

QUIET TIME

Theme: Witnessing

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understood.

- Day 1 Isaiah 44:6-8
Witnessing is: telling about God who knows what is going to happen
- Day 2 Mark 1:40-45
Witnessing is: telling what Jesus Christ has changed in your life
- Day 3 Mark 2:13-17
Witnessing is: introducing your friends to Jesus Christ
- Day 4 Mark 5:1-20
Witnessing is: telling your family what Jesus Christ has done for you
- Day 5 Mark 8:34-38
Witnessing is: not being ashamed to talk about Jesus Christ
- Day 6^{BS} Acts 5:17-20
Witnessing is: talking about everything concerning the new life
- Day 7 Acts 20:24-27
Witnessing is: to proclaim the whole will of God
- Day 8 Hebrews 11:24-27
Witnessing is: letting your faith speak by means of your actions (cf. Hebrews 12:1-3)
- Day 9 Isaiah 55:10-13
A witness believes that no word of God will return empty to God
- Day 10 Matthew 10:16-33
A promise to those who come out for their faith in Jesus Christ
- Think about Colossians 4:2-4. Pray that God opens a door to proclaim the gospel to others
 - Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

STUDY

Theme: Explaining the gospel and witnessing

Read study 43 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

BIBLE STUDY

Theme: The task of evangelisation belongs to the congregation

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **Acts 5:12-42**

MEMORISATION

1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

WITNESSING Matthew 10:32

Whoever acknowledges me before men,
I will also acknowledge him
before my Father in heaven.

Matthew 10:32(NIV)

3. Review and back-review

Review the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

43. Explaining the gospel and witnessing

This study helps you to explain the gospel to others and also to give a personal testimony how you became a believer in Jesus Christ. This study requires regular practice!

An important characteristic of a disciple of Jesus Christ is that he bears fruit (John 15:8,16).

Bearing fruit consists of bearing different kinds of fruit: First, the fruit of the Spirit in your life consists of the characteristics of a Spirit-filled life (Galatians 5:22-23) that spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Jesus Christ everywhere (2 Corinthians 2:14-16) and causes you to be a letter written by Jesus Christ which other people may read (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). Second, the fruit consists of the influence of your good works on others (Luke 3:8-14). Third, the fruit consists of your influence in witnessing to others, helping them to repent (change their thinking) and believe in Christ (i.e. become new believers) (Colossians 1:5-6). And fourth, the fruit consists of disciples of Jesus Christ that have grown to maturity and persevere in following Jesus Christ (John 15:16).

A. Explaining the message of the gospel in 12 Bible verses

1. The approach to explaining the gospel

Explain the gospel by using the illustration below. John 3:16 says: "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."

Draw the illustration.

Ask the person whether you may explain the gospel in short to him. If he says 'yes', then explain the gospel step by step, by drawing the illustration. When you have completed the illustration, ask whether he has more questions and discuss them as good as possible.

Discuss his place in the illustration.

Ask him where he thinks he is standing in the illustration. Ask him whether he would like to receive Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord. If he answers 'yes', then read the prayer and answer his questions. Ask him whether he wants to pray this prayer. If he answers 'yes', let *him* read or pray this prayer.

2. Explaining the gospel in 12 Bible verses

(1) Genesis 1:27. In the beginning, when God created man, God wanted man to share eternal life with him. (Draw top block with the words 'GOD' and 'eternal life').

(2) Isaiah 59:1-2. But man chose another way. The Bible says that 'sin' brought separation between God and man. (Draw second block with the words 'my sins' and 'separation').

(3) Romans 3:23. Thus, all people are separated from God. They are lost and lack the beautiful characteristics from God.

(4) Romans 6:23. All people are on their way to eternal death (hell). (Draw bottom block with the words 'man' and 'eternal death').

(5) Ephesians 2:8-9. People try in vain to find a way back to God. They do good works in order to win the favour of God. But the Bible says that people are saved only by God's grace and through faith and not through doing good works (Draw the ladder. Write 'doing good works' next to ladder.)

