

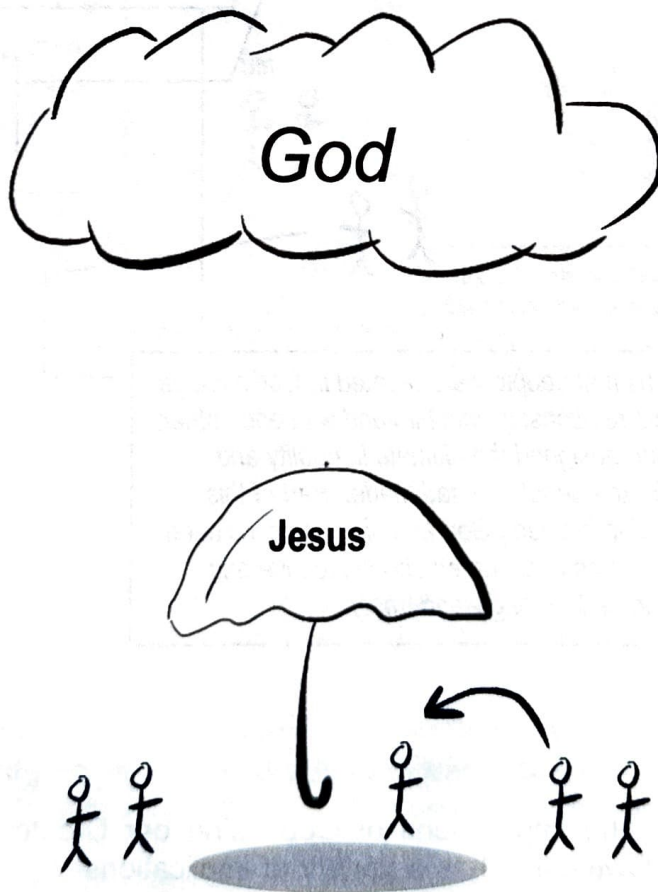
Over the years I have employed a number of examples and illustrations in my attempts to clearly present the gospel. I continued to use diagrams and pictures which I felt needed adjustments and modifications based on the biblical emphasis. I eventually came up with a new picture/illustration which, if explained carefully, captures the urgency of the biblical call to salvation.

I understand that there are other presentations that accurately capture the force of the New Testament gospel, but it is my hope that this offering may be found by some to be as helpful as I have found it to be.

