



European Initiative logo, consisting of the letters 'EI' in white on a blue square background.

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# EUROPEAN INITIATIVE

Evangelism in Europe

# INTRODUCTION

As we partner together to bring the Gospel to Europe, it is our desire that you be fully equipped for the battles that lie ahead. The following points are many important truths and principles that we have learned through the past 10+ years of ministering in Europe.

## I. Why Are You Here?

Your EI mission trip presents you with both a challenge and an opportunity. It could be that this trip may be one of the greatest adventures of your life. Why? Because you will personally have the opportunity to affect the eternal destiny of potentially 100+ Europeans. We believe that your crossing the ocean is something divinely orchestrated by God. As a result, there are “God appointments” waiting for you. There are prodigals waiting to come back to the Father -- and you could be the one to take them by the hand and lead them there. During your trip, you are going to be thrust into the frontlines of the spiritual battle for Europe. There are 750 million people living in Europe and most experts say that 730 million of them do not have a relationship with Jesus. The harvest is great, but by His grace, we will see countless lives impacted during this trip. We encourage you to not shrink back in fear from what is before you. God’s grace will enable you in every situation. He has given you all you need to relentlessly love and pursue the lost. If you will fully yield to Him, He will place His words in your mouth to share the glorious message of salvation.

## II. His Lost Euro-Sheep

We would encourage you to ask the Lord to give you His heart and eyes for Europe. These prodigals are not a statistic or a number to add to our salvation count at the end of the day--they are God’s lost sons and daughters. He longs to walk with them every day of their lives. It is important that in our communication we are displaying His nature by operating in love, humility, and compassion. Please remember it is not your job to save them -- that is the Holy Spirit’s work. Instead we are called to tell them about the most profound love in human history. We are called to share the message of John 3:16.

## III. You Are Valued

You are a very important part of your mission’s team. Your personality, your story, your heart is so unique and needed to make your team complete. While ministering, you don’t need to pretend to be someone you’re not -- just be yourself. Be real. Be authentic. Be confident. God has known since before you were born that you would be here for “such a time as this.” This moment is an integral part of your journey with Jesus -- He has fashioned you to be the unique expression of Himself to those you encounter.

## IV. What is the Gospel?

This might sound crazy, but we have noticed that there is some confusion among 21st century Christians about what the gospel really is. We've often heard the gospel explained as, "Jesus loves you." All of us at EI agree that the most important and resounding truth of the Bible is the love of Jesus Christ. The cross is the evidence of that love and there is no denying its tremendous importance, impact, or meaning. Yet that is not all the gospel message consists of. So what is the Gospel? Below are just 3 verses (of dozens!) that we would like to highlight to help you articulate the gospel to lost Europeans:

- "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."  
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
- "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world: but that the world should be saved through Him." (John 3:16 - 17)
- "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

It is worth noting that two of the three Bible verses bring up the subject of sin. While John 3:16-17 does not specifically mention sin, the concept of judgment is clearly expressed. The point is simple: the "good news" cannot be fully understood without knowing the "bad news". Our sin has separated us from a perfect and holy God -- unless we repent and put our faith in Jesus Christ we will be judged for our sins.

## V. The Gospel in 4 Words

Simplicity is key when sharing your faith cross-culturally. With that in mind, here are 4 words to help you navigate your way through sharing the gospel in a conversation:

### 1. God | 2. Sin | 3. Jesus | 4. Repentance

Let's now consider the appropriate subject matter in context of the Gospel for each of these points:

1. **God** – God created everything and we are His highest creation. He made us to walk with Him through life's journey (Gen 3:8). He created us to enjoy an intimate Father son/Father daughter relationship with Him.

2. **Sin** – Sin came into this world when man chose to rebel against God. We have all made choices to do whatever seemed right in our own eyes rather than follow God. We are all guilty of doing wrong. Our sin separated us from God -- the only One who is without sin. The relationship was broken. Because He is just, there has to be a judgment for our sins.
3. **Jesus** – Jesus came to earth for one reason -- to redeem a lost and guilty humanity. He loved us even though we weren't perfect and lived a perfect life so He could be the perfect sacrifice. He willingly gave His life on the cross -- an agonizing death (see Isaiah 53) -- taking upon Himself the judgment that should have been ours. He did it so we could have a relationship with Him (John 3:16 & John 17:3). Three days later Jesus came back to life. His death and resurrection changed the course of history forever.
4. **Repentance** – Repentance in the Greek (metanoia), literally means a “change of mind”. It is a “turning away” from our selfishness and instead turning to Jesus to make Him our Lord and Savior. Mark 1:15 shows that our response to the “kingdom of heaven being near” is to “repent and believe in the gospel.” His next words are, “Follow Me.” Repentance could be compared to travelling down a road headed east only to find out we are going the wrong way--so we turn around to go west. Repentance is an external action, rooted in an internal faith (Eph. 2:8-9)

