

Welcome to the REACH program! REACH stands for Relational Evangelism And Christian Hospitality. The mission of the REACH training program is to equip believers to reach their communities for Jesus Christ. It is based on building relationships with non-believers and then presenting the gospel. You can start the relationship process by introducing yourself to the class and tell the class what you are looking to gain from the class.

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Introduction to Witnessing

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5 NKJV)

Week One Objective

Introduce yourself to the class and tell the class what you are looking to gain from the class. This class will discuss the three W's of witnessing: "What, Why, and Who."

What is witnessing?

Witnessing is a common term for spreading the Gospel. Paul gives us God's instructions on how and when to witness. He said to:

2 Timothy 4:2 "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with long-suffering and teaching."

As you can see, we are called to tell people about the Good News of Jesus Christ not convert people. The first thing that you must remember is that you cannot save anyone. Salvation is of the Lord. Many Christians feel a lot of pressure when getting ready to tell someone about their faith because they feel they will fail if they do not get a conversion. The truth is that you cannot mess up bad enough. What we mean by this is that most of the work is done by the Holy Spirit. He is certainly powerful enough to overcome anything that you may do. This is not to say that you do not need to do your best but as stated above, you cannot save anyone so you cannot make someone lose salvation. So relax and speak in love. This story may help bring out this point.

A Pastor was on an airplane and witnessed to the person next to him. By the end of the flight he had presented the Gospel but did not have a decision for Christ. The Pastor did not get down on himself for not getting the decision because he knew that he had done what our Lord has commanded him to do. He used the following illustration to explain why he knew that he did what the Lord wanted him to do. He talked about a scale from 0 to 10.

A 0 may be someone that has never heard the Gospel. A 10 may be someone ready to commit to Christ. A 5 may be someone with some knowledge. Everyone that does not know Jesus falls somewhere on this scale. When witnessing to someone you may bring that person from a 3 to an 8. You must know that you have not failed just because you did not bring someone to

a 10. You may bring someone from a 5 to a 7 and then someone else through the Holy Spirit will bring them the rest of the way. The most important point to remember is that sharing the Gospel is never in vain!

Why witness?

As Disciples of Jesus Christ, we are expected to follow His commands. The last command He gave before ascending to Heaven is known as the “Great Commission.”

Acts 1.8 _____ “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Sarmaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Compassion is another reason to witness your faith. When asked why most Christians do not witness, they will tell you it is fear of rejection or looking bad. Well first, we suggest that if this is an issue with you then you need to have a compassion for the lost. These poor souls are headed for eternal punishment. The world tells us there is no Hell, or we are already in it. The Bible tells us that when Jesus comes He will divide the sheep from the goats. The sheep that are blessed by the Father will go to the kingdom. The goats, on the other hand, that were not righteous and that we are so afraid to talk to, He will say

Matthew 25:41b _____ “...Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:”

This is PUNISHMENT FOREVER AND EVER! Hell is spoken about or referred to about 400 times in the New Testament. God has made it clear. You may think that it is bold to walk up to someone and speak about the Gospel. We strongly suggest that you read Foxe's book of martyrs. You will never feel the same about standing up for your faith in Jesus and His Gospel again.

Who do we witness to?

As you can see from "why witness" that the answer is "everyone in the world." This is a pretty tall order but with God on our side, it can be done. During this class, we will address ways to reach people all around the world but the focus will be on the “world next door.” This would include friends, relatives, neighbors, coworkers, or anyone that you love.

Galatians 5:14 NKJV _____ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*”

Yes, Jesus did give us a tall order when He said to reach everyone in the world, but He would not have done that without giving us the ability. The Internet has become a very powerful way to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to people thousands of miles away as well as in the next town. For some very powerful ideas on Web Evangelism, visit our World Wide Witnessing pages at www.stonetablets.org/www.htm.

A Great witnessing memory verse:

John 3:16 NKJV _____ “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.”



Using God's Law

Law to the proud and grace to the humble.

Week Two Objective

Up until the turn of the century, the Christian Church used the Ten Commandments very heavily in evangelism. This class will explore why and when to effectively use God's Law when witnessing.

Review the Ten Commandments

- I. You shall have no other gods before Me (Exodus 20:1-3)
- II. You shall not make for yourself a graven image (Exodus 20:4-6)
- III. You shall not take God's name in vain (Exodus 20:7)
- IV. Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy (Exodus 20:8-11)
- V. Honor your father and mother (Exodus 20:12)
- VI. You shall not murder (Exodus 20:13)
- VII. You shall not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14)
- VIII. You shall not steal (Exodus 20:15)
- IX. You shall not lie (Exodus 20:16)
- X. You shall not covet (Exodus 20:17)

Why use the Ten Commandments?

First, it must be stated "...that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law." (Rom. 3:28b). As Paul told the Galatians "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." (Gal 3:24,25).

Psalm 19:7a

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul..."

It can be argued that modern witnessing techniques that do not use the law have produced many false converts. These were outlined by Jesus in the "Parable of the Sower." Too many times a person that has a problem is told by a loving Christian to say the sinner's prayer and Jesus will take care of their problems. They accept Jesus in their mind because of what He can do for them. "Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble." (Mark 4:17b)

Peace and joy are most certainly fruits of salvation but should not be used as a lure to salvation. The reason for this is that the person will eventually have trials and not feel the peace and joy. If the person came to Christ only for peace and joy, he will be disappointed and disillusioned with Christianity. This will cause him to leave the faith or become unfruitful. The law, when used properly, can show a potential convert that he has sinned against God. He will see that he will be judged on that basis. Therefore, he will come to Christ with a great appreciation for God's mercy and grace. He will know that he will be called to repent. He will be thankful for the salvation he has and not be looking for what God can do for him today.

