

LESSON 3

The Mission of Evangelism

What images or mental concepts come to mind when you hear the word evangelism? Do you envision a flamboyant, outgoing person who can lead people to the Lord on the spot? Or do you fear it may mean being required to go door-to-door sharing your faith with whoever answers, and all the time silently praying that no one will come to the door? Maybe you think of what happens at the end of a church service when the speaker gives an invitation for people to come forward and receive Christ. Perhaps you even remember seeing an evangelist on television or at your local church.

If this is your understanding of the ministry of evangelism, it is a one-sided understanding at best. Evangelism is a more multifaceted ministry than that. It is not a calling limited to a few specially gifted persons. Nor is it a ministry confined to the walls of the church building. And it is certainly not something to be feared. This lesson is designed to help you understand this vital ministry and discover effective ways to engage in evangelism.

LESSON OUTLINE

Defining Evangelism
The Biblical Mandate for Evangelism
The Spiritual Condition of the Lost
Sharing the Gospel
Your Personal Testimony
The Holy Spirit, the Bible, and Prayer in Evangelism
Common Objections to the Gospel
Winning Others to Christ

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. *Define what evangelism is.*
2. *Explain the biblical mandate for evangelism.*
3. *Describe the spiritual condition of the lost.*
4. *Develop a plan for sharing the Gospel message.*
5. *Write your personal testimony.*
6. *Explain the roles of the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and prayer in evangelism.*
7. *Summarize the common objections to the Gospel.*
8. *Devise a strategy for winning others to Christ.*

Defining Evangelism

Objective 1:

Define what evangelism is.

One of the words used most often in the New Testament to define the message of the Gospel is the Greek word, *euaggelion*, which means “good news.” We get the word evangelism from this Greek word. *Euaggelion* is also translated “gospel.”

To be engaged in evangelism then means to announce or share or bring the good news of the Gospel. An evangelist is

someone who devotes his or her life to proclaiming the gospel to the lost. In Scripture, Philip is identified as an evangelist: “Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven” (Acts 21:8). In Ephesians 4:11, evangelism is identified as one of the ministry gifts of the Spirit: “It was he [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.”

The gift of evangelism is the special ability and desire God gives certain members of the Body to 1) share the gospel with unbelievers in such a way that they become followers of the Lord Jesus, and 2) become responsible members of the Body. Evangelism is the primary ministry gift needed to produce church growth by conversion, and not merely biological or transfer growth. The basic purpose of the gift of evangelism is to initiate and develop relationships with the lost in order to share the salvation message and lead them to repentance from sin to eternal life in Christ. Evangelism is not only an enlargement gift but also an enabling gift. The evangelist is also responsible to equip the saints for ministry (Ephesians 4:12.)

Church growth author Donald McGavran has identified several levels of evangelism needed to reach different groups of people.

1. **E-0:** Evangelism is needed to win church-goers to Christ. It produces internal growth.
2. **E-1:** Evangelism is needed to win those of our own culture to Christ. It, too, produces internal growth.
3. **E-2:** Evangelism is needed to reach those who are slightly different from us. It produces cross-cultural evangelism.
4. **E-3:** Evangelism is needed to reach those vastly different from us. It produces bridging growth.

Jesus’ words to His followers in Acts 1:8 illustrate these levels of evangelism:

- Jerusalem and Judea (Acts 3): E-0 and E-1
- Samaria (Acts 8): E-2
- Ends of the earth (Acts 13): E-3

Cross-cultural evangelism (E-2 and E-3) requires the missionary gift. Missionaries are those who are called and sent out with a burden to reach people belonging to different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The purpose of this gift is to advance the Great Commission by extending the local church on a worldwide basis. In Ephesians 3:7, the apostle Paul declared that he had received this gift from God: “I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power.”

The Biblical Mandate for Evangelism

Objective 2:

Explain the biblical mandate for evangelism.