## VI. Other Ways to Share the Gospel

### The Romans Road

Romans (Paul's letter to the church at Rome) contains some of the most important theology in the Bible. These verses create a framework for understanding the gospel:

- GOD (Romans 1:20) – God created the world by His eternal power – creation gives evidence to God (paraphrase).
- SIN (Romans 3:10) – “There is none righteous, not even one.”
- SIN (Romans 3:23) – “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- JESUS (Romans 5:8) – “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
- JESUS (Romans 6:23) “For the wages of sin are death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- REPENTANCE-FAITH (Romans 10:9-10), “That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”



## The New Birth

In Europe and many other places around the globe, there is a lot of confusion surrounding the term “Christian.” Many believe that one’s Christian faith is determined at birth (i.e. I was born Catholic, I was born a Christian, etc). While this of course is a far departure from biblical truth, Jesus did compare becoming a Christian to birth. Perhaps the most profound conversation in the Bible occurred in John 3:3-8. Jesus said to Nicodemus (an intelligent Pharisee and ruler), “Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus responded as we all would have by asking, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?”

Jesus then goes on to explain to Nicodemus that the birth he was referring to was spiritual. Therefore, Jesus equates the decision of the heart to believe in Him with birth. It is a massive decision -- the most important decision of a person’s life. When we give our all to Him, Jesus says that He will do such a profound work of regeneration in us, it will be like a second birth.

2 Cor 5:17 is a parallel passage: “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold new things have come.”

Every person who yields their life to Jesus becomes a new creation. As you share the gospel with Europeans, please help them understand the magnitude of both their decision and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit that will happen – making them “re-born.”

## VII. Religion vs Relationship

One of the greatest deceptions among Europeans is that religion – or the beliefs and traditions of the historical church -- are the essence of the Christian faith. The idea of a father/son or father/daughter relationship with God is a virtually unknown concept. At EI, we encounter this mindset every day in Europe. Satan has blinded their eyes to believe Christianity is merely a set of rules and traditions and nothing more. Most have a very negative view of the church and see the Sunday service as a litany of traditions that have no meaning or relevance to their contemporary lives. One of our goals when talking to Europeans about God is to emphasize “relationship”. So please tell them about the Father heart of God. Tell them that Jesus is their lover who fought valiantly for them. Again, we strongly encourage you to make this point clear to them in conversations.



## VIII. Conversations

*(Please note: we will use the context of performing “The Wall” drama in a public place and going into the crowd 2x2 to engage in a conversation)*

Since Jesus was never about formulas, neither is EI. He respects our individuality and does not want us to become “cookie cutter” Christians. However, there are important principles that Paul, the other disciples, and Jesus Himself, utilized when talking to people about spirituality. For example, Jesus got into the boat with fisherman and he actually helped them fish. As you meet Europeans, please show a genuine interest in their lives – ask questions and listen!

### A. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you

As you are standing in “The Wall” drama ask the Holy Spirit who to talk to. Immediately after the drama is over, do not hesitate but move quickly into the crowd to engage in conversations. If the person the Holy Spirit leads you to, begins to walk away, if it’s appropriate, please try to catch their attention again. As we go into conversations 2x2, you and the team member you are paired with will need to alternate who leads going into the crowd.

### B. Beginning the Conversation

Briefly introduce yourself, state where you are from, and share what you are doing in Europe. Please ask them questions as well! See an example of an introduction below:

*“My name is Josh, and this is my friend Caleb. We are from the USA and attend the same university in Texas.” Sample questions: “What is your name? Are you from Budapest? Are you a student? What do you study?”*

### C. Focus on the Drama

After the introduction, transition into questions about the drama. For example, you could ask, “May I ask what you thought of the drama? What did it mean to you?” At this point – be patient as their English might not be the best and they may need additional time to collect their thoughts. In some cases, you may need to help draw thoughts out of them by asking specific questions about what took place.

