

John 3:16

Good News... made simple!



TRAINING
HANDBOOK

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Good News... made simple!

WHY SHARE OUR FAITH

Those who understand WHY they should share will be motivated to make it happen. Embracing what God says will inspire you to become better equipped and progressively intentional in sharing your faith.

The Call

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." (Matt. 4:19)

"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 28:19-20)

The Curse

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them." (John 3:36)

[The realities of eternity apart from God. Luke 16:19-28]

Common Fears

Yet many Christians deal with a variety of fears:

- ❖ Fear of rejection
- ❖ Fear of feeling inadequate in clearly communicating the Gospel
- ❖ Fear of being asked questions they can't answer.

God's Good News - What does it matter?

BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCE GOD CAN MAKE IN LIFE TODAY... NOW!

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." (Rev. 3:20)

"I came that they might have life and life to the full." (John 10:10)

BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCE THE GOSPEL MAKES IN FUTURE LIFE... FOREVER!

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Rev. 21:3-4)

God's Provision

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Our Privilege

"God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." (2 Cor. 5:19-20)

Do you know for sure you will go to heaven someday?

Key Truth: God wants us to be sure:

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13)

DIARY OF SIN story (See the description in Appendix)

How will this story help to explain the Gospel message to someone?

[Pair up and practice telling this story to each other.]

Helpful tips:

- ❖ Be sure to clearly identify what each hand represents and the item used as your "Diary (record) of sin".
- ❖ Refer to your sin, not the sin of the person you are talking to.
- ❖ Never leave Jesus dead and still in the grave.
- ❖ This story is 'the Gospel in a nutshell'. When you have very little time to share, this story alone can be told quickly and powerfully to tell much of the Gospel message.

STARTING A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Be Praying Be Caring Ask Questions Be Sensitive to the Holy Spirit

LEARN TO SHARE “FAITH STORIES” IN EVERYDAY CONVERSATION.

Stories that tell of God's activity, the Holy Spirit working in your life.

Actual experiences reflecting your personal faith.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL ISSUES

- Difficult Relationships
- Family issues (marriage/kids)
- Work or financial challenges
- School issues
- Health problems
- Safety and security issues

EMOTIONAL ISSUES

- Anxiety/fear...God's peace
- Anger...calm
- Abandonment/rejection...God's love, care and acceptance
- Bitterness...forgiveness
- Inferiority...God's love/acceptance
- Insignificance/emptiness... purpose and meaning
- Aimlessness and restlessness... direction and guidance
- Failure...grace/a second chance

From the list above...what are several ways you've experienced God's help?

Develop a Faith Story by answering these questions:

1. What was the issue you were (or are) dealing with?
 2. Describe the situation you were (or are) experiencing this.
 3. How did God make a positive difference in your life? What was the result of your faith in God?

Pay attention to how others respond. They may comment or ask a question. Or you just notice a curious look that seems to indicate a desire to know more.

**As you sense the Holy Spirit prompting you, respond to Him by asking:

"Have you ever heard or seen the verse... John 3:16? In a nutshell, it explains the main message of the Bible."

or

"Has anyone ever shared with you the main message of the Bible, It's found in the well known verse, John 3:16."

"May I share with you what I discovered from this verse?"

[Watch for opportunities to share stories "like these" when talking to people.]

*Option:

Finish a FAITH STORY, making a confident statement like, "...and I'm grateful to know I'll spend eternity with God - may I ask you a question?"

Then ask, *"If God wants us to experience 'life to the full' both now and forever, are you 100% sure you will go to heaven?"*

(If yes: "How did that happen?) (If no: Ask if you can share...)

(If they have some church background, use the following 'discovery question' to find out what they are trusting in for their salvation - Jesus or 'themselves', i.e. what they do to earn it.)

"If God asked you, Why should I let you into heaven, what would you say?" (If they are not trusting in Jesus, seek to share.)

OTHER POTENTIAL LEAD-IN QUESTIONS to see if/where God is working:

- ❖ With all that is happening in the world today, do you find yourself thinking about spiritual things more?
- ❖ Do you attend a local church? (Which one?)
- ❖ Do you pray about things? Do you believe in heaven/hell?
- ❖ What value would you give the Bible? Do you have one?
- ❖ (If they have small children) Have you thought of getting your children involved in a church for their spiritual development?

