



Christian Witness: Using Tracts to Share Faith



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Suggested citation:

Sanderson, J., Colantonio, A.G., Rodriguez, R. (2019), *Christian Witness: Using Tracts to Share Faith* (pp1-7);
East Hartford, CT; Urban Alliance.

Using Tracts to Share Faith

Before Jesus ascended into Heaven He said to His disciples, *“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.”* (Acts 1:8). We are able to join with the disciples and be Christ’s witnesses in our local communities.

Urban Alliance uses a 5-C framework to describe areas of effective and sustainable programming. The concept of Christian witness captures the spiritual impact programs may have on people as they reflect the love of Christ. When we reflect God’s love through words and actions we act as witnesses to Christ.

What Does it Mean to Be a Witness?

A witness testifies to what they have seen or heard, or verifies what is true. According to the Billy Graham Gospel Association, Christians have been commissioned by Christ to be witnesses to the following:

The Gospel. *“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”* (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

The Divinity of Jesus and That He Is the Savior of the World. *“And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world”* (1 John 4:14).

The Love of God. *“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.”* (John 3:16).

The Forgiveness of God. *“He commanded us...to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”* (Acts 10:42, 43).

The Hope of Eternal Life. *“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have”* (1 Peter 3:15).

Urban Alliance’s 5-C Framework

Capacity is the degree to which programs have mechanisms in place to effectively operate.

Core services are the key offerings of a program.

Culture is comprised of program values, quality of relationships, service procedures, and characteristics of the program environment.

Connection occurs when a program links people to resources in the community.

Christian witness is reflecting the love and truth of God through words and actions.

Each believer is called to be a witness for Christ within their sphere of influence. They are called to share God’s love with the people they interact with in various contexts such as work, family, and neighborhood or community involvement.



Different Evangelism Styles

We often find ourselves in situations where there is an opportunity to share about the love of God. An opportunity may arise during a conversation with a co-worker, while sitting next to a stranger on an airplane, or to a member of the community during a church outreach event. Every day there are opportunities to share our faith and all too often we miss them because we are not ready and equipped.

God made each person differently. There is great diversity in the body of Christ. Because of this diversity, each person will have a different style and approach for sharing the Gospel. Their approach will depend on the situation they are in, their relationship with the other person or people, their gifting and temperament, and of course, following the lead of the Holy Spirit.

In fact, in the book *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, Bill Hybels and Mark Mittleberg point out that there are a variety of different evangelism styles:

Direct

People who prefer a direct style are quite confident, bold, assertive, and to-the-point. They have a tendency to be rather confrontational in their approach to people and situations (which can be either be positive or negative depending on attitude and motivation). People who have a direct style tend to be somewhat “in your face” with regard to matters about which they feel strongly. If you’ve ever had someone knock on your door and been asked when you open the door to them, “If you died today, would you go to heaven or to hell?”, you have encountered someone who has adopted the direct style of evangelism.

Bible Example

In Acts 2, in Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost, he didn’t beat around the bush, but got right to the point. He told the Jews assembled that day that they had murdered their Messiah and if they wanted to avoid the wrath of God they needed to repent. Three thousand people responded.

Intellectual

People who lean more toward an intellectual style have a rather strong tendency to be inquisitive, analytical, logical, and far more focused on what people are thinking than how they are feeling. They enjoy sitting for hours and engaging in reasoned dialogue with others about theology or various Bible topics. They are willing to engage in complex conversations about spiritual matters and can be very patient with difficult questions that require a thoughtful response.

Bible Example

In Acts 17, while in the city of Athens, Paul “was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.” He engaged philosophers and even at times quoted from their own poets and revered writers. Paul knew how to stand toe-to-toe with the best philosophers of his day and even won some to Christ.



Testimonial

People who practice the testimonial style have a tendency to be good listeners, clear communicators, and rather compelling storytellers. They have the ability to hold the interest of those with whom they seek to communicate, whether those people necessarily agree with what they're hearing or not. People who use testimonial styles are willing to share about their own challenges and how they have seen God at work in their life. Many seekers are moved by such dynamic narrative. For them, such a style is exactly what is needed to bring them into a relationship with Christ Jesus.

Bible Example

In John 9, Jesus healed a blind man and news of the miracle spread rapidly. This man was brought before the religious leaders and they questioned him repeatedly. He stuck to his story and through his testimony affirmed the divine healing power of this Jesus.

Interpersonal

A person who tends to use more of an interpersonal style has a tendency to be warm, compassionate, conversational, friendship-oriented, and focused upon people and their needs. Many call this style, "Friendship Evangelism," which simply suggests that a very effective way to share one's faith with others is to do so from a foundation of a growing interpersonal relationship.

Bible Example

In Luke 5:29, after having been called to leave his tax booth and follow Jesus, "Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them." This new follower wanted to share his newfound faith in the Messiah with as many people as he possibly could, so he hosted a large party at his home, inviting all his friends and loved ones to come.

