

STYLES OF EVANGELISM

September 28, 2009

THE BIG IDEA:

There are a variety of methods to sharing the good news of Jesus.

Sharing the gospel message is often said to be the duty of every Christian. In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus says "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

However, it should be added that not only is it the *duty* of each believer to share their faith; it is indeed also their *privilege*. All Christians carry with them the very power of God, the Holy Spirit, and the message of truth that can set people free from sin and death. That is power!

Evangelism should never be done as an act of mere obedience. Rather, it should flow from a heart that loves others and wishes the very best for them. If we truly believe that Jesus is the only way to eternal life in heaven, then our hearts should break for those who are lost and headed for destruction. We should evangelize because we love our friends and family!

Unfortunately, evangelism is often ineffective because the Christian is using methods that may not be best suited to them. As such, here are six valid forms of evangelism (adapted from chapter 9 of *Becoming a Contagious Christian* by Bill Hybels)...

1. **Confrontational Approach** – Anyone who has had a Jehovah's Witness knock on their front door is familiar with the Confrontational approach to religious evangelism. This approach is characterized by bold, in-your-face declarations of the gospel message. The apostle Peter best characterized this method when he preached a sermon from the rooftops demanding all men to repent of their sin in Acts 2 (three thousand people were saved).
2. **Intellectual Approach** – This method of evangelism is characterized by using logic and reasoning to make sense of the gospel message. The apostle Paul demonstrated this method in Acts 17 by arguing with philosophers to reveal why Jesus' death and resurrection is the only logical way of salvation.
3. **Testimonial Approach** – Anyone can use the testimonial approach, since it is simply declaring to others what God has done in your own life. In John 9, Jesus heals a blind man who, though not familiar with the Bible, evangelized the community by simply giving his testimony: "One thing I know, I was blind but now I see!"
4. **Relational Approach** – This approach, often referred to as "lifestyle evangelism", shares the gospel through allowing close friends and family to see a difference in your life, which ideally might prompt spiritual conversations where the gospel can be communicated. In Luke 5 we learn

that Matthew, who was a tax collector and thus a well-known public figure, hosted a banquet for his friends to expose them to Jesus and the new way of life He offered.

5. **Invitational Approach** – This method is simply inviting others to events where the gospel message will be communicated. Often, this is a good method for new Christians or those who struggle with communicating clearly. These kinds of people can still evangelize by inviting others to hear more effective speakers give clear presentations of the good news. In John 4, we see this method demonstrated by the Samaritan woman at the well, who invited others to come and hear Jesus speak.
6. **Service Approach** – A modern-day example of the Service approach would be Mother Teresa, who became a household name by merely dedicated her life to clothing and feeding the poor. Service to others is a demonstration of the love of God and the gift of life through Jesus. In Acts 9, a woman named Dorcas is revealed to have been evangelizing others by “always doing good and helping the poor”.

By using the approach or approaches that best suit you, your efforts in sharing the good news of Jesus will be much more effective.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Am I putting forth effort to share the good news of Jesus? Am I doing it out of a sense of duty or out of love for others?
2. Which evangelism method(s) am I currently using? Are they effective?
3. Which evangelism method(s) should I employ because they best suit me? How can I practice these methods to become better at sharing the gospel?