

SPEAKUP 365: Speaker Qualification

Key Components of the Church Presentation

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1—THE HISTORY OF THE GIDEON CHURCH PRESENTATION

In 1908, at a meeting of the ministerial association in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, pastor E.R. Burkhalter made the motion that their churches should provide funds to allow The Gideons to place God's Word in all the hotel rooms of that city.

A special relationship was initiated between the church and The Gideons that has seen Scriptures taken literally to the uttermost parts of the earth. That was how it started.

Gideons have traditionally reported annually in their local churches how contributions to supply Scriptures have been used in the areas where Gideons place Scriptures. For some churches, The Gideons is a primary international missionary outreach.

Churches are encouraged to provide offerings at the time of the Gideon presentation. This generous support, including prayer of local churches, has been a mainstay of advancing Scripture placement and distribution by Gideons.

Today, Gideons partner with churches anywhere to reach the unreached everywhere.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GIDEON CHURCH PRESENTATION

The Gideon church presentation is as integral to our ministry as the distribution of Scriptures. The church presentation is foremost a relationship-builder for The Gideons with the pastor and congregation—enhancing prayer support, use of the GideonCard Bible Program, Friends of Gideons, and membership.

There is tremendous work yet to be done as new countries and camps remain to be opened at the Lord's timing and millions wait for a copy of His Word.

Church presentations provide an ideal avenue for local church members to uniquely express their compassion for the lost. As a result, they make a difference and have an eternal impact on the lives of others across the globe.

TODAY'S CHALLENGES FOR THE GIDEON CHURCH PRESENTER

The Gideons International is at a transition point as its members update our church presentations to resonate with today's congregations. The Association must communicate the unchanging relevance of the Word of God and how the uniqueness of The Gideons International answers that need.

Gideons must connect with fellow Christians in ways that capture their attention and encourage them to act. People need to know where they have been, where they are going, and where they need to be. In churches today, worship services can vary greatly in style. Gideons must make presentations that fit seamlessly into the style of worship for each church. If not, Gideons will find themselves not being invited back to churches.

Gideon church presentations typically account for approximately one-third of the total funds received in the USA. More Gideon presenters and more prayer partners are needed to join these efforts.

God's Word states in Ecclesiastes 3:7, this is "a time to speak."

2—KEY COMPONENTS

PREPARING YOUR PRESENTATION OUTLINE

During the speaker qualification process, you must first submit an outline for review. Your qualifying presentation must be ten minutes long, and the outline should incorporate each of the following elements:

- Proper use of Scripture verses and samples of God's Word
- Attention-getter/opening
- Gideon informational statement
- Use of current testimonies
- The closing statement (call to action)

THE PROPER USE OF SCRIPTURE VERSES AND SAMPLES OF GOD'S WORD

- Gideons are visitors in the pulpit; it is not our place to teach, preach, or promote doctrine.
- Prayerfully consider what Scripture verses to share and how to use them.
- Select Scripture verses carefully and be sensitive to the versions used in each church you visit. Any Scriptures you use should come from the King James or English Standard Version.
- Take Scriptures with you to show during your presentation—perhaps one Bible and one New Testament.

THE ATTENTION-GETTER AND OPENING

You need to captivate your audience in the first 15 seconds—or you can lose them. The difference between an average Gideon presenter and the best Gideon presenters is often found in the use of an effective attention-getter and in sharing testimonies. Here are some attention-getting tips:

- This first statement needs to be strong or unusual to capture the audience.
- Present your attention-getter clearly and confidently, in a different tone and character from what follows it. You might achieve this impact by volume, tone and inflection of your voice, and/or words chosen.
- The best attention-getters are short, emphatic statements from testimonies about people saved through reading a Gideon-placed Scripture. (See samples section.)
- Be careful not to alter the facts of a testimony. However, longer testimonies can be shortened. Be sure to include locations of where the testimony took place to keep your presentation authentic.
- Do not start your message by thanking the pastor, commenting on how glad you are to be at the church, or discussing other extraneous matters. You will have time later in your presentation to express your gratitude.

THE GIDEON INFORMATIONAL STATEMENT

The informational statement informs the congregation of important facts about the ministry of The Gideons to help them understand what we do. Make sure the facts you share are both interesting and useful to your audience. Do not become bogged down in statistics. In general, the Informational Statement should take approximately 60–90 seconds.

Three Key Elements of the Informational Statement

1. Who we are

This statement should be made early in the message, after the attention-getter and opening testimony. Include these facts:

- We are born-again Christians.
- We are business and professional men.
- We are members of local churches.

2. What we do

Present a clear statement of what makes us different from every other ministry (see samples section). Include at least one statistic about our distributions. Bear in mind that our purpose of winning the lost does not make us unique. Our associating together for service, our personal witnessing, and our Scripture distribution efforts do.

3. Why we do what we do

Clearly identify the passion that drives the ministry. That passion is the desire to see lost people come to Christ. Isaiah 55:11 assures us that God's Word does not return void. We are making a global impact on a local basis.

Always give God the glory and point the congregation toward Jesus. Do not seek to elevate yourself or The Gideons.

USE OF TESTIMONIES

Testimonies are the heart of your Gideon presentation. Congregations are captivated by the testimonies we share. These examples of how Scripture changes lives illustrate the importance of our ministry in ways that other elements of our presentation cannot. Current testimonies show the impact our ministry is having.

