



CHRISTIAN ACTION

Overview

Talk #11
Youth

15–20 minute

Day Three
8:45 A.M.

The CHRISTIAN ACTION talk introduces the third and final day, which has as its theme “Love.” The focus is going forth with Christ into the world to share God’s transforming love. Love, the fruit of Christian discipleship, expresses itself in Christian action. We live out our Christian commitment at home, on the job, in church, and in the community. Christian action is more than doing good things; it is allowing Christ to work through us to touch the people in our lives with love, to become other people’s friends forever, and to guide them into a transformational relationship with God. This talk calls us to “make a friend, be a friend, and bring a friend to Christ.” The theme of this talk is, “They will know we are Christians by our love.”

The speaker completes the tripod image of the Christian life, visually presenting the image and naming the third leg CHRISTIAN ACTION. The other two legs were introduced on Day Two in the talks on COMMUNICATION THROUGH PRAYER and CHRISTIAN GROWTH THROUGH STUDY. CHRISTIAN ACTION is about being the church, not as an organization but as people putting God’s love into action in the name of Jesus wherever we are. This talk also provides a good opportunity to tell how the church nurtures, celebrates, and challenges our discipleship, which will be addressed in a later talk (NEXT STEPS).

The outline elaborates on the meaning of the points, not to provide a script but in order to stimulate the speaker in developing the talk in his or her own words. Personal examples are to be used as the speaker feels comfortable and as they fit the text. This talk should be no longer than 15–20 minutes. Visual aids help convey the main points of the talk. The reflection guide will pose the following questions:

1. Who are the significant people who have shined in my life with God’s love, helping me move closer to Christ?
2. In what ways have I tried to be a Christian witness or planted a seed? What was my experience?
3. Where in my life do I feel Christ is nudging me to act, to be a channel for God’s love?

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ALD—“With a clean sheet of paper, pen in hand...”; followed by the before-talk chorus, at which time the speaker will enter the conference room (participants should be standing for the chorus). The speaker will ask the participants to join in “The Prayer to the Holy Spirit” found on the last page of the Chrysalis Worshipbook. The speaker will then ask the participants to be seated.

Introduction

Share a brief story, illustration, or experience that helps get people’s attention and leads into the theme of Christian action. For example,

As a visual aid, show a flashlight, loaded with batteries but not yet turned on. As loving Christians, we resemble flashlights. Batteries, the energy source for a flashlight, are useless until someone turns the switch on. When turned on, the batteries’ energy creates light. A flashlight, properly used, will illuminate all that is around it. Christians, whose love has been energized by God’s grace and nurtured through grace, through study and prayer, are now ready to shine—not for people to look at but for people to see who they can become. God’s grace energizes Christians to love. The twin batteries of study and prayer are ready to go. We need to “turn on” the switch of Christian action so people will have the light of God to see who they can become. Butterflies are nice to look at, but more importantly, we Christians are to live our lives in such a way that others will know how to become butterflies themselves.

“My name is _____, and the title of this talk is CHRISTIAN ACTION.”

I. Day Three is about living as a Christian witness.

A. Review.

1. On Day One we talked about receiving the gift: the relationship God offers. On Day Two we talked about nurturing the gift and growing in Christ’s love. Today we will talk about giving the gift of God’s love to others.
2. We died with Christ on Day One. We rose and grew with Christ on Day Two. Today we prepare to go forth and fly with Christ like butterflies to share Christ’s love.

B. Complete the tripod image of life in God’s grace. Provide a visual image of the tripod.

1. The tripod that supports our life in grace has three legs. Yesterday you heard about the first two legs, prayer and study. This talk is about the third leg, action.
2. In prayer we offer our hearts to God. In study we offer our minds to God. In action we offer our bodies (our hands and feet) to God.
3. The tripod represents what we must do as butterflies to open our wings to the winds of the Spirit in order to fly with Christ.

II. What is Christian action?

- A. Christian action is going forth with Christ into all the places of our daily lives to show the love of Christ.
 1. It is being a Christian friend. "God...through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends" (2 Cor. 5:18, TEV). It is reflecting God's friendship in the quality of our relationships with others. It is reaching out to those who feel friendless. It is making a friend, being a friend, and bringing a friend to Christ.
 2. It is being a good neighbor. Like the good Samaritan, we are to treat everyone as a child of God, equal in God's sight; we are to go out of our way, if necessary, to give someone a hand and to show God's love (Luke 10:29-37). It is putting ourselves in another's place, doing to others as we would have them do to us (Luke 6:31).
 3. It is letting Christ act through us—to reach out and to touch people with our words and actions. Christlike action is "Christ in action" through us.
- B. Christian action is passing on to others the gift of love we have received. In so doing, we help others become butterflies too.
 1. Butterflies are nice to look at. But the point is not to see how wonderful we can become. It is to fly to others to share God's love. It is to see and call forth God's best in each person.
 2. We are called to live our lives in such a way that others will know they were born to fly, not just to exist. Show by your living how to become a butterfly. Remember that you are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others so people may know Christ and have the joy of a real relationship with God.
 3. Sometimes God may use us to plant a seed. Someone else actually may bring that person to Christ (1 Cor. 3:6-9). *Share a time when you felt you planted a seed toward bringing another person to Christ.*

