

## Bridge Diagram: General Instructions

### Some basic mindsets...

You are engaging in the spiritual battle every time you sharing the gospel. In Mark 4:15, Jesus tells us that in some lives, Satan comes and takes away the Word of God that is sown in people. You have an enemy, and you will be opposed in this. So pray and fight him. And walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is more important than any of these skills, because apart from Him, we can do nothing.

As you are learning and sharing the bridge diagram, put it in your own voice. This presentation of the bridge is written to teach you how to communicate the gospel in a way that is true and effective, but it is probably not just quite how you speak. Learn it well, so you are able to share it from your heart, in your voice.

Many Bible verses are footnoted through the course of the presentation. Use these verses to an appropriate degree. For an atheist who thinks the Bible is a collection of myths, it is more effective to focus on the message and not focus excessively on the fact that the Bible is the authority for this. For someone who believes in the Bible, however, helping them understand that this is its central message can open the truth of the gospel to them.

And be able to pace yourself as you are sharing. Know how much time you have, ask them beforehand, so you don't leave them without even sharing the *good* news. To be able to control the timing of the appointment, you will need to know how to be concise.

### Starting the gospel appointment...

You will be most effective in sharing the bridge diagram when you know the basic mindset of the person you are sharing with. It is extremely helpful to ask them about their spiritual background, and it's also a great way to begin the appointment. Some helpful questions are:

- How did you grow up? Was religion a part of it?
- What's your spiritual background?
- What were you raised believing? How did you feel about it?
- What do you believe now?

Two questions that we would use on virtually ever gospel appointment are:

- If you were to die today, how sure are you that you'd go to heaven (on a scale of 0% to 100%)? Why is that?
- If you were to stand before God and He were to say, 'Why should I let you into heaven?', what would you say?

### Transitions into the bridge diagram...

The best way to transition into the gospel will depend on how and why you set up the appointment. Here are some of the most common transitions:

*[From meaning & purpose]*

I'm really excited that you're interested in hearing more about God and how He relates to the biggest questions we have: Is there any meaning in life? What was I created for in the first place? Do I matter? If there is a God and He created the world, He is the only one who can really answer these questions. So let's look at God, who He is, what He says about us, and how He makes sense of life.

*[From a survey]*

I'm really excited that you're interested in seeing this diagram about what the Bible says about life after death. I think you'll find it really intriguing, because it not only talks about what happens when we die, it also deals with the most important aspects of what goes on while we're alive. So let's look at God and our relationship with Him, and we'll see what that means about life and death.

[From NLC beliefs]

I'm really excited that you're interested in hearing more about New Life and what we're all about. We believe that the very purpose of our lives is to have a relationship with God, and I'd love to show you this diagram we have that explains what a relationship with God is all about. Let's take a look at God and what it means to have a relationship with Him.

[From the existence of God]

I'm really excited that you're interested in discussing the existence of God. What we see in the Bible is that not only does God exist, but He is deeply involved in our lives and desires a relationship with us. And what He did to make that relationship with us possible shows us some key reasons to believe in His existence. So let's look at what the Bible tells us about God.

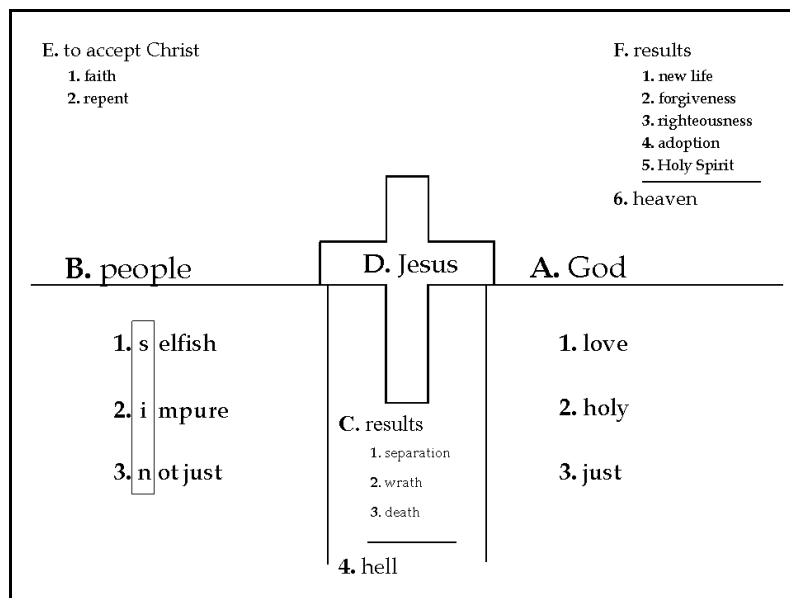
### As you're sharing...

