

Gospel Overview – <http://www.gracecommunityesc.org/home/the-good-news>

Tools to communicate the gospel

Show Jesus

You can present Jesus from any text of the bible, since he is in all of it (Luke 24). You could say “show me Jesus” and I could go to Matthew and show Jesus. But I could also go to the 10 Commandments and say “here is Jesus right here, perfect; and you're here too, not perfect, you need Jesus.”

Romans Road

I like how this one is very bible based. Isa 55:11, “so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

No booklet so it seems more like you're using the bible, only goes through one book, but you can't easily hand it to someone to keep.

- Romans 3:23 (all have sinned), Romans 3:10-18 (sin in our lives) – who we are
- Romans 6:23 (consequences of sin, eternal death).
- Romans 6:23b, Romans 5:8 (eternal life in Christ). – Who he is and what he has done
- Romans 10:9 (confess and believe in Jesus for salvation), Romans 10:13. – what we must do. (encourage people to repent and receive Jesus, don't just tell them about Jesus, call them to him).
- Romans 5:1 (resultant peace with God through JC). Romans 8:1 (no condemnation), Romans 8:38-39 (promise of perseverance).

4 Spiritual Laws/Knowing God Personally booklet, Pictures

This includes helpful verses for communicating the gospel. You can find it online. It also has helpful pictures.

Man reaching up to God picture. Chasm picture. Two circles. Cross picture.

Difficulties

How about when someone is super righteous? They look at the ten commandments and seem perfect. This is like the rich young ruler. How to respond: are they really giving their entire life? Or do they have some idol, like love of money, there are lots of idols out there, many people think they keep the second table of the ten commandments, but don't keep the first, they don't love God, they are just “good people.” They've made an idol of “being nice.” Jesus' standard is much higher.

Sometimes these people need to see their spiritual life and whether they are diligently walking with God (probably they aren't, most people who read and pray every day get the gospel already, and so live as Christ followers; people who examine their life and repent of their sins, and have a clear picture of the holiness of God, know they are sinners). Emphasize both sins of omission vs sins of commission: “sure you're not committing any sins, but are there things you're omitting like bible reading, prayer, and mercy.” Matthew 25 is pretty scary for the person who doesn't really take care of the poor – they just help people to get into a good school or feel better about themselves, self serving.

Not Re-accepting Jesus

We don't want to lead people to Christ who have already come to Christ, we aren't searching for conversion numbers. If someone decides to dedicate their life at a retreat that's excellent, but our goal isn't to come up with numbers. We don't need to make people question whether they were ever really saved, they need to be confirmed (if they indeed know the gospel), otherwise, they may think they are saved temporarily, but then later wonder if “that time” really was it (especially when there is little change or no drama). If you're always telling people “are you sure you were really saved?” then the next time they think about their salvation they will wonder if they were really saved.

We don't want to make people doubt that they were ever really saved, the important thing is to make sure that they are. Some people might just need to get back on the horse. People are in different stages in their discipleship, they might need to be led back to being a disciple. Its not that they are unconverted, its just that their life needs to be changed. You need to lead them to Jesus. Some people don't know what to do and you need to tell them to take steps further in their Christian life to serve or lead or something. Perhaps they need to renew their devotions or take up more active church participation.

Be careful not to only emphasize the steps and efforts they should take. They probably already know that they need to read their bible and they're not reading it. There is likely a heart issue too. Encourage them to ask God to renew their heart and their life.

You don't have to lead people to Christ for the first time. Many people will be seeking a renewed relationship with Jesus Christ. If they tell you about that, when you're done, stop whatever you're doing and say “ok, lets pray” and pray with that person. Other people will see it too and they'll want that. Pray for it to spread.

Goal is conversion. Sometimes that means conversion for the first time. Sometimes it means the next step in their Christian life. Sometimes it means repentance, conversion/change in their life (turning from one way of life to Christ). Leading them to Christ in every situation.

Interacting with students

Its not always that simple as if people are going to say “what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30), and you reply “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household” (v. 31). They have all kinds of problems that are answered by the gospel. They are all in different places and they're waiting for different responses to their situations. You don't always start from the beginning of the gospel presentation, you dialogue with them and see where they are and meet them where they are.

Confirm confirm. Ask questions. Don't just talk but find out where they are, why they said what they said (“hey you said this earlier, what did you mean by that?”), why they say this is that, why they stood up to accept Jesus, why did they raise their hand (emotional experience? They've done it a hundred times? They felt guilty for being distant from God... (waoh that one was a surprise). If you just talk at them and explain the gospel, rather than meet them where they are, you're not using your time well, you might be answering questions they don't have)

1 Cor. 3:6 “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.” God has been working in this person

long before you came, and will be working in this person long after you leave. You don't come into the beginning of the conversation, so remember you're stacking on top, not starting with something fresh. Everyone comes with baggage.

Answer questions: Proverbs 18:13 “he who answers before listening – that is his folly and shame.” Be careful that you don't preach too much, the preacher will do the preaching, its your job to make sure they get it, and you can only make sure they get it by hearing them, you might have to ask questions to see where they are, but you need to listen and not just talk (otherwise you might be answering the wrong questions). You might be answering questions they don't have. They might already know they are a sinner and you might spend you whole time telling them they are a sinner, and not be able to address their needs. The preacher will preach at them, only you can talk to them (he has a special and unique job, and you have a special and unique job – Ezra 8:7-8).

You don't have to know everything. You don't have to have all the answers. The important thing is digging. When you dig up whats going on, and you don't have an answer, you can ask them “how about we go together and talk to a pastor about this?” If someone is having a problem that you're not sure how to deal with you can talk to pastors about it (with permission, privately, when no students are around) and then get back with them. I know I would really appreciate if someone took the time to help me figure out my issue.

Follow up

- Tell the leadership group at the evening meeting about what interaction you had if there is time (as a praise report). Talk about any difficulty you are having in this area.
- Tell your co-leader about the interactions you had with that person and pray for them with the co-leader.
- Find out how to report to that student's leadership/pastor.

Tips

- Look them in the eye. Especially when making important points. This lets them know that you care about them and that you're trying to convey a message to them. You're actually trying to make contact, a connection with them. They should hear your love in your voice and see your love in your eyes. Look at them like you are trying to reach them with a very important message because you are.
- Let them hear compassion in your voice. Speak the truth in love. Fiery is good, but not all sounding like anger. Regulate the tone and sound of your voice. Draw people in by slowing your voice. Use a normal compassionate voice. Love and concern for them in your voice. If you have no love and concern for them, don't open your mouth (I'm sure you do love them, that's why you're here, so show them, with your words and your eyes).
- Wield the sword. Carry it with you. Sharper than any two edged sword. The word is your authority, it is God's word. You're appealing to the ultimate authority. Read the word aloud (1 Tim 4:13). You come not by your authority but by another – God almighty. Be familiar with some key passages, like the Romans Road. Familiarize yourself before the retreat with some of these so you can give them to others. Read the passage for the sermon and be ready to discuss it with the group, you bible doesn't have to be open for group discussion, but it doesn't have to be closed.

- Think about body language – crossed arms doesn't communicate well. Consider matching their posture. Facial expressions and gestures (my neutral face is an unhappy angry looking face, we have to be careful we're not communicating something we don't want to).
- Sit down next to people and smile, ask them how it is going.
- Be gentle, you're dealing with a person, not a project. If it were my family I'd want you to be gentle. This is a soul, this is a person, they have feelings and thoughts.