANGED to ② CONNECTED



① Your unbelieving friend (LEFT, above) is “in a box”, estranged from God and others by their “Secular Mindset”.

You (RIGHT, above), a Christian, are connected to God; Christ is “in you”.

The “Secular Mindset”, the busyness of life, & other things, can get prevent your estranged friend from hearing about Jesus.

Your friendship can break down the barrier between you and your friend.

② Your new friend (LEFT), is less estranged of your friendship with them. They can begin to see Jesus in you.

This connection with Jesus in you, can begin to breakdown their estrangement with God, also.

Your mission begins when you meet a person who does not believe in Jesus, so they do not know God (*1 John 2:23*); they are estranged from Him (**Diagram 2**, above). People have different levels of familiarity with the idea of God. Some people believe He is a distant, uncaring “Power”, while others deny God exists, at all. Others are angry with God, because of the trouble they have experienced. Others embrace “other gods”. When we are disconnected from God, we are disconnected from His wisdom, life, peace, and love. And we can become **estranged from one another, from creation, and from ourselves**. A “secular mindset”, which is also spiritually directed, arises out of the isolation, doubt, and pain that emerges from this estrangement. This world-and-life view will be radically different from your own, because you trust God and rely on Him for guidance and direction. The clash of these different mindsets can hinder communication and fellowship. The “secular mindset” may be part of the first barrier you encounter when guiding your friend back to God. Understanding this mindset will help you deal with this potential barrier.

You must meet your friend where they now are to minister to them. Knowing about the “secular mindset” helps you understand them better. This mindset consists of the assumptions a person has about how things are and how they should be. All that we assume to be true about reality constitutes our faith. People with a secular mindset have a secular faith, even though they may not think of it this way. According to scholars, the “secular mindset” is characterized by the following beliefs and attitudes.

SECULAR MINDSET

- Believes the principles of life should be derived solely from the material world
- Focus of life should be on physical and temporal things, not “religion”
- Eschews any valid role for faith in government, law, society, or public life
- Confuses the right to believe any religion with any religion is equally right
- Rejects the reality of the spiritual realm or is misled by spiritual deception
- Believes that truth is relative, personal, or parochial
- Denies the eternal existence of the soul or has a non-Biblical understanding
- Tends to be anticlerical, finding Christian terminology and customs offensive

Of course, many of the tenets of the secular mindset are contrary to Christian beliefs. This difference in world and life view between you and the unbeliever creates a barrier between you. It is really a clash of “religions” and a conflict of cultures. There will be many things about the life and conduct of the unbeliever that will make you uncomfortable. There will be many things about your faith that your unsaved friend will find ridiculous and/or offensive. To bridge this barrier, you must love and accept your friend in spite of this. This is what Jesus did! You must communicate with them in words and terminology that they can accept and evaluate. You need to be the one to cross that barrier!

You may have noticed this training manual avoids using a lot of typical Christian jargon. This is because our secular culture has reassigned unfavorable meanings to these words, which can sometimes offend people. This creates an unnecessary confrontation. **Confrontation, without relationship, risks separation** — the very thing you are seeking to overcome. To befriend someone new, you should avoid Christian jargon and phrases, like “*sin*”, “*repent*”, “*born again*”, and the like, when you first encounter them. When you speak kindly with people plainly, while hewing to the truth without using specialized religious vocabulary, you follow Jesus’ example. This is how Jesus told others about His Father.

The demands of life also can erect barriers to developing friendships. Busyness hinders connecting with people in meaningful ways. As a result, your early conversations may be dominated by superficial things. But do not minimize the importance of this discourse. This can be the first step towards enjoying a transformational friendship. Amity between people opens the door for sharing personal matters — things that are “inside us” and can’t be seen readily. The intimacy that friendship engenders between people makes them more transparent to one another. You become more transparent to them. This means that your new friend should start to see Jesus in you. They begin to experience God’s love, through your faithful words and deeds. They begin to reconnect with God through His love in you! The intimacy of your friendship helps you see

better into your friend's life. You will understand more clearly how to help your friend. This too can be a link that helps reconnects your friend to you and to God.

Your new friend is NOT your new project. There is no place in friendship for a hidden agenda, insincerity, or manipulation. You must be a genuine friend and allow the Lord to direct what happens next. If your relationship progresses no further than friendship, you still are a channel for God's grace to your friend, just as your friend is to you. God has paid a high price for your friend through the sacrifice of His only Son. **Your testimony for Jesus actually begins with your friendship, but continues with your story of faith in Christ.**

Review of Introduction and Part I:

- Jesus gave you a Great Commission - to make disciples from people of all nations.
- Jesus taught us His discipleship is based on love. Love is the principal testimony of a Christian.
- Friendship is an expression of God's love because all love comes from God.
- Your Great Commission is a spiritual adventure that must be pursued with the help of the Holy Spirit and the bold, humble exercise of your faith, through obedience.
- You need to maintain a healthy relationship with God through prayer, Bible study, engagement at church, giving, and faithful obedience.
- Jesus taught other people about God, faith, and obedience by befriending them and sharing life with them. You should follow Jesus' example.
- Unbelievers are estranged from God and others. What they believe and how they understand things ("mindset") makes it difficult for them to hear the words and ideas of your faith.
- You must accept them "where they are", love them for who they are, and meet them where they are. This is what Jesus did. You must talk to them in a way they can understand.
- Friendship is NOT a tool of manipulation or religious conversion. Really be their friend!
- As you establish a friendship with your unbelieving friend, you are building a connection between you and them and between them and God that is reinforced with God's love. They become less estranged, more connected.
- Theology debates, Christian jargon, argument, and critical judgment of your friend represent a confrontation that is harmful to your friendship and does not serve God's love.

In Summary:

Their Need: Experience God's Love
Your role: Friendship

ON YOUR OWN:

1. Study the **Crossroads Friendship Evangelism Manual**, pages 2 - 7, until you are comfortable with it.
2. Study **Diagram 2**, page 5, Can you explain this diagram to someone else?
3. Memorize
1 John 4:8. “God is Love . . .” , and
Romans 3:23 - “. . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
4. Which of the following characterize the “Secular Mindset”? (Check all that apply)
 - Focus of life should be on physical/temporal things, not “religion”
 - Votes for a particular political party
 - Believes truth is relative, personal, or parochial
 - May find some Christian terminology, words, or customs offensive
 - Likes Country-Western music
5. Complete the following sentence: “*Confrontation, with relationship, risks* _____.
6. Which of the following is true about friendship and evangelism? (Check all that apply)
 - They have nothing to do with each other.
 - Jesus made friends to share His faith in His Father.
 - You should only make friends with moral people.
 - Friendship can help an unbeliever experience God’s love.
 - Your testimony for Jesus actually begins with your friendship.
 - Christians should only have other Christians as friends.
7. Which of the following is true about communicating with non-Christians? (Check all that apply)
 - You should use a lot of Christian theological words so they can learn your religion.
 - Conversation should be natural as you share your life with them.
 - It’s important to show them they are wrong by arguing with them.
 - If you must quote Bible verses, use the King James Version because that sounds the most religious.
 - Do what Jesus did; accept them where they are and be friendly and patient.
8. If your friend doesn’t seem to be interested in spiritual things, you should do the following. (Check all that apply)
 - Keep pray for them
 - Stay their friend and love them
 - Dump them and move on
 - Tell them they better get their life on track or they could go to Hell.
9. In what ways can you contribute to a barrier for friendship between you and your unsaved friend? (Check all that apply)
 - Too busy to spend time with my friend
 - Be patient, kind, gentle, and encouraging.
 - Insist on talking about me and my beliefs
 - Get offended or “put-off” because of their habits, speech, beliefs, or practices.
 - Try to teach them Christian theology so they know what to believe.

