

Personal Evangelism Training

**Grace Baptist Church
2009**

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Our Mandate: Go and Make Disciples

"All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. GO therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." *Matt 28:18-20*

The word translated as "go" is to be understood as a command.¹ The two big ideas or two chief actions enjoined by the Lord are to "go" and to "make disciples." Baptizing them and teaching them are the means by which disciples are made. But before there can be a making of disciples there has to be a "going". The first step in making disciples is to "go". The dictum, "we are to be a going people", was true in the days of the apostles, when they had to reach out beyond Jerusalem and is still true today. We should not remain idle waiting for the nations or our neighbors to come to us, rather we are to be active in going to them – if we are to be obedient to the Lord's command.

Traditional Outreach Still Effective

Contrary to what you might read in the latest church growth material, tradition outreach (going home to home throughout the community) still remains an effective evangelistic tool. As a new church plant we have seen how God has responded to our obedience in going on Saturdays by sending visitors on Sunday. Interestingly those who come Sunday are often not those whom we contacted on Saturday. We maintain by conviction that, apart from God, any type of outreach is futile. Our confidence is solely in the God who draws and regenerates and not in our methods or programs. Of course we do not blindly press ahead with evangelistic efforts that run counter to wisdom, the realities of life, and basic common sense. Traditional door-to-door outreach is a proven method and is one approach that we as a church still believe is necessary in reaching our entire community. Though not the only effective evangelistic method, it remains a strategic part of our overall evangelistic efforts in our community.

Prayer

Then he said to his disciples, "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." *Matt 9:37-38*

Prayer for others is the supreme God-ordained method in evangelism. In the above verse Jesus affirms that believers' prayers further the missionary work of God on earth. In terms of methods and means, prayer is our primary method. Prayer is the open admission that we do not possess the power to perform the work God has called us to. Prayer is the turning away from our own sufficiency and a humble reliance upon God's promised sufficiency. Ultimately, the power needed for evangelism comes through preserving prayer.

Foundational Principles for Evangelism: (Martyn Lloyd Jones)

1. The supreme object of the work of evangelism is to glorify God, not save souls
2. The only power than can do this work is the Holy Spirit, not our own strength.
3. The one and only medium through which the Spirit works is the Scriptures; therefore , we "reason out of the Scriptures" like Paul did.
4. These preceding principles give us the true motivation for evangelism – a zeal for God and a love for others.

¹ Wallace, Daniel., *Greek Grammar Beyond The Basics*, pg 645. The word "go" is most likely an attendant circumstance participle. Coupled with the main verb "make disciples" it carries the force of a command (imperative).

Starting & Steering A Spiritual Conversation *(From Share Jesus Without Fear)*

Five questions that will help steer the conversation and the individual towards the gospel.

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?
2. To you, who is Jesus?
3. Do you believe in a literal heaven? Literal hell?
4. When you die, where do you think you will go and WHY?
5. If the Bible said something different that what you believe, would you want to know?

Developing A Clear Gospel Presentation

Every Christian should be able to clearly, concisely, accurately, quickly and naturally communicate the basic components of the gospel message. In the next section there are a number of well-known and well-ordered gospel presentations for your consideration, but we are not going to look at them just yet. I suppose we could have just picked one, had you memorized it and moved on. Instead what we want you to do is design your own gospel presentation. We are taking this approach for several reasons. First, you need to possess the knowledge (and corresponding confidence) that you KNOW the gospel. By having you think through the essential elements of the gospel and reflecting upon the key texts, you will gain the knowledge and confidence that you KNOW the gospel. Secondly, by having you design a gospel outline it will better reflect your style and personality. An outline which is more "you" is one that will lead to a more natural, comfortable conversation about the gospel.

The Basic Gospel Components: *(please order these in a logical and Scriptural sequence)*

Faith (Repentance) Sin Man Christ God Grace Life

1. _____
Concise Scripture Passage(s):

2. _____
Concise Scripture Passage(s):

3. _____
Concise Scripture Passage(s):

4. _____
Concise Scripture Passage(s):

5. _____
Concise Scripture Passage(s):

6. _____
Concise Scripture Passage(s):

7. _____
Concise Scriptural Passage(s):

Work On Being CLEAR

As you know, or will quickly find out, we live in a post-Christian society. The terms that we as Christians often use and understand are not intelligible to the average person today. To communicate more clearly avoid using these common Christian clichés in your conversations with unbelievers:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| scripture or Bible verse | a place in the Bible where it says... |
| believe | trust, accept |
| born again, converted | changed, transformed |
| Christian | follower of Christ |
| confess | admit |
| found the Lord, get saved | accept Christ, make a decision to follow Christ |
| grace | Gods totally unearned forgiveness |
| gospel | God loves us and sent His Son so that we can find forgiveness and new life through Him |
| have a burden | be concerned |
| know | believe, trust, be certain |
| the Lord | God, Creator |
| the Holy Spirit | God the Spirit, the Spirit of God |
| praise | thanking God for His greatness |
| pray | talk with God, ask God |
| preach | talk about |
| repent | to be sorry about wrongs and to turn from them |
| salvation, saved | forgiven of wrongs and given eternal life |
| Savior | Jesus, Gods Son, who forgave my wrongs and gave me eternal life |
| share | discuss, explain |
| sin, sinner | acting against Gods will and offending Gods character |
| testimony | story |
| witness | tell, show |
| worship | giving honor and glory to God |

Ready Answers To Some Common Questions and Objections

(From *Share Jesus Without Fear*)

1. **I'm not a bad person.**
Read: Matthew 5:21-22 Have you ever been so angry with someone that you cursed them or wished evil on them?
Read: Matthew 5:27-28 Have you ever lusted after someone other than your spouse?
Read: Matthew 22:37 Is there something or someone in your life that is more important to you than God?
2. **There are many paths to God.**
Read: John 14:6 How many ways to God are there according to the Bible?
Read: Matthew 7:13-14 Does this sound like we have many options for getting to God?
Read: Colossians 1:12-23 That's a long section, read verse 20 again. What is the only way to peace with God?
3. **That may be your truth, but it isn't mine.**
Read: John 14:6 How many ways to God are there according to the Bible?
Read: John 17:17 Whose Word is truth?
Read: John 8:31-32 Who will know the truth?
Read: 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 What happens to those who deny God's Truth – God's Word?
4. **Why does God let bad things happen?** (*let the person vent if they need to – just listen*)
Read: Romans 5:12 Why did death come into existence? Who has sinned?
Read: Romans 6:23 What is the result of sin? Why do "bad things" happen?
Read: Romans 5:8-9 Did God leave us condemned?
Read: 1 Peter 4:12-19 That was a long section, read verse 14 again. What does it say about suffering?
Read: Romans 8:33-39 God has never promised that our lives would be pain-free. But those who trust in Him are eternally secure.
5. **What will my friends or family think?**
Read: Matthew 10:22 Unless they also believe, they will not like it.
Read: Matthew 10:28 Who should we be concerned about?
Read: Matthew 10:37-38 Christ must be the priority of our lives; have no other gods before Him.
6. **I'm having too much fun.**
Read: 2 Thessalonians 2:12 What does this say about living for pleasure rather than obeying the truth.
Read: Romans 6:23 What is the result of sin?
7. **I'm not ready.**
Read: Luke 14:27-28 You should give consideration to this commitment.
Read: Hebrews 10:31 Count the cost, but don't just put it off. What happens if you wait too long?
Read: Hebrews 9:27-28 What happens if we die without accepting Christ?
8. **I've always believed in God.**
Read: James 2:19 What does that say about just believing?
Read: John 14:6 Who is the only way to God?
9. **How can a loving God send someone to hell?**
Read: Romans 6:23 What is the result of sin?
Read: Hebrews 2:3 If we neglect what?
Read: Romans 5:8-10 What does this mean?

