

Transitions For Better Flow with the Bridge Illustration

Use the two questions.

Nine out of ten people will answer the second question with some form of, "I'm a good person", or "I try to do the best that I can".

You can respond by nodding your head and saying that's interesting. Then ask them if they would like to see an illustration that explains what the Bible says is the correct answer to the two questions. I have never had anyone in the last 15 years refused to see the bridge after I have used the two questions. It is very important that you open up the conversation about the gospel having used the two questions.

I then say something like this; I would like to show you an illustration that explains what the Bible says about how a person can know the correct answer on how to get to heaven. This is not something new. Actually, you have heard almost all of what I have to share with you before. Personally, there were only two parts of the illustration that I had never heard before, or that I had never understood before.

It is like we go through life with a bag hanging from our belt. Inside this bag are pieces to a jigsaw puzzle. We have never seen a picture of what the puzzle would look like if we put it together, so the whole concept of Heaven and what God requires from us is a bit fuzzy in our minds. I would like to show you an illustration that puts those pieces in their correct places. I also want to point out that most of our bags of puzzle pieces, which we have picked up going through our lives, also have a few pieces that belong to other puzzles. That messes us up and creates confusion in our minds. This illustration helps us weed out incorrect information that belongs to something else. So rest assured that what I am not going share with you is not some new truth that I thought up last night after eating too much pizza. It is actually an old truth that has not been communicated clearly down through the centuries.

1. I start the bridge illustration by writing out the word God on the right hand side of the page at the top. I then write and explain that God created mankind and that he created us with a free will and with a higher reasoning power than any of the animals presently living on earth. I do ask them here the question, "what is the purpose of your life?" I draw an arrow from man to God and put an arrowhead on that side by the word, God, explaining that the purpose of every person's life is to get to know God and to enjoy Him and delight in Him. If we are doing that we feel like we have purpose in life. If we are not doing that we will be dissatisfied. It is like we have a God shaped vacuum on the inside of us that only God can fill.
2. I generally write the word, sin, with the S as kind of a squiggle that breaks the communication between God and man. Then I turned to Isaiah 59:2 and I point out that there is a separation between God and man.
3. Transition: we can represent this separation between man and God by drawing a canyon. Man as a side and God is a side in between them is an uncrossable chasm.
4. Transition: now let's talk about the left side of the canyon which represents man. God is a good God and he wants to help us. So he needs to tell us the truth about our condition. Illustration: I like to talk about going to a doctor. Having him take an x-ray because you have a headache. He shows you the tumor that is in your head. And then he says to you, "you have a tumor the size of a grapefruit. But that's not a problem. Go to Walmart and buy a bottle of St. Joseph's baby aspirin and take two in the morning and two at night. Your headache will go away. Question: what would you think of that of that medical doctor? You're right, he's a quack. The truth is if he doesn't operate you have 100% chance of dying, but if he operates, perhaps you have a 40% chance of living. A good doctor tells the truth no matter how it makes the person feel. God has to tell us the truth about our condition because He loves us and wants something better for us.
5. I now proceed down the left side of the canyon or man's side, through numbers one through three. Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Hebrews 9:27.
6. Transition: I now go to the side of the canyon which belongs the man and I placed my fingers on the top of the canyon like I'm walking. I say, "wow, God is a long way off I need to get busy and do something so that when I die I can go to heaven."
7. Transition: so we draw the stairway to heaven, but we explain that we're going to be some stairs short when we die. Have the person read Ephesians 2:8,9 and write the phrase, not by works. We want to point out that good works do not save us; we will later do good works because we are saved. The currency for salvation is blood - without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Humans want to be able to earn Heaven, but they cannot, because they cannot come up with the payment for their sin, which, of course, is precious unblemished and untarnished blood.

8. Transition: we find ourselves after the explanation of Ephesians 2:8-9 up a creek without a paddle. There is nothing that we can do in order to reach God's side. So here we explain that God is a God of love. That he was not caught by surprise. And that he will now do something Himself that will help humanity be reconciled back to Him.

9. Transition: God is a God of love and he is done all that we need in order to have our sins forgiven and be restored in right relationship with Him. We see this in John 5:24. So now we proceed with the bridge illustration like we have learned, putting down hear and believe. Pointing out that the word believe means that we believe in such a way that we change the way we live. We draw the arrow downward and we write the 1. Eternal Life, and then 2., which is no judgment. From no judgment we draw an arrow to judgment on the left-hand side of the bridge pointing out that, no judgment takes care of the fact that we deserved judgment. Then we start an arrow from Eternal Life and trace across the chasm to the word, death. We explained that eternal life takes care of the fact that the wages of sin is death. We cannot change the fact that we are sinners.

10. Transition: If by hearing and believing we receive eternal life and do not come into judgment, then this question pops up, what do we need to hear?, and what do we need to believe? I'm glad you asked that.

11. Transition: we now draw the cross between the two sides of the canyon and explain the Jesus is the Bridge to Life. We look up 1 Peter 3:18 and we explain that verse. (There is an option at this point to use Isaiah 53:6 and write it on the Cross under 1 Peter 3:18.)

12. I now say after explaining the cross, that this is the simple gospel or good news of Jesus Christ. Do you have any questions?

13. Now under the two sides of the canyon at the bottom of the page, I draw a line across the entire page and I write down 1. I then write John 1:12, followed by the phrase, "I must receive Christ". I proceed to 2. Which is Revelation 3:20. This verse is very important. It shows that Jesus is knocking at the door. It shows that someone needs to make an invitation to allow Jesus to come in and dine with them. The whole point of dining is to get to know someone better and to enjoy their company. I point them back to the very beginning of the bridge illustration at the top of the page where we talk about the fact that man was created to have fellowship or friendship with God. Then I write 3. I now write the verses, Romans 10:9, 10. I usually share that this is one of the points of the puzzle that I had missed in my youth. It says that I must confess Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

14. Now is the time for the three stick men. The first stick man is running away and is saying bahcommission proposal. Then I go over to God's side of the bridge. I draw a stick man with a halo and say this person is 100% sure that he is going to heaven.