EXPLAIN THE GOSPEL USING JOHN 3:16

Many Christians can explain the Gospel better than they think. It's usually a matter of organizing what they already know. Feeling competent in EXPLAINING THE GOSPEL builds confidence and courage to share.

✿ Use a piece of paper and write out John 3:16 across the middle.

[Or use the worksheet in the Workshop Leader's Guide. Download free Witnessing Guides at www.christianwitnessingtools.com]

✿ 5 Key Words to more clearly explain the Gospel

LIFE WORLD GOD SON BELIEVES
[Write them around the outside edge as seen below.]

✿ 5 Key Questions to guide the conversation

1. What does God want us to experience? (LIFE)
2. What keeps us from experiencing it? (WORLD - us)
3. How does God feel about this? (GOD)
4. How did God solve our sin problem? (SON)
5. How do we begin experiencing 'real' life? (BELIEVES)

Life	World (us)	God
For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.		
Son	Believes	(Response)

✿ Next use the following pages to examine John 3:16 more closely. Search for significant 'focus' words to remind you of truths you'll want to share. Write them on your worksheet.

✿ Note: It's OK to repeat some truths. Repetition is a good way to learn. It also allows more opportunity for the Holy Spirit to "convict and convince".

Take note of what helps YOU communicate the Gospel. You'll be surprised how much you know!

[Use the following pages to more fully explain each of the key concepts.]

1. What does God want us to experience?

Life ...

Let's focus on the word LIFE. How can we use it to better explain the Gospel? What do we want to express about the LIFE God desires for us?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal LIFE.

For example:

How long we will actually live? eternal life

(The word eternal reminds us that we will live - forever)

Considering LIFE Forever:

Where does God want us to live forever?

What does He want to save us from?

**God wants us to live forever with Him in heaven.*

Considering LIFE Now:

Explain the kind of life God wants us to experience now...

How would you describe the "abundant life" (Jn. 10:10) to someone?

And/Or, what is the nature (fruit) of God's Spirit He wants us to experience? (Galatians 5: 22-23)

[This is a good time to tell more how God's made a difference in your life]

**God wants to make a difference in our lives today and forever.*

Life...

Life... some 'focus' words and thoughts you might talk about are:

- ✿ eternal or everlasting... Jesus rose from death. He is eternally alive and God desires for us to know and experience Him both now and... forever in heaven.
- ✿ heaven - reminds us of where God wants us to be
- ✿ hell - reminds us of what He can save us from
- ✿ abundant (now) - more than "things"; love, forgiveness, peace

[Share how God has made a difference in your life]

What are some key words and an experiences to illustrate this?

- ✿ maybe perish... as that reflects the opposite of eternal life, i.e. life separated from God both now (broken relationship) and forever because of our ignoring Him (sin).

Optional Verses you may know and want to use:

John 17:3 And this is eternal LIFE, to know...

1 John 5:13 (assurance you can KNOW you HAVE eternal life)

2. What keeps us from experiencing LIFE?

World (us) ...

Let's focus on this word WORLD. How can we talk about it to better explain the Gospel? What keeps us from experiencing LIFE as God desires for us?

For God so loved the WORLD that he gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

Ask yourself:

Who does the "world" refer to... who is or makes up the "world"?

How does God feel about the "world"?

Is our world "perfect"? Why not?

What are *our* 2 possible eternal destinies?

What do we mean by "perish"?

What does He want us to have?

[Note: The question below is not answered in the verse but it is important to explain our problem and its consequences. Unless a person understands this problem and our need for forgiveness, they won't realize their need for a Savior!]

What causes one to "perish" (what is our problem)?

**Our sin separates us from God.*

World (us) ...

World... some 'focus' words and thoughts you might talk about are:

(note World represents 'us'... all of mankind)

❖ whoever... us/everyone, man/woman, boy/girl; it emphasizes you and me

❖ loved... God loves us/He loves YOU

❖ perish... why? Because of our 'sin', that's our problem.
Key truth: Sin is very serious. It makes us unacceptable to God who is perfect and holy.