10. There are too many errors in the Bible.

Read: John 17:17 Whose Word is truth?

Read: 1 Peter 1:25 What will endure forever?

Read: Hebrews 4:12 This says the Bible discerns your most private thoughts and intents. Through His Word, God can show you exactly who you are and what you need. Lets see if that is true.

Making The Gospel Invitation

Make It Clear

We need to be clear on what God is asking them to do. Below are some common clichés that are vague at best to the unsaved person:

- Ask Jesus into your heart,
- Give your heart or life to God,
- Invite Christ into your life,
- Receive Christ as Savior,
- Make Christ Lord and Savior,
- Make Christ Lord of your life,
- Put Jesus on the throne of your life,
- Pray this prayer (*gives the impression that the prayer will save them. Better to say that they must believe in Christ, and they can tell him through prayer that they want the gift of eternal life or that they are thankful for what he has done*).

Instead:

- Will you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal savior?
- Will you believe Jesus took your place on the cross?
- Right now believe that Jesus Christ paid in full the price for your sins.

Do's and Don'ts When Sharing the Gospel...

When sharing the gospel...

Don'ts

1. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know".
2. Don't assume that the person has ever opened a Bible.
3. Don't use terms that non-believers may not understand.
4. Don't argue.
5. Don't take it personally if they don't trust Christ at that moment.
6. Don't talk about denominations if possible.
7. Don't allow non-essential issues to cloud the message.
8. Don't rush just to get through the presentation.
9. Don't force the issue if they strongly indicate they are not interested.
10. Don't end the relationship if they do not trust Christ right away.

Do's

1. Pursue relationships with non-believers.
2. Get to know the person.
3. Listen with your eyes and ears.
4. Smile.
5. Avoid judging the person or their lifestyle.
6. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you interact with non-believers.
7. Make your presentation clear and simple.
8. Allow them the opportunity to ask questions.
9. Stay focused on the essential elements of the gospel.
10. Relax, God is in charge!

Remember: You are not sharing a list of religious principles to follow, but truth about how they can have a personal relationship with their Creator. What an awesome privilege!

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Various Gospel Presentations

The "Romans Road"

1. We must acknowledge God as the Creator of everything, accepting our humble position in God's created order and purpose. **Romans 1:20-21:**

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

2. We must realize that we are sinners and that we need forgiveness. None of us are worthy under God's standards. **Romans 3:23:**

"For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."

3. God gave us the way to be forgiven of our sins. He showed us His love by giving us the potential for life through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. **Romans 5:8:**

"But God demonstrates His love toward us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

4. If we remain sinners, we will die. However, if we repent of our sins, and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we will have eternal life. **Romans 6:23:**

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

5. Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead and you are saved. **Romans 10:9-10:**

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

6. There are no other religious formulas or rituals. Just call upon the name of the Lord and you will be saved! **Romans 10:13:**

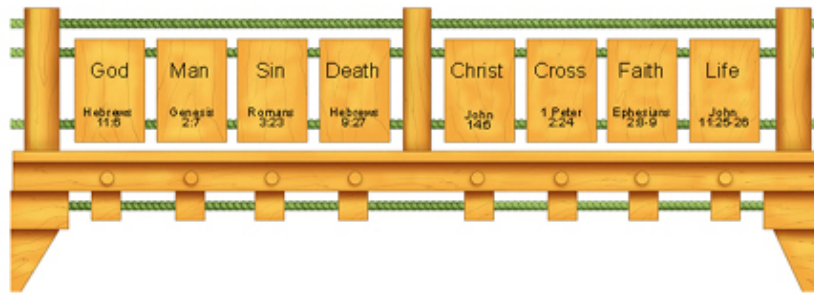
"For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

7. Determine in your heart to make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life today. **Romans 11:36:**

"For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

“The Bridge to Life”

The *Bridge to Life* comes directly from the Bible’s own story.



THE METAPHOR

A bridge is necessary to cross a barrier that separates one from where we are and where we need to be. The message of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the bridge that takes us from our present condition of spiritual death and alienation from God, to the place of spiritual life and an intimate relationship with God. (John 5:24; John 8:32)

GOD Hebrews 11:6 *"But without faith it is impossible to please (God), for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."* The One and Only True God is our all-powerful Creator and perfectly righteous Judge. He has made all things by Himself and for Himself. He is perfect and pure, without limit or fault, and made all things perfect and pure at the beginning. He knows everything. He sustains everything. We are accountable to obey and serve Him, and He is fully worthy of our love, trust and obedience. Every individual will give an account to God after death.
Genesis 1; Romans 1:20; Psalm 19

We must believe that God is, that He is our Creator and Judge, and that we are accountable to Him, to take the first step on this bridge that leads from death to life.

MAN Genesis 2:7 *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."* God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings. God made them perfect, placing them in a perfect place prepared for them. (Eden). Adam and Eve were created as living souls with physical bodies. The soul of man is his essential being, his "personality" where he thinks, feels and decides. God gave Adam and Eve everything they needed for life, peace, joy and fulfillment. They had a perfect relationship with God and each other. God gave Adam and Eve authority over the whole earth to care for the garden and to enjoy everything God made for them. God also commanded that they must not eat of one specific tree. By obeying, Adam and Eve would have proved their loving loyalty to their Creator.
Psalm 8; Romans 1:18-20; Mark 8:36

We must believe that we are made by God, loved by God, and owe to God our full obedience, to take the next step

SIN Romans 3:23 *"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*
Even though God created, loved and provided for Adam and Eve, they rebelled against Him. They disobeyed, eating of that one tree God commanded them not to eat of. Disobeying God is called "sin". God warned them that if they disobeyed, they would die. God is a perfectly righteous Judge. He always does what He says He will do. When Adam and Eve rebelled against God and disobeyed, God placed the curse of death on them, their descendents and the world. Sin ruined the perfect relationship they had with God and each other, resulting in a physical and spiritual change for everyone. As Adam’s descendents, all of us inherit their sinful nature. We rebel against God, parents and other authorities. Fighting, war, anger, selfishness, cruelty, arrogance and

stubbornness are all the results of our inner rebellion against God. Everyone does things that he knows in his heart are wrong. *Genesis 3; Romans 3:9-26; Exodus 20:1-17*

We must believe that we have sinned against God and deserve His punishment, to take the next step

DEATH Hebrews 9:27 *"... it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment..."*

God's righteous judgment that we deserve because of our sin is death. This death is spiritual, physical and eternal.

Adam and Eve died spiritually the moment they sinned. Fear, guilt, shame, and blame-shifting all resulted from being spiritually dead. As their descendents, we are born spiritually dead, in rebellion against God. As physically dead people are unresponsive to men, so spiritually dead people are unresponsive to God. We are "dead in sin" and separated from God. This is why we do not have a personal relationship with God.. Physical death followed spiritual death.

Physical death occurs when we draw our final breath. It is the end of our time on earth, but it is not the end of our existence. The moment we die physically, our souls leave our bodies and come before God for judgment.

