

Sharing The Bridge Illustration In Holiday Crowds

(appropriate for Mid Schoolers and older)

Michael R. Daily, October 2025

Other youth bible studies by Michael Daily available at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

Note: A prerequisite for this study is the study, “Good Works, Witnessing, & Evangelism” at: <http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>.

Over the last 3 years my church leadership has asked me to participate in public witnessing. This study is a result of the positive experiences and results that have come from those efforts.

Romans 10:14-15

How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ How will they preach unless they are sent?

The approach used takes the concepts and methods of personal witnessing using the First-Person, Five-Minute Bridge Illustration discussed in the Good Works, Witnessing, & Evangelism study and extends them for use in public witnessing in large crowds (100+ people). The term “holiday” is used in the title of this study to denote that the methods discussed are for crowds that are not under time pressure and who are on personal time rather than attending work related events. For example, people at the beach, people attending a Fall Festival celebration, or people at weekend events such as kids’ sporting events.

Matthew 4:19 [NLT]

Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”

Presentation of the Bridge Illustration itself does not change except for the use of a small hardback notebook instead of a piece of paper. The primary changes are in the initial engagements with people and the materials you might want to bring with you.

Materials to Bring

Myself and two other men went on a one-day mission trip to a town a few hours drive from where we live as part of a church evangelism effort. We took a small shopping bag with some “Steps to Peace With God” tracts (Billy Graham), “Lessons on Assurance” booklets (NavPress), brochures from a local church that was sponsoring the events (there were over 300 of us from multiple churches), and a small, hardback notebook.

Example: Kids’ Sporting Event

Our three-man team was assigned a particular section of town. It was Saturday and we noticed a large group of people (over 100) on the four soccer/football fields watching little kids play soccer, so we decided to spend our time there.

Over a two-hour period, we talked to about 20 people. Some were sitting in cars, some were walking back and forth to the football fields, and some were on the sidelines, but they were not really watching the games (we left them alone if they seemed to be intently watching the games). We started working as a group but after a few encounters the three of us started talking to people by ourselves.

Our first objective when talking to people was to let them know we were not a cult or something strange and to determine quickly (within 30 seconds) if they were genuine Christians or not.

Key Point: *We didn’t want to spend a lot of time talking to someone if they were already a Christian.*

TRIAGE: How To Rapidly Determine If They Are A Real Christian

First step: let them know we are not a cult or something strange. This is important because religions such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons tend to be more evangelistic than we are and people have often had experiences with them before. But church denominations such as Baptist are not typically thought of as strange by comparison. So, we start by saying something like:

"Hi, we're representing the Baptist Churches of New Mexico"

Second step: Find out if they are already a Christian. To do that we need something that is unique about being a real Christian that we can use as a diagnostic. A unique feature of our faith is that we know for sure before we die that we are going to heaven. No false Christianity or any other religion can make that claim. We can use that as a diagnostic to rapidly determine where people are spiritually.

"We're asking everyone one question. Have you heard the Good News?"

If they say "yes", we say,

"Great! What is the Good News for you?"

Then we listen to see if they can restate the gospel accurately. For example, they might say, "The Good News is Jesus died on the cross to pay for my sins". Regardless of what they say we then say,

"Do you know for sure if you are going to heaven?"

If they say "yes" then we say,

"Wonderful! Good to talk to you today, we're just checking in with everyone."

and we move to the next person.

If they say "no" then we say,

"May I share with you how I learned if I was going to heaven or not? It only takes 5 minutes."

If they say "yes" then I pull out my small notebook while saying, "I like to draw while doing this."

I then go through the First-Person, Five-Minute Bridge Illustration.

At the end of the Bridge Illustration, I ask them if they would like to keep the paper so they can Google the Bible verses if they want. I tear the paper out of the notebook and give it to them. They almost always want it.



Out of the 20 people we talked to, we quickly identified 10 as already Christians. It takes about 30 seconds to go through this process so you can triage 20 people in about 10 minutes (not including travel time between people).

triage: *the sorting of and allocation of treatment to patients according to a system of priorities designed to maximize the number of survivors; the assigning of priority order on the basis of where resources can be best used, are most needed, or are most likely to achieve success.*

What If They Are Not A Christian?

“Hi, we’re representing the Baptist Churches of New Mexico”

“We’re asking everyone one question. Have you heard the Good News?”

If they say “no” or “what is that”? we say,

“The Good News is you can know for sure if you are going to heaven before you die. Do you know for sure if you’re going to heaven?”

If they say “no” or “I hope so”, we say,

“May I share with you how I learned if I was going to heaven or not? It only takes 5 minutes.”

If they say “yes” then I pull out my small notebook while saying, “I like to draw while doing this.”

