

This article is designed to help you prepare to share the Gospel with someone else. Do not bring this document to the conversation in which you share the Gospel. To teach sharing the Gospel with someone else, please use the article of the same name in the Post-High Call section.

## There Is Nobody to Make Them Christians

St. Ignatius of Loyola was able to win over St. Francis Xavier through friendship. This friendship continued to grow as they formed the Jesuits together and sought to win the world for Jesus Christ.

Ignatius planned to use Francis Xavier as a scholar and teacher for their growing order, but these plans were soon interrupted. King John of Portugal requested that the Jesuits send missionaries to his recently acquired territory in India. Ignatius appointed two of his Jesuits for the task, but when one became seriously ill, he was forced to send someone else. With great hesitation, he sent Francis Xavier, knowing that he would probably never see his dear friend ever again.

After his departure, Francis Xavier would send letters back to Ignatius to update him on his mission. Francis Xavier described how he invited thousands of people to accept the gospel and be baptized. He saw hundreds of thousands of conversions, but he was still frustrated that more couldn't be done. He wrote to Ignatius,

Many fail to become Christians, simply for the lack of a teacher of the Christian faith! Often I think of running throughout the universities of Europe, and principally Paris and the Sorbonne, there to shout at the top of my voice, like one who had lost his senses—to tell those men whose learning is greater than their wish to put their knowledge to good use, how many souls, through their negligence, must lose Heaven and end up in hell.

While not all of us are called to go to India to evangelize, Francis Xavier's conviction holds true wherever we are: There are people all around us who aren't living out a relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church for one reason—there is no one willing to help them! 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?" (Rom 10:14). As Catholics, each one of us is called to this task. We can't just hope those around us come to the Christian Faith; we have to actively work to share with them the good news about Jesus.

## Something Always Happens

But what does sharing this good news look like? Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, the preacher to the papal household for the last three popes, provides a good answer: "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 . . . . When you proclaim this living, crucified and risen Jesus something always happens."

When we invite others to consider the gospel, we help them make a distinct decision about Jesus Christ and His Church. Jim Elliot, an evangelical Protestant missionary, once said, "Father, make of me a crisis man. Bring those I contact to decision. Let me not be a milepost on a single road; make me a fork, that men must turn one way or another on facing Christ in me." When we propose Jesus Christ and His Church to others, we allow them to wrestle with the importance of the Faith and the role it plays in their lives.

## The Bridge Diagram

Sharing the good news with others can't be simplified to a set process or presentation. We share Jesus and the Church with others in everything that we do. The way we live out our faith each day, our reliance on the Holy Spirit, and the way we interact with others are just some of the ways that influence our witness. And yet, it can be difficult for people to respond to the gospel if they are not given a clear invitation.

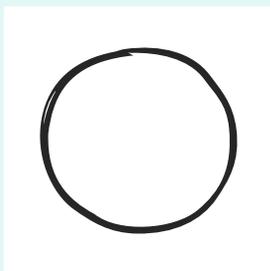
Throughout her history, the Church has called on us to share the kerygma, the basic message of the Gospel.

How do we share the gospel with others? While there's no one right way to present the Faith, we can learn from the advice of the saints to help us. St. Catherine of Siena is a doctor of the Church and the co-patroness of all of Europe. She left us many writings, but her most famous is *The Dialogue of St. Catherine*, which speaks of the spiritual life through a series of conversations between her and God. Our Lord gave Catherine the image of a bridge that can help us articulate how salvation works and how we can enter into a relationship with Jesus.

Below, we've adapted her dialogue with Jesus into five steps that can enable you to share the gospel in a simple, practical, and effective way. We've also included pictures to help you illustrate the gospel as well. Simple images and analogies can help people understand the concepts that you are describing. (For more on Jesus' dialogue with Catherine, we've included quotes from their dialogue at the end of this article.)

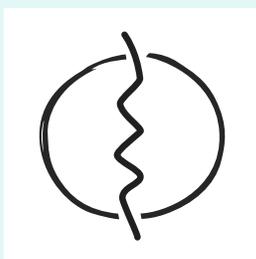
### Step 1: We Are Made for Relationship (The Good News)

The good news is that, in the beginning, God created us in His image and likeness as His sons and daughters. We were made for a personal relationship with Him and to share in His divine life (CCC 1). Drawing the circle below can help visually illustrate how this relationship was perfect and whole in the beginning.

