

Resources for Personal Evangelism

Young Calvinists Evangelism Workshops
2021

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What is the Gospel?

5 Passages from scripture that show our need and the way of salvation:

1. Romans 3:23 (For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.)
2. Romans 6:23 (For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.)
3. John 3:3 (Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.)
4. John 14:6 (Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.)
5. Romans 10:9-11 (If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.)

Passages that demonstrate the gospel being told:

John 3:13-18 - Jesus to Nicodemus

John 4:13b-14 - Jesus and the Samaritan woman

Acts 17:24-31 - Paul to the Athenians (Gentiles)

Acts 10:34-43 - Peter to Cornelius and the Gentiles for the "first time"

Acts 2:37-40 - Pentecost

Passages with whole or part gospel summaries:

Isaiah 53:5; Mark 10:45; John 3:3; John 14:6; John 3:16; Acts 13:38-39; Romans 3:23;

Romans 4:25 ; Romans 5:8; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:1-9;

2 Corinthians 5:19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Titus 2:14; Titus 3:3-7; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24;

1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 4:10

Basic Elements of the Gospel:

1. God (Creator, perfect/holy, just, loving)
2. Humans (created by God for His glory, valuable, made for relationship with Him and others)
3. Sin (guilt, shame, corruption, damage, evil, falling short of His glory)
4. Death (physical & spiritual, loss of all relationships for all time)
5. Our Hope
 - a. Jesus's life (fully God, fully human/identified with us, lived a perfect life, shared all our sufferings)
 - b. Jesus's death (crucifixion, owned our sin and brokenness and the punishment due us for it)
 - c. Jesus' resurrection (conquered death, proved His divinity)
6. Seek a response, as it is God's command to every human to repent and believe
 - a. Turn around 180° and repent - acknowledge sin and ask for forgiveness and help to turn around
 - b. Believe that Jesus is sufficient to do those things for you
 - c. Follow Him - live under Jesus's lordship, live through His power, live the way He commands, give up what keeps you from following Him
7. Appropriate follow-up

An Approach to Personal Evangelism by Rev. J. Holstege

1. Start with the resurrection of Jesus as the most important event that ever happened!

- a. Make it personal – “this event is so important to *me!*”
- b. Make an appeal to listen based on the resurrection of Jesus being key to the whole Christian faith – I Corinthians 15:12-20.
- c. Show you respect the person you are talking to by *asking for permission* to explain why you think the resurrection of Jesus is so important – “May I tell you more?”

2. Now you are set up to talk about Jesus himself and what he came to do.

- a. Talk about Jesus *coming into the world* instead of *being born*, because then you have the opportunity to show that Jesus is God (John 1:1, 14).
- b. Talk about sin as the *reason* for Jesus coming into the world (Matt. 1:21, 9:13).
 - 1) A simple definition of sin is that it is *not giving God what he deserves and is due* (Malachi 1:6).
 - 2) You can talk about sin as applying to every human being (Romans 3:19,20).
 - 3) You can talk about how any true Christian should be ready to point the finger at himself first (I Tim. 1:15).
 - 4) Then, to lead this person to a personal knowledge of sin, use examples from the sermon on the mount such as the golden rule (Matt. 7:12).
 - 5) Do not be afraid to make an appeal to the conscience along these lines – “If God asked you today, would he say *you* have given him what he is due?”
- c. Talk about the final judgment as God finally setting things right in the world.
 - 1) The topic of sin leads naturally into the topic of judgment for sin.
 - 2) It might be more effective to talk about the final judgment first, before touching on hell as the place of personal punishment.
 - 3) You can point to examples from history or current events to show how all is not right in the world, which is why God must come and set things right in the end (Isaiah 40:3-5).
 - 4) The only way God can do that is by dealing with the sin of human beings, which includes *your sin* and *my sin*.
 - 5) This could be the opportunity to talk about what Jesus says about hell (Matt. 10:28).
- d. Talk about Jesus as the Savior from judgment.
 - 1) You want to communicate the truth of the atonement without using the big doctrinal terms like “satisfaction,” “substitution,” or even “atonement.”
 - 2) You might consider using the bible’s own pictures to get the idea across.
 - 3) Jesus is a Shepherd who loves his sheep so much that he gives his life for them (John 10:15,18).
 - 4) Jesus is an innocent Lamb who willingly accepted the high cost of our sin of not giving God what he is due (John 1:29).

