



John 3:16

Good News... made simple!

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Facilitator notes:

Go over these introductory points leading up to the 'Diary of Sin' story. Be sure to stress not only the duty but the privilege we have to share the Good News.

It has been said that people need to hear the Gospel approximately 7.3 times (on average) before responding to God's call. That means that much 'seed planting' needs to take place and we need to be intentionally sharing our faith.

Motivation is key. If someone is motivated, they will find a way! We must be motivated by the difference God makes in life now and forever!

The Call:

Most Christians know God wants to use them to build His kingdom in a hurting world by sharing His love and telling others about His plan of salvation. Verses like the following serve to emphasize this calling:

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
(Matthew 28:19-20)

Common Fears:

Yet many Christians deal with a variety of fears:

- ✠ Fear of rejection
- ✠ Fear of feeling inadequate to clearly communicate the Gospel
- ✠ Fear of being asked questions they can't answer

Motivation:

Why evangelism - what does being a Christian matter?

BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCE GOD MAKES IN LIFE TODAY... NOW!

"I came that they might have life and life to the full." (John 10:10)

BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCE THE GOSPEL MAKES IN FUTURE LIFE... FOREVER!

"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."
(1 John 5:12)

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Facilitator notes:

As people wander through life, there are times when they are far from God, more sensitive to coming home to God and everywhere in between. God uses this great 'seed planting' tool to draw people closer to Himself. However, it is especially useful in helping someone who is ready to respond and move into a personal relationship with Jesus.

Demonstrate the Diary of Sin Story.

Then have them practice it with one another.

Explain how it illustrates so much of the Gospel story:

- God's love
- Our Sin
- Jesus' sacrifice
- Forgiveness offered in JC alone

Tell them they will use it where they feel it is appropriate when sharing the Gospel.

Goal:

To easily enter into a spiritual conversation and give a clear and simple Gospel explanation.

You will learn to use some very natural 'lead-in approaches' about life to enter into a spiritual discussion. Then using John 3:16 and a simple story, you will learn to bring to life the Gospel (Good News) message. And you will learn an easy way to assist someone who is ready to move into a faith relationship with Jesus.

Premise:

Created in God's image, each of us has real innate longings or needs that only God can meet.

GOD...

The need to know without a doubt that He is real, that we can know Him and live in peace with Him now... and forever.

ACCEPTANCE...

Our need to be accepted, loved, and forgiven. To thoroughly embrace and 'experience' this in a very personal relationship in Christ.

PURPOSE...

The need to realize fulfillment and significance in life. To experience 'real' life serving God's purpose of loving and caring for others.

Diary of Sin story:

(See the description in the back of the handbook)

How will this story help to explain the Gospel message to someone?

[Pair up and practice telling this story to each other.]

Helpful tips:

- ✠ Be sure to clearly identify what each hand represents and the item used to represent your "diary (record) of sin".
- ✠ Be sure to refer to your sin, not the sin of the person you are talking.
- ✠ Never leave Jesus dead and still in the grave.
- ✠ This story is 'the Gospel in a nutshell'. When you have very little time to share, this story alone can be told quickly and powerfully to explain much of the Gospel message.

STEP 1: Lead-in Approaches

Facilitator notes:

[Option: Start with Steps 2 & 3, then come back to 1. This way you cover the interactive exercises while students are fresh. Let them know you will be coming back to Step 1 and will teach them how to start a spiritual conversation moving into explaining the Gospel.]

As you begin this section, point out that getting into a spiritual conversation can be as challenging, if not more challenging, than actually sharing the Gospel.

These "Value" questions will help you:

- 1) Go deeper in a personal conversation by discovering the 'values' a person holds.
- 2) To bring God into the conversation.
- 3) 'Explore' to see what God might be doing in their lives to draw them to Himself.

LEARN TO SHARE "FAITH STORIES" IN EVERYDAY CONVERSATION. Stories that tell of God's activity, the Holy Spirit working in your life. Not cliches like, "God is good", or "Praise the Lord", but actual experiences that reflect your personal faith walk with the Lord. Stories like:

- ✠ How God helped you in a relationship
- ✠ How God corrected you when you were wrong, perhaps an apology
- ✠ How God provided for a need or direction in your life
- ✠ How God gave you peace in a difficult situation
- ✠ How God lead you to help someone
- ✠ How God gave you strength to resist a temptation, etc.

