



SECTION 2

## Presenting the Gospel



NOTES

## Gospel outline

1. We matter to God. He made us, and He wants to have a relationship with us. (Write 'us' on one side of a piece of paper and 'God' on the other.)
2. However, we have rebelled against God. We have all disobeyed Him, our rebellion and rebellious acts have separated us from Him and broken the relationship. (Draw lines by both words to form walls around a great chasm, separating 'us' from 'God'.)
3. To varying degrees, most of us are aware of our distance from God, so we start doing all kinds of things (being a helpful neighbour, going to church, giving to charity) to get back to Him. There is nothing wrong with these things, but the Bible makes it clear that none of them can earn us God's forgiveness or re-establish our relationship with Him. Our attempts always fall short. (Draw an arrow going over the 'us' cliff. Write Romans 3:23 next to the arrow so the person can check the biblical source later if they want.)
4. Furthermore, our rebellion must be punished and the penalty due is death – physical death and spiritual separation from God for eternity. (Add the word 'death' and Romans 6:23 at the bottom of the chasm.)
5. It looks pretty bleak, but the good news is that we matter to God. In fact, He loves us so much that He did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He provided a bridge over which we can find His forgiveness and restore our relationship with Him. He built it by coming to earth as one of us, and dying on the cross to pay the death penalty we owed. Here is what the bridge looks like.  
(Draw a cross so that it touches both sides of the chasm. Sometimes add 1 Peter 3:18 next to the cross!)
6. This is a picture of what the central message of the Bible is about. But it is not enough for us just to know about this, or even agree with it. We have to act on it. God wants us to move over the bridge. We do this by humbly admitting to God the situation – we have rebelled and are cut off, we need his forgiveness and leadership, which are possible because of the cross. (Draw a stick figure on the 'us' side, then an arrow to another on the 'God' side. Sometimes add John 1:12)

### Telling your story

'Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you... So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him...' (Mark 5:19,20).

Why use your story?

- It avoids arguments.  
People will rarely attack another person's personal experience.
- It's easy to remember



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Some people find it hard to remember Gospel outlines. With a bit of practise most of us will be able to tell our stories in an accurate and engaging way.

### Ingredients

Jesus should be at the centre of our stories. It's so easy to focus on ourselves and forget that what we are meant to be doing is explaining how we came to follow Him.

It's easy to turn our stories into tales of how our personal and psychological needs were met, as if Jesus is a social worker. It is important to mention the need for forgiveness of sin.

The emphasis should be on the impact of God's grace on our lives since we came to know Jesus. We mustn't make the mistake of spending too much time talking about our lives before we became Christians.

### What makes a good story?

We don't want our stories to sound rehearsed, but nor do we want them to sound confused. It makes sense to write down the 'key' points that we want to convey.

Most of us have particular occasions and people that have influenced our faith.

Try to describe these in some detail so that those listening can picture our situations. The more they can picture us, the easier it will be for them to imagine themselves coming to believe in Christ.

It's all too easy to slip into the 'evangelical mode' when telling our stories. It is important that we should train ourselves to speak naturally.

### Practical exercise (2 minutes each)

Tell someone else your testimony – but only take two minutes.

Our testimonies are very personal and can include three main elements.

#### 1. Before

What was your life like before you became a Christian? You need to be honest but not make this the largest part of your story.

#### 2. During

How did you become a Christian? What led you to this point and how did it take place?

#### 3. After

Your story, or testimony, can include what God has been doing in your life since you trusted Him as Saviour and Lord. This part should always be on-going and focus on what God has been teaching you, or helping you with recently.



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### Exercise

Write out your testimony.

- Try sharing it with a Christian friend, and ask them if they understood it.
- Try sharing it with a non-Christian friend, and see if they understood it too.
- Be ready to use it, or parts of your story as God gives you opportunities.

### Read

Paul's testimony in Acts 26

Before Acts 26:4-11

During Acts 26:12-18

After Acts 26:19-23

John 4:39-42

John 9:25