There is greater value in using more short testimonies than one longer testimony. Using multiple testimonies reinforces the effectiveness of the ministry and shows that many people are being reached. Be tactful and sensitive when sharing unusual testimonies, such as someone contemplating suicide. There may be people in the congregation who had to deal with similar tragic experiences regarding friends or family.

We want to share testimonies that drive home the point that Gideon-distributed Scriptures provided by local churches help win others to Christ. Include local and international testimonies.

While some people may respond to salvation testimonies from local school or hotel distributions, others may be motivated by testimonies from other countries.

Tell each testimony as a narrative, just like you would share it with a friend. Do not read a testimony. Call them “testimonies.” Do not refer to testimonies as “stories” in your presentation.

If you’re new to Gideon church presentations, choose testimonies that move you personally. This will help you tell them in a way that makes them compelling to others. The blog and *theConnection* regularly post new testimonies. *The Gideon* magazine and your own experiences are other great sources of testimonies. Use recent testimonies. Churches want to know where we’ve been lately. Getting out on all available distributions helps keep your testimonies fresh.

THE CLOSING STATEMENT

The close is the final component of your presentation, and it is of vital importance. Your goal is to motivate the congregation to do something specific and then smoothly pass the pulpit back to the pastor.

A sample transition is as follows: “So, you might ask yourself, *how can I help?* What can I do to help put God’s Word into the hands of millions of people around the world?”

A. Prayer

Perhaps the greatest measure of success for a Gideon presentation is the extent to which people are moved to pray regularly for The Gideons. Include a call to prayer support for The Gideons in every presentation. Here is a sample statement:

“Your daily prayers for the worldwide ministry of The Gideons International are vital to our ability to continue to put the Word of God into the hands of a lost and dying world.”

B. Giving/Offerings

Make sure the pastor has agreed that an offering may be taken and, if so, how the offering will be received. We will make a presentation about The Gideons even if an offering cannot be received for Scriptures. The following is a sample statement asking for an offering:

“At the close of the service, you will have the opportunity to help provide Scriptures to be placed by Gideons here in [your city’s name] and around the world. You can make a check payable to “The Gideons International” or a credit card form is available in your church bulletin insert. Remember, for an investment of less than a dollar and twenty cents, you can provide for the purchase and placement of a Scripture somewhere in the world. This includes all the costs of getting a Scripture into the hands of someone who needs it.”

C. Thanking the Pastor

As soon as you have finished your call to action, look at the pastor, thank him/her for allowing you the opportunity to share about The Gideons, and leave the pulpit to return to your seat. The following is an effective “thanking the pastor” statement:

“Pastor, thank you for the opportunity to share about the impact your prayers and donations are making through the worldwide ministry of The Gideons International. Congregation, thank you for your attention. It’s been a privilege to participate in your worship service today. God bless you.”

D. Be Sure to End on Time.

Nothing you could say in your presentation is worth the risk of speaking overtime. Be prepared to give presentations of varying lengths. The difference between a 10-minute and 20-minute presentation is simply the number and length of testimonies shared. Each presentation should include the same core information about our ministry.

3—USE OF MEDIA

Gideon presenters may choose to use media (video or PowerPoint) in their presentations. Presenters must qualify to use media, and this document covers what is required regarding video and PowerPoint.

VIDEO

QUALIFYING TO USE VIDEO

If you would like to use video to supplement your Gideon message, you must qualify to use it. Simply include it in your presentation when you qualify. If you have already qualified to conduct church presentations under the current guidelines, and later wish to add video to your presentation, you must requalify using video.

Use only approved videos provided on *theConnection* (see the list on page 2).

USING VIDEO

Our philosophy still places the appeal and power of a talented Gideon presenter above the impact of media. However, some churches prefer visual media with their presentations. Offering these churches a Gideon presentation that includes media may increase our impact in these churches.

Remember, video is a supplement to your presentation, but it should not become your presentation. It is simply an appealing way to enhance your personal presentation.

While the use of approved videos in a Gideon presentation can have a powerful impact, technical problems can result in an unfavorable presentation. Video should only be used by Gideons who are experienced with video resources and who can seamlessly blend video into their presentations.

The use of video is subject to the following limitations:

- The pastor authorizes the use of video when your presentation is arranged.
- The church uses video technology regularly in the environment where the presentation will be made.
- The church has all of the necessary equipment (screen, DVD player, and audio) and media personnel to facilitate your use of video.
- Make sure the church has a qualified media person to assist you with your video presentation.

Even if you're well versed in using video, it may be challenging to use in a Gideon presentation, particularly since you will need to rely on the support of a church media person or team. Work out the timing of the video with the church's media personnel well ahead of your presentation. To avoid the need to signal someone to play a video during your presentation, provide the media personnel with a copy of your presentation (with the video timing indicated) so they can follow along.

Be prepared by always having backup testimonies you can deliver should you encounter any video

difficulties, and always be prepared to deliver your presentation without video if necessary.

Here are some additional tips regarding the use of video in your Gideon presentation:

- Remember, your use of video depends on the length of the presentation the church allows. Never exceed the time given to you by the pastor.
- If you choose to play the video testimonies, select the one or two testimonies that will best work with your presentation.
- A video often times serves as an excellent attention-getter. Be certain to prepare transition statements to take you to and from your video segments for a smooth presentation.
- While video clips are impactful, we must remember the purpose of the presentation, which is to move God's people to act on behalf of The Gideons in prayer, in financial support, and in membership.

