

Tract Ministry: Good News in Your Pocket

From King Hezekiah's letters to a text message: sharing the gospel briefly, clearly, and kindly

For if you return to the LORD... the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him.

2 CHRONICLES 30:9

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	A gospel tract is a short written message that points people to God. The Bible's first "tract" was King Hezekiah's letter calling Israel back to God: brief, clear, pointed, and calling for a decision. We can share good news the same way, and even write our own.
SCRIPTURE	2 Chronicles 30:1-12 · 1 Corinthians 9:16 · Colossians 1:28-29 · John 2:1-11; 4:1-26 · 1 Peter 3:15 · Romans 1:16
LENGTH	About 25 minutes, plus writing time
BEST FOR	Middle school and high school
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles, pens, and a few good gospel tracts to look at together (read them first)

Start here: the first tract

About 700 years before Jesus, King Hezekiah of Judah wanted God's people to return to Him and celebrate the Passover. So he sent runners "throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king" (2 Chronicles 30:6). Read the letter in verses 6-9. In English it runs only about 160 words, and it is:

Brief

You can read it in under a minute.

Clear

Anyone could understand it.

Pointed

It focuses on one thing: return to the LORD.

Decision-centered

It calls for a response, and gives hope: God "is gracious and merciful."

How did people respond? Some "laughed at them and mocked them. Nevertheless some... humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem" (30:10-11). That's still how it goes today. Some laugh. Some come. Our job is to deliver the message.

1 Why share at all?

Paul said, "Necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16). He worked hard to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," but "according to His working which works in me mightily" (Colossians 1:28-29). Every believer has good news worth passing on, and God gives the power to do it.

2 Go where people are

Jesus didn't wait for people to come to a religious building. He went to a wedding in Cana (John 2) and to a well in Samaria at noon (John 4). He turned everyday moments into conversations about God.

Put yourself in public places and look for openings in normal conversation. Instead of "Want to hear a joke?" try, "**Want to hear a little good news today?**" A tract can give a friend something to read later, after the conversation ends.

3 Share it wisely

- **Read it first.** Only give out a tract you understand and agree with. Choose ones that are clear, kind, and accurate, not mocking or scary.
- **Add a personal touch.** A smile and "This really helped me" go a long way.
- **Be generous.** If you leave a tract for a server at a restaurant, always leave a good tip with it. A tract instead of a tip makes Jesus look bad.
- **Respect rules.** Follow your school's policies and don't stick tracts on cars or doors where it isn't allowed. In most U.S. public schools, students may share faith materials with friends during free time, as long as it isn't disruptive.
- **Go digital.** Today a "tract" can be a text with a verse, a link to a short gospel video, or a post about what Jesus means to you.

STAY SAFE

When sharing in public, go with a friend or an adult leader. Stay in public places, and never go into a stranger's home or car. If someone gets angry, smile, say "Have a good day," and walk away.

4 Write your own tract

Like Hezekiah, aim for about 160 words: brief, clear, pointed, and asking for a decision. Use everyday words and one or two verses.

1. God loves you and created you to know Him. (John 3:16)

2. Our sin separates us from God. (Romans 3:23; 6:23)

3. Jesus died and rose again to bring us back to God. (1 Peter 3:18)

4. How to respond: turn to God and trust Jesus. (Romans 10:9; John 1:12)

FOR THE LEADER

Have students read their tracts aloud in small groups and give feedback: Is it clear? Is the gospel complete? Does it ask for a response? Consider printing the best ones as youth group tracts or sharing them as images students can text to friends.

TALK IT OVER

1. What made Hezekiah's letter effective? How could your words be like that?
2. Why do you think some people mocked the message while others came?
3. What everyday places do you go where you could share good news?
4. Which of the "share it wisely" tips do you think matters most? Why?
5. Who is one person you could give your tract (or a verse) to this week?

TAKE IT HOME

Finish writing your own tract this week. Share it with one Christian friend for feedback, then pray for one person to give it to (in print or by text). Ask God to make you ready to give "a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

Brief, clear, pointed, and full of hope: good news worth passing on.

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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