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*We don't see ourselves as musicians who happen to have a message.  
We see ourselves as messengers who happen to use music.*

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The CTI community focuses on being messengers first and musicians second. The message of the gospel takes priority over our musical interests. Music helps us to win an audience and bring them to a place where they will listen to what we have to say, so we need to be prepared to say something worth listening to! And this doesn't only apply when we're speaking from stage - when we leave the stage, people will still be listening. In fact, they'll probably be listening more closely.

Through CTI you may have opportunities to share the gospel, both from stage and through one-on-one interactions within the host culture. You need to do some work to prepare for those opportunities before you arrive for training.

## What do we mean when we use the term "gospel"?

We use the word *gospel* to refer to both **our need for redemption** and **God's provision of it** - specifically (and solely) through Christ's atoning death on our behalf and subsequent conquering of death through his resurrection. We're also referencing **the overarching truth of a fallen creation, God's ultimate plan to redeem it, and the present, ongoing way He makes us new** as that plan is unfolding.

This is the good news that we hold out to the world. When we invite others to **respond** to this gospel, we are encouraging them to recognize and accept both their need for redemption and God's provision of a redeemer. Responding to the gospel also involves worshiping God and continually aligning ourselves with His plan as we join in the work He calls all of His followers into. This gospel message is therefore as relevant for believers as it is for not-yet-believers.

## How does one prepare for opportunities to share the gospel?

You can't help someone else understand *their* need for Jesus without understanding *your own* need for Jesus, so the first (and best) way you can prepare for these opportunities is to make sure you are constantly growing in your own understanding of the gospel.

We'll spend the first few days of training focusing on the gospel, exploring how our lives are different because of it, and learning how we can share the gospel with others by sharing about our own need for Jesus. You need to prepare for this aspect of training by considering your own need for Jesus and how your life has changed as a result of the implications of the gospel.

Understanding our own need for Jesus profoundly alters our perspective on the world. We see things differently than those who do not understand their need for redemption and God's provision of it, and as we share with them about why we are Christians, we can explain the reason for the hope that we have (1 Peter 3:15).

Ultimately, each one of us is a Christian not because of *how* we came to understand the gospel, but *because* of the gospel itself. We are Christians because of our belief that **our sin** separates us from our creator and father God, but that, because of **His grace**, we can be **restored** to Him through **faith** in Christ and the atoning sacrifice He made on our behalf. ***This is our story.***

It is important for each of us to carefully examine and reflect on our own lives in order to identify the impact the gospel (God's story) has on our own stories. This understanding will help us build bridges between the gospel and whoever we're sharing it with. But we must always remember: our purpose in sharing about our lives is not to draw attention to ourselves, but to draw attention to the gospel.

## How can sharing about our own lives help us share the gospel?

In reflecting on our lives, we want to identify how the truth of the gospel has been shown. For example:

**Our sin:** Where, in your own life, can you see that your sin has separated you from God? We don't want to glorify the "badness" of our stories or stack ourselves up as "worse" than others, but identifying our sin and its spiritual consequences gives us evidence of *our need* for a savior.

**His grace:** Understanding our own sin gives us a practical context in which to better understand God's grace. Until we identify our sin, grace is only theoretical (i.e. "God promises to forgive us if we confess our sin to Him"). But when we identify our own sin, we can talk about how His grace impacts us specifically (i.e. "God promises that He is faithful and just to forgive me for cheating in school if I confess that sin to Him" – see 1 John 1:9). Can you specifically identify how He offers grace to you in your own life?

**Our response (faith):** In order for the gospel to finish its work in us, our response ("through faith") is essential (see Romans 10:9-11). As you have become aware of your need for redemption and God's provision of it, how have you responded? Think beyond how you initially came to Christ – you may not even be able to identify that specifically, and that's okay – but how are you constantly reminded of your need for a savior, and what has been your response to those realizations? Repentance? Faith? Trust? Prayer? Worship? Action?

**Our restoration:** Here again, our own experiences can help us talk about restoration specifically rather than theoretically. Instead of saying "Though we were dead in sin, God has made us alive in Christ, forgiving our sins and cancelling the record of debt that stood against us", we might be able to say "The sin of selfishness separated me from God and made me dead to Him, but when I turned to Jesus, that record of sin was cancelled, and now I am alive to God again!" (see Colossians 2:13-14). Even if your life circumstances aren't different on a practical, day-to-day level, consider how you have been restored as you have responded to God's grace, and how you can share that with others.