I then go through the First-Person, Five-Minute Bridge Illustration.

Out of the 10 non-Christians we talked to, 8 let us share the gospel with them.

One of the men I shared the Bridge Illustration with prayed to receive Christ (out loud, in public, with his wife and kids listening, and while a hundred other people could see him if they looked his way)! He requested more info and that a local church contact him, which I arranged.

I gave him a Steps to Peace With God (Billy Graham),
<https://www.billygrahambookstore.org/evangelism-and-discipleship/tracts-and-pamphlets>

Lesson on Assurance (NavPress), <https://www.navpress.com>

and info on the local church as well as my email info.

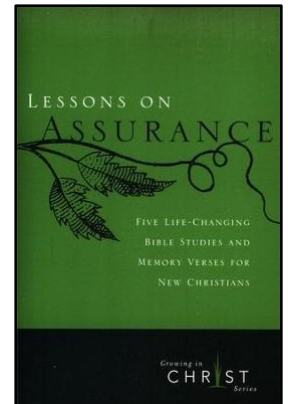
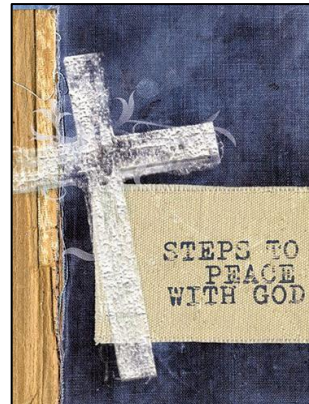
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Example: Fall Festival Community Event At The Church

Our church has an event every October 31st that is very popular in the non-Christian community we live in. It is a free, one night event at the church with games, costumes, prizes, music, and candy. Hundreds of people attend this event with their children. The church has numerous booths set up to support all of this, one of which is the Good News booth. For the last two years I have been assigned this booth along with one or two other people. I don’t usually wear a costume, but I do have the same materials I had for the kids’ sporting event example at the booth. I don’t stay at the booth but instead roam around the crowd with my pen and small notebook in my back pocket and talk to people using the same approach previously discussed.

Since we are at a church event I don’t have to say the first line, I just start with, ***“We’re asking everyone one question. Have you heard the Good News?”*** and go from there as previously discussed. Even though there is loud music playing and announcements of prize winners being made over the loudspeaker this approach was still effective. Within a two-hour period, I triaged about 20 people with 15 of them being non-christians. 10 of the non-christians allowed me to share the Bridge Illustration with them and 4 prayed to receive Christ. A similar result happened the following year as well.

Note: bring a soft drink or something to drink between encounters. You will be talking loudly for about two hours straight!



A Few Final Comments

- 1) Its important to be prepared and well-practiced ahead of time. If you work on memorizing the Bridge Illustration for five minutes a day, every day, you will have it memorized to an expert level in less than 3 months. After that you will be able to share the gospel effectively for the rest of your life.

Ephesians 6:15

and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;

Notice that this verse does not say to shod your feet with the Gospel of Peace. It says to shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Preparation is critical.

- 2) Be bold in acting to engage with non-Christians,

II Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

but be gentle in the actual interaction itself.

I Peter 3:15

but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

Titus 3:2

to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

- 3) Stay away from arguments or disagreements. If at any point in the process the person hints that they are not interested in hearing more just say, "OK, thanks for letting me share that with you" and move on.

Proverbs 20:3

Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, But any fool will quarrel.

Colossians 4:6

Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Appendix: First Person, Five Minute, Bridge Illustration (NASB)

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May I share with you how I became a Christian? It only takes 5 minutes.

(Take out a blank sheet of paper. Draw the two sides and label, "ME" and "GOD").

As a child my parents took me to church to learn about God and the Bible. I learned that I was a sinner separated from God. (Write: "ISAIAH 53:6").

Isaiah 53:6 - All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

I also learned that I was dead to God. (Write: "ROMANS 6:23").

Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And I realized I was heading for judgment. (Write: "HEBREWS 9:27").

Hebrews 9:27 - And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

In college, I was invited to attend a Bible study - so I did. This is where I learned that God loved me and wanted to give me eternal life. (Write: "JOHN 3:16"). In John 3:16 Jesus said,

John 3:16 - "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.

He also wanted me to have an abundant life on the Earth. (Write: "JOHN 10:10"). In John 10:10 Jesus said,

John 10:10 - The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

In order to give me these gifts, God decided to come to the Earth in the form of a man named Jesus Christ. (Draw the CROSS). Jesus paid for my sins by shedding His blood and dying on the cross. He was buried and 3 days later He rose from the dead. By doing this, Jesus became a bridge for me to cross back over to God's side and have life. (Write: "1 PETER 2:24").

