

HOW TO WITNESS AS A WAY OF LIFE

Purpose: The goal of this session is to equip you to witness as a way of life.

Objectives: This session will help you to:

1. Develop two habits necessary in effective way of life witnessing.
2. Adopt the right attitudes necessary for way of life witnessing.
3. Learn five steps for initiating evangelistic conversations.

Key Verses: Acts 5:42; Colossians 1:28

Note to instructor: The ideas in this lesson, and especially in the Appendix, apply to an American audience, but some may not apply in other countries. Feel free to adjust the notes to fit your culture.

I. Introduction

Often when a training like this finishes and certificates are presented, it's a challenge for those who have completed to continue using what they have learned. During the training, trainees are regularly witnessing in a target area, but when the training is over, witnessing sometimes slows or ceases - especially for those who may not be in a day-to-day context that focuses on witnessing.

What can be done so that witnessing does not slow or cease after the training is over?

Consider habits or attitudes that need to be developed. Think about how you will continue to witness after the training center is over. What adjustments will be required of you? How can you keep doing regularly with what you've learned and experienced in this training? Write down your ideas before continuing.

Note to instructor: Have the students get into groups of 3 or 4 to discuss what they wrote. Have them share answers they came up with that were not mentioned in the notes. Give about 10 minutes.

II. Two Necessary Habits in Way of Life Witnessing

- A. The habit of taking advantage of **natural opportunities**. (*Divine appointments*).

Case Study:

Alex was walking home from playing football with some friends and on his way came across a man having trouble with his motorcycle. Alex stopped to help him and repaired the problem quickly. The man thanked Alex and offered to pay him for his services. Alex said no but asked the man for a favor: to take ten minutes to read through the Four Spiritual Laws with Alex and give his opinion. The man listened attentively and said he would begin to study the New Testament to consider Christ's claims.

Where might you have natural opportunities to witness as a way of life? Write down your ideas.

Note to instructor: Have the students share their answers in their small groups. After about 5 minutes, have some share ideas with the class.

You will have activities that naturally bring you into contact with people both inside and outside your home. A broken pipe can open an opportunity for witness with the plumber. A trip to a store can be an opportunity to share with a clerk. A conversation over coffee with a neighbor can be a life-changing discussion about Christ.

Although you can plan on God bringing people to you, you should plan on taking God's message to people. The second habit to develop is...

- B. The habit of **Planning** your activities so you can initiate evangelistic opportunities.

If you are available, God will lead you into natural witnessing situations. For example, the apostle Paul took advantage of every opportunity to proclaim Christ as he went in to the synagogues and market places. He purposefully planned his activities in order to make the greatest impact for Christ.

Case Study:

Sarah realized that she could be more effective for Christ and enjoy people more if she began to look at her weekly routine. She discovered that she bought her food in a very random fashion and almost never from the same place. She decided to go regularly to one store and get to know one of the clerks there. The day came when there was no one else in line behind her and she began to talk to the clerk, named Susan. The next week it happened again and Susan related a problem that was bothering her. Sarah made a transition to the Four Spiritual Laws. Susan was interested and they reached Law Three before another customer came. Sarah made an appointment to meet Susan after work the same day and Susan gave her life to Christ.

If someone is working, be sure not to take much time. If he/she is busy or if his/her employer is not sympathetic, make an appointment.

If you are available to meet others, to spend time with them and to show personal interest in them, you will discover many opportunities to witness. However, most of us tend to rush from one activity to the other, never making people a priority. In Matthew 9 Jesus saw the multitudes and had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. John 4 tells the story of how he introduced himself to the woman at a well as he traveled in Samaria. He could have decided that he was too tired from his trip or that he had things to plan. By being friendly and warm you will have many opportunities to witness if you will only take the time.

What are some other activities that you can plan which would provide opportunities to meet people? Following are some ideas. Write down any additional ideas you may have:

Invite a neighbor to dinner
Eat with a dorm mate
Do your laundry in a Laundromat

Visit specific stores, etc.
“JESUS” Video showing

Note to instructor: Have the students discuss their answers in their small groups. After about 5 minutes, ask for some to share their ideas with the class.