3. Finally, you want to call for a response.

- a. Go back to where you started with the resurrection.
 - 1) Make it personal again – “I believe God is not angry with me for the one reason that Jesus died and rose for me.”
 - 2) Then speak of your desire for them to have the same hope – “I hope you will believe the same thing!”
- b. Then, do not be afraid to *call* them to faith.
 - 1) You can simply quote what the bible says and tell them this is what you are doing.
 - 2) “The bible says, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved’” (Acts 16:31).
 - 3) Tell them that faith means **a.)** believing what the bible says is true (Matt. 4:4), **b.)** owning your sin before God (I John 1:10), and **c.)** leaning on Christ for peace with God (Romans 5:1).

Some other things to think about...

1. A lot of what is presented above is simply developing from elements of the Apostle's Creed.

- a. The Apostle's Creed is a great resource for witnessing about Jesus.
- b. It has the advantage of being something you know so well because you confess it every Sunday.
- c. It is also simple and you have a ready-made explanation of its meaning in the Heidelberg Catechism.

2. A different potential approach could be the approach of the Heidelberg Catechism.

- a. The need for comfort is an immediately relatable idea that applies to everyone.
- b. The comfort which is taught in the catechism follows a very simple three step approach that you probably memorized when you were in catechism class.
- c. Guilt, Grace, Gratitude (See LD 1, Q&A 2).
- d. The basics of personal evangelism are built right into our Reformed confessions! Use the resources you have been given that have stood the test of time!

3. A couple of other important themes you may want to use:

- a. *Hope* – people are afraid of the future and especially of dying, but there is hope in Jesus and his resurrection. (See I Peter 3:15).
- b. *Love* – the love the world talks about is cheap, but the gospel shows the true depths of love that is in God (John 3:16).
- c. *Purpose* – the world today seems so vain and empty with its endless online chatter and vacuous entertainment, but God transcends this world and gives meaning to our lives (Look up the Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A 1, Eccl. 12:13).

4. Believe that God will use you!

- a. I think my biggest challenge in failing to do personal evangelism is simply fear of being rejected or of talking so personally with someone I do not know well.
- b. God calls us to believe the power of the gospel (Romans 1:16) and not in our own ability to communicate it perfectly or skillfully.
- c. So, pick an approach, maybe practice it, but then go and *do* it, believing that the word of God you speak is a power that will not return empty (Isaiah 55:11).

Other Resources for Approaching Personal Evangelism

Example conversation starter with a stranger at college:

You: "Hi, my name is Alice, and this is Aaron. **We're having conversations with people about faith and spirituality. Do you have a few minutes?**"

Student: "Um, sure, I have a few minutes."

Y: "Great, what is your name?"

S: "Abby"

Y: "What are you studying, Abby?"

S: **answer* Whatever their reply, maybe you can relate to it to build some relationship credibility, or maybe it's something you know nothing about, and you can admit that. You could ask why they chose that major. Be looking for a bridge to the gospel and take it if you can. Otherwise...*

Y: "That seems like a really interesting major. **pause** So, I told you we were having conversations about faith and spirituality; **do you have any sort of faith or religious background?**"

S: **answer**

Y: "**Has that changed at all since you came to college? ... Why?**"

Have your natural conversation from this, short or long, trying to understand where they are at, avoiding argument.

Y: "Well, I'm a Christian, and I believe the history of Jesus is the most hopeful thing in the whole wide world. Would you mind if I shared it with you - in just a couple minutes?"

Example Gospel Explanation

** Based on the 'Approach to Personal Evangelism' in the previous two pages. Remember, there are many different ways to go about this. The important thing is to remember the main points!*

The most important thing about the Christian faith is the **resurrection** of Jesus from the dead. So, Jesus lived on the earth about 2000 years ago, died by crucifixion, and then rose from the dead a few days later. Christianity rests on this fact that he rose from the dead, and it's the most important event that's ever taken place on earth. This is why.

