

Dynamic Ways to Share Your Faith Through Literature

GOD has given us the Great Commission:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” Matthew 24:14

“And he said unto them, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.’” Mark 16:15

One of God’s chosen methods of sharing the gospel is through the printed page. Millions of people trace their knowledge of the gospel and conviction to reading a tract, booklet, or book.

The pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church effectively used the printed page to share their faith.

James White urged ministers:

“The press is a mighty engine. Let it do its work, and save the lungs; short, spirited discourses and the books will do tenfold more than long argumen-

tative discourses which weary the people, and wear out the speaker’s lungs. . . . Brethren, you may do the people much more good, and still save your lungs and your breath, by getting them to reading.” James White, *Review and Herald*, December 18, 1856.

Ellen White wrote much about the power and use of literature:

“Church members, awake to the importance of the circulation of our literature, and devote more time to this work.” *Southern Watchman*, November 20, 1902.

Promises

“God will soon do great things for us, if we lie humble and believing at His feet... More than one thousand will soon be converted in one day, most of whom will trace their first convictions to the reading of our publications.” *Review and Herald*, November 10, 1885.



Pacific Press®



Adventist Book Center



REVIEW AND HERALD

“Entering the homes of your neighbors to sell or to give away our literature, and in humility to teach them the truth, you will be accompanied by the light of heaven, which will abide in these homes.” *Review and Herald*, May 24, 1906.

Challenge

“We have been asleep, as it were, regarding the work that may be accomplished by the circulation of well-prepared literature. **Let us now, by the wise use of periodicals and books, preach the word with determined energy, that the world may understand the message that Christ gave to John on the Isle of Patmos.** Let every human intelligence who professes the name of Christ testify: ‘The end of all things is at hand; prepare to meet thy God.’” 9 T, pp. 61, 62.

“If there is one work more important than another, it is that of getting our publications before the public, thus leading them to search the Scriptures.” *The Colporteur Evangelist*, p. 80.

“Our publications are now sowing the gospel seed, and are instrumental in bringing as many souls to Christ as the preached word. **Whole churches have been raised up as the result of their circulation. In this work every disciple of Christ can act a part.**”

Review and Herald, June 10, 1880.

Training Needed

“We are ‘laborers together with God.’ Whatever our position,—whether presidents of conferences, ministers, teachers, students, or lay members,—

we are held accountable by the Lord for making the most of our opportunities to enlighten those in need of present truth. **And one of the principal agencies He has ordained for our use is the printed page. In our schools and sanitariums, in our home churches, and particularly in our annual camp-meetings, we must learn to make a wise use of this precious agency.**” 9 T, pp. 86, 87.

Methods

“Let the workers go from house to house, opening the Bible to the people, circulating the publications, telling others of the light that has blessed their own souls. Let literature be distributed judiciously, on the trains, in the street, on the great ships that ply the sea, and through the mails.” 9 T, p. 123.

“Many in the cities are still without the light of the gospel message. Those who neglect to sound forth the last message of warning will in the future suffer deep regret. My message is, ‘Let companies be organized to enter the cities. Seek proper locations for holding meetings. **Circulate literature. Make earnest efforts to reach the people.’**” *Evangelism*, p. 96.

“Let the leaflets and tracts, the papers and books, go in every direction. **Carry with you, wherever you go, a package of select tracts, which you can hand out as you have opportunity.**” *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1880.

“Let every believer scatter broadcast tracts and leaflets and books containing the message for this time.” *Southern Watchman*, January 5, 1904.

“Small tracts of four, eight, or sixteen pages, can be furnished for a trifle, from a fund raised by the donations of those who have the cause at heart. **When you write to a friend, you can enclose one or more without increasing postage. When you meet persons in the cars, on the boat, or in the stage [coach], who seem to have an ear to hear, you can hand them a tract.**” 1 T, pp. 551, 552.

“There are many places . . . which can be reached only by publications,—the books, papers, and tracts that are filled with the Bible truth that the people need. **Our literature is to be distributed everywhere.** The truth is to be sown beside all waters; for we know not which shall prosper, this or that. **In our erring judgment we may think it unwise to give literature to the very ones who would accept the truth most readily.** We know not what may be the good results of giving away a leaflet containing present truth.”

