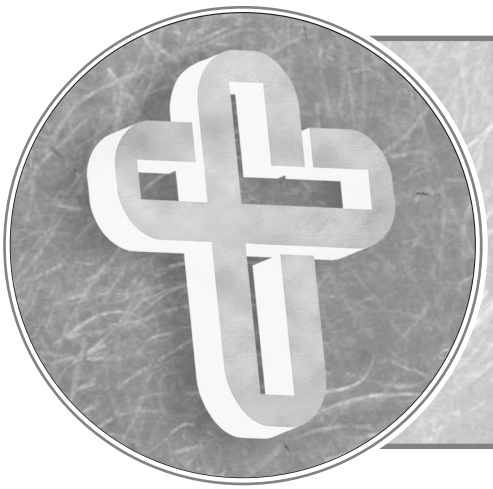


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JULY 12 2025

can I get a witness?

Scripture Story: Matthew 10; Mark 6:7-11; Luke 9:1-6.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 37.
Key Text: Luke 9:1 2.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This lesson focuses on the calling of Christ for us to share the good news of salvation with those who are far from God. Often this can be an intimidating topic to teach and to motivate young people to put into practice. After all, isn't evangelism best left for the professional evangelists?

To ease any anxiety you may be feeling and to offer some perspective on the topic, consider the story that Christian author Ken Davis tells of a girl named Beth, aka "Space Cadet." Ken admits, "She was the ditziest blonde I've ever seen in my life." Nevertheless, she responded to Ken's challenge to be involved with their campus youth program.

One evening, Ken revved up the students with an evangelism pep talk. "You are God's answer to reach the lost students in your high school," he preached. "You have access. You have their ear. You have their respect. You are their age. So go and reach your lost friends for Jesus!"

Following the meeting Beth approached Ken. "Oh, Pastor," she sobbed, "I, um, ah, well, I want to share Jesus with my friends, but, ah, I don't know what to say."

"Relax," Ken consoled. "Beth, God will tell you what to say."

Abruptly the tears stopped. "Oh," she giggled, "OK."

So Beth invited a friend to the youth meeting. Outfitted for battle, Beth carried a tract in her pocket that explained the miracle of salvation. She was waiting for that moment when she would whip it out and do that thing we call "witness."

On the way home Beth's heart was pounding like a spastic woodpecker. It was witness time! Casually she asked her friend, "So, what did you think of the meeting tonight?"

"Well," her friend replied, "I liked it except for the Jesus part."

Ouch! Beth thought. *It's the Jesus part that I've got in my pocket. Now what should I do?*

Collecting her wits, Beth responded, "Why didn't you like the Jesus part?"

The question prompted a sordid testimony shadowed by shame. Wisely, Beth reckoned she would save "witnessing" for later. Instead, she just shared her story—which was also filled with guilt and pain; but hers was punctuated with a sense of hope because she knew that Jesus had completely forgiven her.

At the end of the conversation Beth introduced her friend to Christ—without ever opening the pamphlet.

Her senior year in high school, Beth led seven kids into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. And to think, she never did know what to say!

How many "Beths" are in your youth group?

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Learn about the calling that Christ extends to His followers to share the gospel. *(Know)*
- Sense the heart of God for lost people. *(Feel)*

- Be challenged to share the gospel with those who are far from God. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Remnant and Its Mission, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 13: "The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Dan. 7:9-14; Isa. 1:9; 11:11; Jer. 23:3; Mic. 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 4:17; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Jude 3, 14; Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

As an alternate activity, use this scenario:

Role-play the following scenario with your group: You are a foreign exchange student from India. The only religion you know is Hinduism. Now you're staying in the home of Seventh-day Adventists. You find it fascinating that Christians believe in heaven, not reincarnation. You'd like to know more about what Seventh-day Adventists believe.

Divide your class into small groups and have them outline a study to share with you. What are they going to say? How will they share their beliefs? Then bring the groups together to present their study and explain their beliefs to you. The purpose of this exercise is to get the young people to think about their faith and how to defend what they believe.

