

Table of Contents

Glossary of Terms	2
Chapter 1 — How to Use This Guide	3
Chapter 2 — The Bible's Big Story in Four Moves	6
Chapter 3 — Who God Is	8
Chapter 4 — Who We Are and What Went Wrong	11
Chapter 5 — Who Jesus Is and What He Did	13
Chapter 6 — How We Are Saved	15
Chapter 7 — Six Questions to Help You Listen and Share	16
Chapter 8 — Go-To Bible Passages	19
Chapter 9 — How to Start, Continue, and End a Conversation	21
Chapter 10 — Comparing Common Belief Systems	23
Chapter 11 — Staying Grounded	28
Chapter 12 — If You Remember Nothing Else	31
Appendix A — A Simple Timeline of the Bible's Story	34
Appendix B — Six Questions Worksheet	35
Appendix C — Common Objections and Brief Responses	36
Appendix D — A One-Page Gospel Summary	37
More From Christian Field Guide	38

Glossary of Terms

These eighteen terms are the ones used most often throughout this short book. Each is explained in plain language so you can move quickly between chapters without stopping to look elsewhere.

Term	Simple Definition
Atonement	Christ's work in His death to deal with sin and reconcile sinners to God. Shows how Jesus saves by sacrificing Himself for sinners.
Authority of Scripture	The truth that the Bible has the right to govern what Christians believe and how they live, standing above tradition, experience, and opinion.
Covenant	A binding relational agreement God initiates with His people, carrying His promises and their expected response; Scripture unfolds through a series of covenants that culminate in the new covenant secured by Christ's blood (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Luke 22:20).
Election	God's gracious choice, before the foundation of the world, to save His people in Christ — a choice rooted in His love and purpose, not in anything a person has done (Ephesians 1:4–5).
Faith	Trusting in Jesus Christ and relying on Him alone for salvation. Faith is the means by which sinners receive God's saving grace.
Gospel	The good news that Jesus died for sins and rose again to save all who trust in Him. This is the heart of Christianity and the center of the Guide.
Grace	God's undeserved favor shown to sinners. Salvation is a gift from God, not something people earn.
Incarnation	The eternal Son of God taking on full human nature and becoming man in Jesus of Nazareth, without ceasing to be fully God — "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14).
Justification	God's act of declaring a sinner righteous through faith in Christ. Clarifies that salvation is received by grace, not earned by works.
Perseverance of the Saints	The teaching that those whom God has genuinely saved will, by His enabling grace, continue trusting and following Him to the end — not because of their own strength, but because He keeps them (Philippians 1:6; John 10:28–29).
Propitiation	The turning away of God's righteous wrath through the sacrifice of Christ; Jesus's death satisfies the just penalty for sin so that God can forgive without compromising His justice (Romans 3:25).

Term	Simple Definition
Reformation Christianity	The stream of historic Christianity marked especially by Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone, and Christ alone. The theological perspective of this Guide.
Regeneration	The Holy Spirit's work of spiritually re-creating a person — giving them a new heart and new spiritual life so they can turn to God in faith; sometimes called being “born again” (John 3:3).
Repentance	A change of mind and heart that turns away from sin and toward God. Shows that saving faith includes turning from sin, not just agreeing with facts.
Salvation	God’s work of rescuing sinners from sin, judgment, and death through Jesus Christ. The central message of the Christian faith.
Sanctification	God’s ongoing work of making believers holy in heart and life. Distinguishes growth in holiness from the one-time act of justification.
Substitution	Christ taking the place of sinners and bearing the penalty they deserve. Explains the heart of the cross in personal and legal terms.
Trinity	The one true God existing eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Foundational to historic Christian belief about God.

A full glossary with many more terms — covering the authority of Scripture, canon, inspiration, and comparative worldview vocabulary — is available in the complete Christian Field Guide.

GO DEEPER

*For the full glossary of theological terms — including canon, inerrancy, inspiration, propitiation, and more — see the complete **Christian Field Guide**.*

1

How to Use This Guide

This book is for ordinary Christians who want to be ready when God opens a door for conversation — not for professional apologists or seminary professors. It is meant to be simple, short, and practical. It will help you know the core message of the gospel and give you a few tools so you can talk about Jesus with real people in real life.

Most of us have had moments where someone asks a real question about God or faith, we know we should say something, and we suddenly feel unprepared or afraid we'll say it wrong. This book exists to help you be steady instead of panicked in those moments — to understand the core message of Christianity in simple terms, remember a small set of Bible passages and questions, listen well across different backgrounds, and be pointed back to the Bible and your local church for deeper growth.

What This Book Is Not

- It is not a debate manual.
- It is not a comprehensive textbook on world religions.
- It is not meant to replace your Bible or your church.

You will not come out of this book knowing everything — and you don't need to. The goal is that you would know the gospel well, love people well, and be willing to speak up when God gives you the opportunity.

How This Book Fits with the Bigger Christian Field Guide

This “Faith Basics” version is a simpler companion to the larger Christian Field Guide, which goes into more detail on the authority of the Bible, what Christians believe, and how different religions and worldviews compare — with fuller charts, tables, and nuanced discussion. This shorter book takes the core ideas from that Guide and puts them in plain language, shortens them into bite-sized chapters, and adds more stories, examples, and questions you can use right away.

Think of this book as your pocket version — what you keep in your Bible, bag, or glove compartment. You do not have to read the full Guide to benefit from this one, but if this book whets your appetite, the Christian Field Guide is there to give you more background and depth.

How to Use This Book, Depending on Your Situation

If you're new to sharing your faith

Start with Chapters 2–6. Get comfortable with the big story of the Bible (Creation – Fall – Rescue – New Creation) and the core gospel message: who God is, who we are, who Jesus is, what He did, and how we are saved. Read these slowly, with your Bible open. Aim to reach the point where you could explain the basics to a friend in your own words.

If you have a specific conversation coming up

Skim Chapters 7–9 (**Your Conversation Toolkit**) for six simple questions, a short list of go-to Bible passages, and a pattern for starting, continuing, and ending a conversation. Then read the chapter in the comparison table (Chapter 10) that best fits the specific person you’re talking with — LDS, Jehovah’s Witness, cultural/progressive Christian, spiritual-but-not-religious, or atheist/agnostic.

If you just had a conversation and felt stuck

Use this Guide after the fact. Go back to the section that fits the person you spoke with. Ask yourself: “Did I understand what they actually believe?” and “Which part of the gospel would have been most helpful to share?” Jot down what they said and what you wish you had asked or shared. Pray for them by name and ask God for another opportunity.

GO DEEPER

*Want more depth on the authority of Scripture and the doctrines behind this book? See the full **Christian Field Guide**, or explore the **Christian Field Guide Workbook** for a guided small-group version.*

One Final Reminder

At every point, keep your Bible open. When this book mentions a passage, don’t just glance at the reference — turn there and read it. The real power in any conversation is not in this little book or in your “sales pitch,” but in God’s Word and the work of the Holy Spirit in people’s hearts. This Guide is here to help you be ready. God is the One who saves.

A Word on Praying Before You Speak

Before any tool or technique, prayer is the real preparation. Ask God for opportunities, for the right words, and for a listening heart before a conversation begins — and thank Him afterward regardless of how it went, since faithfulness is measured by obedience, not outcomes.

Excellent passages: Colossians 4:2–4; James 1:5.

How Each Chapter Is Laid Out

To make this guide easy to use in a hurry, every chapter follows the same simple shape: the main teaching first, then a maroon Key Verse box holding one central passage worth memorizing, and finally a forest-green Summary box distilling the whole chapter into two or three sentences. If you only have thirty