VIDEO RESOURCES

Video-qualified speakers now have many videos to choose from when preparing to speak in a church. You can download church videos from the Church Ministry page on *theConnection*, including:

- *More to the Story* (3:00)
- *It Changes Everything* (1:11)
- *With Every Heartbeat* (3:18)
- *Love in Action* (2:33)
- Country Profile Videos—Brazil (2:47), India (2:14), Nigeria (2:20), Philippines (2:01)
- Five Video Testimonies—Beth Kroa (2:21), Christopher Yuan (2:22), Leroy Cannady (2:58), Michael Williams (2:24), Pat Shelton (2:54)
- The Life Book (:53)
- *Lord I Need You* (3:14)
- *The Ministry of Gideons* (2:48)

VIDEO ONLY PRESENTATIONS

The inspirational videos are also appropriate for use in churches that may not allow a live Gideon presenter and that use video on a regular basis. The approved use of these videos has expanded to include the following churches:

- Any church with at least 1,000 people attending the worship service that requests the video where a live Gideon presentation cannot be obtained.
- A church of any size where a live Gideon presentation cannot be obtained that requests the video, with the approval of the state president or state church ministry coordinator and USA zone trustee.

When only a video is used, ideally, a Gideon should introduce it.

These videos are not to be provided to a pastor to show without a Gideon present. Our goal is to have a Gideon presenter introduced as a representative of The Gideons—and for him to introduce the video.

If an offering is acceptable in the church, the Gideon, or pastor, can make that appeal after the video is shown.

POWERPOINT

QUALIFYING TO USE POWERPOINT

If you would like to use PowerPoint to supplement your Gideon message, you must qualify to use it. Simply add it to your presentation when you qualify. If you have already qualified to conduct church presentations under the current guidelines, and later wish to add PowerPoint to your presentation, you must requalify using PowerPoint.

You must submit a copy of your PowerPoint slides with your written outline. Approved slides can be found on the SPEAKUP365 Resource Page. The use of personal slides is now acceptable, if approved in advance by the state church ministry coordinator or his designee. If you qualify with PowerPoint, you are automatically qualified to use video.

USING POWERPOINT

Your PowerPoint should not be the focus of the congregation's attention. We want them to see it, but it should not include elements that could be distracting to the viewer. PowerPoint is simply a supportive backdrop to illustrate a point. Pictures are stronger than bullet points. Always use a font size greater than 30 point if you use text.

PowerPoint should only be used by Gideons well versed in how to prepare and assemble a PowerPoint presentation. While the use of appropriate pictures in a Gideon presentation can have a powerful impact, inappropriate pictures, or technical problems encountered in using PowerPoint, can hamper it.

The use of PowerPoint is subject to the following limitations:

- The pastor authorizes the use of PowerPoint.
- The church uses similar technology regularly in the environment where the presentation will be made
- The church has all the necessary equipment (computer, projector, screen, audio).
- The church has qualified personnel to facilitate the use of PowerPoint.

Even if you're well versed in using PowerPoint, it may be challenging for you to use in a Gideon presentation. Advancing slides is a primary concern. Most likely, you will not control the computer system—nor will your prayer partner.

You should not signal someone to advance the program for every slide. Doing so is annoying and detracts from the emotional power of your presentation.

If the PowerPoint malfunctions for any reason, don't give it undue attention or make apologies. Keep going and complete your presentation within your original time limit.

POWERPOINT RESOURCES

You may use the provided ten-minute presentation on the SPEAKUP365 resource page or use slides from it to create shorter presentations. Or, select and arrange slides from the slide library under Resources on *theConnection*. We recommend starting with the slide that has the logo and our name and ending with the slide that has our logo, name, and Web address.

Select the slides you wish to use, putting them in the order that is appropriate for your message. As you arrange your slides, never use "flashy" transitions; instead, provide a smooth, subtle transition from one slide to the next, with fading.

4—SAMPLE ATTENTION-GETTERS AND TESTIMONIES

Testimonies are the heart of your Gideon presentation. Sharing a variety of short testimonies has proven to be more effective than emphasizing longer ones. The following suggested testimonies could each be presented in 60 to 90 seconds. Or, choose your own testimonies from sources such as The Gideons blog, *The Gideon* magazine, *theConnection*, the *Information Bulletin* or your personal experiences.

Note: The bold-faced statement at the beginning of each testimony below can be used as an attention-getter to begin your presentation.

PRISON DISTRIBUTIONS

Example #1: “Doctors predicted I would die.”

In fact, the Ukrainian prison doctor told Gennady Zhevets he was surprised he was still alive. Gennady’s 27 years of drug dependence and reckless living had left him with stage-four AIDS, liver cirrhosis, tuberculosis, and other diseases. He could no longer walk, so he lay in his prison cell staring at the ceiling.

The only consolation he had was a small New Testament from The Gideons. One day as he was reading Psalm 90, Gennady sincerely called to God asking for help. As the days passed, he noticed a return of his appetite, and he slowly began to recover.

During his next medical examination, the doctor found the cirrhosis and tuberculosis were gone. He credited it to “spontaneous self-healing.” However, Gennady knew it was Jesus who healed him.

After his release from prison, Gennady met former drug addicts who had become believers. They invited him to church, where he accepted Christ and devoted his life to ministry. Today, he is the director of a rehabilitation center for people seeking help to recover from drug and alcohol addictions. God has blessed him with a wife and three children.

Here’s how Gennady sums up his story, “Previously, prison was my home. Now I regularly visit prisons as a chaplain. I explain to prisoners we cannot save ourselves. We need Jesus as our Savior. Doctors predicted I would die, and I really did die—to sin.”