Watch how others respond... it may lead to sharing the Gospel. Responses like:

- ✠ "I wish I had that."
- ✠ "God seems so real in your life."
- ✠ "How do you know it's God talking?"
- ✠ "That's cool!"
- ✠ *Or you just notice a curious look that seems to indicate a desire to know more but... they don't know how to ask it.*

You sense the Holy Spirit prompting you. Take the initiative to ask:

"Have you ever heard or seen the verse... John 3:16? In a nutshell, it explains the main message of the Bible."

"Has anyone every shared with you the main message of the Bible, i.e. how we can experience life to its fullest, both now (today, in this life) and forever? It's found in the well known verse, John 3:16."

"Can I share with you what I discovered from this verse?"

OR USE SOME EASY, NON-THREATENING "VALUE QUESTIONS" that will reflect what is important to people and open the door to spiritual discussions.

Let's say you are having a casual conversation and you notice they are having a good day or perhaps a rough day. For example saying, "Chris, you sure seem to enjoy your work." Then ask, "How would you rate you life... " or 'Bill, life seems to be pretty tough for you today. How would you rate your life... "

In either case, watch for an opportunity to ask the initial question (then continue your discussion using the additional follow up questions):

- ✠ *How would you rate your life? (Lousy, OK, Good, Great?)*
- ✠ *Why ____, what makes it ____? (What would make it better?)*
- ✠ *How might it change if you knew more about God and/or His plan for your life? (Why?)*

Facilitator notes:

This is what we might call a 'testimony of God's goodness', i.e. something that communicates the difference God has made in your life and that He wants us to experience life to the full.

This "heaven" question will serve as a natural lead-in to discussing the main message of the Bible, i.e. how a person can experience the full life God intends for us, both now and forever.

If time permits, allow students to pair up and discuss which approach they most identify with. Give them time to practice how they might do this in a real situation.

Several possible transitions:

- ✠ *God has made quite a difference in my life. Before I knew much about God, my life was _____.*
- ✠ (Share a "faith story") Comment on how God has made a difference in your life. (As appropriate, share about an area in your life that relates to your friend.

**Options you can take:*

End your faith story with a confident statement like, ...and I'm grateful to know I'll spend eternity with God... may I ask you a question?

*Then ask, If God wants us to experience 'life to the full' both now and forever, are you 100% sure you will go to heaven?
(If yes, how did that happen?)*

(If they have some church background, use the following 'discovery question' to find out what they are trusting in for their salvation... Jesus or 'self')

If God asked you, "WHY should I let you into heaven, what would you say?"

- ✠ Or simply ask, *"Have you ever heard the verse in the Bible... John 3:16? In a nutshell this verse tells the main message of the Bible, i.e. how to experience life to its fullest, both now and forever. Can I take a few minutes to share what I discovered in this verse?"*

OTHER POTENTIAL LEAD-IN QUESTIONS to explore if/where God is working:

- ✠ With all that is going on in the world today, do you find yourself thinking about spiritual things more than you did several years ago?
- ✠ Do you attend a local church? (Which one?)
- ✠ Do you in some way pray regularly?
- ✠ What value would you give the Bible? Do you have one?
- ✠ (If they have small children) Have you thought about getting your children involved in a church for their spiritual development?
- ✠ Have you ever heard the verse in the Bible called John 3:16? In a nutshell this verse tells the main message of the Bible, i.e. how to experience life to its fullest, both now and forever. Can I take a few minutes to share what I discovered in this verse?

STEP 2: Explaining John 3:16

Facilitator notes:

If available, use poster board or a white board and marker to walk through steps 3 and 4, asking students for group input.

Note: each of these key words will serve as a 'talking point' to explain the Gospel.

Have students use the Student Handbook or the blank worksheet (p. 14). Give students time to work with the key word LIFE as instructed in the Student Handbook. Then call on some to share.

