

SCREEN YOUR LANGUAGE

The following is taken from Stonecroft Speaker Workshop, sponsored by Stonecroft Ministries.

UNLEARNING THE LINGO

Many of the words we use to share our faith may be meaningless, too churchy or clichéd to the people we're attempting to reach.

- If you were an unbeliever, would you understand the following (common Christian clichés are underlined)?

I heard the plan of salvation and was told that I needed to be saved. So, I went forward to be born again. The Lord spoke to me and then opened the door of my heart to show me God's plan for my life. I learned to stand on God's word and began to walk with the Lord. I turned away from worldly things, and it has been such a blessing.

- Instead of these clichés (left), what could you say (suggestions on the right)?

Scripture or Bible verse.....	A place in the Bible where it says...
Believe	Trust, accept
Born again, converted.....	Changed, transformed (with explanation)
Christian.....	Follower of Christ
Confess.....	Admit, agree with God
Found the Lord, get saved	Accept Christ make a decision to follow Christ
Grace	God's totally unearned forgiveness
Gospel.....	God loves us and sent His Son so that we can find forgiveness and new life through Him
Have a burden	Be concerned
Know	Believe, trust, be certain
The Lord.....	God, Creator, Jesus
The Holy Spirit	God the Spirit, the Spirit of God
Praise.....	Thanking God for His greatness
Pray.....	Talk with God, ask God
Preach.....	Talk about
Repent	To be sorry about wrongs and to turn from them to do right
Salvation, saved.....	Forgiven of wrongs and given eternal life
Savior.....	Jesus, God's Son, who forgave my wrongs and gave me eternal life
Share	Discuss, explain
Sin, sinner	Acting against God's will and offending God's character, the wrong things that we do
Testimony	Telling my story
Witness	Tell, show
Worship.....	Giving honor and glory to God

- Other commonly used “churchy” terms that could be baffling to a nonbeliever are: *Into my heart, Lord of my life, rely on the Lord, raised in a Christian home, the Lord told me/spoke to me/directed me, total surrender.* What could you use instead?
- In some cases, you may want to avoid using theological words such as justification or the sovereignty of God unless you explain them well.
- If you are praying with nonbelievers present, even with believers, be careful how often you address God by name in prayer. Prayer is simply talking to God. In normal speech, you wouldn’t continually repeat someone’s name, but many Christians think it necessary to mention God’s name after every five words or so. This is disconcerting to non-Christians. Write out your prayer if this is a temptation for you.
- Above all, be real and be normal.

AVOID INAPPROPRIATE INFORMATION

Be cautious about using these, especially in faith stories.

- Use discretion in naming religions, churches, denominations, or cults.
- Controversial issues such as doctrinal, political and social issues.
- Derogatory remarks relating to any person, place, group, or issue.
- Promoting any project, campaign, business, cause, financial need.
- If any person, especially family members, are referred to, could it cause embarrassment or conflict?

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

—2 Corinthians 5:18, 20