Example #2: “I want to know Him!”

That’s what Arturo Laredo said after reading a New Testament provided by The Gideons. This is his story:

“My cousin approached me with a special job offer and I accepted. I would receive \$3,000 to store two tons of marijuana in Mexico. I also had to hide it in cars with special compartments in order to cross the border and deliver it to El Paso, Texas. The smell was very strong at home, and even my children and my wife smelled like marijuana.

We had no trouble delivering the drugs. In November, my cousin came to me again, insisting on one last trip. It was before Christmas, and I needed the money so I said, 'Let’s do it.'

However, when I crossed the border this time, U.S. immigration agents were waiting. They arrested me for drug trafficking, and I was sentenced to five years in a federal prison in Texas.

One day, some men called Gideons arrived at the prison. They gave me a little blue book. It was a New Testament. After reading Hebrews 1:1–4 I said to myself, ‘I want to know Him!’

I began to seek God. Eventually I said, ‘I want to serve you Lord,’ and received Jesus Christ into my heart.

I finished my sentence, left prison, and started my own business. Now where I used to store two tons of marijuana I keep New Testaments because today I serve the Lord in The Gideons International. My house is where my camp stores Scriptures. To God be the glory!”

Example #3: Francisco Gomez started using drugs when he was ten years old.

He got into a life of crime, and on two different occasions, tried to kill his entire family. He was sent to jail four times and finally received a 73-year sentence. Gideons visited his prison and made a presentation to the inmates. When Francisco saw what the Gideons were doing, he became enraged. He rushed forward, hitting them and cursing them.

The guards got him under control and took him back to his cell. He was filled with anger as he reflected on what had happened. He tore off his jacket and threw it against the wall. As he did, he saw a book fall out of the pocket. He picked up the book and discovered it was a New Testament. He couldn’t believe it— one of the Gideons must have shoved the New Testament into his pocket during the attack!

He suddenly felt drawn to read the book. The Word of God began to speak to his heart, and within a few hours, he repented of his sins and cried out for the Lord to take over his life.

He shared the Gospel with his Mom during one of her visits, and she pleaded with the judge for mercy. God set this man free, both spiritually and physically. He is now a pastor in Seville, Spain, serving the Lord and preaching the Gospel.

HOTEL DISTRIBUTIONS

Example #1: “I decided to divorce my wife.”

So said John Baily about the start of his journey to Christ. Here is the rest of the story in his own words.

“Many years ago, I decided to divorce my wife. I left her, my home, and my three children in Pensacola, and I traveled to Greeley, Colorado. I started my new life living in a motel room.

One morning around 2 a.m., I found myself wide awake and unable to sleep. In the nightstand by my bed was a Gideon-placed Bible. I picked it up and began reading. In the book of Malachi, I read in chapter 2 that men of Israel were divorcing their wives and marrying women of nations around them. God, through the prophet Malachi, rebuked them in verse 16, saying, ‘For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her...covers his garment with violence...so guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.’

That same morning, I left my motel room and went home. I reconciled with my wife and family, and I have resisted any thought of separation or divorce ever since. May 7th of this year was our 56th wedding anniversary. I am truly grateful and forever indebted to God and The Gideons.”

Example #2: Arvind planned to kill his family.

Arvind Ram and his family were on their way home from watching his son, Neelkash, win the Fiji Junior Golf Open Championship several years ago. They stopped to spend the night at a motel in the village of Nadi.

As his wife and children slept, Arvind paced up and down the floor of their room. Despite the win, he was burdened so heavily with problems he could not sleep. He was deeply in debt, and he had decided to kill his family and himself. However, he spotted a Gideon-placed Bible and felt compelled to pick it up and open it. Soon he was reading into the early hours of the morning. The Holy Spirit convicted him of his sins and his need for a Savior. He gave his life to Jesus that morning in the hotel room, another win.

God had intervened to save him and his family, and his suicide plan was thwarted. His life was miraculously transformed, and God led him out of his debts. Arvind later led all his family members to Christ. The promise of Isaiah 55:11 is fulfilled: God’s Word does not return to Him void.

Example #3: “I was part of the proverbial rat race.”

That’s how Richard described himself, and he admits that his family had to deal with a tense, short-tempered man who came home late every evening.

Late one afternoon during a business trip, Richard checked into a hotel. He was filled with worry and tension about the meetings scheduled for the next day and stressed about his life in general. Around 3:00 a.m., he woke up with a feeling of despair, shaking uncontrollably. He didn’t know what was happening to him, and he was scared. He pulled open the nightstand drawer and took out the Bible he knew would be there.

After reading that Bible for over two hours, he finally got out of bed, fell to his knees, and asked God to take charge of his life. He knew he couldn’t do it anymore on his own. He said, “I remember a feeling like none I have ever experienced coming over me. I was crying and asking God to please help me fix my life. In the morning, I was weak and drained, but somehow, I felt different. I was sure the Holy Spirit was with me in that room.”

Richard started going to church, never missing a Sunday, and began praying to God every day. He is active in his church, first becoming a trustee, and then an elder. Richard recently received the calling to become a Gideon and now serves the Lord by spreading the Word of God.

HOSPITAL/MEDICAL DISTRIBUTIONS

Example #1: “They could not believe I was always so happy.”