❖ life... God desires 'abundant' life for us now and the hope of eternity with God forever in heaven.

Optional Verse you may know and want to use:

Romans 3:23 All have sinned...

3. How does God feel about this?

God...

Let's focus on this word God. How can we talk about His nature to better explain the Gospel? How does God feel about our problem?

For GOD so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

Ask yourself:

What are a couple of words that describe God, e.g.

What are His feelings towards us (the World)... what kind of God is He?

What did He *do*?

What does that tell you about Him?

**God wants us to know He loves us but He must punish sin.*

God...

God... some 'focus' words and thoughts you might talk about are:

❖ loved ... proves God really cares about us

❖ SO (loved)... emphasizes how much He loves

❖ gave... He is a generous God... what does He give?

❖ maybe perish... referring to God being the perfect Judge of mankind and our moral character

Optional Verses you may know and want to use:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin...

Romans 5: 8 God demonstrates His love for us...

1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God but...

4. How did God solve our sin problem?

Son...

Now let's focus on the word SON. How can we talk about Him to better explain the Gospel? What makes Him so special?

For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only SON that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

Ask yourself:

[You'll want to explain who the "Son" refers to.]

What words are used to describe the "Son"?

How might you describe the way Jesus lived to the way we live our lives?

[It's important to explain what makes Him so "special" using the "Diary of Sin" story.]

Key Truth:

Jesus IS God in the flesh. (Jn. 1:1,14)

Jesus died on the cross to pay our penalty for sin and rose again so we can experience eternal life both now and forever with Him in heaven.

Son...

Son... some 'focus' words and thoughts you might talk about are:

- ✿ Son... This refers to Jesus.
- ✿ only or one and only... He is special because He is:
 - ↗ God in the flesh who lived a perfect life.
 - ↗ He died on the cross but rose again (He is alive) to be our Savior by paying for or taking the punishment for our sin... to be our Lord to give us Life.
- ✿ The simple but profound "Diary (record) of Sin" story fits well here.

*Although the Diary of Sin story works well when talking about Jesus, share it wherever you feel is appropriate. The main points are:

- ✿ Jesus Died for our sin
- ✿ Jesus Rose to give us real life... now and forever

Optional Verses you may know and want to use:

- John 1:1, 14 In the beginning was the Word and...
- John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is...
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 For God made Christ, who never sinned...
- John 3:17 God did not send His Son into the world to condemn 1. 1.

5. How do we begin to experiencing 'real' Life?

Believes ...

Let's focus on this word BELIEVES. How can we talk about it to better explain the Gospel? Why is it so important? What does it really mean to BELIEVE?

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever BELIEVES in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

Ask yourself:

If you believe, what do you have?

How certain does God want us to be - what does He promise?

Who and what must you believe in?

If you don't believe, then what?

[You'll want to explain what it means to believe.]

What are some other words for 'believe'?

**We must believe (trust) in Jesus Christ alone to have eternal life.
(It's not what we do but what Jesus has done.)*

Believes ...

Believes... some 'focus' words and thoughts you might talk about are:

- ✿ eternal life... now and forever
- ✿ have... not maybe, not hope so, but 'have' eternal life
- ✿ in Him (Jesus)... you need to believe in the risen Christ Jesus and what He did on the cross for you to have and experience 'life' as He desires for you; starting now and continuing forever
- ✿ 'not' perish... tells that we are saved from a life apart from God
- ✿ Other words for 'believe' are faith and trust

(optional)

You might use the acronym K-A-T to clarify what it means to Believe, i.e. what true saving faith is:

K – Knowledge... yes you need to know the facts about Jesus, our sin and His grace as our Savior.

Key Truth: but its more than just knowledge alone

A – Agreeing with the facts

T – Trust Jesus alone for your salvation and the real life He wants for you as Lord (leader) of your life

Key Truth: It's not what we do to be saved, it's what Jesus has done.
We can't ever be good enough to earn it. Eph. 2:8,9]

Optional Verses:

Ephesians 2:8, 9 For by grace are you saved through faith not...
Acts 16:31 Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and...

Review

(Memorize these 5 questions and main points)

What does God want you (us) to experience?

