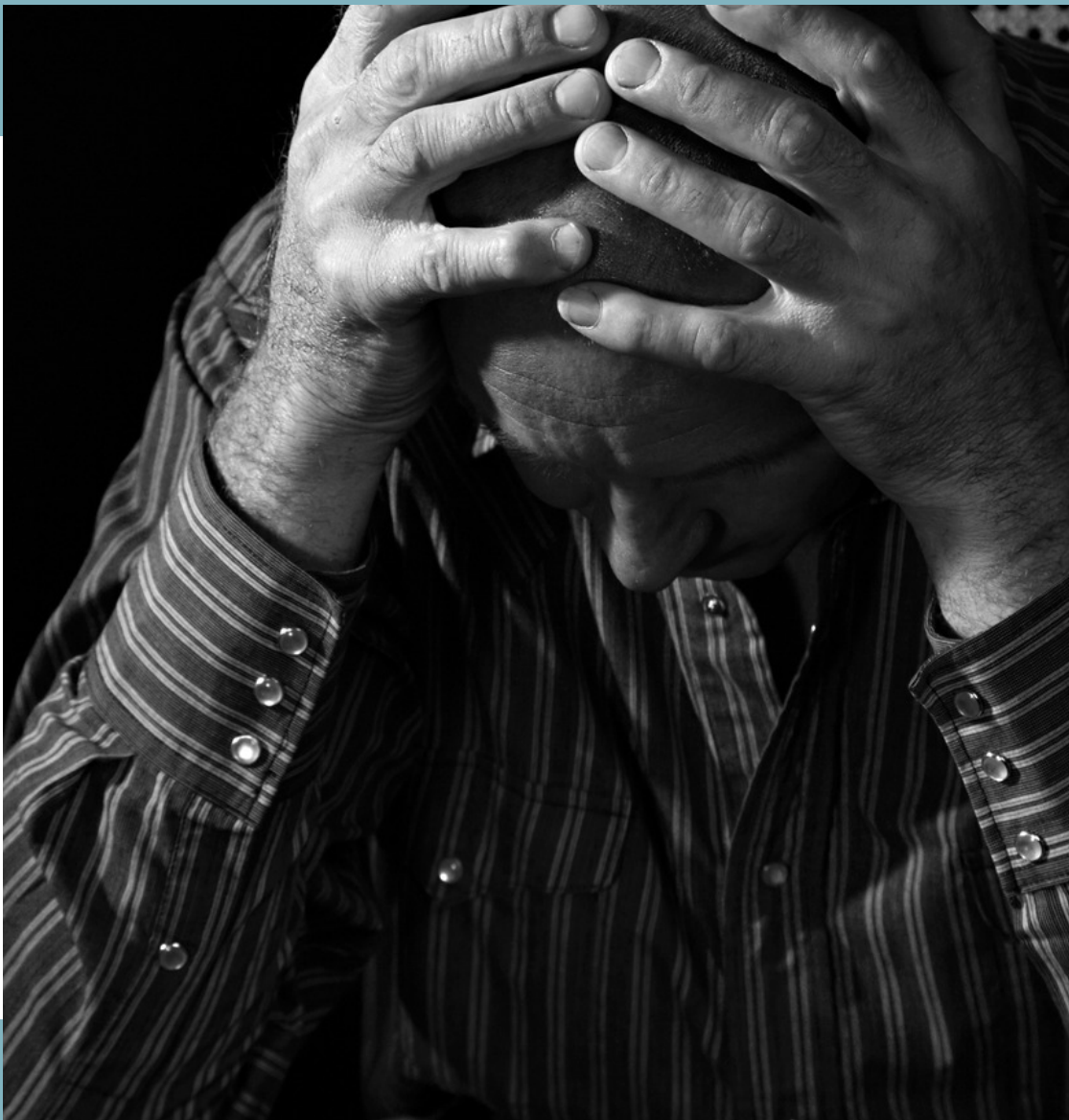


INSTITUTE FOR PRISON MINISTRIES

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# TRAUMA HEALING EVANGELISM TRAINING



"WE ARE THEREFORE CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS, AS THOUGH GOD WERE MAKING HIS APPEAL THROUGH US. WE IMPLORE YOU ON CHRIST'S BEHALF: BE RECONCILED TO GOD."

