

Shadow Christians

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Lesson Title: “We Share the Gospel” (pp. 154-166)

Session 11

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The main point of this lesson is: Shadow Christians share the gospel message with others.

Focus on this goal: To help adults accept their role as sharers of the gospel message

Key Bible Passage: John 4:1-42

Before the Session

1. Bring to class two types of edible goodies: one you love and regularly share with others, and one you love, but are hesitant to share, either because it is expensive, rare, or special. (Steps 1 and 7)

2. Read carefully through the story of the woman at the well (John 4:1-42) and be ready to summarize it. (Step 6)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Display the goodies you brought from home that you regularly share with others. Tell why you love them and offer one to anyone who might be interested. As learners enjoy the treat, engage them in considering corresponding thoughts: What do you enjoy sharing? Why? What joy comes from sharing? What are some things that others readily share with you?

Explain that in today’s focal session, you’ll consider each Christian’s role in sharing the gospel message.

Step 2. Communicate the Gospel

Say: Today we’re going to consider the responsibility and blessing of sharing the gospel. Invite learners to read silently the opening two paragraphs of Day One (pp. 154-155). Ask: Do these paragraphs reflect your impression of sharing the gospel and seeing someone receive Christ? Be vulnerable to share your own hesitation or fearfulness at sharing the gospel.

Invite two volunteers to read Acts 1:8 and Ephesians 3:8,11. As a group, consider these verses together and create one statement of encouragement that each participant can easily recall when it comes to communicating Jesus.

Step 3. A Spiritual Virus

Invite a volunteer to read the first Day Two paragraph (pp. 155-156).

Inquire if anyone is willing to quote the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). Call on a few volunteers to read Malachi 1:11; 2 Timothy 4:5; and 1 Peter 3:15. Debrief the significance of each verse individually and the group collectively.

Challenge participants to find or quote a verse explaining that the responsibility for sharing the gospel belongs to popular evangelists. [Spoiler: it’s not there.]

Use the math in Day Two (pp. 156-157) to point out the power of multiplication (every believer sharing Jesus) over addition (conversions during Billy Graham crusades). Say: It’s not my job alone to take the gospel to the world, but it is my job to take it to my world.

Step 4. A Rose by Any Other Name

Use content from Day Three (pp. 157-159) to discuss different descriptors and strategies used through the years in guiding Christians to share the gospel. Add some of your own terminology as it comes to mind and encourage adults to do the same.

Invite a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 5:11,20, analyzing as a group our job in presenting the gospel. Remind learners that Christ invites all to come to Him in faith, offering grace to anyone who would come (Titus 2:11).

Read from Day Three (p. 159): “While the terminology has changed, a better way to saturate our world with the gospel has never been and never will be invented.”

Step 5. Bringing People to Jesus

Invite a volunteer to read Mark 2:1-5. Point out that, though the focus of the passage is on the healed man, we must take time to notice the shadow Christians in the story: the four men who brought their friend to Jesus.

Engage learners by asking: Perhaps we don’t bring our friends to church on a cot, but how can we bring them to Jesus in our time? Suggest inviting friends into our home, taking them to a special worship service, or introducing them to another believer as possible steps in bringing people to Jesus.

Invite a volunteer to read the Day Four paragraph (p. 160) that begins “Shadow Christians do similar things today,” as well as the following paragraph. Ask: How do you “stick with it” (p. 160) in sharing the gospel? Why?

Step 6. Taking Jesus to People

Summarize the story of the woman at the well (John 4:1-33) and say: You’ve probably heard this story before, and the focus is certainly Jesus. But let’s gaze at the nameless shadow Christian mentioned in the following verses. Read John 4:39-42, pointing out that this Samaritan woman did exactly what this session has been advocating: sharing how Jesus had changed her life. She became “a messenger of grace and hope” (p. 161) to the people in that town.

Ask rhetorically: Who knows you well and calls you a friend? How are you using that relationship to share Jesus?

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Remind learners of the goodies you shared in Step 1 and reveal the extra-special goodies you also brought. Say: The gospel is not something we treasure and keep to ourselves; it’s precious and amazing, but it’s meant to be shared. Share these special treats with the class, explaining why they are special and rarely shared.

Close in prayer,asking the Holy Spirit to speak through adults as they spread the gospel in the coming days.