III. Right Attitudes needed for Way of Life Witnessing.

Taking the initiative is a function of your **attitude**.

Attitude is defined as “Manner, disposition, feeling, position or posture toward a person or thing.” Your attitude is what you tell yourself and how you act out what you tell yourself. The following statements are true of all believers. Since they are true, act like it! This is what it means to walk by faith (making our actions conform to our beliefs). Talking with others about Christ (like prayer, praise, and thanksgiving) is something we do by faith. The following statements are true of you: Write down your thoughts regarding the following statements and verses.

Note to instructor: Ask the class what they wrote down here in section III.

A. "I am an **ambassador** for the King." 2 Corinthians 5:20

How does an ambassador act?

Note to instructor: If not mentioned here, you could say, “Acts as a representative of the one/country who sent him/her. Acts with confidence. Tries to create a good impression of his/her country. Is a diplomat: acts with tact and gentleness. Does not compromise the interests of his/her country.”

- B. "I **love** the people that God puts on my path." Matthew 22:39

Think of how God wants you to act and take a step to act in that way, believing that God will supernaturally enable you. You may need to love some by faith, and trust God that the feelings will follow.

- C. "I have the **joy** of the Spirit." Nehemiah 8:10

If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we can make the mental or verbal affirmation that is appropriate and begin to act out this characteristic by faith, whatever our emotions may be.

- D. "People **need** what I have to offer. I will see people **respond**." John 4:35

God has prepared people for your message.

- E. "Success in 'way-of-life' witnessing is taking the initiative to meet people naturally and share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and leaving the results to God."

IV. Five steps to turning a conversation to Christ

What are some of the ways that you have successfully turned the conversation to Christ?

Note to instructor: Have them share their ideas in their groups. After about 5 minutes, ask for some of their ideas.

There are many ways to turn a conversation to spiritual things, but they each follow five main principles. The first is:

- A. Be **concerned** for people and be **friendly**. 😊

Many people feel lonely and alienated in this busy world. It is astounding what a smile can do when accompanied by a "How are you?" Because most people are not friendly, it is easy to go into a shop, do business, and go home without ever talking to anyone. But if you are warm and friendly, you can easily begin a conversation. Any conversation, no matter how brief, can be a bridge to a gospel presentation. Most people are naturally attracted to friendly, smiling people. Just ask things like: "How are you today?" "Have you worked here long?" "Do you like your work?" "Do you come here often?"

B. Ask **questions** to discover interests and felt needs. **?**

The more you know about a person, the more you will be able to relate together. The more you know, the more you will be able to make a bridge from the person's felt need (a need he knows he has) to the Gospel. Questions help you to bridge from your world into theirs. When you ask questions, you communicate interest in the person.

Some questions that express interest include: "How do you like your job?" "Would you prefer to do something else?" "What do you like to do in your spare time?" "How many are in your family?" The question "Why?" in response to something they said is very useful.

As you ask questions, you will often discover needs. Although people need Christ, whether they feel that need or not, they often respond to Christ on the basis of a felt need. Although some people will not talk about themselves easily to new acquaintances, most will. Establishing rapport by asking questions will set the stage to transition into the gospel. As you rely on the Holy Spirit, he will speak to the person's needs.

C. Turn the conversation to Christ using a **transition** or a **bridge** .

The goal in a conversation is to turn it to Christ in the least abrupt way. Many people may be surprised when you talk about spiritual things but the rapport that you initially establish will overcome that uneasiness. It is important to become skilled in turning the conversation to Christ. Following are some sample transitions to the gospel.

"Have you ever thought much about spiritual things?"

"It sounds as if you would like to get more out of life than what you have been experiencing. Has anyone ever taken the time to explain how you can experience an abundant life through knowing Jesus Christ?"

To a college student, you might say: "Since you are interested in education, have you ever looked into the facts concerning the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?"

