

Personal Spiritual Growth Lesson 5B

Witnessing (Part 2)

We will continue with part two of the lesson on witnessing. We begin on page 47.

There are many ways to share the gospel. In a group setting, we would take time to share a few of these approaches and then ask for input from the group.

Let's start by reviewing a few of these approaches list on page 47.

The first one is called The Wordless Book. This approach utilizes a bracelet, beads, colored pages in a booklet.

We often start by asking if we may share the story of God's love with you in five colors? This works well in an oral culture because you can share the gospel in a story format. The colors are gold, a dark color, red, white, and green.

I often start with gold. Gold represents God and his love for us. God is in heaven. I talk about the golden streets of heaven. I will also say that gold is precious, and we are precious to God. He created us in his image and likeness. He created us to be in relationship with him. He desires that we would be in relationship with him for all eternity.

This leads to the dark color. In Genesis 3 the perfect relationship that Adam and Eve had with God was shattered because of their disobedience to God. They disobeyed God's command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told them that when they eat of it they would surely die. They gave in to the temptation of Satan through the serpent and ate the fruit. As a result, sin entered the world, and the relationship between God and man was broken. As a result of sin, all men die and are separated from a holy God.

There would be a need, a need for someone to come to make that relationship right again. Nothing can take sin away. We are walking in darkness. We are separated from God. We are dead in our sin. The only way to come back to God is for God to provide a solution. And that leads to color red.

The red color reminds us that God demonstrated his love for us while we were still sinners, separated from God, Christ died for us. Jesus is our substitute. It was not that we love God, but that he loved us first and sent his son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sin. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever would believe in him will not perish, but have eternal life. So Christ is our substitute. He died in our place. He was buried.

And as he promised, he rose again victorious over sin and death. And that is what the white color reminds us of. Jesus' sacrifice was acceptable to God because Jesus was raised from the dead. The father resurrected him and he was brought back to life. We take on the righteousness of Christ when we put our trust in him. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is gone. The new has come. We become right with God. We are declared innocent before God.

The final color is green. As a follower of Jesus, we just do not stay the way we are. God's purpose and promise is to conform us to the likeness of his son. He's transforming us day by day. When Jesus returns again as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, we will be like him. We will be glorified. We will be transformed into his likeness for all of eternity.

In this world, healthy things grow. There are green leaves on the tree. In the rainy season, things begin to grow and there's green everywhere in Senegal. As followers of Jesus, we grow spiritually by reading the Bible, through praying, through serving, through sharing the love of Jesus with others, through being generous with the gifts and the things that God has given to us.

When we die physically though, we will not be in heaven because of the good things we've done. We will be in heaven because of what Jesus accomplished for us, his death on the cross for our sin and his resurrection. He's the one who paid the penalty for our sins. He is the one who bought us out of slavery. He is the one who reconciled us to God. He's the one who satisfied the wrath of God. We will be in heaven for eternity because of our faith in what Jesus did.

That is a simple way in just a few minutes of sharing the gospel using the wordless book, The Five Colors.

In your handout, there's another example that we have that's on page 49, called The Bridge of Life. The Bible can be very confusing for some people. You may ask if you share the message of the Bible in just one verse. If they agree, you can share the gospel with one verse and this picture.

You start with Romans 6:23.

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

This is explained on page 49. You may begin to draw this picture and just go word by word. You might start by drawing two cliffs separated by a gap. God on one side and man is on the other. And there's a gap in between.

You start with the word “wages”. Wages are things that we earn. When we work, we get paid, we get what we deserve or what we earned. The Wages of sin is death. What we deserve because of our sin is death. Death is eternal separation from God.

The next word is “sin”. What is sin? Sin is disobedience to God. If you were aiming at a target, sin would be equal to missing the target completely. All of us have sinned and we fall short of the glory of God. And the penalty for sin is separation from God for all of eternity.

The next word is “death”. Death is physical death, as well as spiritual death. When the Bible speaks about death it has the meaning of spiritual separation. What we deserve for our sin is death.

Looking at the picture, there is no way to build a bridge to cross the chasm from us to God. We can't get to God by being a good person. We can't get to God by praying or reading the Bible. We can't get to God because our parents followed Jesus. There is no way, in our own abilities, to cross this chasm that exists between us and God.

We continue with the next word in the verse.

That leads to the next word "but". But represents a contrast. In this diagram, our sin has separated us from a holy God. There is no way for us to come to God on our own. There is no way for us to cleanse ourselves from sin. We thank the Lord for this word "but". God offers a way for us to come to him.

The next word is "gift". A gift is the opposite of a wage. We do not do anything to receive a gift. A gift is not something that we earn. If I gave you a gift and you reached in your pocket to give me 10,000 CFA for that gift, it would no longer be a gift. A gift is free. A gift is undeserved.