(6) Galatians 3:10. They keep the law in order to earn God's justification. But the Bible says that people who want to keep the law must keep it perfectly (100%), otherwise they are under a curse (Write 'keeping the law' next to ladder).

(7) Acts 4:12 or John 14:6. They try out other religions. But the Bible says that Jesus Christ is the only Way to God. (Write 'trying other religions' next to ladder).

(8) Romans 5:8. God nevertheless loves lost people. So he took the initiative, took on the nature of man in Jesus Christ and came down to man. Jesus Christ revealed God to man and died on the cross in order to make atonement for the sins of those who believe in him and reconcile them to God. He was resurrected from the dead as proof that God accepted his work of salvation. Thus Jesus Christ removed man's problem: 'sin' by nailing it with his body onto the cross and he also removed the consequence of man's problem: 'separation' from God. (Draw the cross so that the block with the words 'sin' and 'separation' are as it were nailed to the top of the cross.)

(9) 1 Peter 2:24. The cross is absolutely necessary because it is the only and indispensable way to reconcile God's righteousness (by punishing my sins) with God's mercy and love (by saving me from eternal damnation). It is the only effective way to remove the problem ('sin').

(10) 1 Peter 3:18a. The cross is the only effective way to remove the consequence of the problem ('separation from God').

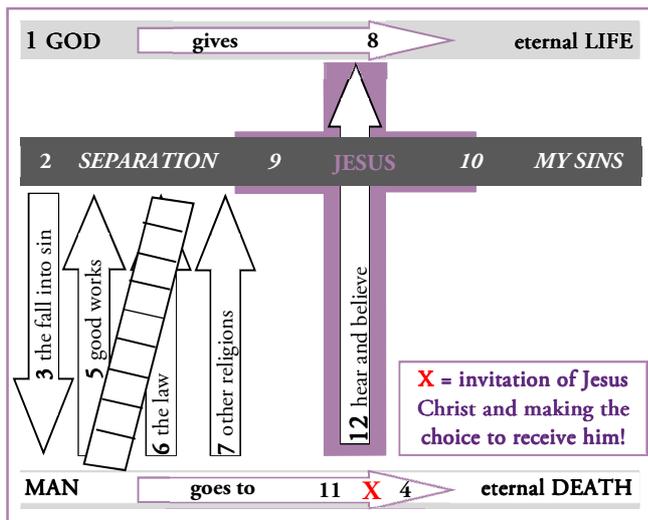
(11) Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus Christ invites people, who realise that they are lost and on their way to eternal damnation, to come to him and find rest. Now you stand before a personal decision. You must make a choice between eternal death without Christ and eternal life with Christ. There is no other way! (Draw an 'X' at the foot of the cross where the choice must be made).

(12) John 5:24. Jesus Christ says: “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, *has* eternal life and *will not* be condemned; he *has crossed over* from (eternal) death to (eternal) life.”

Ask him whether he has any questions. Answer them as good as you can.

Then ask him whether he believes the message and wants to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Let him pray the prayer to receive Jesus Christ.



B. Explaining the message of the gospel in 20 Bible verses

1. The message of the gospel illustrated

See the illustration on the last page.
Read the Bible passages one by one and draw the illustration.

The message of the gospel is ‘the good news’ about five truths in the Bible:

(1) The truth about GOD

God’s plan is to fill the earth with people who bear the image of God.

(2) The truth about MAN

The problem of man is ‘sin’ (missing God’s goal for your life).

(3) The truth about JESUS CHRIST

God’s solution for the problem of man is Jesus Christ, his death and his resurrection.

(4) The truth about SALVATION

The response God requires from man is faith.

(5) The truth about the NEW LIFE.

The characteristic of the new life is assurance of forgiveness.