As you witness you will find that some people will already be convicted by their sins. They believe that they are sinners. In this case, you do not need to present the law. You are free to tell them about the grace of our Lord. On the other hand, you will find that many people do not feel that they are sinners. By the world's standard that's probably true, but we will not be judged by the world's standards but by God's. With the law, we can show them this reality. Paul tells us "...I would not have known sin except through the law..." (Rom. 7:7a). You will find that much of the normal resistance that a person has for the Gospel will disappear when they realize that they have sinned against God and not just man. They will understand that without God's forgiveness they will be judged guilty and will "...go away to everlasting punishment..." (Matt. 25:46a). We must not be afraid to tell sinners about hell. It is real and Jesus speaks about it many times. As Christians, we are to follow in His footsteps and do the same.

Presenting the Ten Commandments

This is an example of a very basic dialog that you may have with a self-righteous person. Simply ask if the person has kept the Ten Commandments. They will most likely say yes. Then go through them:

- Have you ever told one lie (even a "white" lie)? What does that make you? A liar.
- Have you ever stolen something (even if it's small)? What does that make you? A thief.
- Have you ever lusted? Then you have committed adultery of the heart.
- At this point, you can let the seeker know that by his or her own admission that he or she is a lying, thieving, and adulterer at heart and in big trouble.
- On Judgment Day the seeker will be found guilty and end up in Hell!
- Then tell the seeker the Good News. God sent His Son to die on a Roman Cross for you. Jesus took your punishment upon Himself and then rose from the grave--defeating death.

This is a very powerful way of witnessing. We know that God has placed the law on the sinners heart "...the work of the law written in their hearts..." (Rom. 2:15a).

What is the gospel message?

As we have seen, the purpose of the Law is to bring the sinner to an understanding of his or her sin. In some cases, this is not necessary. If a person comes to you already, broken in contrition then you should go right into grace. The gospel message can be summed up by these seven verses:

The Fact of Sin

Romans 3:23 NKJV “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

The Penalty

Romans 6:23 NKJV “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God's Remedy

John 3:3 NKJV “Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

John 14:6 NKJV “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Man's Responsibility

Romans 10:9-11 NKJV “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”

God's Love

2 Cor. 5:15 NKJV “He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”

Revelation 3:20 NKJV “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

A Great witnessing memory verse:

Romans 5:8 NKJV “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”



Tools in Witnessing

"Oh, my friends we are loaded down with countless church activities, while the real work of the church, that of evangelizing the world and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected."

...Oswald J. Smith

Week Three Objective

You can employ in your witnessing many tools. The objective of this class is to review some of these tools. Then to maximize your potential impact we will match your individual personality with the best tools.

The Bible

The Bible is the first and foremost tool in witnessing. There is power in God's Word that no other tool can come close to. One effective way of using the Bible in witnessing is called the "Roman Road." It comprises of three verses that can quickly and completely explain the gospel. These are Romans 3:23, 6:23, and 10:13.

Tracts

Handing out tracts is only one way to use tracts to spread His message and very limiting. At Stone Tablets Ministries, we would like you to use your imagination when using tracts. The Holy Spirit will do the most important part. Your job is simply to get the tract in a person's hand so they can read it. Several people may be used by our Lord to bring a person to Him. Your part may be to place a tract somewhere that the person will find it and start seeking.

Remember to pray that the Holy Spirit give you the boldness that you will need and to guide you to the correct place. Then listen to Him! Here are some ways that you can use to spread His message:

- Bathroom Ministry - We can not think of a better place where you are assured a captured audience. People love to read, especially men, in a restroom. So take advantage of it and give them some good reading material.
- Mail Ministry - Use tracts in business and personal letters, when paying bills (on time), with greeting cards, and in conjunction with holidays. The person on the receiving end will know that someone cares for them. They will soon find out that the person that cares for them is Jesus!
- Service Ministry - Give or leave a tract for someone who has performed a service for you. This could be a sales clerk, a repairman, or a waitress. What better way to leave a tip than one

that can bring salvation! The tract is not meant to replace the tip but to be additional to it. If you are a frequent customer then it will give you an opportunity to witness the next time you see the person.

- Cult Ministry - Walking up to a person that is a member of a cult can be a very difficult thing to do. We would not suggest that you try this until you have spent a great deal of time witnessing and the Lord is guiding you in this direction. You can make a difference without having to go face to face with a cult member. In most libraries, there is a section devoted to gift subscriptions. These are full of cult magazines. You can put a tract in these magazines. There are specialized tracts directed to cults that would be very effective. You can also mail a tract to a local cult place of worship. Remember that God may be working in the heart of the cult member that opens the magazine or receives the tract letter.

Lifestyle

Never forget that you do not witness...you are a witness! You are called to be His light to this dark world. Therefore, you will need to "Live the Life." The life you live will show sinners how Jesus has positively effected your life and they will want the same. On the other hand, if you do not live a godly life it will show.

Testimony

Your personal testimony is an extremely powerful witnessing tool. In today's society people are becoming less interested in whether the Bible is true or not but what it's relevancy to their lives. Many times, we hear about conversions of people that were on the brink of suicide or living lives of extreme sin. This causes many Christians to mistakenly believe that their conversions were not spectacular. This is a fatal mistake because what God has done in their lives is no less a miracle than any other conversion. In truth, very few people are living a life that is that extreme and most will be better able to identify with a typical conversion. A point to remember when giving your testimony is to focus on what God has done for you. Too many testimonies focus on what Satan did and the terrible life lived. This is certainly necessary to "set the stage" but should not be the major part of your testimony.

