

ON MISSION TO SHARE JESUS

SPECIAL SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SMALL GROUP STUDY

LESSON TWO

HOW CHRIST CHANGED YOU AND HOW TO TELL ABOUT IT PRESENTING YOUR PERSONAL STORY OF SALVATION

LESSON AIM

The purpose of these lessons is to equip believers to become effective witnesses for Christ by using their personal testimony and a simple witnessing card.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Teacher, each class member should have completed writing out their personal testimony and have brought their worksheets with them to class. Congratulate them for completing this very important assignment, this is the foundation which the class member will build upon in today's session. If a class member was not present at last week's session, give them a copy of the Personal Testimony Worksheet and encourage them to write out their testimony at home this week. Offer to contact them if they need additional help.

MATERIALS NEEDED

As you get ready to teach these two sessions, you will need to provide your students with the following:

- A copy of the personal testimony worksheet for each person. This sheet is at the end of this teaching outline.
- A *One-Day* witnessing card for each participant These can be ordered from North American Mission Board by calling 1 866 407-6262 or visit www.namb.net/catalog.

LESSON TWO TEACHING OUTLINE

Teacher, use the following outline and time suggestions to cover the material in this session. Feel free to change any of the time suggestions or lesson content to fit into your particular Sunday school or small group context.

Review (7 minutes)

I hope by now you're seeing how simple it is to share your faith. With a little diligence and planning, you can be equipped to share your faith whenever the opportunity arises.

Last week we discussed:

- a) How to transition into a conversation about faith.
- b) The various parts of our testimony and how to share them.

I'm sure most of you have brought your written testimonies with you. Would two or three of you please read yours aloud? Teacher, you may share your own, or have others prepared to read.

An Aid To Your Effort (2 minutes)

As if sharing your story isn't already easy enough, we're making it even easier. A resource has been created that will help guide you and the listener through the gospel, and will prompt you to tell your story at just the right time. It is a witnessing card, similar perhaps to other tracts you've seen. This card is to assist you in sharing the gospel.

What makes this card unique, is that you personalize the gospel presentation by including your own story. Keep several handy as you seek to be a faithful witness for the Lord.

The witnessing card contains Scripture, transitional statements, questions, and arrows. Scripture passages are in black. Transitional statements and questions are in purple. The arrows let you know when and where to include the various components of your personal story.

How to use the Witnessing Card (3 minutes)

The card is only a guide to assist you in communicating the essentials of the gospel. It does not contain every word you will say in your witnessing conversation. As you practice using the card, put your personality into it and feel free to include further transitional statements and concepts. In other words, use the card to your advantage, don't feel constrained to the card or as if you're having to fit its mold. It's a tool, not a rigid guide, though it does include the vital Scripture you need to share.

Learn how to smoothly transition from one area to the next. You do this simply by practice. You can role play with other Christians, which we will do that in a little while.

For example: When you come to a Scripture reference, say something like: "The Bible says," or, "I discovered the Bible teaches that," or, "God says," or, "I learned."

Tips to using the card

- Sit or stand beside the person.
- Fold the card so the person can see only the page you are using.
- Point to words and verses with your finger or a pen.
- Call the person by name while using the card.

Telling Your Story (20 minutes)

Begin a witnessing conversation by whatever means is comfortable and natural. Again, this material is to help you and guide you, not constrain you.

Take a witnessing card and place it next to your written testimony. As you read through the tract, insert a sample of your testimony, follow along, and you'll begin to clearly get the idea.

As the Holy Spirit leads, begin to share the first part of your testimony, as indicated by the first purple arrow—*My life before making a commitment to follow Jesus*.

The first part of your testimony should culminate in the recognition that you needed a change in your life because of sin. The diagram on the first page—see the watermark behind the words—illustrates humanity's separation from God because of sin. The clouds represent God and Heaven. The people at the bottom of the card represent humanity. The dark blue section of the card illustrates the truth that humanity is separated from God because of sin.

Sample testimony

"At the age of 12, before I made a commitment to follow Jesus, I found myself asking, 'Why am I here?' I remember wondering if the only purpose that a man had was to spend his life getting an education, going to work everyday, coming home, reading the newspaper, watching television, going to bed, only to get up and start all over again the next day. That question created a thirst for an answer. Even though my parents seldom attended church, they made sure my sisters and I attended. It was through attending Sunday School and church that I realized I needed a change in my life. I discovered the Bible says, 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' I realized that 'all' included me and that the consequence of sin is spiritual death. The Bible says, 'The wages of sin is death.'"

After explaining the illustration, begin sharing the card until you come to the second arrow. At this point, share the part of your testimony—*How you came to know Christ personally*.

Then continue the witnessing conversation by simply referring to or reading the card. The diagram on page two may be used to explain that it is only through the Cross that man can experience God's forgiveness and the joy of becoming a part of God's family.

