



MY HOPE

PLANNING YOUR
EVANGELISTIC
OUTREACH



Planning Your Evangelistic Outreach

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Introduction

Reaping requires sowing. No farmer expects a harvest without having prepared the soil, planted the seed, watered it, and allowed time for growth. Likewise, spiritual harvest requires spiritual preparation. This guide provides resources and suggestions to encourage and equip you to plan, prepare, and host an effective evangelistic outreach.

What Is *My Hope*?

My Hope is a national initiative to encourage and equip the local church to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In short, it's a simple way to help you share Jesus.

Key Elements

- ❖ For nearly 80 years Billy Graham's focus has always been on two things: proclaiming the Gospel and equipping and encouraging others to proclaim the Gospel. All of our ministries are a part of those callings.
- ❖ *My Hope* combines both emphases by providing short films that clearly and powerfully share the Gospel and by encouraging the church to share the films in conjunction with prayer and personal relationships.
- ❖ Local churches are the focus of *My Hope*. This outreach exists to strengthen the local church by calling Christians across the country to pray for and share Christ with lost people around them.
- ❖ Effective evangelism is built on relationships (John 1:42; Matthew 9:9–13). *My Hope* is not televangelism or mass evangelism, but personal evangelism on a massive scale. In the months leading up to sharing the programs, Christians are encouraged to be active in strengthening their relationships with people they know who aren't following Christ. As close friends, family members, co-workers, fellow students, or neighbors, they earn the privilege to share their story.
- ❖ Evangelism must begin and end with prayer. The Holy Spirit quickens the hearts of people, not our words alone. Billy Graham once said, "We must repent of our prayerlessness and make prayer our priority." *My Hope* churches pray for God's guidance and a burden and strategy to share the Gospel with their communities.



Ways to Use *My Hope*

The *My Hope* films have been shown in a variety of contexts and settings. Below are ways pastors, ministries, and individuals have shared the Gospel through *My Hope*.



Churches

Encourage your church to pray for those who need Christ in their lives and invite them to watch a *My Hope* film at the church. Show the film before a church service, at an evening gathering, or at a special event.



Youth Groups

Plan a gathering for youth. Show a *My Hope* film and have one or two young people give a brief, prepared testimony.



College Campuses

Show a *My Hope* film at a small group, movie night, tutoring group, or dorm gathering.



Prison Ministry

Show a *My Hope* film during a chapel service, in a class, one-on-one, or in any way to bring people to hear the Gospel.



Rescue Missions

Show a *My Hope* film after a meal, in small groups, or in any way to bring people together to hear the Gospel.



Community Meetings

Several families can work together to invite friends, family, and neighbors to a block party or similar event where a *My Hope* film and brief testimonies are shared.



Informal Gatherings

My Hope films can be shown on a smartphone or tablet to two or three friends in any informal setting.



Homes & Small Groups

Pray for God to reveal Himself to your friends, family, and neighbors and then invite them into your home to watch a *My Hope* film. Share a meal together and then watch the film.

In each of these ways to use *My Hope*, after the film is shown it is important to give an invitation and pray with those who would like to receive Christ.

Engaging Your Church in *My Hope*

In the weeks and months leading up to your church's outreach, it's important to get members involved as participants, not just spectators. Below are suggestions from pastors across the country for planning and implementing a *My Hope* event. Please use whatever is helpful to your ministry.

Sample Preparation Schedule

Planning/Prayer

- Leaders/Church Staff Briefing—Watch one of the [My Hope 30-minute films](#); pray about the type of *My Hope* event that could be used by the church.
- Set dates and times for the *My Hope* outreach.
- Download or order the necessary *My Hope* materials:
 - [New My Hope DVD](#): This new film features compelling testimonies and a clear presentation of the Gospel.
 - [Prayer Cards](#): Encourage every member of your church to pray for those in their lives who don't know Christ.
 - [Living in Christ Booklets](#): A simple, four-lesson discipleship tool, combined with the gospel of John. Request enough for each person who may come forward to accept Christ or rededicate their life to Him.
- Promotions—Make plans to ensure the congregation is aware of and preparing for the event on a personal level; key leaders of the church are contacted to promote the *My Hope* event; the congregation is informed and reminded of the outreach (church website, church bulletin, social media, email, etc.).
- If possible, establish an event director/team to coordinate and promote all aspects of the evangelistic event.