Bible Study

Offer to read the Bible with the person. This will show that you are truly interested in the person by spending time with the person and will expose him or her to the Word. There are many good Bible study guides. These give you a step by step lesson to complete and are very good for typical study. You can also simply read a book of the Bible. The Gospel of John is a wonderful book to start with. As you read it make sure to ask questions so that he has an understanding of what was read. Once he is hooked on the milk of the Word, he will never let go! Be sure to include an appropriate memory verse in the study. It will give the person something to focus on until the next lesson.

Books

If you sense that a person is seeking to learn more about Christianity, you can give him a book. You can chose between two different types of books. One type of book would be straightforward explaining Christian Christianity. Such as "More Than a Carpenter" by Josh McDowell. This book is for people who are skeptical about Jesus' deity, His resurrection, and His

claims on their lives. The second type would indirectly present the gospel. Such a book is “The Mystery” by Ray Comfort. It is a novel about an American, as he fights for the French resistance.

Hospitality

Hospitality is a vital part of reaching the lost. Today the idea of hospitality is foreign to most people. We meet at a restaurant, theater, or park instead of inviting people to our homes. Sowing true hospitality can quickly differentiate us from non-Christians.

Hebrews 13:1,2 NKJV Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.

When the Bible speaks of hospitality, it is very different from what we do today. Let’s quickly look at principals of old times hospitality.

- The guest is the one that picks where they stay.
- No reservations were needed.
- The guest is the Master of the home.
- The guest is given all of the hosts possessions.
- The host protects the guest.
- The host must put down all hostilities to the guest.
- The guest can leave whenever they want to leave.

This is quite a bit different from today. The essence of this kind of hospitality is to put the other person first. This speaks volumes to an unbelieving world that feels many Christians do not practice what they preach. So, invite a neighbor over for a barbecue and get to know them and their needs.

Internet and WebTracts

We talked in the first lesson about the power of the Internet to reach the lost. To assist you in using the Internet for evangelism we created WebTracts. They work just like paper tracts except that you send them in emails or post them on message boards. You simply add the WebTract address to an email. You can find a listing of WebTracts at www.stonetablets.org/webtracts.htm.

Outreach

This tool is for a group of believers to do together. There are hundreds of ways to reach communities for Christ. Some are painting homes of the elderly and poor, having a fair, Vacation Bible School, bringing food to shut-ins, and showing a Christian movie. A good outreach program should be trying to help people by satisfying a need. Then it should present the gospel in a non-intimidating way.

A Great witnessing memory verse:

John 14:6 NKJV “Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”



Common questions about Christianity

“The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians. . .who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.” dcTalk

Week Four Objective

In this class, we will review several common questions or objections to Christianity. Then present a possible answer to each question. Many times a seeker will ask questions just for the sake of keeping you away from the core issues. These kind of apologetic arguments are sometimes needed but should not be overused. Try to find out the real reason that the seeker is putting off a commitment.

Is Jesus really the Son of God?

We must thank Josh McDowell and C.S. Lewis for a powerful answer to this question. If Jesus is not the Son of God then he must be either a liar or a lunatic. Lets look into the possibility that Jesus was neither the Son of God nor a liar. In that case, He truly believed all the claims that He made. However, if He believed them and was not the Son of God then He would have to have been a lunatic. No one in his or her right mind would make the claims He did and risk death for no gain. When we look at Jesus' life, we can see something special about His character. He was very wise. A lunatic is the opposite of wise. We can find lunatics in asylums who sincerely believe that they are God. This is called "divinity complex" and tend to have the following traits: egotism, narcissism, inflexibility, dullness and inability to understand and love others as they really are and creatively relate to others. This sounds nothing like the personality of Jesus.

Could He have been a liar? He would have then fully known what He was saying about Himself was untrue. He would have deceived His followers on purpose. These are people that He told to trust Him with their eternal destiny. If He could not have fulfilled His claims and knew it, then He was totally evil. In addition, He would have been a fool because it was His claims that caused Him to die on a Roman Cross. As we look at the life of Jesus, we can see that He was not evil but unbelievably good. He was morally impeccable and had all the virtues, soft and hard, tender and tough. Beyond all this is the fact that He lived on the streets, was attacked by mobs of people, cursed and finally died a torturous death for this lie. What would make an evil and selfish liar do that? No one in his or her right mind would go through that for a lie.

Therefore, if He was not a liar or a lunatic then He must be the Son of God. This is very good news for us. The claims that He made were true and this gives us hope.

There are too many Denominations

Many non-Christians look at all the denominations as a sign of poor health of the church. In reality, the opposite is true. As we look at the different denominations, we can see a kind of branch organization. Each denomination takes care of different needs within its community. Some feed the hungry, others start day care centers, and others start Christian schools.

1 Cor. 12:12 NKJV “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.”

The perception is that these denominations do not agree on anything. This is caused by the myriad of doctrinal differences between the churches. The truth is that these differences are not on the core beliefs within the faith. Beliefs such as the virgin birth, Christ’s death on the cross and His resurrection, and salvation by grace are agreed upon by all evangelical Christian churches. A popular phrase to keep in mind is:

In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in everything charity.

Christians are hypocrites

As the old bumper sticker said, “Christians are not perfect, just forgiven.” It is a case of managing expectations of the seeker. They hear us quote “shall not” and expect us to meet this standard every time. We need to be ready to turn the seeker’s attention to the only one that is perfect. People are fickle and will let them down from time to time but Jesus will always be there for them. He cares and will bring them through whatever trial faces them.

Philippians 4:13 NKJV “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

We need to reinforce that we are talking about a relationship with Christ not a group of people. With this understanding, the seeker can look beyond the failures of people and to the real reason for our faith.

There is no God.

Darwinism is taught in just about every public school around the nation. To go along with this teaching must be the "Big Bang Theory" or something like it. Darwinism denies the belief that God created man. If there is no God to create man then therefore He could not create the earth. So anyone that believes in Darwinism must believe in something like the "Big Bang Theory." First let's understand that, like Darwinism, the Big Bang is just a theory. There is no proof at all.