Carol Coble was in the hospital in Washington state, confined to bed rest for two months because of toxemia she developed during pregnancy. She could do nothing but lay on her side for two months. In her room, she found a New Testament placed by The Gideons. Every day for several hours she read and re-read Psalms. It was very comforting for her, and despite her situation, she had an extremely

positive outlook.

About one month into the hospitalization, a psychologist was sent in to visit her. The doctors and nurses were apparently stumped by her optimism. Carol said, “They could not believe I was always so happy. I had to explain I was reading and praying daily. The New Testament was my greatest companion, I told him, and I trusted God that all would be well.”

Carol’s baby faced a long list of potential problems including physical limitations and brain disorders. However, when Carol’s daughter, Lindsey, was born, she had absolutely no challenges and was able to go home four weeks later. Today, Lindsey is a beautiful young mother of two. Her mom Carol calls her a miracle from God and continues to thank Him and The Gideons for helping her get through that difficult time.

Example #2: “I don’t want to die and go to Hell.”

Randy was in the hospital in critical care. He was 39 years old and had very serious health problems. He was in such poor health he could not even move himself in the bed and was totally dependent on others for all his needs.

Earlier that same day, the doctors had talked with Randy about agreeing to a Do Not Resuscitate Order. Randy’s mother wanted him to agree to this order, but Randy did not understand why she was so willing to give up on him.

A Gideon who was distributing New Testaments at the hospital that evening was asked by a nurse to visit with Randy. During that conversation, Randy said he did not want to die and go to Hell. He claimed he had never hurt anyone but had done some really bad things in his life. He felt the end was near and there was no hope. He said he wished he had made something of his life and been a better person, but now it was too late.

The Gideon told him it was not too late, and he could still turn his life around if he would put his faith in God. Then the Gideon opened a New Testament and shared the Gospel with Randy. Romans 10:13 really got his attention: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” After asking several questions, Randy prayed and asked God to forgive him, and he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

SCHOOL/COLLEGE DISTRIBUTIONS

Example #1: “I will prove to you from your book that your God is not real.”

That was Erik’s response when a friend challenged him to read the book of John. However, he first needed a Bible.

Erik remembered a New Testament he had received from a Gideon several years ago in high school in Sweden. He searched until he found it in a drawer where it had been for years. As he started reading the Gospel of John, questions began to fill his mind: *What if Jesus is who He says He is?*

Soon after, he agreed to attend a Christian youth rally with some Christian friends who had invited him. This rally was his first time experiencing prayer and attending a church service. He thought, “God, if You are real, show Yourself to me. I need to know.”

Erik then experienced a strange unfamiliar presence. He accepted forgiveness for persuading people to doubt God over the last 19 years of his life, and he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

During his first year as a Christian, Erik began reading his New Testament once through each month. Feeling a call to missions, Erik then traveled around the world spreading the Gospel, eventually ending up in Australia. He now teaches at a Bible College in Sydney.

Example #2: “I just want to say thank you!”

We recently received this message from a happy mom:

Today my daughter was given a New Testament outside her middle school in Round Rock, Texas. When she got in the car with it, her friend’s mom told me it was a Mormon book. This concerned me because we are Evangelical Christians, so I asked to look at it. To my happy surprise, it was a New Testament from The Gideons! I drove down the street to see who was passing them out, and I saw several men with boxes, offering copies of God’s Word to the young people as they passed by. I am thrilled the Gideons chose my daughter’s school to pass out the Word of God. I am praying for her school each week, and I will pray those kids who received a New Testament will read it. May there be many changed lives as a result of your gifts! I just want to say, thank you!

Example #3: Karem was a secret Christian.

She was born in Guyana to a Hindu family. She attended the temple frequently with her father, but the many gods were confusing to her. One day, Gideons distributed New Testaments at her school. She started reading and suddenly had a new understanding of God. Reading about the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ moved her to tears. She asked the Lord Jesus to forgive her, and she received Him as her personal Savior.

From then on, Karem had peace and joy she could not explain. However, she didn’t share this with anyone and remained a secret Christian. Three years after she trusted the Lord, she was baptized at a nearby church. Her secret was out.

Her father was very angry, but through it all, the Lord was her constant friend. Two of Karem’s sisters became Christians. Later, her mother and other siblings also trusted the Lord. The Lord used a Gideon-provided New Testament to save one soul who had very little opportunity to hear the Gospel and continued the work to reach others in her family.

POLICE, MILITARY, PERSONAL WITNESSING

Example #1: It changed his life.

David is a police officer in San Antonio, Texas. Early in his career, he started to realize he was only temporarily solving a problem by arresting people and taking them to jail. Many of them were going to get out of jail and go back to doing what had gotten them arrested in the first place.

The problem was not the crime they were caught committing. That was only a symptom. The problem was whatever was inside of them causing them to think committing crime was acceptable.

David started buying cases of New Testaments and providing them to the people he booked into jail. One day, he responded to a call about a disturbance. He parked on the opposite side of the street a couple of houses away. When he returned to his patrol car, he noticed a man mowing his

lawn. He stopped mowing and approached the patrol car.

He asked if David remembered him. David replied he did not. The man then said David had arrested him a couple of years earlier for cocaine possession. David looked at the man's home and yard and said it seemed he was doing a lot better now than before. The man responded that he had received a New Testament from David when David had arrested him, and it had changed his life.

Example #2: God told her to give His Word to soldiers, including the Boko Haram.