- II CORINTHIANS 5:20



## TRAUMA & FAITH

Pastor Kevin Brown shares that in Exodus 6 we learn that Moses received a clear message from God that the Hebrew slaves were about to be freed from 400 years of captivity. Soon, they would have their own land. Moses faithfully delivered the message, but verse 9 gives us a stunning response: “Moses told [the good news of their deliverance] to the Israelites, but they would not listen to him, because their spirit had been broken by their cruel slavery.”

Trauma can shatter our faith and beliefs about God. We doubt God’s goodness, power, and love, and our own lovability. Doubts often lead to distorted beliefs becoming the norm. We believe that God must not exist, that God doesn’t care, that we are being punished, and we are shameful.(1)

The incarcerated who have experienced trauma may have an intellectual understanding of the gospel, but still believe that Jesus died for everyone except them because they are not worthy.

Trauma Healing removes doubts and distorted beliefs about God and replaces them with the truth that God loves us, and we can receive healing through sharing our trauma story, walking through the grief process, taking our pain to the cross, and forgiving others.


Biblically-based trauma healing opens us up to the work of the Holy Spirit and draws us toward God and the truth about Him. Therefore, trauma healing facilitators need to “Always be prepared to give and answer to everyone who asks to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15). The following training is intended to help prepare you.

## TWO MANDATES

As a Christian leading a healing group, the desire to share Christ is very powerful. However, as a facilitator, you must take seriously the pain and trauma of those you are caring for. So you must begin with understanding what you cannot do.

**First, do not seek to share the gospel message during the healing group.** The goal of the healing group is trauma healing, not evangelism. Seeking to evangelize during the healing group can cause spiritual trauma as participants may feel betrayed.

(1) Swanson, K. & Monroe, P. Trauma: How the Church can heal soul wounds. [christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2019/june/trauma-how-church-can-heal-soul-wounds.html](http://christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2019/june/trauma-how-church-can-heal-soul-wounds.html)



When recruiting trauma group participants, people of all faiths and no faith at all are encouraged to join. Participants agree to partake in a biblically-based trauma healing group with the promise of not being pressured to become a Christian.

**Second, do not proselytize.** While not all youth detentions, jails, and prisons have a written “no proselytizing policy,” it is expected by corrections administration and a religious right of the incarcerated (Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act – RLUIPA) not to proselytize. The following is an example of a written no proselytizing policy:

Chaplains, contract Chaplains, religious program volunteers, other staff, members of the community, and offenders may not initiate unwanted or forceful attempts to persuade another individual to convert from one religious belief to another religious belief or criticize the religious beliefs of others within the grounds of any Department facility. Nothing in this provision will prohibit the sharing of information regarding an individual’s religious belief. (State of Washington, DOC 560.200)

It's important to remember that although proselytizing is forbidden, engaging in a gospel conversation is not—with proper permissions and in the proper context. Once you have been given permission by someone to talk about faith, you are welcome to continue that conversation, but always do so with 1 Peter 3:15-16 as your model:

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.  
Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.  
But do this with gentleness and respect,  
keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

## SHARING WITH GENTLENESS & RESPECT

1. Ask for permission.
2. Respond to where they are and go at their pace.
3. Don't pressure, but instead give them space.
4. Don't treat unbelievers like your project, but instead be their friend.
5. Don't force conversations about the gospel, but don't run from open doors.
6. Don't have a pre-set agenda, but be prepared.



# WITNESSING

## TERMS

**Christian:** One who has a personal relationship with Christ as Lord and Savior, and evidenced through a transformed life (John 17:3; Romans 10:9; James 2:17)

**Non-Christian (unbeliever):** One separated from God, without a relationship with Christ, and on a path to eternal damnation without heart transformation (Colossians 1:21)

**Gospel:** The good news of Jesus Christ dying for our sins and this forgiveness being available to all who believe in Him (Romans 1:16)

**Evangelize:** Proclaiming the gospel message


**Witnessing:** Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and others to bring one or more persons one step closer to Christ

**Model:** Prayer, Care, Share, Stay There. **Pray** for participants on your own before, during (silently), and after the healing group. **Care** for participants is an outcome of the group. **Share** the gospel during an individual follow-up meeting **after** completion of the healing group five-core lessons. **Stay there** and disciple them.

