

* The Heights Baptist Church * Series: Discipleship *
* Topic: Sharing the Gospel * Scripture: Various * 8/04/2024 *

MAIN POINT

In his Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), Jesus directed his disciples to “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” The first step in making disciples is helping them see their need for a Savior, and that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Note to study leader: You may want to list these items on the side of the white board as people list them; saving room in the center of the whiteboard for you to draw the circle illustration.

What essential concepts do you need to pass on to this person in order for them to make a decision about becoming a Christian?

- God loves us.
- We have all sinned.
- Sin results in death both physical and spiritual (eternal separation from God).
- We cannot earn our way back to God through good works.
- Jesus paid the death penalty for our sins on the cross, making a way for us to come back to God.
- Jesus rose again from the dead, proving he has power over death.
- Just believing these things isn’t enough. We need to accept the God’s offer of the free gift of salvation by:
 - repenting of our sins and
 - receiving Jesus into our lives.

Quite often, there is a lot of up-front work involved in getting a person to the point of wanting to hear the gospel message. This can include becoming their friend, making them aware you are a Christian, and helping them learn they can trust you. Then, help them see the love for God and people in your life, and helping them see the Bible as an important part of your life. We have previously looked at this topic known as “friendship evangelism”. Today we will be reviewing “The Three Circles” illustration, helping us become more proficient at sharing the gospel with someone who is ready to hear it. This tool provides a method of advancing conversations about brokenness into conversations about Christ, and then sharing how to become a Christian.

UNDERSTANDING

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ MATTHEW 4:19, ROMANS 1:16, AND 2 TIMOTHY 4:5

“Is witnessing making disciples? It’s kind of a yes-no. Witnessing is a huge part of making a disciple.... It is not the whole thing.” Pastor Randy Hahn, The Heights Baptist Church, 6/9/24

As we at The Heights Baptist Church focus on “Be a disciple, make a disciple”, we are initiating an effort to get people involved in connecting with smaller groups who are focusing on growing as disciples, and making disciples. Initially, this should progress somewhat rapidly, as there are likely hundreds of people who are members of the church and meet the criteria of being trained to be a disciple (“SAT” people” = Surrendered to Christ, Available, and Teachable). But as this process continues, there may be more and more people trained to make disciples of others, and less and less untrained SAT people at church available to lead through this process.

So, what is the answer? Jesus told us to go and make disciples of all nations. We see in Acts that the first step is to share the gospel, creating an ever-increasing pool of people with whom to continue the process of making disciples. This needs to be a major focus as we continue making disciples. Remember the parable of the sower. A good portion of the seed falls on the hard path. And other seeds fall on rocky soil or thorny soil. We need to be sharing the gospel while God provides the growth in people who are represented by the good soil. People who will continue in their walk with Christ to become SAT people, ready to be discipled.

OVERVIEW OF THE THREE CIRCLES EVANGELISM METHOD

This tool helps Christians to share the gospel using three simple circles.

The three individual circles represent:

1. God's Design
2. Our Brokenness
3. The Good News (Gospel)

Together the three circles illustrate how accepting and submitting to Jesus will grow faith and lead to God's perfect design.

- "Three Circles" is an illustration to help people understand the gospel.
- All you need to have is something to write with, and something to write on.
- The method provides quick answers to common questions of faith:
 - What was GOD's DESIGN?
 - How did we depart from God's Design (SIN)?
 - How can we escape BROKENNESS and have our relationship to God be restored?
- Include Bible verses in your presentation, since "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

THE EIGHT STEPS TO SHARING THE GOSPEL USING THE THREE CIRCLES METHOD

1. Our brokenness

Draw a circle and label it "Brokenness". Draw several squiggly arrows out from it and looping back to "Brokenness". We are trying to show no matter what we do it just boomerangs back to brokenness.



Conversation Example: "We live in a world of brokenness, full of hurting people hurting each other. We try escaping brokenness by focusing on things like career, gaining money, leisure time, or even things like alcohol. But all these cannot cure our brokenness. They cannot solve the root problem with our brokenness."

2. God's design

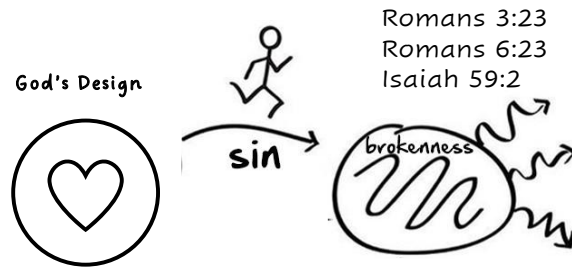
On the left, draw a second circle, and label it "God's Design".



Conversation Example: "Brokenness was not God's original design! 1 John 4:16 tells us that "God is love." God loves us, and his design was perfect, like Himself, with no brokenness present." (Draw heart to symbolize God's love).