If we are not rescued from spiritual death, when we die physically, we will face a final and eternal death. Eternal death is separation from God in everlasting conscious punishment. Eternal death is the final and unchangeable result of our sin against God. Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3; John 3:36

We must believe that we are facing God's judgment and cannot escape it on our own, to take the next step

CHRIST John 14:6 *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* We were created by God for a relationship with God. We rebelled against God and are separated from God, facing eternal judgment. The "good news" is that God has provided a way to rescue us from death, forgive our sins, and restore us to a relationship with Himself. He has done this by sending His only Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God's eternal Son. God sent Him to earth to become a man and live a perfect life of love and obedience to God's commands. Jesus Christ is the only one who ever lived a completely perfect life of love and obedience to God. He is both God and man, in one perfect person. He is the only way to eternal life. John 1:1-18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb 2:9-18

We must believe that Jesus Christ is the perfect Son of God, the only way to eternal life, to take the next step

CROSS 1 Peter 2:24 *"...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed."* The punishment for our sins is eternal separation from God. God is righteous and will not overlook the breaking of His commandments. Because He loves us, He satisfied His own justice by sending His sinless Son to rescue us from death by dying in our place. He had no sin, but took our sin and punishment, dying in our place on the cross. Jesus loved His Father and willingly laid down His life to rescue us. Three days after He died, Jesus rose to life again. He is alive forevermore with God in heaven. He is coming back one day to judge the world. *Isaiah 53; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Hebrews 10:1-23*

We must believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, died for our sins and rose from the dead to rescue us from death and give us eternal life, to take the next step

FAITH Ephesians 2:8-10 *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."* We cannot earn the forgiveness of sins. Our good deeds or religious ceremonies cannot rescue us from God's judgment. It is only through Jesus Christ that we can receive forgiveness and be reconciled to God.

The death of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection from the dead fully satisfied God's righteous judgment against our rebellion and sin. We must admit our sins and turn away (repent) from our sins and rebellion against God. God promises to forgive our sins, to give us His righteousness, and to restore our relationship with Himself if we repent and believe in His Son.

Our faith must grow from a general belief in God's existence, to a specific, personal belief in Jesus Christ as our only Savior and Lord. Faith includes confessing our sins to Him, turning away from our old life of rebellion, humbly trusting Christ to save us and giving our lives to Him in loving obedience. Gen 15:6; Luke 24:47-48; Romans 10:1-17

We must personally turn from our rebellion and sin, trust Christ to save us, and give our lives to follow Him, to take the final step on the bridge to life

LIFE John 11:25-26 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"* If we believe the message of Jesus Christ, we have crossed over God's bridge from death to life through faith in Him. God our Creator and Judge is now God our Savior and Father. We are no longer rebels. We are now God's children possessing spiritual life. Physical death will not separate us from God. God will raise our bodies from the grave and make them perfect when Jesus returns. This new life is eternal life in relationship with God through Christ. This is good news indeed!

As believers, it is our joy to learn from the Bible, memorize its verses and obey its commands. We learn to pray to God and spend time worshiping Him with others. We love to tell others the wonderful story of God's love and forgiveness, because Jesus Christ restores the life, love, joy and fulfillment God created us to enjoy from the beginning of time. John 10:10, 27-29; 1 John 5:11-13; John 5:24

Jesus alone has power over death and gives eternal life to those who put their trust in Him.

Modified Romans Road Outline

All people are sinners

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Rm 3:23

Because we are sinners, we are separated from God

For the wages of sin is death. Rm 6:23a

God doesn't want to be separated from people. He created us and loves us. So he sent His Son to die for us.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. Jn 3:16

God's salvation is a free gift for you to accept.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Accepting Jesus is the only way to be saved and have eternal life with God.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me. Jn 14:6

All you have to do to be saved is to believe Jesus died for your sins and ask Him to come into your life and make you a new person.

That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Rm 10:9

The Modified Engel Scale

Working with God in Evangelism

by Paul Hazelden

Part 1: Introduction

Background

Some years ago, James Engel wrote a book which profoundly changed many people's idea of evangelism. The book, *What's Gone Wrong With The Harvest?* (published by Zondervan) introduced a tool which has become widely used and known as 'the Engel Scale'.

The Engel Scale has been used to introduce many Christians to a new understanding of evangelism. In the past, people have often seen evangelism only in terms of people being converted. Understood this way, most of our evangelism must be counted as pure failure. Few people can live with that level of failure, and few survive as evangelists, or even as effective witnesses, for long.

The Engel Scale completely changes this picture. If you understand something of the journey a person must take in order to discover God, then you know that helping someone take one more step towards God is successful evangelism just as much as helping them over the final line. The Engel Scale helps people to understand this journey.

Evangelists have long known the truth of this, but it has not often been taught and understood. Almost everyone who makes a commitment to Jesus has a story to tell of people and events in their lives bringing them closer and closer to the point of total surrender. Some figures indicate that the average length of the journey, from the time people start looking for God to the time they find Him, is four years. However reliable that figure, and whatever it means, it is clear that for most people the journey to God is a long one.

So the Engel Scale can help us. However, the scale as traditionally used has a number of drawbacks, both in the description of the journey and in the way people have tried to use it. I offer here a modified scale to answer the first problem, and a brief description of the stages and some further thoughts to help answer the second.

This is not intended to be a training manual for people who wish to become evangelists, but something to assist anyone who wants to share their faith in a way which fits what God is doing in the lives of the people they meet.

The Modified Engel Scale is, of course, a vast over simplification of the series of miracles which transforms an unregenerate sinner into a child of God. Each one of us is called individually and responds in a unique way. But the scale contains enough detail, and the details can be seen working out in real life often enough to make it useful.

And the more we allow ourselves to be sensitive to what the Spirit is doing in the lives of the people we meet and speak with, the more fruitful our conversations will be, whatever the outcome.

The Modified Engel Scale

| The Dynamics of New Birth | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|
| Level | Description | God Is | Man's Task |
| | | | |
| -12 | No God framework | Confirming | Prayer |
| | | | |
| -11 | Experience of emptiness | | Presence |
| -10 | God framework | Revealing | |
| -9 | Vague awareness and belief in God | | |
| | | | |
| -8 | Wondering if God can be known | | Preparation |
| -7 | Aware of Jesus | Guiding | |
| -6 | Interested in Jesus | | |
| | | | |
| -5 | Experience of Christian love | | Proclamation |
| -4 | Aware of the basic facts of the gospel | Convicting | |
| -3 | Aware of personal need | | |
| | | | |
| -2 | Grasp the implications of the gospel | | Power |
| -1 | Challenged to respond personally | Converting | |
| 0 | Repentance and faith | | |
| | | | |
| +1 | Holy Spirit and baptism | Transforming | Encouragement |
| +2 | Functioning member of local Church | Empowering | |

| | | | |
|----|---|--|---------|
| +3 | Continuing growth in character, lifestyle and service | | |
| +4 | Part of Team Leadership | | Support |

Please note that the characteristics of our task are cumulative: at stage -9 for example, we are to pray *and* reveal God's presence. For the sake of clarity this has been omitted from the diagram.

OVERVIEW

The fundamental message behind the scale is that salvation is a process. God is doing different things at the different stages, and we need to modify our behavior and prayers accordingly. We therefore need to be sensitive to where the person is, and what God is doing right now. People sometimes move through the stages quite quickly, and sometimes more than one stage at once (Paul moved from -7 to 0 in a few seconds on the Road to Damascus) but this does not happen very often.

The various stages can be seen as steps along the traditional 'bridge' diagram.

Before looking at the stages in detail, it is interesting to note that the twelve steps between -11 and 0 fall naturally into four groups of three. In each of these four groups, we have an experience followed by an intellectual step followed by the corresponding personal or emotional step. This is the way God usually works: experience, message, response. Or, if you prefer, from feeling through intellect to the will.