Psalms 14:1a NKJV “The fool has said in his heart, “*There is no God.*”

The Big Bang Theory has one major flaw that can never be overcome. The Big Bang states that particles over time condensed until they grew so dense that they exploded. So let's take one step back. Where did the particles come from? Something had to create them. That question can not be answered without God and is the major flaw in the theory. Something can not come from nothing. All of creation proves that there is a God.

If there is a God then why is there so much suffering?

This question is often asked because of an incorrect belief in who God is and His role in our lives. First it must be understood that we were created for God's purposes. Many look at God in the

same way as the family dog. When we feel like giving him time we do but otherwise we expect him to stay in the corner and leave us alone. Since God created us for His purposes then we have no rights to require anything of Him except what He has promised us. Nowhere has He promised us there will be no suffering in this world.

John 9:1-3 NKJV “Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.”

Secondly, Many times suffering comes down to perspective. Our understanding of time and circumstances is very limited. A young child dies and we see his parents suffering over the death. What we do not see is the possibility that the child two years later may have been kidnapped and died a far worse death. We do not know the future but we must believe that God does and that His plan is perfect.

Lastly, we know that there was no suffering before sin entered the world. The fall of man is the reason for sin and therefore much of the suffering we see. Therefore, we can not blame God for something that we through Adam brought upon ourselves. Fortunately God saw this and gave us a way out of this world through His one and only son Jesus. Suffering was not foreign to Him. He suffered greatly and died on a Roman cross for our sins.

The Bible was written by men and it is full of contradictions.

The first thing to do when someone tells you this is to hand the person a Bible. Then ask to be shown one contradiction. Many people have heard there are contradictions but none know where they are. This is because there are none. Although apparent contradictions do exist and can be easily explained.

2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”

One such apparent contradiction is how Matthew and Luke disagree on when the Transfiguration took place.

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. (Matthew 17:1,2 NKJV)

Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe *became* white *and* glistening. (Luke 9:28,29 NKJV)

As you can see, Matthew states six days and Luke eight days (Underline added). Now we know that Matthew is writing from a first person perspective since he was there and Luke compiled his information from eyewitness stories. The important part to notice is the word "about" in Luke's version. Luke is not claiming exact knowledge of the day.

Both are true but one is more exact to the day. People looking at this kind of contradiction are missing the glory of the Transfiguration. Many apparent contradictions focus on such unimportant issues. With a little thought and research, each can be easily explained.

A Great witnessing memory verse:

Romans 8:28 NKJV “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God,
to those who are the called according to His purpose.”



Cults and World religions - Part One

Mohammad: "My teachings lead to attainment of truth." Buddha: "The truth has been revealed to me." Jesus: "I am the truth."

Week Five Objective

To introduce the student to the fundamental difference between Christianity and other religions. Then examine the beliefs of the major world religions and cults.

Should Christianity be the only religion in the United States?

The writers of this document believe that all the religions or organizations including the ones mentioned in this document have the freedom to express their beliefs. This freedom of religion is an important right of living in the United States and one that should be defended. Our purpose in this document is to compare orthodox Christianity to other religions and point out differences. Our hope is that by knowing differences we can help Christians when they present the Gospel to members of other religions.

What makes Christians different from other religions?

Religions are greatly defined by what they profess to believe in. These beliefs define and give direction for their followers. As Christians, we believe in many truths as they are revealed in the Bible. Two of these truths are central to the Christian faith and are found together in no other religion. These are:

1. **The deity of Jesus Christ.**
2. **Salvation is by the grace of God and not by our own effort or works.**

By looking at these two truths, you can quickly see if a person or a group of people believes in Christian beliefs. These two truths are often denied or distorted by other religions.

The importance of knowing other religions.

When sharing your faith with a non-Christian you will normally meet up with two types of resistance. The first is the person that believes in nothing. There is no Creator and everything just happened by chance. This person has no preconceived idea of God and needs to be witnessed to from the point of creation. This was addressed in the last class. The second type will be a person that believes that he or she already knows the truth about God. You will need to know what that person believes to be able to better tell them the Good News of Jesus Christ. Be aware that the person may use the same words that you use with an entirely different meaning. Please see appendix A for the comparison chart to see the differences.

Review of each religion

ISLAM - NUMBER TWO AND GROWING

Islam is the second largest religion in the world. Some reports show that Islam is growing faster in the United States than Christianity. Islam means "submission." The people of Islam known as Muslims believe that a man named Muhammad was a Prophet of God. They believe that God revealed many truths to Muhammad. These revelations were recorded and made into a book that we now call the Koran (Qur'an). Central to their faith are the practices the "Five Pillars." Each of these "pillars" must be done by all true Muslims.

The first pillar, the shahadah: (sha-HA-deh) "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet." This is a confession of faith.

The second pillar, the salah: (se-Lah) Five times a day, seven days a week, every faithful Muslim locates the direction of Mecca and prays to Allah.

The third pillar, the sawm: (see-YAM) This is fasting which includes abstinence. It is done from sunrise to sunset for the entire month of Ramadan. This is the month that Muhammad received the Qur'an from Gabriel.

The forth pillar, zakat: Muslims are expected to set aside 2.5 percent of their earnings for the Islamic community.

The fifth pillar, hajj: (haj) Once during the life of a Muslim, they are expected to make a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Witnessing Tip The Muslim relies very heavily on good works done here on earth. This is because Allah is not a personal God that cares about his people. The Muslim has no insurance of salvation but has to hope that he or she is in favor with Allah at death. Many Muslim's have no concept of a loving God that cares for His people. The Qur'an speaks about Jesus Christ but He is just a Prophet. This can still give you an opening to teach about a character in the Qur'an. You can show how the prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus and how He died for all of our sins.