## YOUR TRANSFORMATION OR TRAUMA STORY

One of the most powerful ways of witnessing is to be able to share your transforming story of your faith in Christ. Some non-Christians may not be open to hearing the gospel story because they don't believe in the Bible, but unless your story is unbelievable, they likely will listen and believe how Christ has transformed your life or helped you through a traumatic time of life.

Your story should be 1-2 minutes long so you will keep their attention. Share about your life before and after Christ transformed you, or share a traumatic time in your life and how Christ helped you through it. On the next page are two examples(2)::



"I grew up living in the projects and gang banging. I thought life was about living for women, money, and drugs. I caught a murder case and while in jail, God spoke to me in a dream that I needed to give my life to Him. I gave up my desire for revenge on another inmate and chose to leave the gang and become a follower of Christ. I no longer try to fill my life with the things of the streets, but with the word of God. My identity is not being a gang banger and player, but a man of God."

"I grew up in a home and church that taught me that Jesus loved me and I could spend eternity with Him. As a young child, I placed my faith in Christ as payment for my sins, making him savior and Lord of my life. But, being a Christian does not mean life is always easy. When I was engaged to Mark, he was diagnosed with cancer and asked me if I still wanted to marry him. I said "yes" and we married between his treatments. Mark continued to battle his cancer when I was diagnosed with cancer and we spent our second anniversary sharing a hospital room. God permanently healed Mark by taking him home to heaven and God temporarily healed me. Through these experiences of cancer and loss, I focused on the truths of God and experienced God's love and peace. Christ is the most important person in my life."

## WRITING TIPS

**Avoid Christian lingo.** Avoid phrases that are familiar to Christians but likely unfamiliar to non-Christians. These can include phrases like "born again", "saved", and "accepted Christ". Possible alternatives are "received the free gift of eternal life" or "trusted in Christ to save me from the penalty all I've done wrong."

**Avoid exaggeration.** The best stories are honest and believable.

**Be clear and concise.** Connect your need with God's supply. Be able to share it in 1-2 minutes.

**Focus on Christ.** You may be able to weave the gospel in your story and/or how Christ healed your trauma.

**Write, edit, and rewrite.** Share your story with friends or family. Make edits based on their feedback. Rewrite it and memorize it so you can share it naturally.



# EVANGELISM

## THE GOSPEL

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ—that Jesus was born a man, loves us, died for our sins, raised from the dead proving that he is the Son of God, lives in heaven, and desires us to be reconciled in relationship with Him and through Him.

Many Christians want to be bold about witnessing, but there is often a disconnect between desire and action. One barrier is a lack of confidence in their ability to communicate clearly the gospel message. Becoming familiar with an evangelistic tool will increase your evangelism engagement.

**STEP 1: SELECT AN EVANGELISM TOOL (SEE BELOW) OR CHOOSE ONE YOUR OWN**

**STEP 2: BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE TOOL**

**STEP 3: PRACTICE SHARING THE GOSPEL USING THE TOOL**

**STEP 4: SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH A NON-CHRISTIAN**

## EVANGELISM TOOLS

### **Romans Road**

[biblegateway.com/blog/2016/09/evangelism-the-romans-road-to-salvation](http://biblegateway.com/blog/2016/09/evangelism-the-romans-road-to-salvation)

### **One-Verse Evangelism**

[navigators.org/resource/one-verse-evangelism](http://navigators.org/resource/one-verse-evangelism)

### **Share the Big Story**

[evangelism.intervarsity.org/resource/share-big-story](http://evangelism.intervarsity.org/resource/share-big-story)

### **Steps to Life**

[evangelismexplosion.org/resources/steps-to-life/](http://evangelismexplosion.org/resources/steps-to-life/)



**Steps to Peace with God**

[peacewithgod.net/steps-to-peace-with-god](http://peacewithgod.net/steps-to-peace-with-god)

**The Bridge to Life**

[navigators.org/resource/the-bridge-to-life](http://navigators.org/resource/the-bridge-to-life)

**The God Test**

[thegodtest.org](http://thegodtest.org)

**The Story**

[thestoryfilm.com](http://thestoryfilm.com)

**Two Ways to Live**

[matthiasmedia.com.au/2wtl](http://matthiasmedia.com.au/2wtl)

**Would you like to know God personally?**

[cru.org/us/en/how-to-know-god/would-you-like-to-know-god-personally.html](http://cru.org/us/en/how-to-know-god/would-you-like-to-know-god-personally.html)



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