

## **Presenting the Gospel Message/Talk**

This resource is designed to give you a possible format for designing your own 9-12 minute talk grab the attention of an audience and lead them on a journey to find Jesus. This format is used in basic public speaking. It is designed to get one main point across to the audience. One point only! Use this format or adapt in to your needs or group. Be sure to pray before you begin to create an outline. Take time, give yourself some space. Ask god to lead you to the scripture and story from your own life, which will best illustrate the point you want to make.

### **The basic format for creating a gospel-oriented message includes:**

- Get the attention of your audience. Make sure your introduction is comfortable, relaxed, and perhaps funny. Attempt to pull your audience together. Share personal experiences or comment upon a current event or issue. TV, MTV, movies, popular songs (CAUTION). Use whatever you think will attract young people's attention or relate to the point you will try to make. You might even use a brief story, which invites your audience to participate. The introduction will set-up the body of the talk
- Describe an account from Scripture. Make the Bible come alive when you speak. Young people are visually-oriented. They depend on striking imagery for understanding. Paint verbal pictures. Help your audience to experience a Bible story: what happened, what people might have been feeling, what a particular place might have looked like. Tell your stories vividly; don't tell about them/
- Explain the main point about the Christian life. Clearly and simply present one idea. Do not try to say too much. An illustration or two may be helpful in clarifying your thoughts or point.
- Ask your audience to do something. As you conclude your talk, challenge the young people to act upon what they have heard – to ask questions, to pray, to confront someone, to discuss what was said.

## A Sample Message

The following worksheet offers an opportunity to create your own talk or message. Below each explanation is an example. The examples tied together as they are written could be combined to form a complete talk. Use complete sentences or brief phrases – whichever is more convenient and easier for you to memorize. The goal is for you to share your thoughts as naturally as if you were talking to a close friend.

- Theme or topic: \_\_\_\_\_

*Example: Jesus the healer*

Being with the end in mind. What is the challenge or focus that you want to leave the group with? What is the main point you want to make in your talk? In one or two sentences write out the focus or the main point of the message.

- Main Point/Focus/Challenge:

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*Example:* Christ wants to touch us, to heal us of our pain. Do you think that if Christ reached out and touched us we would be healed?

1. GET THE ATTENTION OF YOUR AUDIENCE. The introduction is a story, which pulls the group in. Perhaps share a story about a time when you were physically ill, or take a few minutes to talk about AIDS or another illness you might have read about in an article. Be creative!

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*Example:* When I was a little girl, my sister and I contracted scarlet fever. When you talk to older people about scarlet fever you may see a few eyebrows raised, but in the late seventies, scarlet fever was not that serious. In fact, we rather enjoyed ourselves. We missed nearly two weeks of school because it took the doctor a while to figure out what he had. I had a rash all over my body and my throat was very swollen. The interesting thing about the illness was that thirty or forty years ago, people used to burn everything in their homes to eliminate the germs and infection. One day my mother invited a friend over for lunch, and even though my sister and I were no longer contagious her friend refused to come over. It kept happening...my mother would shop for groceries and eventually the conversation would turn to her sick daughters. In a very real way she felt almost ostracized as people took a few steps away from her as she spoke. We couldn't believe it!

Use transition effectively. a transition is needed to bring the speaker from the introduction to the body of talk. How does one get from two sick girls in elementary school to the account of Jesus and the leper without losing the group?

2. DESCRIBE AN ACCOUNT FROM SCRIPTURE. Tell the story. Read a few lines from the Bible. Pause. Ask those listening to imagine themselves in the setting of the story. Give them details and images. Help make the situation more real.

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*Example:* Mark 1:40-45. Another person who was left out of society entirely was the leper at the time of Jesus. (This is the transition.) Lepers are people with leprosy, a bacterial disease that attacks the body. Large sores or lesions develop and individual lose feelings in those parts of their body. Typically those parts waste away and fall off. The leper we read about in scripture might have had part of his body missing. In those days, lepers were required to walk around with a bell. When people approached, lepers were supposed to ring their bell and shout, "Unclean, unclean!" It was surely a difficult life.

I'd like to read from the book of Mark about Jesus' encounter with this man. (Read verses 40-42. Elaborate on the interaction between the two.) Imagine being that leper. You are desperate. You want to participate in the life around you. The leper just wants to be normal. (Read 43-45.) Jesus was willing to do what a healthy human would not normally have done. He didn't send him healing bolt of lightning from afar. Instead, Jesus reached out and touched this person who may not have looked or smelled very beautiful. The leper wanted desperately to be healed and Jesus walked right up to him and touched him, healing him of this disease.

3. EXPLAIN THE MAIN POINT ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

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*Example:* each of us is a leper of sorts. Most of us have something we spend a great deal of time trying to hide from others. Perhaps it is something about our family or ourselves. Perhaps our parents may not get along with or we might still feel stung by their divorce, or maybe there is a substance abuse problem in our own life or in our family that we spend all our time trying to hide. Whatever it may be, it is your own sort of leprosy—something that you probably did not choose to have in your life, just like the leper did not seek to have that horrible disease – but something that makes you feel alone, because we think nobody else can relate to it. Sometimes we convince ourselves that if she shares our pain, we will be rejected. Just as he did for the lepers, Jesus wants to heal our pain, our brokenness, and make us whole. Jesus wants to walk right up to us and touch us.

4. ASK YOUR AUDIENCE TO DO SOMETHING. Write the challenge here.

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*Example:* I or we (if you speak on behalf of another adults) believe that Jesus has the power to heal you with his touch, whatever your pain or hurt, wherever you feel broken. Do you think that if he were to touch you, the depression, loneliness, fear, whatever could begin to heal?

5. GROUP DISCUSSION. After closing the talk with a challenge or thought for the group, it is ideal to move into small groups to discuss three to five questions which are not answered by a yes or no – to help promote discussion. The issues isn't really whether Christ can reach out and touch us, rather the challenge is to assist young people in identifying how Christ reaches out to us in our pain. A few discussions question might be:

- How can or does Christ reach out to you?
- What prevents us from sharing our pain hurt with God/Jesus?
- Why do we all work so hard to hide our pain?
- How might we learn to live with and perhaps overcome the pain in our lives?

Develop a few questions for each small group to discuss.

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