HINDUISM - MANY GODS

Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world. It is also one of the oldest religions, reaching back to 3000 BC. Hinduism believes in many gods and has no central founder such as Jesus. They follow no single Scripture like the Bible. With no central founder or Scripture, Hinduism is able to change to meet new ideas and challenges. Along the way, they adopted the idea of gurus to teach the central idea of Hinduism. This central idea is the oneness of a universal truth that is present everywhere and binds all things together.

Reincarnation or samsara is also commonly taught by these gurus. The belief is that there is a continuous cycle of birth and rebirth of a soul through different lifetimes. Each lifetime is spent trying to work out a transgression of a past life. The goal of the Hindu is to break out of this endless cycle of life and death. This can be done by yoking or uniting with Brahman who is the

eternal being of Hinduism. Yoga is the method used to unite with Brahman. Of course, the Bible denounces reincarnation.

Hebrews 9:27 NKJV “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”

Witnessing Tip Reincarnation and yoga have become very popular in the West in recent years. In the West Reincarnation is thought of as a way to better one's self from life to life and yoga a means for relaxation. As we can see both have their roots in Hinduism. Unlike in the West, the Hindu looks at reincarnation as a terrible punishment and something to escape. They do this by calling on Hindu gods through the same yoga performed in the West today. Yoga is the doorway to Hinduism that many professing Christians have walked through. You can show the seeker how believing in reincarnation is opposite of the teachings in the Bible and how calling on other gods for peace is walking away from the true peace found only in Jesus Christ.

BUDDHISM - THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

About 563 BC a baby named Siddhartha was born to King Suddhodana. A hermit named Asita allegedly had a vision about this baby. The Buddhist Promoting foundation states the prophesy in this way:

This Prince, if he remains in the palace, when grown up, will become a great King and subjugate the whole world. But if he forsakes the court life to embrace a religious life, he will become a Buddha, the Savior of the world.

In hearing this prophesy, King Suddhodana decided to never let Siddhartha leave the walled city. Years later, the young prince did find his way out of the city to see the people. What he found was evil and suffering. He was never the same and looked to find the answer of why there was so much suffering. He searched for the "truth" through self-denial. He would eat very little such as grass or a single grain of rice each day. He did not learn the meaning of life but he did learn that self-denial nor the extravagant living of a prince would bring him nearer to "truth." Therefore, he figured the better path would be the Middle Way. He then meditated under a fig tree where he allegedly saw an "infinite succession of deaths and births in an ever-flowing stream of life." This is samsara or reincarnation from Hinduism. He then continued to meditate until he obtained the knowledge of how to escape from samsara. When he was finished he became the "awakened one" - the Buddha. To escape samsara and reach nirvana you must follow a journey, which is outlined in his Four Noble Truths.

The First Noble Truth - Every dimension of life is saturated with pain.

The Second Noble Truth - The cause of suffering is desire, craving is due to ignorance.

The Third Noble Truth - The way out of suffering is to disengage oneself completely from the false desires of the temporary self.

The Fourth Noble Truth - The Eightfold Path. The path consists of these eight -branches of life: Right Views, Right Aspirations, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

Witnessing Tip Buddhism is growing in the West and is becoming a part of our everyday life. We can see it in movies, commercials, and in many books. The most obvious impact that Buddhism has had is by the way of Martial Arts. Zen Buddhists created many of these Martial Arts and much of their philosophy is taught during the class. All Martial Arts focus on three areas. These are Body, Mind, and Spirit. The spiritual part is often not discussed in the lower levels but becomes very important as the person moves up in ranks. In addition many of the rituals are an abomination to God such as bowing down to a picture of a "Master." These pictures typically have a Buddha statue along with the "Master." This is considered respectful but you can easily show from the Bible how this breaks God's second commandment (Exodus 20:4-6). The idea of bowing to a "Master" is not new...please read Daniel 3:8-30.

A Great witnessing memory verse:

Titus 3:5 NKJV “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”



Cults and World religions - Part Two

By the term cult I mean nothing derogatory to any group so classified. A cult, as I defined it, is any religious group which differs significantly in one or more respects as to belief or practice from those religious groups which are regarded as the normative expressions of religion in our total culture. " Dr. Charles Braden

Week Six Objective

To continue the study on the fundamental difference between Christianity and all other religions by examining the beliefs of today's major cults.

MORMONISM - WAS JOSEPH SMITH A PROPHET?

In June of 1998, Robert Stark projected in Christianity Today that Mormonism will become the next world religion, with a membership of 267million by 2080. Stark is an author and University of Washington sociologist. They also stated that in 1997, 318,000 people converted to Mormonism, primarily from Christian groups.

Are Mormons another Christian denomination as they claim? After all they believe in Jesus Christ and He is a central part of their religion. The name of their religion is truly the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS). On the surface, they would appear to be a true denomination that believes in family values, witnessing their faith, and serving the Church. When you peel away, the first layer of the LDS beliefs you find a different religion all together. One major difference is the LDS belief in "Upward progression." This can be seen in this quote from Lorenzo Snow.

“As man is, God once was: as God is, man may become” (Prophet Lorenzo Snow, quoted in Milton R. Hunter, *The Gospel Through the Ages*, 105–106).

Yes, the LDS Church teaches that we can become a god and that God was once a person like us. He has a human body just like ours. Therefore, Jesus is just a child of God like us that has reached the level of Godhood.

As you can see this is not the God or Jesus of the Bible or taught in orthodox Christianity. This is just an example of the differences. There is also the LDS belief in baptism of the dead, that Jesus and Satan were once brothers, God the Father had natural relations with Mary, and the LDS is the only true Church.