Elizabeth lives in the part of Nigeria ravaged by war and rampant with terrorism. Her home is in an area where every church has been burned by the Boko Haram. One night, Elizabeth, her husband and five children, and her entire village had to flee in order to escape certain death. For many months, she had no idea if her own mother was safe.

Several months later, her family was able to return to their village. While she was grateful to find her mother alive, she learned that some relatives and many people from her village had been killed the night of their escape.

Miraculously, Elizabeth's home was intact. As she walked from room to room, checking the status of her family's belongings, Elizabeth found a box of New Testaments! She immediately began to pray for the Lord to show her exactly what to do with the Scriptures. She felt they were like gold in her hands.

The Lord told her to give them to the military. So that's exactly what she did. One-by-one, she gave them to the armed soldiers as she came across them in the village. This was an especially dangerous mission for Elizabeth because the Boko Haram integrates with the village people by day. Some of the New Testaments Elizabeth gave out ended up in the hands of the Boko Haram.

With tears running down her cheeks, Elizabeth said, "Some of the Boko Haram soldiers are coming to Christ!" That's what happens when the power of God's Word meets the courage and obedience of God's people.

Example #3: "The last bullet was for me."

Gary grew up in a small town and learned the history of Christ, but never understood a personal relationship with Christ was possible. As he grew older, he got involved with alcohol and drugs and joined a local motorcycle gang. After numerous run-ins with the law, he was spiraling out of control. One night, while out of his mind on drugs, Gary planned to end his life and make a mark on society. He loaded an automatic rifle and went to kill some people at a local bar that had caused him trouble. Here is the rest of the story in his own words:

"The last bullet was for me. On the way there, it was extremely quiet, and I heard a voice say plainly, 'Don't do this, as I have plans for you!' I pulled to the side of the road, flipped on the interior light, and to my surprise, no one was there. Then came an incredible flood of feelings from sorrow to shame. At the same time, a certain peace came over me—Jesus is real! He still wanted a relationship with me even after all I had become, and I cried out for Jesus to help me.

After wiping the tears from my eyes, I drove back to my apartment and found a little New Testament that my dad, a Gideon in Wellsburg, West Virginia, had given me years ago. I turned to the back page and prayed to receive Jesus Christ as my personal Savior.

Now I'm in seminary and ordained as a chaplain in a Christian motorcycle club. I still use a small New Testament from The Gideons to witness to people.”

THE LIFE BOOK

Example #1: “We had to bring more and more and more.”

Amanda, a student in Missouri, shared this experience with The Life Book:

“When I was passing out The Life Book at my school, so many kids wanted them that we ran out! Then, about a week after everyone who wanted one got one, a ton of people were coming up to me and saying that they loved The Life Book and wanted to give some to their brothers and sisters and cousins, so we had to bring more and more and more and more!”

Example #2: “I have given out 55 so far, and I'm still giving.”

Robyn, a student in North Carolina, has discovered how easy it is to share the Good News. She says,

“God really placed it on my heart to reach out to as many people as I could by giving out The Life Book. I have given out 55 so far, and I'm still giving. Kids have come up to me saying how cool the book is, and how it has made some sort of impact in their lives. I decided also to give the book to my teachers and one of them wrote me a thank you note saying how much she loved me and how awesome The Life Book is and the message behind it. I thank God for the opportunity to make a difference in at least one person's life.”

Example #3: “I was terrified of someone rejecting me.”

Jalissa, who lives in New Jersey, was nervous about sharing The Life Book, but she isn't nervous anymore. Here is her story:

“This book has completely changed my thinking and outlook on other people. I'm a very shy person, and when my youth pastor gave us the challenge to go to school and hand out these books, I was terrified at the thought of someone rejecting me. But it did happen, and I got over it, and it was the people who I would never think would want the book, that actually asked me if I had any extra copies. I love this book. It has changed the lives of some people in my city, and it's such a blessing to witness the change.”

5—SAMPLE GIDEON INFORMATIONAL STATEMENTS

Example 1:

The Gideons International is an Association of born-again Christian business and professional men. Since 1899, our purpose has been sharing the Gospel with the world. Today, we are organized in some 200 countries, territories, and possessions, and we distribute Scriptures in over 95 languages.

We place Bibles and New Testaments in designated locations—places like hotels, motels, hospitals, and assisted living facilities. Through your ongoing contributions, we also distribute New Testaments to students in schools and colleges, to prisoners and to police, fire, and medical personnel—as well as to men and women in the armed forces.

As members of local churches like yours, Gideons visit congregations to let you know how God is using the seeds being sown. We are part of the local church and work in one spirit and one mind with believers like you to spread the Gospel around the world.

By God's grace, we placed and distributed almost 82 million Scriptures last year. What a true blessing: millions of people received Bibles and New Testaments in just a single year through your prayers and donations. And since 1908, we have placed more than 2 billion Scriptures around the world. The promise of Isaiah 55:11 is fulfilled, and God's Word does not return void as men, women, boys, and girls come to Christ through reading a Scripture placed by a Gideon.

Example 2:

Share God's Word and change lives...these few words really sum up what The Gideons International is all about.

For more than 100 years, Gideons, and the people who support us, have been striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel by sharing God's Word and helping to change lives around the world. We are unique in that our members live where they serve. We aren't just visitors in countries like Sudan, Nepal, Haiti, or Ukraine. Gideons live and work there . . . and share the Gospel.

Last year alone, Gideons distributed more than 82 million copies of God's Word around the world in more than 95 languages. We're reaching many in places like India, where Scripture distributions have increased dramatically and could grow even more if needed funds were available to provide the Scriptures. God is moving here at home, too. Just *[insert timeframe here]*, we provided *[insert quantity here]* copies of God's Word to *[insert description here]* at a local *[insert location here]*.

