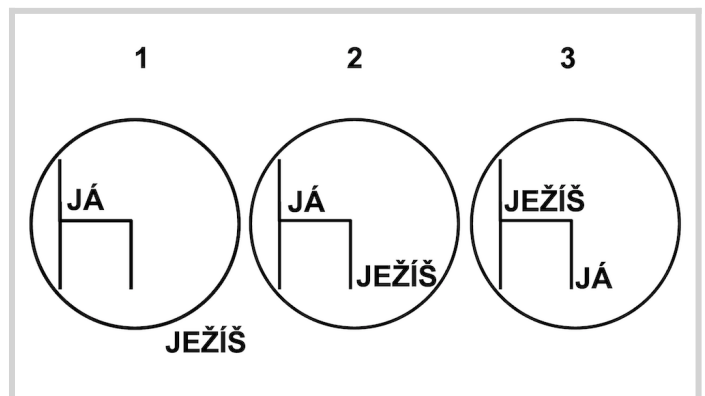


Bridges to People are tried many times, especially with atheists and agnostics. But how to share Jesus with religious people? If we negate their statements, they will declare us a sect. This tends to be their easiest defense. So we try to offer religious people something more than what they think they have. In addition to quotations from Scripture, they also need to hear **our stories from life with Jesus**, how he speaks to us and practically helps us.

The **Funnel** is a universal beginning. In our **lightning story**, we come to the question: „How are you doing with Jesus?“ Here we usually hear something about the grandmother or the parents who were taking our George to a church. „You know, one illustration helped me a lot.“ And then there is the drawing of the **bridge over the gap**, up to the example of the prayer: „Jesus, please **come, forgive me and guide me**. Are you going to say something like that to Jesus right now?“ A religious person usually has to „think it over“ or „has already said something like that“ or „says it every day“ – in the Lord’s Prayer: „forgive us our trespasses“.



Here it helps to draw another simple picture: „There is a very interesting mention in the Bible about three types of people. (For your information: 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3) One manages his life on his own and Jesus is completely out of his attention. The second type did somehow include Jesus in his life, but rather peripherally. Only the third gave Jesus the leadership of his life, follows Him and obeys. Which of those circles represents your life?“ Religious George usually identifies with the second circle, meaning that Jesus is „somehow“ present in his life. „And which circle would you ideally choose for your life?“ Don’t be surprised if religious George chooses the third circle! „It is great! So tell Him: Jesus, please come into my life, forgive me for everything bad and be my Lord.“ In the case of religious George, I deliberately use a stronger wording: „Be my Lord.“ Not just „guide me.“ it’s an ideal, when George chooses the third circle. However, some George wants to stay where he is – in his second circle. Here it is good to try the **first steps with the new believer** in the

sense that, according to the Holy Scriptures, everyone who makes Jesus their Lord, will get these. After boss explanation, I ask George again: „Do you want to say: Jesus, please come into my life, forgive me for everything bad and be my Lord?“

Some religious George says that he is already in the third circle because he prays or because he goes to church. „And do you think God has already forgiven you all your bad things?“ Only rarely will someone say a clear yes. Every now and then, when someone says yes, I respond, “That’s great! **And how did you get that forgiveness?**” Here I will hear something about confession, absolution, good works and so on. „Hm, that’s interesting. In the Holy Scriptures, there is this procedure for obtaining the forgiveness of sins.“ I open the 1st John 1:7-9 in the Bible or on my mobile phone and let George read it aloud: *The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* „George, **-according to this text-** what cleanses us from every sin?“ „The blood of Jesus!“ „And how can we **-according to this text-** receive the forgiveness of our sins?“ „When we confess them.“ I will add one more thing just to be sure : „It also seems very important to me, who **-according to this text-** forgives our sins? – God, who is faithful and just! George, have you already confessed your sins directly to God, who forgives us because of Jesus’ sacrifice?“

A pious person often talks about good deeds for which he hopes to be forgiven. „You know, George, God values good deeds very much! But read what St. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8-9: For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast. And here Saint Paul says (Ephesians 2:10) that we were created for good works! Good deeds are our mission, not merit for salvation!

In any case, we will **invite the religious George to Discovery** so that he can continue to be exposed to God’s Word and to life of Jesus’ disciples. And above all, **we pray for him.**

Lord Jesus, please reveal yourself to the sincere religious Georges, so that they can build their hope of salvation – and their current life – only on You.