As you have students work on the remaining key words, for variety, consider having them do it in pairs, individually or even ask for responses of the entire group.

Option: Give students time to "pair up and practice" every section (or combine a couple of sections).

When they give you permission to proceed:

✠ Use a piece of paper and write out John 3:16 in the middle.
(Or use the worksheet in the back of the handbook. Or download the free wallet sized Witnessing Guide at www.christianwitnessingtools.com)

✠ Then say, "We're going to focus on 5 key words."
[There are 4 nouns and 1 verb (action word). Write those around the outside edge as seen below.]

The Basic Message is:

God wants us to experience 'real' LIFE.
What keeps us from experiencing it? (WORLD - us/sin)
How does GOD feel about this?
What did He do to solve our problem? (SON)
How do we begin to experience 'real' life? (BELIEVE)

Life	World (us)	God
For <u>God</u> so loved the <u>world</u> that He gave His one and only <u>Son</u> that whoever <u>believes</u> in Him will not perish but have eternal <u>life</u> .		
Son	Believes (faith)	(Response)

✠ Then say, "OK, let's look closely at this verse and see what it tells us about this."

✠ Using other words in John 3:16, begin to build 'mini-stories' around each key word. (Descriptive words can work in more than one area. That's OK, just so it helps YOU communicate the Gospel. You'll be surprised how much you know!)

For example:

"What words or phrases from John 3:16 tell us something about LIFE?
(Pick out some that fit. Write them down and discuss/comment.)"

Facilitator

notes:

Refer to Student Handbook as you go through Step 3...

"Prompting ?'s":

LIFE...

[You'll want to explain how long we will actually live.]

What does God want us to have 'forever'? Where does God want us to live forever?

Explain what kind of life God wants for us now?

WORLD...

Who does the "world" refer to... who is or makes up the "world"?

How does God feel about the "world"?

What does He want us to have? What are the 2 possible destinies for those who make up the "world"?

[Note: the following question is not answered in the verse but needs to be explained.]

What do we mean by "perish" and what causes one to "perish" (what is our problem)?

Tip:

When witnessing you may need to guide listeners through each 'talking point'. But do not discourage discussion or questions.

"Prompting ?'s":

GOD..

What kind of God is He? What is He like? What are His feelings towards us? What did He do? What does that tell you about Him?

 LIFE... some words or thoughts that could go there are:

 eternal or everlasting... Jesus rose from death. He is eternally alive and God desires for us to know and experience Him both now and... forever in heaven

 maybe perish... as that reflects the opposite of eternal life, i.e. life separated from God both now and forever because of our ignoring Him (sin)

*(optional) You might use the acronym of G-A-P to explain how God has made a difference in your life:

G – Relationship with God our Creator; to know God

A – To be accepted and forgiven just as we are

P – To live with purpose and fulfillment in this life

*Optional verse you may know and want to use:

John 17:3 And this is eternal LIFE, to know...

 WORLD... some words and thoughts that could go there are: (note this represents 'us'... all of mankind)

 whoever... us/everyone, man/woman, boy/girl, you/me (mankind... not the plants or animals; they're not 'whoever's')

 loved... by God

 eternal/everlasting life... this is what God desires for us

 perish... why? Because of our 'sin' problem, we ignore God

 believe... we need to believe to have life (i.e. to know and experience the living God... both now and forever)

*Optional verse you may know and want to use:

Romans 3:23 All have sinned...

 GOD... some words and thoughts that could go there are:

 loved ... He is a loving God; He really cares about us

 so (loved)... emphasizes how much He loves

 gave... He is a generous God... what does He give?

 maybe perish... referring to God being the perfect Judge of mankind and our moral character

*Optional verses you may know and want to use:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin...

Romans 5: 8 God demonstrates His love for us...

1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God but...

Facilitator
notes:

SON...
[Explain who the "Son" refers to.]
What words are used to describe the "Son"?
Explain what makes Him so special.

BELIEVES...
If you believe, what do you have? How certain would God want us to be?
[You'll want to explain what it means to 'believe.] What are some other words for 'believe'?
Who or what must you believe in?
If you don't believe, then what?