Illustration

Share the following stories in your own words:

Every year thousands of Seventh-day Adventist young people volunteer to serve the poor, feed the hungry, love the orphans, and share the gospel of Jesus around the world. Often these volunteers willingly accept the harshest of circumstances—buggy beds, violent weather, cold showers, bland food, and miserably long and expensive flights—just to participate in a mission experience. Why would anyone trade the cushy comforts of home for the difficulties inherent in the mission field? Listen to an excerpt from just one of hundreds of online testimonies from Seventh-day Adventist young people:

"My experience in Ghana was one of the most important experiences of my life. I knew that God took me out there for a reason, and I am thankful because I know what that reason was.

"When God called me and I accepted, I have seen His hand working through me in very vivid ways. This trip was no exception. God put me on that plane, flew me for about 20 hours, and began to teach me my mission. However, the process was not easy. I faced trials and obstacles different from any I had ever faced before. I encountered a culture foreign to my own. I was completely ignorant about it, but once again, God used me in spite of me!

"When I arrived in Ghana, I was clueless to all the experiences I was going to encounter in that place. I had no idea of the war zone I was about to step foot into. However, God fought the battle for me, and was victorious" (Manuel Arteaga, referring to a mission trip with the Quiet Hour).

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Use the following discussion questions to follow up Manuel's mission experience:

Discussion questions:

- Why do you think young people would give up their comfort to serve God in the mission field?
- Would an experience like this interest you? Why or why not?
- What might you learn from this kind of experience?

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to*

process it with them. Split your class into three groups and designate to each group one of the following passages and assignments. (If your class is small, simply choose one *of the following assignments.) After 15 minutes of working on the assignment, have each group share their final project with the class.*

Read Luke 9:1-6: Challenge this first group to create a seminar on how to win the world for Jesus. Using the same principles Jesus taught His disciples in Luke 9:1-6, have the group design and present a course about witnessing. Instruct them to take their training and techniques only from this passage.

Read Mark 6:7-11: Have this second group recreate Mark 6:7-11 using pictures. Their assignment is to pretend they are living in a cave shortly after Jesus ascended to heaven but they want to preserve this teaching of Jesus for all time, for all people, in all languages. Using a chalkboard or a whiteboard, have them communicate this entire passage by sketching it out.

Read Matthew 10: This third group is tasked with the challenge of "selling" this calling of Christ to Christians. Jesus clearly states they will be arrested and persecuted and betrayed by their own family members—even unto death. Tell the young people they are working on Madison Avenue at an advertising agency and their job is to brainstorm ways to make people want to sign on for this unsavory task.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

Go to the lost sheep of Israel. Jesus clearly directed His disciples where to preach this message: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel" (Matthew 10:5, 6, NIV).

In the Old Testament, God's people were often referred to as sheep and their leaders as shepherds (see Ezekiel 34:2-16, etc.). In Jeremiah 50:6 God refers to Israel as being "lost sheep." Isaiah refers to those who have drifted into sin as sheep that have gone astray (see Isaiah 53:6). Jesus referred to Himself as the Shepherd, leading the sheep of His fold (see John 10:1-16). Thus Jesus instructed His disciples to first share the gospel with the Jews.

Preach: "The kingdom of heaven is near." Jesus called the disciples to "preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' " The term *kingdom of heaven* is used 31 times in the New Testament but only by Matthew. The other New Testament writers prefer the term *kingdom of God.* The substitute of "heaven" for "God" reflects the custom of the Jews in Jesus' day to avoid uttering the sacred name of God.

Jesus was continually teaching about the kingdom of God (see Luke 4:43; 8:1). He introduced many of His parables with the phrase "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ." (see Matthew 13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, NIV). He taught His followers to pray for God's kingdom to come (Matthew 6:10).