Exploring With Others - Part I: Friendship

Q1 - How do you feel about befriending non-christians? How do you feel about sharing your faith with them? Be specific.

Q2 - What do you think are the three (3) most important ways that your “Christian Mindset” differs from the “Secular Mindset”?

Q3 - Think of someone you know who does not have a faith-relationship with Jesus. Is there anything about them — their dress, speech, conduct, *etc.* — that causes you to avoid them? What should you do about that?

Q4 - How might you need to adapt your communication to your unsaved friend to help them hear your faith rightly? Explain.

Q5 - Explain how your friendship can help your unsaved friend begin to connect with God? What does this program mean by being “connected”? Why is this important?

ON YOUR OWN:

1. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to other people who have do not know Jesus.
2. Make a list of two (2) or three (3) unsaved family members, friends, neighbors, or associates that God is leading you to befriend and disciple.
3. Review **Part I**, *pages 2-7*.
4. Practice your two Bible memory verses. Read these verses in the Bible in the context of their chapters.
5. Pray and ask God if there is anything in your life that might hinder you from being a “Good Newser” - someone who will share the good news of Jesus Christ.
6. Make a plan and a commitment to become more active as a witness for Jesus and follow through on it.

PART TWO: Your Story

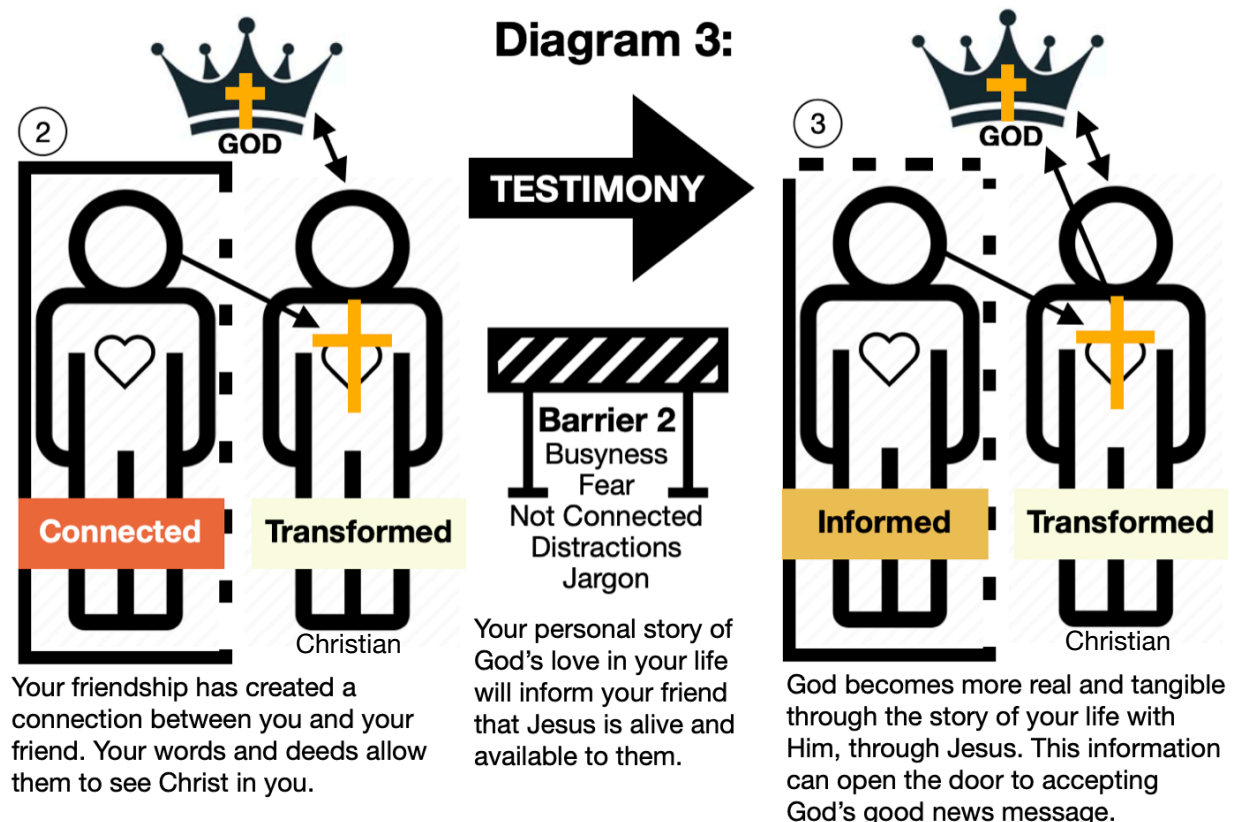
What You Will Learn In PART TWO:

- How Jesus in you becomes evident to your friend through the story of your life
- How your testimony helps to prove that Jesus is alive, cares, and can make a difference.
- How to transition the conversation with your friend away from secular chit-chat to the more meaningful discussion of your testimony.

Your kindness and transparency with your friend created a connection between you and them. It also began a process of reconnecting them to God, through His love in you, expressed through friendship. As some of the barrier between you and your unbelieving friend became less imposing, this new intimacy becomes possible. And your caring words and deeds made your love for God, and how Jesus changed your life, plausible to your friend. This point is absolutely critical; **Your friendship and your personal life story provide the evidence that Jesus is alive and God loves us.** Diagram 3, below, illustrates how your newly-connected friend can become informed about the hope that is available to them through your personal testimony about Jesus. Through your story, they see that your faith is not just another religion. Jesus is alive! Jesus can make a difference! This testimony is in you! (*1 John 5:10*)

STEP TWO:

② CONNECTED to ③ INFORMED



There are many religions in the world and there have been many religious leaders, but the resurrection of Christ is central to your faith and story. As the Apostle Paul taught us, “. . . *if Christ is not raised, your faith is worthless* . . .” (1 Corinthians 15:17). Your testimony tells your friend that your faith is not just another religion; Jesus is not just another religious leader. It tells your story with Jesus. — His love and influence in your life. It tells your friend how you learned about Jesus, came to believe in Him, how this directs your life, and show He helps you. **It’s NOT a theology lesson. It’s personal experience.**

You should avoid Christian jargon and phrases that might be foreign or offensive to your friend. Your friend will understand your testimony best if you keep your testimony brief, although you should be prepared if it provokes a discussion. This is a healthy thing. Also, it may help to write down your story, while limiting yourself to less than 250 words. Pray about what you should say and how to say it. Practice your testimony with other Christians so that you are comfortable with it, but when you share your story with your friend, you must allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. A real-life example of a testimony may be helpful (**blue font**, below).

This is part of my life story with Jesus. I share it with you as an example of how I sometimes tell others about my faith in Jesus.

My Testimony (180 words):

“When I grew up, we only attended church on Christmas and Easter. God didn’t seem relevant to me. I believed more in science. My life changed in 1971, when I was a student at St. Louis University. I met two guys from Campus Crusade, who told me God loved me, but I was estranged from God. They said God proved He loved me by sacrificing His only Son, Jesus, and that God raised Jesus from the dead to prove the power of His love. They told me Jesus was alive and I could trust Him with my life, but it was my decision to believe this. None of this made sense to me. I argued with them a lot, but I sensed it was true. Later that night, I decided to test what they said. While alone, I asked Jesus to show me He was real. When I did this, an invisible presence of peace and love embraced me. This is how I came to believe in Jesus. He is alive! This is what changed my life. I feel God with me now.”

