

Session One

THE POWER OF ONE: THE P.R.A.Y. GOSPEL PRESENTATION

KEY SCRIPTURE

"I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

KEY TRUTH

God will give me opportunities to share His Good News if I will listen to Him and be prepared to share His story.

In this lesson, you will learn the **P.R.A.Y.** Gospel Presentation¹. First, some preparation...

PREPARE TO SHARE

You are God's means of sharing the greatest news in the world. In His wisdom, God decided to trust the sharing of the message of Jesus to people who believe in Him.

And when God calls, He equips. He provides all the tools necessary for you to share His message. In Acts 1:8 and in Matthew 28:18-20, God reveals His strategy.

NOTES:

¹ The **P.R.A.Y.** Gospel Presentation was developed by Keith Manuel, when he was pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, New Orleans, before joining LBC's Evangelism/Church Growth Team. **P.R.A.Y.** was a successful tool as part of Calvary's outreach by numerous volunteers following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. **P.R.A.Y.** is used in *One on One: Evangelism Made Simple* with the author's permission.

God's Power for You

"You shall receive power..." Acts 1:8

"Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to me.'" Matthew 28:18

As a believer, you are plugged into the power source for sharing the story of Jesus. When you share, you will sense the power of God in you and working through you. You have the power of God in you because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. You have God's power working through you because of the authority Jesus delegates to you.

God's Purpose for You

"...you will be my witnesses..." Acts 1:8

"...make disciples..." Matthew 28:19

Because you are a recipient of God's love through Jesus, God calls you to bear witness to the value of Jesus. You must bear that witness in your words and actions. When others see and hear of the new value you place in Jesus, many will want to hear about your faith. As you bear witness, some will find value in Jesus too. Then you will have the privilege of helping them become committed followers of Christ.

God's Plan for You

"...to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

"...to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20

In these verses, Jesus reveals two aspects of God's plan, *where you will go* (to accomplish His plan for you) and *where He will be* (the "distance" He will go to help you). Jesus said believers are to take the message of the value of Christ to the ends of the earth. That means everywhere. When believers go, they don't go alone. The Lord will be with His followers until the end of the age. He will be with them always, wherever and whenever they tell the message.

Here's an application. Two couples on an airplane were on their way for checkups following transplant surgeries. One man had received a new heart, the other a new kidney. As they told their stories to a fellow traveler, it didn't take them long to brag about the individuals who donated organs at death to give these men a second chance at life. They didn't hesitate to describe their thanks and amazement for the gift of life.

Isn't that the way Christians should be about the sacrifice of Jesus? In death, He became our substitute. In His resurrection, He became our hope for eternal life. We shouldn't hesitate to express our thanks and amazement for His gift of eternal life.

Remember this when you share your faith. Do it because you love Jesus. Share because you want people to know about Jesus. Do it because you are amazed at God's love for you. Share the message because you've experienced the wonderful grace of Jesus.

USING THE P.R.A.Y. OUTLINE

Getting started is the hardest part in witnessing. This lead-in statement is honest and easy to use. It serves as a transition to ask the **P.R.A.Y.** question.

Lead-in statement:

“We've been asking people this question in our community. I'd love to hear how you would answer it.”

The P.R.A.Y. Question:

“In your opinion, what does God require for a person to go to heaven?”

ANSWERS TO THE P.R.A.Y. QUESTION

The following answers are the most common you will hear to the **P.R.A.Y.** question. Become familiar with them all.

WORKS ANSWER: “I think if you're a good person, go to church and help people, you will go to heaven.” Others answer, “If you're filled with the Holy Spirit, live differently and speak differently, you'll go to heaven.” Or: “You need to obey the 10 commandments.”

YOUR RESPONSE: “That's a GREAT answer! That's exactly what a Christian does, BUT it is not what God requires. May I share that with you?”

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UNCLEAR ANSWER: “You have to be saved.” Or: “You just believe.”

These answers sound right, but the person may just be giving you an answer they picked up from church.

YOUR RESPONSE: “Tell me more about that. What do you mean by _____?”

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE: May I share with you how the Bible answers this question? (If YES, move to **P.R.A.Y.** If NO, “Thanks for taking the time to answer my question. I will leave this card with you. It has a number on the back to call if you ever have spiritual questions or just need to talk to someone.”)

ANSWER based on faith/grace: “You must trust Jesus as your personal Savior and place your faith in Him alone.”

YOUR RESPONSE: “That’s a GREAT answer! Since you answered that way, on a scale of 1-10, 1 meaning, “I don’t know” and 10 meaning, ‘I’m absolutely certain,’ if you died right now, how sure are you that you would go to heaven?”

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE: If their response is anything less than 10, your goal is to help them nail down their salvation. Go through the **P.R.A.Y.** Presentation to confirm their faith. If their response is 10, rejoice with them and share the 888-JESUS-2000 telephone number. Say: “If you ever need someone to talk to or pray for you, you can call this number 24 hours a day.”