Ellen G. White in *The Desire of Ages* offers insightful commentary on this central theme of Jesus' teaching: "The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. The gospel of the grace of God, with its spirit of self-abnegation, can never be in harmony

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Desire of Ages. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

How to Share Your Faith

Albert Cook offers these tips when teaching young people how to share their faith:

- Learn a logical presentation of the gospel.
- Invite others to confess their faith in Jesus.
- Practice your presentation.
- Stay focused on salvation.
- Go on evangelistic visits.
- Have a definite period of training.
- Have attractive literature.
- Trust in God.
- Expect difficulty.
- Follow up.*

* Albert Cook, "Teaching Evangelism," *WRS Journal* 2, no. 2 (August 1995): 25-28.

with the spirit of the world. The two principles are antagonistic. 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' 1 Corinthians 2:14.

"But today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. . . . But He said, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' John 18:36. He would not accept the earthly throne. . . .

". . . Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God" (p. 509).

Christ is looking for a people that has His character and displays the love and care that He showed when He walked the earth 2,000 years ago.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Equip your students with the tools they need to share a gospel presentation—the essential verses they can use when presenting the love of God to others. Go through the verses with your group and have them put the verses in their own words. For example, you could share with them the Romans Road to Salvation—Romans 3:10, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8, 9, and Romans 10:9-13—and then have them cross-reference their Bibles so they are always prepared and confident to share the gospel when an opportunity presents itself.

Summary

Share the following story in your own words:

"Arthur Burns, a Jewish economist of great influence in Washington during the tenure of several presidents, was once asked to pray at a gathering of evangelical politicians. Stunning his hosts, he prayed, 'Lord, I pray that Jews would come to know Jesus Christ. And I pray that Buddhists would come to know Jesus Christ. And I pray that Muslims would come to know Jesus Christ.'

"And then, most stunning of all: 'And Lord, I pray that Christians would come to know Jesus Christ.'"[1]

In the end, evangelism is all about sharing Jesus Christ. Of course, we cannot share Jesus Christ with others if we do not know Him ourselves. In this light, witnessing is nothing more than one friend telling another friend about a Friend.

[1] Mark Buchanan, "Singing in the Chains," *Christianity Today*, February 2008, p. 33.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*),* chapter 37.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Matthew 10; Mark 6:7-11; Luke 9:1-6.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 37.

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Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

keytext

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick."

(Luke 9:1, 2, NIV)

flashlight

"All over the field of Christ's labor there were souls awakened to their need, and hungering and thirsting for the truth. The time had come to send the tidings of His love to these longing hearts. To all these the disciples were to go as His representatives. The believers would thus be led to look upon them as divinely appointed teachers, and when the Saviour should be taken from them they would not be left without instructors" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 351).

what do you think?

Circle the top three reasons you think some Christian teenagers are hesitant to share Christ with their friends:

- They are afraid of rejection.
- They don't see it as important.
- They think Christianity is boring.
- They feel embarrassed.
- They don't want to offend anyone.
- They feel like hypocrites.
- They are too busy.
- They are too shy.
- They believe that evangelism is the work of pastors or evangelists.

Circle the top three ways you think represent the most effective means to share Christ with others.

- Hand out gospel tracts.
- Stand on a street corner and preach.
- Always carry a Bible.
- Live a good life.
- Talk to my friends about Jesus.
- Invite a friend to church.
- Show kindness to others.
- Wear clothes that display a Christian message.
- Hang out with nonreligious people.
- Bring a friend to a social activity where your church friends will be.

INTO THE STORY

"When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: 'Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.' So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere."

(Luke 9:1-6, NIV)

"These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.' "

" 'Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. . . .

"'Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. You will hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. . . .

"'Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.' "

"'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. . . . And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.'"

(Matthew 10:5-8, 17-33, 40-42, NIV)

did you know?