3. The problem is sin

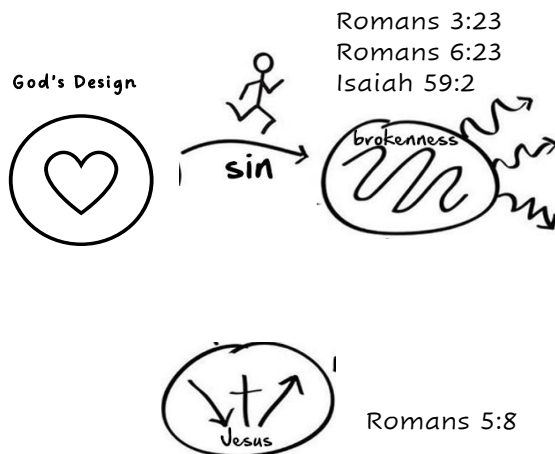
Draw an arrow going away from God's Design to Brokenness and label it, "Sin", including a person moving away from God's Design.



Conversation Example: "Each of us has rebelled against God and walked away from His perfect design. The Bible calls this sin, which leaves us in brokenness. Romans 3:23 tells us "All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God." And we read in Romans 6:23 that "The wages (or consequences) of sin is death." And this isn't just physical death, it is separation from God. Isaiah 59:2 says, "Your sins have separated you from your God."

4. The solution is Jesus

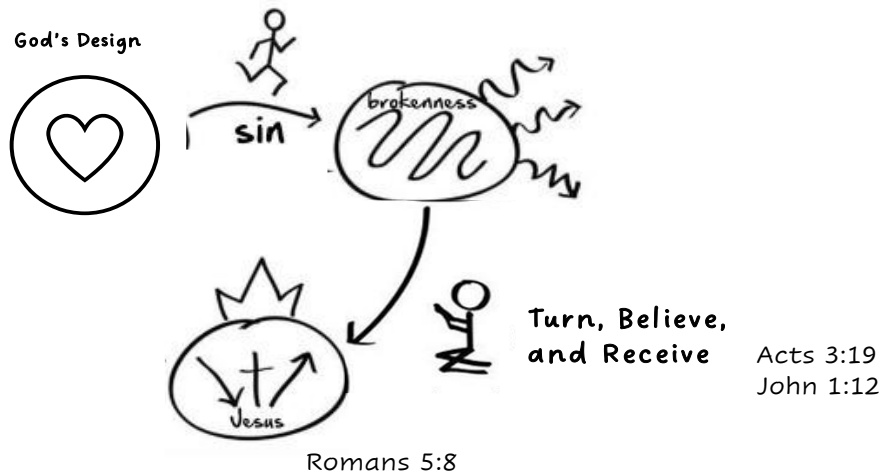
Draw a third circle below and between the first two (forming an upside-down triangle of circles), and label it "Jesus".



Conversation Example: "God saw we could not escape our brokenness on our own, so God demonstrated his love towards us!" Now draw a down-arrow below Jesus' name inside the circle. "God sent Jesus to the earth. Jesus was perfect and lived a perfect life, because He was God." Next draw a cross next to the down-arrow. "He willingly died on a cross to pay the penalty sin upon Himself." Next draw an up-arrow next to the cross. "Then Jesus rose again proving that He has power over death! He's alive!" Romans 5:8 tells us, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

5. Our part is to turn (repent), believe, and receive (follow).

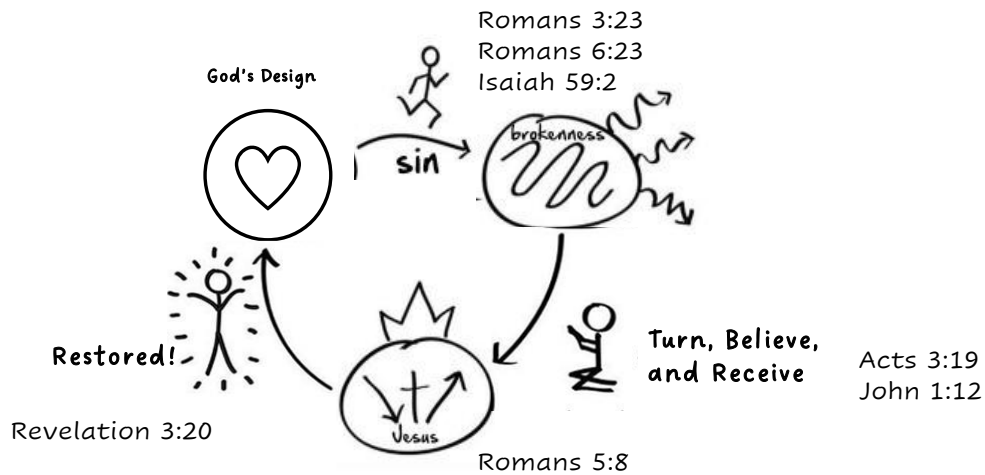
Draw an arrow from Brokenness to Jesus, draw a king's crown and write Turn, Believe, and Receive (or follow).