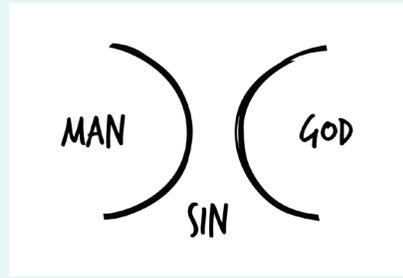


### Step 2: This Relationship Is Broken by Sin (The Bad News)

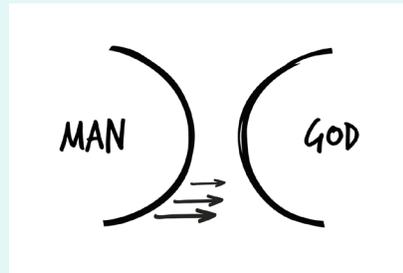
Despite God's original plans, the bad news is that our relationship with Him was broken by sin. Romans 3:23 tells us, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." And this Fall was severe: "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). Today, we see this brokenness in our own lives, in our relationships, and in the world around us.



This sin creates an infinite chasm between us and God and prevents us from having eternal life with Him.

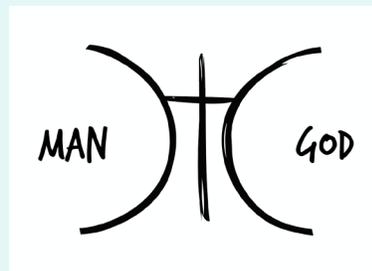


This infinite chasm is so great that there's nothing that we can do on our own to restore our relationship with Him.



### Step 3: Jesus Is the Answer (Even Better News)

The even better news is that, while we were unable to save ourselves, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). Because Jesus is fully human, He can represent the human family and offer an act of love on our behalf. However, because He is fully divine, His act of love on the cross takes on infinite value. Thus, Jesus is able to bridge this infinite chasm. His death gives us an opportunity to overcome sin, to live as His sons and daughters, and to go to heaven (CCC 615).



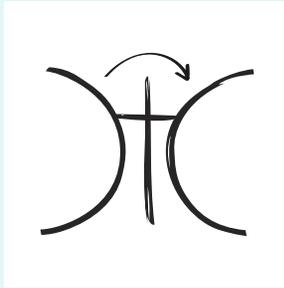
### Step 4: Invitation and Response

Jesus provides an answer that bridges the gap made by sin. Salvation is a gift, freely offered to each of us by God. Before a gift can be owned, though, it must be accepted. The decision to accept God's saving gift means making the fundamental choice to become a disciple of Jesus. God's gift is a complete gift of Himself to you and for you; the only appropriate response is a complete gift of ourselves in return.

It can be hard for some to understand what it means to accept this invitation. It can be helpful to share that there are often three types of people: those who don't have God in their lives; those who have God in their lives, but not at the center; and those who have God at the center of their lives. With this in mind, two simple questions can be helpful: "Where are you at?" and "Where do you want to be?" This can reveal their feelings as well as potential obstacles that they need to overcome.

If they *do* want to make Jesus the center of their lives, they can pray a simple prayer like this:

Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am to begin or renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me, Lord, take me into your redeeming embrace. (adapted from Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 3)<sup>1</sup>



### Step 5: Life in Christ

When we accept this invitation of God's love, we must respond not just with thoughts or words but with our actions as well. Our whole lives should be a response to the gift of salvation that God offers us. How do we do this? The Church has traditionally looked to the early Church and, in particular, the four foundational habits in Acts 2:42 for how to live out our life in Christ. These practices include fellowship, breaking of the bread, prayer, and the teaching of the Apostles. If someone positively responds to the gospel, help them take small steps in these areas as they grow in their relationship with Jesus. Also, as they accept Jesus as their lord and king, show them how essential it is for them to accept Jesus' kingdom, the Catholic Church.



