



PLT: HOW TO SHARE THE ULTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

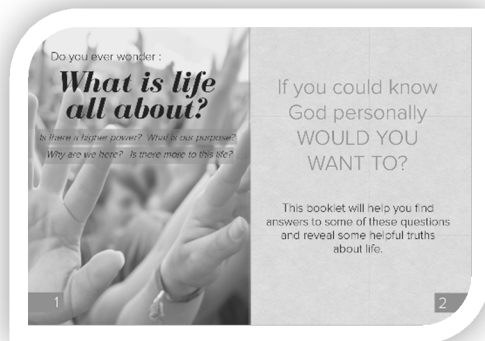
Objective: Learn how to share the Ultimate Relationship Booklet

Sharing your faith with others can seem very intimidating at first. You might know the message, but struggle with how to communicate it in a clear and simple way. Fortunately, CCO has developed a tool called the Ultimate Relationship booklet to help you with your Gospel presentations. This booklet presents the four-point Gospel message in a clear, unintimidating way and provides an opportunity for them to respond to this Gospel and put Jesus at the centre of their life.

Although we are familiar with the content of this booklet, it is quite another thing to communicate that content in a clear, concise, simple way for another to understand. This PLT was created to help you use The Ultimate Relationship booklet to successfully communicate the kerygma. By simply reading it with someone, you can effectively and personally share the Gospel with someone. Naturally, the more familiar you are with the book, the more creative you can get: adding analogies, extra questions, etc.

Pages 1-2

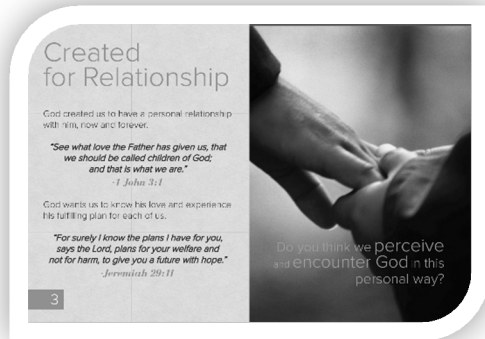
This page is just an introduction page. It can lead to great discussion if the person you are sharing with is particularly interested in any of the questions on this page.



- You do not have to read all the questions. You can just keep the booklet open as they skim.
- You can simply read the sentence that starts with “This little booklet...” as a transition to the next page.

Pages 3-4

These pages present the first point of the kerygma: God created you for a relationship with him.

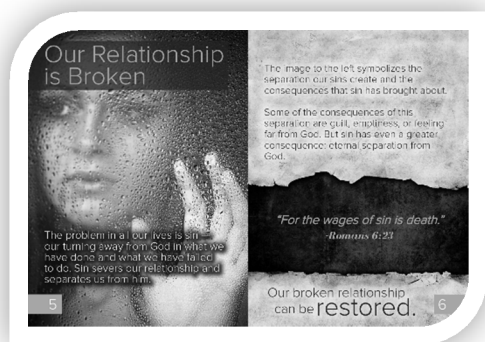


- You can simply read these pages.
- The question on page 4 will help you see if they have encountered God is a personal way.
- This would be a good place to share how there was a time in your life when you didn't know God personally and how things are different now. Example:
 - "I used to thinking God was up in heaven like some kind of spirit, uninterested or too busy to pay attention to the little things in my life. But now, I know that he is with me wherever I go."

Transition: The answer to the question on page 4 is almost always "No" or "I'm not sure". You can use this to transition to the next page by saying: "People are not experiencing this kind of relationship because it has been broken by sin."

Pages 5-6

These pages present the second point in the kerygma: our relationship is broken through sin.



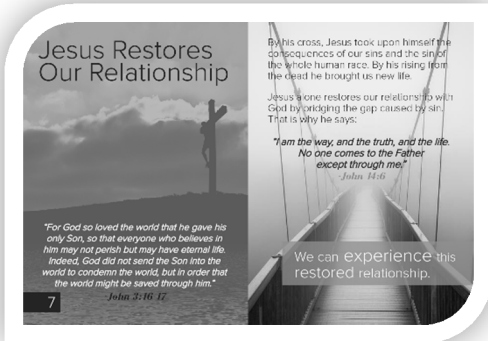
- You can simply read these pages.
- The images in the UR aim to convey important concepts.
- The image of the woman at the window communicates separation, and the deep-down emptiness sin causes.

Transition: Using the last line on page 6, you can transition to the next page by saying "However, there is good news! Our broken relationship can be restored!"



Pages 7-8

These pages present the third point in the kerygma: Jesus restores our relationship.