We can also look beyond our direct life experiences to help us share a gospel-centered worldview. For example:

**Our observations of fallenness:** What have you observed or experienced that illustrates the overarching truth of a fallen creation? Your sin (as discussed above) would be one example, but the pain, suffering and struggle all around us also points to this reality. Perhaps there are specific examples that you have observed, but that are larger than just your personal story?

**Our altered perspective:** Because of our understanding of God's provision of redemption, we have a different perspective on life (the hope that we profess.) We have a different view of the world because we believe in God's ultimate plan to redeem His creation. How does understanding the gospel change your view of the world and give you hope in the midst of the brokenness of creation? How can this perspective provide hope to others?

**Our growth in Christ:** As we live in the light of this worldview and continually respond to the gospel, we are formed more closely in the image of Christ, God's Son. This kind of life-change is evidence of the assurance that, "in Christ, we are a new creation." In what ways have we personally experienced this growth? In what ways might this opportunity for newness – this "right to become children of God" – be appealing to others?

Once we have identified ways in which the gospel has impacted our own lives, we can use our experiences to help communicate the truth of the gospel to others:

<b>MY STORY</b> element (personal example)	illustrates this aspect of <b>the GOSPEL</b>
My sin His grace My response My restoration	Our need for redemption God's provision of redemption Faith as the mechanism for gospel consummation Christ's atonement & my identity
My observations of fallenness My altered perspective / the hope that I have My growth in Christ	The overarching truth of a fallen creation God's ultimate plan to redeem it The present, ongoing way He makes us new

## Prepare to share:

The following questions are designed to help you prepare for opportunities to share the gospel, both from stage and through one-on-one interactions. We want you to work through these questions and bring your answers with you to training. You'll be using them right away, so do this before you arrive!

1. Using the reflection points outlined on the previous page, identify **at least three specific examples** of how you have been made aware of your need for redemption. These can either be recognition of your own sin or ways in which you have experienced the overarching truth of a fallen creation, but it is a good idea to make sure at least one example is specifically evidences your own need for redemption.
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.
  
2. How does God's provision of redemption through Christ impact each of the examples you identified above, or how is the gospel evidenced to you through these experiences? What does it look like to respond to the gospel in each situation?
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.
  
3. How have you experienced *restoration* as you have responded? Or how has your eternal perspective been changed? What Biblical assurances of this restoration can you share?
  - i.
  - ii.
  - iii.
  
4. Consider how you might use the opportunity of your CTI experience to share the gospel with your audiences, both from stage and one-on-one:
  - a) Are there specific songs in your repertoire that you can use to set up or bridge from your story?
  
  - b) Are there specific Bible verses that speak to the truth of what you have experienced? (See the back of this page for scriptural support of what we mean when we use the term *gospel*!)
  
5. **On a separate sheet of paper:** Develop *at least one* of your examples into a short narrative that uses your personal experience to illustrate your own need for redemption and God's provision of it in Christ, and how this relates to the overall truth of the gospel for everyone (refer to the chart on the previous page.) Make sure your narrative stands on the truth of God's word – our purpose in sharing about our lives is not to draw attention to ourselves, but to draw attention to the gospel!

**Once you have developed a full narrative, see if you can also develop a one-minute "essentials" version that clearly communicates the gospel.**

**Bring these answers with you to training!**

## References for “What do we mean when we use the term ‘gospel?’”

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### Our need for redemption

**Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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### and God’s provision of it-

**John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**Romans 5:8** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Romans 10:9-10** <sup>9</sup> because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

**Ephesians 2:8-9** <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

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### specifically (and solely)

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

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### through Christ’s atoning death on our behalf,

**2 Corinthians 5:21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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### and subsequent conquering of death through his resurrection.

**1 Corinthians 15:3-4** <sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures

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### We are also referencing the overarching truth of a fallen creation,

<p><b>Genesis 3:14-19</b> <sup>14</sup> The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” <sup>16</sup> To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”</p>	<p><sup>17</sup> And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; <sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”</p>
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**Romans 3:10-12** <sup>10</sup> as it is written:  
“None is righteous, no, not one;  
<sup>11</sup> no one understands;  
no one seeks for God.  
<sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;  
no one does good,  
not even one.”

**Romans 8:22** we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

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### God’s ultimate plan to redeem it,

**Romans 8:23** And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

**Ephesians 1:7-10** <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

**1 Corinthians 15:21** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

**Philippians 3:20-21** <sup>20</sup> But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

**Colossians 1:19-20** <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

**Revelation 21:5** And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

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### and the present and ongoing way He makes us new as that plan is unfolding.

**John 1:12-13** <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.