-- Pastor Mike

The Umbrella Illustration

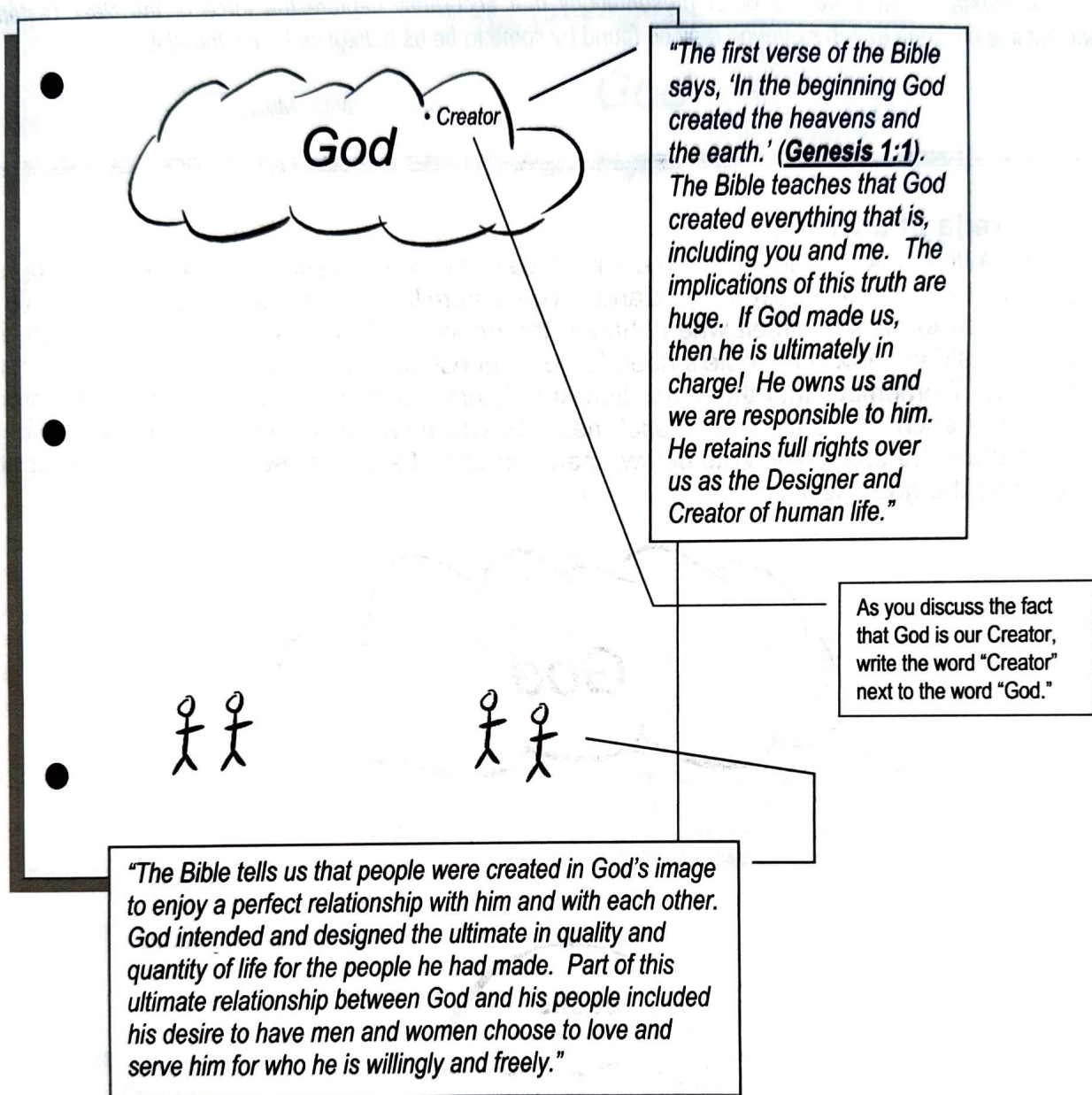
The umbrella illustration is designed to communicate the core message of salvation through an analogy that people can easily understand. The umbrella diagram is designed to be simple enough for you to draw yourself when sharing the gospel with others. This can prove to be a helpful visual aid in showing people's need for forgiveness and God's gracious provision through Jesus Christ. Remember that the illustration and diagram are only supplements for a thorough explanation of each element of the gospel message which we will cover on the pages to follow. If you can draw the basic elements below, then you can effectively use the umbrella illustration when sharing the good news!



For more help in sharing the umbrella illustration go to:

www.sharetheumbrella.com

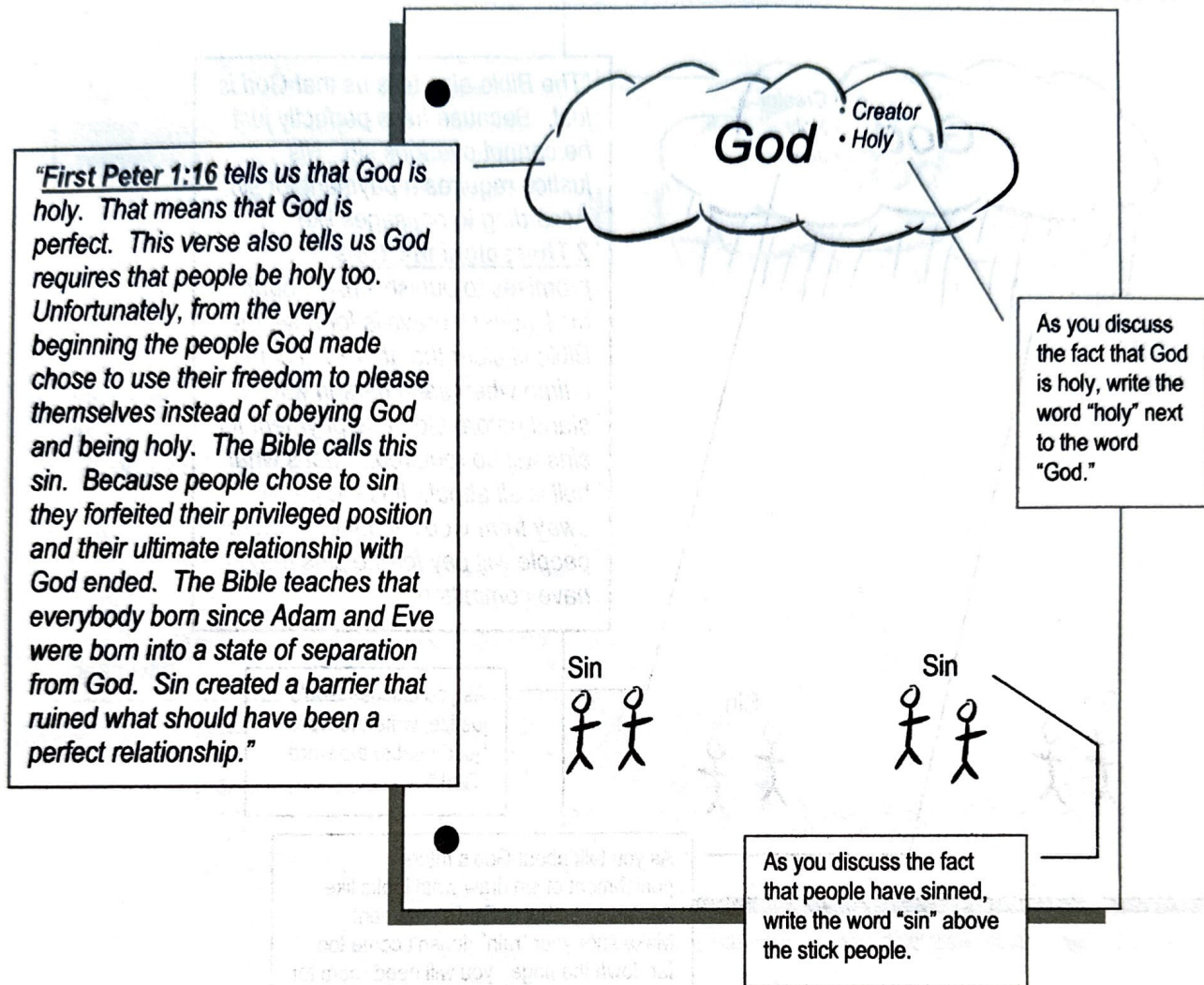
Step 1: Draw these first two elements (the cloud with the word "God" in the middle of it and the stick figures) and explain...



When talking about the implications of God being our Creator, you may have a few illustrations of your own. Ownership has a variety of implications that are key in realizing why the "God issue" must be addressed by everyone!

When talking about God creating people be sure to emphasize the goodness of God! Recall in your own mind the early chapters of Genesis where God gives Adam and Eve every possible advantage – a perfect world, perfect health, perfect relationships, etc.

Step 2: Write the words "holy" and "sin" in their appropriate places and explain...



Often it is helpful to actually show the person the verses you are talking about (the verses that are underlined). It is excellent if you commit them to memory! At least know the gist of each verse and where it is found.

When discussing the problem of sin, another helpful verse is Isaiah 59:2 (*"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."*). You might want to utilize the wording of this passage in explaining the separation that sin caused.

It is important to make the distinction between Adam's sinful act that led to separation and our sinful acts that stem from a state of separation. Though our choices confirm Adam's choice, his sin was quite different from ours. This is important, as Romans 5:12-19 says, because Christ's righteousness is imputed to us in the same way as Adam's sin was imputed to us.

