

SUGGESTIONS FOR WITNESSING TO ROMAN CATHOLICS¹

“Millions of sincere Catholics believe that the Roman Catholic Church is the true church established by Christ. Nevertheless... **the gospel according to Rome is *not* the gospel taught by Christ and recorded in the Scriptures.** It is a different gospel [cf. **II Cor. 11:3-4**], the mixing of *faith plus works for justification*, the error condemned in the book of Galatians (**Gal. 1:6-9**). [So] how can you help Catholics to see the truth?

- **PRAY FOR CATHOLICS**

“The Bible says that the gospel ‘*is veiled to those who are perishing*’ (**2 Cor. 4:3**). Pray that God would open the eyes of Roman Catholics.

- **DEVELOP FRIENDSHIPS**

“Ask God to increase your love for Catholics and to help you to nurture friendships with them. *The best opportunities to share your faith usually come early in a new relationship, so don’t let them pass.*

- **STIMULATE THOUGHT**

“Take the initiative. Speak to Catholics about their religious beliefs. **Ask whether they know with certainty what will happen to them when they die. Then offer literature that explains the biblical way of salvation.**

[There’s a fine line here. Most Catholics are very defensive, so you need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading. *There is a time to be bold and also a time to back off, in order to keep the communication lines open.* You don’t want to burn all your bridges for future opportunities to share the gospel. **Often asking questions** is a less threatening way to begin a discussion or highlight differences between biblical truth & church tradition. **It’s even better when they ask you questions!** After all, how can someone who asks you a question, then get offended for you answering it?! When trying to catch fish it’s usually important to bait the hook attractively. We do well to take a spiritual lesson. After all, when Jesus called Peter & Andrew, He said to them, “*Follow me and I will make you fishers of men*” (**Mt. 4:19**).-mwe]

PROMOTE BIBLE STUDY

“**Encourage your Catholic friends to read the Scriptures, suggesting a starting place (e.g. the book of John).** Make sure that they have Bibles that are readable and convenient to use, not oversized family editions. Once a genuine seeker discovers that he can learn directly from the Scriptures, there will [often] be no stopping him. [**Ps. 119:105, 130; Jn. 17:17**]

ADDRESS THE REAL PROBLEM

“**Don’t let Roman Catholicism become the focus of our discussions. Your Catholic friend’s greatest problem is not his church; it is his sin.** Explain the biblical meaning of sin and its consequences. Pray that your friend would become genuinely convicted of his guilt.

“*Next explain the way of salvation. Do so directly from the Scriptures. Since Catholics and non-Catholics use many of the same words but with different meanings, be careful to define your terms.*

¹ All the material appearing here is taken verbatim from the pamphlet “*Roman Catholicism—What You Need to Know*” by James G. McCarthy (Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, OR, 1995), with the exception of that appearing in brackets, which has been added by me. Bolding, underlining & most italicizing has been added. –Mike Edwards, Madison, Ohio, December, 2017

“Go slowly! Do not prematurely lead your friend in a prayer to accept Christ. Wait until the person is clearly under conviction of sin and understands the gospel. Then encourage him to make a decision for Christ, speaking to God in his own words.

ENCOURAGE A CLEAN BREAK

“Help your friend to find a church where the Bible is taught and upheld as the sole standard of the Christian faith. Additionally, explain the value of [the] discarding of everything associated with unbiblical beliefs and practices (**Acts 19:17-20**). Pray for spiritual liberation and encourage the individual regularly.

ANTICIPATE TRIALS

“Jesus taught that following Him may often involve opposition, particularly from family members (Matt. 10:34-39). Prepare a newly saved Catholic to expect trials.

CONTINUE TO LEARN

“The better you understand Roman Catholicism, the more able you will be to effectively communicate the gospel to Catholics... [one unquestionably authoritative source of what the Roman Catholic church teaches is the] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the first official summary of Roman Catholicism in over 400 years.

“For further information on how you can help Catholics, and a complete biblical analysis of Roman Catholicism indexed to the new catechism, refer to the book from which this quick reference guide was produced: *The Gospel According to Rome* (James G. McCarthy, Harvest House Publishers, 1995).”

(continued)

HOW TO WITNESS TO A JEHOVAH'S WITNESS²

HISTORY & OVERVIEW. The founder was **Charles Taze Russell**, born in Pennsylvania, USA, 1852. In 1884 he formed the “*Zion’s Watchtower & Tract Society*” and **predicted that Christ would return in 1914.** When Christ did not come then, **Russell revised the date to 1918.** He died however in 1916, without getting to see his second false prophecy fail again to come to pass.

