

Sample Evangelistic Talk #1

Note: Tailor the first paragraph of this presentation so it is accurate for your own life. This is a talk you can give as host or co-host or one you can invite another Christian to share. Just change the references in parentheses so they fit your situation.



I've enjoyed hearing the traditions many of you have shared. Recently, I asked my children what they remembered our family traditions to be. When all three mentioned decorating the Christmas tree, I was certain they were thinking about those ornaments I made or purchased for them each year! In fact, what they all remembered was the annual debate over who should run to Target for more lights, and the tinsel war—should we hang each piece of tinsel individually and carefully as *my* family always did (the *right* way) or should we throw it on in big clumps as my husband's family did? I was gratified when all three children named that wonderful moment when we turned on the lights for the first time.

And what about presents? Certainly the giving and receiving of gifts is part of what we remember about Christmas. Have you ever thought about the dynamics of gift-giving? The giver of the gift is someone who makes a sacrifice of money, time, effort; the gift is free, with no obligation, no strings attached, and usually serves a purpose or fulfills a need; and the receiver chooses to open the gift and use it as his or her own.

I have a gift in my hands. I am the giver of this gift. Now, I need someone to receive my gift, someone to claim it as his or her own. (*Wait for someone to take the gift you have prepared, then invite him to open it. As he does, say the following.*)

There was some sacrifice involved in my being the giver—in picking out the gift, wrapping it, and spending money. However, the gift is free to (name). Did you see him/her give me any money? I don't know if s/he even deserves the gift. It was given with no strings attached (except the ribbon!). Hopefully, it will serve a purpose as a memento of our party. (Name) gets to keep the gift because s/he's the one who chose to receive it as her/his own.

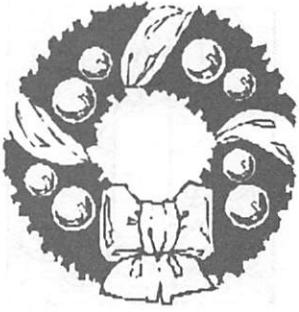
My point in this illustration is that (host/hostess) has asked me to share for a few moments about the most precious and greatest gift ever given. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish, but would have eternal life."

These words are from the book of John in the Bible and may be familiar to you. They're powerful words, but what do they mean?

God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He created everything in the world, including you and me. And because He created us, He knows everything about us. He knows what fills your heart with joy; He knows what causes you to grieve. He knows your loneliness. He knows your frustrations and your hurts. He knows all of these things because He made you—He created you to have fellowship with Him forever.

And how do we respond to God's plan for us? We often turn our backs on God and choose to go our own way, rather than God's way. We do this because we seek fulfillment for our lives not in God, the Creator of the universe, but in the things He has created. We look to intellect, material possessions, money and other people. We put our hope in what has been created rather than in the Creator.





These things separate us from God and are called sin. *Anything* that falls short of God's perfect standard is called sin. The Bible tells us, "All of us have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God."

"God so loved the world that He *gave*": Some 2,000 years ago God gave His Son Jesus to be born in a stable. When I was little, I thought a stable was the cute red barn with sweet-smelling animals and clean hay. It wasn't until I was much older that I learned *this* stable was actually a dark, damp cave. The animals kept there were not very sweet-smelling, and the hay was probably not very clean. The manger in which Jesus slept was the animals' feeding trough. Imagine, our kids are born under conditions fit for a king, and the King of creation was born under conditions fit for an animal.

Fortunately, Jesus didn't stay in the manger. He grew to be a man and lived on this earth for about 33 years. While He was here, He said and did many amazing things, which are recorded in the Bible. They are also written in historical books of that time. One of the amazing things Jesus said was, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." He could say that because of something He did—something I still don't completely understand.

He willingly chose to die for every sin— every sin that you and I would ever commit! He died on the cross in our place. He shed His blood, so that you and I would no longer be separated from a perfectly righteous God because of our sin. Because Jesus willingly laid down His life, we can have forgiveness of our sin and peace with God forever. How can we know this is true? Jesus rose from the dead! He's alive! Several hundred witnesses actually saw Him alive.