Invitational

This is very similar to the previous style, as it is very much people-oriented. However, the emphasis is more upon those with whom you don't yet have

a close, intimate relationship than with those you do. An invitational approach focuses on bringing new people into your circle of intimacy. Those who possess this style are hospitable, inviting, persuasive, and enthusiastic. They almost always seem to be "up," and people enjoy being around them. In fact, people seem to be irresistibly drawn to them.

Bible Example

In John 4, the Samaritan woman whom Jesus encountered at Jacob's well just outside of the village of Sychar, is given as a good example of this style. After a rather intimate conversation with Jesus, she "went back into the village and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?' So they came out of the town and made their way toward Him." Later we are informed, "Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony."

Serving

Those who prefer a serving style have a tendency to be others-centered, patient, willing to work behind the scenes, and typically demonstrate love through their actions, rather than through mere words alone. Acts of service often involve meeting practical needs such as preparing a meal, watching another person's children, providing needed items, or helping with a task. People with this style simply want to love one another, and seek to do so in a quiet, unassuming manner.

Bible Example

In Acts 9:36, Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) lived in Joppa, and "was always doing good and helping the poor." One of her talents was making clothing for the poor, a gift for which she was well-beloved in that area.

For many people, it is helpful to identify their style of evangelism and discern how God can use them to share his love with others. The quiz at the end of this booklet can be used to help you determine your style.

Tracts and Evangelism

Tracts are printed materials that contain the Word of God. Different tracts contain different messages from God's Word, but most include the basic tenets of the Gospel: God loves us, sin separates us from God, Jesus died on the cross so we might have peace with God, and if we believe that Jesus is our Savior and choose to live for Him, we will have eternal life. Tracts can be used in a variety of ways depending on a person's evangelism style and the context in which they are sharing their faith.

There are a variety of different ways tracts can be distributed and all have merit. Isaiah 55:11 says, "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." When we make God's word and truth available to others, God can use our efforts in powerful ways. However, tracts are often most effective when provided in the context of a relationship or conversation. This gives the person receiving the tract the opportunity to ask questions, respond to the information, and for follow-up after the conversation. It is important to consider the most relational way tracts can be distributed. See the table below for examples of how to use tracts that are more or less relational in nature.

Very Relational

A tract is provided in the context of an existing relationship; there is a conversation where truth about God is shared and there is an opportunity for questions, the person is invited to respond (if the Holy Spirit leads in that way), and there is an opportunity for follow-up or ongoing dialogue.

Examples:

- Two friends have lunch together, the conversation centers on God and His love, a tract is shared, and there is an opportunity for continued dialogue.
- A volunteer at a food pantry has been building relationship with a single mother who comes regularly. One day the mother begins asking questions about heaven, the volunteer shares the Gospel, and provides a tract.

Somewhat Relational

A tract is provided to a stranger or someone you do not know very well; there is little opportunity for conversation and little to no opportunity for follow-up or continued dialogue.

Examples:

- A church hosts a large community event with activities for children and a presentation of the Gospel. After the Gospel is shared, a community member asks for prayer. She receives prayer and engages in a conversation about Jesus with a member of the church. She is provided with a tract and invited to the next Sunday church service.
- During a door-to-door outreach tracts are provided to each person and they are offered prayer. In some cases, the tracts create an opportunity for a conversation about Jesus, and in other cases there is no interest.

Not Relational/Situational

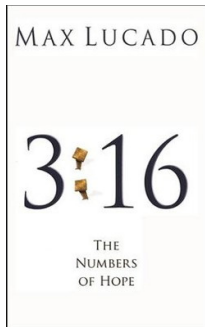
A tract is provided outside of the context of a relationship; since there is no relational context, there is no opportunity for conversation or follow-up.

Examples:

- A church provides toys to families for Christmas. Each bag of toys contains a tract and a Bible. Most of the families that receive toys have no connection to the church.
- Each member of a church receives a tract and is directed to leave it somewhere in the community for another person to find.
- At a large community event, tracts are provided to a large group of people during a Gospel presentation. There is no one-on-one interaction and most people do not have a connection to the church that is sponsoring the event.

Types of Tracts

There are also many types of tracts, each containing different messages. It is often best to have a variety of tracts available so you can match the message of the tract with the context. There are also tracts written to different audiences such as people who are not yet believers, new believers, adults, young adults, children, people with particular struggles (i.e. addiction or depression), as well as tracts with various themes such as salvation, holidays, grace, or encouragement. See below for examples of different types of tracts:

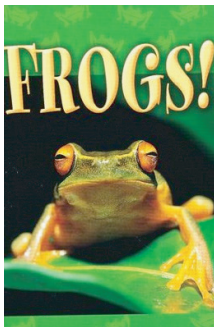


“Regardless of our spiritual maturity or biblical knowledge, we all need to be reminded of the message John 3:16 gives. Beloved author Max Lucado tells us that the heart of the human problem is the heart of the human, and God’s treatment is prescribed in the 26 words of this verse. There we find promise, hope, life, and joy for eternity.”