The steps from +1 to +4 do not follow the same neat pattern. Stage +1 is, in the Bible, part of the Salvation package. It is shown as a distinct stage here because that is the experience of most people, not because God wants it to be that way. Stages +2 to +4 are all present in embryo in stages 0 and +1: the whole of the Christian life consists of working out and learning to use what we have already been given in Christ. God continues to teach us through the same pattern: experience, message, response; but from this point He takes us along diverging paths.

Part 2: The Stages

No God Framework (-12)

God is Confirming; our main task is to pray.

People at this stage have no place in their mental picture of the universe for God to fit into: they live in a world totally devoid of any supernatural element. They cannot even ask the question 'Is there a God?' because their belief about the nature of the universe makes such a question meaningless. For them, not only is there not a God, but it is not possible that He can exist.

They may talk - often very intelligently - about God, His Nature and Attributes. But such talk is very misleading: when they say 'God' they mean a myth, a construct of subconscious desires, or a tool of political manipulation. In the same way, I can talk about dragons: they form part of my cultural heritage, I have read stories in which they feature and so on. For people at this stage, God and dragons both exist, but only as myths and characters in stories made up by people. They may even enjoy such stories, but 'know' that they are simply fantasies which have nothing to do with the 'real' world.

This is regarded as the 'scientific' position by most people today. It is the modern orthodoxy. As with most orthodoxies down the centuries, far fewer people actually believe it than claim to.

God's activity at this stage consists largely in confirming and clarifying the implications of such a position. He faces them, in essence, with the issue of personal integrity: if you choose to believe this, are you prepared to live with the consequences?

People at this stage see themselves as living 'in touch with reality' or some similar phrase. This is the way the universe is, that is all. Other people may choose to believe all kinds of things, but they do not see themselves as having chosen a set of beliefs, or even (very often) having any beliefs of any significance. If they can see they have chosen to believe this, there is opened up the possibility they can choose to believe something different if the facts appear to support a change.

While our main task is to pray for these people, it would be very unscriptural to suggest this is all we should do. There is no harm in talking about God as a living presence in your life - it may do little to help at this stage, but the Holy Spirit can bring such testimony to mind later, when it is more relevant. And it is always right to communicate Jesus' love in practical ways: again, it may be more directly relevant in an evangelistic sense later on, but it is always our Father's desire to bless people. 'Doing good' as an expression of God's love is always valid, whether it directly contributes to some evangelistic effort or not.

Experience of Emptiness (-11)

God is Revealing; our task is to pray and communicate His presence.

People often hold the position of 'No God framework' in their heads, but do not allow it to connect with them personally. At this next stage, that connection has taken place. Our first prayers for them have been answered. Understanding this point is vitally important, as it is one of the defining characteristics of the twentieth century.

If there is no room in your universe for a God, for any transcendent reality you care to put a name to, nothing more than the bare molecules, then life has no meaning, no purpose. Things like 'purpose' and 'values' only exist in our minds: we can pretend our life has meaning, that the human race is more than a cosmic accident, but this is mere sham. Life is totally empty and futile. Your life is pointless; all human life is pointless; the universe itself is pointless.

This is the position of 'modern man' as described graphically by the Existentialists: Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and their followers. This is the source of the *angst* described in so much modern literature.

On a more popular and accessible level, Douglas Adams described this experience of emptiness in the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. According to this work, the 'Total Perspective Vortex' is the worst torture any sentient being can possibly experience. That is a singularly profound observation, and remarkably close to the truth. Very few people can linger at this stage for long.

If a universe without God is such a barren, meaningless place, people start to consider the possibility that there may be a God after all. Perhaps they were being too hasty and dogmatic to rule out the possibility so quickly?

Some people object that we cannot communicate God's presence to someone who does not recognise the possibility that God exists. That is only partly true.

Firstly, the experience of emptiness makes them open to more than they currently allow to be possible.

Secondly, they can experience something of God's presence through you even if they don't believe in Him.

And thirdly, they know in their heads that other people have a space for God in *their* heads. What they do not appreciate is that other people have the reality of God's presence *in their lives*. They do not need arguments for His existence - something the Bible never offers or suggests - they need the assurance that for other people God is not just a theory, but is actually *real* in their experience. Without this - and the possibility that these people may not be completely deluded - they see no escape from the dreadful emptiness within.

God Framework (-10)

God is Revealing; our task is to pray and communicate His presence.

Most people, once they are faced with the reality of a universe without God, rapidly move to the point when they are willing to accept the possibility that there may be a God. It is hard to be totally dogmatic that the universe is meaningless, especially when so few people around you really believe it. So don't be dogmatic: leave the door open a crack. Allow the logical possibility that you may be mistaken, that there may be room in this universe for a God. After all, how can you be sure about such things?

Once God becomes a real possibility, you have a 'God framework'. Once people have a God framework, you can start to communicate not only His presence to them, but also something of His character. This can be very low-key: perhaps just let them know that you are sure He cares about them. And, as you tell them something of His character, God is usually revealing Himself to them in a very gentle and unhurried way.

Vague awareness and belief in God (-9)

God is Revealing; our task is to pray and communicate His presence.

Once you believe in the *possibility* of a God 'somewhere out there' it is very difficult not to take the next step and believe in a vague way that He *does* exist. We find it hard to hold a position of simple 'not knowing' - the typical agnostic is deciding not to face up to these questions. Very few people can really hold to a position of 'I do not know' or even 'We cannot know' and leave it there.

So, for most people, 'perhaps there is a God' becomes 'I believe there might be a God' and for many this moves on to 'I believe there probably is a God - out there - somewhere.'

Many people we talk to are here. Very few set out on a quest for God - they are too afraid of what they will find. This is about as far as people get 'on their own' (they are never really on their own, but of course to them it often seems that way) and it usually takes God to step in and do something, either directly or through His people, to encourage someone to move on from here.

As you continue to communicate His presence in your life, through what you say and do, they begin to appreciate that you not only seem to know about God, you seem to know Him personally. This prepares the ground for the next step.

Wondering if God can be known (-8)

God is Revealing; our task is to pray, communicate His presence and prepare them.

This is in some ways the most risky step anyone takes. The possibility that there may be a God becomes personal. This is not an intellectual game: it now involves real risk. If I allow myself to wonder, I start to hope; if I start to hope that God can be known, if I try to do things to find Him, I risk deep disappointment if it turns out there is no God after all or I cannot find Him, or He turns out to be vengeful and unpleasant after all.

Most of us have encountered the deep bitterness and disappointment of someone who has fallen away from following a formal religion. This is the risk people are taking when they start to wonder if God can be known - can be known by them. It is a very fragile position, and people here need very careful handling.

God is revealing to them that He can be known, and there are ways to get to know Him. Our job here is to prepare people. Prepare them for what? Prepare them for the Gospel. And, for many people, the essential preparation at this stage is to help them overcome what is known in the trade as the 'scandal of particularity.'

This is a dreadful phrase, but it describes the problem nicely. Up to this point, God is a sort of universal concept. He is probably understood to be 'everywhere' - but if He is everywhere, there is no point in going anywhere to meet Him, is there?

Aware of Jesus (-7)

Many people will have been aware of Jesus, or the Christian faith, long before this stage, but up to this point Christianity has always been thought irrelevant. This is a hard point for many Christians to grasp: there are people who are actively looking for God but it simply does not occur to them to try the Church. They may live next door to a Church building, they may have gone to Sunday School, but they simply do not make the connection between Church and God.