Witnessing Tip The most basic truth about Mormonism is that all it's beliefs rise or fall upon whether or not Joseph Smith was a Prophet from God. The Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants were all written by him. They are used as

companions to the Bible. In reviewing these books, it is obvious that they are not inspired by God and therefore should not be used as equals to the Bible. An example of this is in the Book of Mormon. We stated above the Mormons teach that God was once a man. Over time, he changed from being a man to being God. This teaching is in opposition to what the Book of Mormon states in Moroni 8:18:

"For I know that God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity."

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES - POWER IN THE WRITTEN WORD

Jehovah's Witnesses are very well known for their door-to-door preaching. They offer the person answering the door a free Bible study and Watchtower material. This material and the Bible study are of course filled with their unique beliefs. The Watchtower Society is the central controlling power within the organization. The Society publishes all the material that each Witness is required to read and obey its precepts. This includes their own translation of the Bible called the "New World Translation." A Jehovah's Witness is not permitted to read any other information such as tracts or Bibles that are not produced by the Society. This total control makes evangelizing this group very difficult.

The Watchtower Society was started by Charles Taze Russell. He greatly disbelieved in the doctrine of eternal torment and set out to prove all churches that taught this were false. In 1879 he started *The Herald of the Morning* that became today's *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom* magazine. Right from the beginning Russell used printed material to advance his own beliefs and convince people to follow him. Today the Watchtower produces books, tracts, and another magazine called *Awake* to familiarize people with their cause.

This organization has developed many beliefs over the years that contradict the Bible and orthodox Christianity. The most important differences come in the person of Jesus Christ. The Watchtower Society rejects any teaching of the Trinity. To them Jesus Christ was a created being just like us only more important because He was the first of Jehovah's creations. One of the most puzzling points is that the Watchtower claims that Jesus is truly Michael the Archangel. Jehovah just changed Michael for his time on earth and now he is back as Michael in heaven. The belief is hard to grasp for most Christians and not one that a Witness will touch on at first meeting. As you can see, the Watchtower goes through great lengths to denounce the deity of Jesus Christ and therefore differentiate them from orthodox Christianity.

Witnessing Tip One point that the Watchtower uses to differentiate themselves is how they believe Jesus Christ died. A Witness will tell you that Jesus did not die on a cross and that that the cross is a pagan symbol. The Watchtower teaches that Jesus died on an upright torture stick with His hands over His head. If a Witness tells you this then simply, ask him or her to explain John 19:31 to you. This often-overlooked verse is critical in disproving the Watchtower teaching. The verse talks about how the Romans would break the legs of a man on a cross to make him die quicker. The reason for this is that the way a man would die on a cross is that he would slowly suffocate to death. A man on a cross would tire and lean forward. This would cause his chest to constrict so he could not breathe. All he could do is lift up on his legs to catch his breath. With his legs broken he could not do this and would suffocate. Ask the Witness how breaking a man's legs on a torture stick would cause him to die quicker? With his hands over his

head like on a stick, it would not make a difference. It may increase the pain the man is feeling but breaking his legs would not make him die any quicker. Your Witness friend will not have an answer. Then ask him, if the Watchtower is wrong in this area where else could they be wrong?

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE - EVERYTHING IS AN ILLUSION

Christian Science is a very influential organization that was founded by Mary Baker Eddy. Eddy's main writing and the core of this organization's belief are the book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Christian Science like the Watchtower uses publications to spread their beliefs. Their most influential magazine is *The Christian Science Monitor*. This magazine is read by thousands of people every month and is considered by many to be a respected publication. Many Christians are unaware that this magazine carries with it the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy. One such teaching is found on pages 472-473 of *Science and Health*. This is part of the answer to the question "Is there no sin?"

"All reality is in God and His creation, harmonious and eternal. That which He creates is good, and He makes all that is made. Therefore the only reality of sin, sickness, or death is the awful fact that unrealities seem real to human, erring belief, until God strips off their disguise. They are not true, because they are not of God. We learn in Christian Science that all inharmony of mortal mind or body is illusion, possessing neither reality nor identity through seeming to be real and identical. "

As we know from many passages in the Bible such as 1 John 1:10 sin is real. This is just one of the many non-biblical teachings of this group. In addition to their magazine, they have buildings called reading rooms for people to study their teachings. Some of these buildings look like churches to draw unsuspecting seekers to their services.

Witnessing Tip This group like the Mormon religion revolves around their founder. When talking to a member of the Christian Science it is wise to be educated on their beliefs and how they differ from the Bible. Eddy quotes the Bible in her book many times. This makes the Bible an authority to them although her book may supersede anything the Bible states. Many members of the Christian Science religion may not know there are differences. Pointing out these differences is powerful. The idea is to place a question in the mind of the member about the validity of Eddy's teaching.

SCIENTOLOGY - SCIENCE FICTION OR REALITY?

L. Ron Hubbard who was a popular science fiction writer in the 1930's wrote a book in 1950 that has sold like wildfire. The book is named *Dianetics*. Many people may remember the TV commercials with the exploding volcano and the word "DIANETICS" appearing at the top of the screen. From this book, which is now considered scripture, grew the Church of Scientology. They claim that *Dianetics* is "the most widely used and proven effective technology for releasing the minds potential."

Engram's is the key to this group. What are *engram's*? Hubbard tells us that an *engram* is a moment of "unconsciousness" containing physical pain or painful emotion and all perceptions, and is not available to the analytical mind as experience. The *engram* is the single source of aberrations and psychosomatic ills. This group claims to be able to free people from these *engrams* and in doing so bring peace to the person's life. They do this by taking the person back in time even to past lives

when the bad experience happened. This is done in counseling sessions with an "auditor" using a device called the E-meter. The highest condition that most members of this group will try to reach is a state called "CLEAR." Reaching this state can take a long time and be very costly and painful.