Presently, Gideons serve the Lord in some 200 countries, territories, and possessions—often going where individual churches and denominations can't. We are born-again members of local churches. As business and professional men in our communities, we simply want to make sure everyone has a chance to receive God's Word and know Jesus as Lord and Savior.

To do that, we visit churches to share the blessings God has provided through the distribution of Scriptures. And God's blessings are many. Isaiah 55:11 states that God's Word shall not return unto Him void. Through your support of The Gideons, God's Word is at work every minute of every day.

6—SAMPLE CLOSING STATEMENTS

Example #1:

So when will we begin our next Scripture distribution? Where will we go next? Even though we're placing more than two Scriptures every second, the need is even greater. You may be wondering how you can help.

Our number one need is prayer. Please pray for a steady flow of funds to purchase and place Scriptures and for open doors to the countries and communities that need them most. And, if God has placed it on your heart, I would ask you to consider a financial gift. Every Scripture we distribute—and every salvation testimony—is the result of the generosity of somebody just like you.

At the close of the service, you will have the opportunity to help purchase Scriptures to be placed by Gideons in this area and around the world. *[Please confirm that an offering will be taken.]* When you give to The Gideons International, you help impact lives for Christ. For an investment of less than a dollar and twenty cents, you can provide for the purchase and placement of a Scripture somewhere in the world. This includes all the costs of getting a Scripture into the hands of someone who needs it. Likewise, your donation of about one hundred and twenty dollars can result in a box of 100 New Testaments reaching men, women, and children in a country where many people struggle to survive...and they can't afford God's Word.

Gideon-placed hotel Bibles cost just five dollars each and have the potential to reach more than 2,300 people over the course of about six years in a hotel room.

For your convenience, you can make a check payable to "The Gideons International" or use the credit card form available in your bulletin insert. *[Make certain bulletin inserts will be permitted.]* There's a way for you to give right now using your smartphone, or—if you want to magnify your impact—you can set up a monthly gift.

You can also help purchase Scriptures throughout the year by using GideonCards. The cards *[bold up one card]* can be used to recognize an important event, let someone know you're thinking of them, or place Scriptures in memory of a loved one. Look for the GideonCard display in your lobby. *[Make sure there is a display and that it is up-to-date.]* You'll find more details on the cards in your Gideon bulletin insert. *[Again, confirm the inserts are acceptable and that the church has a card display.]*

Pastor, thank you for the opportunity to share about the impact of your prayers and donations to the worldwide ministry of The Gideons International. Congregation, thank you for your attention. It's been a privilege to participate in your worship service today. God bless you.

Example #2:

Gideons distribute at least two Scriptures per second...every second of every day.

And as I've shared, these Scriptures make a real difference in people's lives. So why am I here today? Because despite the fact that our ministry is accomplishing so much through your support, the need for God's Word is even greater...and it continues to grow.

The testimonies you've heard me share today were made possible by gifts from people just like you. That is how The Gideons has accomplished this ministry for more than 100 years—as part of the church. We are an extension of your church's ministry to the world. We go many places where individual churches and denominations can't.

Please pray today for The Gideons International and keep us in your prayers. Pray that God will provide "open doors" for Scripture distributions . . . for more funds to purchase Scriptures . . . and more Gideons to distribute them.

Next, if God leads you to do so, please consider giving to The Gideons. When you give to The Gideons International, you help impact lives for Christ. For an investment of less than a dollar and twenty cents, you can provide for the purchase and placement of a Scripture somewhere in the world. This includes all the costs of getting a Scripture into the hands of someone who needs it.

A Gideon-placed hotel Bible like this *[bold one up]* costs just five dollars. And it has the potential to reach more than 2,300 people during its life in a hotel room.

We also place New Testaments *[bold one up]* in schools, prisons, hospitals, and more.

Your donation of about one hundred and twenty-dollars can result in a box of 100 New Testaments reaching men, women, and children in a country where many people struggle to survive...and they can't afford God's Word.

At the close of the service, you'll have the opportunity to provide Scriptures. *[Please confirm that an offering will be taken.]*

For your convenience, you can make a check payable to "The Gideons International" or use the credit card form that is available in your bulletin insert. *[Make certain bulletin inserts will be permitted.]* There is a way for you to give right now using your smartphone, or—if you want to magnify your impact—you can set up a monthly gift.

There's another exciting way you can put God's Word into searching hands and pay tribute to someone close to you: GideonCards. The cards *[bold up one card]* can be used to recognize an important event, let someone know you're thinking of them, or place Scriptures in memory of a loved one. Look for the card display in your lobby. *[Make sure there is a display and that it is up-to-date.]* You'll find more details on GideonCards in your Gideon bulletin insert. *[Again, confirm the inserts are acceptable and that the church has a card display.]*

[Turn to pastor] Thank you, pastor *[turn back to audience]* and congregation, for granting me this time to talk about The Gideons—and the impact of your prayer and gifts around the world. Please keep The Gideons in your prayers. May God bless you.

7—PRESENTATION CONTENT REMINDERS

Church presentations should include important information about The Gideons International. Here are some specific content reminders, to be used if appropriate (check with the pastor). These can be shortened for use in the closing statement (see previous section for examples).

