

Lifestyle Witnessing

• Lesson Five •

Get Ready to Speak

1. Season your conversation
2. Declare God's promises

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 145:1,2,4-7,11,12,21.

A: I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.

B: Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.

A: One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts.

B: They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works.

A: They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds.

B: They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

A: They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,

B: So that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

A: My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD.

B: Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me tell others who you are and what you've done. Amen.

Witnessing Activity Report

Spend a few minutes talking about witnessing joys and frustrations, triumphs and failures.

Introduction

What do you have strong feelings about? Is it a special brand of car, style of music, style of home, the latest book you read, your grandchildren, your pet?

Whatever it is, speak a few sentences about it right now.

Was that difficult? Why or why not?

You probably guessed where this is going! What, ultimately, will help us get over our hesitancy to speak about Christ?

Studying God's Word

Season your conversation

Read Colossians 4:2-6.

1. Paul encouraged the Colossians to be watchful. What were they to be watchful for?
2. Paul was concerned that he proclaim the message of God clearly. Why?
3. Paul wrote, "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders." How would you say that in your own words?
4. What differences come to mind when you think of grace and salt?

His Word in My Life

What might you pray for when you're talking to an unbeliever?

If all I do for the elderly man across the street is yard work, heavy chores, meal preparation, and visiting, I really haven't made the most of every opportunity. He may think I'm nice because I live next door. How might my conversation with him be "full of grace, seasoned with salt"?

Even before we talk of a Savior from sin, we set the stage for sharing the gospel by the way we listen, speak, and act.

Declare God's promises

Read 1 Peter 2:9-12.

1. It's easy to think highly of ourselves when we do well and poorly of ourselves when we fail. Verse 9 defines our worth in different terms. Where does our true value come from?

2. Use verses 9 and 10 to write a personal mission statement. Include details unique to your life.
"I am here to . . ."
3. How might we "declare the praises" of God in our conversations?
4. Sinful desires "war against" our souls. How do sins hurt our ability to witness to others?
5. According to verse 12, what's the goal of a Christian life?

His Word in My Life

A fellow Christian remarks to you, "I really want to tell my friend about Jesus, but I feel so inadequate. After all, I'm not perfect." What would you say to her?

John confides to you, "It's so hard to be a Christian where I work. It seems like everyone around me challenges my morals and makes fun of my beliefs. Sometimes I just want to get out of there." What would you say to him?

One man privately made fun of and even cursed his Christian neighbor. Today he's a Christian! Now they worship God together on Sundays. Have you ever witnessed a person changing in such a dramatic way? If so, share your story.

Our way of acting and talking may have a profound and eternal impact on people.

Summary

If you find it easy to find fault with others and to be sarcastic, others may find your conversation interesting but not full of grace and seasoned with salt in a Christian sense. Summarize this lesson by suggesting how you might make your conversation salty and full of grace.

If you find it so difficult to talk about your Savior that you seldom, if ever, do, others may like you, even admire you, but never know what makes you tick. Summarize the lesson by suggesting how you might better wear your faith on your sleeve.

Life with God

As you read each of these sections of Scripture, ask yourself what you can learn from them about sharing your faith in Christ.

- Day 1: Read John chapter 4.
- Day 2: Read Acts 8:26-40.
- Day 3: Read Mark 2:13-17.
- Day 4: Read Psalm 145.
- Day 5: Read Matthew 10:1-20.
- Day 6: Read Revelation 7:9-17, and plan your witnessing activity report for the group.

Lifestyle Witnessing

• Lesson Six •

Adapt

1. Apostolic adaptability
2. Divine adaptability

Worship

Read responsively the hymn “Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spoke” (CW 453:1,3).

A: “Come, follow me,” the Savior spoke, “All in my way abiding.

B: Deny yourselves; the world forsake; Obey my call and guiding.

A: Oh, bear the cross, whate’er betide;

B: Take my example for your guide.

A: “My heart abounds in lowliness, My soul with love is glowing,

B: And gracious words my lips express, With meekness overflowing.

A: My heart, my mind, my strength, my all

B: To God I yield; on him I call.