Once people start wondering if God can be known, they are then in a position to consider the possibility that the Christian faith may have something to offer. The church, for these folk, does not necessarily have the complete answer, but at least it contains people who have some interest in - and maybe a knowledge of - God.

People at this stage do not need to be told that 'Jesus has all the answers' or 'Jesus is the only way to God.' Such things appear to be dogmatic, to come from a closed mind. They were (perhaps until very recently) dogmatic themselves, they had a closed mind against God: they do not want to retreat to that position of safety right away. They want to risk, they want to explore, they want to open up to the possibilities the world contains.

What they need to hear is that Jesus can offer them a way to get to know God better. He is willing to take them just as they are, just where they are, that He welcomes people with doubts and fears and uncertainties. They need to hear they do not need to be saints. They are allowed to start exploring the Christian Faith right now.

Interested in Jesus (-6)

Once there is a desire to know God, and the recognition that Christianity, or perhaps that strange historic character called 'Jesus,' may be able to offer some help, the person can then decide to do something about it and show an interest. The door to God is opened in a new way.

The danger for some people is that they stay here. They start coming to church out of interest, as a way of looking for God, and get taken up into the activities, the social events and the rituals of church life.

The church, as a human institution, relies on volunteers, and these people are often willing to volunteer, and they often have the time and capacity to contribute in various ways. It seems churlish to refuse their offers, and it can be very hurtful. To refuse their help is generally seen as a way of rejecting them as people, which of course we do not want to do. So they start to contribute to the life of the church.

They may well have a vague idea that they are doing 'their bit for God' in this way, and settle down with the idea that, having become a part of God's people, they have 'found God' as much as they are likely to. They learn to say their prayers along with the rest, and are accepted as part of the church. People at this stage can form the respected backbone of the local church.

That is what can happen when people get stuck at this stage. For many, spending a while here seems to be necessary. The person who is interested is not only gathering information about the Christian faith, but is very often discovering Christian culture. A lively church, to an outsider, is a weird group of people. It takes some getting used to. Many people (understandably) find it very difficult to commit themselves to a faith, and hence a group of people, if they do not feel they understand it well enough to believe they will 'fit'.

Experience of Christian love (-5)

On the outside, almost all that Christians do and say can be understood in human terms. Church Prayer Meetings and ballroom dancing are both social activities, and going to church provides you with a bunch of friends and a structure to your social life in much the same way as joining the local pub darts team.

Many people think that what they see on the outside is all there is to the Christian faith. They can know all about what goes on, on the outside, yet have no idea of what is happening on the inside. And they do not know that they do not know, if you get the meaning.

Something must happen to step into their experience, to make them realize that there is more to the Christian faith than the outward activities. There is something real at the centre of it, something different, something which they do not share.

What often happens is they experience Christian love. It touches them on the inside, and they realize that there is something here they cannot explain, something beyond their experience. People are not capable of that kind of love, not ordinary people like this. There is something - and this can be a vital point of revelation - *divine* about that love.

So God is really there for these people, present in some way in their experience. He is a reality in their lives in a way I do not know or understand. Their talk about God is not just talk: it expresses something deeper. I am beginning to realize I want what they have got. I begin to thirst for God.

Of course, it is not always love which prompts this step - or perhaps, it is not always seen as love at the time. It can be a simple answer to prayer, or a direct revelation. The effect is the same: God is real, and I want Him.

Aware of the basic facts of the gospel (-4)

Up to now, the Christian message for most people has been a mixture of sound ethical advice and a comforting mythology. Adam and Eve in the garden, Jesus being born at Christmas, the events of Easter: they are all powerful stories which resonate deep within and move people, Christian or not.

But if God is real, then - wait for it - these stories must be true, in some sense, at least. A real God became a real human being to die on a real cross, outside a real town in the Middle East. Real people, like me, killed Him in a horrible way. This can be quite a shock. What were just stories become frighteningly different when you realize they really happened.

At this point, someone who a few weeks earlier could have described the gospel message very well, might need to hear it for the first time. They do not need to be convinced, they simply need to hear the words said by someone who believes them to be true. This is the point where 'Tell me the old, old story' ceases to be sentimentality and becomes a vital necessity. Now they can hear - really hear - the basic facts of the gospel for the first time.

Aware of personal need (-3)

This is in some ways the real crux of the issue. If someone does not feel their personal need of a saviour, they will never come to the foot of the cross. Many evangelists put most of their effort into convincing people of their personal need, and most of this effort is completely wasted.

If a person knows within themselves they are a miserable sinner and they deserve to go to Hell, you can tell them, they will respond and agree with you. If they do not know it within, you might be able to convince their head that 'all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,' but any profession of faith will be nothing more than a response to human pressure.

You are entirely dependant upon God's Spirit working at this point. You can pray for them, and you can tell them they need a savior, but until *they* know they need a savior you can go no further.

Grasp the implications of the gospel (-2)

It is a dreadful thing to be in fear of Hell. If they have spent more than a few minutes aware of their personal need, there will often be some strong emotions churning around inside.

A person at this stage *wants* to hear the gospel. The difficulty here is to keep it simple. They want to hear, and the temptation sometimes is to keep on explaining things you think they need to understand. You do not need to ensure their theological soundness at this point. Depending on how much they have gained at the earlier stages, you may need to say very little more than: 'Yes, you are in a hole. That is why Jesus died: to provide you with a way out of this hole.'

The main point to check is that they understand the Lordship of Christ. The core gospel message is: Jesus Christ is Lord, and if you give your life to Him and submit to His Lordship, He will give His life to you, save you and keep you.

The gospel message is a very costly one. That is why people will only respond to it if they know the cost of ignoring it is even greater. Jesus emphasized the need for people to count the cost before they sign up, and we dare not presume to know better.

Challenged to respond personally (-1)

This is the classic 'invitation'. The previous stage was 'Jesus died so that you may have eternal life', this stage is 'What are you going to do about it?' Of course, you do not have to put it as bluntly as that. In sales jargon, this is the 'close', but evangelism is not about selling Jesus to someone, and we can be misled by the similarities.

This stage and the previous one often go together, but this is not essential. We easily make several mistakes at this point.

The first mistake is to give the invitation too soon. You are 'so near, and yet so far' - the temptation is to listen to your own enthusiasm or impatience rather than to the Holy Spirit for His timing. There is no rush. If God is at work in someone's life, you will not 'lose them' if they go off and sleep on it.

A variation on the 'too soon' mistake is to pressurize people to respond. The only way to come to Jesus is freely. A person can only be saved if they want to be. Just saying the words of the 'sinner's prayer' without meaning them is worse than useless. If someone is pushed into 'accepting Jesus' before they are ready, it is sometimes hard to tell later if they are really saved. It certainly causes problems. Giving your life to Jesus is a major step, and some people need time before they are ready to do it, even when they are sure they have to do it.

Of course, some people will try to put off the commitment as a way of avoiding it altogether. Every now and then you have to present the stark choice: either accept Jesus or reject Him. Choose Heaven or Hell. Sitting on the fence for ever is not an alternative: if you fail to choose God, you choose Satan. However you put it, sometimes the choice has to be presented as bluntly as this

The second mistake is to put off the invitation, or fail to give it altogether. You have been talking to someone for a while, and it is perfectly clear they know what to do. The strange thing is that many people know what to do, and yet do nothing until they are asked. So maybe all you have to do is ask. It doesn't matter if they want time to think about it, to 'count the cost'. If you ask politely and sensitively, you can keep on coming back and asking, so you have lost nothing in the attempt.