- ✿ LIFE – This is what God desires for you. Life to the full now and forever (eternal). To experience His love and discover real purpose in your life.

What keeps you (us) from experiencing it?

- ✿ WORLD (us) – Because of our sin we separate ourselves from God. This breaks our relationship with Him now that will result in a permanent separation from God (perish).

How does God feel about this?

- ✿ GOD – God loves you. He must punish sin but doesn't want you to perish because of your sin.

How did God solve your (our) sin problem?

- ✿ SON – God solved your sin problem in Jesus. He is both God and man and lived a sinless, perfect life. He did not deserve to be punished. But Jesus died on the cross taking upon Himself the punishment you deserve and removed the barrier that blocks your relationship with God. Then Jesus rose from death to live forever. Now you can join Him to live life to the full, without guilt or shame, now and forever.

How do you (we) begin experiencing 'real' life?

- ✿ BELIEVE – By believing (trusting) in the risen Jesus alone and what He did for you on the cross. In friendship with Jesus you can experience life as He desires for you now and forever.
-

You can personalize the verse by putting their name in the following blanks

"For God so loved _____ that He gave His one and only Son that (if) _____ believes in Him, _____ will not perish but _____ (will) have eternal life"

Or, point out that G-O-S-P-E-L (the Good News) is central to this verse:

G _____ so loved the world that He gave His
O _____ and only
S _____ that whoever believes in Him will not
P _____ but have
E _____
L _____.

Response

Jesus desires that each of us act on this knowledge... to take a step of faith, to believe. Ask them if they "sense the Lord Jesus speaking to them about taking this step of faith". (If they are not, simply explain the following and encourage them to follow Jesus' prompting when they are ready.)

If they are ready now, say, "Here is an easy way to do that, it's as easy as A-B-C:

- A – ADMIT... that you have sinned in need of forgiveness
- B – BELIEVE... in who Jesus is and that He died to take your punishment and be your living Lord and Savior
- C – COMMIT... to let Jesus change things that are not pleasing to Him (repent) and choose to follow Him

[You may lead them in a prayer of commitment or they may wish to pray unassisted by you. If they do not want to pray, be sure to leave them the paper/witnessing guide and encourage them to ask the Lord to help them with this life changing decision. Offer your willingness to be of any help you can be in the days to come.]

Sample prayer:

"Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe, you died on the cross and rose again to take the punishment for my sin and give me life now and forever. Thank you for your love and acceptance. Help me lead a life that is pleasing to you. Jesus, I want to follow you. Come into my life and help change anything that is not pleasing to you. In Jesus name, Amen."

And do what you can to include them in future activities to encourage their faith journey.

Optional Verses you may know:

- John 1:12 As many as received Him (Jesus)...
- Rev. 3:20 Behold I stand at the door and knock...

Appendix

Explaining the DIARY (record) OF SIN story:

This story consist of 3 components:

- ❖ A cell phone, or book, to represent (your) sin -- which God hates
- ❖ 1st Hand = you (us) -- who God loves
- ❖ 2nd Hand = Jesus (God) -- who died for me/us

❖ State that, "*This 'phone' represents my life... specifically all the sin of the past, present and future. Every wrong word, thought or action I've ever done*".

❖ Point at 1st hand representing you and say, "*Let this hand represent me - who God loves*".

❖ (Then place the 'diary of sin' (phone) on that hand representing you.)
State that, "*This is the problem – my sin separates me from God.*"
(Hold the 2nd hand representing God above the 'diary of sin' to show how our sin separates us from God).

❖ State again that, "*God loves me, (Point to the 'me' hand) but He hates my sin.*" (Point at the 'diary of sin' (phone) resting on the 'me' hand.)
Say, "*And because God is holy and just, my sin must be punished.*"

❖ Say, "*To solve my problem, God sent His Son (Jesus) to earth.*"
(Put the Jesus/God hand parallel to the hand that represents you.)

❖ State that, "*Jesus was sinless and when Jesus died on the cross all of our sins were placed upon Him.*"

(Take the 'diary of sin' from the 'me' hand to the 'Jesus' hand.)

