

## Gospel Basics

At Project Refuge, the Gospel Basics must be presented all the time. Our goal is to help you do so biblically, clearly, and concisely, no matter what the problems of the callers are indeed, anytime you lead someone about Christ, there are three basic elements that must be clearly conveyed.

They are **SIN**, **SUBSTITUTION**, and **FAITH**.

When you talk about **SIN**, you're saying there's a barrier between each person and God. That barrier has been put there because of a natural tendency to live their life independently from God. That barrier will have eternal consequences if it's not removed. But no matter how hard they try; they cannot get around that barrier by their own effort. But the Good News is that God has taken care of that barrier for them. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in their place and pay the penalty for their sin. And God says they can now be set free from the penalty of their sin. This privilege isn't something they deserve. Jesus did it simply because of His great love for them. That's **SUBSTITUTION**.

When you mention **FAITH**, you're talking about their willingness to trust God, and trust Him completely. God wants them to realize He has done everything required for their eternal relationship with Him. There's nothing left for them to do. And therefore, they must trust Him and Him alone. In order to do that, they must first stop trusting their own efforts or their own goodness. It simply won't work until they choose to believe that God wants to save them, and will if they ask Him.

To summarize, **SIN** is the barrier, **SUBSTITUTION** is God's solution, and **FAITH** is their recognition that God will remove that barrier, simply because He wants to. These are the Gospel basics that we need to share any time we present the Good News of Christ.

Below are some Bible verses to go along with these basics. There are certainly many other verses, but this is a good start.

### **SIN**

Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

Romans 3:12 – “All have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.”

Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death...”

### **SUBSTITUTION**

Romans 5:8 – “But God demonstrated His love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

2 Corinthians 5:21 – “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

## **FAITH**

Ephesians 2:8-9 – “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.”

Titus 3:5 – “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to his mercy...”

## **Diagnostic Fundamentals**

Each time the phone number is presented to the public, often we find that callers have various needs motivating them to make the call. Whenever you answer a phone call, your first responsibility is to determine whether that caller is already saved. Many of the people who call in are already saved. If so, you don't want to re-lead them through that process, otherwise they might think they have to get e-saved every time something goes wrong in their life.

To find out, ask the caller, “Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Tell them “What do you think it takes to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ?”

Now keep in mind, of course, that most callers aren't really thinking about that when they call in. So you might have to give them a couple of tries. They need to say something about the barrier between them and God, something about what God has done to fix that barrier, and that they're willing to trust Him completely in this regard.

If they don't seem to answer correctly, you might ask something like, “Is there something that prevents you from having a right relationship with God?” Or, “Why did Jesus die on the cross?”

If they give you a works-related answer, as they frequently will, you can ask them, “How much?” (Like: How much do they have to pray? How much do they have to go to church?)

Then ask, “Do you know for certain that heaven is your eternal home?” Hopefully you're helping them realize that if they have to trust their own efforts, they will be disappointed every time. Rather, they need to trust Christ's completed work on the cross, and trust Him alone.

Keep in mind; the biggest matter is not what do they know, but Whom do they trust? If you can help them determine that at one point in their life they did ask God to save them and truly believed He would because of Christ and Christ alone, then God saved them, and they're still saved.

If they believe this is something that is not already settled, ask if they're ready to get it settled.

Usually they say yes, but if not, impress on them the importance of getting it settled soon, like right now. But remember, this must be a personal decision between them and God. We should never push someone into a decision they really aren't serious about. Besides, just saying a prayer never saved anyone. God knows if they're truly accepting His gift of eternal life or not, and therefore the final decision must be between the caller and God, not you. It may be helpful at this point to share your story of when you received God's gift of eternal life.

When someone is ready to settle this matter, tell him or her there are a few things they need to communicate to God. It's the same outline of **SIN-SUBSTITUTION-FAITH** used in sharing the Gospel. They need to admit to God that they do not deserve heaven, but thank Him for sending Christ to pay their sin penalty. They need to tell God they want His gift of eternal life and they believe He will now give it to them. If they're serious about this matter, they should also tell God they're willing to let Him change whatever needs to be changed in their life. Whenever possible, avoid the "Sinner's Prayer" approach to leading someone to their new life in Christ. There's nothing necessarily wrong with that approach, but generally it's better when the caller words the prayer for himself. God knows their heart, and He wants to hear from them what they're thinking and feeling.

Besides, when they form their own prayer, it helps you know whether they're sincere and understand what's happening. Of course, some people are hesitant about praying out loud. Just remind them that they've done a great job of talking to you, and they can talk to God the same way. God doesn't want just the right words; He simply wants an open heart. Usually, when they're serious, they can do what needs to be done.

## **Managing the Conversation**

Our mission at Project Refuge is first and foremost to intentionally present the Gospel. Some callers, though, are more concerned with their problems. Since many are going through very difficult circumstances and are just desperate for a listening ear. You may find it challenging with those callers to turn the conversation first back to the Gospel.

How you start each conversation is very important. Set the course, so to speak, "By asking the question "How may I direct your call?" Then regardless of their response, follow up by helping them determine whether or not they're already saved. If they're persistent in wanting to discuss their issues more, eventually you'll need to say something like, "What you're dealing with is an important matter that needs to be resolved, but first we need to discuss an even more important matter, and that's your personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

Keep in mind, no one can effectively address any issue of life without first settling their spiritual relationship with Christ. That's why the Gospel is so important, for all callers. Further, even when they are saved, we cannot provide the long-term assistance that they need to resolve their other issues. Therefore, we must try our

utmost to direct them to the church where God would want them to be. If the person isn't interested in listening to you, don't enter into a debate with them. You won't convince them, and they won't convince you. Kindly tell them you won't be able to continue the conversation.

Also, don't encourage ongoing contact. Don't give out your phone number, email address, or hours when you take calls. Again, additional support needs to come from the church where God wants them to be, not from you. We rarely receive suicide calls. And when we do, most of the time, they aren't serious, they just want to talk. Stay calm, and remember it's never your job to change their mind. To determine whether they're serious, ask them what their plan is, and if they have the means necessary to carry it out. If they do have a specific plan ready to go, then you have a legitimate suicide call. If it is a suicide call, stay on the phone with them. Get the attention of someone around you, and have them call for help. They can get the caller's phone number from your caller ID. Dial directory assistance to get a police dispatcher in the area of the caller.

## **Getting Started as a Volunteer**

Upon approval of your Project Refuge application form, you will be given three volunteer options. Your training and tools will be based on the option that you have chosen.

There are also two levels of counselor's training; the basic and the advanced one. The advanced level of phone counseling training is more extensive. We would suggest that you volunteer for at least six months continuously. If you decide to drop out after six months, you are more than welcome to come back and volunteer as a phone counselor again.

## **How can Project Refuge help your spiritual growth?**

By sharing the Gospel with callers, you will share it more confidently with a friend.

By praying with believers, you will minister more effectively to others in church.

By not knowing which Bible verses to use, you will study God's word more passionately.

By seeing God use you in caller's lives, you will look for other areas of ministry.

By encountering difficult situations, you will depend on the Lord more and more.  
By leading souls to Christ, you will experience Heaven's joy when the lost is found.

God has many great things in store for you and we're excited. Time is a valuable resource, and we thank you for giving up some of it for Project Refuge. May God bless your faithfulness as we serve His Kingdom, together.