

Making a Simple Statement of the Gospel

Some preliminaries:

- 1) The suggestions below are for stating the *Gospel*. They tell what God has done in Christ for our salvation. All of them in some way recognize God's Law and our sinful condition, but none of them dwell on it.
- 2) If you are in conversation with people who do not recognize themselves as sinners, you will probably have to address this before you do much to state the Gospel.

Below are three encouragements, A, B, and C. Each of them stands independent of the others. Perhaps you will encounter a situation in which you can use more than one of these three suggestions. However, please bear in mind that they are not listed here with the intention that you will utilize the second one only after using the first one, etc.

A. "Good News Method" from Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ

This simple method utilizes an extended paraphrase of John 3:16, inserting the first name of a person several times. The name goes in the blanks below.

For God so loved _____ that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer, die, and rise in victory for _____, so that believing in Jesus as the Savior from sin, _____ shall not perish, but _____ shall have everlasting life.

- You can speak the above words, inserting the person's name.
- You can also put these words on a card. A model for your use can be found at <https://www.oafc.org/the-gospel-message.html>
 - If you print some of these cards, carry a supply with you.
 - Give the cards to people. The cards can come in handy in all kinds of situations.
 - A particularly interesting way to do this is at a restaurant. Write the name of your server in the blanks and leave the card with your generous tip.

B. "Sin – Separation – Savior Method" from Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ

This method can be used after people have told you how they think they will be saved, especially if their way is not Christ and His Gospel. It might be adapted for use in situations a bit more broadly, when someone has told you about hopes and dreams, although not necessarily thoughts on salvation.

May I tell you why I believe I will go to heaven? I try to be a good person [or whatever – here, reflect as much as possible what the other person has been telling you].

But I still sin. Because God requires perfection, even one sin would separate me from God forever.

That is why I am glad to know that God sent Jesus Christ to suffer, die, and rise in victory to pay for all of my sins.

I believe I will go to heaven because of what Jesus did for me. What do you think about what Jesus has done?

- You can see in the few sentences above the basic outline: sin – separation – Savior. This basic outline can be adapted as needed.
- Note the question at the end. It does not put words into others' mouths, but merely asks for their reaction.

C. "Soap" Method

This method uses a simple analogy.

What would we do without soap? Washing with soap gets dirt off your body or your clothes. In the process, though, the soap itself disappears. A bar of soap gets smaller and smaller with each wash. You might say that as we use soap, it gives itself for our cleanliness.

Jesus said this of Himself: "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). He Himself became the price for our release. He died for us – not just for our benefit, but in our place. Jesus Christ gave Himself for us.

The Bible says that "the blood of Jesus [God's] Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). He is the Man Who is also God, so He rose from the dead. He lives. Not just anyone's blood can cleanse from sin, but His can. His does. It removes our separation from God.

How is this cleansing by the blood of Christ applied to us? Here's one way. The Bible says: "Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins" (Acts 22:16).

- The analogy between Christ and soap can be helpful. Unlike an expended bar of soap, though, Jesus is not gone. He lives and reigns!
- The last paragraph could be extended to include the other means of grace: the Gospel (see John 15:3) and the Lord's Supper in which we drink Christ's blood and eat His body for our forgiveness. The emphasis above falls on baptism, the "frontier sacrament."

SPECIAL NOTES for keeping the Gospel focus on Christ and His work, not us and ours:

1. Sorrow over sin should paint us into a corner so we have nowhere else to turn. Don't overly minimize it or maximize it.
2. Don't make all contrition (sorrow over sin) depend on one sin. Sin is a condition.
3. Faith is passive in salvation. Don't dwell on its activity: the feelings it stirs, the things it does, etc.
4. A related point: God in Christ is the cause of our salvation. We are not saved because we believe in Christ. God saves us through faith in Christ. Avoid speaking of faith as a work or as a cause of salvation.
5. Christians in this life still have their old sinful nature hanging on. Therefore Christians do not always behave better than others, face death without fear, etc. It is wise not to make unrealistic and untrue claims.