Stress that:
"It's not what we do but what Christ has done."
Eph. 2:8,9

[Give students time to practice.]

✎ SON... some words and thoughts that could go there are:

✎ only or one and only... This refers to Jesus. He is special because He is:

- ✦ God in the flesh who lived a perfect life
- ✦ He died on the cross but rose again (He is alive) to be our Savior by paying for or taking the punishment for our sin... to be our Lord to give us Life

✎ The simple but profound "Diary of Sin" story fits well here (emphasis Jesus' death on the cross)

*Optional verses you may know and want to use:

John 1:1, 14 In the beginning was the Word and...

Isaiah 53:6 We all like sheep have gone astray but...

✎ BELIEVES... some words or thoughts that could go there are:

✎ in Him (Jesus)... need to believe in the risen Christ Jesus and what He did on the cross for you to have and experience 'life' as He desires for you starting now and forever

✎ have... not maybe, not hope so, but 'have' eternal life

✎ not perish... this tells what we are saved from, a life apart from God, in part now, but eternally forever in Hell

✎ Another word for 'believe' is Faith (or trust)

*(optional) You might use the acronym K-A-T to explain what it means to Believe, i.e. what true saving faith is:

K – Knowledge... you need to know the facts about Jesus, our sin and His grace as our Savior *but its more than just knowledge alone*

A – Agreeing with the facts

T – Trust Jesus alone for your salvation and the real life He wants for you

*Optional verses you may know and want to use:

Ephesians 2:8, 9 For by grace are you saved through faith not...

Acts 16:31 Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and...

*Although the Diary of Sin works well when talking about Jesus, share it wherever you feel is appropriate.

Review

Facilitator notes:

If time permits, you may want to ask for class participation, having individuals give a summary of each area.

Encourage students to commit these questions and 5 key words to memory. These are the basic foundation to explaining the Gospel. The Holy Spirit will 'give you words to speak' to flesh out each 'talking point'.

Point out on your poster or white board where their names could be inserted into John 3:16.

Circle the letters G-O-S-P-E-L on your poster board.

Now quickly review the 5 'talking points'.

What does God want you to experience?

- ✠ LIFE – This is what God desires for you. Life to the full now and forever (eternal). To experience His love and discover real purpose in your life.

What keeps you from experiencing it?

- ✠ WORLD (us) – Because of our sin we separate ourselves from God. This breaks our relationship with Him now that will result in a permanent separation from God (perish).

How does God feel about this?

- ✠ GOD – God loves you. He must punish sin but doesn't want you to perish because of your sin.

How did God solve our sin problem?

- ✠ SON – God solved your sin problem in Jesus. He is both God and man and lived a sinless, perfect life. He did not deserve to be punished. But Jesus died on the cross taking upon Himself the punishment you deserve and removed the barrier that blocks your relationship with God. Then Jesus rose from death to live forever. Now you can join Him to live life to the full, without guilt or shame, now and forever.

How do we begin experiencing real life?

- ✠ BELIEVE – By believing (trusting) in the risen Jesus alone and what He did for you on the cross. In friendship with Jesus you can experience life as He desires for you now and forever.

Optional:

*You can personalize the verse by putting their name in the following blanks.

"For God so loved _____ that He gave His one and only Son that (if) _____ believes in Him, _____ will not perish but _____ (will) have eternal life"

Or, point out that the G-O-S-P-E-L (Good News) is in this verse:

G _____ so loved the world that He gave His
O _____ and only
S _____ that whoever believes in Him will not
P _____ but have
E _____
L _____

*Note - eternal life is to know Jesus (John 17:3)

STEP 3: Response

Facilitator notes:

Point out that many times praying with someone is overlooked because the witness does not know how to help someone express their new faith in Christ.

Therefore, it is important to have them pair up and practice praying a prayer of commitment... 'breaking the sound barrier' and hearing what it sounds like coming off of their own lips.

Have students pair up and using a worksheet or the Student Handbook, give each one 7 minutes to go through the '5 talking points', quick review, A-B-C's and prayer.

