

Speak Up for God

You are Christ's ambassador: what that means, what you say, and how to say it

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	Every Christian is an ambassador for Christ, sent to represent Him and to carry His message: "Be reconciled to God." When we speak for Him, we speak His words, in His strength, for His glory.
SCRIPTURE	2 Corinthians 5:17-21 · 1 Peter 4:10-11 · Colossians 4:5-6 · Acts 4:13-20 · Romans 1:16
LENGTH	About 20 minutes
BEST FOR	Middle school and high school
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles; optional: a picture of an embassy or an ambassador presenting credentials

Start here: what is an ambassador?

An ambassador is a person sent by a ruler to live in another country and represent that ruler there. An ambassador doesn't make up his own policies. He carries his government's message, speaks with its authority, and behaves in a way that reflects well on the one who sent him. Embassies even count as a piece of the home country on foreign soil.

Paul says that's exactly who we are. "We are ambassadors for Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:20). Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20), and right now we're posted at a school, on a team, in a family, and in a neighborhood, representing our King.

1 An ambassador represents the King

When people watch an ambassador, they form opinions about his country. When people watch you, they form opinions about Jesus. That's a serious responsibility, but also a great honor. Paul says to "walk in wisdom toward those who are outside" (Colossians 4:5). How we live gives weight to what we say.

2 An ambassador carries the King's message

What is the message? Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. God has done something amazing: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (v. 17). God was in Christ "reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them" (v. 19). Reconcile means to bring two people who were enemies back together as friends.

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." **2 CORINTHIANS 5:21**

That's our message in one verse. We don't invent it or soften it. We pass it on, "as though God were pleading through us."

3 Speak God's words, not just your opinions

"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." **1**

PETER 4:11

An "oracle" is a message that comes from God. Peter means that when we speak for God, we should be careful to say what God has actually said. That's why knowing your Bible matters. Your opinions might be interesting, but God's Word has power: the gospel "is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

4 Speak in God's strength

Peter adds, "with the ability which God supplies." You don't have to be the smartest person in the room. When Peter and John were arrested for talking about Jesus, the leaders noticed they were "uneducated and untrained men," yet bold, "and they realized that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Their answer? "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (4:20). Time with Jesus makes us bold.

5 Speak with grace

"Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." **COLOSSIANS 4:6**

Ambassadors are diplomats. Speaking up for God never means being rude, preachy, or mocking. Salt makes food taste better and makes people thirsty. Gracious words make people want to hear more. Peter says to answer "with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

PRACTICE IT

Pair up. One person asks a common question a friend might ask: "Why do you go to church?" "Do you really believe that stuff?" "What makes Christianity different?" The other answers in one minute, using a verse if possible and keeping a gracious tone. Then switch.

The goal: God gets the glory

Peter ends with the reason we speak up: "that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." We're not trying to win arguments or look impressive. We want people to see how good our King is, and to come home to Him.

TALK IT OVER

1. What does an ambassador do? How is that like being a Christian?
2. In your own words, what is the message of 2 Corinthians 5:17-21?
3. Why is it important to speak "as the oracles of God" and not just share opinions?
4. What does it mean for your words to be "seasoned with salt"?
5. Where is God "posting" you as His ambassador this week? Who might need to hear His message?

TAKE IT HOME

Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:20 this week. Each morning, pray, "Lord, I'm Your ambassador today. Give me a chance to represent You well." Then watch for one opportunity to speak up for Him, with grace.

Sent by the King, carrying His message, for His glory.

From fifty years of youth ministry by **Ron Whittam**. Share freely with your students and leaders. · The Youth Ministry Living Room · qrprogramming.com/livingroom

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