

A Guide to “Confronting” a Friend with the Gospel

Introducing the Conversation

To begin, say, “I just have a few questions for you.” Then, ask:

1. When would you say that you became a Christian? What happened at that time? What does being a Christian mean to you?
2. If you were going to share tell someone who wasn't a Christian how to become a Christian, how would you explain that to them?
3. So, theoretically (because I don't think it happens this way), but, theoretically, if you were to die today (because any of us could die at any point), so if you were to die today and stand before God in heaven, and He was to say to you, __ (Name) __, why should I let you into heaven, what would you say?

Allow them to answer....

People typically respond in a few different ways to this question:

1. Unsaved (sinner - sees that, is sad about that), “I don't know. I don't think God should let me into heaven. I'm a sinner.”
2. Unsaved (sinner - doesn't see that, hopes good works are enough), “I don't know. I guess I would say that I'm a pretty good person – go to church, help people, and that I would hope that would be enough and that God would be kind and let me into heaven.”
3. Saved (has accepted Gospel, but lacking assurance of salvation), “I don't know. I believe in Jesus and I try to do what's right, but I know I'm a sinner, and don't deserve heaven, so I hope God would let me in, but I'm not sure He would.”
4. Saved (Accepted Gospel – assurance of salvation), “I guess I would say something like: Even though I'm a sinner, I've trusted Jesus Christ to forgive me and save me, and You promise that if I do that, I will be saved and spend eternity with You.”

The truth of God's Word is the same for all of these people, but their responses help us to focus our explanation of the Gospel to meet their needs and reveal the truth that is most relevant to their current situation. Unless someone responds with the 4th response and is walking in a manner consistent with Christ, I would still take them through all the steps included in this guide.

As we now endeavor to share the Gospel, we need to realize that there is no “fool-proof” plan for evangelism. We want to do our part by clearly articulating the truth of the Gospel. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit must use us and our words to convict the hearts of the hearers to respond to Him. And sometimes people respond to the Holy Spirit right away, sometimes later in life, and sometimes, very sadly, not at all. So, pray, do your best, and entrust the rest to God.

1. First, the Bad News...

Help Them See We Are All Sinners Who Cannot Save Ourselves.

Ask: Do you think you have done wrong things? Like have you ever lied, stolen, thought something mean or lustful towards someone?

God's Word says "All have sinned (rebelled against God and done evil things" – including me and you. Let's read some passages that confirm this. Read each of these passages aloud (either you or them if they are willing.)

1. Isaiah 64:6 – Righteousness is like filthy (period/menstrual) rags
2. (if applicable, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10) – sexual sins – will not inherit the kingdom of God
3. Romans 3:10-21 – No one is righteous, no one seeks God, no fear of God before their eyes; all mouths stopped, whole world held accountable to God.
4. Romans 3:23 – All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
5. Romans 6:23a – The wages (result/fair punishment) for sin is death.
6. Revelation 21:8 – And that death means separation from God, others, and being thrown into "the lake that burns with fire and sulfur".

Bottom Line – We have all done wrong/evil. God is just. He can't just let sin go without punishing it. If He did, it would be like a judge letting someone who murdered your family member go free with no penalty. God has to punish evil. And because of the evil we have done, we deserve to die and burn in hell, separated from God and others forever. This is really bad news. There is no being "good enough". We deserve death for what we have done against the Holy, Loving, Just God of the Universe and against other people.

So, that's the Bad News. Now, don't leave your friends hanging here. Help them to understand the Good News.

2. Next, the Good News...

God Loves Us and Offers Us Salvation through Jesus.

The Good News is: God loves us, and He wants to save us from the punishment we deserve. So, Jesus, God, the Son, came to earth as a Man, and was the only human ever to live a sinless, perfect life. Then, out of His love for the world, He gave up His life on the cross. In dying on the cross, Jesus paid the price required by God (the Father) for our evil ways. He endured the punishment of death that we all deserve to get for our sin. But, because He is God, He didn't stay dead. He rose back to life three days later and proofed once and for all that He has power of sin, death, Satan and the demons. He made a way for us as humans to be forgiven of our sins and have a relationship with God again – one that starts now and last forever. This means God, the Holy Spirit, comes to live in us now, and that when we die, we will go to heaven to live in the presence of God forever.

These verses help us to see this truth:

1. John 3:16 – God so love the world that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.
2. Romans 3:23-24 – All have sinned, fall short of the glory of God – but are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus
3. Romans 5:8 – God demonstrated His love while we were still sinners by sending Christ to die for us.
4. Romans 6:23 – The wages of sin is death, BUT, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. Finally, the Response...

Help Them Understand that We Must Believe in Christ to Receive Salvation.

So, this is great news! But, does this just mean we can all go around happy that Jesus took the punishment for sin, so now we will just automatically go to heaven? The Bible is clear that the salvation that God offers is a free gift. That means that we can't do anything to earn it. But, like with any gift, we still have to decide whether or not to accept it. We have to decide if we believe that this gift God offers is real. And if it is, and if we want it, we have to agree with God that we need this gift in the first place, and ask Him to forgive us and save us because of what Christ has done on our behalf.

The Bible says:

1. Romans 10:9-10 – If we confess (agree with God) with our mouths, that Jesus is Lord (God and Rightful Ruler of the Universe), and believe (truth fully) in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved.
2. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 – We are saved by believing the Gospel - that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised as God's Word's says
3. 1 John 1:8-9 – If we confess (agree with God) about our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
4. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 – Even those of with significant (sexual or other) sin can be washed, sanctified, justified (made right with God) in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit.
5. John 14:6 – Jesus is the ONLY Way to God (salvation).

Ask Them If They Are Ready to Respond Right Now.

So, the question for each of us to consider is, how will we respond to these truths from God's Word? Will we believe that Jesus is both 100% God and 100% Man and really lived, died in our places for our sins, and rose back to life? Will we agree with God that we have done evil and ask Him for the forgiveness and salvation that only comes through Jesus? Will you give Jesus Christ full control of your life?

(If they gave the 3rd response, ask: have you ever done this before? If so, you can say with confidence that the reason God should let you into heaven has nothing to do with your ability to be good and everything to do with your faith in what Christ has already accomplished through His death and resurrection. However, if they gave the 1st or 2nd response or gave the 3rd but say they have never accepted Jesus as Savior before, continue with the last steps.)

Tomorrow may be too late. I encourage you to respond today to the gift of forgiveness, salvation, and a relationship with God that is available through Jesus Christ. God is offering each of us a gift. We can either reject it and “drop the gift on the floor” or respond to the offer and receive the gift Christ offers. Are you ready to respond?

Do you agree with God that you have done wrong? Do you agree with God that you can't save yourself and need His help? Do you agree that the only way to be saved is by believing in and accepting the forgiveness and salvation that He offers through Jesus death and resurrection?

If so, talk to God about that right now. Just talk to Him like you would to a friend. It's not the words the exact words you pray that save you, it's if you believe the truth of the words you say.

Say something like this:

Dear God, I agree with you that I have done many wrong things against You. Because of that I deserve death. But, I believe that Jesus is God and came and died in my place to take the punishment I deserve for my sins. I believe that He came back to life 3 days later and that He can give eternal life too. God, because of what Jesus has done, please forgive my sins and give me a relationship with You that starts now and lasts forever. And please help me to live my entire life in thankfulness to You. Amen.

Be sure to encourage your friend to connect right away with other believers/church at least weekly (including you if possible), with God in prayer, and with God's Word. I have included a simple “Journey through Psalms & Proverbs” devotional that is a starting point for them in God's Word.

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