So who is the giver of the greatest gift? God. He gave us a gift that involved the utmost love and sacrifice. The gift was Jesus Christ. His purpose was to restore our broken relationship with Himself and assure of us eternal life. And the gift is free; it cannot be earned. Though most of us try to live good lives, we will *never* deserve Him. However, no matter how much we have sinned, the gift of Christ will *never* be withheld from us. This is where my gift illustration breaks down. I only had one gift to give and only one of you could accept it. But the gift of Christ is offered to each one of us.

So how do you receive this amazing gift? We can know all the words to every Christmas carol, send religious Christmas cards, attend every church service that's offered, but the gift of Christ cannot be truly ours until we choose to believe He is who He says He is and *invite* Him into our lives.

In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, there is a word picture in which Jesus says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in." This is a picture of Jesus gently knocking on the door of your life, at the door of your heart. He will not force His way into our lives. He will wait until we invite Him in.

Church has always been very important to me, but it wasn't until (___) years ago that I understood for the first time that I needed to *choose* to accept Christ as my Savior and invite Him into my life. When I did, it was like finding the missing piece of a puzzle.

Perhaps you can identify with me. This may be the first time you've heard that you need to make a choice. And you make it simply by expressing to



God the desire of your heart. I want to take a minute to thank God for our time together tonight. I would also like to pray this simple prayer. If you would like to invite Christ into your life, just pray silently along with me:

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son Jesus Christ because You love me so much. I realize for the first time that Jesus died for the sins I have committed that have separated me from You. I want to open the door of my heart and invite Jesus to come in and take control of my life. Thank You for coming into my life. Amen.

If that prayer expressed the desire of your heart, Jesus makes a wonderful promise to you, something we can cling to in this unstable world. He says, "I will never leave you or forsake you."

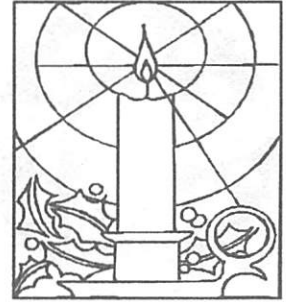
For some, Christmas is not a joyful time. Because of deaths of loved ones, broken relationships or moves, many people find Christmas to be a sad and lonely time. But if Jesus is in your life because you invited Him to come in, you have His promise that He will never leave you or forsake you.

Now I want to give all of you the opportunity to communicate to (host/hostess) and me how you felt about being here. I have some cards to pass around. Please take one and fill it out, and when you're finished, just drop it in this basket on the coffee table.

On the card, I would appreciate your comments on what I shared and how you enjoyed the evening. Just put your name and telephone number at the top. If you have any questions, please feel free to write them down. Either (host/hostess) or I will gladly talk with you. If you did silently pray along with me and ask Jesus to be the center of your life, would you put an X on your card? I would like to send you something to help you grow in your new faith.

(Host/hostess) is interested in starting a four- to six-week neighborhood Bible study in January. If you are interested in a Bible study, put your name and phone number on your card so he/she can contact you about it. Write Bible Study in the corner.

Thank you, (host/hostess), for asking me to join you and your neighbors tonight. There are plenty of refreshments left, so help yourselves after you've filled out your cards, and we'll have more time to visit.





Sample Evangelistic Talk #2

I've enjoyed hearing about your favorite Christmas memories. Many of them involve the giving and receiving of gifts. I'd like you to consider—what would be the greatest gift that one person could give another?

Some of you who have been in the military service might say the greatest gift would be to lay down your life for a friend. For others, it might be a winning lotto ticket or your dream car. For still others, it might be as basic as a steady job, good health or more meaningful relationships with family.

I'd like to share what I consider to be the greatest gift ever given. "For God so loved the world" (that's you and me) "that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but would have eternal life."

These words are from the Bible. Two thousand years ago, on that first Christmas night, God came to this earth in the person of the baby Jesus. In fact, one of the names given to the baby (at God's command) was Emmanuel, which literally means "God with us."

Do you know why God did this? Because of love! God loves us so personally that He calls us by name. Better yet, God loves us just the way we are, with all our failures and faults.

Fortunately for us, Jesus didn't stay a baby but grew to be a man. He was a carpenter by trade, a working man just like you and me. He walked this earth fully man and yet, at the same time, fully God.