Focus on making sure they understand the message. The goal is not to get the information out, it is to have this person understand the gospel. This presentation of the bridge includes questions through the text that will help you first make sure the person understands, then also to see what they think about it. As they are answering questions, it is very helpful to affirm the areas that they agree with, and to express appreciation for and interest in their responses in general.

Another important aspect of sharing the gospel is to see if they agree with what you are telling them. The general question, "What do you think of this?" is designed to accomplish that goal. If you can't tell from their response, you can ask directly, "Do you agree with this?" (However, if the person you are sharing with is very obviously not going to agree – for example, an atheist is not going to agree with this view of God – simply stick with asking what they think about it in general.)

Remember, it is not your role to convince this person to believe the message. Your responsibility is simply to share the gospel. So if they do not agree, it's most effective to make sure you understand what they do think about it, acknowledge the fact that you both may continue to disagree after they hear this message, and move on. Later, it may be appropriate to share reasons to believe this message. For now, continue going through the bridge so that this person gets to hear the gospel and have an opportunity to accept Christ.

If the person you're sharing with has a lot of questions, it's best to not get distracted by discussing them deeply. Answer quickly if you can, but in general a good response is, "That's a great question. It might be a little confusing if we went into that now, so why don't I write it down, finish explaining this, and then we can discuss it in light of this diagram."



### The critical questions...

The closing questions are one of the most critical aspects of presenting the bridge diagram, because they take it from being information that this person is hearing to a relationship with God that they personally must either accept or reject. This is one of the most exciting aspects of sharing the gospel, and it is critical to be able to do it skillfully.

<p>✓ “If someone walked up to you and asked what the Bible teaches about how to have a relationship with God and go to heaven, what would you say?”</p> <p>If they have caught the critical fact that going to heaven depends simply upon accepting Christ, move on. If not (e.g. they still say that it depends on doing good works), explain this point again, and ask if they understand. Do not move on until they comprehend this critical point.</p> <p>If someone understands but doesn’t agree, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ “Is this something you think you might ever believe?”</li> <li>✓ “Would you be interested in hearing any of the evidence that helps us see that this message is true?”</li> </ul>	<p>✓ Here the “people” side is us being separated from God because of our sin, and the “God” side is us having accepted Christ. Which side do you see yourself on?</p> <p>Their response allows you to find whether or not they have accepted Christ. A common response based on misunderstanding is, “I’m somewhere in between.” Explain again that there are two options (having accepted Christ or not), and ask again where they are.</p> <p>If their response was “on the God side,” confirm by asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ “Is there a specific point when you remember accepting Christ?”</li> </ul> <p>If so, celebrate with them! If not, explain that it never hurts to recommit their lives to Christ, and can be comforting for them to have a specific time to point back to, and ask if they would like to do that.</p> <p>If their response was “on the people side,” ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Which side do you want to be on?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What would compel you to accept Christ?</li> <li>✓ What would keep you from repenting and placing your faith in Christ?</li> </ul> <p>The first question helps them see why they would want to do this, and you can encourage them in that. The second question is critical, because it shows you what is holding them back (e.g. sin they don’t want to repent of, doubt, insecurity). If it is a major issue that they won’t get past at this point, ask something like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Would you be open to talking more about some reasons to move beyond what is holding you back?</li> </ul> <p>If they say nothing is holding them back from accepting Christ, or if it’s only a minor issue that they might choose to give up immediately, move on to the next questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ If Jesus were here right now, what would you say to Him to express your repentance?</li> </ul> <p>If they can’t clearly express them, you can guide them by saying something like, “when I accepted Christ, I told just said, ‘Jesus, I believe in You and I know I’ve rebelled against you. Thank You for dying for my sins and rising from the dead. I believe in You, and I want to accept Your forgiveness. I want to turn away from my sins and live life Your way. Thank You, God. Amen.’” Then ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do you realize this is something you can do now? Would you like to pray to God right now?</li> </ul> <p>If yes, offer to lead them in prayer, then celebrate together! If not, ask if there is a time when they would want to accept Christ. Then ask if they’d mind if you check back with them to see how it went. And celebrate then!</p>