Christian Service, p. 15.

Literature is a tool EVERY MEMBER can use.

All Christians are called to share their faith and to be a part of the evangelistic process of the church. While we don't all have the same gifts, there are two things we can all do:

- **First**—Pray. Every Christian is called to pray for the lost.
- **Second**—Share literature. It's simple.

Principles for Sharing Literature

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you.
- Build relationships—people are more likely to read something given them by a friend. Treat people the way you would like to be treated.
- Develop a plan to cover a particular area and develop a follow-up strategy.
- Keep a supply of literature with you at all times.
- Choose appropriate material.
- Read the literature yourself so you know what it says.
- Say, “I have found this helpful. I know you would enjoy reading it.”
- Never force a person to take the literature.
- Don't litter.

Choosing Literature to Use

Each piece of literature should have the following:

- Bible study enrollment card, or information for requesting Bible studies.
- Phone number and/or address for further information.

Items to Keep With You At All Times

- Lesson 1 of Bible studies
- Bible study enrollment cards
- Tracts
- *Steps to Christ*

Places, Times, and Ways to Use Literature

At Work

- If you own a business, set up a literature rack for customers, clients, or patients.
- Place a business card holder with tracts in it on your desk.
- Subscribe to magazines like *Signs of the Times*®, *Message Magazine*®, or *El Centinela*® and place them in the waiting area.

On Vacation

- Share a piece of literature with the person next to you on the plane.
- Leave tracts and booklets in hotel rooms.
- Put tracts in the Gideon Bible in your hotel room as bookmarks in places like Psalm 23.
- Give a booklet to those you meet.

During the Holidays

Thanksgiving dinners. Nativity scenes. Christmas carols. In spite of the mass commercialization of the holiday season, people's hearts are still touched by God's love and His gift to the world. During this time, people are more likely to be open to the gospel message than at any other time. Ellen White encouraged church members to use the printed page to witness during this time of year.

"I would not wholly condemn the practice of making Christmas and New Year's gifts to our friends. It is right to bestow upon one another tokens of love and remembrance if we do not in this

forget God, our best Friend. We should make our gifts such as will prove a real benefit to the receiver. **I would recommend such books as will be an aid in understanding the Word of God, or that will increase our love for its precepts.**"
Review and Herald, December 26, 1882.

Consider these ideas for using the holidays as an opportunity to present the gospel to those you know and love:

- ***The gift that keeps on giving.*** Send *Signs of the Times*®, *Message Magazine*®, or *El Centinela*® to a friend, coworker, relative, or neighbor.
- ***The story of Jesus' birth from The Desire of Ages*** is certain to touch the hearts of many.
- ***Include a pocket Signs or An Hour with your Bible tract*** in each Christmas card you send.
- ***Add a book to every Thanksgiving and Christmas basket*** given to families by your church's Community Services center.
- ***Remember former and inactive members.*** Let them know that you're missing them and thinking of them. Send a book or magazine subscription with a Christmas card or letter from the church and/or pastor.
- ***Use your local newspaper.*** Place an advertisement offering a free book to anyone who writes or calls to request it.
- ***If your church has a special Christmas event for the community,*** be sure that each of your visitors takes home a gift of a book or magazine.
- ***A literature rack*** filled with fresh material and placed in a prominent location in your foyer is always a

blessing to visitors. Be sure to encourage visitors with a sign that says; “Free, help yourself.”

- **Leave Bible study enrollment cards** and a Christ-centered piece of literature when Ingathering.
- **Give a book to a friend.** A book from your Adventist Book Center makes an excellent gift for the hard-to-shop-for loved one. (You can give an ABC gift card.)
- **Give the gift of music.** Chapel® Music offers a wide variety of vocal and instrumental music that will bring many hours of enjoyment throughout the year.

Is There a Child on Your List?

