



# God's Good News: witnessing and evangelism

**Aim:** To look at our responsibility to tell others about Jesus.

Bible base

Matthew 28:16-20

<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Acts 1:8

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

**You will need:**

- Bibles
- Flip chart and pens
- 2 signs: 1 STRONGLY AGREE 2. STRONGLY DISAGREE
- A cross
- A candle (with matches)
- Post it notes and pens.

**Introduction (5 mins):**

Spend a short time praising God, giving thanks for what he has done for us, eg giving us the privilege of being his children.

**Activity (15 mins):**

Ask what comes into people's minds when you say 'Evangelism'. Use this as a means to introduce the subject.

**Sliding Scale:**

To help explore our thoughts on witnessing/ evangelism do the sliding scale exercise. This is good to get people's thoughts focused before looking at what the Bible has to say.

The sliding scale works by making a space up the middle of the room. At one end is the statement

STRONGLY AGREE and at the other STRONGLY DISAGREE. You then make a statement and people have to stand in a place that reflects how strongly they feel about the issue. This is a gentle way of finding out where people stand on the matter as well as sensitively challenging them to discussion on their views. It is also good as a means of asking one side what they may advise the other. (For example, with the statement, 'It is easy to talk to



people about Jesus', you may ask the group who stand nearer the 'strongly agree' end to explain why they find it easy and then encourage them to share any helpful tips. Do the same with those at the 'strongly disagree' end too.

Questions:

- Everyone who follows Jesus has a responsibility to tell others about Jesus.
- (If everyone says it's not their responsibility you may want to go straight to the Think section and come back to the rest of the questions later.)
- It is easy to tell people you are a Christian.
- It is easy to talk to people about Jesus.
- Jesus helps us to witness to others.
- Our lives should be a witness to God. (How easy is this?)
- We should be telling people daily if not hourly that they have to follow Jesus.
- There comes a time when we should tell people directly and not avoid it.

**Think (25 mins):**

Methods of evangelism:

Briefly list different ways in which the church reaches out to people and evangelises (shares the good news about Jesus Christ).

Read Matthew 28:16-20, 'The great commission'. Before discussing the following questions, briefly bring out the following: Jesus has died and come back to life. He encourages his disciples to tell others about him yet, from verse 17, we read some still doubted him (even though he was standing right in front of them). There will always be those who do not believe and who are blinded to the truth. Yet Jesus goes on to say that all authority is his, and therefore we can go and tell others. He is with us, helping us every step of the way - we are not alone.

1. What authority is Jesus talking about?
2. What difference does it make?
3. 'Therefore go .. .' (verse 19) What is Jesus saying about our responsibility to tell others?
4. 'Teaching them .. .' (verse 20) What responsibility do we have to nurture young Christians? (Bring out that we are not into 'hit and run' evangelism, but we need to think seriously about how we help someone who has just become a Christian to grow in their faith.)
5. 'I am with you always.' (verse 20) In what ways is Jesus with us? What comfort can we draw from this?

**Let's get practical**

Start by reading Acts 1:8.

When God gave the Holy Spirit, Jesus asked the disciples to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Note how they were to start where they were (in Jerusalem), then move further out to Judea then further out again to Samaria then ultimately into the whole world. The important thing is that they started where they were,



in Jerusalem, just as we should start where we are now, ie with the friends we have, in the places we go.

Spend some time discussing both as a group and as individuals how you could take up the responsibility to tell people about Jesus. A simple suggestion would be to organise a meal to invite friends to. Remember that concentrating on a longer-term programme of relationship building is often far more effective than seeking to tell people the gospel when they're not ready to hear it. You might like to plan some purely relationship- building, fun events with limited Christian content. Many who come to these events many not be interested in finding out about Jesus, but they may well be interested in getting to know some new people and enlarging their circle of friends.

Ask participants to think about specific people they know locally that they would invite to an event like this.

Give each person a post it note and pen. Ask them to write the name of the person onto the post it.

**Prayer (10 mins):**

1. Light the candle and place it in front of the cross.
2. Ask participants to bring their post it and stick the note onto the cross.
3. Spend time praying both corporately and individually for the people identified.