The Bible says God is the **creator** of the world, including you and me. He deserves praise and worship from his creatures, but all the people in the world are huge sinners against him. I know that's especially true about myself. Are you familiar with the concept of **sin**? ** Yeah, we often think of big things like murder and stealing. Also, God is so **holy**, and he calls all His creatures to be holy, too. He can't accept ANY sin, and He even cares about little things and even what we feel in our hearts. Any lie - have you ever told a lie? ** That's a sin. Jesus says even hatred towards someone is murder. Have you ever felt hatred towards someone? ** I've done that, too, and that makes both of us murderers in God's eyes. The Bible says we sin whenever we don't give God perfectly what he is due. If God asked you today, would he say you have given him what he is due? ** I certainly couldn't say I have done that. That's why we're all in a lot of trouble before God.

God is holy, and he is **just**, which means he's a good judge and must punish wrong. Obviously, there are a lot of things messed up in the world. He says that in the end of the world, he's going to come back and finally set all things right and **punish** all wrong - wrong humans have done against him and against each other, because that really is a wrong done against their Creator. This includes punishing all my sin and all your sin. To be honest, this sin is against such a great and holy God that God's punishment is worse than we could ever imagine. This seems really bleak.

But God is not only holy and just, but he is also **love**. The Bible doesn't just say that God is loving, but it says that he IS love. Because of the great love he has for his people, he sent Jesus, who is God himself, into this awful world, to be a **sacrifice** in place of humans. God himself became a human, walked this earth, lived a perfect life without sin, and then **died** a death of crucifixion in the place of his people. The Bible says he is a

Example Approaches to Evangelism

shepherd who loved his sheep, even to the point of dying for them. On the cross, he took all the punishment of God for every one of my sins, and then his **resurrection** from the dead proved that he finished all that punishment.

God really is going to judge all people as a just judge; either the punishment will be upon you, or on Jesus. I believe for certain that God loves me and is no longer angry with me because Jesus died to pay for my sins and rose from the dead. The Bible says, “**Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.” Believing in Jesus means that we 1) believe that what the Bible says - this good news - is true; 2) acknowledge your sin before God and be sorry for it; and 3) trust only in Jesus for peace with God.

Would you like to learn more about what the Bible says and what it means to believe in Jesus?

Shorter Example Gospel Summary

There is a holy Creator God against whom we have rebelled entirely. We have neglected to do what He has commanded, and we have neglected to thank Him properly for all He has given. For that, God’s perfect holiness and justice demands punishment, but through Jesus’ sacrifice alone, that punishment has been taken for everyone who believes in him, and these people who believe have been given a cloak of the righteousness that Jesus lived while on this earth - the lens through which God Almighty, the holy Judge, legally sees us. Because of our Mediator Jesus, we have the right to approach God in perfect confidence of His mercy, not only as our King, but also as our Father, for Jesus was both fully our human brother and fully the Son of God. Therefore, we escape the perfect and eternal judgment of God and are rewarded with eternal life in perfect fellowship with our Creator, with whom we will live and reign forever when death and evil have been eternally eradicated from the renewed heavens and earth. Outside the sacrifice of Jesus, the eternal reality will be the absence of everything good and the full weight of the wrath of the perfect, holy, just God.

Helpful tips for continuing evangelism:

- Get their name and phone number to follow up
- Invite them to have coffee or dinner with you if they have more questions or want to learn more
- Invite them to do a personal Bible study with you
- Invite them to go with you to church (make sure you meet them, sit with them, know where the words to the doxologies and Apostles’ Creed are, and maybe tell them ahead of time that people typically dress up a little bit but that it really doesn’t matter what they wear)
- This can be a long process that requires a time and energy sacrifice from you, but it’s the most amazing privilege!

How to Take a Conversation Deeper

Tips for Meek Conversations:

- Listen, listen, listen, listen, listen! Intentionally practice listening with the intent to understand, not the intent to reply. Stories and ideas will come to you, but practice restraining yourself from speaking just because you feel like you need to add something.
- Be willing to reveal something slightly personal to allow the other person the freedom to match that vulnerability.
- Be willing to answer the questions yourself.
- Ask for stories, not answers. For example, ask “What was the best part of your weekend?” versus “How was your weekend?”
- Learn to ask follow-up questions – “How did that make you feel?” or “Why did you enjoy that so much?”

