

Ev221 Sharing Your Spiritual Journey

Lesson Ev221-19 Methods: The Basic Gospel Story

As an olBi student, you have had the benefit of hearing the spoken word and viewing pictures at the same time. Combining the eye gate and the ear gate helps to understand the message of your lessons. For people who learn by reading, printed tracts are used for witnessing. This lesson, on the basic gospel story, is the second in a series on methods you can use for witnessing. Instead of handing out a printed message, you can use your phone to share. You can show the drawings to someone you are talking with—as you explain the story.

So, let's get started. The first image shows God's hands hovering above the man and woman that he created. The basic biblical principle is: ***God Made Us All***. The scripture passage is from Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

The verse is from the beginning of the Bible. Using this verse affirms that the salvation story starts at the very beginning of human history. It reminds people that God created everyone. We are all created in his image and thus are of great value to him. We were all made by him to have relationship with him.

The second image depicts diverse people of various cultural backgrounds, each going their own direction. It shows God's hands held up in alarm. The people's faces show various emotions – fear, stubborn rebellion, frustration, depression, despair, or searching. They do not have the relationship with God that he intended.

The basic biblical principle here is: ***Sin Separates Us From God***. The scripture is from Exodus 32:7-8: "Your people ... have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them." It is part of the Exodus story, where God has freed the people of Israel from slavery. Moses has led them to Mount Sinai, and he is on the way to receive the Ten Commandments. Up to this point, God referred to Israel as *my* people. But the writer of Exodus tells us that the people of Israel have turned away from God. Certain that Moses is dead on the fiery mountain, they convince Aaron to make a golden calf they can worship. Suddenly God's language changes. When he speaks to Moses, he refers to Israel not as *my* people, but as *your* people. Their sin had separated them from God. Our sin likewise separates us from God. He gave us commandments, because he wants us to live joyful and right lives. We do not keep his rules, and thus many live unhappy and wrong lives.

The third image depicts God's hands reaching out to his people. This time, they are nail-scarred. The cross in the center reminds us of why they are nail-scarred. People are now reaching out to God, as they turn away from sin and turn to him. The basic biblical principle here is: ***Jesus Restores Us***. The scripture is from John 3:3, 14-15: "Jesus declared, 'I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. ... The Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.'"

This scripture is from a story about a very religious man, who came to speak to Jesus one night. Nicodemus, whom Jesus calls 'Israel's teacher', said: "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him" (John 3:2).

But Jesus cut through all the flattery and told him, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (John 3:3).

So, at this point you should ask your hearers: “Have you heard that phrase ‘born again’ before? What does it mean to you?” Some will have heard it before. Some may incorrectly say that it stands for reincarnation or baptism. It seems clear, however, that Jesus is talking about being reborn spiritually. Nicodemus was confused by this too, but Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:5-6).

We become born again through Jesus’ sacrifice: “The Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14-15). Jesus died on the cross to remove the barrier of sin between God and us. This is how he became our Savior. The nail scars in God’s hands remind us that God is holy and just. Jesus paid the penalty for our sins; he bore our judgment. Jesus *is* God, and God did what he had to do to restore us to himself. When we believe in Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, we are born again by the Spirit of God and made new in him. We receive eternal life through an ongoing relationship of obedience to Jesus.

The fourth image shows God’s hands accepting his people, who have their arms around each other in a joyful group hug. The basic biblical principle is: ***God Loves Us and We Love One Another***. The scripture is from 1 John 3:11: “This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.”

This verse links the message of salvation with God’s plan from the very beginning. Our relationship with God, with others, and with the broken selves we have become, has been restored. Thus, we can truly love as Jesus loved. It reminds people that Christians are to love one another and others as God loves us. It also suggests the need for all believers to be part of a local church or community of faith. That’s where we can best practice love for one another and for others that don’t yet know Jesus.

The fifth image shows a family walking hand in hand down a road on a journey. It sums up the basic biblical principles from this lesson: ***God loves you and wants to share eternal life with you. You can begin this eternal life by making a commitment to God.*** At this point, it’s important that you, the one sharing your faith, guide the hearers to a decision. Ask them to commit their life to Christ and begin to follow him. One way to do that is by sharing a simple prayer with them. Here is a suggested prayer you might ask them to repeat after you: “*Dear God, I know I am a sinner and I need a Savior. I ask you to forgive me of my sins, and fill me with the power of your Holy Spirit now. I want to receive you, Jesus, as my personal living Savior. I now commit my life totally to you. Thank you, Jesus. Amen!*”

If the person repeats the prayer with you, then rejoice with them! Tell them Jesus said, “there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent” (Luke 15:7). Right now they are having a praise party in heaven, as the person’s name is written in the Lamb’s book of life. Remind that person: “Praying the prayer is only the *beginning* of a new relationship with Christ. Further steps will need to be taken.” You can then begin to share with them some of the next steps of Christian discipleship: study God’s Word, pray daily, fellowship with others of like faith, and tell people about Jesus.

If the person is not ready to commit their life to Christ then you should get their contact information and offer to meet with them again to discuss the gospel further. Continue to pray for them on a regular basis that the Lord would take the seed of the gospel and bring it to full fruit in their life. Pray that at some later point the Holy Spirit will convict the person, who will *then* receive Christ. The important thing is that you did what the Lord commanded and shared the gospel. Make sure they know you are available to answer any questions they might have later in their spiritual journey.

You may want to ask some additional questions to help them along their journey at this point: “Would you be interested in being part of a group to learn more about the Bible and Jesus Christ? And, would you like to come with me and visit our church someday?” Offer to share with them another olBi lesson on your phone.

This lesson is **important** because it helps the student share the basics of the gospel: God created us all, sin separates us from God, Jesus restores us, we love one another, and God wants to share eternal life with us. It has a practical way, using pictures, to lead a person to make a personal commitment to God. It is a simple method to share your spiritual journey.

The **main truth** is that God the Father, through the death and resurrection of his Son Jesus and the power of his Holy Spirit, restores us back into a relationship with him.

Review Questions

1. According to this lesson, what are the basics of the gospel story? [Pause 5 seconds.]
 - A. If you said, “God made us all, sin separates us from God, Jesus restores us, God loves us, and we love one another,” you are correct.
2. What are the two biblical principles that sum up the principles from the basic gospel story and lead the hearer to a decision? [Pause]
 - A. If you answered, “God loves you and wants to share eternal life with you” and “You can begin to receive eternal life by making a prayerful commitment to God,” you are right.
3. If we could limit discipleship for new believers to just four things, what should they be? [Pause]
 - A. If you answered, “Study God’s Word, pray daily, fellowship with others of like faith, and tell people about Jesus,” you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to go over it as many times as you need to, in order to memorize the basics of the gospel story along with the scriptures that support them. Find someone who will allow you to “practice” sharing the gospel with them. Then share these biblical truths with someone who has not heard the gospel or made a commitment to Christ.