Notice this version of my testimony has the following features.

- It’s my personal experience. It’s what happened. There is no theology or Bible verses.
- It is succinct (180 words). In our fast-paced world, attention spans are short. Sometimes a message is enhanced by brevity.
- It uses few specialized Christian words, jargon, or phrases. This makes the testimony easier to understand and less confrontational.
- It provides evidence that Jesus is alive because He answered my prayer and changed me.

As you pray for your friend and as your relationship with them deepens, the Holy Spirit will “open a door” for you to share your story of faith in Jesus. This happens as your friend trusts you enough to share their personal problems or struggles. Since friendship rests on a foundation of trust, you must respect the confidentiality of what they tell you. Your friendship means you have a responsibility to pray for them and care about their struggles. In my experience, some

common indications that a friendship has deepened enough to give me permission to share my story of Christ includes the following

- Your friend asks you about what you believe. This is an obvious open door to sharing not only your testimony, but also the gospel of Jesus Christ (covered in the next section).
- Your friend explains to you what their religious beliefs are or tells you about the faith of a member of their family. In this way, the discussion has turned to more personal things, like “religion”, which may be an open door to share your testimony.
- Your friend shares with you a worry or concern that they have about the state of the world or of our country. This provides of segue to tell them about the peace and confidence you have because of your faith in Christ.
- Your friend begins to trust you enough to tell you about personal matters, such as health, family, personal, financial, or work problems. This can provide a natural segue for you to share how your faith in Jesus helped you with a similar or related problem.

As you learn about your friend’s struggles and problems, your friendship can open the door for you to offer to pray for them. **A Willingness to accept prayer often indicates that the relationship with your friend is close enough to share your testimony.** Your story may tell your friend why prayer is worthwhile. It may include times when God answered your prayers. This informs your connected friend how your trust in Jesus was not misplaced, because He made a difference in your life. Your testimony may unfold over several conversations as your friendship evolves. And if your friend believes in God, but still does not fully understand faith in Jesus, it may be appropriate to invite your friend to attend church with you or to pray for you. Friendship can make these things possible. When the relationship permits it, you can introduce them to your life of faith by asking if you can pray **for** them (as opposed to with them, which may seem confrontational to them). This can be a watershed moment in your relationship. Let the Holy Spirit guide you.

Can I pray FOR you?

At some point, the friendship you’ve developed will obligate you to become involved in their life. This is when the sacrificial nature of love is expressed. Helping your friend in tangible, material, emotional, financial, and spiritual ways will require you to give of yourself and your resources to help them. It’s what Jesus would do. Faith and love expressed in tangible, sacrificial ways can open the door to praying **with** your friend and to asking them to pray for you. This is an opportune time to tell your friend about your faith in Jesus.

Can I pray WITH you?

Do not be surprised if you experience some discomfort or jitteriness when the time arrives for you to share your personal testimony. It sometimes can feel “awkward” when the conversation turns from superficial “chit chat” to eternal spiritual truths. This discomfort happens for several reasons.

- You and your friend probably have radically different “mindsets”. Your testimony and/or God’s gospel message, introduce concepts and beliefs to the mix that have been rejected or are alien to your friend. Your testimony takes a huge step towards closing the gap between you and them. But you must “step out” in faith, when the Holy Spirit prompts you to do so. This demonstrates to your friend the very faith you’ve been praying they will acquire!
- There is a real spiritual battle going on all around you. The world spiritual forces will not part with influence over your friend easily. But Jesus commands you to enter the fray! Remember and believe these things about this battle.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 6:12)

“. . . the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.” (2 Corinthians 10:3,4)

When the Lord tells you it’s time for you to share your personal testimony and/or His gospel message, you must be . . .

**Be bold in your faith,
Be humble in God’s love, &
Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading.**

This is why you must remain diligent in prayer, well-studied in God’s Word, practiced in serving others in your local church and community, and clear on the purpose and calling of your life in Christ Jesus. Remember, you can best lead your friend to faith in Christ by demonstrating your faith in Christ. The “awkward moment” is a time to do this. Trust and obey!

BE CONSIDERATE: Your mission is about love, relationship, and reconciliation with God — not religion. Guiding your friend back to an intimate, loving dependence on God, through faith in Jesus, is not accomplished by a theology lesson. It is not about “converting them”. Also, our Christian jargon, which includes terms like “*sin*”, “*repent*”, and “*born again*”, is unfamiliar and uncomfortable to your friend; they only will alienate them further and may not help them understand God’s good news. As your friend gets to know you through friendship, they will be confronted with your faith in Jesus. But you must be mindful of this;

CONFRONTATION WITHOUT RELATIONSHIP RISKS SEPARATION

Your genuine friendship creates the relationship that makes sharing the intimate things of life possible. If you are following Christ, your friend will begin to see Him through your words and deeds. You are their first connection. The Holy Spirit, in you, is your Guide. Listen to Him.

Review of Part Two:

- You already studied friendship as a way to express love and grace to reconnect people to God.
- Your personal testimony is the story of your life of faith in Jesus. It’s not theology; it’s biography.
- Through your story, your friend sees evidence that Jesus is alive, willing, and able to change a life for the better. It gives them hope that can nurture faith.
- Your testimony should avoid Christian jargon, critical judgment, and be concise. You want your friend to be able to hear and understand how Jesus makes a difference in your life.
- The Holy Spirit will prompt you, but often, the time will be right to share your story when your friend is willing to discuss personal problems or spiritual questions. Your testimony shares how Jesus helped you with things like this.
- It can be uncomfortable or awkward when the conversation transitions from superficial secular things to personal or spiritual matters. This is a spiritual battle going on behind the scenes. You want your friend to find saving faith in Jesus. This means YOU must exercise your faith by sharing your personal testimony with your friend with bold humility. The Lord is with you!
- Spiritual progress is often marked by your friend’s willingness to request and/or accept prayer.

Summary:

Their Need: Know Jesus is Alive

Your role: Your Testimony

ON YOUR OWN:

1. Study the **Crossroads Friendship Evangelism Manual**, pages 11 - 15, until you are comfortable with it.
2. Study **Diagram 3**, page 11, Can you explain this diagram to someone else?
3. Memorize
Romans 6:23 - **“For the wages of sin is death . . .”** and
John 5:12 - **“He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son does not have the life.”**
4. Which of the following is correct about your personal testimony? (Check all that apply)
 - It should help my friend belong to the right political party and vote for Christian values.
 - It should make sure my friend understands that God can change lives today, through faith in Jesus.
 - It should stop some of my friends immoral behavior and crude speech.
 - It should help my friend see evidence of God’s love in my life.
 - It’s important tool to teach my friend the right Christian doctrines.
 - It should be long and detailed.
5. What are some indications that your friend may be ready to hear your testimony and talk about spiritual things? (Check all that apply)
 - We like playing golf together.
 - Your friend is beginning to share some of their personal problems and struggles with you.
 - Your friend is asking questions about the Bible or about what you believe.
 - The Holy Spirit leads you to share your testimony.
 - Your friend asks you how you became a Christian.
 - Your friend tells you they do not believe in God.
 - Your friend is willing to have you pray for them.
6. What are some barriers that hinder you from sharing your testimony (Check all that apply)
 - You are too busy and preoccupied with other things to spend time with your friend.
 - Your friend has a lot of tattoos, body piercing, and like heavy metal music.
 - You feel uncomfortable or awkward talking about your faith, the Bible, or Jesus.
 - You have been praying too much for your friend.
 - Your friend thinks differently from you (warning: trick question!)
7. Which of the following are effective ways to have an effective personal testimony (Check all that apply)
 - Include a lot of Christian theology and Bible terms in it.
 - Tell your friend how you came to believe in Jesus.
 - Tell your friend how believing in Jesus has made your life better.
 - Tell your friend that all their problems will go away if they believe in Jesus.
 - Keep you testimony short and simple.
 - Don’t write out your testimony or practice it because that can be confusing.
 - Listen to the Holy Spirit to adapt your testimony to the moment and to your friend.