If a European is hesitant to give an opinion just quickly explain the 4 main points of the drama, which are 1) the girl represents all of us – she is looking for love and relationship 2) The wall represents 2 things: humanity and separation 3) The **turning point** of the drama is when she gets on her knees and cries out for help. In that moment, she acknowledges she is at her end and is crying out to God 4) At that point, the man in the white shirt (Jesus) breaks through the wall and gives her a new heart and she at last experiences unconditional love.





## D. The Deep End of the Pool

At this point, they will know you are a Christian, probably for the first time. Please be aware as you proceed to discuss spiritual things not to use American “Christianese” such as “Are you a believer?” or “Are you saved?” If you do, they will most likely be confused and think to themselves, “A believer in what? Saved from what?” Instead it is important at this point to ask them a few questions to try to “go deeper” to see where they are at spiritually. Here are a few sample questions:

- “Now that you know what the drama is all about, what do you think of it?”
- “Who is God to you?”
- “Do you believe in God?”
- “Do you have spiritual beliefs?”
- “Who is Jesus to you?”
- “Do you believe in life after death?”

We would not suggest asking, the obvious, “Are you a Christian?” As mentioned previously, there is great confusion about what or who is a Christian. Many times, we have heard Europeans say that they are a Christian and a few minutes later, they confess that they don’t even believe in the existence of God.

A European could respond to the afore mentioned questions 1,000 different ways -- so just relax and rely on the Holy Spirit to lead you – and He will. Below are some additional points to keep in mind to help you navigate your conversations:

- Many Europeans, like American unbelievers, have animosity towards the church, God, or Christians in general. Some will try to hijack the conversation and talk with you about everything from homosexuality to President Trump. The point is not to argue, but to show them love and kindness. At the same time, be bold and speak the truth with love. We are not called to be politically correct (check out Peter’s response in Acts 2), but we are called to be truth tellers and people lovers.
- If they say, “I believe in God” don’t just assume that they believe in the God of the Bible. They could be Muslim and believe in Allah. They could hold New Age philosophies and believe in “an energy force”. The point is to ask them more questions about their beliefs so that you can discern if they really have a relationship with Jesus or not.
- They may become defensive and say, “I am not a religious person, I am not interested.” At this point you can reply, “I am not religious either.” In fact, you might tell them that Jesus came against the religious belief of the day. He came to restore understanding of how to have a personal relationship with God. The point is to use their negativity on “religion” to steer the conversation to “relationship”.

- Don't panic by a seemingly "hard-hearted" response like "I am an atheist," or "I don't believe in anything," or, "I believe in me," or "I don't believe in God and religion, I believe in evolution," or, "I can't believe in a God who allows suffering in the world."
- First don't be offended – sinners sin and the unredeemed are more or less a mess (we all were and sometimes still are). So be ready for anything. Always show respect to them and NEVER lower yourself to their level of antagonism. Do everything to avoid an argument.
- If they are running off and don't want to talk, we often respectfully ask them for just 30 seconds and say one of two things 1) You may not believe in Him, but He believes in you and He loves you more than you can know 2) At some point in your life, when it is just you alone, whisper these words, 'God, if you are real, would You please show me? Also, if they are rushing off, try to put a flyer in their hands. Do your best to always try to sow a seed.
- If a professed atheist is willing to talk, consider asking these questions 1) What led you to be an atheist? 2) Was there ever a time that you did believe in God?
- Responding to "I believe in me". First of all, agree with them and say that you also believe in "yourself". Then, appeal to their common sense to consider that **there is something bigger out there than "me"**. In other words, "Who made me? Does that being, the creator - have a purpose for my life? Yes, we can believe in ourselves to a point, but it is important to consider the question about the origin of life and that "me" did not just happen without a creator.
- We could write pages about the whole evolution-creation argument. The critical point is **not to get stuck on it**. However, in some conversations, it is important to plant seeds of doubt to the theory:
  - There are basically two worldviews on this point: an intelligent designer and randomness. Get them to consider this question, "Is there a God who made everything -- including them-- or, are we all just random beings, a product of a big bang?"
  - Challenge them that evolution and the "big-bang theory" takes great faith. In other words, to believe that the order and balance of the entire universe, not to mention the human body, is predicated on a random explosion, is a belief based on many leaps of faith.
  - Many times, I (Jeff Serio) have looked people in the eye, and said, "I respect that you believe in evolution, but I believe that you are not random. I believe that you are the highest, most magnificent creation of God. I believe in God...because of 'you.' Just as my watch proves that there is a watchmaker, your eyes, your brain, your face, proves to me that there is a God. You are made in His image." I encourage you to memorize and be ready to share Psalm 139:13 - 16.