Jesus would have us act on this knowledge... to take a step of faith, to believe. Ask them, *"Do you sense the Lord speaking to you about taking this step of faith?"*

(If they are not, simply explain the following and encourage them to do so when they are ready.)

If they are ready now, say, *"Here is an easy way to do that... it's as easy as A-B-C."*

✠ A – ADMIT... that you have sinned in need of forgiveness

✠ B – BELIEVE... in who Jesus is and that He died to take your punishment and be your living Lord and Savior

✠ C – COMMIT... to let Jesus change things that are not pleasing to Him (repent) and choose to follow Him

✠ [You may lead them in a prayer of commitment or they may wish to pray unassisted by you. If they do not care to pray, be sure to leave them the paper and encourage them to ask the Lord to help them with this life changing decision. Offer your willingness to be of any help you can be in the days to come.]

Sample prayer:

"Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe, you died on the cross and rose again to take the punishment for my sin. Thank you for your love and acceptance. Help me lead a life that is pleasing to you. Jesus, I want to follow you. Come into my life and help change anything that is not pleasing to you. In Jesus name, Amen."

✠ And do what you can to include them in future activities to encourage their faith journey.

Optional Verses you may know and want to use:

John 1:12 As many as received Him (Jesus)...

Rev. 3:20 Behold I stand at the door and knock...

Explaining the DIARY of SIN Story

This story consist of 3 components:

✠ Use a book/DVD/booklet/object = my (our) sin, which God hates

✠ 1st Hand = me (us), who God loves

✠ 2nd Hand = Jesus (God), who died for me

Let the object represent your life... specifically all the sin of the past, present and future. Every wrong word, thought or action you've ever done.

Let one hand represent you and the other hand represent God in heaven.

✠ (Hold one above the other to represent you on earth and God in heaven.)

✠ (Then place the 'diary (record) of sin' on the hand representing you.)

State that this is the problem – "My sin separates me from God."

✠ (Hold the God hand above the 'diary of sin' to show how sin separates you from God).

State that, "God loves me,

✠ (Point to the 'me' hand)

but He hates my sin."

✠ (Point at the 'diary of sin' resting on the 'me' hand.)

State that, "And because God is holy and just, my sin must be punished."

"To solve my problem, God sent His Son (Jesus) to earth."

✠ (Put the Jesus (God) hand parallel to the hand that represents yourself)

State that, "Jesus was sinless and when Jesus died on the cross all of our sins were placed upon Him."

✠ (Move the 'diary of sin' from the 'me' hand to the 'Jesus' hand.)

"All of my sin, which God hates, has been placed on Jesus. He died and suffered by taking the punishment for our sin so we might be forgiven."

Explain that, "When He died, He was buried in a grave,

✠ (Lower the 'Jesus' hand and put the 'diary of sin' on your lap.)

but then He was raised back to LIFE so we might experience the full life He intends for us. A little later, He went to heaven to prepare a place for you and me."

✠ (Move 'Jesus' hand up above the 'me' hand to show Jesus going to heaven.)

Finish by stating that, "Having taken the punishment for our sin, Jesus offers this Life to us, real Life, that starts now and lasts forever with Him in heaven."

(Sample John 3.16 'worksheet')

<p>Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - eternal/everlasting... (now and forever) - not perish (separated from God... hell) <p>God meets our deepest needs G - real relationship w/ God A - acceptance and forgiveness P - purpose and meaning</p>	<p>World (us)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - loved... by God - whoever (you/me) - perish (why? Sin) - eternal life... a 'gift' to us - need to 'believe' 	<p>God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - loved - gave - perish (judges sin)
<p>For <u>God</u> so loved the <u>world</u> that He gave His one and only <u>Son</u> that whoever <u>believes</u> in Him will not perish but have eternal <u>life</u>.</p>		
<p>Son (Jesus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'only' Son - who? Refers to Jesus - (cross)... † - [Diary of Sin] 	<p>Believes (faith)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - whoever - 'in' Him (Jesus) - 'not' perish - 'have' eternal life (now and forever) 	<p>→ <u>Review</u></p> <p>What does God Desire? Life What keeps us from it? Sin How does God feel? Loves How did He solve this? Jesus How do we begin? Believe</p> <p>[Response] A – admit (sinner) B – believe (in Jesus) C – commit (to follow Jesus)</p>

Similar Verses... in the Book of John

John 1:1, 14

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:12

But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 3:15

Everyone who believes in Me will have eternal life.