Exploring With Others - Part II: Your Story

EXERCISE 1: Critical Analysis of a Testimony

Read the this example of a **personal testimony**. Now, compare it with the testimony, in **blue font**, on *Page 12*. In your group, or with your partner, discuss what you would change about this testimony to make it easier to hear by your non-christian friend.

I was born again when I learned about the substitutionary atonement of the Messiah. I learned all men are sinners because we have offended God by transgressing His righteous laws. For this reason, God’s wrath abides on us. The just penalty for our sins is death and eternal damnation. I repented of my sins and the cleansing blood of Christ washed away my sins. Now that I am holy, just like God. The Bible says, “Be Ye holy, for I am holy.” (**1 Peter 1:16**). You should accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior too, so you can have eternal life and be saved from Hell.

EXERCISE 2: Building Your Testimony

Instructions: Briefly jot notes to answer the following questions. Complete sentences are not required. Use a separate piece of paper, if you must. Share your ideas with your group/partner.

1. How and when did you come to believe in Jesus? _____

2. Why did you choose to believe in Jesus? _____

3. What difference has your faith in Jesus meant in your life? (Be specific) _____

ON YOUR OWN:

1. Re-read and study *pages 11 through 15*, in your **Friendship Evangelism Manual**.
2. Review **Diagram 3**, on *Page 11*. Can you explain it to someone else?
3. Review your written testimony. Does it tell your story of faith in Jesus clearly? Did you use Christian jargon?
4. Practice telling family members or friends your testimony. You can also practice it “in the mirror”. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you improve it.
5. Thought question: How does your personal testimony provide evidence that God raised Jesus from the dead?
6. Memorize

Romans 6:23 - **“For the wages of sin is death . . .”** and

John 14:6 - **“I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.”**

PART THREE: Sharing the Good News

What You Will Learn In **PART THREE**:

- How the gospel can be understood by thinking about God's love - a love for His family.
- How our unbelief and rebellion separates us from God and every good thing we need for life — because it all comes from Him. It even results in our death!
- How faith in God's only Son, Jesus, can restore our relationship with God and restore us to our original created state, through redemption.
- A helpful mnemonic that will assist you in recounting to others God's gospel plan.
- How to invite someone to join God's family and be renewed, through faith in Jesus.

The gospel is the good news of God's plan for our salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ alone as our Lord and Savior. The theology of our salvation and redemption is very complicated. These have been proposed and explored by theologians for centuries. Fortunately, it is not necessary for your friend to master the nuances of atonement theology to understand and submit to God's loving provision and direction. A good starting place to explain the gospel is to compare salvation to the actions and grace of a loving and concerned father whose estranged children have gone astray. In fact, this is exactly what Jesus did! (*Luke 15:11-32*) Strangers who have experienced the pain of a dysfunctional family can relate to the father they wish they had. In any case, family is a common "touch point" for believers to share the story of our Heavenly Father's gospel plan with unbelievers. The gospel is rooted in love and relationships.

The gospel also is rooted in God's Word, as revealed to us in Scripture. This is because the gospel is detailed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, which is anticipated, revealed, and explained in the Bible. But also it is because there is supernatural power in the Word of God. It can animate the faith of your friend to embrace the good news message and be transformed (*Romans 10:17*).

In the **Crossroads Friendship Evangelism Program**, you will use the acronym "**GOSPEL**" to help you share God's gospel message with your friend. Selected Bible verses will be part of your explanation. You will need to memorize six (6) simple Bible verses for this program. And you will use the familiar context of a good father's love for his estranged and struggling children. Recall that, in most instances, your friend already will have experienced God's love through your friendship. They may have heard the evidence of the power your faith in Jesus to change lives, through your personal testimony. Also, remember that sharing the gospel is NOT a complex theology lesson or exercise in Christian jargon. You will be following Jesus' example of meeting your friend where they are and talking to them so they can hear and understand God's love message.

Let's begin with the **GOSPEL** acronym (page 21, below), and learn what each letter helps you remember. You should memorize this acronym. We will associate each letter and part of the gospel with its relevant Bible memory verse. You may substitute other Bible verses that make more sense to you, but this is a beginning point in the learning process.

GOSPEL

God' Love

Our Sin

Sin's Result

Power of Faith

Eternal Life

Life Abundant

Now, let's explore the each part of the **GOSPEL** acronym, point by point, so you can understand it well and be able to explain it in your own words. Each part is compared to common family relationships and dynamics. Each part of this story has an associated key Bible verse you should memorize.

God's Love

Why did God make us in the first place? **The answer to this question is found in your first Bible memory verse.**

“ . . . God is Love.” (1 John 4:8)

It's who He is. He created us so He can love us. He made us to experience His love and for us to love Him, in return. That's why He created us and everything else. **Love is creative.**

Why does an artist strive with canvas and paint to finish a masterpiece? Why does a sculptor work the hard stone to hammer out a statue? Why does an author write or a poet rhyme? They engage these labors because they love to create. Love is creative.

Love is expressed with creation, but it is fulfilled in relationships. Love gives, shares, and invests in others, which requires the intimacy and commitment of a relationship. It is unselfish, like God. Love is so important to God that He also wants us to love one another. For this reason, He did not create us to be alone, but in communities, to have relationships that share love. He gave us each other. And we are able to love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). This is not complicated theology. Consider the following illustration.

Why does a husband and wife want children, knowing that each child will be expensive and cause them pain and trouble? They become parents because of love, which they believe makes all that hardship worthwhile. Their love is fulfilled in their relationships with their children. They want to be with their children. They want their children to want to be with them. They want their children to love them and trust them. Trust is critical because children must depend on their parents for everything they cannot do. Relationships require trust. And parents want their children to love each other. When our parents do this, we learn love from them.

Notice that parents also express their love for their children by sacrificing for them. For the sake of love, a parent will set aside their own best interests for the benefit of their children. **Personal sacrifice is one of the most powerful proofs of love.** This is true for any loving relationship. Jesus said, “*Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*” (John 15:13)

It’s this way with God. He loves us. In fact, in the Bible, we call Him “Father”. He calls us His children. **We were created to be His family.** This was His plan and purpose in creation from the beginning. God loves us so much, that He’s willing to sacrifice for us — just like our earthly fathers are willing to sacrifice for their children. It’s not complicated.

It’s all about love, but it’s also about trust. **Love requires faith.**

Our Sin

In the beginning, God created us and placed us in a perfect world, designed for His love. He made us man and women, for intimate fellowship. He knew we were ill-equipped to manage life alone because we lacked His wisdom and love. We depended on His Life to live. But if we had faith in God and submitted to His loving care, we could have thrived and grown with Him each new day. We basked in God’s love and blessings. Our world was Paradise, but we didn’t know this because we were naive. **Everything was good until we listened to Distrust.**

One day, duped by a deceptive voice that invaded our world and still whispers to us today, we unwittingly joined a cosmic rebellion against God’s family. We disobeyed God’s wise instructions to us, embracing lawlessness to rebel against Him. This is sin, because “*sin is lawlessness.*” (1 John 3:4). We forgot about God’s love and betrayed His trust. We stopped having faith in God for no good reason.