Prayer: Then let us follow Christ our Lord And take the cross appointed
And, firmly clinging to his Word, In suff’ring be undaunted.
For those who bear the battle’s strain
The crown of heav’nly life obtain. Amen. (CW 453:5)

Witnessing Activity Report

Spend a few minutes talking about witnessing joys and frustrations, triumphs and failures.

Introduction

Think of a person with whom you have a difficult time communicating. List the consequences of your lack of communication.

After you’ve made your list, answer these two questions.

1. Am I willing to accept those consequences?
2. Is it worth my effort to communicate more effectively?

Most of the time poor communication stems from differences. We tend to believe that others see things the way we do. That's wrong. A key to communicating effectively is to discover the other person's perspective.

This principle is also true when we're communicating our faith. For example, how would you respond if a coworker said to you, "I could never believe in God the way you do"? On the one hand, you could become defensive and argue with him. You could tell him he's lost and quote a Bible passage or two.

Or you could reply, "That's interesting. Tell me what you think about my God. Maybe, based on what you believe about him, I wouldn't believe in him either!" Which response do you think will help you gain the other person's perspective and, perhaps, trust?

We have the most important news in the world. It demands the best possible communication. Such communication can be difficult and frustrating. It demands that we adapt to other people's communication styles or needs. It means, as Paul said, "We put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:12).

Studying God's Word

Apostolic adaptability

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

1. In your own words, state the principle Paul followed when ministering to others.
2. Review the passage again, and state why Paul followed this principle.
3. How did Paul follow this principle in the following places:
 - in Lystra? See Acts 16:3.
 - in Corinth? See Acts 18:18.
 - in Jerusalem? See Acts 21:26.
4. How did Paul become like a non-Jew (those not having the law) in the city of Athens? See Acts 17:22,23.

5. Read the section from 1 Corinthians below. How did Paul become like “the weak” (Christians easily offended or lacking knowledge)?

Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food [leftover from idol sacrifices] they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, won’t he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall (1 Corinthians 8:7,9-13).

His Word in My Life

Learning to adapt is not easy. First, we have to know when it’s necessary to adapt. Second, we must overcome our natural aversion to changing our way of doing things. Imagine someone of a different generation, culture, or personality. How might you have to adapt in order to better share the gospel?

Paul teaches us how important it is to adapt, but he also reminds us that there are limits. “I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law” (1 Corinthians 9:21). How might Paul have been tempted to sin in adapting his methods to reach others?

Paul’s goal is the Spirit’s goal: to win the lost. When that becomes our goal, we’ll be more eager and able to adapt to others.

Divine adaptability

Scan John chapters 3 and 4.

Jesus knows what is in a person’s heart. He also knows the unique needs of individuals. Three conversations in John chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate Jesus’ ability to deal uniquely with different personalities. His goal was the same: to bring each person to faith. But he varied his approach. He adapted his witness.

1. What was unique about Jesus’ communication with each of these people? Consider their ages, life situations, hurts, family lives, cultures, and burning questions.
 - Nicodemus (John 3:1-21)
 - The Samaritan woman (John 4:4-26)

- The royal official (John 4:49-53)

His Word in My Life

Jesus never said, “Write down this piece of information. Someday you’ll need it.” Sometimes we’re accused of having all the right answers to questions people aren’t asking. How might that happen?

Discuss practical ways you may need to adapt to communicate Christ to each of the following:

- a stressed-out manager
- a new mother
- a teenager

Jesus didn’t waste his time blaming age, gender, or personality differences for an inability to communicate God’s love. He adapted. So can we.

Summary

Take each witnessing situation as you find it. Don’t force the person to fit into your mold. Rather, adapt your approach and presentation to the person. Be flexible. Try to think like the other person. Don’t do or say things that would turn him or her away.

Life with God

Read the gospel of Mark this week, and note how Jesus communicated differently with various individuals.

- Day 1: Read Mark chapters 1 and 2.
- Day 2: Read Mark chapters 3 and 4.
- Day 3: Read Mark chapters 5 to 7.
- Day 4: Read Mark chapters 8 to 10.
- Day 5: Read Mark chapters 11 to 13.
- Day 6: Read Mark chapters 14 to 16, and plan your witnessing activity report for the group.