The next word is "God". God is holy and without sin. Notice that God is also opposite from sin on the page. Because God is holy and just, he must judge sin. He desires that we would be in a perfect relationship with him. He desires to forgive our sin and make us holy.

The next word is "Eternal Life". Notice that eternal life is the opposite of death, eternal separation from God. God desires to give us a renewed life, eternal life where our sins are forgiven.

The final words of the verse are "through Christ Jesus our Lord". Here is where you can draw a cross in between the two cliffs. We can come to God for the free gift of forgiveness of sin and eternal life through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Jesus said, in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the father except through me."

In Acts 4:12, there is no other name is given to men under heaven by which we may be saved other than the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is called the Bridge of life using Romans 6:23. This is a powerful and simple way to share the gospel with others.

Allow me to continue with another simple, biblical way to share the gospel. I call this the phone and hand method. I will hold up cell phone in my left hand. I also hold up my other empty hand. This is based on 2 Corinthians 5:21. "God made him who had no sin to become sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

I show my empty hand and say this represents Jesus, perfect, without sin, righteous. He is God. This hand represents the righteousness of Christ, the holiness of God.

And in my other hand, I hold my phone and say, this is man, sinful, guilty, separated from God.

I share the verse. "God made him (Jesus) who had no sin". I wave my empty hand.

"to become sin for us." At this moment, I transfer my phone, representing my sin, into my empty hand. I say, God made him who had no sin to become sin for us. What this shows is that Jesus who was without sin, took on our sin when he died on the cross.

Then I will wave the hand that used to hold my phone. And I will say, "So that in him I might become the righteousness of God." The hand that represented me as a sinner, now is clean, representing the righteousness of Jesus, holy, without sin.

That's a picture in one verse of the message of the gospel. It's called the great exchange. Jesus took on our sin and when we put our trust in him, we take on his righteousness.

Here's another method ...

As children we learned to read and write using the ABCs of the alphabet.

The gospel is as simple as ABC.

The letter "A", in English, is the first letter of the alphabet. **The letter "A" stands for the word "admit"**. Each of us must **admit** that we are sinner and in need of a savior. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The next letter "B" represents the word "believe". We must **believe** that Christ died for our sin. Romans 5:8, says, "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us".

John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

The final letter "C" stands for the word "confess". We must then **confess** that Jesus is our savior and commit to follow him.

Romans 5:9-10 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. Because it's with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth you confess and are saved."

Again, another simple way of sharing the gospel. As simple as ABC. Admit that you are a sinner and you need a savior. Believe that Christ is your Savior. And confess that you trust in Jesus' death and resurrection for eternal life.

We just shared 4 simple ways to communicate the gospel. If we were together doing this training, I'd say there are many in the group who might have others ways to share the gospel in your context. We would take time and allow the group to share other ways of communicating the gospel through words, pictures, stories and illustrations.

Remember, God simply calls us to be faithful witnesses. God is the one who's working in the lives of people and drawing people to himself. The Holy Spirit is at work, opening eyes, convicting of sin, stripping away scales that are blinding the minds and hearts of people, so they can see Jesus in all of his glory. Prayer is a huge part of the witnessing process.

On page 48 you can read through a number of biblical ways to pray for people who don't know Jesus yet. And as you read through each prayer, you will notice that each is based on a scripture.

For example, John 6:44 says, no one can come to Jesus unless the Father who sent Jesus draws that person. That's what Jesus said. The prayer might be, I pray Lord that you would draw _____ to yourself, you know, to Jesus.

Romans 10:17 says, faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word of Christ. The prayer might be, I pray that my friend will hear and believe the word of God.

2 Corinthians 4:4 says, the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God. The prayer is, I ask you to prevent Satan from blinding my friend to the truth.

And you can pray through this page with a confidence because you are not just using your own words. You are praying God's Word back to him.

This is God's heart for the lost. This is God's desire to see people put their trust in Jesus for salvation.

And these prayers acknowledge that the Father is at work in this process. The Son has accomplished amazing things through in this process. And the Holy Spirit is actively involved in the process of salvation, bringing of new life and placing us in the body of Christ.

As we conclude this portion of the lesson on witnessing, remember that God has a desire to see all people have an opportunity to hear, see, and respond to the gospel. Not all will respond. Some will respond to this call and put their trust in Jesus. We are called to be faithful in making Jesus known. We testify to the truth, make known the mystery of the gospel and trust God for the results.

Each person must make their own decision, by the grace of God, to respond to this invitation by faith. And there is great joy each time someone trust Christ. Angels are rejoicing in heaven each time a person trusts in Jesus.

There will be one more short lesson to summary to conclude this Personal Spiritual Growth course. We will review the one page chart that we have been building throughout the course. This will help to solidify your learnings and prepare you to teach this to others.