God has always wanted people to know Him and enter into a relationship with Him. It was His desire that the early patriarchs and later the children of Israel be witnesses for Him. Isaiah writes, “You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me” (Isaiah 43:10). “Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses” (Isaiah 44:8). David was a faithful witness for God. Through the prophet Isaiah, God said of him, “See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples” (Isaiah 55:4).

In the New Testament, the focus shifted to Jesus and His followers. At Jesus’ birth, the angel said to Joseph, “Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:20). Jesus on numerous occasions declared His intention to fulfill God’s plan of salvation. “My food,’ said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34). And in Mark 10:45, He said, “The Son of Man did not come to be

served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” He left that same commission with His followers. “He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation’” (Mark 16:15). Matthew 28:19–20 reads, “‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’” Luke records the same commission in Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The apostle Paul writes, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Romans 1:16). Looking into the future John the Revelator said this of Christ’s victorious witnesses,

“Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:
‘Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.’” (Revelation 12:10–11)

It has been and still is God’s plan that His people, first the Israelites and then the church, take the good news of the gospel to the world. His heart of love for the lost can be seen in 2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” While some believers are gifted in evangelism, all of us are called to be Christ’s witnesses (see Acts 1:8).

The Spiritual Condition of the Lost

Objective 3:

Describe the spiritual condition of the lost.

The Bible uses the following terms to describe the spiritual condition of the lost:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Scripture Reference</u>
Lost sheep	Isaiah 53:6; Jeremiah 50:6; Luke 15:3–10; 1 Peter 2:25
Perishing	Proverbs 24:11; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:10
Hopeless	1 Chronicles 29:15; Job 18:13; Ephesians 2:12
Slaves to sin	Romans 6:6, 16, 19, 20; Galatians 4:8; 2 Peter 2:19
Aliens, foreigners, pagans	Jeremiah 5:19; Ephesians 2:12, 19; 1 Thessalonians 4:5
In darkness	Psalms 107:10; Proverbs 4:19; John 3:19; Acts 26:18; Romans 1:21; Ephesians 4:18; Colossians 1:13
Enemies of God	Genesis 3:15; Romans 8:7; James 4:4; Hebrews 10:27
Depraved, fools	Proverbs 1:7; Jeremiah 4:22; Romans 1:21, 28; Philippians 3:19; 1 Peter 4:3
Blind	Deuteronomy 28:28; 1 Samuel 2:23; Job 11:20; Psalm 36:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4
Dead	Ephesians 2:1, 2:4; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 John 3:14; Jude 12
Old man, nature	Galatians 5:24; Ephesians 2:3; 4:22; Colossians 3:3, 5, 9

These terms tell us that humankind was hopelessly lost, with no clue of how lost they were and no inclination or ability to do anything about it. God's salvation would be purely a work of mercy and grace. There would be no opportunity for anyone to boast or take credit for his or her spiritual rescue.

Sharing the Gospel

Objective 4:

Develop a plan for sharing the Gospel message.

Success in sharing your faith requires a plan. Any plan for sharing the message of the Gospel must include these key facts: 1) We are sinners and deserve the punishment of death; 2) God loved us and made full provision through Christ for our salvation; 3) We must believe in what Jesus Christ did on the Cross to save us; 4) We must admit our need of a Savior, repent of our sins, and ask God to save us. Numerous plans have been developed over the years that incorporate these basic elements, although not always in the same order or sequence. We will now take a brief look at three helpful plans.

Billy Graham's "Steps to Peace with God"

- **Step 1** – Describe God's Purpose: Peace and Life—God loves you and wants you to experience peace and abundant life (See Romans 5:1; John 3:16; John 10:10).
- **Step 2** – Describe Man's Biggest Problem: Our Separation from God—God created us in His own image to have an abundant life. He gave us a will and a freedom of choice. We chose to disobey God and go our own willful way. We still make this choice today. This result in separation from God (See Proverbs 14:12; Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23; 6:23).
- **Step 3** – Describe God's Bridge: The Cross—Jesus Christ died on the Cross and rose from the grave. He paid the penalty for our sin and bridged the gap between God and people (See Romans 5:8; 1 Timothy 5:2; 1 Peter 3:18).