Lifestyle Witnessing

• Lesson Seven •

Let the Church Help

1. A place to worship in spirit and truth
2. A place of welcome

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 122:1-4,6-9.

A: I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

B: **Our feet are standing in your gates, O Jerusalem.**

A: Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together.

B: **That is where the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, to praise the name of the LORD according to the statute given to Israel.**

A: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May those who love you be secure.

B: **May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels."**

A: For the sake of my brothers and friends, I will say, "Peace be within you."

B: **For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your prosperity. Amen.**

Witnessing Activity Report

Spend a few minutes talking about witnessing joys and frustrations, triumphs and failures.

Introduction

In the Greek the word for *grace* is closely related to the word *rejoice*. Grace allows us to rejoice. We rejoice in Jesus' life, sacrifice, and resurrection. We rejoice that by faith in his Son, God declares us not guilty. That's grace.

Church is a special place at which grace is given. Today we'll discuss how this place of grace we call church can help us share the joy of our salvation.

Studying God's Word

A place to worship in spirit and truth

Read John 4:20-24.

1. You can't worship God if you don't know him. What was Jesus telling the Samaritan woman in verse 22?

2. Jesus required that worship be “in spirit and truth.” How does our worship meet those two requirements?

3. Jesus hit a little too close to home for the Samaritan woman (“you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband” [verse 18]). She tried to turn the conversation into an argument about church. What do you learn about witnessing from Jesus’ response?

His Word in My Life

Unbelievers who come to our worship services really can’t worship God. Not yet. But they can observe us as we worship God. What kinds of things do you want them to notice?

You invite a friend to worship with you on a Communion Sunday. She politely acquiesces to the close Communion practice, but it clearly upsets her. Afterward, over coffee, she explodes, “I’ve never felt so humiliated in all my life. How dare your church exclude me like that. Why didn’t you warn me?” How might you help her understand?

We worship God in spirit and in truth. However, we also worship with fellow Christians, usually in some corporate gatherings. Christians will want to introduce their prospects to their congregations as soon as practical so the prospects can enjoy the benefits of being part of a larger Lutheran community.

A place of welcome

Read Colossians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 10:32; 14:23.

1. What did Paul teach churches about their response to visitors and guests?

2. We must be willing to adjust our preferences and even our worship practices for visitors and guests. Why?

3. Make a list of things your congregation can do better to see that visitors find it easy to feel welcome in your church and have a clear path to hearing the gospel message.

His Word in My Life

When you have company over for dinner, do you do anything differently from your daily pattern? If so, are you being hypocritical? No, you're just being sensitive to your guests. Apply this principle to how we treat guests who come to our churches. Which of the following practices do you think are good, and which do you think are bad?

- Reserved parking for visitors
- Name tags for guests
- Greeters outside the building or sanctuary
- A clearly marked information table
- A time for visitors to stand and introduce themselves
- A “three-minute rule” for members—for the first three minutes after each service, you can't talk to people you know, only people you don't know!
- A “three-check rule”—members should first look for someone they've never seen before, then look for someone they've never met before, and then, finally, look for their friends.

Share comments you've heard from visitors or guests or friends you've brought to your church.

We ought to do everything we can to cater to the needs of visitors. God is bringing these people under our care, and we will want to serve them as honored guests.

Summary

Our church building is an important tool in evangelism work. It gives us a place to bring friends and relatives where they can hear and learn God's Word.

In closing consider this question: If you could change one thing about your church that would make it easier for you to invite friends, what would it be? You might want to make a list and present it to your pastor or worship committee.

Life with God

As you read this week's Scripture readings, ask God to give you insights to help you worship him and invite others to do the same.

- Day 1: Read 1 Corinthians chapter 10.
- Day 2: Read 1 Corinthians chapter 11.
- Day 3: Read 1 Corinthians chapter 14.
- Day 4: Read Titus chapter 2.
- Day 5: Read Psalm 40.
- Day 6: Read Psalm 96, and plan your witnessing activity report for the group.

