

An open book with white pages and a dark cover is centered at the bottom of a rounded square frame. The background of the frame is a blue gradient, transitioning from a lighter blue at the top to a darker blue at the bottom. The text is overlaid on this background.

Witnessing: Re-envisioning God

Instructor's Guide

Church Renewal Resource
Evangelism Ministries USA/Canada Region
Church of the Nazarene

Acknowledgments

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Evangelism Ministries

Church of the Nazarene

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Preparation Checklist

The following information will help you prepare to instruct this module.

- Review the material and make notes of specific areas for special emphasis.
- Check to ensure the following materials are available:
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - Participant booklet (copy as needed)
- Gather the following materials:
 - Pens and/or pencils
 - Other material you want to use
- Check the classroom for:
 - Projector
 - Sufficient number of tables and chairs for the participants
- Arrange the room so that each church team sits around an individual table and you have ample room to move among the teams.

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The table below identifies each module section, the time allotted for each section, and a brief description of the section's objective. When you are familiar with this module, you may want to teach from this page rather than the detailed information.

SECTION	TIME	PAGE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
I. Module Introduction	5 mins.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce module, objectives, and outline.
II. Lecture	25 mins.	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator presents information that will help participants assess their congregation and identify areas for growth and development.
III. Small Group Exercise	15 mins.	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator presents information that will help participants assess their congregation and identify areas for growth and development.
V. Action Planning/ Reporting	15 mins.	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants plan how they will utilize the new concepts in their church.
VI. Module Wrap-up	5 mins.	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close the module with your final comments regarding the topic.
Total Module Time: 65 mins.			

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I. Module Introduction

(5 Minutes)

Notes

Let the participants know the material is theirs to keep and encourage them to take notes. The participant material includes:

- Purpose
- Objectives
- “Fill-in-the-blanks” for the lecture
- Application exercises

The purpose of this module is to **inspire churchgoers to become witnesses, reflecting God in their community.**

The objectives for this module are:

- Dispel stereotypes about witnessing.
- Identify the Biblical imperative for representing Christ through our lives and actions.
- Learn about Christ-like ways to witness.
- Acknowledge the power of the Spirit in showing God to the world.

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II. Lecture

(25 Minutes)

- The underlined text represents the blanks in the participant booklet.

I. Embodying Light

“There was a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light” (John 1:6-8).

- John the Baptist **CLARIFIED** his role as paving the way for the Lord, stating that he was worthy only to announce Christ’s presence.
- John the Baptist’s witness **POINTED** to “*the true light that gives light to every man. . . .” noting God’s inclusive nature and His desire for all to know Him.
- The Baptist’s introduction of Jesus **STARTLES** us with its clarity and significance in John 1:29-34.
- God still uses witnesses to **SPEAK** on His behalf so people will know who He is and what He wants.

John 1:29-34 *John Testifies About Jesus*

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! **30** This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ **31** I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

32 Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. **33** And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ **34** I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

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II. Lecture (cont.)

II. Empowered Acts

A. Service: Jesus spoke forcefully of how we were to live and **SERVE** as God's witness when He said, ". . . let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

1. When Jesus chased the vendors out of the temple (John 2: 13-22) his act challenged religious people to reconsider the connection between belief and behavior. God wants us to be people of principle.
2. Acts of kindness in the community provide an accurate picture of an otherwise obscure and invisible God. Good deeds often heighten the effectiveness of evangelism.

B. Mercy: Jesus performed miracles because they expressed His concern, involvement, and attentiveness to human predicaments. He **CARED** deeply.

1. Though he mourned the inability of people to believe in God apart from supernatural phenomena, He told an official, "Go, your son will live" (John 2:50).
2. On the cross, Jesus arranged for the care of his mother. For the sufferer to care for a sorrowing mom speaks of empathy and devotion. We can follow such a person.

C. Evangelism: Witnessing successfully **ACHIEVES** God's purposes when we employ words, deeds and His signs.

1. Paul described how he witnessed. He wrote, "I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit" (Rom. 15:17-19).

II. Lecture (cont.)

2. We are to expect God's presence and power to advance our witness in the world. While words and deeds are ours, miracles are given at God's discretion, and our role is to provide a holy conduit through which God can work.

III. Exemplary Representatives

- A. God **HONORED** us with the ambassadorial work of representing Him in the world.
- B. We **RECOIL** from this charge because we confuse the persuasion that changes people's opinions about God with conflict and debate.

Illustration:

George Hunter tells of inviting people "who believed that evangelism is important and ought to be done, but they were not doing it" to join his lunch table. He says that at that table he discovered "the greatest barrier to evangelism in our churches."

When asked why they were not doing evangelism, people usually responded with, "I am not that sort of person." In describing the kind of person who does evangelism, they used adjectives like dogmatic, holier-than-thou, narrow minded, self-righteous, pushy, aggressive, over-bearing, judgmental, hypocritical, insensitive and fanatical. No wonder people resist serving as "ambassadors for Christ."

On the other hand, when recent Christians described the persons who influenced them to come to Christ, they gave this contrasting set of adjectives: loving, caring, informed, understanding, accepting, affirming, interested, concerned, encouraging, supporting, kind and credible.