- **Step 4** – Describe Our Response: Receive Christ— We must trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and receive Him by personal invitation (See John 1:12; Romans 10:9–10; Revelation 3:20).

Campus Crusade for Christ's "Four Spiritual Laws"

- **First Spiritual Law** – God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life. Why is it that most people are not experiencing the abundant life?
- **Second Spiritual Law** – Man is sinful and separated from God, who is holy. Therefore, man cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life. A great gulf separates man from God. The third law explains the only way to bridge this gulf.
- **Third Spiritual Law** – Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life. It is not enough just to know these three laws.
- **Fourth Spiritual Law** – We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives. You can receive Christ right now by faith through prayer.

The following is a suggested prayer seekers can use.

"Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of my life, and make me the person You want me to be."

The "Romans Road" based on four verses from the book of Romans

- Romans 3:23: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- Romans 5:8: "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- Romans 10:9–10: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that

God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

It is sometimes best to use only one verse of Scripture in explaining the plan of salvation to young children or persons who know nothing about the Bible. You may want to devise your own plan for sharing the message of salvation. The ideas above will assist you in including those elements that are essential to an accurate presentation of the Gospel.

Your Personal Testimony

Objective 5:

Write your personal testimony.

Jesus told the man out of whom He had cast a legion of demons, “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you” (Mark 5:19). One powerful way to share the message of the Gospel is to tell the story of your own salvation experience. Your personal testimony is simply a matter of telling how Jesus changed your life. The testimony will include these three key elements:

1. “Before I met Christ, my life was...” Describe what your life was like before you became a Christian.
2. “When I met Christ, here is how my life changed...” Explain how things changed when you received Christ into your life.
3. “Since I met Christ, my life has been...” Tell what your life is like now that you are a Christian. How have things changed since you came to Christ?

You will be able to tell your story better if you take time to write it out first. Doing this will insure that you include the highlights (and low lights) of your life and will give you more confidence as you share your story. One effective way to use your written testimony is to give copies of it to unsaved friends and ask them to

critique it for you. Ask them to note any thoughts that are unclear to them and encourage them to offer suggestions that would better express your ideas. Tell them you will check with them in a few days to get their reaction to what you have written. Doing this could help you improve what you have written and open opportunities for you to respond to questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

The Holy Spirit, the Bible, and Prayer in Evangelism

Objective 6:

Explain the roles of the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and prayer in evangelism.

Fortunately, leading people to Christ is not entirely dependent upon us as Christians. Certainly, we do need to open our mouths and share the Good News, but let us consider three other important aspects of soul-winning.

The Holy Spirit in Evangelism

We have already explained that there is nothing we can do to save ourselves. It is all a work of God's grace and power as the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins and brings us to the place where we recognize our need of the Savior. John writes, "When he [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8). John 6:44 notes we cannot even come to the Lord for salvation unless the Holy Spirit draws us. It is the Holy Spirit who regenerates and renews us: "He [Christ] saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

The Holy Spirit also gives us power to continue to live for Christ. "Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). And someday the Holy Spirit will energize our bodies and enable us to live with Christ through all

eternity. Paul affirms, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you” (Romans 8:11).

The Bible in Evangelism

Ephesians 2:8–9 says that we are saved by faith. And Romans 10:17 teaches that “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” This message of good news is found in the Bible. Any Gospel presentation must clearly show that the truths of God’s Word are the basis for our salvation. When explaining to people how to be saved, have them read a verse or two from the Bible so they will know their experience is based on faith in the Word of God and not just on their feelings. Second Peter 3:18 encourages us to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

The Role of Prayer in Evangelism

Focused prayer prepares the way for people to hear and receive the salvation message. The apostle Paul made this request of his readers, “Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should” (Ephesians 6:19–20). Believers can also pray that conviction will accompany the presentation of the Gospel.