In His early 30s, He paid the penalty for all the nasty, selfish things you and I have ever thought, said or done. Jesus took my punishment and yours by willingly dying on the cross for us. He was buried, and on the third day, He rose again. He lives today.

You see, God is a holy God. He is perfect and flawless. Man, on the other hand, is imperfect, marred by sin (sin being anything that separates you from God). You might be saying to yourself, "Well, I'm a good person. I go to church. I'm no sinner." But think, just for a moment, about the selfish things you've done—those angry outbursts, those unkind thoughts. These are all sins, and they separate us from God.

The Bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and that the penalty of sin is death. But it goes on to say that while the penalty of sin is death, the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. Now a gift has two parts. It must be given, no strings attached, and it must also be received. If it is given but not received, then it's not a gift at all.

The Bible also says that this gift is not earned. It is a gift of God, so we can't brag about it. God does not expect nor does He want us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps so that we can *earn forgiveness* or *deserve heaven*. We will never be good enough. He wants us to simply accept and receive forgiveness and eternal life as His free gift through faith in Jesus Christ. Everyone must make his own decision about receiving this gift.

I once heard a true story about a fascinating legal case. I think it's a great analogy to what I'm talking about. The case involved a man named



Wilson, a convicted felon, sentenced to die according to the Georgia state penal code. Due to certain irregularities in his trial, the governor, and later the president of the United States, granted Wilson a pardon. The problem was that Wilson, frustrated and embittered about his situation, refused the pardon. The authorities faced a dilemma. The prosecution said, "Execute him!" The defense said, "Let him go free." They decided to appeal the case to the United States Supreme Court.



In writing for the Supreme Court, Justice Marshall acknowledged the dilemma. There was a valid pardon, and Wilson's name was on it. The problem was that the defendant was still guilty. He had been found guilty by a jury. Understand, a pardon does not remove the guilt; it just *covers* it. A pardon does not make a guilty person innocent. Wilson was still guilty.

Justice Marshall went on to say that a pardon is a gift, an act of grace, which is basically an undeserved favor. As a gift, it is given, but it must also be received. A person can choose to receive the pardon or not. Wilson chose to reject the pardon. Therefore, his guilt was not covered, and since he was still guilty, he had to pay the penalty for his crimes. In carrying out the Supreme Court decision, the State of Georgia executed Wilson.

You see, that's where all of us are today. We are all guilty because of sin, but we have the opportunity to accept a pardon that will cover our guilt. There are two choices we can make. We can invite Christ into our lives, and receive forgiveness and eternal life. Or we can choose to reject Him or avoid making a decision at all, which is the same as rejecting Him.

Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except by Me." He goes on to say, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and invites Me in, I will come in and eat with him and live with him forever." God has given us free choice—to choose Him or reject Him. Unlike Wilson, who chose to refuse his pardon, I chose to accept mine from God. I didn't deserve it then; I don't deserve it now. But I received it all the same.

I want to give you an opportunity to receive your pardon from God simple by asking for it in your heart, as I did a few years ago. Will you pray silently with me: *Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I've done many selfish, self-centered things, and I confess those things to You. I believe that Jesus Christ died for me and for my sins, and I want to receive my pardon. I invite Jesus Christ to come into my life and take control. Thank you, Father, for not giving up on me and for loving me. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.*

If you prayed with me and sincerely meant it, you can know that God heard your prayer and Jesus Christ has come into your life. Thank you for listening, and for giving me a chance to share the most important gift ever given. Would you do me a favor by writing, on one of these cards, your impressions about this evening? Did you enjoy the party? What did you think of what I just shared? Good, bad or indifferent, I'd welcome your comments. If you prayed along with me tonight, would you put an X on your card. (Host/hostess) would be willing to get together in January for a short-term Bible study. If you are interested, write the words "Bible study" in the corner. When you've finished, please put your card in the basket on the coffee table. Thanks!

(used by permission from Joyce Bademan, Founder of Christmas Gatherings,
a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.)





Outline for an Evangelistic Talk

Introduction

Your introduction should flow naturally out of the activity that has just taken place in the sharing time. You may want to share about one of your fondest Christmas memories or joke about the most unusual gift you ever received. This could lead naturally to a discussion of a family tradition you celebrate that reflects your relationship with Christ or the greatest Christmas gift you have ever received: Jesus Himself!