### Personal Encounter with Jesus

To close, gospel invitations are so critical in helping others personally encounter Jesus Christ. In his apostolic exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel," Pope Francis notes, "I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since 'no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord'" (*Evangelii Gaudium* 3).

Through the history of the Church, people have come to faith because Christians had the courage to proclaim Jesus and to help others have an encounter with Him. Take the time to learn how to present the kerygma to others and practice it so that those around you can experience the life-changing power of a relationship with Jesus.

---

<sup>1</sup> For those who are Catholic, the sacrament of reconciliation is typically needed to help restore a person to a relationship with Jesus and the Church. They should also be confirmed if they haven't been already. If someone is Christian but not Catholic, talk to your pastor about RCIA and next steps. If they have not been baptized, it's important that this invitation is accepted by enrolling in the process to receive this great sacrament.

## Reflection Questions

1. Am I convinced of the need to share the Gospel? How can I grow in this conviction?
2. What method of sharing the Gospel am I going to use? Will the bridge diagram resonate with the person I am sharing the Gospel with or do I need to adapt it?
3. What obstacles might occur during a Gospel invitation, and how can I prepare for those difficulties?
4. How do I need to prepare? (Prayer? Fasting? Further study? Practice?)
5. When will I share the Gospel with the people in my life?

## Leader's Guide: Transferrable Concepts

1. We are called to personally share the faith with others: "How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?" (Rom 10:14). As Catholics, each one of us is called to share the Faith with others. "Many, many people hereabouts are not becoming Christians for one reason only: there is nobody to make them Christians" (St. Francis Xavier).
2. We should proclaim Jesus as Lord: "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 . . . . When you proclaim this living, crucified and risen Jesus something always happens" (Rev. Raniero Cantalamessa).
3. The Five-Step Gospel: Based on St. Catherine of Siena's dialogue with Jesus, we can share the basic message of the gospel in five steps.
  - We Are Made for Relationship
  - This Relationship Is Broken by Sin
  - Jesus Is the Answer
  - Invitation and Response
  - Life in Christ

## QUOTES FROM ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA'S DIALOGUE WITH JESUS

### Step 1: Made for Relationship

In her mystical, contemplative prayer, the Father communicated to Catherine the life of promise He planned for us: "I had created them in my image and likeness so that they might have eternal life, sharing in my being and enjoying my supreme eternal tenderness and goodness."

### Step 2: Broken by Sin

"I wish that you, My children, should know that the road was broken by the sin and disobedience of Adam, in such a way, that no one could arrive at Eternal Life . . . . And, as soon as he had sinned, a tempestuous flood arose, which ever buffets him with its waves, bringing him weariness and trouble from himself, the devil, and the world. Every one was drowned in the flood, because no one, with his own justice alone, could arrive at Eternal Life."

### Step 3: Jesus Is the Answer

In light of this gap, God the Father explains to Catherine that He is providing a way out of this dilemma through Jesus. "And so, wishing to remedy your great evils, I have given you the Bridge of My Son, in order that, passing across the flood, you may not be drowned, which flood is the tempestuous sea of this dark life."

### Step 4: Invitation

Jesus provides an answer that bridges the gap made by sin. Ultimately, however, we have to cross that bridge by accepting Him as Lord of our lives. As our Lord told Catherine, "See, therefore, under what obligations the creature is to Me, and how ignorant he is, not to take the remedy which I have offered, but to be willing to drown." While Jesus provides a way out, we still have to be willing to cross the bridge.

### Step 5: Life in Christ

Catherine noted that, in accepting God's invitation and moving to the other side, we must go through sanctification through steps such as rejecting sin from our lives and practicing good spiritual habits. The Church has traditionally looked to the early Church, and in particular the four foundational habits in Acts 2:42, for how to live out our life in Christ. These practices include: fellowship, breaking of the bread, prayer, and the teaching of the apostles.

Copyright © 2018 - FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students). All Scripture texts from the New and Old Testaments are taken from Revised Standard Version Bible: 2nd Catholic Edition, copyright 1989, 1993, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, unless otherwise noted. Used by permission. All rights reserved.