Repentance and Faith (0)

Repentance is turning around, turning to God. It is agreeing with Him that you have got it wrong up to now, and you want to go His way from now on. For some people, it is clearly a turning away from something which they have tried to put in the place of God, while for others it is more like coming home at long last.

Faith is sometimes made into something more difficult and complicated than it really is. You switch the kettle on because you have faith it will boil the water for your tea. You use a taxi because you have faith the taxi driver will take you where you want to go. Everything in life operates through faith.

Faith in Jesus works in exactly the same way. You ask Jesus to save you because you have faith that He is able to save. You want what He offers, you believe that He can supply it, and so you turn

to Him. On this level, the only difference between Jesus and a kettle is that there are many ways of getting water boiled, but only one way to get eternal life.

Of course, there is the mystery of God at work in the life of the individual coming to faith, the mystery of regeneration. Spiritual forces and powers are at work, angels and demons watch in awe as the wonder of re-birth takes place. But you don't have to worry about all that. God does His bit, and we do not need to understand it.

What is the evangelist called to do at this point? As little as possible! Some people need no help at this point, so don't get in their way. Some people just need to be encouraged to pray, to talk with Jesus, and it all spills out.

Others are less clear. 'Yes, I want to be saved. What do I do?' For them, you explain as simply as possible that God wants them to repent and believe. Now is not the time for detailed theology - just offer the bare minimum to enable them to understand what they need to do, and let them get on with it.

For those who needed no help, it may be appropriate - after they have finished praying and calmed down a little - to check that they do understand about both repentance and faith. But that is all.

There is an optional short talk to give at this point, and 97% of the time it is given faultlessly. Most of us remember it very well because we were given the same talk when we became Christians. It goes like this. "Okay. You have been saved by grace. That's great, but don't imagine it will always be this easy. You have to keep the rules. You have to go to Church every Sunday. You have to get up early in the morning to read your Bible and pray. You have to join a Housegroup. You have to..."

All right, I lie. It is probably more like 98%. I realize this is a vital message, that your new convert has to learn that most Churches operate on works rather than grace, and that the best way to motivate Christians is through guilt rather than forgiveness. But do you have to hit your new convert with this right now? Why not allow them a few days to enjoy the experience of praying and reading their Bible because they want to? Why not let someone else have the job of turning this into a miserable duty? It's just a suggestion.

The Home Straight

We all need to be brought to the foot of the cross, and in a sense our journey finishes there. Certainly, we never 'move on' from there. There is no deeper teaching, no further revelation than that of the cross. The Christian faith contains no secret or hidden truth, despite the thousands of teachers who will promise to reveal it to you. Any attempt to leave the cross behind is not moving on but falling back, not deeper fellowship with Jesus but turning away from Him. All we have, all we could ever hope for, is present in the cross.

But in another sense, the foot of the cross is just the start of our life's journey. We cease the finite journey *to* God, and start the infinite journey *into* God. Salvation from the guilt of sin is complete, and salvation from the power of sin begins. We have been given a place in Heaven: now the work begins to make us fit for Heaven. In traditional terms, we have been justified, and we start to become sanctified.

We would never imagine that physical growth stops when a child is born: birth is just the starting point for life. Spiritual growth is the same: the New Birth is the starting point for the New Life. All the lengthy journey to the foot of the cross is just a preparation: it brings us to the point where we can get started, where we can start to discover what real living is about.

The writings of Christian saints and mystics are useful to us as Christian autobiography. They tell us "This is my experience of God," and we can learn from them. What we must not do is treat their writings as a road map.

Part 3. How To Use The Scale.

The pathway shown is just one from an infinite number of possibilities. It is unique because it is the only path which leads to eternal life, but to the people on it at each stage it appears to be only one of a range of alternatives.

There is a serious problem in trying to show some of the alternatives on a sort of map: you either show a route to Jesus from the alternative branches, or you don't. If you do, you imply that "all roads lead to God," and if you don't, you imply that a person who has taken a wrong turning has to go back to the junction they missed before they can progress along the right road.

Sometimes there is a sense in which a person has to turn away from an earlier decision in order to keep traveling towards God, but this happens far less often than we think it should. You and I would probably have tried very hard to convince Saul that throwing Christians into prison was a bad idea. Fortunately, God knows better, and generally moves people on from where they are, not back.

Assist Understanding

Another thing which should be clear by now is that the scale is not prescriptive. It does not tell you what to do or say. Every person is an individual, and the whole point of the scale is to help you be sensitive to where that person is and how to communicate with them.

The Modified Engel Scale is offered to assist evangelism: not as a tool but as training. We are called as Christians to be 'co-workers' with God, and this requires of us both obedience and understanding. Use of the scale assists our understanding of what God is doing and what He wants us to do.

Not For Presentation

Possibly the most important thing to remember is that the scale is *not* intended for presentation to your prospective convert! There are at least two good reasons for this.

Firstly, people do not like being labeled. They do not like to feel they are being categorized. The purpose of the scale is to help you treat them as individuals, and not just lump them together with all the 'unsaved' - and they will not appreciate your explanation that you are putting them into this box because it is much more helpful than the box you would have used before!

And secondly, if your contact is not completely put off by the concept of the scale, you will probably end up discussing the scale, justifying it, suggesting alternatives, comparing the strengths and weaknesses of the different options, and so on. Anything, in fact, except presenting Jesus. We are not called to explain the scale, we are called to present Jesus to them.

Present Jesus

We are called to present Jesus. Could this whole discussion be one big distraction from that simple object? Clearly, I do not think so. To present Jesus to someone, the pair of you have to speak the same language. You may be intending to present Jesus, but if you speak a different language your words are meaningless. You can explain the gospel to someone at level -12, but unless God steps in and does another 'Road to Damascus' job, your words will be wasted: they are not in a position to understand what you mean. You need to pray and try to communicate the presence of God as a reality in your life - to communicate that He is not just a figment of your imagination or an externalisation of your subconscious desires.

Let In The Light

We are called to present Jesus. We are not called to criticize, attack or demolish the alternatives to Jesus. Evangelism is inherently constructive, not destructive. We are not called to convince people that Islam or Buddhism or Communism or Materialism is evil, wrong or inadequate: we are called to offer them Jesus. Once they see Him, they can make up their own minds.

There is a little truth, a little light in almost every religion and ideology that people cling to. Don't attack the candle, just let in the daylight. No-one relies on the light from a candle when standing in the sunshine, but until people see the true light they would be foolish to give up their candle.

The Original Version

I have seen several versions of the Engel Scale over the years. This is one of the first I met, and seems to be fairly representative of the other variants.

| The Dynamics of New Birth | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| What God is Doing | What Our Task Is | Man's Response (The Engel Scale) |
| Revealing (Romans 1:19-20) | | -10 No God Framework |
| " | Prayer (Acts 6:4) | -9 Vague awareness and belief |
| " | " | -8 No knowledge of Christianity |
| " | " Presence (being a model) (Matthew 5:16) | -7 Aware of Christianity |
| Convicting (John 16:8) | " " Preparation (Hos 10:12; 2 Cor 5:11) | -6 Interested in Christianity |
| " | " " " | -5 Aware of the basic facts of the gospel |
| " | " " " Proclamation (Mark 1:4; 2 Tim 4:2; Rom 16:25-27) | -4 Grasp of the implications of the gospel |
| " | " " " " | -3 Awareness of personal need |
| Rebirth/Renewal (Titus 3:4-5) | " " " " | -2 Challenge and decision to act |
| " | " " " " Power (Mat 4:23; Acts 2:43; Acts 14:9-10) | -1 Repentance and faith |
| New Birth (2 Cor 5:17) | | |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | +1 Join a Church Bible Study Group |
| Transforming (2 Cor 3:18) | Follow-up and discipling (2 Tim 2:2) | +2 Growth in Christian Character |
| | | +3 Use of gifts in the Church |
| | | +4 Christian Lifestyle |
| | | Effective sharing of faith |

2. Diagnostic Questions:

These are some possible questions to help determine where a person is on the revised scale.

