

Lesson 7

Defending My Faith

Mt. Zion Church Bible Study



Lesson written by

Rev. Harold G. Whitaker

INTRODUCTION: Evangelism is an announcement. It is telling others the plan of salvation and about the kingdom of God. Apologetics is the defense of the faith. In this lesson we will explore basic principles for effectively witnessing and defending our faith to people of non-Christian belief. The defense of the gospel and the gospel message are both necessary to bring people to know the Lord. We can no longer ignore the fact that our society is (and has been) religiously diverse. We should expect to encounter people with non-Christian beliefs. Often those from different religious backgrounds like Muslims, Atheist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Jewish show more commitment and aggression in seeking converts. We are not in a competition; however, we are on a mission to give those who do not know Jesus an opportunity for salvation!



1 Peter 3:15-16

It all begins with your testimony. Share your testimony of faith in Jesus Christ.

Describe your salvation experience and relationship with Christ in personal terms. Tell about your life before you were saved, how you came to know about and receive Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, and what He has meant to you since then.

In your own words, write down your salvation story.

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

➤ **Every Christian should know how to share the basic plan of salvation – that is the Gospel or Good News. Let us see what elements should be shared to a non-believer:**

A. God’s desire is that all people have eternal life.

- “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”. John 3:16 NIV
- “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”. Romans 6:23b

B. We all have a problem, which is sin.

- “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”. Romans 3:23
- “For the wages of sin is death”. Romans 6:23a

C. God’s only solution for sin is Jesus Christ.

- “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me”. John 14: 6

D. Each person must repent of (i.e.: turn away from) his or her sins and by faith receive Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior.

- “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”. John 1:12

QUESTION: When sharing your faith, non-Christians complain that you are closed minded or a hypocrite. How should you respond to criticism about your faith?



Now, let us explore how to interact with the following non-Christians

I. Witnessing to a Muslim

“With about 1.62 billion followers or 23% of the global population, Islam is the second-largest religion by and the fastest-growing major religion in the world.”

Overview of Islam

Muhammad bin [son of] Abdullah, was born about 570 C.E., in the prosperous trade city of Mecca. Young Muhammad was very much dissatisfied with the religious system of his day. As far as he was concerned, both Judaism and Christianity had abandoned Allah, and for this reason, the God of the Bible was raising up one last prophet to restore the pure religion of Abraham.

During a meditation, Allah or Gabriel began to come to him while he was in his trance. People didn't believe these visions, believing Muhammad to be “demon-possessed.” It was in Medina that the Quran, a sacred textbook, was further developed into the final revelation from Allah.

View of God

Allah is the God of Islam. For the Muslim, Allah is almighty, all powerful, all knowing, and has no equal. Allah is the God of judgment and is to be feared in the sense of dread, not a reverential fear. As Abraham was God's friend, the concept of a Muslim being the friend of Allah would be foreign to their thinking.

Christian Moral Code vs Islam

Each human that has descended from Adam and Eve have a moral code (conscience) in them from birth. This moral code enables one to choose between what is right and what is wrong, “and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.” – [Romans 2:15](#). It is the correct understanding of the Word of God, which trains the moral code.

On the surface, it may appear that the moral values of the Muslim are humane and selfless in nature.

Islam believes in a **salvation by doing good works**; God will punish any worship that is not directed at him, rights against crime against your fellow man, adultery and fornication are wrong, drunkenness, suicide, and homosexuality are forbidden.



Reaching the Heart of Muslim friends.

If we are to reach the heart of a Muslim, it will be through patience and understanding. Arguing with a Muslim will serve us no better than arguing with any other person over religious matters. Instead of using the word “Bible,” refer to it as the book of God. Muslims also do not like the phrase “Son of God,” but they have great regard for Jesus as a prophet or messenger, so avoid the phrase “Son of God” until you have a long record of rapport. It is best to witness to just one person and avoid talking with a group. Most importantly, women should witness to women and men to men.

II. Witnessing to an Atheist

Today, the atheist’s movement is more involved in sharing their beliefs than Christians are. Their messages are on billboards, the radio, and television.

We should not assume all atheists are knowledgeable about what they believe. We must consider the reasons why they may not believe in Jesus.

