

Let's Share Our Faith

A series by Rev. Martin Lundi of brief, weekly hints toward helping God's people learn to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in everyday life situations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ is the most all-inclusive activity of the Church.

- A. The Great Commission in Matthew 28: 18-20 to "make disciples" applies to every Christian. See also Acts 1:8, Acts 8:4 and 1 Peter 2:9.
- B. "Making Disciples" is a continuous, full-time, year-round activity for Christians. Acts 2:47
- C. There are FIVE ESSENTIALS to effective witnessing:
 1. *Consecration*, knowing that we are "saved to serve."
 2. *Connection* with those outside the fellowship of believers.
 3. *Contact* with the life-giving Word of God.
 4. *Conversion*, the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word.
 5. *Conservation*, "stopping back door losses" (people drifting away.)

HOMEWORK:

Re-read and pray about the passages listed above.

NEXT WEEK: *Witness Pre-Requisites*

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2. WITNESS PRE-REQUISITES

For effective witnessing there are FOUR PRE-REQUISITES.

One who witnesses effectively is:

- A. *A Person of Prayer*. Prayer and witnessing are inseparable.
- B. *Genuinely trust in Jesus and lives in that trust*. (Faith) "You can no more share what you haven't got than you can go back to where you have never been!"
- C. *Has love and concern for people*. Without such love any efforts will be mechanical and insincere.
- D. *Listens carefully*. It is vital that we learn and practice good listening skills to become sensitive to "where the other person is" spiritually, emotionally, physically, and morally. We want to meet their needs, be non-judgmental, and pray for their growth.

HOMEWORK:

Learn the Four Pre-Requisites

NEXT WEEK: *Overcoming the Fear of Witnessing*

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3. OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF WITNESSING

A. Some reasons why you need not be afraid to talk about your faith with others:

1. *You are in good company!* 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

2. *You, too, are an "Ambassador for Christ!"*
2 Corinthians 5:20

3. *Most people are interested in religion.*
Recent polls indicate that many say they have a religious belief.

4. *Some people are waiting for the church to come to them!*
A 2003 study by George Barna reveals that 75% of people would come to church if they were asked.

B. Study and believe the Promises of God!

Proverbs 29:25

Isaiah 51:12-15

Hebrews 13:6

2 Timothy 1:7-8

1 Peter 3:13-18

Romans 10:17

HOMEWORK: Pray to overcome fear as you study God's promises. Pray for those you know that are living without Christ.

NEXT WEEK: *Overcoming the fear of not knowing what to say.*

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4. OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF NOT KNOWING WHAT TO SAY

A. The easiest, most effective way to overcome the fear of not knowing what to say is knowing your own experience of what Jesus has done in your life.

1. We are living letters, read by all people. 2 Corinthians 3:2

2. You are more visible and believable to most people than the Bible. You are the "Gospel in shoe leather."

B. Read 1 Peter 3:15 once again,

1. Each of us has a unique story to tell. Your story is important.

2. Only you, in your own way, can tell the story of what Jesus and his Church mean to you.

A 2003 study by George Barna reveals that 75% of people would come to church if they were asked.

HOMEWORK: Prayerfully discover the many ways in which Jesus has touched your life and how much he and your involvement with his Church means to you.

NEXT WEEK: *How can I say it?* Part 1

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5. HOW CAN I SAY IT? (PART 1)

Having received God's grace through faith in Jesus for your own life, you have found God working *HIS-story*. Your experiences of God's presence and faithfulness in your life form the substance of *YOUR-story*. As you prayerfully prepare, realize that you are fashioning an outreach tool so that you can more clearly witness. And remember that tool will be uniquely your own – designed for God's purpose in you and through you for others.

A. Things to know for certain:

1. The assurance that in Jesus Christ you have eternal life and that he alone is your Savior.
2. The positive benefits in your life experiences from knowing that you have eternal life and can live every day in faith and trust in Jesus.

B. What are the positive benefits you experience daily because of your faith?

HOMEWORK: Prayerfully consider and list the positive benefits.

NEXT WEEK: How can I say it? Part 2

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6. HOW CAN I SAY IT? (PART 2)

Using your list from last week, you have stored up an “arsenal” of available experiences for witnessing and can now speak the truth in love. Most of our sharing opportunities occur when are in casual conversation with people with whom we already have a relationship! Therefore, these are generally non-threatening situations. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- A. **Listen** carefully and attentively. Try to be sensitive to “where they are” spiritually, emotionally, and morally and make no sudden moral judgments.
- B. **Ask questions** which elicit their opinions and feelings.
- C. **Continue to dialog** to draw out their thoughts, concerns, needs and fears.
- D. **Attempt to relate** to their concerns out of your experiences (your arsenal), and then share how you were helped in a similar situation or circumstance (be it in dealing with fear, guilt, loneliness, etc) through your faith in Jesus, and how it can help them, too. See Ephesians 4:29

HOMEWORK: Practice the listening skill of dialog with someone. Can you surface a concern or need by the questions you ask?

NEXT WEEK: *Helpful Hints*

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7. HELPFUL HINTS

- A. Relate your personal witness to the specific need surfaced through the listening dialog.
1. Show love, concern, care and honesty.
 2. Watch you attitude. No "holier-than-thou" stuff!
 3. Stay away from "church-eze" like, sanctification, saving grace, come to the faith, Trinity; these are all great words for someone that has come to understand them, but may quickly become a barrier to your dialog.
 4. Express understanding because of your similar experiences. This does not mean that you have to gone through what the other person has but try to relate to them terms of what they may have been feeling; doubt, fear, frustration, etc. We can all relate to feelings.
 5. Always ask: *May I share with you what has helped me?* Then share your witness of how Jesus has helped you and can help them.

HOMEWORK: Refine your listening skills. Practice a transition from THEIR concern to YOUR witness. Ask questions throughout your witness. This will be more conversational, less threatening and continue to keep them interested.

NEXT WEEK: *Creating dialog that relates to life situations*

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8. CREATING DIALOG THAT RELATES TO LIFE SITUATIONS

- A. Parent/Child: In a recent survey 65% of Lutheran parents have not shared their faith verbally with their children! When you talk about love, joy, life, good, evil, etc., learn quickly to share your faith with your children! *Jesus is very important to me. He is my friend because...* then continue to give an applicable, age-appropriate witness to the given situation.
- B. Friend: When you are casually talking about life, death, guilt, burdens, problems, etc, learn to ask: *What are your thoughts* (on whatever the topic is)? You can relate your personal witness to the freeing grace and power of Jesus Christ on any of the topics you discuss!
- C. Prayer: Learn to share in prayer. After listening, and sharing personal witness, ask the person to join you in prayer. Pray for their particular need. And remember, if there is not a NEED then you can share in prayer for times of joy and celebration, and even in the "everyday" aspects of what is happening in their lives.

Suggestion: Decide now the partner with someone you know that is also sharing their faith with others so that you can encourage one another, pray for one another and share your joys and challenges. May God open your ears and eyes to the abundant opportunities that await you!

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