This also was our sin. The Bible says, “*Whatever is not from faith is sin . . .*” (Romans 14:23)

It’s even more complicated. Sin is more than a simple transgression. The theology of sin is beyond the scope of this program, but picture a child betraying their own father, stealing from him, lying, and turning their back on him for no good reason. This is what we have done. We all have fallen a long way from our glorious beginnings in creation with God. This too is sin.

This brings us to our second memory Bible verse.

“ . . . all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory”. (Romans 3:23)

The same sin that led us to doubt God, caused us to abandon Him and hide from Him (as though that were possible). When He confronted us with our sin, we refused to accept responsibility for it, which compounded our transgression. When we betrayed God, He did not force Himself upon us. **Love is not expressed through coercion,** so He lets us go our own way. Nor did God exterminate us for our betrayal because He loves us. Instead, He left us in

charge of the world He gave us to make our own choices, but told us it would be a much different world. Life would become our taskmaster and our harsh tutor.

Sin's Result

The consequences of not trusting God follow logically from our broken fellowship with Him. When we parted ways with God, we refused His wisdom, preferring misguidance and self-reliance, instead. Lacking His direction and left to our own devices, we blindly mismanaged the world God designed. The wonders, beauty, and blessings of the planet we witness today are merely residues of the one God gave us in the beginning. Our foolishness is making a mess of those, too. Our world has become “Paradise Lost”.

This is the world we now know; deeply stained and twisted by sin. It's a world of conflict, heartache, pain, and broken relationships. This is because **sin estranges us from God, from each other, from creation, and from ourselves**. Selfishness and pride have filled the void we created when we withdrew from God's Love. Our crowded globe is saturated with loneliness. It is a world at war with itself — and with God.

Recall that God is Love; He also is Life (*John 14:6*). **When we divorced ourselves from God, we separated ourselves from every good thing only He can provide us.** We even became separated from Life itself. The natural consequence of our choice is our demise. **Striving to profit from a world without God, all we've earned for ourselves is death.**

This brings us to our next Bible memory verse.

“For the wages of sin is death . . . “ (*Romans 6:23*)

The consequences of our unbelief should have taught us that we need God; we need to trust Him. But the deception of sin is stubborn (*Ephesians 4:22*). A “Greater Power” must break its trance. Once we've learned our lesson, we need hope to believe the way back to God is still possible. God provided us with both the hope and the way back to Him when He gave us Jesus. But first we had to rediscover our faith in God. It's the simple faith of a child (*Matthew 18:3*).

Power of Faith

We cannot find our way back to God by the same way that we abandoned Him. **Rejecting faith in God by insisting on our way to regain His favor repeats our first transgression.** The delusion of self-sufficiency is lethal! Recall how man's decision not to trust God led to death, estrangement, and a corrupted world. Our ways still are not working. Things are not getting better! But how can we know God's way will be better?

The answer is found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. New Testament authors *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John* lived with Him for over three years. They knew Jesus intimately and were eyewitnesses to His life and miracles. From them, we learn that Jesus' life contrasts

sharply with the life of the first man, Adam. **Jesus trusted His Father and healed the sick, fed the multitudes, and raised the dead to life. His was a life of godly faith!**

When Jesus died on the cross, He proved God's love for us through His great sacrifice; **Love sacrifices**. God still awaits us with open arms — just like a father would for his estranged children. **When Jesus rose from the dead, He proved the power of God** to rescue us from our predicament, if only we would choose to believe in Him. Jesus' resurrection proved that God found Him trustworthy to tend all Creation, unlike Adam, who failed in this task.

Believing in Jesus as both Lord (“boss”) and Savior became God's offer for reconciling with us and redeeming us. To accept God's offer, we first must forsake our delusion of self-sufficiency. Then, we must choose to trust the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ for our rescue. We have to believe that Jesus is the only way to God, the Father, not another way of our choosing. **These are God's conditions but it's our decision.** We must choose to believe that Jesus is God's only Way, even when it may not make sense. The Bible reminds us, “*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*” (Proverbs 14:12) Jesus is God's Way. **This brings us to our fourth Bible memory verse. Jesus said,**

“I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father but through me.” (John 14:6)

Eternal Life

When Jesus offered Himself up to prove God's love and power to us, He made it possible for us to be rescued from eternal death, giving us resurrection life after death, through faith in Jesus. It is a free gift that we cannot pay for through good deeds — **but there is something we must do. We must choose to trust in God and obey Him.**

“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son does not have life.” (1 John 5:12)

The ball now is in our court to *trust* God's offer: Jesus. **Real faith is more than just saying we believe.** What we really believe is revealed by what we **do.** (James 2:18) This is common sense. Consider this simple example.

Two boys decide to go ice skating on a lake one winter morning. Although both boys said they believed the ice is thick enough to safely skate on it, only one boy dared to go ice skating. The other boy was afraid to venture out onto the ice.

Which boy do you think really had faith in the ice? Does a person really have faith in God if they do not obey Him?

Life Abundant

Choosing to trust God by having faith in Jesus as Savior and obeying Him as Lord frees us from the perils and foolishness of self-sufficiency. Through God's Holy Spirit, we have access to His peace, power, and wisdom. These blessings are the consequences of trusting God. We can be restored to an abundant life, here and now, in the midst of all the troubles of this world. This is what any father would want for their children.

Your sixth Bible memory verse also from Jesus Himself

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (*John 10:10*)

The Qualifying Question:

Having shared the gospel with your friend, when the time is right, **you must now invite them to make a decision**. Did they understand everything you told them? One way to test this is to ask them. For example, you could ask,

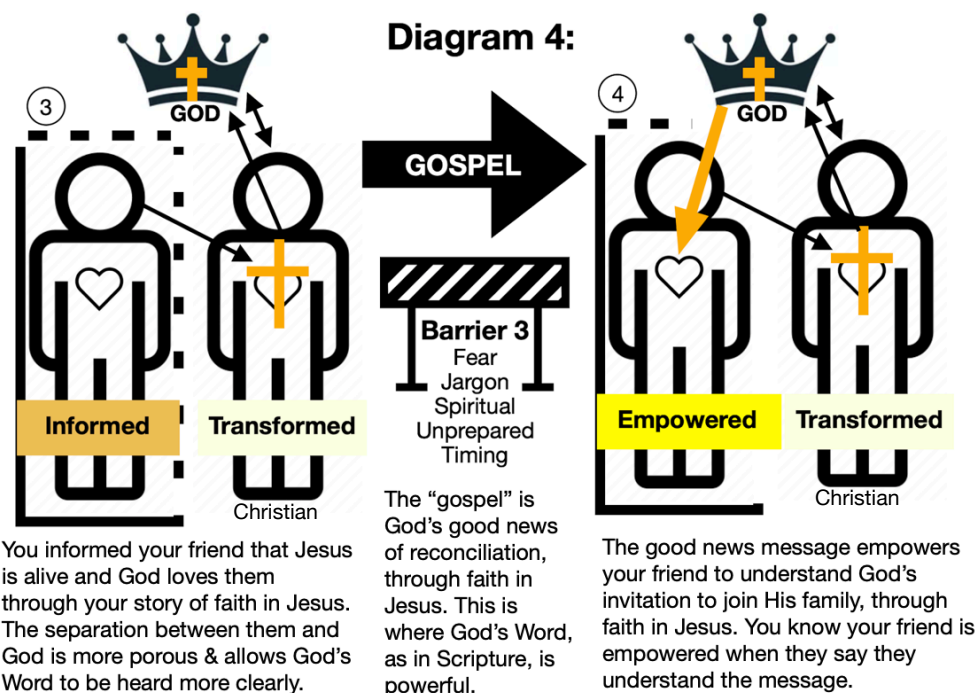
"Does this make sense to you?"