No similarity is found among the lists of descriptors. One Christian observed, "We have been duped into assuming that you cannot be like Jesus if you want to reach people for Jesus!"

II. Lecture (cont.)

- C. Conversions take place through **CONVERSATIONS** which allow us to try out ideas, take in differing perspectives and come to conclusions helpful to our spiritual journey.
- D. Ambassadors **REFLECT** the one who sends them. We picture God for unbelievers.

IV. Sanctified and Sent

- A. Jesus prayed for his disciples to be **PROTECTED**, sanctified and sent into the world at the end of his earthly ministry. “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20-21).
- B. Our witness to the world includes our holiness. Holiness is **FOUND** in acting as God acts.
- C. Unity among the people of God **SHOWS** the true nature of God to the world. Divisions in the community of believers misrepresent God.

Illustration:

Randy, a 34 year old skeptic, responded to an inquiry about his church background, “Don’t expect me to go to church. None of you ‘believers’ (he flashed quotation marks with his fingers) can agree on anything. I am not going to be a part of anything so divided as the church.”

A Christian friend acknowledged his hesitancy and added, “The Church does express itself in a variety of ways. But if you compare my denomination to any other, we will only vary from one to three points. In matters of doctrine or belief we are far more united than what it appears from the outside. What differences we do have at times are a matter of emphasis and practice.”

Jesus knew the importance of unity among the people of God. Togetherness

II. Lecture (cont.)

or oneness helps people to see God better. How we interact with each other is a testimony to the oneness of God.

Unchurched people are confused by the numerous labels and expressions of the Church. How we conduct our lives is strategic to the influence we exert upon an unsaved world. How we act and what we say are to draw people to the mystery of Christ which we are to explain clearly (Col. 4:2-6).

D. Christians act like God when we take the **INITIATIVE** to start friendships with unbelievers. Offering our friendship to those outside the family of faith is a step toward being complete in Christ. Fellowship encourages conversation and connections that allow us to represent God for unbelievers.

Illustration:

Bill Hybels tells of a business man who walked across the room to meet a man who appeared as a Muslim. He discovered a man who suffered the quiet rejection stemming from the prejudices and fears of others. The businessman listened with curiosity and courtesy to the Muslim. They struck up a friendship, explored each other's religious faith and lunched together regularly.

The Muslim, formerly a Christian in his childhood, explained, "There finally came a day--I remember being home alone when this happened--that I felt totally compelled to pray to God. I kneeled beside my bed, told God everything I was feeling, and in the end gave my life to Jesus Christ."

Hybels summarizes, "All because of one man's walk across the room."

V. Depending upon the Spirit's Guidance

- A. Our re-envisioning God for others is not an action of human discipline or persuasion alone. Jesus **PROMISED** the Holy Spirit as a guide.
- B. Our testimony coupled with the Spirit's power **STIRS** the hearts of people outside God's forgiveness. As we, the people of God, extend God's offer of forgiveness, we build a vision for seekers of a concerned and caring God.

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III. Small Group Exercise

(15 Minutes)

This exercise provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on the information presented and begin to apply it to their lives.

Participants should break into small groups of three to five individuals. Instruct them to spend a few minutes sharing their reactions to the lecture portion of the lesson in their groups. What was surprising, challenging, or interesting to them in the presentation?

Next, invite groups to complete the small group exercise on the participant handout. First, groups should work together to fill the mirror on the handout with phrases that describe God to them. (The mirror represents the ways we will describe God to the world.)

Tell groups:

Sometimes, even the most devoted Christians find it difficult to explain God to others. Our relationships with God are complex and personal and often accompanied by strong emotion. Believing in God means having faith in something we cannot fully understand.

Before we can re-envision God for others, we need to be able to describe God in ways that help draw unbelievers to want to know Him more. Several qualities of God that help unbelievers see Him clearly were discussed in the lesson: God is merciful and cares deeply about people. God is forgiving and erases our trespasses.

Work together to fill the mirror illustration on your handout with words and phrases that you can use to describe God to unbelievers.

Then, consider the most effective witness strategies for representing God in your community. Write words or phrases in the human figures that illustrate how our words and actions make us effective ambassadors for God.

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V. Action Planning/Reporting

(15 Minutes)

Now that the small groups have spent some time processing the information presented in the lecture, individuals should be prepared to identify opportunities to witness and begin of ways to initiate conversation with the unchurched. The chart on the participant handout asks participants to plan who they may feel compelled to talk to about God in their daily lives. Then, participants should consider and document how they will initiate a conversation with the people on their list. In the final column, participants will note how they can re-envision God for each person.

The instructions from the participant guide follow:

As God's ambassador, who are the people you encounter every day who will benefit from seeing God in your life and hearing about Him? Use the table below to make a plan for how you will take action as a witness.

VI. Module Wrap-Up

(5 Minutes)

This section provides an opportunity to close the module.

- Ask participants to share their thoughts about the module.
- If time allows, they may share the results of their “witness plan” with other groups.
- Answer any questions and provide encouragement for the next steps and improvements groups have identified.