General Questions

Keep these questions in your toolbox. Some can be asked out of the blue, and others follow other conversations more naturally, leading to worldview questions, and then to the gospel.

- What does your perfect day look like?
- Who do you look up to?
- What would you say is the biggest adventure you've been on?
- What qualities are most important to you in friends?
- What would you do if you inherited a large sum of money?
- What are you afraid of?
- What's one of your greatest accomplishments?
- What makes you feel most fulfilled?
- What are you most passionate about?
- What are your biggest goals in life?
- What's your five-year plan?
- If you had one week/24 hours to live, what would you do?
- What do you miss about being a kid?
- Who or what has changed your life?
- What's on your bucket list?
- If you were given \$10,000 and two weeks paid off work, where would you travel?
- If you could take a year-long, paid sabbatical, what would you do?
- What's your favorite family tradition?
- What's your favorite quote?
- What's your story?
- What's a story of yours that you don't get to tell often enough?
- What do you want your legacy to be/what would you want in your epitaph?
- What's your earliest memory?
- If you had \$100,000 to give to any cause, what would it be? Why?
- What are your top three places to travel, and why?
- What's your dream job?
- Tell me about a day you'll never forget.
- What is something you wish you could change about the world?
- If you could live forever, would you?
- When does life feel most fulfilling to you?
- If you had ___ time to live, what would you do?

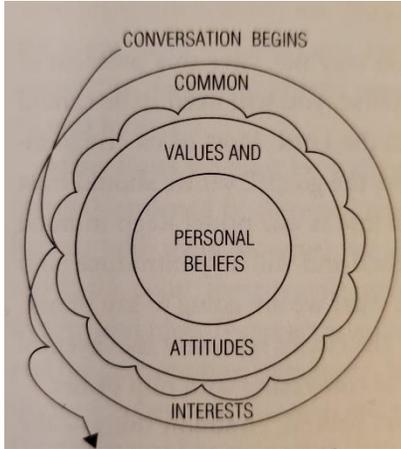
Worldview Questions

How would you answer these? How will your answer lead you to the gospel?

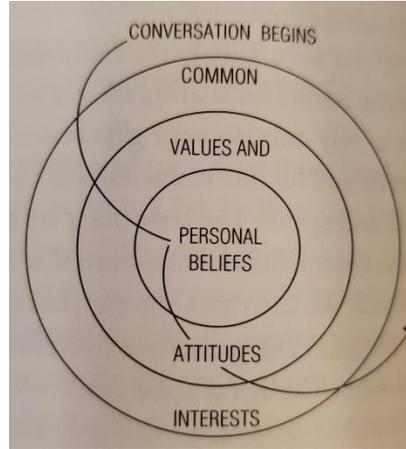
- Do you think people are basically good or evil?
- Why are some people cruel and unkind?
- Why do you think there is injustice in the world?
- How do you know the difference between right and wrong?
- Is there absolute truth? What is truth?
- Why do you think there are so many different religions?
- Why do people search for meaning?
- What is the meaning of life?
- What is the purpose of this life?
- What values are important to you? Where did they come from?
- Do you have a religious background?
- How familiar are you with Christianity?
- What makes you feel hopeful? Is there hope in life?
- Where do you find meaning in your life?
- What is the best way for a person to attain happiness?
- What happens after death?

Moving Progressively Deeper in Conversation

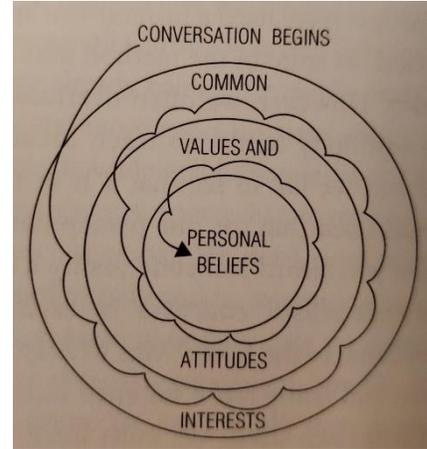
These graphics from the book *Tell the Truth*¹ by Will Metzger show some paths conversations can take from common interests to values and attitudes to personal beliefs. Approach A and B are easier but ineffective; approach C will help you get to the gospel naturally.