- **If you’re a teacher, Sabbath School teacher, or Pathfinder leader,** you know that nothing will thrill a child’s heart more than a small gift book from you.
- **When you give holiday greetings to your neighbors,** be sure to include a gift for their children. The new *Bible Treasures* magazines are filled with exciting stories that share Bible truths in ways children can understand.

In the Neighborhood

- **Welcome baskets**—Take a basket to your new neighbors. Include loaf of bread, juice, and a nice book or magazine.
- **Choose a territory**—around the church, around your home, etc. Visit each home and offer a piece of literature. As the Spirit leads, offer to pray with those you visit.

- **Give literature that tells our beliefs.** Arrange them in a logical sequence and deliver once or twice a month. *Signs—What the Bible Says About . . .* is a good set to use.
- **Be sure to have some material for children** to leave with families. You can use *Our Little Friend*®, *Primary Treasure*®, *Guide*®, and small story books.
- **Send Signs of the Times**®, *Message Magazine*®, or *El Centinela*® to your neighbors.

Everyday Opportunities

- **Always have some literature with you.** Dedicate a special place to keep literature so it is always ready to give away. Dedicate a pocket, glove compartment, briefcase, or purse.
- There are countless ways to use tracts.
 - Leave in waiting rooms
 - Include with payments
 - Give to a person you visit
- **Give a missionary journal** to your doctor for his office or waiting room.
- **If you are looking for extra income** as well as a way to share your faith—consider selling magabooks.

Special Events

- **Distribute literature at your local fairs.** After the St. Louis World’s Fair in 1904, Ellen White wrote:

“I was given instruction that as we approach the end, there will be large gatherings in our cities, as there has recently been in St. Louis, and that preparations must be made to present the truth at these gatherings. When

Christ was upon this earth, He took advantage of such opportunities. Wherever a large number of people was gathered for any purpose, His voice was heard, clear and distinct, giving His message. And as a result, after His crucifixion and ascension, thousands were converted in a day. The seed sown by Christ sank deep into hearts, and germinated, and when the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit, the harvest was gathered in. . . .

“We should improve every opportunity as that presented by the St. Louis Fair. At all such gatherings there should be present men whom God can use. Leaflets containing the light of present truth should be scattered among the people like the leaves of autumn. To many who attend these gatherings these leaflets would be as the leaves of the tree of life, which are for the healing of the nations.” Letter 296, 1904 (*Evangelism*, p. 35).

At Church

- **Literature racks at your church**—Members and visitors will be encouraged by having a supply of reading material they can pick up from the literature rack in the foyer of your church.
- **Seminars at church**—Every time you have a seminar of any kind at church, make sure there is a table of free literature available.
- **Church interest list**—Send a monthly or quarterly mailing to those on the interest list. The mailings should include a letter as well as a book, booklet, tract, or magazine.

- **ZIP Codes around church**—Many pieces of literature can be mailed to a ZIP Code or carrier route around your church, i.e., *Steps to Christ*, *Signs* specials. Do this several times each year. Make sure each piece includes a Bible study enrollment card.
- **Missionary magazines**—List the individuals that you are praying for and send each of them one of the missionary journals of the church each month, i.e., *Signs of the Times*®, *Message Magazine*, *El Centinela*®.
- **Set up a program for visiting shut-ins** and sharing various types of literature:
 - Deliver the church bulletin or share a book or magazine.
 - Read a book or story to someone whose eyes may not allow them to have the joy of reading.
- **New member retention**—Make sure that the new members in the church are cared for by using some of the following:
 - At the time of baptism, your class can present to the new member a “Spiritual Food Basket.” This could include a devotional book, a Spirit of Prophecy book, a missionary magazine, and a story book.
 - Deliver books on a monthly or quarterly basis to all new members for the first year in the church.
 - Church school—Make sure the parents of the children from non-Seventh-day Adventist families attending your local church school are receiving the missionary magazine each month. (*Signs*, *Message*, *El Centinela*®)

- Greeters at church—Make sure each of the greeters at church have a supply of literature that they can share with visitors to the church.

