

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

INTRODUCTION TO EVANGELISM

LESSON 7: COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module entitled Introduction to Evangelism. This series of lessons aims to prepare participants to effectively share the Gospel with others. Understanding how God equips us for ministry and how to prepare our Gospel message for various worldviews will help us bring the unchanging message of the hope found in Jesus Christ to a world that does not yet know Him.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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INTRODUCTION TO EVANGELISM

LESSON 7: COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to examine the factors that produce effective communication in sharing the Gospel message by studying Paul's example.

LEADER'S NOTE

A good presentation of the Gospel isn't just about great language skills and a charming personality! It is about connecting with your audience to ensure comprehension, and crafting a presentation that the audience can understand. As a leader, take some time to consider creative ways to present this lesson material, and make sure the participants understand it. In doing so, you will demonstrate the importance of effective creative communication! A little extra effort in building new skills will be very valuable for your students!

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ Have you had the experience of someone trying to communicate something to you, but you had difficulty understanding the message? It could be something as simple as asking directions. What barriers were there in the communication?
- ❖ What interactions have you had this week with those who have a different culture or language than you?
- ❖ How many languages do you speak? Have you had experiences trying to acquire a language not taught in your youth? What were the difficulties in learning this language?

STUDY

TEACH

- ❖ **Jesus' Example.** The Bible shows us many examples of effective communication of the truth.
 - Jesus was an audience-sensitive communicator. Consider [Mark 4:33](#): "With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it." Jesus was careful to give listeners only as much as they could understand.



- Jesus was patient and creative in presenting His message. He was focused on His audience, and readily interacted with them by answering questions and repeating information.

❖ **Paul's Example:** Paul and his companions took notice of cultural barriers when sharing the Gospel message, and encountered several situations that required an understanding of their audience. Examine the following Scriptures and how Paul presented the Gospel.

	Who and Where	Audience Worldview	Paul's Strategy	What Happened
Acts 14: 8-18	Paul and Barnabas at Lystra.	Greek Polytheism (Olympian gods)	A miracle that demonstrated the power of God and the supremacy of God over their idols.	They believed Paul and Barnabas to be their own gods Zeus and Hermes.
Acts 17: 16-34	Paul at Athens	Greek, Educated Philosophers	He spoke to them as a philosopher, using quotations from their own poetry and culturally relevant phrases.	Some mocked, some wanted to hear more, but some joined him and believed.
Acts 17: 1-4	Paul at Thessalonica	Jews and some Greeks—they were in a synagogue.	He reasoned with them with authority on the Sabbath as a scholar of the Scriptures.	A wide range of people believed and followed him.
Acts 21:37–22:2; 22:22-29; 23:6-10 *You may wish to summarize these chapters	Paul in Jerusalem	Jews in Jerusalem	Paul used the authority he had as a Roman citizen, and spoke to the Jews in Jerusalem in their language, showing he understood the values of the priests.	The word of God was preached to a great number, and Paul's life was preserved.
Acts 26	Paul speaks before King Agrippa	A king, educated nobility.	He shared his testimony, which could not be refuted, rather than arguing from philosophy or Scriptures. He was respectful, and used language appropriate for his audience.	The King, governor, Bernice (sister to Herod Agrippa), and those who were sitting with them heard the Gospel.

❖ **Barriers to Communication** There are many barriers to effective cross-cultural communication which we must be aware of.

- **Culture:** Paul was sensitive to the culture of those he was preaching to. He used culturally relevant examples, mentioned cultural icons, and used common idioms to connect with his audience.



- **Language:** Paul was able to speak in multiple languages, and used the appropriate one for his audience. He also changed the way he spoke depending on who he was addressing. The way we use language for children or elders may be different.
- **Literacy:** A large number of people in our world today rely on receiving information orally, rather than reading. Some people prefer to read material, some prefer to hear it, and some will need to discuss it to understand. Literate groups will process information differently than oral-learners. Be aware of the literacy level or learning preference of your audience. That will determine what access they have to reading materials and the Bible, but also how they remember and process information.
 - **Oral communicators** learn not only by hearing, but also by observing and imitating. They discuss events; they use tradition and stories to remember events. Communicating through stories, songs, dialogue, and art forms (such as music, drama or film) are more likely to connect with oral learners or the illiterate.
 - **Highly literate people** will be more comfortable with factual presentations, and prefer to read, study, analyze information, and discuss words, concepts, and principles.

TASK:

Try this activity with your group. Have two people stand back to back with a paper in front of each of them. Have the first person draw a simple picture. Then have that person explain to the other how to duplicate the picture without actually telling them what to draw. For instance, a drawing of a house may consist of a square with a triangle on top. Have the participants switch rolls with another picture. Were the images alike? Note how difficult it can be to communicate something simple to another person!



DISCUSSION

Choose three or four of the following questions:

- ❖ What were some of the ways that Paul changed the delivery of the Gospel to fit the audience he was trying to communicate with?
- ❖ Can there be language barriers between people who speak the same language? What might some of them be? (*Accent, dialogue, slang, local references, etc.*). Are there differing worldviews within your own neighbourhood? Within your family?
- ❖ A captive audience is not enough to assess whether the Gospel message has been delivered effectively. The only way we can measure effectiveness is by observing changed practices and behaviour in those who receive the Good News. What ways can we assess the changed practices in a group who has heard the Gospel? What changes should we expect to see?
- ❖ Paul had a unique opportunity to minister because of his citizenship, spiritual and cultural upbringing, languages spoken, and time available. How has God equipped you in a special way to be a messenger of the Gospel? Are there groups, cultures or languages you are uniquely able to minister to?
- ❖ Have you had experience communicating with literate and non-literate audiences? What are some practical ways to change your methods of delivery? What is important to remember for each audience?

PRAYER

Close the lesson in prayer. Praise God that through these labourers, the Word of God will increase and be multiplied ([Acts 12:24](#)), it will bear fruit as it is proclaimed ([Colossians 1:6](#)), and those who hear it will understand it. Pray that God would grant the participants wisdom, and equip them to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth, to every tongue, tribe, and nation.