Evangelism simply means telling people about the gospel. We evangelize when we tell someone the gospel. It is not sharing opinions, telling stories, sharing our testimony, singing songs, etc. We may tell the gospel through various means, such as these, but the main thing is the message, not the method" (Basic Christian Doctrines 39:4, Faith BibleChurch, faith bibleonline.net).

OUT OF THE STORY

Read the passages from *Into the Story*, then answer the following questions:

• **Luke 9:1-6**

Can we "drive out all demons and . . . cure diseases" today? Why or why not?

_____
_____
_____

How might Jesus' advice to "shake the dust off your feet" apply to us today?

_____
_____

Have you ever felt rejected for sharing your faith? If so, reflect on whether or not they were rejecting you or Jesus. How did Jesus handle rejection?

_____
_____

• **Matthew 10:5-42**

Notice the message that the Twelve were to proclaim: "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Compare this with the gospel that Jesus came to proclaim (see Mark 1:14, 15). How is this same message of good news (or the "gospel") relevant today?

_____
_____
_____

Does this warning of persecution for those who proclaim the gospel mean the same today as it did back then? Explain.

_____
_____

How might you share "a cup of cold water" with someone today?

_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: 'God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age'" **(Matthew 28:18-20, *The Message*).**

"After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee preaching the Message of God: 'Time's up! God's kingdom is here. Change your life and believe the Message'" **(Mark 1:14, 15, *The Message*).**

"The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern" **(Proverbs 29:7, NIV).**

"Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you'" **(John 20:21, NIV).**

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" **(Psalm 20:7, NIV).**

further insight

"In the training of the disciples the example of the Saviour's life was far more effective than any mere doctrinal instruction."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 349

"The love of Christ, manifested in unselfish ministry, will be more effective in reforming the evildoer than will the sword or the court of justice."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 350

Sabbath

Read Philippians 3:17.

How can we make Paul's words our own to live in a way that honors God and uplifts others?

As a Christian, you too are called to play a unique role in the worldwide sharing of the gospel. In what ways can you be an example or a role model to inspire in others a love for Christ?

Sunday

Read Galatians 2:20.

Who is the best advertisement for Christianity that you know? What makes this person's witness so compelling?

Is there more to evangelism than just setting a good example? Why or why not?

Monday

Read Luke 9:1, 2.

Read the *Key Text* and reflect on the following questions:

- Why do you think Jesus empowered His disciples to perform miracles?

- To what end(s) did Jesus perform miracles in His ministry?

- Is it possible to access that same "power and authority" of Jesus today? If so, how?

Tuesday

Read Isaiah 6:8.

Quoted in the *Flashlight* section is this statement: "All over the field of Christ's labor there were souls awakened to their need, and hungering and thirsting for the truth." Spend time in prayer and ask God to reveal to you any friends or family members you may know who are "hungering and thirsting" for truth. Write their names on your prayer list.

Next, prayerfully consider how God might want to use you to share the gospel with the people on your list.

Wednesday

Read the two passages in the *Punch Lines* section that come from *The Message* paraphrase. Now choose one of the remaining verses from *Punch Lines* and translate it into contemporary language similar to what Eugene Peterson did with *The Message.*

Thursday

Read Philippians 1:20.

Consider this observation from Becky Pippert: "Christians and non-Christians have something in common. We're both uptight about evangelism. Christians are afraid of offending. Non-Christians are afraid of being assaulted!"[1]

Would you agree or disagree with Becky? Why? What is your biggest fear in sharing your faith? What is the worst thing that could happen if you took a risk and told someone about Jesus? Is the risk worth it?

Friday

Read Jeremiah 31:3.

In his award-winning book on evangelism, *Just Walk Across the Room*, Bill Hybels suggests that the single greatest gift Christ-followers can give to the people around them is an introduction to the God who created them, who loves them, and has a purpose for their lives. Hybels says: "This is what evangelism is—constantly looking for ways to give that gift to someone living far from God." In what ways can God use me to draw people to Him?

To think about: How can I be more intentional about sharing that gift of life with those who are far from God?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 37.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.