If your friend answers, "Yes", this may indicate the time is right to invite your friend to choose to submit to God's love and direction, through Jesus. Remember, this is their choice.

Diagram 4 (*page 25*,) represents the empowering effect the gospel has to help a person understand God's plan for them; it helps them choose. Grace and love work with this understanding.

STEP THREE

③ INFORMED to ④ EMPOWERED



An example of a gospel presentation might help you. The memory verses are listed in *green italic font*. The qualifying question is in *red italic font*. The Lord may give you different verses to use. The Holy Spirit will guide you in what you should say and when to say it. Your friend may not be able to hear all of the gospel message at one time. Be open and flexible to follow the Lord. Your job is to be faithful and trust Him!

Example: GOSPEL Presentation

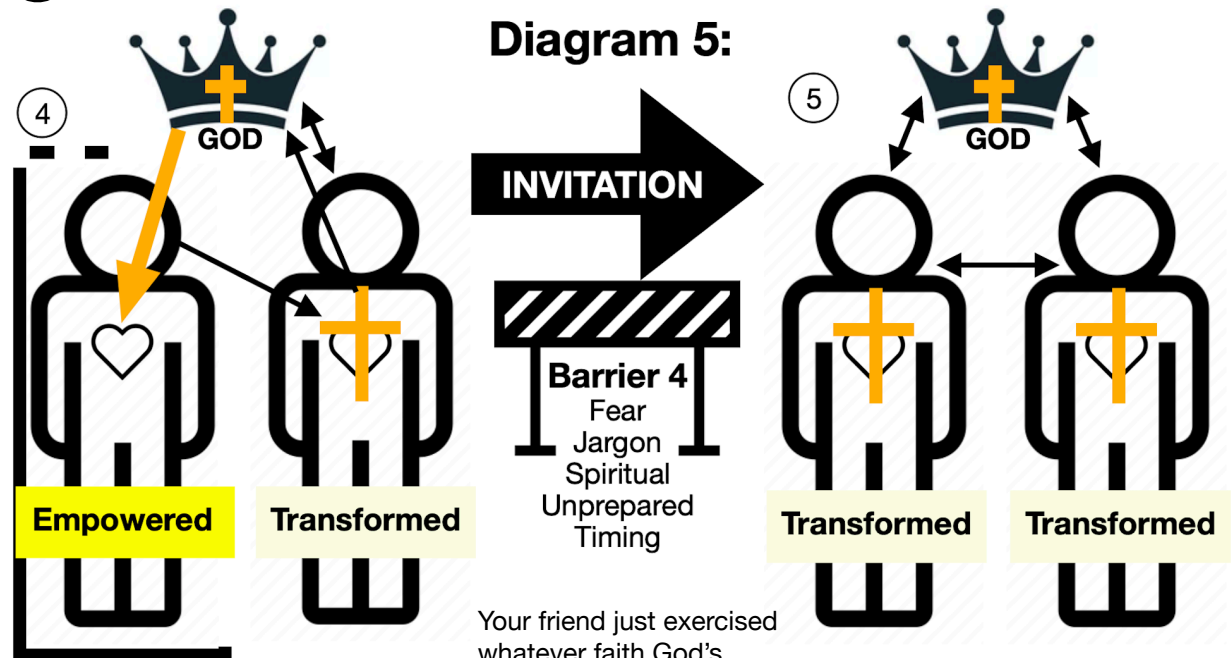
(G) - “Having experienced God’s love for myself when I decided to have faith in Jesus, I know ‘*God IS Love*’. He created us to love us and to love Him. **(O)** - But we didn’t trust God, so we went our own way. We separated ourselves from God and now we’re a long way from what God wants us to be. The Bible says, ‘. . . *all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory.*’ **(S)** - Our way has created a mess. We’re not only estranged from God, but we’re also estranged from each other, from creation, and from ourselves. Our history books and news headlines tell the story. We’ve cut ourselves off from God, who is Life, so now we all die. That’s all we’ve earned for all our efforts. The Bible says it this way; ‘*for the wages of sin is death.*’ **(P)** - I learned about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This evidence led me to believe in Jesus. His life proved to me what could happen if I trusted God. When Jesus died on the cross, He proved to me how much God loved me. When God raised Jesus from the dead, I learned that He has to power to do the same thing for me. God said Jesus is the Way to all this; I have to believe in Him. Jesus said, ‘*I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, no one comes to the Father, but through Me.*’ Submitting to God’s and direction meant I had to trust Him. I had to trust Jesus. **(E)** Jesus promises us life as a free gift, but we have to trust God enough to accept it. This only comes from Jesus. The Bible teaches, ‘*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son does not have life.*’ This is good news. **(L)** - When I decided to believe it, it changed my life for the better. Jesus said, ‘*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*’ That’s what I’ve experienced. Life isn’t trouble-free, but I’m now blessed by the peace and joy of God, through faith in Jesus. I am strengthen by this hope.“ *Does this make sense to you?*

Notice the gospel is not a theology lecture! It’s not an apologetics lesson. No one is argued into the Kingdom of Heaven! It is a simple story of God’s love, our distrust and betrayal, and God’s patient and sacrificial efforts to be reunited with us. It should be a story of hope and of renewed life. It’s about salvation and redemption. The gospel should be understandable in simple, everyday terms and examples. The only difficult part is for your friend to decide to believe in the supernatural life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This part takes faith. When your friend indicates that God’s good news makes sense to them, it may be time for you to invited them to choose to change their life and follow Jesus. This is a HUGE decision! Your friend may need time to think about it. They may have more questions. Your friend may be doing exactly what they should be doing at a time like this — counting the cost of this commitment (Luke 14:28-30). Let them do that! Pray for them; they are your friend. This might be a good time to give your friend a Bible or invite them to a Bible study or to church. **But it is YOUR job to invite your friend** to choose to surrender to God’s love and direction, through faith in Jesus. You must do this. If you friend makes this decision, they are “transformed” into a child of God (See **Diagram 5**, page 27 - and see *John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 1:23*)

People need to know they must choose to believe. You must invite them.

STEP FOUR

④ EMPOWERED to ⑤ TRANSFORMED



The good news message empowered your friend to understand God's invitation to join His family, through faith in Jesus. You know your friend is empowered when they say they understand the message.

Your friend just exercised whatever faith God's gospel empowered by choosing to trust God, through faith in Jesus. This choice is the first act of obedience. You must invite them to make this choice.

When your friend chooses to submit to God's love by faith in Jesus alone as their Lord and Savior, they are transformed - "born again". As a "new born", they now need your discipleship and friendship.

In my experience, failing to invite your friend to choose to believe in Jesus is the most neglected parts of the gospel presentation — but it is needful! **It can be their first act of obedience.** God has invited them to join His family. You are His designated agent to extend this invitation. It is a critical part of your great commission.

This doesn't need to be anything fancy. Consider how Paul instructed the Philippian jailer to submit to God's love. This could be a good memory verse!

"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved . . . " (Acts 16:31)

The Apostle Paul presented the jailer with a new option for his life and explained the consequences of this choice in a single sentence. The Holy Spirit does the rest. A simple question might be enough; **"Would you like you choose to trust God and follow Jesus from now on?"** Keep your invitation short and clear; this is a time when sin will try to bring confusion or misdirection. You want to focus your friend on their opportunity to choose.