If a repentant sinner wants to become saved, he or she must ask God to save him or her. In his sermon on the Day of Pentecost the apostle Peter said, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Acts 2:21). To call on the Lord means to pray to Him. No special language or tone of voice is necessary for Him to hear us. Encourage someone wanting to receive Christ to speak to God out loud, asking Him to save and forgive. If possible, try to get the person to pray in his or her own words, rather than following you in a repeat-after-me prayer. Personally praying will help the seeker know he

or she can pray to God anytime and anywhere, without mimicking someone else.

Common Objections to the Gospel

Objective 7:

Summarize the common objections to the Gospel.

Some people are not interested in receiving Christ because they have questions or objections to the Gospel message. Here are a few examples.

- Some people think they will get to heaven because of their good works. They believe that if they have done enough good things in their lifetime, these will cancel out any bad things they have done. However, Ephesians 2:8–9 says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” When talking with those who believe this way, you may ask the following questions: How good would you have to be for a perfect, holy God to let you into heaven? Is it possible for you to be that good? Explain that if we could enter heaven by any other means God would never have sacrificed His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Some people believe that a loving God would never send anyone to hell and that everyone will be saved and go to heaven. Jesus himself said this regarding those who think this way, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (John 3:18). Ask such people if they really believe that unrepentant murderers, child molesters, or dictators like Adolph Hitler will be saved. If they say, “no,” point out that they really do not believe everyone will be saved. If they say, “yes,” ask if they would want to spend eternity with these kinds of people.

- Some believe it is not possible to know if we will make it to heaven. Here is what the Bible says about those who think this way: “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory” (Romans 8:17). “Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God” (1 Peter 1:21).
- Some people believe it is not necessary to be saved since they do not believe in life after death. Regarding this the Bible says, “Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). To not believe in eternity does not make it cease to exist any more than not believing in the power of electricity makes it any less potent if you come in contact with an exposed wire.

Winning Others to Christ

Objective 8:

Devise a strategy for winning others to Christ.

Here are several things to keep in mind as you consider how to lead people to the Lord:

Relationships

The majority of people who come to Christ do so as a result of the encouragement and influence of a friend or family member. Those you want to reach with the Gospel will be more responsive if they already know and trust you as a friend. So look for ways to establish and strengthen your relationship with those you want to lead to Christ.

Common Interests

When Jesus spoke with the woman at the well in John 4, He began with something she was interested in—water. From there, He led her to knowledge of

himself as God's Messiah. The same will be true of your efforts to bring people to Christ. Those with whom you already share a common interest will be more likely to listen to you talk about the Lord than those with whom you have little in common. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you find those points of interest from which you can lead into a conversation about the Lord.

Change and Crisis

People are sometimes most receptive to the Gospel when they are going through transitions, such as moving to a new community, changing jobs, getting married, beginning a family, and so on. Another time of receptivity is when they are experiencing a crisis or have a special need, such as an unexpected death, illness or injury, loss of a job, divorce, or financial need. While you do not want to take unfair advantage of them during this crisis, it is a good time to offer spiritual help and comfort, which may lead to an opportunity to share Christ with them.

The Setting

Think of the setting in which you will be with the people you want to win to Christ. What topics of conversation are likely to come up? What common interests could you begin with? What needs are they experiencing? Ask the Lord to keep you alert to opportunities to share the Gospel and also to prepare the soil to receive the seed of the message of salvation.

Discipleship

The best time to begin discipling new believers is immediately after they have received Christ into their lives. You can begin this process by helping them:

- 1) Understand their need to pray on a daily basis.
- 2) Begin reading the Bible. Suggest they start with one of the Gospels, maybe Mark's.
- 3) Tell someone what has happened to them. If possible arrange for them to talk with someone who will be excited and supportive about their new-found faith, before they have to tell someone who may not be as understanding.

