



Life Group discussion guide is a little different from normal this week. As a follow up to Sunday's talk, this week you'll be challenged to share your story of how you came to know Jesus. In this study guide you'll find 3 points to help guide you through the process of sharing about the Peace we have in Christ. This is great practice for to sharing the truth of Jesus with a friend.

Life Group Discussion Guide

Talk Title: "Powerful Patience"

When Jesus walked the earth, he took ordinary guys and showed them how to be evangelists—fishers of men. Today, through the power of the Holy Spirit, ordinary people are still spreading the Good News about Jesus. And just like 2,000 years ago, it's not always easy. Still, every follower of Christ is called to share the Gospel. Here are some ways to get started.

1. Identify your mission field. (It may be closer than you think!)

Have you ever heard the expression, "Bloom where you're planted"? That's what God wants us to do with the Gospel—make the most of our circumstances and reflect His love to everyone around us. You don't have to be a pastor or missionary to tell people about Jesus, either; just think of all the people around you in need of hope.

Psalm 96:3 tells us to "Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!" Keep your eyes open for people you can talk to and ways you can connect the conversation with Christ. Catch up with a family member by phone or text message. Use social media to encourage a friend. Let a coworker know you are praying for him or her. Take dinner to a neighbor in need. Ask a cashier how their day is going and really listen. Be intentional about forming relationships with people around you.

One more tip, and this is a biggie: Don't underestimate the power of prayer. As Billy Graham once said, "Prayer is crucial in evangelism: ... No matter how logical our arguments or how fervent our appeals, our words will accomplish nothing unless God's Spirit prepares the way."

2. Focus on the Gospel.

Billy Graham has said, "I do not have to make the Gospel relevant; it is always relevant in any part of the world ... [and] I must get the whole Gospel in [every] sermon."

The Gospel has power to transform lives. If you're short on time and want to explain the Good News in a nutshell, share John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

There are also things you can do to *show* your faith over time:

- Live a consistent, Christ-centered life.

- Be a friend and a good listener.
- The Holy Spirit gives us power to share the Gospel (Acts 1:8). Pray He will give you opportunities to share your faith.
- Avoid arrogance and preachiness.

Remember, we're all sinners in need of a Savior. Try to see people as God sees them—as treasured creations made in His image and loved unconditionally. When we see others that way, we will want to follow God's command to share the hope of the Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20).

3. Share true stories of God's power.

No matter how "ordinary" yours may seem, we've all got a story to tell and you never know what it can mean to someone until you share it. Jesus often talked in parables so people could better grasp God's plans, instructions and power. In the same way, you can use personal experiences and stories to relate to others and tell them about Christ.

Keep in mind, though, that most people will only give you a few minutes to get your point across. So you don't ramble on and on, try writing down your story—focusing on a few key points. Ask God to give you guidance as you write (James 1:5-6). These questions may also help you narrow your testimony down to three minutes or so:

- What was life like before you accepted Christ?
- How did you receive Christ? What did you hear? How did you respond? Why did you choose to put your trust in Christ? Try to mention a Bible verse or two, but be careful not to overwhelm your listener.
- How has life changed since accepting Christ? It's OK if you stumbled or struggled in the past. The important thing is to be honest and relatable here.

Life Group discussion: Tell your story of how you came to know Jesus. This is great practice for that opportunity you have been praying for to share the truth of Jesus with a friend.

*This study guide has been adapted from Billy Graham's "3 Keys to Sharing Your Faith."
billygraham.org/story/3-keys-to-sharing-your-faith

For Further reading on how to share your faith:

4 Simple Steps

To share the Gospel, you can follow these 4 simple steps:

1. Tell them about God's plan—peace and life. God loves you and wants you to experience the peace and life He offers. 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" (John 3:16). He has a plan for you.

2. Share our problem—separation from God. Being at peace with God is not automatic. By nature, we are all separated from Him. The Bible says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). God is holy, but we are human and don't measure up to His perfect standard. We are sinful, and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

3. Talk about God's remedy—the cross. God's love bridges the gap of separation between you and Him. When Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the grave, He paid the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, "'He Himself bore our sins' in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by His wounds you have been healed'" (1 Peter 2:24).

4. Our response—receive Christ. You cross the bridge into God's family when you accept Christ's free gift of salvation. The Bible says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).

To receive Christ, a person needs to do 4 things:

- Admit you're a sinner.
- Ask forgiveness and be willing to turn away from your sins.
- Believe that Christ died for you on the cross.
- Receive Christ into your heart and life.

Romans 10:13 says, “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” Here’s a prayer you can pray to receive Christ:

“Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I trust and follow you as my Lord and Savior. Guide my life and help me to do your will. In your name, amen.”

5 things to remember

Gary Cobb, a BGEA staff member who helps train others to share their faith, shares five things to remember.

1. Understand that your own life is a great part of your witness. If my relationship with Christ isn’t vital, then I really don’t have a lot to share. People not only listen to your words, they look at your life. We still fail and aren’t always a good example, so our only hope is to come to God and surrender to Him. It’s nothing that we can do. It’s God’s work.

2. Realize that we earn the right to be heard by sincerely listening to others. Everyone has a story. You can’t just blunder into a situation and callously share without listening. The Bible says that Jesus was a friend of sinners. That’s our example—to be a friend, to listen to people, see where they are, and then take them where they need to go.

3. Recognize that people are looking for a cure. When you go to the doctor, you don’t say, “I have cancer.” Instead, you describe your symptoms. That’s where most people live. They only see symptoms. “I’m lonely. I’m suffering from a broken relationship. I’m stressed. There’s darkness within me that I don’t know what to do with.” How do we share Christ with someone who is overwhelmed with their symptoms? We know the ultimate cure. It’s Jesus Christ. Jesus didn’t die for their symptoms. He died for their sins. Yet, people don’t wake up in the morning and think, “You know, I need to accept Jesus.” They wake up with the symptoms, and so as

people who are attempting to rescue those who are lost, we need to start with their symptoms, show them the disease (sin), and take them to the ultimate cure (Jesus).

4. Keep it simple. The Gospel is already simple. Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again. We need to turn away from the things that are wrong in our lives, and accept what Jesus did on the cross for us and receive Him as Lord. Don't complicate it. So many times we throw in things like our denomination or other doctrines or we use religious terms that a lot of people don't understand. We end up confusing them and creating barriers. Explain the Gospel in a way that people can understand.

5. Stress the love of God. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (NIV). It starts with love, and that's where we need to start. Ultimately, we have to explain that we're all sinners and have violated God's standards, and, because of that, there is a judgment. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23, NIV). But don't start with that. People know they've done a lot of wrong things, but they first need to hear that God is still open to forgiving them.