To someone from a strong religious background, you might say: "I can tell that you have thought about spiritual things more than most people. I would like to get your opinion of a booklet that I have found interesting. Have you heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?"

Has anyone ever shared with you how you can know God personally?

Have you ever made the discovery of knowing Christ personally or are you still in the process?

There are many transitions. These are just a few suggestions. Do you have any others that you have found helpful? Please write them down.

Note to instructor: Ask the class for ideas they came up with here.

D. **Adapt** your presentation to people's needs.

When you adapt the presentation to a person, consider his openness to the Bible. Never dilute the gospel or minimize sin or the need to trust in Christ's finished work on the cross. One of the advantages of getting to know people is that you can be sensitive to their perspectives. A Jewish person might need to hear about how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy before he will consider him as the Messiah.

E. Give people an **opportunity** to receive Christ. Always try to bring people to the point of **decision**.

We want good conversations with the people we talk with, and yet we also want to steer the conversation to Christ. The Holy Spirit prepares people to receive Christ. They need to know how and be given the opportunity to put their trust in Christ.

Note to instructor: It would be helpful to share a recent experience you had in way-of-life witnessing - illustrating the previous five points.

V. Consider the Available Time

A. The available time you have with a person will affect what you present. A brief encounter requires immediate verbal witness. Be prepared to share the gospel in one-minute if needed. Leave an evangelistic piece of literature if the time is extremely brief.

*Instructor could ask, "Would anyone like to try sharing the gospel in one minute or less?"
The instructor should be able to do this. Here is a sample:*

There is a God. He made us to know Him personally. We all messed this up through our sin. We all know that we've sinned, and the penalty is separation from God. God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ and died in our place to pay our penalty. He arose from the dead three days later. God now calls each of us to make a decision: "Do I want a relationship with God or not?" If I do, I need to acknowledge my sin and that Christ died for my sins and rose from the dead. Do you want a personal relationship with God?

Sometimes a long term contact may require less initial verbal witness and more lifestyle witness. When you have longer contact with people you can get to know them better. For instance, in your neighborhood you may have months to establish a relationship.

- B. Come to class prepared to initiate a conversation in any of the following situations, turn it to Christ and introduce the “Four Spiritual Laws.”
1. **Your neighbor is out working in his yard.**
 2. **A student from one of your classes sits by you in the cafeteria.**
 3. **A family comes along when you are swinging your daughter at the park.**
 4. **You’re waiting with another person in the customer’s lounge at an automobile repair garage.**

Conclusion: Throughout this training, you’ve had experience in witnessing and making disciples. What about after the training? What would God have you do? How can you ensure that your involvement in regular ministry won’t diminish nor cease? Discuss this with your mentor sometime this week.

Note to instructor: with any remaining time, have the students discuss the “Discussion Questions” in their small groups.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the two habits (section II) do you need to trust God to develop in your life?

2. Do you live your life demonstrating the attitudes listed in section III? If not, which one(s) do you need to trust God to develop in your life?

3. Section IV lists 5 steps to turning the conversation to Christ. Which ones do you feel you do well in? Which ones would you like to trust God to develop in?

APPENDIX A

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD 70 WAYS TO REACH YOUR WORLD

I. START WITH YOURSELF

1. Have quality time with the Lord and yield yourself to the Holy Spirit. He will overflow into others' lives.
2. Ask Him to use you and EXPECT opportunities.
3. Listen to tapes or read books with God's view of evangelism (recommended - Josh's tape "For I Am Not Ashamed").
4. Read Biographies of missionaries and evangelists (recommended - Jonathan Goforth's biography by Rosalyn Goforth).
5. Spend time with staff whose main ministry is outreach and learn from their perspective.