Reasons for Disbelief

Not all atheists were born to atheist parents. Many were a part of some religion or believing in God, but over time abandoned their faith. Their faith was weakened by severe health problems in the family, a death of a loved one, or some great injustice. With others, it was when they attended college that weaken their faith in Jesus. Parents must do more than taking their children to church and read them

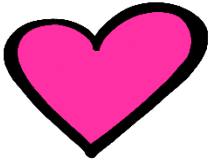


Bible stories. Parents need to be trained in defending their faith and be able to explain to their children why we believe as we do.

Question: Was there a time in your life when you were tempted to abandon the faith? If so, what prevent you from abandoning your faith in Jesus?

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |

Reaching the Heart of an Atheist



If we have an issue with God, with his Word, with the faith, with someone in the faith, with injustices of the world and we ignore these, failing to find an answer, we will eventually fall away from the faith. Paul called this a spiritual shipwreck. Paul told young Timothy “Some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.” ([1 Tim 1:19](#).)

Our first goal when someone says, ‘I am an atheist,’ is to ask why. If he or she is open to talking further, we need to try to find out what led to their reason for falling away. As we listen to their story, we need to do so with empathy because this could be us. We can start by saying, it has been our experience that there is a reasonable to every Bible difficulty that we have encountered. We can show even more empathy if we have struggled with something that made us pause for a moment. We must be willing to share how we struggled with the similar problem. Next, ask something like, “What if I can find you a reasonable answer to this issue that has plagued you for so long.

Not all atheists are going to accept the truth. Use reason, logic, persuasion and, above all, the power of God’s Word, to lead them into the truth or back to the truth. [Acts 28:23-24](#); [Heb. 4:12](#).

III. Witnessing to a Jehovah’s Witness

The Jehovah’s Witnesses are well trained to defend their beliefs. They spend time in meetings, devote time in personal study and learning how to defend their faith. We should not be scared off by sharing our faith. We should be prepared to share! We do not have to go out and find the Witnesses, as they come to us because they go house-to-house. The objective is not to be confrontational. Let us look at what they believe:

About God

A Jehovah’s Witness believes there is one God Almighty – a Spirit Being with a body, but not a human body.

About the Trinity

They believe there is no Trinity, because they believe that Jesus Christ is a god, but not the God of the Bible, and that the Holy Spirit is an active force (rather than a real Person).

About Jesus

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus Christ is not 'Jehovah' God, but the first son that 'Jehovah' brought forth. He is a god, but inferior to the only Father God.

Note: John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." The translators of the New World Translation misinterpret the end of this verse by adding an "a" as in "the Word was a god." According to the vast majority of Greek language scholars, this is a poor translation.

About Salvation

They believe that salvation is granted to those who had a combination of faith and good works (as defined by the Watchtower organization).

The best thing we can do is know what we believe very well and be prepared to defend it. Where do we begin to witness to a Jehovah's Witness? There is only one place to begin—with the person of Christ Jesus, who is the foundation of Christianity. Jehovah's Witnesses are unable to grasp the importance of Jesus' death and why they must be born again in order to have their sins forgiven. They have to understand they are not saved, which means they are lost in their sin. We can share that the assurance of salvation, is the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who belong to the Father through Christ ([Romans 8:16](#)).



Reaching the Heart of Jehovah's Witnesses must be done in Christian love and with compassion. Remember, they have been deceived and believe a false gospel. Do not be afraid of them ([1 John 4:17-19](#)), but let them know how much you care about their eternal salvation. Share your Christian testimony with them. Talk to them, discuss spiritual matters with them, but do not allow them to conduct what they describe as a Bible study, which is actually a study of their literature. Be aware they will not read any non-Watchtower literature or attend a church service. They say they will only accept what the Bible says, but their New World

Translation has been altered to reflect their theology, and many verses in the New Testament that point to the full deity of Christ Jesus have been changed to support their view. Speak the truth in love ([Ephesians 4:15](#)). Direct all your conversation to the person of Christ and the need to put total faith in what He has done. More than anything else, pray for them.

IV. Witnessing to Mormons

Mormons will say they are Christians, believe God is their Heavenly Father, believe Jesus is the Son of God and their savior, preach the gospel, believe in the Second Coming, etc. Most Christians, however, do not understand that, though they use these common Christian terms, they have entirely different meanings for them.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, also known as the Mormons, claims to be the restored church. Its founder, Joseph Smith, was involved in the occult at the time when he started Mormonism. Along with the Book of Mormon, the LDS church uses the Bible to teach many strange doctrines. It says that God came from another planet, that there is a goddess mother, that there's a secret temple ceremony where they learn how to become gods, that salvation is earned by their good works, and that we preexisted as offspring between God and his goddess wife before inhabiting human bodies. Mormonism is most definitely not Christian. Let us examine what Mormons believe:

About Mormonism

Mormons believe that the Church of Latter-Day Saints is the one and only true church on earth. They believe that the church became utterly corrupt soon after the Apostles, so God decided to restore the true church through Joseph Smith. Because of this, they believe all other denominations (Baptist, Lutheran, etc.) are false churches, or in other words, not following God.