“*Judge*” **Joseph Rutherford** took over leadership of the organization after Russell’s death. He had not learned from Russell’s mistakes, and so **predicted that Christ would return in 1925,** famously stating over and over that “*Millions Now Living Will Never Die.*” In reality, almost everyone living then has now died, including Rutherford in 1942. In later years he would evince a problem with alcohol. Most JW’s were unaware of that though, since Rutherford spent 6 months/year living in a very expensive home that he had had the *Watchtower Society* build near San Diego, California, called “*Beth Sarim.*” This palatial mansion was supposedly built so that the “*ancient worthies*” (e.g. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc.) would have a place to live when they returned to earth, in accordance with Jehovah Witness theology. In reality, the only person who ever lived in there was Rutherford, who also availed himself of the opportunity to drive around in one of the two 16 cylinder Cadillac motor cars that the organization purchased and had parked in the garage-ostensibly for the patriarchs to ride around in. *Beth Sarim* is testimony to yet another failed prophecy, and a complete embarrassment to the Watchtower Society. Consequently it was quietly sold around 1952.³

It is Rutherford who developed a clever teaching to explain away the fact that Russell’s 1914 prophecy of Christ’s return had failed. The “*Judge*” taught that Christ actually had returned in 1914, only invisibly, so only JW’s were spiritually perceptive enough to be aware of that fact (sic). Rutherford also created the JW organizational structure and made it sinful to question Watchtower leadership and teaching.

After Rutherford’s death, **Nathan Knorr** took over. After his passing, **Frederick Franz** led the organization. **It was under Franz’s leadership that the Watchtower Society yet again falsely predicted Christ return, teaching and claiming that Christ would return in 1975.** As was the case prior to the failed 1925 prophecy, hundreds of loyal Jehovah’s Witnesses sold their homes, postponed marriages or having children, and quit their jobs, etc., in order to give whole-hearted service to the organization in light of Christ’s imminent return. And as was the case after the failed 1925 prophecy, thousands of JW’s quit the organization after the 1975 prophecy failed. Franz’s own nephew Raymond Franz, who was a member of the eighteen man “*Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses*”, resigned from the organization a few years later, because his conscience would not allow him to continue to promulgate such heresy and false teaching. He even wrote a book about it, “*Crisis of Conscience.*”⁴

Despite such losses due to repeated false prophecies (cf. **Dt. 18:20-22 & 13:1-3**), the JW organization continues to proselytize and gain new converts. Every five years the JW’s lose approximately 300,000-400,000 members who quit the organization, but that is offset by new members, so their numbers remain fairly constant. They work in 210 countries.

² This material is excerpted from my fuller notes on “Jehovah’s Witnesses.” –Mike Edwards, Dec. 2017.

³ For thorough documentation of “*Beth Sarim*” (complete with photos), see the “*Christian Research Journal*” Elliot Miller editor, Vol. 20, Number 1, September-October, 1997, pp. 22-29.

⁴ Raymond Franz, “*Crisis of Conscience*” (Commentary Press: Atlanta, Georgia, 1983).

A SIMPLE BIBLE-BASED WAY OF WITNESSING TO A JEHOVAH’S WITNESS⁵

“What we are presenting here is an appeal to the heart, not the intellect.” You can debate all day long with a Jehovah’s Witness and get nowhere. But if they see that their organization is not trustworthy, then there is hope that when you share a presentation such as the following one, that they will begin to see that there is something wrong with what they believe. **The questions presented here are designed to be asked in the precise order in which they are given.**

1) **“ARE YOU A CHILD OF GOD?”** – Acts 26:17-18. If the Jehovah’s Witness says “Yes”, then ask him how he became one and listen carefully to his explanation. If he says “No”, ask him: ***“Then whose child are you?”*** The basis for this question is Acts 26:17-18: ***“I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan unto God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith that is in Me.”***

There are only two places or positions for a person to be: Darkness or Light, Forgiveness of sins or not. Under Satan’s power and dominion, or God’s! **Eph. 2:1-4** teaches that before being saved they (& we) were ***“sons of disobedience”*** & ***“children of wrath.”***

2) **“ARE YOU BORN AGAIN?”** John 3:3-6; I John 5:1. Ask this question ***IF*** he answers “Yes” to the first question i.e. that he is a ***“child of God”*** and believes in Jesus as his Savior. If he says “No”, ask him: ***“Why not?”***

“He will then proceed to tell you that only 144,000 are born again and going to heaven, and since he intends to live forever on the earth, he doesn’t need to be ‘born again.’ In reply ask: ***“Can you show me one verse in the Bible that says that only the 144,000 will be born again?”*** **There is no such verse! Do NOT accept a string of Scripture references!**

Now ask, ***“Do you believe the Bible or only what your organization tells you?”***

3) **“DO YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?”** – I John 5:1, 11-13. JW’s believe that the judgment which will decide who gets eternal life is yet future and will occur at the end of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ: ***“Jehovah God will justify, declare righteous, on the basis of their own merit, all perfected humans who have withstood that final, decisive test of mankind. He will adopt and acknowledge them as his sons through Jesus Christ.”*** (from the JW book ***“Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God”***, p. 400).

