

If you had the opportunity today to help someone embrace a relationship with Jesus Christ, would you feel confident in your ability to communicate what they needed to know? Explain.

What truths did you understand at the time you became a Christian that enabled you to cross that line of faith?

What do you think are the essential core truths a person needs to understand in order to become a Christian?

Teacher: Write each statement out for the group to see (on paper board, white board, projector, etc) and have them evaluate whether or not they think a person “must” understand that truth in order to be saved. Work it down until you have only the critical pieces necessary for salvation.

Read the following verses and determine the requirements for salvation.

Romans 3:10-12 (NIV)

¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Acts 16:31 (NIV)

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household."

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Acts 3:19 (NIV)

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

Romans 10:9 (NIV)

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

In light of the above verses, would you modify any of the “essentials” you had previously listed?

Acknowledge_____ you have a broken relationship with God.

Romans 3:23 (NIV)

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

1 John 1:8 (NIV)

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 (NIV)

⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

Believe_____ in Jesus Christ.

John 1:12 (NIV)

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 3:16 (NIV)

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.

Confess_____ your sins and repent.

Luke 13:3 (NIV)

I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

Luke 15:10 (NIV)

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Acts 2:38 (NIV)

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Declare_____ Jesus is Lord.

Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV)

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Why is it important to acknowledge that there is a problem in our relationship with God?

It is important to know the problem before we can discuss a solution. If there is no problem, then there is no need for a solution. This is significant because many people do not think there is a problem between themselves and God. Many believe that they are a basically good person who will be admitted into heaven on judgement day due to the good life they lived. Anyone with this perspective does not feel compelled to seek out God for forgiveness and new life.

What exactly is it about Jesus that we are to believe in order to be saved?**What do the following verses reveal about what we must believe about Jesus?****John 20:31 (NIV)**

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

1 Peter 3:18 (NIV)

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 (NIV)

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

- Jesus is the Son of God
(God in human form, Philippians 2:6-8, John 1:1, Colossians 1:15)
- Jesus died as a sacrifice for our sins.
- Jesus rose from the grave to new life.

Why is it necessary to believe Jesus is God in order to be saved?

Turning to Jesus, as God, is what everything is all about. We're not simply using Jesus as a "means" by which to get to God. We are turning to Jesus because that's who God is. To embrace "God", but not Jesus as God, is a rejection of the very God we are to worship.

Everything in scripture points to us bowing our knees before Jesus and worshipping him through eternity (Philippians 2:11). Our very relationship with God is based on the Spirit of Christ in our lives. If Jesus is not God, then he does not have an eternal spirit which can indwell all believers through all time and around the globe. His spirit would be finite. The only reason his death and resurrection can be applied to the lives of every believer is because his spirit is the Holy Spirit. If Jesus is not God, then we are still trapped in our sin nature.

Below are two ways to explain our dilemma and how to be restored to relationship with God. (We have already discussed the Bridge to Life presentation in the Foundations series.)

MARRIAGE:

ONENESS



God created us to be in intimate relationship with him, where he would enjoy us and we would enjoy him forever. His Spirit was to live within us, making us literally “one” with him. This was the way it was at the beginning of Creation.

DIVORCE



In time, we became unfaithful and rejected our relationship with God. We declared independence from him and went our own sinful way. Because we separated ourselves from the source of goodness and life, we ended up only with death. The life we had hoped to gain was revealed to be a deception and we lost everything we had. We are now in the process of dying physically, but we have already died spiritually.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION



In spite of all this, God still loves us deeply and wants to restore our relationship with him. In order to do so, the death penalty for our unfaithfulness needed to be paid. God came as a man (Jesus Christ) to die on the cross to pay that price and make forgiveness possible.

REMARRIAGE

For those of us who desire to be restored to relationship with God, all we need to do is ask God to forgive us for our sins (in light of the fact that Jesus paid the death price on our behalf), turn away from sin and accept his Spirit into our lives to direct us, as leader of our lives.

Heaven is then described as a huge wedding feast prepared for all those who chose to enter this new covenant relationship with God. (Matt 8:11, 22:1-2, Lk 13:29, 14,15)

Have you ever chosen to enter this type of relationship with God?

LEGAL SYSTEM:

Our relationship with God can be described in terms of a legal system.

Picture a person brought before a judge for a very serious crime they committed. They are guilty. They know it and the judge knows it.

**GUILTY**

The guilty verdict is given and the person is sentenced to prison and ultimately the death sentence. The person is then about to be led away in bondage to wait for that fateful day.

**PARDON**

The judge then makes an astounding and absurd offer. He declares that he will send his own son to prison for the time allotted and then face the death penalty for the guilty person. On top of that he will offer the person a complete pardon and an opportunity to be adopted by the judge himself.

**DECISION**

The guilty person then has a decision to make. Does he/she accept the gift of adoption and the pardon, or does he/she decide to pay the consequence himself/herself? Either way, the judge's son still pays the price, the only question is whether or not the person will allow it be applied to his/her life.

ANALOGY EXPLAINED

We stand guilty before God for all our sin. Because he is a righteous and just God, he must declare us guilty and give our sins the consequence they deserve – death. But because God is also limitless in his love, he came to earth to pay the death price for our sin, in order to provide us with a pardon for our sins.



He has now already paid the price on our behalf. The only question is whether we will allow the death and resurrection of Jesus to be applied to our lives or not. To accept this incredible offer, all we need to do is confess our guilt and accept the free gift of grace God offers us. This action, when authentically done, will be evidenced through a turning away from sin and accepting the leadership of God over our lives.

Have you ever confessed your sin to God, received his forgiveness and made a decision to let him completely direct your life?

To which illustration do you find easiest to relate?

Which illustration would you find easiest to explain to others?

TEACHER NOTE: If you have time, encourage the students to choose one of the Illustrations and explain it to another student.

Is there anyone in one of your circles of influence with whom you could share one of these illustrations? If so, who?

Is there some other way you can develop relationships with people this week that might reveal God's love and truth to them?

Each week, try to make "mission" an intentional focus of your life.
Look for practical ways to represent God's heart passion.