Teamwork and Process

Evangelism is a process and not just the effort or responsibility of a single person. In 1 Corinthians 3:6–7, Paul writes of this progression: “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.” It is not your job, nor within your ability, to get anyone saved. Only God can do that. So do not get discouraged if everything does not happen as outlined in this lesson.

Compile a List of People You Want to Reach with the Gospel

You are more likely to be successful if you concentrate your evangelism efforts on a list of specific people. Besides, there are probably some people you are especially desirous to see come to Christ, such as members of your family and close friends. So start your list with these special people. You may also include some people you work with or do business with, neighbors, casual acquaintances, and classmates. As you compile your list, note the common interests you have with each. Begin praying earnestly for each person on your list, asking God to open his or her heart to the truth of the Gospel and to give you wisdom and courage in sharing Christ.

Conclusion

As you actively share your faith, you will experience deep joy. Sure, you will face rejection from time to time as some people may insult you. Remember, they are not so much rejecting you as they are the Gospel. However, as you are diligent, God will give you success and someone will eventually give his or her heart to Christ. This will make all your sacrifice and efforts well worth it! Feel free to let your pastor, spiritual mentor, and even your friends at Global University know when a person you have witnessed to receives Christ. We will rejoice with you!

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE VERSES TO MEMORIZE

Isaiah 59:2

John 3:16

John 10:10

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

Romans 10:9–10

SELF-TEST

After studying the lesson, please read each study question carefully and circle the correct response. Unless indicated otherwise, there is only one correct response for each question.

- In its simplest definition, an evangelist is someone who*
 - travels from church to church holding special services.*
 - devotes his or her life to proclaiming the gospel to the lost.*
 - goes from door-to-door sharing the faith.*
- While some believers are gifted in evangelism, according to Acts 1:8, all of us are called to be Christ's*
 - witnesses.*
 - defenders.*
 - friends.*
- Which term is not used to describe the spiritual condition of the lost?*
 - Lost sheep*
 - Slaves to sin*
 - Alive in Christ*
- Any plan for sharing the message of the Gospel must include the fact that*
 - God loves us and made full provision through Christ for our salvation.*
 - we can get to heaven by being good.*
 - everyone will eventually be saved.*
- The purpose of writing your personal testimony is to*
 - show off your writing ability.*
 - tell your story better.*
 - detail your life of sin and remember those good old days.*
- Identify two roles the Holy Spirit plays in evangelism.*
 - The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin.*
 - He regenerates and renews us.*
 - He gives understanding of the final judgment of sinners.*

7. *A good way to respond to people who question the Gospel message is to*
 - a) *teach them lovingly the message of Christ.*
 - b) *argue with them about the philosophies of life.*
 - c) *not even get into conversation with them in the first place.*

8. *Most people who come to Christ do so as a result of*
 - a) *evangelistic crusades.*
 - b) *the encouragement and influence of a friend or family member.*
 - c) *reading a Gospel tract.*

9. *The best time to begin discipling new believers is*
 - a) *immediately after they have received Christ into their lives.*
 - b) *after they have been a Christian for several months.*
 - c) *when they fully understand what it means to be a Christian.*

10. *You are more likely to be successful in leading someone to Christ if you*
 - a) *force the message of Christ on everyone you know.*
 - b) *wait for the perfect setting—when the person is grieving or in trouble.*
 - c) *concentrate your efforts on a list of specific people.*

ANSWERS TO STUDY QUESTIONS

Note: If you answered a study question incorrectly, you can find the objective it was drawn from by looking at the reference in parenthesis.

1. *b* (3.1)
2. *a* (3.2)
3. *c* (3.3)
4. *a* (3.4)
5. *b* (3.5)
6. *b* (3.6)
7. *a* (3.7)
8. *b* (3.8)
9. *a* (3.8)
10. *c* (3.8)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS LESSON

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