



SPREAD THE WORD:

How do I share Jesus with others?

Facilitator's Guide

OUTREACH

🎯 OVERVIEW:

How do we get young people to reach the lost? Time and time again, people who are lost are most interested in Christ when they see the impact of faith on the life of someone they respect. While there may be a time and place for reaching the lost by going door to door, this lesson focuses instead on the impact of a dynamic faith paired with the hopeful message of Christ's love. The Bible passage about Peter and John will show that people are more interested in hearing about Christ once they've seen the power of faith. Paul Rader paired a dynamic faith and love for people with innovative ways of sharing the truth about Christ.

? OPENING QUESTIONS:

- Has anyone shared the good news of Jesus with you before? How did they do it? What was your reaction to what they said or did?
- Have any of you shared the good news of Jesus with someone else before? How did it go?

💬 WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT:

We know that the world has plenty of lost people, and we know that we should do something about it. But what can we do to direct people toward the truth of Jesus? That's not an easy question, but G.K. Chesterton says, "Each generation is converted by the saint who contradicts it most."¹ In other words, people crave what's missing from their lives. They want to see someone who knows a different way of doing things. And in the midst of a shallow culture, they crave the depth and rootedness that Christ offers. But as Romans 10:14 asks, "How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?" Do you just walk up to people and start telling them how to believe in Jesus? Maybe in some cases, but usually people don't listen to someone they don't know or trust. More often than not, the best way to reach the lost is to live out your faith as an example, to build relationships with people, and to talk about Jesus as a natural and essential part of your life. It's not just about having some sort of speech prepared. It's not about following a checklist of steps to get a person from Point A (lost) to Point B (found). It's about passionately pursuing God and letting your changed life shine in a way that others take notice. Sometimes it takes a number of promptings to interest someone in a life with Christ: patient explanation, thoughtful questions, open conversations, solid community, prayerful acts of kindness, and non-judgmental generosity.

The story in Acts 3 and the beginning of Acts 4 offers a great example of how people are drawn to a powerful act of faith and love. Notice that it's at this point, after people have seen something that shows them the impact of faith, that Peter and John share their story of their encounter with Jesus and what Jesus is all about. Notice also how they specifically tailor the message for the audience that they have there.





LEADER'S NOTE: Keep in mind that, although God asks us to play a role in spreading the good news of Jesus, God is the only one who can truly change a person's heart. As the following passage makes clear, Peter and John aren't the ones who actually healed the beggar—God did. But God chose to include Peter and John in this powerful miracle. Our job isn't to save lost people. Only Jesus saves. Rather, our job is to lead others to Jesus and his message so that God can work powerfully within them. This isn't an excuse not to reach out to the lost with the love of Jesus (he commands us to make disciples in Matt. 28:16–20). But it is a reminder that a person's ultimate salvation is in God's hands, not ours.

Read: Acts 3:1–16; 4:1–4

Discuss:

- Peter and John attract the attention of the crowd through a miracle. What can you do to show others that God's love is important and powerful?
- What is the best way to show others that Jesus has made a difference in your life?
- What things should you be sure to mention about God to someone who doesn't know anything about him?
- If you're a disciple of Jesus, can you articulate the story of how you came to follow him?

LEADER'S NOTE: It's important to help students articulate the story of redemption through their answers to these questions. A lot of students don't get past the fact that there is a God and that Jesus was a nice person. But there's a lot more to the story. Below are key points and explanatory verses. There are also many resources that provide a good framework for understanding God's redemption story and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. These resources are listed at the end of this study. You can also take a look at the studies in the "Rescue" root of Deep Discipleship or give students *I Am a Disciple*, a devotional journal available at www.leadertreks.org/deep-discipleship.

Here are some key aspects of being a disciple of Jesus for students to know and share with their friends:

- The Problem of Sin (our separation from God): Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23
- The Consequence of Sin (death): Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1
- The Need for a Savior (a way to reconnect with God): John 17:3
- Jesus is God's Son (completely untainted by sin; able to be our savior): 2 Corinthians 5:21
- The Sacrifice of Jesus (he died on the cross, covering our sin and bridging the gap between us and God: Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18
- Jesus Rose from the Dead (defeating the power of sin and death): Romans 1:4; 4:25
- Jesus Shows Us Grace (available to everyone who believes and follows him): John 1:12; 3:16–18.
- Jesus Calls Us to a Great Mission (The Great Commission): Matthew 28:18–20

*** A SECOND LOOK:**

There's a verse in the book of John that goes like this: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another," (John 13:34–35). Paul Rader did this. He loved people and found dynamic and innovative ways to share his faith with the lost. While he went through times of doubt, he eventually found a rich faith in God that he was excited to share with others. This dynamic faith and ability to communicate the love of God helped him become the pastor of a large church in Chicago. Eventually, he left that church when he felt that it was getting in the way of his work to spread the message of Jesus.