Example:

It's always fun to hear about the exciting family Christmas traditions that people continue year after year. My most treasured memory has to do with a family tradition I looked forward to each December. You see, each year my entire family would gather together to go downtown to visit a bank that had been transformed into a winter wonderland. The highlight of that time, though, was the gingerbread and wassail they provided! We would gather together with our refreshments and catch up with one another, recounting the events in our lives over the past few months. Once we had eaten our fill it was across the street to another bank that had assembled a huge choir. Although none of us could carry a tune in a bucket, it didn't seem to matter as we belted out those songs we had sung for years and knew by heart.

Pre-evangelistic Party

The goal of a pre-evangelistic party is to share the true meaning of Christmas. What you share will not only let your neighbors know what you believe, but it will open doors for future conversations about how they too can have a relationship with Christ. Tie in how knowing Christ has deepened the family tradition you shared above. Communicate how special Christmas is to you and your family.

Personal testimony

*I remember one year in particular. I was home from college and was really looking forward to seeing everyone. As usual, we headed over to the first bank, ate more gingerbread than we needed to, and then proceeded to the next bank. But this year something was different. When we began to sing the Christmas carols, they took on a whole new meaning to me. The songs that I had once sung by heart, I was now singing **with** my heart. I remember singing, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come. Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room." As I sang those words a true sense of joy overwhelmed me, as I realized for the first time what they really meant. You see, that's exactly what I had done just a few months earlier. A friend had explained to me about the true meaning of Christmas. He shared how the greatest gift ever given was Jesus Christ, who came to earth as a baby, but who went on to die on the cross to pay the penalty for all the wrong things I had done. That afternoon, I realized I could do what the song encourages; I could prepare room in my heart for Him and invite Him into my life to forgive me of my sins and bring me into a relationship with God.*



That day, Christmas took on a whole new meaning because it reminded me that the Son of God not only came into the world born in a manger, but came into my life to restore my relationship with God and give me joy throughout the year, not just on Christmas day!



Evangelistic Party

The goal of the evangelistic party is to communicate the Gospel, relating it to the true meaning of Christmas and to give your guests an opportunity to pray to receive Christ. At the end of the group sharing time begin your portion by relating briefly your personal testimony (similar to the one above). It's a natural introduction to sharing the Gospel.

Personal testimony

Include a testimony like the one above, then transition into the Gospel.

Transition to the Gospel

Having shared with your neighbors about how the message of Christ has changed your life, now discuss the content of that message and how you responded to God's offer of forgiveness and eternal life.

Example:

A friend had explained to me about the true meaning of Christmas. He shared four very important truths from the Bible that have radically changed my life, and I'd like to share them with you briefly.

Gospel presentation

Presenting the Gospel means explaining its four main truths. As you share each, try to relate it to the true meaning of Christmas. Several outlines are available in Gospel booklets such as "Would You Like to Know God Personally?" (Campus Crusade for Christ); "The Bridge to Life" (Navigators); "Steps to Peace with God" (Billy Graham Association). These and other resources are found at Christian bookstores. You may also want to memorize one verse of Scripture to reinforce the significance of each point. Avoid reading to your guests. Rather, adapt these resources to the context of a Christmas party and share them as your own thoughts flow naturally.

The Four Main Truths of the Gospel:

(from "Would You Like to Know God Personally?")

- *God loves you and created you to know Him personally.*
- *Man is sinful and separated from God, so we cannot know Him personally or experience His love.*
- *Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him alone we can know God personally and experience His love.*
- *We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know God personally and experience His love.*

To illustrate the fourth point, you might say,

At Christmastime, people love to give gifts to one another, but those gifts only truly become ours when we reach out and accept them from the person who is offering them to us. Likewise, God's greatest gift to us, the gift of forgiveness and eternal life, is ours only when we reach out to God and accept it by inviting Jesus Christ to come into our lives.

See "Sample Evangelistic Talks," on pages 40-44.





End the evening by closing in prayer

As you close the evening it will be important that you give your neighbors an opportunity to accept God's greatest gift to them: Jesus Christ.

