

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Ways to Witness

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SYNOPSIS There are at least six ways we can share our faith. Which one is best suited for you?

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ Ways to Witness

Review previous messages

You may say, "I'm not like Paul. I can't witness the way he did." And you're right; you can't witness the same way Paul did. God has made each one of us unique, and so God has given each of us a unique ability to witness. You just have to find what works for you.

D.L. Moody once spoke with a woman who didn't like his method of evangelism. "I don't really like mine all that much either," he said. "What's yours?" She replied that she didn't have one. Moody said, "Then I like mine better than yours..."

Experts have identified at least six different approaches to evangelism and every person fits with at least one. Furthermore, a church community will likely have all of the styles present, and everyone working together can be very effective at sharing the message of Christ in their area. Let's see which one best fits you.

☞ The Direct Approach:

This approach is what we see in Acts 2 where Peter addresses the crowd on Pentecost. He boldly proclaims the Gospel to those who are present and it is very direct.

In Acts 2:14-41 Peter stood up and addressed the crowd... he explained that Jesus was known for his miracles and signs, which they knew about... he reminded them how they were part of the reason he was crucified... but God also raised him from the dead, with the disciples being first-hand witnesses... then he tells them to repent and be baptized for forgiveness of sins... he warned them and pleaded with them... and about 3,000 people were saved in one day.

The person with this approach directs the conversation to a discussion on faith. Some describe ☞ this approach as "**redirecting conversations to Christ.**" Those with this style **get straight to the point.** They preach Christ and they seek a response.

Some people don't like this approach and think it is too aggressive, but it is biblical. However, I think it is important to note that the people in Peter's audience were Jews who already had knowledge of God and had heard of Jesus. Therefore, he could skip over some of the fundamentals and get right to the point. And, it was effective – a lot of people got saved.

☞ The Intellectual Approach:

The biblical person who best demonstrates this style is Paul. In Acts 17 Paul reasoned with philosophers and deep thinkers as he traveled. The first part of the chapter tells how he spoke in ☞ the synagogue at Thessalonica and he **reasoned** with them.

In Acts 17:2-4 it was Paul's custom to go into the synagogue and reason with the people there from the Scriptures... he explained how Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead... some of the Jews were persuaded and so were many Greeks.



Then, later in the chapter Paul was speaking with Greeks in Athens at the Areopagus, who had little to no knowledge of the God of the bible. So, he gave some background information to draw them into the conversation.

In verse 22 Paul commented that the people were very religious, having many objects of worship, including an altar to an unknown God. Then he went on to tell them about this “unknown God,” explaining from Creation how God is a real person who can be known. Then, he turned the conversation to Christ, proclaiming that he had been raised from the dead as proof of the reality of God.

☞ Today this approach is practiced by apologists and other **logical** thinkers. This style of evangelism typically includes a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Gospel. To be sure, some non-believers get hung up with Christianity because of questions and doubts they have. This is especially true in today’s world. Bill Hybels says, “This style of evangelism has become more and more important as our society has become increasingly secular.”

☞ 1 Timothy 3:15 reminds us to “Be **prepared to give an answer** to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

Sometimes when we think of evangelism, we tend to imagine someone who uses the Direct approach - someone who calls out sin and “gets up in people’s business.” We also might think of someone like C.S. Lewis or Hank Hanegraaff when we hear about the Intellectual approach. These are common styles we think of when it comes to evangelism, and you may be thinking, “I don’t like either of these.” Take heart! There are four more approaches to discover.

☞ **The Testimonial Approach:**

The best way to describe this approach is with one word: Storytelling. This approach uses a very ☞ natural, conversational way to evangelize. It is simply **sharing your story**.

Sharing personal stories of your own walk with Christ carries unique weight. Nobody can really argue with your personal experience. One of the best Biblical examples is the story of the blind man in John 9 who was healed by Jesus. When he was asked who healed him, he replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind, but now I see.”