Instead of starting a new church or becoming a missionary, he decided to focus his efforts on a cutting-edge method of communicating with a broad audience: the radio. Paul used his talents to put together an incredibly popular radio show sharing the good news of Jesus. This was during the Great Depression, and many people were literally starving. So, Paul used his tools and technology to not only share the message of God's love, but also to start a program to feed the poor and hungry. He even convinced his church to turn their building into a factory for preserving cabbages so they could last longer and more people could eat them. Through these efforts, he fed over 100,000 children in Chicago. Paul Rader's faith was easy to see, and it showed the lost how a passionate, rooted relationship with God was something they could experience, too.²

Discuss:

- How did Paul Rader use his actions and message to bring people to Christ?
- How do you think you could combine the way you live with the articulated message of Jesus to show people God's love?
- Paul Rader happily embraced the newest methods of communication and used them to spread the message of Christ's love. How can you use the methods of communication available today to do the same thing?

**LIVE IT OUT: Telephone Pictionary**

What you'll need: note cards or paper, pencils or pens for every student

Just as the title implies, this activity is a combination of the games Telephone and Pictionary. Start by having students sit in circles of no more than seven people. Hand each student a stack of seven (or whatever the number of group participants is) note cards or pieces of paper (4" x 5" or so). Students should label each note card in their stack with their initials and number each card 1 through 7 in the bottom corner.

1. To start, tell students to write a common phrase on the top card of their stack—perhaps a short song lyric, book title, or movie quote (for example, "I believe I can fly," "Jurassic Park," or "I'm the king of the world!").
2. Once everyone has written an introductory phrase, have students pass their entire stack to the person on their left. On the second card, students should draw a picture to represent the words written on the first card. Give them 30 seconds to draw. Have them place the first card at the bottom of the stack and pass the stack again to the person on their left.
3. Now, based on the picture on the second card, have each student write what they think the original phrase is on card number three. Again, give them 30 seconds, place the second card at the bottom of the stack, and pass it left.
4. Continue this pattern—picture, phrase, picture, phrase—until the stack returns to the original owner. Their phrase should be on top of the stack again.
5. Give students some time to look through their stack and laugh at the way their phrase was distorted and visualized. Then have each student share every card of their stack with the whole group or with the person next to them.



Discuss:

- How close was the final card to your original phrase (probably very different)?
- Why do you think your message got so distorted through this process?
- Some people think we should, “Preach the gospel and, if necessary, use words,” (usually falsely attributed to Francis of Assisi). They mean that words aren’t necessary because our actions should convey Jesus’ message clearly to the lost. While it’s essential to live out Jesus’ love as we share his good news, what did this game show us about how visual-only interpretations can distort our message?
- Is it necessary to verbalize Jesus’ truth to the lost? Why or why not?



APPLY IT:

Now that you know more about sharing the message of Jesus, what are you going to do about it? What is something you can do this week to share Jesus’ good news with those around you?

LEADER’S NOTE: Many students may say they’ll just tell someone the gospel. Challenge students to think about steps they can take that combines their actions with the words they speak about God’s truth. Living out our faith and sharing our faith are good steps individually, but they will make a bigger impact if they’re combined in a practical way.

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

LEADER’S NOTE: Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It’s one thing to say, “I’m going to trust God more.” The truth is, our students won’t really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It’s another thing to say, “Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I’m going to tell God that today is his and that I trust him, and I’m going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust.” Challenge your students to answer the questions under the “Be Specific” section. You can even have them pair up, share their applications, and ask for accountability from their partner.



THINK ABOUT IT:

“To be a witness does not consist in engaging in propaganda, nor even in stirring people up, but in being a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one’s life would not make sense if God did not exist.” – Emmanuel Célestin Suhard⁵

***Any reference within this piece to Internet addresses of websites not under the administration of LeaderTreks is not to be taken as an endorsement of these websites by LeaderTreks; neither does LeaderTreks vouch for their content.

¹ G.K. Chesterton, *St. Thomas Aquinas* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2009), 4.

² James L. Snyder, *Paul Rader: Portrait of an Evangelist* (Ocala, FL: printed by CreateSpace, 2015).

³ Emmanuel Célestin Suhard, *Priests Among Men*, trans. L. Bégin et. al. (Notre Dame, IN: Fides, 1964).