**Men of His Word 2015 Presentation**

**Presenter – Pastor David Scharf (****pastorscharf@immluth.org****) of Immanuel, Greenville, WI**

**STARTING A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION**



“Be Prepared” is direction that the Apostle Peter gives us about witnessing. We want to witness for Jesus, but we often find it difficult to make the transition from ordinary conversation to spiritual talk. In this workshop we will discuss some practical thoughts that will prepare us for leading a conversation from everyday matters to things that matter eternally.

**Getting Started**

Starting a conversation that leads from everyday life to eternal life requires the skill of listening. Communication is a two-way process. We listen and we speak. Telling about Jesus comes after listening to people talk about their feelings and fears, and about their problems and opinions.

**Listen actively**

* Give feedback: “I see.” “Good point!” “Yes, that’s important.”
* Draw out people’s thinking and reasoning when they make a strong point by saying, “That’s interesting. What makes you say that?” With this question, you clarify issues and learn more about people. By patiently and intently listening, you foster respect and trust, so that people are more inclined to listen to you when you turn the conversation to spiritual matters.
* Take note of statements that you can use to bridge the conversation to a spiritual discussion.
* Don’t interrupt; limit your own talking; be sensitive to body language

 ***Keep in Mind***

* Expectations – we want the best for people and the most important thing is Jesus.
* Be genuine – don’t pretend to be someone you’re not.
* Care for people and rejoice in them. This is the opposite of being self-possessed, interested only in ourselves. The time will come when they are curious about why you care. In the process of Christian love and care, you will have opportunities to express and demonstrate your faith and what Jesus has done for the world.

**Turn the Conversation**

A simple approach for turning the conversation is to remember the words: **Feel… Felt… Found**. After listening carefully to a person's concern, respond by saying, “I can see how you might ***feel*** that way… Others have ***felt*** the same way, I know…(or: ‘I once ***felt*** that way myself.’) But what I’ve ***found*** is …” Then direct the person to the truth of God's Word.

When people speak with you about their problems, you may use this approach to turn the conversation into a witness opportunity. Think of these four letters: **p, P, S, s**:

***p*:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***P: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***S: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***s: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

**Talk about Jesus**

To communicate our faith well requires some preparation. St. Peter wrote: *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have* (1 Peter 3:15). The Word of God is the power to bring a person to faith in Jesus and strengthen such faith. We prepare not to make the Word more powerful, but to be able to speak it clearly and completely.

***Describe the hope that you have in Christ (1 Peter 3:15)***

***Use a witness outline:***

**Apostles’ Creed**

I believe in the God of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (First Article)

I believe in the God of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Second Article)

I believe in the God of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Third Article)

**One Verse**

You can also use a Bible verse as a witness outline, such as Romans 6:23, *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.* God’s law is taught in the first half of the verse and God’s gospel is the second half. By explaining the key words: sin – wages – death – gift of God – eternal life – Jesus Christ our Lord, you can tell a person the main truths of Christian faith.

**Roman Way**

When sharing the good news of our salvation through Jesus, here are some helpful passages from Paul’s letter to the Romans:

**Romans 3:23** *There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

**Romans 3:10** *There is no one righteous, not even one.*

**Romans 6:23a** *The wages of sin is death…*

**Romans 6:23b** *But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Romans 5:8** *God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**Romans 10:9** *If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

**Romans 10:17** *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*

**Confidently Trust God’s Promises**

As Christians we have the privilege and the command from our Lord to tell others about salvation through Jesus. But we have fears that often keep us from being confident witnesses. We are afraid that others will reject our witness. We are afraid that we won’t say the right thing. We are afraid we won’t be able to give clear and correct answers to people’s questions and objections. When such fears arise, remember these words of comfort and encouragement from our God and Savior.

*He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.* (Luke 10:16)

*Do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.* (Matthew 10:19-20)

*So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.* (Isaiah 55:11)

*Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.* (Matthew 28:20)

Our God will never fail us. He will use our witness, however simple or inadequate it may seem, and make it serve for the good that he intends. Trusting God’s promises, we can confidently tell others about Jesus

**Follow-up**

* Pray (you may let people know that you are praying for them)
* E-mail a devotion (Daily Devotions from www.WhatAboutJesus.com)
* Give a tract (I Am… What About…Answers from God’s Word)
* Point people to helpful web sites (WhatAboutJesus.com, your church’s web site)
* Invite to a Bible study (small group)
* Network with other Christians for encouragement, ideas and advice.
* Don’t give up – it may take a long time to get to a point where you can share the gospel.

### \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### 1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you

to give the reason for the hope that you have.

But do this with gentleness and respect.