The Key Question:

“HOW CAN A PERSON BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND YET NOT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?”

After all, Jesus said: ***“He who believes on me HAS eternal life”*** – John 6:47.

Review I John 5:1 with the JW: Does he believe in Jesus as the Christ? Then according to this verse he should have been born again! And if he had been adopted by God as His child, he would have eternal life! “So then, when he says that he ‘believes’ in Jesus Christ, his idea or belief is defective and we can understand why God has not received him as His son... [Finally], be sure that you present your testimony about what your faith in Jesus...has done for you. When he leaves you, tell him you will not forget him in your prayers.”⁶

⁵ Material taken from ***“How to Witness to Jehovah’s Witnesses”*** by Kenneth R. Guindon, BMM missionary to JW’s in ***“Focus on Missions.”***

⁶ Ibid.

WITNESSING TO MORMONS

(This approach is based on something *every* Mormon believes: Joseph Smith's "*First Vision*" testimony)⁷

- 1) Ask: "**Do you believe Joseph Smith saw God?**" They will say *yes*. Then point out to them that, according to the Bible, "**No man has seen God at ANY time!**" – **John 1:18**; cf. **I Tim. 1:16-17**; **Jn. 6:46**; **I Tim. 6:16 & Col. 1:15 cf. Ex. 33:20**).
- 2) Ask: "**Do you believe God has a body of flesh and bones like unto man's?**" They will say *yes*. Then point out that the Bible says that "**God is a spirit**" (**John 4:24**) and Jesus said "**a spirit does NOT have flesh & bones ...**" (**Luke 24:39**)! If the Mormon responds that the Bible talks about God's "hands," "feet," etc., explain to him that God uses such symbolic terms to help us understand Him easier. They are obviously meant to be taken *figuratively*, otherwise God also has wings and feathers and looks like a chicken (**Ps. 91:4**)! cf. **John 10:7, 9; 15:1, 5**. If they still won't accept this truth, point out that people who have an image of God in the form of man are *unclean*, possess *vile affections* & have a *reprobate mind* according to **Rom. 1:23 cf. 24, 26, 28!**
- 3) Ask: "**Do you believe truth ever ceased from the earth and needed to be restored?**" They will say *yes*. Then point out that truth is not found in a church group or denomination, but in a **person: Jesus Christ (John 14:6)**! **So truth never ceased from the earth!** You might point out that truth is also found in God's Word the Bible, and Jesus and the apostles said that the Bible, and the truth contained in it, would *NEVER* pass away (**Matt. 5:17-18; I Pet. 1:22-25**)! So... since truth has never been lost, it doesn't need to be restored! So there is no need for Joseph Smith and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints!!

Note: In regard to this last point, it should also be noted that many of the beliefs which Mormons claim were lost, were either *never lost at all* or were "*lost*" because they were never part of the New Testament church & it's teachings to begin with!

GENERAL ADVICE:

- **BE BOLD!** Mormons, especially Mormon missionaries, interpret any "softness" or a gentle, apologetic attitude on your part, as *weakness*, and a proof that you are wrong. *They are taught that they alone have the truth, since they alone hold the priesthood.* Thus any tentative, apologizing type of comments by you only encourages them in their conviction that they are right-"since you were tentative in talking with them." **So be blunt. Be bold. Be unapologetic.** This is not how I would recommend you approach some other groups, but I definitely would with members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints-*especially their missionaries.*
- **DON'T WASTE TIME ON MORMON MISSIONARIES.** You will not convert them! One of the greatest Christian missionaries *TO* Mormons during this past half-century has stated that he does not personally know of *any* LDS missionary who has *ever* been saved while on his two year mission! So I seriously doubt if you or I will be the first one to lead one to Christ. They normally will not read or possess any "anti-Mormon" literature. They live and work in pairs, so that if one begins to have doubts or questions, the other one can quickly change the focus. On the other hand, there *ARE* a goodly number of examples of Mormons who have been saved *AFTER* their two year mission term was over and they went back to being "*Joe Average Mormon.*"