One Month Prior to the Outreach—*My Hope* Sunday

- Purpose—to motivate and challenge the entire church to build relationships with their friends, family, and neighbors who don't know Christ, persistently pray for them, and then invite them to hear the Gospel.
- Order *My Hope* prayer cards for each person attending and place them in the church bulletin in advance—or be creative and design your own.
- Preach a motivational message on evangelism. The goal is to encourage members of your church to ask God for a renewed love for people and a heart of prayer for those around them who need the hope of Jesus Christ.
- Ask each person to write down one to two names of people they know who don't know Christ. They could be friends, family members, colleagues, or neighbors. This makes the project

personal, showing the church that each of us knows someone who doesn't have a relationship with God.

- Pray for the names during the service.
- Consider using one of the *My Hope* trailers, a portion of one of the films, or one of the promotional videos to grab people's attention or drive home a particular point from your sermon.
- Share details of the church's upcoming *My Hope* outreach: date, time, venue, etc. Leading up to the outreach, Christians are encouraged to be active in strengthening their relationships with people they know who don't have a relationship with Christ.
- *My Hope* Sunday: Possible dates for *My Hope* Sunday _____

- *My Hope* Outreach: Possible dates for *My Hope* evangelistic outreach _____

4 Weeks to 2 Weeks Prior to Outreach—Building Momentum

- Each Sunday the pastor leads the church to pray for the names on the prayer cards.
- [Promotional videos and film trailers](#) are available to show in services to remind and encourage the congregation.
- Encourage intentional building of relationships. Everyone should be in touch with the people on their prayer card before inviting them to the church-wide event.

1 Week Prior to Outreach—Final Preparation

- Encourage the church to invite those on their prayer cards to the outreach. They can then confirm their attendance two days before the event.
- Encourage constant prayer for each person who is being invited.
- **Important:** Discuss with staff how to handle the invitation to receive Christ at the outreach. Here are two possibilities:
 - Altar Call—Lead in a simple prayer of salvation. Ask people who prayed to come forward to speak with a counselor. Have counselors come up alongside new believers.
 - Fill Out Decision Cards—Lead in salvation prayer. Invite people who prayed to fill out a decision card placed on the seat. Collect all the cards and follow up as indicated on the card.

Day of Outreach—Prepare for Harvest

- Checklist: Lead staff/counselors in prayer time. Check video and sound as well as temperature of room. Meet with counselors and greeting team for final instructions. Ensure there's an adequate

supply of *Living in Christ* booklets on hand for those who respond. A decision card is found inside each copy of *Living in Christ*.

- **Host the event. Whether it's a showing in the church or a barbecue in the park, pray for the Holy Spirit to draw the people and speak to their hearts!**
- After showing the program, ask one of the counselors or pastors to briefly share their personal testimony of how they accepted Christ, and then give an invitation to the crowd to pray to receive Christ. (See "Sharing Your Story" outline in the appendix.)
- Begin follow-up after the event by immediately praying with those individuals who accepted Christ, recording their information on the "My Decision" card in *Living in Christ*, giving them a copy of *Living in Christ*, and calling them the next day.

The Week After the Outreach

- Report what God did through your outreach at MyHopeWithBillyGraham.org/stories or contact your *My Hope* representative to share your story. Please share the attendance and the number of first-time salvations and rededications.
- Celebrate what happened at your next church service.
- Ensure each new believer is guided into a Bible study. Consider using *Living in Christ* booklets to teach the first steps of faith in Christ.
- Ensure counselors are prepared by reviewing whatever materials will be used. Consider role-playing to aid in their preparation.

Giving an Evangelistic Invitation

Any time someone responds to the Gospel, it is a work of the Holy Spirit. It is not based upon clever words or manipulation. When the Gospel is preached, something supernatural happens. *"It is the power of God for salvation"* (Romans 1:16, ESV). Billy Graham consistently focused on several points when he gave invitations to large stadiums or small groups. Below are a few suggestions to anyone giving an evangelistic invitation after watching a *My Hope* film.

- There should be an **urgency and clarity** when we extend the public invitation to respond to the Gospel. Knowing that the enemy of God is at work, we should remind everyone that Holy Spirit is also at work. We must remember that this event could be the most important moment of their lives.
- At the beginning of the event, share that there will be an invitation to receive Christ after the film. The Holy Spirit can begin to work and draw them to that decision throughout the course of the presentation. Example: "After the program you will have the opportunity to follow Jesus in the hope He offers to each of us."
- After the program, ask everyone to remain with bowed heads in an attitude of self-examination and prayer and to listen to the inner voice of the Holy Spirit. Remind them, as Billy Graham's own testimony attested, "You can be religious and a church member without having a personal relationship with God."
- Ask, "Did you pray that prayer of repentance and faith with Mr. Graham just a moment ago?"

