



Chapter 9

How-to Give a Gospel Presentation

Acts 4:1-22

UNDERSTANDING

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DISCUSSION

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UNDERSTANDING

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PASSAGE?

Read Acts 4:1-22

Everyone is made for relationship with Jesus Christ. Why is it that so many people have not made a commitment to Jesus Christ and His Church? Some will say it is because no one has ever clearly explained to them the simple message of the gospel and asked them if they would commit their lives to it.

As St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, “And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14). In this chapter, we will look at an example of a gospel presentation made by the apostles and then learn how to give one today.

Arrested for the Gospel

Right after St. Peter’s address at Pentecost, Sts. Peter and John go to the Jewish temple. There St. Peter heals a man who had been lame since birth. After this, the people in the temple are astonished and run to Sts. Peter and John to find out how this happened. While they are telling the people the gospel, they are arrested by the Jewish authorities. Today we will examine how they present the gospel to the Jewish authorities.

Live a Life Worth Explaining

Sts. Peter and John's actions in the temple prompt the Jewish officials to bring them into custody for questioning. We have the opportunity to live in a unique way that causes others to wonder, "Why do you live like that?" But first, we must live differently than the world does.

We can do this in so many ways, but one essential way is through joy. Pope Benedict XVI, in his address at World Youth Day 2012, stated, "Dear friends....be missionaries of joy. We cannot be happy if others are not. Joy has to be shared. Go and tell other young people about your joy at finding the precious treasure which is Jesus himself." Blessed Teresa of Calcutta once said, "Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls." Sts. Peter and John exhibit this joy while they preach the gospel and when they are questioned by the Jewish authorities.

Why Do We Speak Out?

In Acts 4:18, the Jewish officials ask Sts. Peter and John to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. They give a remarkable response for why they must continue to do so: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). Sts. Peter and John have had such a deep encounter with Jesus that they cannot help but speak about it.

How Do We Speak Out?

The gospel message that St. Peter preaches to the Jewish authorities has a few simple components: Jesus was crucified (v. 10); Jesus rose from the dead (v. 10); Jesus is the only way to salvation (v. 12); and Jesus makes this offer to all men (v. 12).

This presentation is given within a historical context to a specific group of people. Let's look at one model that can be used with audiences today.

The Ultimate Relationship

As we see in Acts, the gospel can be presented in many ways. FOCUS uses one method called "The Ultimate Relationship." To find out how to use "The Ultimate Relationship" booklet, please see the article that accompanies this chapter.

"The Ultimate Relationship" has four main components:

1. God created us for a relationship with Him.
2. Our relationship is broken through sin.
3. Jesus restores our relationship with the Father.
4. We have the choice to accept or reject this offer.

To prepare for this Bible study, please be ready to present "The Ultimate Relationship" booklet to your group. Even if you haven't used the book before, it is simple enough that you can read the text directly from the booklet.

Next, use the article on "The Ultimate Relationship" that accompanies this chapter to walk your group through the various steps of the booklet.

At the end of the study, everyone should be equipped to go home and practice "The Ultimate Relationship" on their own. During the next

Bible study, you will practice presenting “The Ultimate Relationship” to one another. Afterwards, members of your group will be assigned to present “The Ultimate Relationship” to two people who need to hear the gospel.

Don't Make Assumptions

Too often we assume that certain people have already given their life to Christ or that they have actually heard the gospel before. We must never make this assumption. Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the papal household, says, “I can see from my own experience that even if I speak of many beautiful concepts, nothing seems to happen. We must proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior, helping people to grasp what it means to have Jesus as their Savior—not in a theoretical way, but that every day they have a Savior, someone who will lift them from their fatigue of the day, of their sin, and their mistakes, and who renews them. He saves us. When you proclaim this living, crucified and risen Jesus something always happens.”

Something always happens when we present the gospel. Be willing to step out of your comfort zone to give a gift that lasts forever.

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUR BIBLE STUDY

Acts 4:1-22

STEP 1: OPENER

What prevents you from sharing the message of Jesus with others?

STEP 2: BACKDROP

Right after St. Peter's address at Pentecost, Sts. Peter and John go to the Jewish temple. There St. Peter heals a man who had been lame since birth. After this, the people in the temple are astonished and run to Sts. Peter and John to find out how this happened. While they are telling the people the Gospel, they are arrested by the Jewish authorities. Today we will examine how they present the Gospel to the Jewish authorities.

STEP 3: PASSAGE

Read Acts 4:1-22

STEP 4: EXPLORATION: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Note that answers appear in italics.

Exploration: Questions and Answers

Read Acts 4:1-22

1. The Jewish authorities see the actions of Sts. Peter and John in the temple and ask, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" How do we live in such a way that people ask how we are able to live the way we do?

Allow the group to discuss. Feel free to use the example of joy found in "Live a Life Worth Explaining."

2. If you were put in the same situation as Sts. Peter and John, what would you be thinking and feeling?

Allow the group to discuss.

3. In light of this, what makes the example of Sts. Peter and John so impressive?

Allow the group to discuss.

4. What causes them to continue to preach the gospel?

Answer: Their conviction in the truth of the gospel message: "For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20).

5. When have you seen and heard God in your own life?

Allow the group to discuss.

6. What prevents us from telling others how we have experienced God in our own lives?

Allow the group to discuss.

7. In Acts 4:8-12, what are the steps that St. Peter takes in his explanation of the gospel to the Jewish authorities?

Answer: Try to hone in on the four basic steps found in the section "How Do We Speak Out?"

8. Why it is important to tell others about Jesus in addition to demonstrating our conviction by how we live?

Allow the group to discuss.

9. Who do you think needs to hear the gospel?

Answer: Everyone who we haven't discussed it with. Feel free to read the quote by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa found in the section "Don't Make Assumptions."

10. Introduce your group to “The Ultimate Relationship” booklet and explain that it is a method for clearly articulating the basic message of the gospel. Use the article on “The Ultimate Relationship” that accompanies this chapter for your explanation.

- *Demonstrate to them how you would walk someone through “The Ultimate Relationship.”*
- *After demonstration, explain the purpose of each step.*
- *Tell your group that they will be practicing this as a group and then eventually sharing it with two people outside the group.*