Say, "*All of my sin, which God hates, was placed on Jesus. He died and suffered by taking the punishment for our sin on the cross so we might be forgiven.*"

❖ Explain that, "*When He died, He was buried in a grave, (Lower the 'Jesus' hand and put the 'diary of sin' on your lap) but then He was raised back to LIFE so we might experience the full life He intends for us. A little later, He went to heaven to prepare a place for you and me.*"
(Move 'Jesus' hand up above the 'me' hand to show Jesus in heaven.)

❖ Finish by stating, "*Having taken the punishment for our sin, Jesus offers this Life to us that starts now and lasts forever with Him in heaven.*"

(Sample)

Life	World (sin)	God	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - eternal... forever (heaven or hell) - abundant life now (love, peace, forgiveness..) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - whoever (you/me) loved... by God - broken world (our sin) - perish (why? Sin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (so) loved - gave... generous - perish (judges sin) 	
<i>What does God want us to experience?</i>	<i>What keeps us from experiencing this?</i>	<i>How does God feel about this?</i>	
For God so loved the <u>world</u> that He gave His one and only <u>Son</u> that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.			

Son (Jesus)	Believes (faith)	Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who? Refers to Jesus - 'only' Son (God in flesh) - perfect life - [Diary of Sin] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'have' eternal life - 'in' Him (Jesus) - 'not' perish - "trust" and "faith" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does God Desire? What keeps us from it? How does God feel? How did He solve this? How do we begin? <p>[Response]</p> <p>A - admit (sinner) B - believe (in Jesus) C - commit (to follow Jesus)</p>
<i>How did God solve our problem?</i>	<i>How do we begin to experience this?</i>	

Similar Verses... in the Book of John

John 1:1, 14

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:12

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 3:15

Everyone who believes in Me will have eternal life.

John 5:24

I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

John 6:39-40

And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day.

John 6:47

I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life.

John 8:24

That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I Am who I say I am, you will die in your sins.

John 10:10

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.

John 10:28

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me,

John 11:25-26

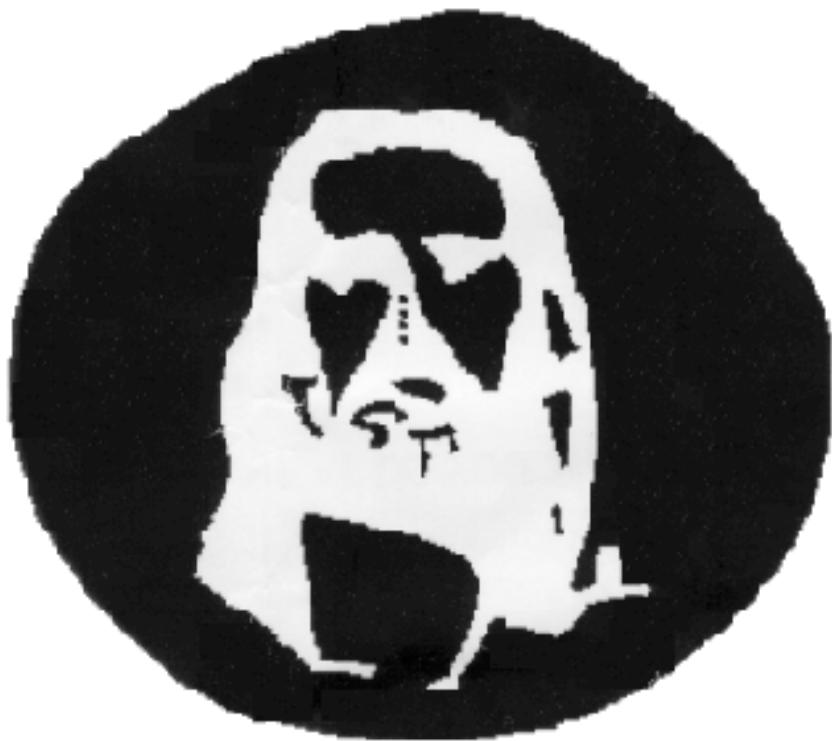
Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die.

John 17:2-3

For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.

John 20:31

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life.



Illusion of Jesus

Focus on the 4 small dots for 30 seconds (count of 30). Then close your eyes.

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matt. 28:20b