1 Peter 2:24 - and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

In order to cross over to God's side I had to do 2 things. First, I had to believe these things are true. (Write: "BELIEVE" and under it write "JOHN 5:24"). In John 5:24 Jesus said,

John 5:24 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

(Draw the arrow from the Me side to God's side)

Second, I had to RECEIVE Christ as my Lord and Savior. (Write: "RECEIVE" and under it write "JOHN 1:12").

John 1:12 - But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

So, when I was 18 years old, I prayed a prayer and it went something like this: “Lord I know I could never be good enough to earn my way to heaven. Thank you for paying for my sins by dying on the cross. Please come into my life right now and be my Lord and Savior”.

The moment I prayed that prayer God gave me eternal life and I can never lose it, because I didn’t do anything to earn it. (Write: “EPHESIANS 2:8-9”).

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

Since becoming a Christian, Christ has changed my life for the better. (Write: “II CORINTHIANS 5:17”).

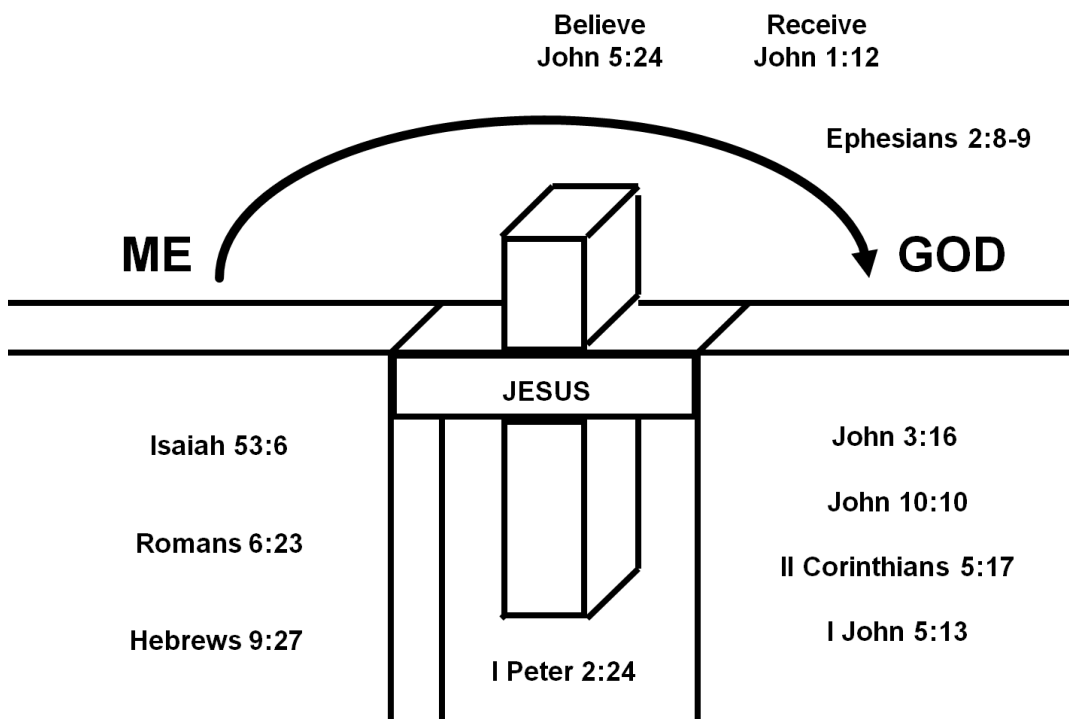
II Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

And I know for sure – 100 percent for sure - that when I die I will live in heaven with God forever. (Write: “I JOHN 5:13”).

I John 5:13 - These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

- 1) If this is true, how would a person cross over to God’s side? (if they are not sure or get it wrong just tell them – “Believe these things are true & pray to receive Christ as Lord and Savior”)
- 2) If this is true, where would you be on this bridge? (if they say anything other than God’s side ask question 3, if they say “God’s side” ask them when they received Christ. If they don’t know then ask question 3, if they really are already a Christian thank them for letting you share this with them).
- 3) Would you like to pray to receive Christ right now? (If they say “yes” then take their hand and pray with them to receive Christ as Lord and Savior. If they say “no” ask them if they would like to meet with you to study the Bible and learn more about these things. If they still say no thank them for letting you share this with them).

Draw the illustration below on a piece of paper while you are speaking. Let them keep the paper:



QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Sharing The Bridge Illustration In Holiday Crowds*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 10:14-15, Matthew 4:19, Ephesians 6:15*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Timothy 1:7, I Peter 3:15, Titus 3:2*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 20:3, Colossians 4:6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?