

Proxe Station Prep with Gospel Improv

This exercise uses Gospel Improv to fill in the final panel for the proxe station in preparation for running a proxe station.

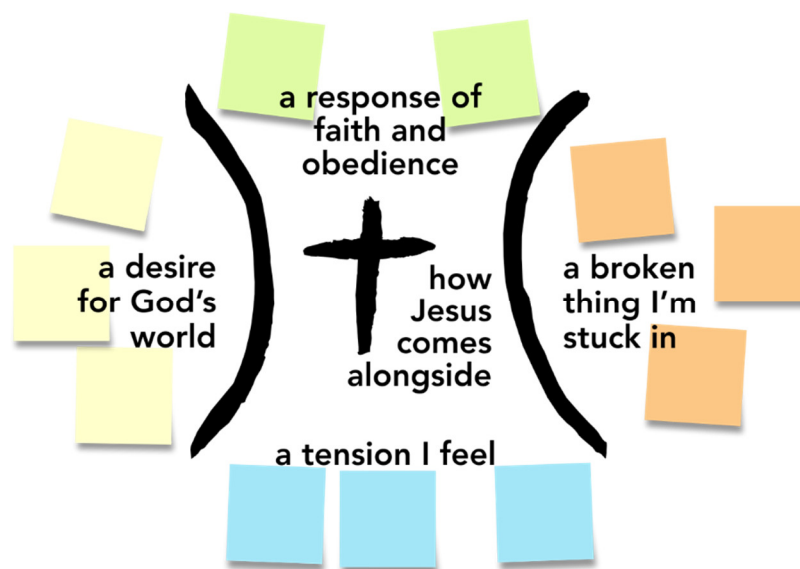
Proxe station evangelism can look a lot like those seemingly random encounters Jesus had with people in the New Testament. In those stories, Jesus shows up with love and power to meet their deep longings. We hope that the proxe station will stir up longings and give an opportunity to meet Jesus and be transformed.

Your preparation is key, because rather than sharing a *general* gospel story, you will share *your* story of how Jesus is with *you* in a tension and longing that this proxe reveals. Your experience will illustrate the gospel. Then, you can explore how Jesus might be showing up in the participant's experience of the proxe. This will help you come alongside those who are experiencing it for the first time.

To start, you will need a bunch of post-it notes (3 inch square is a good size) and a fairly thick dark pen, as well as panel 4 of the proxe with the "empty" Two Worlds drawing on it -- the drawing that usually looks something like this:) † (.

Fill out post-it notes to place in each of these positions on panel 4. Try to capture your desires and feelings with brief thoughtful phrases. If you can, match your words to the wording or theme of the proxe to help participants see how it relates.

Here is an overview:

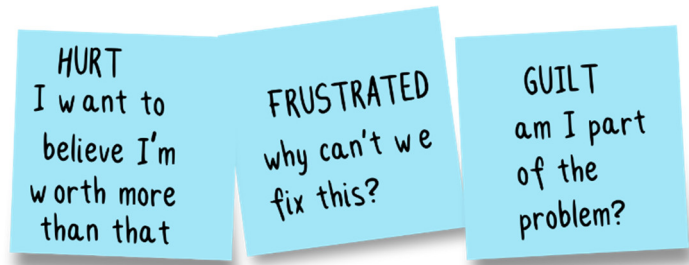


Use colors however you like. In this article, we've just color coded it to keep the sections clear in the more detailed explanations below. The example post-it notes are from various proxes.

Notes for My Awareness of a Tension or Hard Place

Fill in: the tension *feels like this* because _____

anger
guilt
shame
frustration
insecurity
loneliness
confusion
conflicted
needy



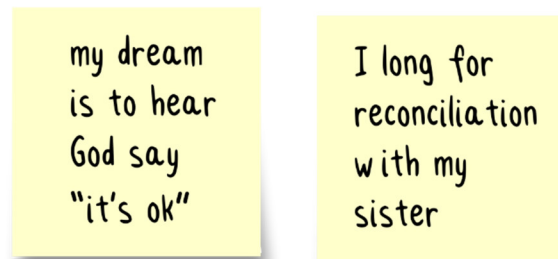
This is where we feel torn between longings for God's world and being caught in a broken world. How do you experience tension in this proxe? This is the key experience or "angsty" feeling that drives the whole proxe. Often our negative experiences capture these tensions. Try to describe it clearly without interpreting.