"Through a series of people in my life, I discovered the truth about God. He loves us even though we are sinners. The Bible says, 'For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' I came to understand that 'the world' means people, 'Only begotten' means one and only and 'Son' refers to Jesus. 'Whoever' then includes everyone, and the phrase 'believes in Him' means to place your trust in Jesus alone. I also discovered God sent His Son, Jesus to die for our sins. The Bible says, 'And the Word,' 'Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us.' It also says, 'Jesus died for our sins, and rose again the third day.'"

“Through Jesus, God offers us forgiveness of our sin and the gift of eternal life. The Bible says, ‘the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’”

“When I discovered these truths, I realized that Jesus was the only way to experience true spiritual life. So one summer evening while listening to a guest speaker, I realized that the only way Jesus could change my life was for me to receive Him, so by faith I did. The Bible says, ‘But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.’ That verse is John 1:12.”

At the third arrow, share the third part of your testimony—*How my life is different since I came to know Christ personally*. Then continue the witnessing conversation by reading the card.

Every believer could write a book describing the impact that Christ has made on his or her life. Keep your presentation brief and to the point, simply sharing in a sentence or two the impact He has made.

Examples:

And since then, He has become a friend that is always there.

And since then, He has brought me peace.

And since then, He has brought purpose and meaning to my life.

And since then, He has been a daily source of strength.

“And since then, He has brought a great sense of direction and purpose in my life. He has set me on a journey that is exciting and fulfilling. He’s become a friend who is always there to give me wisdom, encouragement and strength. You see Jesus said, ‘I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.’ And I have certainly found that to be true.”

Drawing the Net (10 minutes)

You’ve shared the truth. You’re already a successful witness. The final decision is up to the Holy Spirit and the choice of the individual. Now that you’ve shared the truth, you’ll want to ask if the person wants to give their life to Christ.

The question used after the Scripture begins a process of drawing the net. Be sensitive to the person with whom you are sharing at this strategic point. Be prepared for questions. See your sharing as a conversation, rather than an uninterrupted presentation.

A Very Key Point

Be conscious of the Holy Spirit throughout the conversation, asking Him to guide you, to guide the one you’re talking to, and to draw them. Trust Him—He is in this conversation.

You ask, “Would you like to receive God’s forgiveness and His gift of eternal life?”

If the answer is yes

Continue by leading the person into repentance. Go to the top of the next page of the card.

Repentance is turning to God through Jesus and away from our sins. It is like making a U-turn. The U-turn has been reversed to illustrate that repentance is only available through Jesus Christ.

Encourage the person to receive Christ. Say, “You can become a follower of Jesus by turning away from your sin and trusting Him alone as your Lord and Savior. You can do this now by inviting Jesus into your life through prayer.”

Ask: Would you like for me to lead you in that prayer?

If the person is being led by the Holy Spirit and desires to receive Jesus, lead him or her in the prayer of salvation found at the top of the next page of the card.

If the person hesitates or says no to your offer to lead in a prayer, you may say, “Let me share with you a prayer that is very much like the one I prayed when Jesus came in and changed my life.”

Then read the prayer in the card. Ask, “Does this prayer say what you would like to say to God?”

Again, seek discernment from the Holy Spirit to know whether or not to continue. He or she may want to pray this prayer at a later time. Always leave the door open for further ministry. At the same time help them recognize the urgency of accepting Christ today.

If the answer is no

If the person hesitates or says no, deal with their response in a positive manner. You may say, “What do you feel is keeping you from making a decision?”

If the person continues to hesitate or refuse, leave the door open for future opportunities.

You may have the privilege of seeing the person give their life to Christ right then, but possibly you’ll be a vital part of a process, and someone else will be there when they come to Christ. Either way, your work is valuable—your part irreplaceable.

Immediate Follow-up (2 minutes)

If you have the privilege of leading someone to Christ, the necessity for follow-up falls squarely on your shoulders. Make this just as much of a priority as when you originally shared Christ.

Once a person has accepted Christ, congratulate them.

Remember, 1 Peter 2:2 (NIV) refers to new believers as newborn babes. “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.”

The pure spiritual milk represents the immediate needs of the new believer. Those needs include baptism, Bible study, a group of Christian friends to be their spiritual family—Sunday school or small group—a church home, etc.

Do everything you can to help the person find a church home and a small group within the church. Do the follow-up work to help them get assimilated into the body of Christ.

Conclusion and Role Playing (5 minutes)

Teachers, encourage your class. Be sensitive to the looks on their faces. Do you see excitement, bewilderment, or that dreaded deer in the headlights look? Respond with appropriate encouraging words, such as:

“I know we’ve covered a lot of material in the past two weeks, but I think you can clearly see that you already have what you need to share the gospel effectively—your story and the truth, as represented in the Scripture on the witnessing card.”

“Though it will take some practice and review, what we’ve covered is simple and easy to deliver—especially when you know the Holy Spirit is empowering you!”

“Let’s break up in pairs, and take 5 minutes each to walk through your story—using the card and integrating the story and the card. You don’t have to be perfect—just faithful to work at it and deliver the good news.”

After the role playing time, close the class in prayer and encourage class members to share Christ with someone who needs Him using what they have learned.

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*NORTH AMERICAN
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4200 North Point Pkwy.
Alpharetta, GA 30022-4176

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