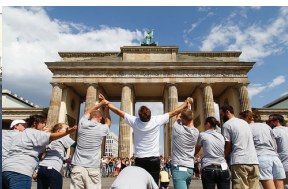
- We often share the example of the junkyard and the Apple MacBook. Imagine a huge junk yard and you place many sticks of dynamite under all of it. The explosion causes thousands of pieces of metal and car parts to fly upward. When it all falls back to the ground, all the random pieces form perfectly into 1,000 MacBooks or a Boeing 747 jet. The explosion could happen a billion times and it still would not produce the computers. Remember one of the laws of physics – order cannot come out of disorder.
- Another thought about evolution....if we came from animals, why do they not have the same moral laws that we have? If a lion is hungry, he kills and eats. The law of the jungle is simply survival. Though some humans lower themselves to this kind of behavior, denying all morality, we as humans have moral laws – that come from God. He has written them on our hearts.
- You could even follow this pursuit a bit more with the atheist and ask “Do you believe in absolutes -- right and wrong?” If they say, no, then ask them more questions about their views about murder, adultery, child trafficking, are these things right or wrong? Only the most stubborn would refute absolute “rights and wrongs” in this context. You can easily bring them to a point of admitting that there are absolutes – we live by them every day. These laws – these values for all mankind -- did not happen randomly, they are etched on our hearts by the One who made us. Moral absolutes, lead us to the conclusion, that they came from a higher being – from God.
- What about a God who allows suffering? Remember, that you are in Europe – the land of WW2, the Holocaust and for half of Europe, 45 years of brutality under Communism. Europe is well acquainted with suffering. Many young Europeans will not focus so much on the past but will bring up current hotspots of suffering in Syria, Iraq and parts of Africa. In their minds, what kind of God would allow suffering? What do you say in response?
  - Empathize with them, and accept the sincerity of their position.
  - The truthful response is rooted in Genesis 3, the rebellion of man and the consequential sin and corruption that came into the world. Don't belabor Gen 3 and the Garden of Eden, because at this point in the conversation that is not a valid reference point for them.
  - Rather, make the point in a more general way, “God loves humanity so much, that He gave each person a free will. Sadly, today and throughout history, mankind has exercised their free will to rebel against God, and have waged wars against each other, all due to our own selfish desires.”
  - They might also say that most wars and suffering globally are religious based – the conflicts in the Middle East, are rooted in different sects of Islam doing battle against each other. So, in their minds, religion is the culprit for much of the world's suffering. We counter this thinking by refocusing on the teachings of Jesus – to love our neighbor, to go the 2nd mile for our enemies, etc. The truth is that real Christ followers are not advocates of hate and killing, rather, they lay down their lives for others.

## IX. Leading them to Jesus

After handling their objections and questions, it is important to bring the conversation to Jesus. Again, as we proceed in the conversation, let these 5 words be your guide: God, Sin, Jesus, Repentance and Faith.

### It is important to help them understand....

- **God is not an “it” but a “He”. He is their Father.** Their most important purpose/identity in life is to first be a “son” and know God as their Father.
- **They need to understand their sinfulness.** This may sound difficult but it is important and does not have to be awkward. Here are some tips:
  - Ask them this question – “If they were to die tomorrow, and stand before God, would He let them into heaven?” Regardless of how they answer – yes or no -- ask them “Why?”
  - “Why would God let you into heaven?” If they base their hope on their own righteousness (i.e. I am a good person, etc), ask them if they’ve ever done something wrong. Be relatable and nonjudgmental- emphasize that you too have failed. Help them understand that before God, they are not good – one sin causes them to be separated from Him. Again, understanding the bad news will help lead them to Jesus -- the good news!
- Jesus often used illustrations to help people understand deep spiritual truths. For that reason we often do the same. Here are just a few:
- **Water bottle** - every time you sin, it is like putting a piece of dirt in your water bottle (representing your life-your soul). Sin is like dirt on our soul - there is nothing we can do to clean it. We cannot do good things to make our sins go away. If we embrace what Jesus did on the cross, we become clean, like a pure, fresh bottle of water.
- **Convicted of murder** - let’s say that you are talking to two Europeans -- Andreas and Lukas -- and you share this hypothetical story, “Andreas – is angry and throws his iPhone at Lukas. The phone hits Lukas on the side of his head and he dies. Andreas stands before the judge – the judge pronounces him, guilty and sentences him to the rest of his life in prison. As soon as the sentence is declared, a stranger walks into the room (point to the team member in the conversation with you) and this stranger says to the judge, “Your honor, this man is guilty of murder and surely a life must be given for the life that was taken. I want to take this man’s place and serve the prison term, for him so that he can be set free.”