III. Share a relationship in your life that has enabled you to know God's love and grow in Christ's likeness.

- A. *Share something about a person who has influenced your life for good and whose action toward you exemplifies Christian action. For example, how has this person enabled you to see God more clearly? What about this person's actions makes God's love visible to you? How is your relationship with God enhanced by the spiritual dimension of this person's life?*
- B. We can learn about Christian action by remembering the actions of those who have influenced us and helped us grow. Ask yourself, "Who has been influential in helping me recognize God's love? What can I learn from them?"

IV. What does it take to be a Christian disciple-in-action?

- A. You must have the light of God's love shining in your heart.
 - 1. Jesus said to his disciples, "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).
 - 2. But you can't be light to the world if your flashlight has weak or worn-out batteries or none at all. The batteries are your relationship with Christ. Christian action flows from Christ in you.
 - 3. Through prayer God recharges the batteries. Through study God aims your light: You see God's will and ways you can serve. Through action God turns on your light for those around you.
- B. You must want others to know Christ's love in their lives.
 - 1. Think about your friends. Are you going to keep Christ's love to yourself or share it?
 - 2. Ask Christ in prayer about whom he wants to touch with his love through your words and actions.
 - 3. Shine the flashlight on what Christ has done in and through you. Be careful not to shine the light on yourself and your experiences.
- C. You must have sensitivity and respect for other people and their needs.
 - 1. Don't assume others have no relationship with God. Be interested in other people's experiences of God and share yours. Don't force yourself on others. Don't judge people or presume to know their needs too quickly.
 - 2. Don't force Christ on another person. Jesus never forced himself on people. He showed respect and acceptance. God is already present in people's lives. Your job is to love people and share what you have found. God's job is to save them.

V. What steps can we take to pass on the love of Christ?

- A. Make a friend.
 - 1. Remember, every person is a unique creation of God. Love and accept people as they are.
 - 2. You can make a friend no matter where you are: school, work, church, community.
 - 3. Extend friendship to people who need it, not just to people you think deserve it.
- B. Be a friend.
 - 1. Don't stop with making friends. Don't just act friendly. Really be a friend.
 - 2. Accept a person for who he or she is. Be open-minded and caring.
 - 3. Be there for friends, even new friends, in their time of need and stand by them. The disciples were friends with Jesus but denied him when it became too costly. Treat your friends as you would treat Christ.
- C. Bring your friend to Christ.

1. Love is even more than giving people the best of yourself. Give them Christ, the source of love and real joy. Tell them who inspires you to be who you are and to do what you do.
 2. Introduce your friend to your most important friend, Jesus Christ, through word and action. Share why Jesus is the most important person in your life.
- D. *Illustrate "Make a friend, be a friend, bring a friend to Christ" from your own experience.*
1. Remember that sometimes God will use you to plant a seed and someone else will bring in the harvest.
 2. Imagine your relationships as a garden. Where is Christ asking you to plant a seed of faith or to water the ground with love?

VI. In closing: Challenge the participants to "Be light!"

- A. As Christians we are like flashlights. Batteries are the energy source for a flashlight, but they are useless until someone turns the switch on. When the flashlight is turned on, the energy creates light.
- B. The twin batteries of prayer and study are ready to go. Grace has energized our love to give.
- C. Now we just need to turn on the switch of Christian action so people will have the light to see Christ, who they can become, and what the world would be like if ruled by God's love.

At the close of the talk, the table groups may begin discussion using the two-page reflection guide that follows. Permission is granted to make one copy per participant.

TALK #11: CHRISTIAN ACTION

In CHRISTIAN ACTION we offer our bodies (hands and feet) to God.

1. Who are the significant people who have shined in my life with God's love, helping me move closer to Christ?
2. In what ways have I tried to be a Christian witness or planted a seed? What was my experience?
3. Where in my life do I feel Christ is nudging me to act, to be a channel for God's love?

TALK #11: CHRISTIAN ACTION

Scripture References

2 Corinthians 5:18

Luke 10:29-37

Luke 6:31

1 Corinthians 3:6-9

Matthew 5:14

Make a friend; be a friend; bring a friend to Christ.