- You can simply read these pages
- The main thing we want to get across with these pages is that Jesus has become like a bridge connecting heaven and earth by dying on the cross for our sin.
- Because the images do not exactly portray this reality, you may choose to use the space on page 7 to draw the *St. Catherine of Siena Bridge analogy*.

St. Catherine of Siena Bridge Analogy:

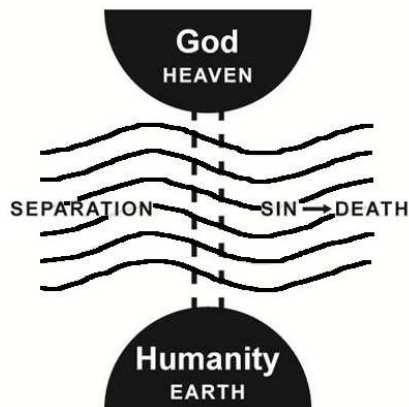
St. Catherine describes Adam and Eve and how they were created in God's image. In Eden, they tasted the beginnings of a personal relationship with God that would have continued to grow, so that eventually, they would fully know his eternal goodness, tenderness, and love.

- Stage 1: Draw Heaven/God and Earth/Humanity with a line connecting them. The line represents the connection and unity they had at creation.

You can say "Remember on page 3 when we saw that God created us to have a personal relationship with him?"



However, sin created irreparable problems; it caused an impassible division between God and man. St. Catherine describes this separation as a great river. That made it impossible for anyone to reach God, as much as we might try. This impassible, powerful river of sin leads to death.

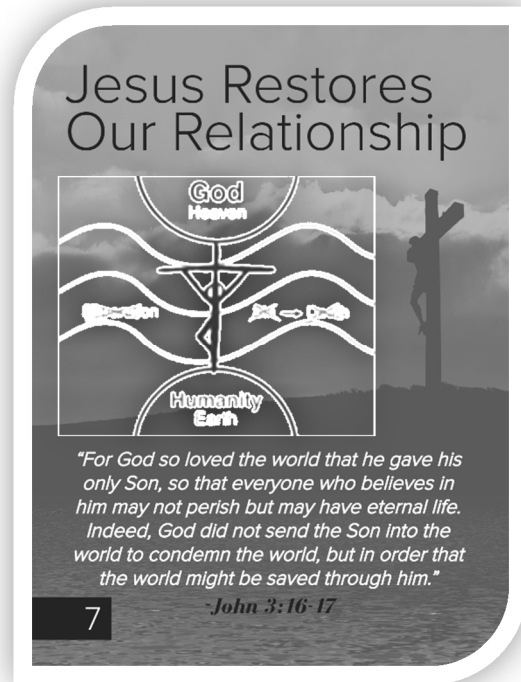


- Stage 2: Erase the line from Heaven to Earth (or draw a squiggly line over it). Write "separation" to the left and "sin" with an arrow pointing to "death" on the right.

You can say "We saw on the last page, that our sin separates us from God. And as you can see, the river leaves us in a place of desperate need, and can only lead us to death should we try to overcome it on our own."

Then, we can say “However, we see on this page, that God the Father deals with the problem of sin by sending his Son into the world. Through his death on the cross, Jesus becomes a bridge so that we can reach heaven.”

- Stage 3: Draw a vertical line coming from heaven to earth, and then continue making it into a cross and draw a corpus on it.
- Drawing attention to the fact that Jesus dealt with sin, death, and separation, you can mark each of these words with an X. (stage 3 is represented on the image to the right).



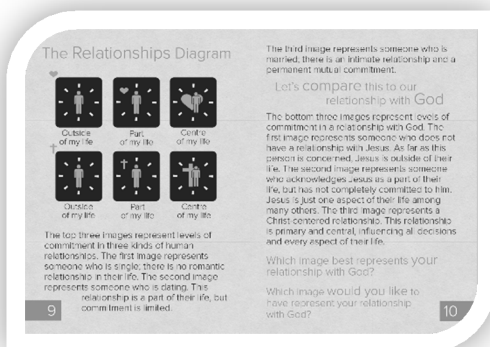
As you can see, it can fit nicely in that spot to the left of the crucifix.

NOTE: You do not need to share the analogy. The text and images should be enough for the person to gain a basic understanding of the third point of the gospel message. Only share this analogy if you feel a visual would be beneficial.

Generally, this analogy is better suited for people who have a faith background and already know that Jesus died. The analogy reviews what they already knew in an accessible way. People who are not familiar with the basic Christian message might be overwhelmed by all the additional information offered by the analogy.

Pages 9 and 10

These pages introduce the 4th point of the kerygma: making the decisions.



