

Person to Person

Jesus' last command was the well-known Great Commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . ." (Matthew 28:19). That directive comes down through the ages to every Christian today. As you develop the topic of witnessing with your group, bring out that the Bible is clear about the qualifications of one who witnesses: "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits" (2 Timothy 2:6). Your students should understand that in order to be an effective witness, a person must first experience and prove God's promises for himself.

You might wish to bring out that the message of the Gospel is a message of God's love, which can be delivered in many ways besides words. Yes, the most obvious method is by telling others, but a deed of kindness can speak volumes also. Sometimes a listening ear does more than any words can. A life lived each day in a godly manner has an influence. Showing concern for the needs of others often opens the door to an opportunity to share the Gospel story. A smile can prompt a question regarding the source of one's happiness.

Direct your group to this thought: The message of the Gospel was designed to be handed from person to person. Are we taking advantage of every opportunity that comes our way?

Response 1 — The students should be able to think of great historical Christians, or of people with whom they have been personally acquainted, who have proved their burden for the lost by sharing Jesus Christ with the unsaved. These actions of witnessing are a source of inspiration to other Christians. The attributes of these persons will probably include prayerfulness, dedication, zeal, compassion, and interest in others.

Response 2 — Your students should see that, without a burden for souls, we will not pray for the lost. We need a burden to feel the urgency of lost souls going to Hell. Without prayer, all the

Objective

The students will be able to relate why we must have a burden for the lost in order to be an effective witness, and will accept the challenge to pray for that burden.

Key Texts

Matthew 4:19; 6:19-21; Mark 1:17; 8:36; 16:15; Luke 15:4-7; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 3:6,7

Other Scriptures Used in This Study

Matthew 28:19; 2 Timothy 2:6

Suggested Verse for Memorization

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. — Psalm 126:6

talking in the world will not bring people to the point of surrender to Christ. We need to have a burden also in order to share out of a heart of love. Your group should understand that, for the most part, the burden for souls will come only through prayer. Oftentimes, as we pray, we receive a real burden for the lost. Sometimes the burden will develop through a missionary's talk, through an opportunity to observe the need of others, or through reading books describing the endeavors of missionaries.

The words of this song should reflect our heart's desire: "Lord, lay some soul upon my heart, and love that soul through me. And may I humbly do my part, to win that soul for Thee."

Response 3 — Your students' answers might include: a focus on accumulating material things or on enlarging personal bank accounts; excessive involvement in recreational pursuits; total absorption in a tight circle of family and friends. Actions which show the opposite attitude would include: an interest in missions and a willingness to support this type of endeavor; caution in personal conduct in terms of attitude, actions, and deportment; a willingness to deny self for the sake of the Gospel; and a sensitivity to the needs of others.

Response 4 — Every day, most of us have opportunities to share Christ with people we meet at work, at school, on the bus, in the neighborhood, at a store, or any number of other places. Explain to your group that a good way to start taking advantage of these opportunities is to always carry some Gospel tracts. If they are shy, they can begin by leaving a tract at a restaurant with their tip, at a phone booth, or on their seat on the bus (being sure not to litter!). Soon, they might find themselves offering a tract to the grocery clerk or to a person waiting for a bus with them. Many people get saved after reading Gospel tracts. Before long, they will find that the Holy Spirit will give boldness to start talking with people about Christ. We must ask God to help us view each person we meet as a potential candidate for the Gospel. We can ask Him to help us to make a difference in that life.

The important point of discussion should be

that we just need to start! The Lord will help us continue. The Spirit can guide us into creative ways of reaching out—both as a church family and as individuals. Some groups have held free car washes and have taken that opportunity to hand the drivers a portion of Scripture and to speak a word for the Lord. Others have set up free coffee stands at public locations and have given out verses or tracts with the coffee. We can ask God to broaden our horizons and to bring to mind new ways to get the Gospel out to our neighborhood and community.

Response 5 — The students will probably bring up events such as serious illness, accidents, or death of a loved one, identifying these as situations which call our attention to the shortness of life here on earth and to the fact that we don't know when our time will come. Having a friend come to know Jesus and seeing their excitement about telling others could encourage us to share our story also. The privilege of going on a missionary trip where we are challenged to share Jesus with others could be another example.

To wrap up your lesson, you might want to point out that the Great Commission—Jesus' last charge to His disciples—was not a suggestion. It was a command! Our responsibility to share the Gospel is neither optional nor something that only super-dedicated Christians need to worry about. If we are serious about our commitment to Christ, we need to be serious about witnessing!