



BE A LIGHT



TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE.** Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; silence allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.

PART 3: "SPEAK BOLDLY"

ICEBREAKER |

What do you wish people knew and understood about you?

INTRODUCTION |

Nobody likes to be misunderstood. When it comes to expressing ourselves, we all want to be simple and clear. And when it comes to sharing our faith, the same is true. We don't share our faith because it's an obligation but because it's an opportunity. Today, we're going to look at how one of the greatest evangelists ever shared his message of Jesus. And then, we'll find out how we can do just what he did.

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Imagine for a minute that you have to give a speech at work. Maybe that's something you're used to, but for most people it strikes fear in their hearts! "What if I mess up? What if I don't say the right thing? What if I say something embarrassing?"

When it comes to sharing your faith, you may think that's all left up to the best public speakers of all time. Paul was clearly a great communicator, but he knew that sharing the story of Jesus wasn't about how he did it but sharing who had changed his life. Read the following passage:

Friends, when I came and told you the mystery that God had shared with us, I didn't use big words or try to sound wise. In fact, while I was with you, I made up my mind to speak only about Jesus Christ, who had been nailed to a cross.

1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (CEV)

Isn't it a relief to know that someone like Paul who knew big words and could show off his wisdom didn't? Instead, he used clear communication, stayed away from theological land mines, and focused on the "who" of salvation – Who changed his life? Jesus!

The best way to communicate is through a story. In just a few sentences and a couple minutes, tell us a concise story of how you came to follow Jesus.

READ I

Two principles Paul gives us about speaking boldly are ***Keep it Simple*** and ***Keep it about Jesus***.

First, we need to steer clear of things that just get in the way. Use the fewest words possible, and the shortest words you know. There is always more than one way to share your story, and the easiest is always best.

Second, we need to focus on Jesus. You may be able to spend a lot of time going over all the mistakes in your past. Or you could show off just how much you know about some deep subject. But when Paul was sharing his faith, he always made sure to come back around to Jesus.

Investing and Inviting (like we talked about last week) doesn't mean you ONLY talk about Jesus. **But when you do share your faith, you can look for ways to bring Jesus into your conversation. Give an example of how you've done that in the past.** (Ex. I helped someone who was struggling with the death of a relative by sharing how I overcame that same problem by spending time with Jesus)

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Paul chose to highlight his weaknesses and God's strength whenever he shared about Jesus. He had plenty of personal strengths in his life. But instead of highlighting them, he downplayed them.

I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling.

1 Corinthians 2:3 (NLT)

We can get caught up sometimes in trying to make a good impression. We focus on the things that set us apart or make us look good. But whenever we share sincerely from our weaknesses, we are better witnesses.

Why do you think that people naturally respond to someone who is being humble – sharing their weaknesses – than those who brag about their strengths?

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In another place, Paul was speaking to his good friend and protégé, Timothy. He was someone that Paul had invested a great deal in and prepared to take over as a pastor as well. When talking to him about his faith, Paul reminded Timothy that he came to follow Jesus not because of someone's perfect presentation of the gospel but through a constant display from close relatives:

I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

2 Timothy 1:5 (NIV)

Eunice and Lois had been making simple spiritual deposits in Timothy's life from a very young age. This made all the difference in how Timothy would later receive Jesus into his life. As a pastor, he did the same while leading his congregation.

We have an opportunity to make simple spiritual deposits in the lives of those close to us. As parents, we can share our faith daily with our kids through instruction and example. With coworkers, we can always be looking for a chance to share Jesus in the smallest moments. As we spend time with friends, our faith can shine through in word and deed.

What are some simple spiritual deposits you can make this week? (Example, praying with someone who is having a bad day, sharing a main idea you got from a sermon this weekend)

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

As you continue to pray specifically for your five and invest boldly, don't forget to look for opportunities to speak boldly. Remember to:

- Keep it Simple
- Keep it about Jesus
- Share with the group the name of a person you have invited or will invite and ask the group to all pray for that person.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Share your testimony with one of your 5 this week

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Dear Lord, each of us are following You because someone invited us. And we get the chance to lead others to follow You. Thank You so much for such a great opportunity! Help us to take it seriously. Remove all the anxiety and worry we may have. And give us clear openings to share You this week. In Jesus' name, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

My message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 (NLT)

Day 2:

“And now, Lord ... grant that your servants may speak Your word with all boldness, while You stretch out Your hand for healing, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.” When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God boldly. Acts 4:29-31 (CSB)

Day 3:

God has protected me right up to this present time so I can testify to everyone, from the least to the greatest. I teach nothing except what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Messiah would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, and in this way announce God’s light to Jews and Gentiles alike.”

Acts 26:22-23 (NLT)

Day 4:

Pray that I will be given the message to speak and that I may fearlessly explain the mystery about the good news.

Ephesians 6:19 (CEV)

Day 5:

Because of my imprisonment, most of the believers here have gained confidence and boldly speak God’s message without fear.

Philippians 1:14 (NLT)