No God framework (-12)

- Is it possible there is a God?
- Do you believe God may exist?
- Are you certain there is no God?

Experience of emptiness (-11)

- Is there a purpose to the universe?
- Is life on Earth purely the result of chemical processes?
- Does the human race have a destiny to fulfill?

God framework (-10)

- Do you think you may be mistaken about whether God exists?
- Is it possible you may be mistaken in your ideas about God?

Vague awareness and belief in God (-9)

- Do you think there probably is a God?
- Do you think God is a person?
- Do you think God likes some things?
- Do you think God gets angry about some things?
- Do you think God created the universe?

Wondering if God can be known (-8)

- Do you think a person can know God?
- Do you hope it may be possible to get to know God?

- Do you believe anyone in the past has known God?
- Can you name anyone who you think knows God or has known God?

Aware of Jesus (-7)

- Do you know who Jesus Christ was?
- Do you think Jesus was a historic person?
- Can you name a Christian who has shown something of God's love?

Interested in Jesus (-6)

- Do you think the life of Jesus has anything to show or teach us today?
- Do you think the Bible may have something useful to say to people today?

Experience of Christian love (-5)

- Have you met a Christian who has shown you something of God's love?

Aware of the basic facts of the gospel (-4)

- Do you think Jesus was the Son of God?
- Do you think Jesus was God and chose to become human?
- Do you think Jesus died to save us from our sins?
- Do you think Jesus really died on the cross?
- Do you think Jesus rose from the dead?

Aware of personal need (-3)

- Do you think that a life without God lacks something important?
- Is it important to you to develop a personal relationship with God?
- Do you believe you are responsible for sins you have committed?
- Do you feel in need of God's forgiveness of your sins?

Grasp the implications of the gospel (-2)

- Is it possible to become a Christian and continue to live as before?

Challenged to respond personally (-1)

- Do you feel a need to commit your life to Jesus?

Repentance and faith (0)

- Do you want to give your life to Jesus now?

A Summary of Catholic Theology

Catholicism is a philosophy, a theology, a world-view and a religious practice. It retains an Old Testament view of priesthood, sacramentalism & ritual.

Salvation is the job of the church; provided through its sacraments and priests

- Salvation is sacramental; grace is obtained through these means of grace
- Salvation is ceremonial. The ceremonies are given by God to provide the mystical grace for salvation
- It is the job of the church to obtain forgiveness for sinners.
- It is my job to be loyal to and follow the church.
- No one is perfect. As long as I'm cooperating with the church to some degree, all is well.
- Heaven is hoped for eventually, but not certainly.
- Purgatory completes whatever failures I leave undone.

Man is sinful. He needs his sin removed and replaced with righteousness.

- We need an infusion of righteousness provided through the sacraments.
- This lack of righteousness is an on-going problem that needs on-going correction.
- Nothing is settled or certain.
- One sins the sin of presumption if you maintain a certainty about your own salvation.

Christ died for our sins and provides righteousness for us through the means of grace.

- Christ's priestly role to forgive sins, remove guilt and infuse righteousness has been bestowed upon the Apostles, particularly Peter, and from Peter through succession to the present priesthood.
- The priests administer the sacraments which remove sins and infuse righteousness.
- There is no forgiveness or righteousness apart from the priest and the sacraments.
- This is God's means of grace to apply the work of Christ to us.
- This is an on-going and insecure situation of obtaining and losing righteousness.
- Sin and righteousness cannot co-exist.
- When I receive the sacraments I receive righteousness.
- But as soon as I sin, that righteousness is removed.
- Therefore I must continually receive the sacraments to remain in a state of grace.
- Extreme unction and purgatory are for the final cleansing and removal of guilt and for the perfection of the soul so that it may be accepted before God.

Christ and His death on the cross – the basis of salvation

Priests, Mary and the Saints – the mediators of salvation through sacraments and present intercession to Jesus, and through Jesus to the Father

Sacraments – the means of grace and therefore salvation

- Sacramental new birth - baptism
- Sacramental forgiveness, cleansing and righteousness infused – penance, Eucharist
- Sacramental indwelling of the Spirit - confirmation

Justification: Righteousness imputed versus righteousness imparted or infused

Means: Faith versus sacraments

Focus: Personal versus the Priesthood

Authority: Scripture versus the Church

Experience: Relationship versus Religious practices and rituals

By grace *alone*..... through faith *alone*..... in Christ *alone*

Not grace plus works, not faith plus sacraments, not Christ plus the church

Reformers Five Solas: *Sola scriptura Sola gracia Sola fide Sola Christus Sola Deo gloria*

<http://www.catholicapologetics.org/> Catholic Website promoting Catholic belief
<http://www.apologeticsindex.org/c16.html> Evangelical Website rejecting Catholic belief
Protestants & Catholics: Do They Now Agree? John Ankerberg, John Weldon (Harvest House Publishers)

Roman Catholicism: Diverse worldwide religious tradition that officially looks to the Pope and his predecessors/successors as God's human leader of world Christianity. Because of its size and scope—both in membership (about a billion people worldwide) and geographically, the actual beliefs held by devout Catholics are widespread and eclectic. Catholicism has been influenced by liberation theology, especially in parts of South America. In Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere, attempts have been made to blend Catholicism with spiritism, creating a type of Catholicism with occult elements. In addition, since the 1960s there has been a small but significant element of charismatic Catholics who have been influenced by the larger charismatic movement. A small percentage of Catholics are doctrinally evangelical, and others (such as Matthew Fox) are part of the New Age movement. As a whole, however, the differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism are still seen most clearly in the issues of the Reformation. ***The 16th century reformers distinguished themselves from Catholicism in two key ways. First, they saw the Bible as the sole foundation for authority (sola scriptura) rather than the Pope, church dogma or tradition. Second, the reformers taught salvation by "grace alone" (sola gracia). They also insisted that sola gracia could be faithfully maintained only by understanding the gospel to be the message of a free pardon and righteous standing with God through "faith alone" (sola fide) in the imputed righteousness of Christ. The Roman Catholic Church claimed (and still claims) to affirm sola gracia, but anathematized sola fide, teaching instead that grace is received and maintained by a combination of faith plus works (religious rites, sacraments, and human endeavor). ROOT VERSUS FRUIT; CAUSE VERSUS EFFECT***

THE SACRAMENTS – the means of salvation

"The Catholic Encyclopedia": <http://www.sni.net/advent/cathen/13295a.htm>

If it is known that God has appointed external, visible ceremonies as the means by which certain graces are to be conferred on us, then in order to obtain those graces it will be necessary for us to make use of those Divinely appointed means. They were not 'officially' promulgated as "The Seven Sacraments" until the Council of Trent, although they were always taught and mentioned since the first A.D. by Pope St. Peter and various Popes, saints, and theologians.

Except for Baptism, one does not fully receive the Graces from the Sacrament if they are in a state of mortal sin; however, when they make a true, contrite confession after receiving the Sacrament, they then receive the Graces from it.