II. IDEAS FOR PLANNING

1. Make a map of your neighborhood with houses or apartments on it; keep track of progress (meeting your neighbors, names, sharing Gospel, etc.)
2. Keep record of their names, significant details, their concerns and pray for them
3. Brainstorm with your husband/roommates
4. Organize a monthly prayer time with other nearby Christians to pray for common neighbors and encourage each other
5. Organize a "monthly theme" for your neighborhood Christians or Sunday School and keep each other accountable. Example:
 - First month - Pray for a neighbor
 - Second month - Meet a new neighbor
 - Third month - Take a treat to a neighbor
 - Fourth month - Meet a neighbor's need
 - Fifth month - Have a neighbor over
 - Sixth month - Have a neighborhood outreach
6. Find another Christian not with CCC whom you can disciple in the process of doing outreach

III. MEETING PEOPLE

1. Join a PTA, organized sports, evening class
2. Go to the playground, park or pool at popular times
3. Get together a few Christians to meet at the park, playing fields, etc. - be open to include others there and share the Gospel
4. Have a garage sale - have extra good prices, offer free Christian materials
5. visit neighbor's garage sales
6. Take walks or bike rides; you will notice houses and meet people you would not see otherwise

7. On your walks, look for "For Sale" or "For Rent" signs and go welcome new neighbors when signs of life appear
8. Better yet, make it a prayer walk and pray for the people in the houses/apartments you pass
9. Go to homes you've been praying for and say, "I've been praying for you whenever I pass your house. Anything specific I can remember?"
10. Ask neighbors for prayer requests (and then pray!). A church of 2000 started by a pastor doing this.
11. Make new neighbors a top priority!
 - invite them for dinner or take dinner to them the 1st or 2nd day ideally
 - take them a treat or helpful supplies
 - have their kids over so they can unpack
 - give them information pamphlets about your area
 - at least stop and say "hi"; offer to answer questions

(Church growth experts say people are especially open after any transition: marriage, divorce, baby, new job, a move, etc.)

IV. DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

1. Ask God to help you see cashiers, waitresses as people with needs:
 - ask how they are
 - empathize with their challenges
 - leave a good tip, especially if you see her/him frequently
2. Invite school friends' or their families or a teacher over for dinner or dessert.
3. Take your neighbor a treat or a "good deal" from the store.
4. When they're sick, take soup, fruit, offer to run to the store, watch the kids.
5. Watch a game together.
6. Exercise together with Christian exercise video or tape or go running, play basketball
7. Ask advice on area stores, weather, plants, etc. - you'll get some helpful tips and they'll be honored you asked.
8. Find something to compliment them on.
9. Think through their needs and pray for a way to help:
 - babysitting (for Christmas shopping. . .)
 - friendship/listening ear
 - decorating/painting/carpentry advice
 - learning to sew, fix the car, do electrical work, bake, organize household

V. SHARING THE GOSPEL

1. Make the effort 3 or 4 times a year (if not able to go sharing regularly) to go with someone to "aggressively" get people's responses on the 4 Spiritual Laws at such places as the beach, park, campus, etc.
2. Ask a friend to read a book, article or listen to a tape or video and give their opinion on it.
3. Offer a 4-week Bible Study on an area of felt need, filtering in the Gospel (e.g. Homebuilders Bible Study, children, relationships, success).
4. Have a special speaker cover an area of interest at a neighborhood gathering:

- athletic testimonies
 - financial planning
 - raising children
 - developing potential
5. Don't assume people at church are Christians
 6. Do a neighborhood survey: "We're new in the area and want to get an idea of people's beliefs in the area"
 7. Have a video party: "JESUS," "Football Fever," Andre Kole, Josh.
 8. Have a "rebirthday party" on your spiritual birthday - have cake, share your testimony and give them a gift (magazine, book, pamphlet, whatever).
 9. Donate Christian videos and tapes to the public or school library: "JESUS," "McGee 'N' Me," Josh, "Football Fever," etc.
 10. Bring to an appropriate CCC meeting or church event
 11. Make use of the mail:
 - sometimes it's easier to write your testimony than to speak it
 - send Christian tapes such as Josh's apologetics
 - send books pertinent to needs
 12. Put a short Christian message on your answering machine
 13. Start a "Kids' Video Library," lending out videos which will bring the Bible stories and Christ into their homes.