About God

Mormons believes God was once a man but became God. God has a physical body as does His wife (Heavenly Mother).

About the Trinity

A Mormon does not believe in the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate gods.

About Jesus

They believe that Jesus is a separate God from the Father (Elohim). He was created as spirit by the Father and Mother in heaven and is the ‘elder brother’ of all people and spirit beings. His body was created as a result of a sexual union between God the Father and Mary. Jesus was married. His death on the cross does not pay for the sins of all people but does provide everyone with resurrection.

About Salvation

They believe salvation is defined as being physically resurrected and exalted to godhood (i.e., becoming a god). People are saved by trusting in Christ and doing good works.



Reaching the Heart of Mormon friends. How, then, can Christians effectively reach a Mormon neighbor and friend? First, the Christian must know the message of Jesus and know it well. Make sure to remove any “churchy” language from the discussion.

1. Salvation is a free gift from the Father

Passages like [Ephesians 2:8–9](#), [Romans 5:8](#), and [Romans 6:23](#) are vital. Those passages plainly teach that salvation is a free gift, given in spite of our works.. Works are important to Mormons, so stressing freedom from earning salvation is vital.

2. Jesus is the final prophet, priest, and king

Mormons believe in the need for a living prophet who hears from God daily and then passes that information on to humanity. Without a living prophet, most Mormons would feel lost. Sharing passages like [Hebrews 1:1–4](#) and [2 Timothy 3:16–17](#) can be helpful here.

3. There’s no need for a mediator other than the risen Christ

Mormons, in effect, believe LDS Church leadership is the current mediator between humanity and Elohim, as part of the priesthood being passed down via LDS hierarchy. Without the priesthood, Mormons believe no work can be done that will be accepted by Elohim. Passages like [1 Timothy 2:5–6](#) and [Galatians 3:20](#) can bring necessary light to this doctrine.

V. Witnessing to a Jewish Person

Jews believe that Judaism is the one true religion because God personally spoke to Moses and gave him the law and commandments that they should follow. It should be noted that the average Jew we might run into is a faithful follower of the traditions of Rabbis. Somewhat like the Catholic Church viewing the word of the pope to be equal to Scripture, this would be true of the average Jew and Rabbi traditions. Therefore, while we might have thought we could have had some deep Bible discussion to build rapport, this is unlikely. The word “Bible” is viewed as a Christian book.

Well, we might be wondering just what we can talk about with the average Jewish person. Let us examine what a Jewish person believes:

About God:

A Jew believes in the same God of the universe that Christians do – the One revealed in the Bible as Yahweh.

About the Trinity:

Jews do not believe in the Trinity as revealed in the Bible.

About Jesus:

They believe Jesus was a teacher, but no more than that.

About Salvation:

A Jew believes salvation is achieved by keeping the Law of the Torah.



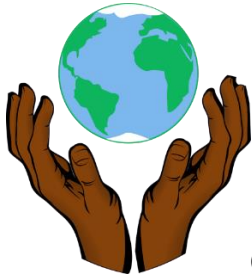
Reaching the Heart of Jewish Friends

Ask questions to learn where they’re coming from, questions like:

- What happens at Passover?
- What do you believe about the coming of Messiah?
- How will you recognize the Messiah when he comes?

Jews are usually raised with little knowledge about Jesus Christ, so talk about how Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies made about the coming Messiah. Ask them to

read Isaiah 53 and ask who they believe that passage is describing. Whenever possible, use Scripture to answer your friend's questions. If you get asked something you don't know the answer to, ask them for some time to find out. Your main goal initially should not be to persuade your Jewish friend that Jesus is the Messiah. Your conversation is a means to an end, and that end is that they must see that they cannot ever keep God's Law perfectly.



CONCLUDE WITH PRAYER!

My Father,

I thank you for calling me and making me your child through what Jesus did for me on the Cross. You have commanded me to share and defend the faith.

You have called your believers to go into the world and make disciples of every nation. I ask that you give me courage and boldness to share your truth and your Gospel with those around me.

In Jesus Name, Amen!