- **Teacher & Chalkboard** – your worst nightmare has just happened.

You are in your high school classroom with all your friends. The teacher decides to write every sin that you have ever committed, even every bad thought, on the board for everyone to see. You are shamed beyond imagination, people in the room are laughing and mocking you. Suddenly a stranger walks into the room, he takes the eraser from the teachers and wipes away every sin – the chalkboard is clean. He turns and says to all, “This man has no sin, he is forgiven.”

- **Repentance and Faith – Action is required.** Here are a few important points to consider when leading people to salvation:
  - Salvation is a gift – just like when we are given birthday gifts, the giver is showing us love. Also, the gift must be received by the recipient (Eph. 2:8-9)
  - Salvation comes by a decision of the human will. We often tell unbelievers that entrusting their life to Jesus – is the biggest and most important decision of their life.
  - Salvation comes by opening up the heart. Revelation 3:20 is a verse that describes in a clear way, the path to giving our hearts to Jesus. We will break this verse down, to see its full impact:
    - “I stand at the door and knock.” Jesus comes to us and He knocks on the door of our hearts. It is important to note to the unbeliever, that each of us has a door on our heart.
    - “If anyone hears My voice...” That means 2 things: He is truly alive and He cares about us – why else would He talk to us? He wants to have this intimate relationship with us, so that we can hear His voice and respond.
    - “....and opens the door,” The God of the universe, stands before us and He so respects our free will that He lets us decide “if” we want to open the door of our heart. You can say to the European, “love has to be voluntary, this decision to open up your heart to Jesus is up to you, it must come from within.”
    - “I will come into him and will dine with him, and he with Me.” Emphasize that Jesus will “come into them,” live in them, and then let them experience Him every day for the rest of thier lives. To dine together is symbolic of an ever-so-close relationship.
    - As you share this verse, explain it, and apply it to them, the person is now ready for the next step....
  - Lead them in prayer to give their lives to Jesus
    - After sharing Rev 3:20, ask them if they want to freely open up the door of their heart to Jesus. Make sure they understand that this decision is about turning from self (Gal 2:20 – it is no longer I who live...) and turning to follow Jesus.

- Help them understand that they can pray right where you are – there is no rule or special virtue to pray in a church building. Remind them that God is present and He hears them wherever – if they pray from their heart.
- Instruct them that the Bible stresses the importance of making a verbal confession. Share Romans 10:9-10, which speaks of “confessing (speaking aloud) with your mouth and believing in your heart....” If needed refer to the words of Jesus, “If you confess Me before men, I will confess you before My Father.” Matt 10:32.
- Lead them in prayer. Have them repeat after you or after the translator – speaking aloud.

## XI. What Next?

This is an incredible moment as you have just prayed with a European to receive Jesus. A few important instructions:

- **Celebrate the moment** --remind them that angels in heaven are rejoicing. Ask them how they feel, if they feel different. Let them savor the moment.
- **Connect them to a local believer** – if there is a believer nearby, make an introduction. It is so important that they know of a good local church and home group to attend.
- **Collect their contact info** – and give them yours. This is very important – not just with those who are saved, but with everyone you talk with who is open to further conversation via social media.
- **Communicate how they can grow** -- remind them that despite their physical age, that they are literally a new born babe – spiritually. They need to “eat and drink” the living Word – the Bible. They can now talk to Jesus so encourage them that they can hear His voice (John 10:3-4). Strongly urge them to be part of a small group at a church where they can be discipled by mature believers.

## XII. Conclusion

Again, we want to remind you that it is God who does the saving -- He only asks that you be obedient. Please feel free to reach out to your leadership or anyone on the EI staff if you have questions during the trip. We are praying and believing this will be a life-changing experience for you!





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