VI. OUR CHILDREN

1. Pray for yourself to have a patient, joyful spirit around them while preparing for an outreach, so they will have a positive attitude about evangelism
2. Make a big deal remembering their spiritual birthday: rebirthday cake, a gift that helps them spiritually, invite a few of their friends and let your child tell his/her story
3. Help them to see people as God does: not "that cashier was crabby," but, "that cashier looked like something was bothering her and she needs Jesus."
4. Supply them with Christian books, videos, tapes they can share with friends.
5. Have a pajama party Saturday night and take them all to church on Sunday.

VII. SEASONS AND HOLIDAYS

Valentine's Day

1. have a Josh McDowell or Dick Purnell video
2. have dinner and testimony and/or talk on "true love" or relationships
3. do relationship survey with neighbors

Easter

1. "JESUS" video and dessert
2. give out "The Case of the Empty Tomb" article or tape
3. use your windows and doors as "message boards" - "He Lives," "He Arose," cross, etc.
4. invite them to Sunrise Service and breakfast
5. direct an Easter play with neighbor kids - the parents can't resist attending!

6. make up a short Easter survey and use it at the mall, park, etc.
7. give a mini-Easter basket with a good Easter tract attached
8. get some chocolate molds and make Easter candy together

Summer

1. pool party, Barbeque, block party, trip to the beach
2. neighbor children:
 - Good News Club
 - organize a sport team, play or concert
 - teach them piano, baseball, auto mechanics, art, sewing
 - help with Vacation Bible school and share the Good News booklet, one-on-one during game time
3. make-your-own-sundae/dessert party; each person brings one ingredient

Thanksgiving

1. have a Giving-thanks dinner
2. ask God to show you someone lonely - cashier, neighbor - who you can invite to dinner

Christmas

1. go caroling
2. have a cookie exchange (ideally before Dec. 10)
3. Open House Christmas Party (week after Christmas works great)
4. make your manger scene, not tree, the focus of attention
5. put lights outside in the shape of the cross
6. decorate windows: Happy Birthday Jesus, manger, angels
7. have a Jesus' birthday party for neighbor kids
8. watch "Charlie Brown Christmas" together and talk about it afterwards
9. give people you see regularly (beautician, store clerk, gas station attendant, banker, etc.) an evangelistic magazine rolled up and tied with a candy cane and/or Christmas cookies.
10. give teachers a book to read while on vacation
11. use a Christmas survey at the mall, park, neighbors, etc.

IDEAS FOR REACHING YOUR APARTMENT COMPLEX WITH THE GOSPEL

- * prayer walks around the complex (break down strongholds and spiritual fortresses)
- * Christmas caroling
- * holiday gatherings/open house
- * bake cookies for new residents
- * be service-oriented (i.e. help with apartment-wide activities/Barbeques, parties. . .)
- * use the apartment car wash area and talk to people there
- * Grinch video with related spiritual talk
- * do something for children only
- * "JESUS" film at Easter
- * crafts
- * playground activities
- * sports activities (volleyball court, tennis, weight room, etc.)
- * babysitting
- * give out WorldWide Challenge evangelistic issues
- * lend "JESUS" video and then talk about when they return it
- * laundry room talk
- * basically hang out where the people congregate, introduce yourself, pray for opportunities
- * be willing to spend time talking to people beyond, "hello, nice day"
- * read a book by the pool instead of on your couch; talk to those around you
- * remember people's names, even if you have to write them on your refrigerator until you memorize them
- * respond to crisis situations (some neighbors will have fights, illness or police at their door - be available to talk)
- * borrow a cup of sugar, a bit of honey (it really works and allows your neighbors to feel needed and helpful)
- * have Barbeques off your patio and invite your neighbors
- * in general, create a "neighborly" atmosphere - often apartment living can seem temporary and transient; anything you can do to make people feel "at home" speaks volumes and allows you to build rapport, friendships and evangelistic opportunities