Many people will put up a wall if challenged directly or logically. But, they might respond to ☞ something more **personal** to which they can relate. Now, the blind man’s testimony included a powerful miracle, but our stories don’t have to be dramatic or miraculous.

☞ In fact, it could be as simple as sharing that you **changed** from being a “religious person” who attended church regularly to one who now has a deeper relationship with Christ. It’s simply your story.



☞ **The Relational Approach:**

This one is exactly as the name describes. Some people's evangelistic aptitudes come from the ☞ natural ability to relate to people. This person is typically very social and **loves being with others**. The story of the calling of Levi is a great biblical example of this approach.

In Luke 5:27-29 Jesus saw Levi sitting at his tax booth and called him to follow him. Levi left everything and did exactly that. Then he held a banquet for Jesus and a large crowd of other tax collectors and more came to eat with them.

This style places a high value on building relationships. It requires a commitment of time and energy because relationships require that to build trust. There are all kinds of areas where this approach is effective: work, home, sports, hobbies, and many other activities.

☞ The **friendships developed** there are fertile soil for evangelism.

Perhaps one of these two approaches might be a better fit for you than the Direct or Intellectual. You can share your personal story or you can build relationships to share Christ. But, we still have two more to go. The idea is to find one or two approaches that speak to your soul and inspire you to share God's love.

☞ **The Invitational Approach:**

This approach is similar to the Relational approach. However, it is characterized predominantly ☞ by **inviting people to church events** such as Sunday services, Small Groups, and other activities. It is definitely one of the most natural styles, and is an easy way to reach out to others. It's especially good when you feel like you don't know what to say in order to witness.

One of the reasons this style is easy is that people do this same thing in other venues. For example, in the fall, people like to visit orchards and will often invite a friend to join them. It's the same with other outings like concerts, parades, and going out to eat. You just extend an invitation.

A Gallop Poll of over 6 million people asked, "What would it take to get you to church?" The number one answer: "Someone to ask me to attend." So, a simple invitation might be all it takes to get your friend or family member into church where they can experience God. Yes, they might turn you down. But, then again, they might not. And, God can use that opportunity to reach their heart. It is all about extending the invitation. We have a few options for you to consider. There are yard signs available which promote our church. Also, next Sunday is National Back to Church Sunday, which you can use as a starting point to invite someone to church. You can use ☞ our **invitation cards** as well for any time of the year.

This invitational style is seen with the woman at the well after she realized Jesus was the Messiah. In John 4:28-41 she went back to the town and invited the people to come see the man who told her everything she ever did. They came out to meet Jesus and many got saved. Your simple invitation may make an eternal difference for someone.



☞ **The Service Approach:**

This is another way to share your faith with people which doesn't require logical reasoning or ☞ extraordinary boldness. If you are a person who naturally **notices the needs of others**, this might be the perfect way to share your faith. A little-known person in Acts 9 exemplifies this method. In Acts 9:36-42 we learn about Tabitha, who was always doing good and helping the poor. When she got sick and died the people mourned her because of all she had done for them. Peter was called upon and ended up raising her from the dead, which led to many people getting saved. Now, in this case, it was a miracle which turned people to the Lord. But, it all started because Tabitha was a generous servant of the people and they loved her.

This approach enjoys sharing the love of Christ through actions. Some say that this method is at ☞ the heart of the Christian faith since all of us are called to **be kind to others and help those in need**. This style can soften the hearts of those receiving the kindness so that they are receptive to the message of the Gospel.

So, there you have it – six different Ways to Witness.

☞ **The Direct Approach gets straight to the point.**

The Intellectual Approach uses logic and reason.

The Testimonial Approach tells your personal story.

The Relational Approach builds friendships.

The Invitational Approach invites people to church activities.

The Service Approach helps those in need.

One or more of these probably fits you best. Others may fit someone else, and working all together, we can have a powerful impact on our community. Before we leave today, take a moment to share with the person next to you, which approach seems the most natural to you.