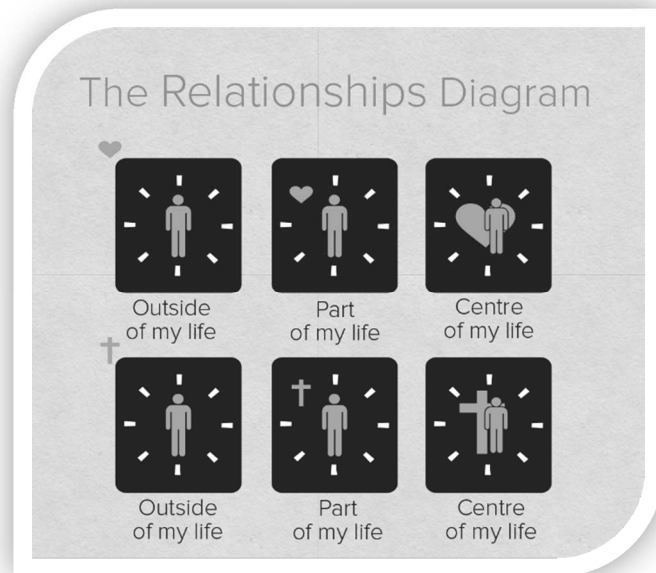
- It is very important to read these pages exactly the way they are written. The *Relationships Diagram* can sometimes be confusing, especially if we try to paraphrase the explanations.
- The *Relationships Diagram* is a tool we can use to help know where people are in their relationship with God.



The questions at the bottom of page 10 are really important. The answers to these questions will obviously vary. Here is how you can use their answers to move along the booklet.

Which image best represents your relationship with God?

- If the person responds with either the first or second image (outside my life or part of my life) simply ask them the next question in the booklet.
- If the person responds with the third image (centre of my life), enquire about their testimony. Ask them “It’s always interesting to hear how people made that decision, when did you make your decision to put Jesus at the centre?” or simply “Really, that’s great! What is your story?”



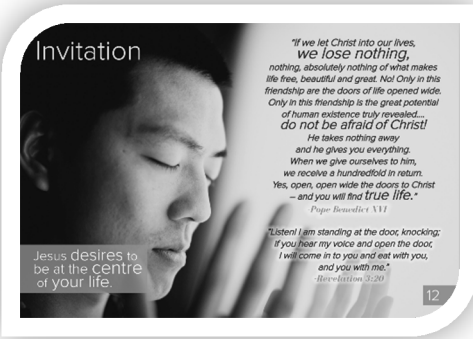
Which image would you like to have represent your relationship with God?

- If the person wishes to have Jesus at the centre of their lives, you can say “the next page will show us how to move from Jesus being a part of your life to Jesus being at the centre of your life”.
- If the person does not wish to have Jesus at the centre of their lives (they answer the question with image one or two, or are unsure), follow these two steps:
 - Ask: “What would be preventing you from choosing to put Jesus at the centre of your life?”. Sometimes people simply do not understand what the choice entails. This attitude is likely due to a misconception of what it means to be in a relationship with God. Some people believe that being in a relationship with Jesus is about ‘measuring-up’ or mastering the Christian life. It’s important to emphasize that the relationships diagram is conveying levels of commitment, not levels of personal holiness.
 - Many people will change their mind after you clear up this common misconception. However, if they still decide not to put Jesus at the centre, maintain a loving and positive attitude. They may change their mind one day! Simply go through the booklet as normal, showing them how to pray should they change their mind in the future. You can say “Well, if you ever want to put Jesus at the centre of your life, this next page explains how it’s done.”



Pages 11 and 12

This page is just a continuation of the 4th point of the Gospel presentation. Most people are overwhelmed and scared at the thought of making Jesus the centre of their lives. These pages will help you reassure them that it is the best decision they could make.

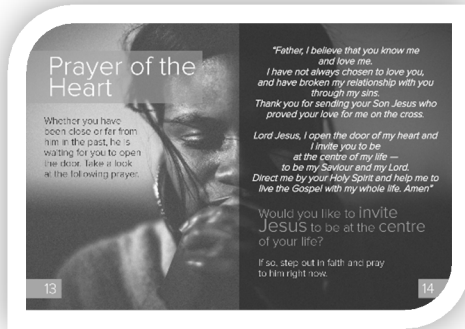


- A helpful transition to begin these pages is: "On this page we see that it all comes down to an invitation."
- Then, you can simply read the page. However, your sharing will be more effective if you prepare a personal testimony of how this decision has affected your life.