Lifestyle Witnessing

• Lesson Eight •

Speak the Gospel: It's Our Goal

1. Make it natural
2. Be prepared

Worship

Read responsively Psalm 9:1,2,9-11.

A: I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart;

B: I will tell of all your wonders.

A: I will be glad and rejoice in you;

B: I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

A: The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

B: Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

A: Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion;

B: Proclaim among the nations what he has done.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for filling us with a desire to tell others about the wonders you have performed and the refuge you provide in Christ. Let the joy you have given us overflow to the people who hear your Word from our lips. Amen.

Witnessing Activity Report

Spend a few minutes talking about witnessing joys and frustrations, triumphs and failures.

Introduction

There are no Christians where there have never been any. That might seem like an obvious statement, but it's a reminder that faith doesn't come by spontaneous generation. It comes when people hear the message. For anyone to hear the message, someone has to speak it. That someone is you.

We have seen how our whole lives become a demonstration of the Spirit who lives in us. Our lives are meant to attract attention, not to us but to God. Finally, God gives us opportunities to

speaking his Word. Today we'll discuss what we might say. First, let's discuss how we can interject Christ into our conversations and then consider developing our own personal witnessing strategy.

Studying God's Word

Make it natural

Read John 4:10-15,25,26.

1. The woman had asked Jesus for a drink of water. They talked about drinking water. Then Jesus made the transition from earthly water to living water. What is living water?
2. How did Jesus direct the woman to himself in verses 10, 14, and 26?
3. At first, the woman didn't understand what Jesus was driving at. What lesson does this teach us about our witnessing?
4. Follow how the woman changed over the course of her conversation with Jesus. Read verses 11 and 12, then verse 15, and finally verse 25. What change do you notice?

His Word in My Life

Jesus found the setting at the well perfect for starting to talk to the woman about faith. What are some good situations in which it is easy for you to talk about your faith?

Your neighbor makes the following statements. How might you take the conversation in a Christ-centered direction?

"My kids are driving me crazy."

"How's your year going?"

"The doctor doesn't know what it is."

Many people have found it helpful to memorize two questions to help them learn more about a person and to introduce their witness.

- If you were to die tonight, do you know for sure where you would go?
- If God were to ask you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" what would you tell him?

What information are the questions designed to uncover?

How might a person's answer shape your witness to him or her?

The more we talk about our Savior, the more natural it will become, both to us and the people we're speaking with. Almost any subject can lead to a witnessing opportunity.

Be prepared

Read Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 5:21.

1. Any talk about God's plan to save people must include the message of God's justice and God's love. How do these passages describe God's justice?

2. How does each describe God's love?

3. Use the words of Romans 6:23 to complete this outline:
 - A. We have a problem. It's . . .

 - B. We try to solve the problem by *doing* something, but God solves it by *giving* us . . .

4. Now use the words of 2 Corinthians 5:21 to complete the same outline.

His Word in My Life

A parent expresses an interest in sending a child to your Sunday school but has some questions. "First," she says, "what's this God thing all about anyway?" In less than one minute, how would you reply?

Share with the group any outlines or methods for witnessing you've used or heard of. Why might a memorized outline help you speak naturally about your faith in Jesus?

The following are some reasons people give as to why they don't speak about Christ. Are any of them yours? As a class, discuss how you might overcome these fears.

- I might say something wrong.
- Religion is too personal.
- People will think I'm weird.
- I'm too shy.
- Someone might ask a question I can't answer.

Our witness doesn't have to be a canned speech or a memorized presentation. We don't have to quote the Bible by chapter and verse. We simply prepare ourselves to express the reason for our hope and let God guide us as we turn conversations to what really matters.

Summary

To summarize this lesson and this course, share with the class how this study has helped you. Consider the following areas:

How I live and reflect my hope in Christ.

How I express my hope in words.

How I use God-given opportunities to give Christ to others.

Life with God

As you read the Scriptures this week, discover important truths for your witnessing.

- Day 1: Read Acts 18:1-11.
- Day 2: Read Matthew 18:19,20.
- Day 3: Read Romans chapter 12.
- Day 4: Read Matthew 5:14-16.
- Day 5: Read John 15:12-17.
- Day 6: Read 1 Corinthians chapter 2.