John 5:24

I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

John 6:39-40

And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day.

John 6:47

I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life.

John 8:24

That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I Am who I say I am, you will die in your sins.

John 10:10

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.

John 10:28

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me,

John 11:25-26

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die.

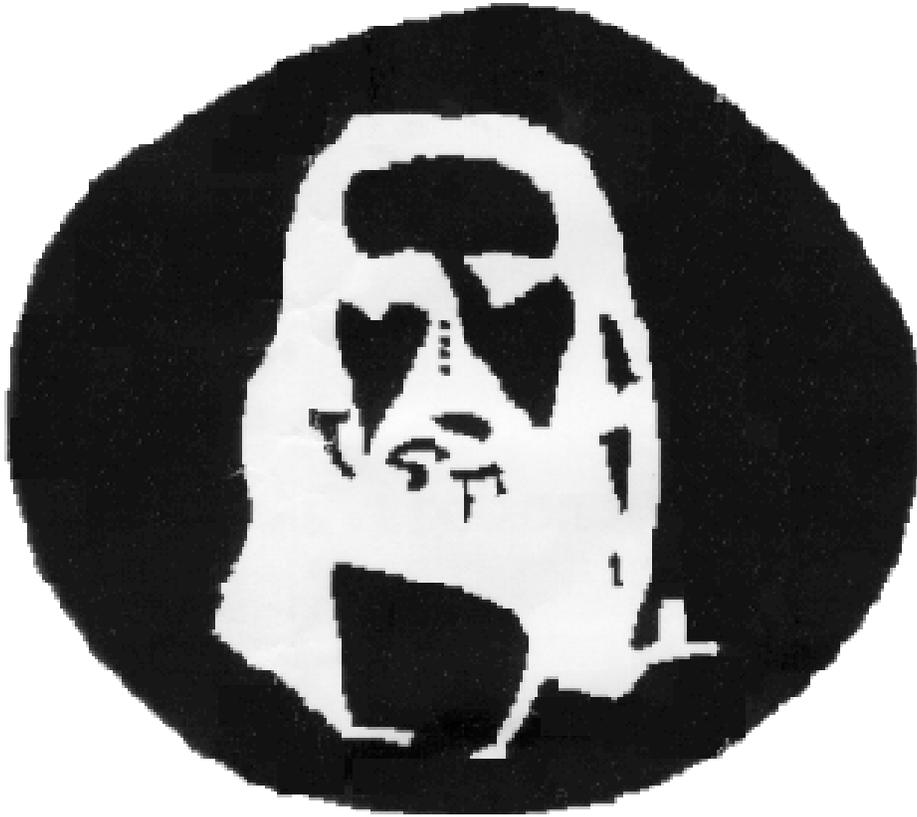
John 17:2-3

For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.

John 20:31

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life.

<p>Life</p> <p>God meets our deepest needs G - real relationship w/ God A - acceptance and forgiveness P - purpose and meaning</p>	<p>World (us)</p>	<p>God</p>
<p>For <u>God</u> so loved the <u>world</u> that He gave His one and only <u>Son</u> that <u>whoever believes</u> in Him will not perish but have <u>eternal life</u>.</p>		
<p>Son (Jesus)</p> <p>- (cross)... † - [Diary of Sin]</p>	<p>Believes (faith)</p>	<p><u>Review</u></p> <p>What does God desire? Life What keeps us from it? Sin How does God feel? Loves How did He solve this? Jesus How do we begin? Believe</p> <p>[Response] A – admit (sinner) B – believe (in Jesus) C – commit (to follow Jesus)</p>



Illusion of Jesus

Focus on the 4 small dots for 30 seconds (count of 30). Then close your eyes.

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matt. 28:20b