THE P.R.A.Y. PRESENTATION

What follows on the next page is the approximate wording you can use with your listener...

NOTES:

I'll use the word **P.R.A.Y.** to share what the Bible says God requires for a person to go to heaven.

The P stands for a Promise. The promise is God loves you. No matter who you are or what you've done . . . God loves you. The Bible says, *"For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son..."* (John 3:16). God loves you so much that He gave His Son, Jesus, to die for you. Why did Jesus die? That's what the next letter tells us.

The R stands for a Reality. The reality is we all struggle with sin. The Bible says, *"For all have sinned..."* (Romans 3:23). Have you ever met anyone who is perfect? Neither have I. Everyone struggles with sin, no matter who they are.

The A stands for Answer. The answer for our struggle with sin is Jesus. Jesus said, *"...Repent and believe in the Good News!"* (Mark 1:15). The word repent means to change direction. If you were going down your road and remembered you left something at your house, what would you do? You would turn around or make a U-turn. Repent means to make a U-turn with our lives mentally, physically and spiritually. We quit living for self and live for our Savior, Jesus.

The Good News is the true Easter story. Jesus died, was buried and rose again on the third day. The Bible says, *"...Christ...suffered for sins once for all . . . that He might bring you to God..."* (1 Peter 3:18). Jesus died to remove your sins and He rose again, so He might give you eternal life.

It's not enough to know God loves you. It's not enough to admit you're a sinner. It's not even enough to know that Jesus is the answer for your struggle with sin.

The key is the next letter in P.R.A.Y., "Y."

The Y stands for You. It is up to you to receive God's offer of Heaven. Look how many times "you" is stated or implied in this verse. *"If YOU confess with YOUR mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and YOU believe in YOUR heart that God raised Him from the dead, YOU will be saved."* (Romans 10:9).

God is a gentleman and never forces Himself on anyone. He has told you He loves you. He has reminded you of your struggle with sin. He has even provided the answer for your sin through His Son, Jesus Christ. You must be willing to surrender your life to Him.

RECEIVING CHRIST AND IMMEDIATE FOLLOW UP

Explain to your listener that there are no magic prayers in the Bible for salvation. But the way we talk to God is called prayer. If you want to receive the gift of eternal life and know you will have a place in heaven, pray a prayer like this in your own words...

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for loving me and for dying for me. I ask you to forgive me of my sins.

I am willing to turn my life over to you. I'm willing to live for you. I ask you to be my Savior and Lord. Amen

As you begin your new walk with Jesus, I encourage you to tell someone. You can tell a family member, a friend or a minister. I also encourage you to call 888-JESUS-2000 and tell one of the people who will answer the phone anytime, night or day.

To grow in your new walk with Jesus, read the Bible, pray, and find a church that teaches from the Bible. The people at 888-JESUS-2000 will link you to a church in your area.

A church home is important, unlike some people think. It is a place where you can find help, and eventually you can help others who are fellow strugglers trying to live a life pleasing to God.

Also, you can follow through with Jesus' command to be baptized. Every baptism in the Bible comes *after* a person makes the confession you just made of Jesus as Lord. If you were baptized or christened *before* this decision, think of it this way: On that occasion, you simply got wet. Baptism has no magical power. It's like a wedding ring – a symbol of what you already did in your heart. Also, it's the way you identify yourself as a Christ follower in the presence of your friends and family.

God bless you as you begin your new journey with Jesus.

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EXTRA INFO ON THE P.R.A.Y. CARD

More approximate wording you can use with your listener...

The back of this card has some great information. First, I'd love for you to go online to www.whativaluemost.com and read my story. Just type in my name, and my story will appear. At the end, you can go back through the **P.R.A.Y.** Presentation.

Also, I'd love for you to come to our church as my guest. I worship at _____ and our service begins at _____.

One last thing, here is that 888-JESUS-2000 phone number if you want to talk to someone more about your decision today, if you would like someone to pray for you or if you are in search of a church. They will take care of making sure someone contacts you.

Thanks for taking the time to visit with me today. I hope we'll get to talk again real soon, and I'd love to see you this Sunday.

EIGHT USES FOR THE P.R.A.Y. CARD

1. Leave a card at a restaurant. Circle the 888-JESUS-2000 phone number and "Read my story." Write on the card "Thanks for your service."
2. Give the card to someone in the hospital. Circle the 888-JESUS-2000 phone number.
3. Give the card to a neighbor or friend in crisis (marital problems, job loss, trouble with children, prolonged sickness, family emergencies, experiencing divorce, etc.). Circle the 888-JESUS-2000 phone number. Invite him or her to read your story.
4. Share it with a co-worker who is having difficulties on the job or at home. Circle the 888-JESUS-2000 phone number and invite him or her to read your story.
5. Use the card to invite a new neighbor or someone you meet in your community to church.
6. Leave with someone as a self-explanatory witnessing tool.
7. Leave the card when visiting guests who attended a worship service.
8. Ask people to "Read My Story" at www.whativaluemost.com.