- The quote from Pope Benedict gives you an opportunity to have a great conversation about their fears. You can say "What do we fear in letting God fully into our lives?"
- You can share with them how you also had similar fears, but by surrendering to God, you experienced freedom, peace, and joy.
- The main point of these pages is to emphasize that God loves us and desires an intimate friendship with each of us.
- The quote from Revelations expresses this reality: Jesus is knocking on the door of their hearts.
- You can mention that in the Jewish culture of that time, to share a meal was a sign of great intimacy.
- You can also mention the classic painting representation of Revelations 3:20 by Warner Sallman. In this painting, Jesus is portrayed knocking at a door with no handle. This door can only be opened from the inside. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus is says that he will come in if we open the door.
- By the end of this page, we want them to realise that letting God fully into their lives is not scary, but desirable.

Page 13-14

This is where the 4th point of the kerygma happens: by praying the prayer on page 14, they are choosing to respond to the free gift of salvation. (See “Prayer of Commitment” section below)



- A helpful transition to start pages 13 and 14 is “One way of beginning (or renewing) your commitment to Christ is to pray this prayer”.
- You’ll want to read the prayer aloud to them and ask the question on page 14: “Would you like to invite Jesus to be at the centre of your life?”
- If they say “yes”, offer to pray it out loud with them.

- This part can be uncomfortable, and often people want to skip it. Do not be afraid! This is an important time for them to verbally give a yes to God.
- After they pray the prayer with you, affirm the significance of their choice! You can say “God is so pleased with your heart-felt prayer!”.
- Some people will not choose to invite Jesus to be at the centre of their life. In which case, be positive and loving.
- Do not continue reading the booklet. You can use the remaining time to seek to understand where they are with their relationship with God. You could ask “What would be preventing you from desiring to place Jesus at the centre of your life?”.

Pages 15-16

Through these pages, we challenge people to confirm their yes and to begin (or renew) their relationship with God by going to the sacrament of Reconciliation.



- If they are Catholic you can help them go to confession by finding out where and when they can receive the sacrament in your area.
- If they are not ready to go, let them know that they are still loved and that they can choose to go when they feel ready.
- If the person is not Catholic, you may suggest they talk with a priest about their sins and struggles.

Page 17

This page highlights some practical ways to live out a relationship with God.



- You can simply read this page
- Answer any questions they might have

The Prayer of Commitment

One of the unique advantages of the Ultimate Relationship booklet is that it actually gives people a concrete opportunity to begin or renew a relationship with God. Many of the people we meet on campus first received the gift of Salvation at their Baptism through the faith of their parents. However, each of them is invited to make that faith their own. Unfortunately, many of the Catholics in our pews today do not understand how to do that or have not been given an opportunity to do it.

Some Catholics have neglected the importance of this conscious, personal, commitment to Jesus Christ. Catholics sometimes assume that persons who are baptized, attend Mass, and receive the sacraments regularly have obviously accepted Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of their lives... This is often not the case, many Catholics have not yet made a deliberate, adult decision to believe in Jesus Christ and give their lives fully to him.

Dr. Alan Shreck, Catholic and Christian, p.25

The commitment prayer on page 14 gives the people with whom we are sharing the UR an opportunity to do just that: make a deliberate adult decision to believe in Jesus Christ and give their lives fully to him.

As a leader, it is important that you understand just how significant a decision it is to put Jesus at the centre of one's life. Choosing a Christ-centered relationship is not just good for their spiritual lives. The significance of their yes is that they are choosing to live in the grace of Salvation they received at Baptism and walk intimately with Christ.

We are often afraid as Catholics to sound to Protestant by saying “personal relationship with Jesus”. Neither is it Catholic nor Protestant to talk about Jesus as a personal friend, Lord, and Saviour. It is the nature of God to want us to know and experience him personally in our everyday lives.

Conversion means accepting, by a personal decision, the saving sovereignty of Christ and becoming his disciple. The Church calls all people to this conversion.

Redemptoris Missio, 46

Sharing the UR with Faithful People

You may think that the Gospel message presented in the UR is too basic to share with those who already seem to have faith. Here are some reasons you should never assume someone is too holy to hear what you have to say:

- You cannot assume that a person has had the opportunity to surrender their lives to the Lord.
- It may be obvious that they have a deep faith, but they may not know how to have a personal relationship with Jesus.
- They likely have not had the opportunity to have this kind of material presented to them so clearly.
- Although they may have seen this information in a faith study or at a large-group event, sometimes material sinks-in better when delivered in a one-on-one context.
- Even if they are totally up-to-date on the information given in the booklet, they can look at this time as a training time to enhance their skills in their own personal ministry to others.