Approach A: Miss and run

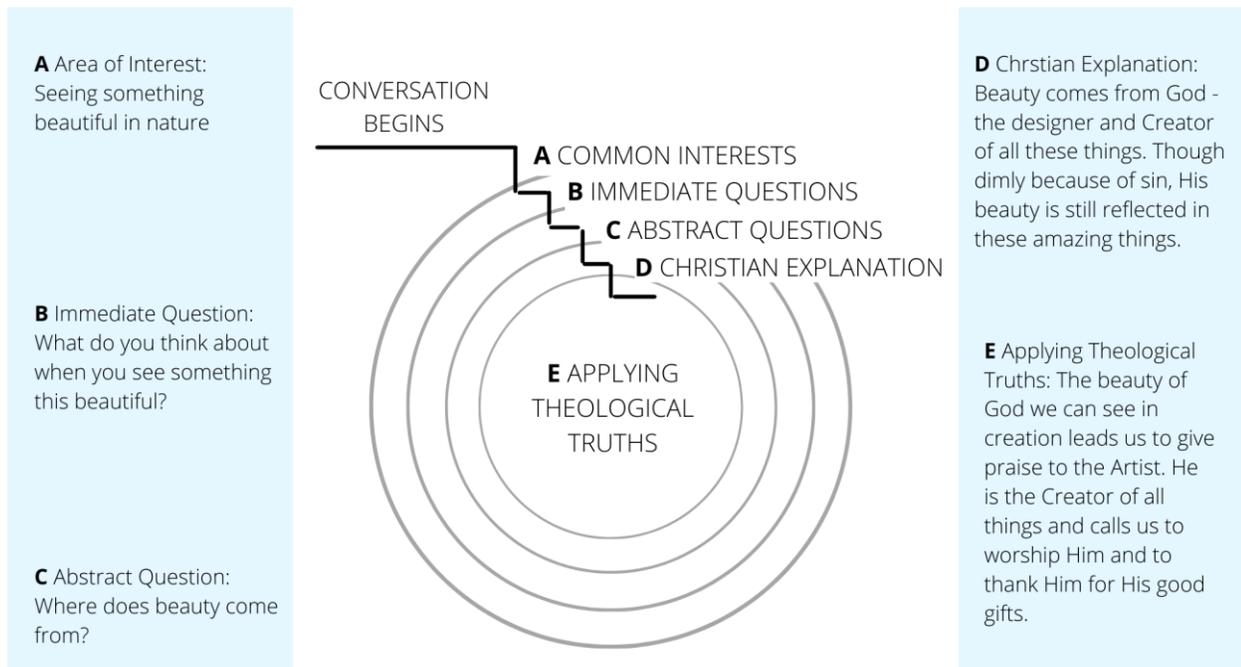


Approach B: Hit and run



Approach C: Raise questions and make a point

Example of moving progressively towards the gospel in a conversation:



*This diagram structure was taken from the same book *Tell the Truth*, but the example conversation is changed from the book.

¹ Metzger, W. (2012). *Tell the Truth: The Gospel Wholly by Grace Communicated Truthfully & Lovingly* (4th ed.). Intervarsity Press. <https://www.ivpress.com/tell-the-truth>

Biblical Fear in Evangelism

Following is a collection of various passages that teach us about God's sovereignty and proper fear of God and of man, especially in evangelism:

Isaiah 55:11; Jeremiah 1:6-10; Zechariah 4:6-10; Matthew 10:16-33; Acts 9:10-19; II Corinthians 2:14-16; II Corinthians 4; Colossians 4:2-4

Further Reading List

Ye are my Witnesses by David Engelsma & Herman Hanko

Pamphlet available from Crete PRC

Evangelism in the Established Church by Rev. Jason L. Kortering

Pamphlet available from First PRC

Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel Wholly by Grace Communicated Truthfully and Lovingly by Will Metzger

Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life by Rebecca Manley Pippert

**Please note that some of these resources may contain some Arminian language. Use your discretion as a Reformed reader.*

The more you witness, the more questions you will encounter. We encourage you to speak with your pastors and mentors often, and you may find that God uses this to strengthen your own faith along the way!