2. Explanation of the meaning of the difficult words

a. Atonement

The death of Jesus Christ is a sacrifice of *atonement*, a sacrifice that turns away God’s holy and righteous anger against your sins and reconciles you to God (Romans 3:25).

b. Justification

Justification is a judicial concept and means that God has once for all time declared you perfectly righteous (forgiven) and henceforth regards and treats you as completely righteous. Jesus Christ has taken all your sins upon himself and has granted you his perfect righteousness (‘sinless’ as a position) (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18a). All the past, present and future sins of a righteous person have been completely forgiven (Psalm 103:3; Luke 24:47; Hebrews 10:17-18). A righteous person has a personal relationship with God forever. This happens the moment someone believes in Jesus Christ.

c. Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a social expression and means that God has given up his hostility against you and your old lifestyle of being a slave to sin (Psalm 11:5), that God has made peace with you and that you may henceforth experience his peace in your thoughts and feelings (Romans 5:1,9-10; Philippians 4:7). This happens the moment someone believes in Jesus Christ.

d. Sanctification

Sanctification is an ethical term and means that God is from now onwards transforming you so that you will become more and more Christ like (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is a process that continues from your regeneration until your physical death.

e. Glorification

Glorification is an eschatological expression and means that God will change you completely and perfectly to be like Jesus Christ in your spirit (1 John 3:1-3) and in your body (Philippians 3:21). This will be completed at the second coming of Christ.

C. Sharing your personal salvation testimony

1. A personal salvation testimony like that of Paul

Read Acts 26:1-29. Investigate how Paul came to faith in Jesus Christ. Paul divided his personal testimony in five parts: an introduction, the period before his conversion, his conversion (the great change), the period after his conversion and the discussion (the invitation).

Part 1. The introduction (establishing a relationship) (Acts 26:1-3).

When Paul sees an opportunity to share the gospel he takes it. This time he tells the gospel by sharing the story of how he became a believer in Jesus Christ. But first he builds a bridge to the other person by establishing a friendly relationship with him.

Part 2. The period before his conversion (Acts 26:4-11). Paul speaks about his background and past in order to help his listeners to identify themselves with him (verse 4).

Paul shares a few positive points about his past (his education, his religious zeal and his good intentions) (verse 5; cf. Acts 22:3).

Paul also shares a few negative points about his past (how he persecuted the Christians and used violence against the Christian Church) (verses 9-11).

Paul talks about things his listeners can identify with. He creates a possibility for his listeners to respond with approval. He rouses their interest by telling them how he found answers to such kinds of questions. (The Pharisees were very interested in the resurrection from the dead and King Agrippa was very interested in the points of disputes of the Jews) (verses 6-8).

Part 3. His conversion (Acts 26:12-18).

Paul never says, “I think” or “I feel”, but in a lively way describes how he actually came to faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul emphasises the fact that he did not seek Christ at all, but that Christ sought him and found him! He relates how Jesus Christ made himself known to him when his life was still in chaos.

Paul quotes the words of Jesus Christ. He tells parts of the good news (the gospel) in his testimony: People must turn from the darkness to the light; from Satan to God; believe in Jesus Christ; and then believers will receive forgiveness of their sins; and a place in God’s people (verse 18). The gospel is the message by which his listeners get the chance to also believe in Jesus Christ!

Part 4. The period after his conversion (the change) (Acts 26:19-23).

Paul describes the transformation in his life. (The persecutor of Christians became the promoter of Christ). He relates at least one important change in his life.

Paul admits that he still faces difficult situations in life. But he also says that God helps him in these difficulties.

Paul quotes the Bible (the Law and the Prophets) as the source of his inspiration and authority (verse 22).

Paul tells more about the gospel: Jesus Christ died and was resurrected. The good news is for Jews and for Gentiles. All people must repent, must turn away from sin and turn to God. They must prove their repentance by their deeds – by practically following Jesus Christ (verses 23,20).

Part 5. The conversation (the invitation) (Acts 26:24-29).

When Paul is abused, he stays calm and continues to show respect (verses 24-25).

Paul tries to convince his hearers to become Christians (verses 26-27). He uses no violence or threats, but tries to convince people of the truth.