Be mindful you are a “soldier” on a mission in God’s “army” (2 Timothy 2:3, 4). You are on the front lines, engaged in a spiritual battle for the family of God against spiritual and cultural forces of darkness in this world and in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12). As a result, you may experience some “pressure” or “push-back” to not speak up when the Holy Spirit prompts you to share your personal testimony, tell God’s gospel message, or invite your friend to trust in Jesus. Even experienced pastors report having similar feelings when they share the gospel message. But it is **your** opportunity to exercise faith in God, trust the leading of His Holy Spirit, and obey.

What If Your Friend *Declines* Your Invitation?

The gospel requires your friend to radically change the way they manage their entire life! This is a big decision. People should “count the cost” before they decide to submit their will to God’s grace and guidance. It’s not your role to persuade them to make the decision. Your purpose is to be their friend, regardless of what they decide, share the truth of God’s love and Way for them, and trust the Holy Spirit for the rest. Be keen to listen to the Holy Spirit. Be patient. No decision your friend makes will be their last one, as long as they draw a breath. Many people reject the gospel invitation several times before they surrender their lives to Christ.

What If Your Friend *Accepts* Your Invitation?

Praise God! You have a new brother or sister in the family of God. The first part of your mission from God is done, but you’ve just begun this adventure. You must “disciple” them so they can grow in faith.

Their Need: Hear God’s Gospel & Be Invited **Your role: “Good Newser” & Invite**

Review of Part Three:

God’s love (1 John 4:8)

- He made you to love you, and for you to trust and love Him.
- He made us to love one another.

Our sin (Romans 3:23)

- We stopped trusting God and estranged ourselves from Him.

Sin’s result (Romans 6:23)

- We became estranged from God, each other, creation, and ourselves, causing trouble and death.
- Our sin radically changed us and separated us from God’s benevolent provision.

Power of faith (John 14:6)

- Jesus lived to prove the power of living by faith in God.
- He suffered and died on a cross to prove God loves us.
- God raised Jesus from the dead to prove the power of trusting God alone, no matter what happens to us.

Eternal life (1 John:5:12)

- God offers us resurrection from death, like Jesus, if we trust His way; Jesus is that Way.
- This is the Way of faith in Jesus alone, which results in eternal life.

Life abundant (John 10:10)

- By trusting Jesus, we can have an abundant, blessed life now, even in the midst of trouble, because of the power and presences of the Holy Spirit.

Qualifying Question → **Invitation** → **Discipleship**

ON YOUR OWN:

1. Study *pages 20 - 28*, until you are comfortable with it.
2. Study **Diagram 4**, *page 25*. Can you explain this diagram to someone else?
3. Study **Diagram 5**, *page 27*. Can you explain this diagram to someone else?
4. Memorize

1 John 5:12 **“He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”**, and

John 10:10 **“I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.”**

5. Complete the **GOSPEL** acronym by writing out what each letter stands for, below.

GOSPEL	
G	_____
O	_____
S	_____
P	_____
E	_____
L	_____

6. If your empowered friend decides NOT to accept God’s invitation to believe in Jesus, what should you do next? Check all that apply. (See *Page 28*, if needed.)

- Tell them you know this is an important decision. You’re glad they are being thoughtful before they make a commitment.
- Drop them as your friend.
- Find out what they didn’t believe about the gospel and argue with them.
- Be patient and continue to pray for them.
- Tell them they’re going to Hell if they don’t believe in Jesus.
- Ask them if they have any questions or if there’s anything you can explain to them.
- Explain the Doctrine of Atonement to them.

7. What should you do next if your friend agrees to believe in Jesus? Check all that you think makes sense.

- Pray with them.
- Invite them to church with you.
- Give them a study Bible, if you haven't done so already.
- Drop them and move on to the next stranger.
- Explain baptism to them and encourage them to get baptized.
- Stop praying for them now that they're "saved".
- Invite them to a Bible study with you or start a Bible study with them.
- Tell your transformed friend NOT to share their new faith with anyone else until they get a degree from a Bible college or seminary.

8. Read *Luke 15:11-32*, the "Parable of the Prodigal Son". Can you use this parable to explain the gospel to someone else? Does this help you understand why God is patient and gracious to us and is willing to forgive us? (Hint: Imagine the father in there parable symbolizes God and the stubborn, foolish, wayward son is us.)

2. Practice presenting your gospel presentation to your partner or in your group. Include the “Qualifying Question” and be sure to invite your friend to make a decision.

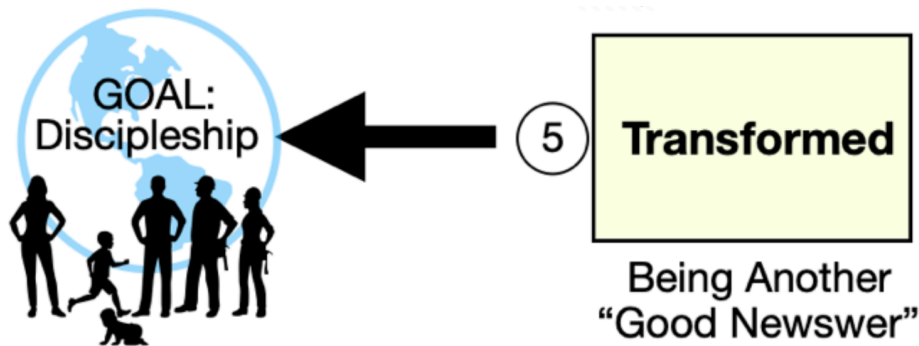
Congratulations!



What To Do Now:

1. Read the **ON YOUR OWN, NEXT STEPS** section, below.
2. Pray about pursuing the suggestions listed in this section.

ON YOUR OWN, NEXT STEPS: Discipleship



1. Start praying regularly with your new friend and encourage them in their new life of prayer.
 - Keep praying for your new friend.
 - Ask them to pray for you and your needs
 - Encourage them with answered prayer, when that happens.
 - Tell them about fasting and how it can amplify the prayer experience.
2. Make sure your friend has a good study Bible.
 - They will find modern English translations, like the NIV, NASB, or ESV easier to understand.
 - A paraphrased version, like *The Message*, is also a good option.
 - Encourage them to read their Bible daily. Better still, start a Bible study with them or invite them to one with you. The gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, or *John* are good places to begin.

- Check up on them and answer their questions.
 - Encourage them to start memorizing Bible verses that are meaningful to them.
 - Tell them about good Bible podcasts.
3. Invite them to church with you and introduce them to others at your church and to the pastoral staff.
 - Encourage them to attend church services regularly.
 - Encourage them to participate in other church gatherings, such as prayer meetings, praise services, etc.
 4. Encourage your friend to get baptized and share in the Lord's Supper .
 - Explain baptism to your friend. Baptism is commanded by Jesus and is the second act of obedience, after choosing to believe in Christ.
 - Baptism will prompt your friend to formulate their own testimony of faith, which they will share when they are baptized. This activates your friend to do their part in pursuing Christ's Great Commission.
 - Explain the Lord's Supper to them. Encourage them to participate in it prayerfully.
 5. Encourage your friend to join a small group and/or Bible study at the church.
 6. Help your friend to become engaged in the life and ministry at your church that is appropriate for their gifts, training, background, and maturity.
 7. Encourage your friend to start listening to Christian praise and worship music.
 8. Encourage your friend to share their new faith with their unbelieving friends and family. This will build their faith and grow the church. (NOTE: 78 percent of church-attending Christians have not shared their faith with anyone in the last 6 months, according to Lifeway Research! We need to fix this!)
 9. Encourage your friend to invite their friends and extended family to church. (NOTE: 59 percent of church-attending Christians have not invited someone else to church in the last 6 months, according to Lifeway Research! Help them start good habits early.)
 10. Encourage them to start giving regularly in tithes and offerings.