Example:

I'd like to take a moment to thank God for the fun we've had together this evening. I also want to give you the opportunity to receive God's greatest gift to us: His Son, Jesus Christ. Remember the carol, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come; let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room." As I close our time in prayer, if you would like to prepare room in your heart for Christ, and invite Him into your life to forgive your sins and give you eternal life, just pray silently as I pray out loud.

Dear heavenly Father, I want to thank You for all these wonderful friends and the fun we have shared tonight. As the Christmas celebration approaches, help us to remember the gift of Your Son, who You sent to bring joy to the world and forgiveness and eternal life to those who would accept Him. Father, I pray that if there is anyone here tonight who has never accepted the gift of Your Son, that they would pray this prayer with me. "Dear Jesus, thank You for the incredible gift of forgiveness and eternal life that you offer me because You died on the cross for my sins. Right now, I accept that gift and open the door of my life and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Please come into my life to forgive me of my sins, to give me eternal life and to begin making me into the person You created me to be. Amen."

Comment cards

At this point, pass out the comment cards and then extend an invitation to a home Bible study. For tips on how to do this, see "Inviting Response and Planning Your Next Event" on page 18.

Tips for an effective talk

- Try to limit your talk to about 10-15 minutes. If you see your guests looking at their watches, nodding off or using their neighbor as a pillow, this is your cue that you should close fairly soon!
- Make sure your invitations clearly state that you plan to have a time of sharing inspirational thoughts about the true meaning of Christmas. You want your guests to know this will be an important part of the evening.
- Don't use religious clichés. Carefully prepare what you will say and think about how it will be understood by a non-Christian audience. Run it by several discerning Christian friends.
- Practice your talk until you become very comfortable with it.
- Make your talk personal, sharing your own life experiences.



Tips for Writing a Testimony



Your personal testimony is a natural introduction to sharing the Gospel of Christ. Use these guidelines to tell about what God has done in your life.

1. Let God be original in you. You have your own story to tell, and in the telling, Jesus Christ can be lifted up and glorified.
2. God's power shows up best in "weak" people. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 2:1-5: "And when I came to you brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."
3. Ask God to give you insight into how He has worked in your life.
4. Don't think of sharing with a group, but rather, with an individual. You do not need to be a speaker, just one who has the riches of Christ and who wants to share those riches with another person.
5. As you write, avoid Christian terminology. The non-Christian is not familiar with it. If you do use it, be sure to explain what you mean by it. The non-Christian is not familiar with Bible language. Avoid using denominational names as well.
6. To help you as you prepare, read Acts 22, 23 and 26. Note Paul's "before," "how," and "after." Organize your testimony accordingly.

a. **Before I received Christ, I lived and thought this way:**

Spend a brief time on "before." This is not a biography from childhood. It's best to start at a time in life which relates to your experience with Christ.

If you became a Christian as a child, thank God for the years you have known Him. We often think that the only exciting testimonies are those of people who have committed a lot of sin. Remember, *anything* God does in a life is exciting. Christ did not sin, but He did relate to people.

b. **How I received Christ:**

Be specific. The Holy Spirit often convinces people they should receive Christ when others are sharing how they received Him.

However, many people cannot remember the exact circumstances of receiving Christ. The circumstances are not as important as the assurance that Christ is in your life.





c. **Now with Christ in my life, as I trust Him, I live and think this way:**

Be practical. Explain how you are continuing to grow as you learn to trust Christ as your Lord and Master. Some areas where you may have seen changes are:

- Relationships with spouse, children, boss, employees, friends
- Atmosphere in the home
- Adjusting to changes and handling life's problems
- Goals in life; changing priorities
- Inner peace
- Bad habits
- Being in control vs. surrendering to God
- New attitudes

Be realistic; don't create the illusion that all things, including you, are perfect. Share how Christ is the problem-solver, and the only One who is all-sufficient.

Be positive. Explain how you are applying God's word to your life. Some ideas:

- Receiving and expressing God's love
- Receiving and expressing God's forgiveness
- Fulfillment
- Peace of mind
- New perspective on life
- Freedom from fear and/or guilt
- Assurance of eternal life
- Purpose for living
- God's direct counsel from His Word
- Fellowship
- Inner strength
- Witnessing
- Sense of belonging
- Understanding of others
- Surrendering to God