Step 3: Write the word "just" in the appropriate place and draw what looks like rain coming from the cloud while continuing your explanation...

God

- Creator
- Holy
- Just

Sin

Sin

"The Bible also tells us that God is just. Because he is perfectly just he cannot overlook sin. His justice requires a payment for sin. According to passages like 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 God promises to punish sin. Though his kindness prevails for now, the Bible is clear that there will come a time when each person will stand before God and payment for sins will be required. That's what hell is all about. It is the place away from God's kindness where people will pay for the sins they have committed."

As you discuss God's justice, write the word "just" next to the word "God."

As you talk about God's future punishment of sin draw what looks like rain as a symbol of God's judgment. Make sure your "rain" doesn't come too far down the page; you will need room for the umbrella.

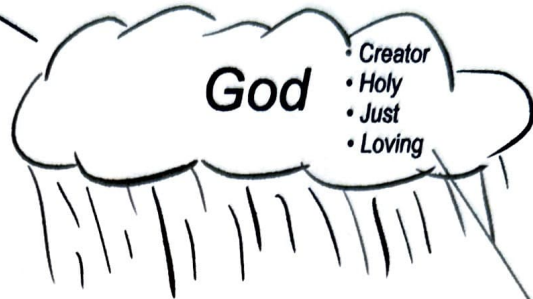
This may seem an uncomfortable part of the gospel presentation. Few people like talking about or hearing about "hell" and "God's wrath," but they are essential elements of the gospel. The good news will mean little, if the bad news is not made crystal clear.

Don't be ashamed of sharing the bad news. The pattern of New Testament evangelism that God left for us to study in the book of Acts focuses hard on the sobering reality of what our sins will cost us if we don't "get saved"!

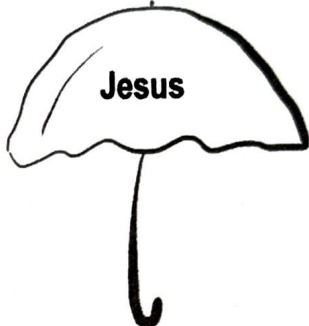
As mentioned above, God's kindness prevails for now. His patience and grace prior to his day of judgment should not lull us into believing that God will go easy on sin; it should, as Romans 2:4 says, lead people to repentance (see also 2 Peter 3:9).

Step 4: Write the word "loving" in the appropriate place and draw an umbrella labeling it "Jesus" while continuing your explanation... "Jesus" while continuing your explanation...

"Thankfully, the Bible also tells us that God is loving (1Jn.4:8). In his love for sinful and separated people God has provided a solution – a way out for people who otherwise would have no hope! This is the "good news." Much like an umbrella God has provided Jesus, his own Son – God in human form – who has endured the punishment that we deserve so that we won't have to. As God, Jesus lived the perfect life for us as well as incurring the wrath of God for us while dying on the cross (2Cor.5:21). Because the umbrella is rained on there is a place beneath it that isn't – so it is with Christ! After living the life we needed and dying the death we deserved, Jesus rose from the dead to prove to the world that sin and the penalty for sin had been adequately dealt with."



As you talk about God's love, write the word "loving" next to the word "God."



As you talk about Jesus draw the umbrella and write the word "Jesus" inside of it.



As you talk about Jesus providing a place where God's wrath won't be, shade in this area, but make sure that the stickmen are not inside the shaded area... yet!

This is the heart of the good news – God's solution! Don't be afraid to spend a good percentage of your time on this step. Make sure you adequately explain: 1) who Jesus is; 2) that Jesus served as our substitute in his life and his death; and 3) that Jesus rose again as a testimony to his completed work on our behalf.

In underscoring God's incredible love it can be helpful (if you have any artistic skill at all) to draw an arm coming out of the cloud holding the umbrella as a shelter from his wrath. Whether you can do this or not, just make sure you give God the credit he deserves for loving sinners enough to provide us with such a costly solution for our sins!