The Seven Sacraments:

1. Baptism

SIGNIFICANCE The Roman Catechism offers the following definition: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration by water in the word" (per aquam in verbo). Baptism was instituted to confer upon us the beginnings of the spiritual Life, to transfer us from the state of enemies of God to the state of adoption as sons and daughters of God. The sacrament of regeneration is the metaphysical essence of the sacrament, while the physical essence is expressed by the second part of the definition of the sacrament (i.e. the washing with water (matter), accompanied by the invocation of the Holy Trinity (metaphysical form)). Baptism is, therefore, the sacrament by which we are born again of water and the Holy Ghost, that is, by which we receive in a new and spiritual life, the dignity of adoption as sons and daughters of God and heirs of God's kingdom.

MANNER Baptism is conferred on the recipient when a Priest or Deacon pours water over their forehead and recites the words of Baptism: I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

VALIDITY If some other variant is used in a Protestant "baptism", a person entering into the Catholic Church must be rebaptized with the correct words. The normal baptizer is a Priest or Deacon, but in emergencies any person (lay Catholic, heretic, Gnostic, etc.) can baptize AS LONG AS they intend to do what the Church does.

2. Reconciliation/Penance/Confession

SIGNIFICANCE The Sacrament of Confession is the manner in which *we reconcile ourselves with God* after we commit the heinous act of sin and, having a contrite heart, truly desire to be *reunited* fully with God.

VALIDITY In order to obtain a valid confession, the penitent must have true sorrow for committing their sins, and must confess all mortal sins which they are aware of at the time of the Confession after examining their conscience; it is the duty of the Faithful to confess one's sins at least once a year. Although you are only required to confess mortal sins.

The Council of Trent (1551) declares: "As a means of regaining grace and justice, penance was at all times necessary for those who had defiled their souls with any mortal sin...The Lord then principally instituted the Sacrament of Penance, when he breathed upon His disciples saying: 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained' (John, 20:22-23); the power of forgiving and retaining sins was communicated to the Apostles and to their lawful successors, for the reconciling of the faithful who have fallen after Baptism." Farther on the council expressly states that Christ left priests, His own vicars, as judges (praesides et iudices), unto whom all the mortal crimes into which the faithful may have fallen should be revealed in order that, in accordance with the power of the keys, they may pronounce the sentence of forgiveness or retention of sins" (Sess. XIV, c. v)

This power, moreover, He transmitted to Peter and the other Apostles. To Peter He says: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt.,16:19). Later He says to all the Apostles: "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven" (Matt., 18:18).

3. Holy Eucharist

SIGNIFICANCE The Greatest Sacrament, the Holy Eucharist—the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Jesus Christ—was given to us by Christ so that we may enter into union with Christ Himself and His Love, as when Jesus says "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh blood, abideth in me, and I in him" (John, 6:57) The Eucharist removes our venial sins from our soul.

MATTER/VALIDITY The Holy Eucharist is composed of two elements: the bread and the wine, which are later Consecrated by the priest into the Body and Blood of Jesus.

MANNER (Cannon 927) Only a priest can consecrate the Eucharist, although a Deacon can assist at various points in the Celebration of the Mass.

Due to the extreme holiness of the Sacrament as well as its symbolism of being in full communion with the Church, only Catholics may enter into the Sacrament of the Eucharist. It is a mortal sin to receive the Eucharist while you knowingly have an unconfessed mortal sin on your soul.

4. Confirmation

SIGNIFICANCE Confirmation imparts 1) an increase of sanctifying grace which makes the recipient a "perfect Christian"; 2) a special sacramental grace consisting in the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost and notably in the strength and courage to confess boldly the name of Christ; 3) an indelible character by reason of which the sacrament cannot be received again by the same person.

Confirmation can be conferred only on those who have already been baptized and have not yet been confirmed. MANNER The bishop alone is the ordinary minister of confirmation. This is expressly declared by the Council of Trent (Sess. VII, De Conf., C. iii). Simple priests may be the extraordinary ministers of the sacrament under certain conditions (during Easter vigil Mass). They must, however, use chrism blessed by a patriarch.

The Bishop/priest takes Chrism, makes the sign of the Cross on the forehead of the recipient, and says "Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit".

5. Matrimony

Contrary to popular misconception, the priest does NOT confer the sacrament of Holy Matrimony—the priest is merely the 'witness' to the man and woman making their vows before God. It is the husband and wife who 'minister' the Sacrament to themselves from God. However, the fact that a husband and wife make the sacrament between themselves and God does not mean that they can 'unmake' this union, as it is an agreement until the death of one of the parties.

6. Holy Orders

In the Latin Rite, the current discipline is for only non-married Catholics may be ordained priests; however, converts to the Catholic Faith who are married may later become ordained because the Church recognizes their marriage as valid and does not want to deny them the opportunity to serve the Church as a priest if they had previously joined in marriage in another Church before knowing the fullness of the Catholic Faith.

7. Extreme Unction

Administered to a person who is dying, it may be given to both Catholics and non-Catholics who truthfully declare (in danger of death) to have a desire to enter into the Catholic Church and profess the Faith that the Catholic Church teaches.

First, the Sacrament of Penance is administered, then the anointing with the oil, and then the giving of the Eucharist (called Viaticum for this Sacrament)

As administered in the Western Church today according to the rite of the Roman Ritual, the sacrament consists (apart from certain non-essential prayers) in the unction with oil, specially blessed by the bishop, of the organs of the five external senses (eyes, ears, nostrils, lips, hands), of the feet and in the following form repeated at each unction with mention of the corresponding sense or faculty: "Through this holy unction and His own most tender mercy may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins or faults thou hast committed [quidquid deliquisti] by sight [by hearing, smell, taste, touch, walking, carnal delectation]". To perform this rite fully takes an appreciable time, but in cases of urgent necessity, when death is likely to occur before it can be completed, it is sufficient to employ a single unction (on the forehead, for instance) with the general form: "Through this holy unction may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins or faults thou hast committed."

I speak with the successor of the fisherman...Though I acknowledge none as first except Christ, I am joined in communion with your Holiness, that is to say, in communion with the Chair of Peter. I know that it is upon that rock that the Church has been built. – St. Jerome, Ad Damasum, circa 420 A.D.

Witnessing to Roman Catholics

Our goal is to be able to share the good news of Christ in a full and meaningful way. To do this, it is important to show genuine love and concern for them as individuals. Focus on them, not the church. It is important to get to know what they believe, if they are open to spiritual things, and what they personally believe. We must listen. It is important to lead them to searching the scriptures for themselves. Don't make the version an issue. Let them use their own translation, regardless of which one. Stay on target.

Listen – seek to engage in a conversation in which they are free to tell you what they really believe about God, themselves, forgiveness, heaven. It is essential to understand where they are coming from so you can lead them to the truth. Make it obvious you are interested in and concerned for them personally. (John 4)

Affirm – as they make statements that are biblical in nature, affirm those statements by letting them know that this is exactly what the Bible teaches. Be alert for opportunities to connect belief with the bible. Our goal is to get them to read the bible for themselves.

Identify – when you hear statements that are in error (good works, being a good person, trying, going to church) if you can, tell them you used to believe too. Perhaps you can share some basic beliefs that most “religious” people hold to that you “used to believe” – good outweighs the bad, being average, grade curve, God can't condemn everyone, safe in the middle of the crowd

Compare and Contrast – fear and doubts with absolute assurance, my works and the work of Christ, my righteousness and God's righteousness, faith and works, my works and a finished work, belief about and belief in, assenting and trusting, relying on myself or my church and relying on Christ alone.