Keep in mind that the items listed below are not necessarily mentioned in every church presentation. Please do not feel compelled to mention each item, but rather discuss items that are appropriate for the specific congregation. (See Know Your Audience in Tips on Polishing Your Public Speaking.)

Ministry Scope

To be more accurate in how we reference the locations where we serve, please use the phrase “countries, territories, and possessions.” Also, when referencing languages, the correct number is “more than 95.” Here is a sample statement of ministry scope:

“Today, we are organized in 201 countries, territories, and possessions, and we distribute Scriptures in more than 95 languages.”

Financial Appeal

Scripture Funds are derived from church presentations, the GideonCard Bible Program, and individual contributions. The allocation of funds from church presentations and the GideonCard Bible Program allow for all costs associated with getting a Scripture from the printer into the hands of a Gideon for distribution. This may include such costs as order processing, freight, customs duty, and other expenses. Therefore, the statement, “100% of your contribution is used to purchase Scriptures” is incorrect and should not be used. Please do not use 100% in this connotation, as it may be misleading, albeit innocently. Here is the proper funding statement:

“For an investment of less than a dollar and twenty cents, you can provide for the purchase and placement of a Scripture somewhere in the world. This includes all costs of getting a Scripture into the hands of someone who needs it.”

Recurring Donations

Use of the church bulletin insert (Item 209) is a very important part of the presentation. The church ministry chairman arranges to have an appropriate number of the inserts delivered to the church two weeks before the scheduled presentation (that allows church personnel time to have them inserted into the regular church bulletin or order of worship). The church presenter calls the congregation’s attention to the insert. The following are two examples of sample verbiage to be used as part of the offering appeal:

Example 1

You should have received one of these special inserts with your bulletin (order of worship) as you arrived. You can simply fill this out and leave it with me as you leave. In fact, there is a QR code there which you can scan with your smart phone and make a donation for God’s Word. You can also make a monthly donation by simply checking the appropriate box. Just think, for as little as about \$10.00 a month, Gideons will place 100 copies of God’s Word into hands on your behalf.”

Example 2

You may be thinking, “I would like to provide the Word of God into open hands on an ongoing basis.” You can do that today. There is an easy-to-use section of your bulletin insert that gives you that opportunity right now. Simply fill in the attached form indicating your desire for a monthly gift, utilizing a credit or debit card. Simple as that. Or you can use your smartphone or other mobile device with the QR (Quick Response) code on the back page. You can use either of those methods without even moving from where you are sitting right now. This makes it easier to reach people with the Gospel.

Gideon Membership

In some churches, it may be appropriate to mention the opportunity for men to fulfill the commission of our Lord as a member of The Gideons International. Making a suggestion of membership should only be done in churches that are very supportive of The Gideons.

If a suggestion of membership is made, it must be very short and positive. Focus on the impact of being involved in distributing and placing the Word of God. The following is a suggested Gideon membership statement:

“If you are a business or professional man, and you would like to learn more about the joy of putting the Word of God into the hands of people here in [your area], see me after the service.”

The GideonCard Bible Program

When the GideonCard Bible Program is being used in the church, presenters should share the following information with congregations as a part of the offering appeal:

GideonCards enable you to provide Scriptures in memory, or in recognition, of a friend or loved one. You can also use these unique cards to acknowledge a special day or occasion in someone’s life, or simply to say, ‘I’m praying for you.’

Each GideonCard provides a brief testimony—just like the ones I’ve shared here today—of how God has worked in someone’s life as a result of receiving a Scripture from the Gideons. These Scriptures, placed in areas around the world served by The Gideons, provide a lasting memorial.

Consider using a GideonCard to memorialize the life of a loved one. Bibles placed in memory of a person enable the witness of a believer who is with the Lord to continue.

- *Their family will be blessed by receiving your card and knowing of your memorial gift.*
- *Also, some persons, somewhere in the world, unknown to you, will be blessed by receiving the copies of God’s Word that you have provided.*
- *And, you will be blessed by knowing that your donation through the use of GideonCards will be used of God to transform the lives of many for the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Life Book

If applicable, the following statement should be made toward the close of the presentation:

You would be interested to know that we now have a new avenue of distribution to help reach the youth of America. This unique opportunity, which is facilitated through church youth pastors, involves an in-school, peer-to-peer distribution by Christian high school youth to their classmates of an attractive booklet known as The Life Book.

The Life Book began in 2010. Since then, over 29 million copies of The Life Book, which contains the Gospel of John, have been provided to some 2 million Christian youth for distribution to their peers. The Gospel of Mark is also now available.

This avenue of distribution further strengthens our long-standing program of placing the Word of God into the hands of young people.

The People's Republic of China

Here is the specific, approved information to be used in church presentations (if appropriate):

The Gideons International is legally distributing Scriptures in The People's Republic of China, and to date has distributed more than 3.7 million copies in 14 different provinces. These Scriptures are distributed by international Gideon teams and also made available for distribution through Christian-owned businesses. We praise God for the open doors across Asia where one out of every three people lives. For example, last year over a million Scriptures per month were placed in the country of India, and we thank you for helping make this possible.

Friends of Gideons

The International Cabinet has approved the following message to be shared regarding Friends of Gideons:

You may be interested in the benefits of registering as a Friend of Gideons. Information can be found at www.gideons.org/friends. If interested, please see me at the conclusion of the service.

Gideon Blog

If appropriate for the congregation's demographic, speakers may elect to mention the Gideon blog as a way to keep up with what Gideons are doing around the world. The URL is gideons.org/blog.