Paul invites his hearers to make a choice (verses 28-29). He invites them to become followers (disciples) of Jesus Christ.

You can also share your personal salvation testimony in the way Paul shared it. You may make use of the same five steps.

2. A personal salvation testimony like that of Timothy

Read 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:10-15.

There are many Christians who have come to faith in Jesus Christ while they were still very young, just like Timothy. Maybe they cannot remember all the influences that led to their coming to faith in Jesus Christ, but they do know that they are believers in Jesus Christ! These ‘Timothy’s’ could record and tell their personal salvation testimony as follows:

Part 1. Overview of your Christian life.

Tell shortly your Christian background (about the influence of Christian parents, teachers and church).

Part 2. What Jesus Christ means to you now.

Tell what influence he has had on your life and especially tell about one area in which he has changed your life.

Part 3. The gospel.

Tell one important part of the gospel message or quote a Bible passage that explains the gospel.

Assignment: write your personal salvation testimony.

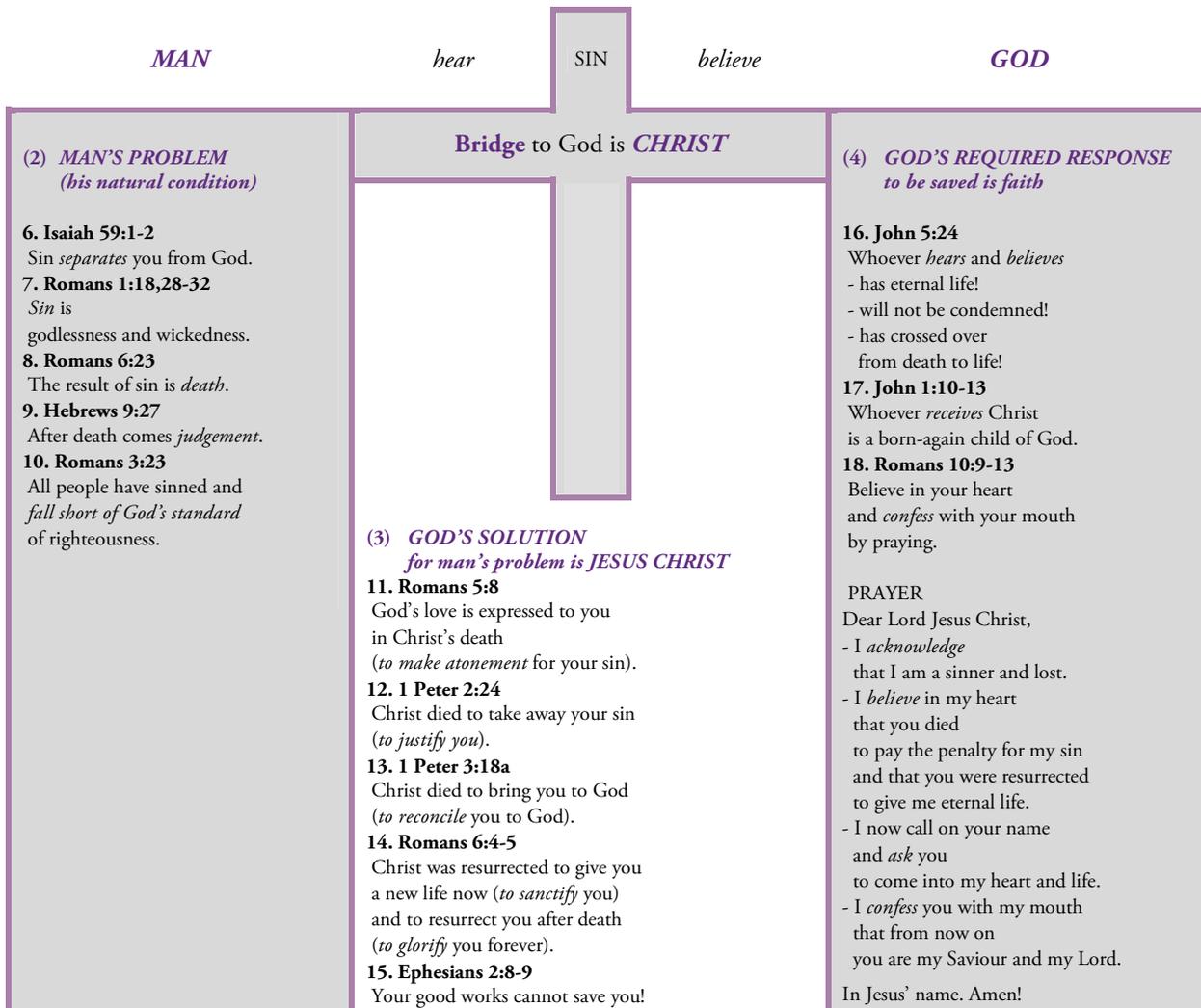
Write your personal salvation testimony and practise sharing it in your group. ‘Witnessing’ is telling how you have become a believer in Jesus Christ (a follower of Jesus Christ) and what he now means to you.

“Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34)!

WHY JESUS CHRIST?

(1) GOD'S PLAN

- 1. Romans 1:19-20** God *revealed* himself. You can *know* God.
2. 1 John 1:5-6 God is light. If you want to know God, *come into the light*.
3. 1 John 4:8 God is love. If you want to experience God, *receive God's love* and love other people.
4. Genesis 1:27 God *created* you to *have the characteristics of God*, not of evil.
5. Isaiah 43:7 God created you to *live for God*, not for yourself.



(5) GOD'S ASSURANCE

(the new life of the Christian)

- 19. John 10:27-28** From now on - you *listen* to God's Word and *follow* Christ.
 - Christ gives you the *assurance*: that you have life forever, that you will never perish and that no one will snatch you away from him.
20. John 10:7-10 Christ gives you an *abundant life*.

The meaning of difficult words

- To make atonement for your sin* means to remove God's righteous anger against your sin. Christ's death is an atonement sacrifice, a sacrifice that turns away God's wrath against your sin (Romans 3:25).
To justify you is a legal term and means to declare you righteous in God's eyes. On the cross, Christ takes your unrighteousness on himself and gives you his righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). As a righteous person you are forgiven and stand in the right relationship with God. This happens the moment you believe. From that moment onwards, God regards and treats you as completely righteous.
To reconcile you to God means to change God's enmity against you and your former life-style (Psalm 5:4-5; 11:5). From the moment you believe, God has made peace with you and you may experience peace of mind and heart (Romans 5:1,9-10; Philippians 4:7).
To sanctify you means to transform you more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). This happens during your whole Christian life on earth.
To glorify you means to transform you to become like Jesus Christ (1 John 3:2). This includes the transformation of your present body, which will become like Christ's glorious body (Philippians 3:21). This will happen at Christ's second coming.

What the Bible says

<p>1. Romans 1:19-20 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.</p> <p>2. 1 John 1:5-6 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.</p> <p>3. 1 John 4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.</p> <p>4. Genesis 1:27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.</p> <p>5. Isaiah 43:7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.</p> <p>6. Isaiah 59:1-2 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.</p> <p>7. Romans 1:18,28-32 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness. Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.</p> <p>8. Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.</p> <p>9. Hebrews 9:27 Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,</p> <p>10. Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,</p>	<p>11. Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.</p> <p>12. 1 Peter 2:24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”</p> <p>13. 1 Peter 3:18a For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.</p> <p>14. Romans 6:4-5 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.</p> <p>15. Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.</p> <p>16. John 5:24 “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.</p> <p>17. John 1:10-13 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.</p> <p>18. Romans 10:9-13 If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”</p> <p>19. John 10:27-28 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.</p> <p>20. John 10:7-10 Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.</p>
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**The birth of Jesus Christ brought God to man.
The death of Jesus Christ brought man to God.**