The religious part of the Church of Scientology comes from Hubbard's discovery of the "Thetan". They teach that the Thetan is much like a man's spirit and is timeless. It reincarnates in interplanetary life forms until reaching earth as a man. Once on earth it's goal is to break free of the cycle of birth and rebirth. This is much like Hinduism.

Witnessing Tip As you can see, the Church of Scientology beliefs are very different from those of orthodox Christianity. The Bible may not be an authority to a member of this group. Any counseling, such as the counseling done by this group, can have a short-term positive effect on an individual. Without a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the member will eventually be looking for the peace that only God provides. Once that opportunity arrives, you can present the truths of the Gospel. In the mean time you may be free to ask questions such as "Who do you personally know that has reached the state of clear?" or "What is the Thetan and how did Hubbard discover it?". Some newer members may not even know about the teaching of the Thetan.

A Great witnessing memory verse:

1 Cor. 1:18 NKJV "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."



One on One Scenarios

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. (1Peter 3:15-16)

Week Seven Objective

To give each student an opportunity to use the information learned in this course. Break up into small groups of no more than four students each. One student is designated the seeker and the other students in the group will use the witnessing skills learned in this class. Four scenarios should be assigned to each group. Go through each scenario and change the seeker after each scenario.

Scenario One - No God

Your son comes home from school with a friend. He tells you that today they learned about Darwinism in school and how we all came from apes. Your son's friend adds that the earth came from the "Big Bang." He then explains that the earth came into existence one day when there was a big explosion in space. You now need to explain to your son and his friend why they were taught about the big bang theory in school and what the Bible teaches about creation.

Scenario Two - Hinduism

You are in a church meeting where the topic is reaching out to the community. One of the new members that you have been assigned to mentor suggests a Yoga class. He tells everyone how he loves Yoga and how he would be able to bring at least 15 non-Christians to a class each week. Some of the people in the meeting look at you and then end the discussion. Two days later you meet with him one on one. He needs to learn the truth about Yoga and why a Christian could not be honoring God and perform Hindu rituals at the same time.

Scenario Three - Christian Science

You're at your neighbors house and he picks up a magazine. He says that you are kind of a religious person and that you would like this magazine. He has subscribed to it for years now and it has helped him understand life and God. You take the magazine and it is the Christian Science Monitor. He also tells you that he sometimes goes to their church. Then he asks you if you would like to go with him next week. He truly believes that this a Christian church just like yours. You know that you need to tell him the differences so that he can find the true living God.

Scenario Four - Jehovah's Witness

It is a Saturday morning and you just finished breakfast. The doorbell rings, you go to the door to find two nicely dressed men carrying briefcases. They wish you a good morning and tell you that they are going around your neighborhood offering a free Bible study. They have a magazine that they would like you to read about the "New World Order" that Jehovah will bring to earth. These people are lost and need to hear about the love of Jesus Christ.

Scenario Five - Buddhism

A close friend from work invites you over to her house to meet her husband. As you enter, the family room there is a small altar with a picture of an oriental man and a statue of Buddha. You question it and she tells you that her husband is really into Karate. It has changed his life and that she will be starting classes next week. He walks into the room and bows to the picture. He then turns to you, smiles and says hello. Your friend may go to a Christian church but is now moving towards a religion that is foreign to the teaching of Jesus. You know that you need to show her that she is going down a road that will lead to destruction. A few weeks later you go to lunch together and she invites you to Karate class.

Scenario Six - Mormonism

You are sitting watching TV with your Aunt. A commercial comes on the TV talking about family values and offers a free Bible. Your Aunt says that she is going to call that church and get their book. She knows a Mormon family and they are such nice people. One day she would like to see what their church is like. If you do not talk to her now she is very likely going to try their church.

A Great witnessing memory verse:

1 John 4:10 NKJV "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins."

Appendix A

A comparison chart of different religious beliefs.

| Religion | God | Jesus Christ | Sin and Salvation |
|---|---|--|---|
| <i>Christianity</i> | One God that has always existed. | God the Son, Creator of all. | Disobedience to God, the act of breaking His law. Salvation is by grace through faith. |
| <i>Islam</i> | Allah is the only true God. | A prophet of Allah. | All have sinned. Fulfill the five Pillars of the Faith. |
| <i>Hinduism</i> | There are many gods. Each with a different purpose. | A good moral teacher. | Karma is the debt of one's actions. There are three paths to salvation. |
| <i>Buddhism</i> | Buddha rejected subservience to a supreme God. He did not deny the existence of many equal gods. | A good moral teacher. | Karma is the debt of one's actions. Following the Four Noble Truths. Reach Nirvana. |
| <i>Mormons – Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.</i> | There are many gods. God was once a man and man can become a god. | Not the Son of God but God's actual son. Conceived in the same manner as all men. He has achieved Godhood. | All have sinned. Faith in Christ and obedience to the teaching of the Mormon Church. |
| <i>Jehovah's Witnesses</i> | Jehovah is Almighty God. There is no Holy Trinity. | Not God but created by Jehovah. Now is Michael the Archangel in heaven. Returned invisibly in 1914. | Two classes. The 144,000 anointed class and the great crowd. Salvation requires faith in Christ and following Watchtower directives. |
| <i>Christian Science</i> | The Christian Science God is universal, eternal, divine Love, which changes not and causes no evil, disease, nor death. | Jesus is not God. Son of God, a great man inspired by the 'Christ idea.' | Illusion, error, not real. Sin, sickness, and death are to be classified as effects of error. Christ came to destroy the belief of sin. |
| <i>Scientology</i> | Each person attains his own certainty as to who God is and exactly what God means to him. | Neither Lord Buddha nor Jesus Christ reached Operating Thetan (OT), according to the evidence. They were just a shade above clear. | Man is basically good. Salvation is to be free from the endless cycle of rebirth. The way to salvation is to erase engrams though auditing. |

Appendix B

Additional Reading on Witnessing

Colson, Charles. *A Dance with Deception* (Word Publishing)

Colson, Charles. *How Now Shall We Live?* (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.)