“The CrossTalk is a fun new way to share the clear and simple gospel featuring: Kid-friendly language, colorful cartoon graphics, die-cut pattern that unfolds to the shape of a cross (ships unfolded).

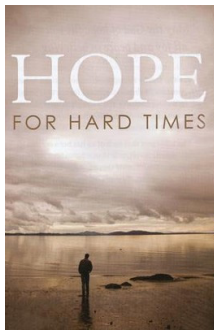
Crosstalk fold-outs includes God Loves You (John 3:16), Our Problem (sin Romans 3:23), Our Punishment (separation from God), God’s Answer (the cross Romans 5:8), and Your Choice (choose Jesus, with a sinner’s prayer for children).”



“Certain to catch the eyes of your elementary school children, these tracts give awesome facts all about frogs and 5 more pictures inside. Along with how a tadpole becomes a new creature, new life in Christ and the complete gospel message are also described with a prayer and address for more information. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17).”



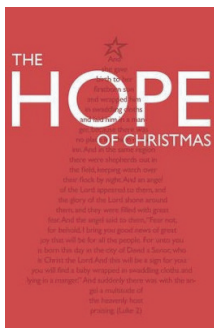
“An intimate letter from the Father to his children telling them how deeply He loves them. This letter will stir hearts, change lives, and bring healing and restoration to those who respond to God’s love. The Father reveals his character and his care telling his children that he is the perfect Father you’ve been looking for all your life. Abundant Scripture references, with no particular translation used.”



“There is no greater hope than this—the assurance of eternal life offered to us through Jesus Christ and his promise to stay with us and sustain us in all circumstances. Prayer included. Bible references from the ESV.”



“The offer of a ticket to heaven might seem too easy to be true, but this little tract gets right to the heart of the matter. Offering the ticket but explaining the price involved, the text moves quickly into the reality of sin, Christ’s atonement and acceptance of that sacrifice. While not actually using the word “repent” and addressing the relationship between the sinner and God as more intimate than salvific, this tract can be used most effectively by the evangelist following up with answers to questions and further exposition of biblical truths.”



“This tract illustrates that God offers hope and peace to all during the Christmas season through the gift of sending His Son with many Scripture verses, steps to receive Christ as Savior, and a sample prayer. There’s no better “Christmas gift” than the gift of eternal life and peace with God through Jesus Christ!”

These are just a few of the hundreds of different tracts available to choose from. Tracts can be purchased from a variety of places including:

- **Christian Book Distributors**
<https://www.christianbook.com>
- **Bibles by the Case**
<http://www.biblesbythecase.com>
- **Living Waters**
<http://store.livingwaters.com/>
- **Life Way**
<http://www.lifeway.com>



Other Considerations

In addition to the context, relationship, and type of tract to use there are some other things that are important to consider when sharing your faith. These include word choice, culture, and messages communicated.

Christianese

Christians routinely use words like “sin,” “salvation,” “fellowship,” “sanctification,” and “the Gospel” without realizing these phrases can confuse or even repel people who are not familiar with them. These words or phrases are often known as “Christianese”. Christianese is characterized by the use in everyday conversation of certain words, theological terms, puns and catchphrases, in ways that may only be understood within the context of the Christian faith or a specific denomination. When speaking with others about faith it is important to use words that are clear and that are known by people who have not read the Bible or attended church in the past.

For example, consider the word conversion. This is a word used commonly in the Christian faith to describe the point when a person commits their life to Jesus. However, it can also be used to describe a building project that makes an area habitable (a “loft conversion”), as a term for comparing the value of money from different countries (a “currency conversion”), or as a way of changing the format of a document on a computer (“file conversion”). The same word can have many meanings and associations.

It is best to communicate using words that are easily understood. Sometimes this means intentionally choosing words or phrases commonly understood by others. In other cases, a person may use a less commonly understood word and give definition to it. For example, a person may say “At my conversion, the moment I understood God’s love for me and chose to live for Him...” These extra words or phrases help a person to understand the full meaning of what is being said. This is very important for people who do not have faith in Jesus and are learning about Him through conversations and interactions with others.

Language

Another important consideration is spoken language. A person will understand the Gospel if it is not communicated in a language they are not able to understand. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the demographics of the people likely to attend events and programming. This allows leaders to plan accordingly to ensure staff and volunteers who speak specific languages are present and that tracts and other printed materials are available in the appropriate language.



Message

There are many different messages that can be communicated to help a person understand God’s nature, character, and their need for Him. Some people may or may not know just how much they need a Savior, and have varying levels of exposure to and understanding of the theological consequences of sin. It takes wisdom and discernment to know the best way to communicate about these things. Generally, it is encouraged to lead with a message of God’s love for people and His desire to invite them into a relationship with Him and fellowship with other believers. As the Church, we must not forget that transformation often happens in community and fellowship with others. Our goal is to share a message of love with unbelievers and build a bridge that leads to relationship and transformation.