So with Mormon missionaries, your goal should be simply to plant seeds of doubt in their minds and get them to honestly look at and question the truthfulness of their faith. *It may be the first time they*

⁷ The three questions technique above is taken in its entirety from Rev. Hal Mason, Baptist Mid-Missions missionary who served for many years in Utah as a missionary *TO* the Mormons. –Mike Edwards. Originally written in Papua New Guinea in 1993, reformatted, Oct, 2008, St. Vincent, West Indies, revised Aug 2011 (SVG) & Dec. 2017, Madison, Ohio.

have ever done so! Try to get them to take & read literature exposing the errors of Mormonism. **BUT make them promise you that they will read it completely!** Otherwise they most likely will dispose of it and never read it. Often they will refuse to promise to read it. Even if they do promise to read it, check back with them later. Ask them: “*Did you read it, all of it?*” They will often simply throw it away. If they did so though, perhaps their conscience will convict them of having lied to you. Mormon missionaries will often say that the literature you gave them “*is full of errors,*” or is, “*twisted.*” **Don’t settle for that!** Ask them to show you what parts are in error, what parts are “*twisted.*” Hopefully the end result will be a willingness by them to honestly, objectively, compare Mormonism with the Bible. Then Pray. We know the Word of God does not return void (**Isa. 55:10-11; Heb. 4:12**), and only eternity will reveal what God may do as we sow the seed of the Word of God in sincere but misguided Mormon hearts (**1 Cor. 3:6**).

- **EXPECT MORMONS TO “BEAR THEIR TESTIMONY.”** Mormons—especially missionaries, will “bear their testimony” often—**especially when they are in a jam and facing questions & evidence that they can’t answer.** It is a memorized statement that goes something like this: “*I bear you my testimony that Joseph Smith is a true prophet, and that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true church, and I say this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!*” Usually when a Mormon does this, he’s in trouble. **Don’t let him finish.** Cut him off in mid-sentence and ask him: “*But how do you know he’s a prophet. Look at Joseph Smith’s false teachings & false prophecies!*” Don’t let them finish this, since this is just an escape hatch for them and a bit of memorized mind control. Keep the heat on them. And when you are ready to say goodbye, YOU suggest closing in prayer, and YOU pray. Hold hands with them if you can. Mormon missionaries are trained to take control of the visit, the discussion, etc. So you need to reverse that and take control instead!

USE THE THREE QUESTIONS MENTIONED ABOVE i.e. “*Do you believe Joseph Smith saw God?*”, “*Do you believe God has a body of flesh and bones like unto mans?*” & “*Do you believe truth ever ceased from the earth and needed to be restored again?*” All of these statements are false & show the error of Mormonism at the most foundational point of their faith.

AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD

Taken from “*KISS Method of Witnessing to a Mormon*”⁸ by Dick Baer, a former Mormon. Ask:

- **“Do you believe God the Father is a glorified, resurrected, exalted man?”** (Yes-it can be no other, if he knows anything about what his church teaches).
- **“Do you believe Jesus Christ is the spirit brother of Lucifer?”** (Yes).
- **“We are worshipping a different God and a different Jesus! Can you agree that one of us has to be wrong?”** (Yes).

Then ask your Mormon friend: **“Who told you that God is a glorified, resurrected, exalted man and that Jesus is the spirit brother of Lucifer?”** (He should answer that Joseph Smith said so, or that the Mormon books &/or authorities teach that). Ask your friend: **“Could Joseph Smith be wrong?”** He will probably respond that Joseph Smith was not wrong because he was a prophet. Ask him: **“How do you know that Joseph Smith was a prophet?”** or **“How do you know Joseph Smith wasn’t wrong?”** Your Mormon friend will probably then allude to that fact that he knows Smith is true because he has had a **“burning in his bosom,”** or a **“warm feeling in his chest.”** (Note: Mormons are taught in the Book of Mormon and Doctrines & Covenants to know if something is true or not, by FEELINGS –instead of testing it with the Bible (e.g. Moroni 10:3-5 & D & C 9:8).

You might then show your friend that the Bible clearly teaches that **Satan is very happy to counterfeit a feeling, or appear as an angel of light to someone!** (**2 Cor. 11:13-15**). Help them to see that we can’t trust our physical senses, but must rely always and only on the Bible (**Isa. 8:20; Gal. 1:6-9**).

⁸ *KISS: Keep it Simple, Saint.*