- Ask, “Are you willing to obey Jesus Christ, who said, ‘*Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in Heaven?*’” (Matthew 10:32).
- Explain why we invite them to come publicly—with their needs and questions—to Christ who loves them and who gave His life for their sins. Every person in the New Testament whom Jesus called, He called publicly.
- Remember, do not delay. The Bible says, “*Now is the accepted time ... Today is the day of salvation*” (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:2).
- Inform: “We want to give you some free, helpful literature from Billy Graham, so I am asking you to move from your seat and come forward now. We will meet and encourage you.”
- Be sure to enlist trusted and trained spiritual encouragers/counselors to come forward to talk with those who respond. Equip them with *Living in Christ* booklets.

Following these suggestions will help provide an atmosphere for genuine spiritual commitments to be made. Of course, since spiritual victory belongs to God alone, we should never confuse results with something we have done or failed to do. Whatever happens, to God be the glory!

Praying With New Believers

Romans 1:16 says the Gospel is the “*power of God for salvation to everyone who believes*” (ESV). In outreaches across the world, individuals have come forward in tears to receive Christ after watching a *My Hope* film. As Christians, we have seen God’s power in our own lives, and it now becomes our joy to meet, pray with, and provide materials to inquirers as they begin their Christian walk.

Selecting Counselors

- Meet with counselors the week before the outreach to give instructions, answer questions, and pray together.
- Seek to match counselors with inquirers one-on-one. Whenever possible, match male counselors with male inquirers, female counselors with female inquirers, and youth counselors with student inquirers.

Counseling Process

- Counselors come forward at the invitation to join inquirers to meet and pray for them.
- Use the initial pages of *Living in Christ* to guide your discussion. Be sure to have enough copies for all who may come forward.
- Page 1—Decision Card
 - Begin by asking, “Are you coming forward to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior for the first time, to rededicate your life to Him, or for another purpose?” This allows the counselor to know where to begin their discussion.
 - Mark their decision in the appropriate box on page 1.

- Page 4—How to Receive Christ
 - Briefly go through each of the points found on page 4. This reinforces the Gospel presentation from the *My Hope* film and ensures the inquirer understands why they are coming forward.
- Review pages 5 or 6 and complete together.
 - First-Time Salvation—Review page 5.
 - Rededication—Review page 6.
- Review page 7 and explain the various parts of the *Living in Christ* booklet.
 - Open to the middle of the booklet and encourage them to review the key verses to memorize.
 - To the left, the first half of the book is a four-lesson Bible study to begin their walk with Christ. Encourage the inquirer to go home and complete the first lesson.
 - The second half is a copy of the gospel of John, an eyewitness account of Jesus’ ministry on earth. This section is divided into daily readings. Encourage them to read a section every day for the next month.
- Remove the follow-up card from the *Living in Christ* book and keep it for the church to follow up with the inquirer.
- Close your time together in prayer.

Immediately following the outreach:

- Counselors gather to process the decision cards that were collected. It’s an exciting time to see what God has done! A leader, volunteer, or church staff member should then collect the cards, but make sure each counselor has contact information for the inquirers they counseled.
- The next day counselors should send a letter or personal note to each inquirer from the pastor or another church leader. The goal of the letter is to thank them for responding, encourage them to begin reading *Living in Christ* and the gospel of John, and invite them to a follow-up meeting or Bible study.
- Counselors should call the inquirer within 48 hours to pray for them, answer any questions, and further encourage them to complete their Bible study. Be sure to invite the inquirer back to church that Sunday.

Our Prayer for You

Only God can change a person’s heart. No combination of actions or strategies based upon human effort will be fruitful or successful; however, our prayer is that these suggestions will support, encourage, and empower you. We pray that many will come to know Christ as you lead your church to proclaim the Gospel through *My Hope*.

“If God is for us, who can be against us?” —Romans 8:31, NKJV

“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”—2 Timothy 4:2, ESV

Appendix

Sharing Your Story

As part of planning an effective outreach, there is great value in equipping your congregation to be prepared to share the reason for the hope they have whenever God brings an opportunity.

Paul's story of his encounter with Jesus followed this pattern:*

- This is who I was before Christ.
- This was the turning point.
- This is who I am after Christ or the difference that Christ has made in my life.

This outline will help you express what God has done in your life and give structure to your simple, easy-to-follow story. Start by writing out your answers in a format that you can practice. Using the guide below, aim to share each section in about one minute.

1. Your life before you encountered Christ (Romans 3:23)

- What impact did faith have on your life?
- Where did you get your happiness and security?
- How did areas where you put your trust let you down?