Supplement: **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Your mission as a “goodnewser” is NOT to defend Christianity or prove it is true. Faith cannot be proven, otherwise it would not be faith. But we have a reasonable faith that is supported by evidence. As your new friend tries to understand why you are a Christian, they will want to know why you think your faith is reasonable. This is a fair question. This **FAQ** section lists some of the common questions people ask as they consider the claims of Christianity and the Bible. You are encouraged to research these questions in scripture yourself to understand them better. Some questions no one can answer, except God. It’s OK to say, “I don’t know.” Be humble and give the Holy Spirit an opportunity to work. Don’t argue or seek to persuade by force of argument.

■ **How can a God of love send people to Hell?**

◆ God doesn’t want anyone to go to Hell; He rescues us from there, if we’ll let Him. He gave His only Son, Jesus, so we can avoid this. He is patient with us and He gives us a lifetime to choose to believe in Him (*2 Peter 3:9*). When we refuse God, we cut ourselves off from every good thing that only He can provide, like light, love, peace, joy, and life. God **is** the source of every good and perfect thing (*James 1:17*). God doesn’t force Himself on us. He sacrificed His only Son to prove He loves us and to give us a ready way back to Him (*John 3:16*). But we must believe God and trust His Son Jesus by obeying what He says (*Ephesians 2:8, 9*). Ultimately, we choose our own permanent destinies, after a lifetime of experiences. Hell is the place where God is not. It is the consequence of our own choice (*2 Thessalonians 1:9*).

■ **The Bible says God . . . (there’s a list, including . . . “killed everyone in the flood”, “destroyed all the people in Sodom and Gomorrah”, “told the Israelites to kill all the Canaanites”, etc., etc.). How can you believe in this God?**

◆ I can’t explain everything God does, but He has proven His love, patience, and wisdom to me (this is why your personal testimony is so important!). He gave His only Son to prove His love (*Romans 5:8*). But consider this; when our courts render a righteous judgment, the criminal protests, but the victim rejoices and is made safe again. What we think about judgment depends on “which side” of the judgment we’re on. We can’t fault God for allowing bad things in the world — the things we do — and then find fault with Him when He judges the people who do these same things.

■ **How can a good God allow evil in the world?**

◆ God is not the source of evil in our world (*Psalms 5:4*) — we are! If we had chosen to have faith in Him and obey Him, there would not be evil in our world. But God has allowed us to go our own way for a time, to teach us that our ways are not good (*Proverbs 2:6-8; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 13:11; 1 Peter 2:2-3*). He didn’t make us to be robots because He wants a loving relationship with us. We apparently still need this evidence (*Romans 6:15*). God will not allow evil in the world forever; He will bring a judgment that will rid the world of it (*Matthew 12:36, 37; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:11-13*). And how many people will howl that God

is being unjust when He does it?! We can choose to make the world a better place, by choosing to believe God and follow Jesus now. It's our choice.

- **There are so many religions in the world. What makes you think Christianity is the right one?** (There are many variations on this question.)
- ◆ There are many religions because there are many different kinds of faith. People choose to trust in different things. Their religion reflects what or who they trust. Faith cannot be proven because it's what we assume to be true, but faith should be reasonable; it should have evidence. Christians believe their faith is the right one because God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day (*John 11:25, 26*). Many people who knew Christ well, saw Him die on a Roman cross, and thousands of people, thereafter, saw Him alive from the dead (*1 Corinthians 15:6*). This is our great hope (*1 Corinthians 15:13-23*). Ultimately, I believe in Jesus because I experience Him in my own personal life. (Again, this is YOUR testimony). Trusting in Jesus has changed my life for the better. This is compelling evidence for me that faith in Christ is the right faith.
- **How can you be a Christian when they . . .** (fill in the "bad things", such as . . . **"went on the Crusades", "are so judgmental", "are hypocrites" etc.**)?
- ◆ You know me. That's not the kind of person I am. Most of the Christians I know are not like this. And not everyone who claims to be a Christian really is one. Christians are human, too. Jesus said you will know who the true Christians are by their fruits (*Matthew 7:15-23*). Christians are not perfect. That's why we need a Savior! But you must admit, Christians do many good things, too. According to Pew Research, 71 percent of all public charities in the US, like homeless shelters and food pantries, are Christian. Where would we be without them? But don't let the bad behavior of a few others keep you from making the right decision or becoming a good Christian yourself. You can become the good Christian that is different from the bad ones you condemn.
- **Why are there so many different Christian denominations, like Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics, and Nazarene?**
- ◆ The answer to this is complicated. Basically, it's because people are different. God made us this way. In fact, God loves diversity. The whole testimony of Creation says this. But there's really only one Church; the people in every age who follow Jesus (*Ephesians 4:5-7*). So, the essential core of what we believe is the same and is pretty simple. Our differences reflect different preferences, experiences, and philosophies. Universally, though, the Church shares a common faith in Jesus as God's only Way to be reconciled with Him and restored to abundant Life. Being a Christian means following Jesus (*1 Timothy 3:16; Philipians 2:5-11*).
- **How can I know the Bible is correct? Aren't there many mistakes in the Bible?**
- ◆ Actually, the text of the Bible has been remarkably preserved. We have unearthed many ancient manuscripts from thousands of years ago that show this. The text of the Old Testament alone has been used to locate and unearth ancient cities, like Jericho and Sodom. The New Testament was written by eye witnesses, who actually saw Jesus, His miracles,

life, death and resurrection. Many of them died a martyr's death rather than deny what they witnessed and wrote to be true. Ultimately, I have experienced how the Bible can guide and bless my own life. You can only learn how valuable the Bible is if you spend time reading it. Most people who criticize the Bible really haven't done that.

■ **Why can't I just be a good person? Why do I need to believe in Jesus to have eternal life?** (Or some variation on this question)

- ◆ You really should be a "good person". But this is all about loving and trusting God. That was the problem from the start. It's about having a relationship with Him and trusting that He knows best. The real issue is, "Why can't we just believe God and do what He says?" (*Ephesians 2:8-10; James 2:14-17*) If we do that, we'll automatically do the right thing. We've been trying to do things "our way" for thousands of years. Look at our history books and at the daily headline news. We all are falling short! God says His way is to believe in Jesus. So, He raised Him from the dead to prove Jesus is the Way (*1 Corinthians 15:12-19*).

■ **If believing in Jesus is the only way to be reconciled with God, is Moses lost and how are the natives in the jungle saved?** (Or some variation on this question)

- ◆ The way to be reconciled with God is, and always has been, to have faith in Him and to obey what He says. This was as true for the first man, Adam, as it was later for Moses, as it is now for us, no matter where we live. God knows our heart. He knows whether we are trusting in Him and obeying Him. God has always left enough evidence of who He is, everywhere and in every era, through what He has created (*Romans 1:19, 20*). No one will be able to say, "I didn't trust God because I didn't know about Him." But the Bible says, "Much is required from the person to whom much is given; much more is required from the person to whom much more is given." (*Luke 12:48*) We know all about Jesus now. He said, "I am the Truth, and the Life, and the Way; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (*John 14:6*) The choice is ours.