Comfort, Ray. *God Doesn't Believe in Atheists* (Bridge-Logos Publishers)

Comfort, Ray. *Hell's Best Kept Secret* (Living Waters Publications)

dc Talk and The Voice of the Martyrs. *Jesus Freaks* (Albury Publishing)

Green, Michael. *Evangelism Through the Local Church* (Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Foxe, John. *The New Foxes Book of Martyrs* (Bridge-Logos Publishers)

Graham, Billy. *The Billy Graham Christian Workers Handbook* (World Wide Publications)

Hybels, Bill. *Becoming a Contagious Christian* (Zondervan Publishing House)

Jeremiah, David. *Invasion of Other Gods* (Word Publishing)

Kennedy, D. James. *The Gate of Hell Shall Not Prevail* (Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Kreeft, Peter. & Tacelli, Ronald K. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (InterVarsity Press)

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity* (Macmillan Publishing Company)

Martin, Walter. *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Bethany House Publishers)

McDowell, Josh. *Evidence that Demands a Verdict Volume I & II* (Thomas Nelson Publishers)

McDowell, Josh. *More Than a Carpenter* (Living Books)

Packer, J.I. *Hot Tub Religion* (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.)

The Internet is also a rich place to find information on witnessing. We would like to suggest that you start your search at the Christian links page on our web site.

www.stonetablets.org/links.htm

Appendix C

Leader's Guide

This seven-week evangelism-training program has been developed for use with small groups, one on one or personal study. Each week's lesson contains three common sections. Each lesson opens with a Bible verse or a quote that applies to that week's lesson. Then the information to be covered that week and finally a memory verse. This continuity from week to week should make learning the material easier.

This program has been designated for the leader to make copies and distribute the material a week ahead of each class. Each student should read the material, learn the memory verse and be prepared to discuss that week's lesson. Sharing of ideas and experiences should be encouraged. The following guidelines have been prepared to assist the leader through each week's lesson.

EACH WEEK

Each class should be opened and closed in prayer. Begin by reading the Bible verse or quote at the top of each lesson. It can be used as an introduction to the class. Highlight main topics from each section of the lesson and look for class participation on each subject. Have each of the students look up each verse in their Bibles. Then talk about how the verse applies to the lesson. This will add power to the lesson and help teach them how to find verses quickly. At the end, ask a volunteer to recite the memory verse for that week from memory. Then ask another to tell the class how the verse can be used in witnessing.

WEEK ONE

This week's class material was deliberately kept short to allow time for getting to know each other. As an ice breaker you can ask each class member to state his or her name, reason for being in the class and to share a witnessing experience. Then ask each student to name one or two people that they would like to reach. Take the names, create a prayer list and ask everyone in the class to pray for everyone on the list for the next six weeks. The three W's of witnessing will give the class a good foundation to build on. The idea of talking about Hell may be hard sounding at first but should be presented in a way that creates compassion for the lost.

WEEK TWO

This may be the most difficult class to teach, especially if you have never used the Law in witnessing. Be assured that it works and as the lesson teaches, it is very Biblical. You may want to start by asking if anyone can name the Ten Commandments. You may find that 6, 8, and 10 are commonly known. The first two are almost never given. This will lead you into reviewing all the commandments. When discussing the reasons to use the Law in witnessing you should emphasize that the Law is for the self-righteous and not for someone that already understands that he or she is a sinner. The presenting the Law dialog section should be done with an attitude of love otherwise it could sound very harsh. Many Christians have heard of the gospel but do not know exactly what it is. To help everyone have a clear understanding of the gospel we close with seven verses that when put together reveals the Good News.

WEEK THREE

In this week, we explain nine tools that can be used in witnessing. Visual examples can be very powerful in this lesson. You can hand out some tracts that the class members can use during the next few weeks. The testimony section will give you an opportunity to give your testimony. This could help to bring you closer to everyone in the group. Spend some time in the hospitality section. Hospitality is becoming a lost art that needs to be brought back if we are going to reach our neighbors and friends.

WEEK FOUR

When witnessing they will surely encounter one of these six common questions about Christianity. We tried to answer each question in as simple a way as possible without using many Christian terms. Each is a good example of how to explain why we believe what we believe. You may want to assign a question or two to each class member and have them explain the answer to the class. Then open the floor to anyone who has been asked the question and share how they handled it.

**WEEKS FIVE
AND SIX**

Having knowledge of Cults and World religions is critical to any Christian that will be witnessing his or her faith. First, so they do not become confused and believe that the cult may be right in some area. Cult members are very well educated and can be very persuasive. Secondly, so that they can explain the differences between the seekers beliefs and orthodox Christianity. These differences, when explained correctly, can often lead the seeker to question his or her current belief.

Be sure to talk about freedom of religion if you live in the United States or any country that provides such a freedom. Visual aids are again powerful in this area. It would be helpful if you have a copy of any of their sacred books such as the Koran or Book of Mormon. They can usually be found at a used bookstore for a nominal fee. Review each "Witnessing Tip" in detail and be sure to highlight how each religion is being practiced today in the West.

WEEK SEVEN

This is where the rubber meets the road. In this lesson, we review each of the previous six weeks lessons by allowing each student to use what they have learned. Each person in the group should take turns being the seeker and then the witness. You may want to allow the other members in the group to help the witness if asked. As the leader you should go from group to group and answer any questions the students may have. You may want to start by doing one yourself so everyone can see how it is done. Most importantly is to have fun with it. We provide six scenarios but feel free to write your own that may apply to the area that you live in.