2. When you received Christ (Romans 5:8)

- When was the first time you heard the Gospel? What was your reaction to it?
- What role did Christian relationships or community play in your journey?
- What led you to begin considering and then finally surrender your life to Jesus?
- What were the obstacles in your mind just before you received Christ?
- Repeat the prayer you said to God to ask for forgiveness for your sin and invite Christ into your life (Romans 10:9).

(If you accepted Christ as a small child, then think about when your faith became your own.)

3. Your life after receiving Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)

- How has God changed you, your relationships, etc., since receiving Christ?
- How did receiving Christ address the problems that you had in your life?
- If you had to describe what it means to become a Christian, what would you say?

As you prepare and practice your story, think about these suggestions to keep your story relevant and easy to follow:

- Pray: Ask God for wisdom as you share your story.
- Audience: Focus on what will be most relevant to them and paint a clear picture.
- Clarity: Avoid being too wordy or too vague. Be clear.
- Christian words: Don't use Christian words without an explanation.
- Connection: Describe your life in ways that will help others recognize similarities in their own lives.

* Reference to Paul's story has been taken with permission from *Bringing My World to Christ*.

Small Group Showing Guide

In a small group setting, evangelistic programs produced by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association provide a context where the Gospel is presented in a creative and culturally appropriate way.

Applications

- The Workplace Model—Some businesses allow Christians to use lunch and off-hour times to show the *My Hope* films to co-workers.
- The Church Ministry Model—Within each church there are a number of small group ministries that utilize the *My Hope* films. Some include:
 - Youth/College/Singles ministry
 - Women's/Men's ministry
 - Jail/Prison ministry
 - Small group ministry
 - Children's outreach ministry (AWANA, Kingdom Kids, CEF, etc.)
- The School Model—Students have used the *My Hope* films on high school and college campuses to present the Gospel to small groups of their peers.
- The Home Model—Christians open their homes to unsaved friends and relatives to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The *My Hope* short films are a springboard for hosts to share their story of faith in Christ and to invite their guests to receive the Lord Jesus as Savior.

Preparations & Procedure

1. Pray for the people you intend to invite to the showing of the film. Consider unsaved neighbors, friends, colleagues, and relatives. Continue to pray and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit leading up to the showing of the film.
2. Prepare your story of faith in Christ. Be ready to share your story in less than three minutes.
3. Ten days prior to the showing, invite guests to attend with a phone call and follow up through email, text, or social media.
 - The invitation should include time, place, name of program, and names of others attending that the guest knows.
 - The small group showing is more effective when each person has relationships with others in attendance. For instance, if both your friends and family members attend, it is helpful if they know each other.
4. Two days prior to the showing, remind your guest(s) by phone or social media about the event and ask for a confirmation.
5. Prepare the viewing environment:
 - Choose a good location for the television.
 - Seating arrangement should allow each person a good view of the screen.

- Preview the DVD playback, checking for picture quality and sound volume.
 - Play the entire film, checking for unintended errors on the DVD that will interrupt the presentation.
 - Remember, the room may be full, so more volume may be needed after guests arrive.
 - Position materials you intend to hand out so they are accessible.
6. Consider providing guests with a light snack and drink as they arrive, to stimulate conversation.
 7. At an appropriate time, briefly introduce the film you will show to your guests and mention that you would like to discuss the content after the film.
 8. During the film, silently pray for each of your guests, inviting the Lord Jesus to work in their lives and bring conviction and faith to their hearts.
 9. When the film is over, briefly explain your story of faith in Christ.
 10. Conclude your story by inviting your guests to pray with you a prayer of salvation.
 - A sample prayer to use is: *“Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name, amen.”*
 - Additionally, pray for needs they have been expressed in the conversation. Some people first pray for the expressed needs and then invite guests to pray to receive Christ.
 11. Ask your guests if they have questions about the film. For example:
 - Have you ever known people like the ones whose stories we heard?
 - Have you ever had some of those same questions/feelings about God?
 - Did Billy Graham’s explanation of the Gospel answer any of your questions, or did it open up more questions for you?
 - When you are in difficult times like these people were, where do you turn?
 - Additional questions (Add your own conversation starters.)
 12. After the closing prayer, invite your guests to have refreshments. Continue to follow up with those who show interest or have made decisions for Christ, inviting them to a Bible study or a church service in the coming week.
 13. Distribute discipleship materials (*Living in Christ*) to those who made decisions.
 14. Thank God for the work He has done in your small group gathering, asking Him for guidance with these friendships and your follow-up efforts.