What to check: Help each other distinguish between "broken" and "tension." There is a difference between feeling a painful consequence of the broken world and feeling a spiritual tension because we sense something better -- that *this-is-not-the-way-it's-supposed-to-be* feeling.

Notes for My Desire for God and His Ways

Fill in your *longing for a good thing*

hope
wish for
dream
vision
intuition



In response to any of the first three panels, write down ways in which your own heart is stirred with longing for a good thing that ultimately comes from God (his world, his ways or intentions for the way things are supposed to be).

What to check: Is it concise?
Can it be phrased to clearly relate to the proxe?
Does it relate to God? (remember, we often want the *things of God* without realizing that God is the source – it still counts as longing for God's world)

Notes for Something Holding Me Back

Fill in: I was/can *be stuck in* *something broken*
be a victim of
settle for
be compulsive about
participate in
benefit from
crave

just don't
care enough
to bother

sometimes
I hate
back

Again, prompted by the proxe panels and scripture verses, write notes about how you feel or have felt caught up in the broken world. Sometimes we are trapped as victims, sometimes we just settle for or go along with broken ways passively, sometimes we see evil or destructive motivations in ourselves.

What to check: Am I being honest and vulnerable? (this will keep us humble and real)
 Again, keep "tension" and "broken" separate. A key difference is that in "broken" we settle for it or even want it – these are inclinations that keep us from God. Blue and Green (vertical) sections *describe* how it is for me (without Jesus and with him), Yellow and Orange (horizontal) sections *evaluate* (good and bad).

Jesus Enters the Tension Alongside Us

Jesus may come alongside you anew as you experience the proxe, or it may remind you of earlier turning points you can share. We don't write note cards here because we hope to make room for proxe participants to share *their stories* of how Jesus is showing up for them. The tensions, longings, and reservations you have a prepared above will, we pray, be their introduction to a way that Jesus wants to meet them at this proxe. These stories, big and small, are our testimony and basis for our ongoing witness.

What to check: Should *I* be feeling a gospel tension about the issues in this proxe? Perhaps I need Jesus to come alongside and transform part of *me* – I may have settled in something that displeases God or perhaps I'm still trying to fix it in my own power.
 Don't panic if Jesus' showing up initially makes the tension worse – we see this happen a lot in the gospel accounts (that's why they killed him, after all – we can't hide our longings, both the good and the bad, when Jesus is around). Increased tension might be what we need to finally stop clinging to the broken world (to repent, in other words). It's Jesus who provokes this, though, not us.

Notes for Following Jesus Back Into the Tension

Fill in how I am empowered to respond

<i>enabled to</i>	<i>receive</i>
<i>healed to</i>	<i>heal</i>
<i>set free to</i>	<i>serve</i>
<i>strengthened for hardship</i>	<i>or risk</i>

motivated
to risk

HOPE
that we
will have
a future

able
to forgive
that
person

As you respond to and in Jesus' love and strength, what new life of faith and mission do you experience? A life of faith is about a work in progress – not perfection: try to briefly capture where Jesus has brought you. This is a simple description about how things are different for you with Jesus.

What to check: Am I clear that the empowering is from God (not just me trying harder)?
Is my response about *thriving* in the tension, rather than just escaping or ignoring it?
Is this a response makes me more like Jesus?

Some Final Things to Check:

- Is the note appropriately personal? Avoid sharing private information or "outing" anyone.
- Does the note concisely fit the theme? Sometimes a group can help each other rephrase a note so that it is short and easily relates to the theme. Don't sacrifice what is truly on your heart, however.
- Can each person on the team talk their way through the gospel presentation, using their own notes as prompts? Be sure to practice. Participants may notice and relate best to someone else's notes. That's ok, still tell yours. Practice a simple format: "The way I feel the tension is... (blue)", "The reason is that I'm pulled two different directions ... (yellow and orange)," "But when Jesus is there for me, it's this way instead... (green)."

In summary, we hope this exercise will help you to:

- personally engage the proxe for your own growth (we have to get the gospel *in* before we can effectively *release* it),
- be able to empathize with the experiences of participants as you work at or pray for the proxe,
- better understand the movements of the proxe and give you deeper working familiarity with it,
- be able to transition well to explaining the gospel, as well as providing some prompts as you share.