Conversation Example: “Acts 3:19 tells us, “Repent (turn away from sin) and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out” The Bible also tells us we need to believe that Jesus died for our sins and that God raised Him from the dead. And we need to receive (follow) Jesus into our life. John 1:12 says, “Yet to all who received him (Jesus), to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God!” And this is a promise from God; if we repent of our sins, and believe and receive Jesus, we become children of God!

6. The result

Draw a line from Jesus to God’s Design and label it “Restored!”



Conversation Example: “If we turn from our sin, and believe and receive Jesus, we can be restored into a relationship with God.”, “In Revelation 3:20 Jesus says, ‘I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them, and they with me.’ This is a promise from Jesus.”

7. Encourage them to make a decision today

After the Diagram is drawn, ask them where they are on this illustration. Then ask them where they want to be. If they want to have their relationship with God restored, pray through the illustration with them.

Conversation Example: Ask, “Where do you see yourself on this illustration? (Do they see themselves in God’s perfect design, in brokenness?)” Follow this with, “Where would you like to be? There answer to this will help you understand where they see themselves in relation to God and help you give them an opportunity to respond to follow Jesus. If they see their need for Jesus, ask them, “Would you like to pray to open the door of your life to Jesus right now?” If so, pray through the illustration with them. This can be followed by your testimony.

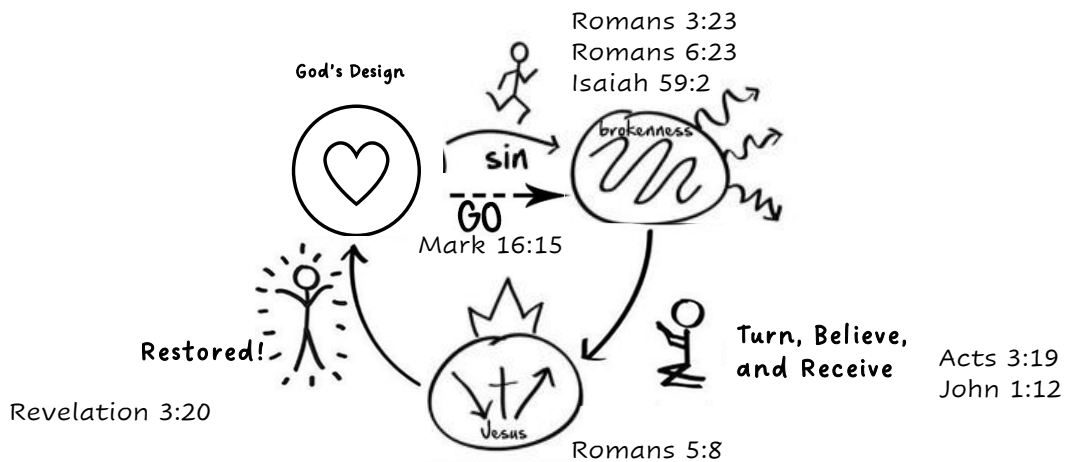
The prayer can be something like this. “God, thank you that you love me. I admit that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. Thank you that Jesus died in my place on the cross, and that he rose again from the dead. I repent of my sins and am asking Jesus to come into my life as my Savior and Lord. I am opening the door of my life to you, and I thank you that when I do this, you promise to forgive my sins and come into my life. Thank you that I now have eternal life with you.”

Assurance of salvation (1 John 5:11-13).

- If we have the Son (Jesus), we have life.
- If we don't have the Son, we don't have life.
- Based God's promise, we can know that if we have received Jesus into our lives, we have eternal life!

8. Go and tell others

Draw an arrow from God's Design to Brokenness and label it "Go".



Conversation Example: “God also tells us to go to others in their “Brokenness” and tell them about the good news of Jesus Christ.” In Mark 16:15, Jesus told his disciples to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel”, which means the good news about Jesus.

APPLICATION

Have you ever prayed to receive Jesus into your life? If not, or if you aren't sure, now would be a great time to open the door of your heart to Jesus. Ask the person who is leading this study, and they will be happy to pray with you.

Are you familiar enough with the gospel message to be able to comfortably share it with someone? If not, what can you do to improve this skill?

Consider memorizing the most important Bible verses that will help you share the gospel clearly.

Practice sharing the gospel by drawing out the “Three Circle Illustration”. Practice by yourself until you have it down well enough, then practice it with a Christian friend, or someone in your disciple-making study.

PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we pray that you would open a door for our message, and that we would faithfully proclaim the good news of Christ. We pray that whenever we speak, words may be given us so that we will clearly make known the mystery of the gospel. We pray that we will declare it fearlessly, as we should, and that the message of the gospel may spread rapidly through us and would be honored by the people who hear it. We pray you will continue to raise up “SAT” people through whom we can continue the process of making disciples at The Heights.