Community Services

- *Literature racks at the Community Services center*—Make sure the Community Services center at your church has good literature available.
- *Every bag of food and clothing given out should contain a book or tract.*

Youth Involvement

- *Get the Pathfinders involved* in literature outreach. There is a Pathfinder honor that can be earned.
- *When Pathfinders collect canned goods* at Halloween, make sure they have some literature to leave at each home.
- *Use magabooks* as fundraisers for Pathfinders and school groups.

Special Projects

- *Hospital visitation*—“Publications containing the precious truths of the gospel should be in the rooms of the patients, or where they can have easy access to them.” *Evangelism*, p. 96.
- *Prison ministries*—Become involved in a prison ministry program—actively go to the prison and share material, or send material to a prison for the inmates.
 - Send monthly missionary magazines to inmates.
 - Organize a Bible Correspondence School for inmates.
 - Work with the prison chaplain to supply books for the prison library.

Overseas Projects

“The home missionary work will be farther advanced in every way when a more liberal, self-denying, self-sacrificing spirit is manifested for the prosperity of foreign missions; for the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelical work done in countries afar off. It is in working actively to supply the necessities of the cause of God that we bring our souls in touch with the Source of all power.” T 6, p. 27.

- *Collect religious books and magazines* from class members and others in your church. Send them to a missionary or a church overseas. (If the magazines have church members’ names and addresses, remove the addresses before mailing overseas. This will protect members from getting unsolicited requests for money.)
- *Take up a collection of funds* in your Sabbath School class and send a monthly subscription of a missionary magazine to a church overseas.
- *Develop a sister-church relationship* with a church overseas. Share materials and stories with your sister church.
- *Send literature* that can be used in an evangelistic series overseas.
- *Send materials* to a literature evangelist overseas.

Other Ideas

- *Signs news box*—Commit to supplying *Signs* magazines for a news box in town.
- *Place a small ad in your local newspaper.* Offer a small book. There are many inexpensive books that deal

with subjects such as grief, marriage, parenting, or health. You'll be surprised the number of individuals who write in for a free book. Send these books to those requesting them and write a personal note to send along with the books. Also, offer free Bible study guides to each of those who write in.

- **Reach out to former and inactive members**—Your Sabbath School class can gather a list of former and inactive members in your church. Begin by praying for them. Then, send a magazine such as *Signs* or *Message*.
- **Share a box of books**—Your Sabbath School class can purchase a case of books. Divide them up among the class members and challenge the class to be creative during the week in distributing these books. Some suggested books: *Steps to Christ* or the *Sharing Book of the Year*. The next Sabbath let members tell whom God led them to during the week and let them tell about the various experiences they had.
- **Share a book**—Many coffee shops have a book lending section. People exchange books. You leave one, and take one. This is the perfect place to take a good book.
- **Having a yard sale** at your church or home? Include a table with "Free Books!" Put message books and sharing books out. Gather previously read books from church members. You'll be amazed at how many pick up these books. People love "free."
- **Many gyms and athletic clubs** have a magazine rack. People leave and pick

up magazines to read while working out. Take your copy of *Signs of the Times*® and leave in the rack.

The Power of the Printed Page

"The message of salvation can be presented through means of the printed page. It never flinches, it never grows tired, never grows disheartened; it works while we sleep; it travels cheaply and requires no rented building; it never loses its temper; and it works long after we are dead. The printed page is a visitor which gets inside the home and stays there; it always catches a man in the right mood, for it speaks to him only when he is reading it; it always sticks to what it has said, and never answers back.

"The printed page is deathless: you can destroy one, but the press can reproduce millions. As often as it is martyred it is raised. It can enter doors locked to the evangelist; it preaches in the factory, the train, the kitchen; it visits the school and the jail; it whispers in the ear of the dying.

"The printed message can reach those whose religions forbid them to go to church. It can reach the student who, proud of his intellectualism, refuses to listen to the Gospel or relate himself to it for fear of his fellow students or professors. Away from searching eyes, from the probing investigations of the state, away from the demand of superstitious religion, away from the critical intrusions of friends and family, the message of salvation can be read and understood."

—Milton Martin

