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Missionary Apologetics Playbook (LDS)

Based on Transcript: "Apologetics 101 - The Weakness of Protestantism" (Hayden Carroll / Jacob Hansen context)

Why this version exists

This guide is built directly from the transcript you supplied for: - [Apologetics 101 - The Weakness of Protestantism](#)

The purpose is to train an LDS missionary to: 1. challenge hidden presuppositions, 2. avoid weak argument tactics, 3. defend the Restoration coherently, 4. still rely on the Spirit for conversion.

This is not a "be aggressive" manual. It is a "be precise, fair, and spiritually grounded" manual.

Part 1: Core Tactical Thesis from the Transcript

Thesis

The recurring strategy in the class is: - do not merely "dodge bullets" (answer random attacks forever), - "disarm" the framework generating the attacks.

Transcript anchors: - "two ways" framing (bullet-dodging vs disarming) around **(28:16-29:32)** via Greg Bahnsen clip discussion. - explicit push to challenge presuppositions repeatedly across **(16:37-18:27)** and **(53:10-54:11)**.

Practical meaning for missionaries

If someone says: "Your doctrine is false," do not sprint into 20 historical details first. Start by asking: - "By what authority standard are you judging that?" - "How is that standard justified?" - "Can you critique my worldview without presupposing your own system first?"

This move changes the conversation from: - conclusion war into: - method and authority evaluation.

Part 2: The Big Error to Avoid (Trent Horn example in class)

A major segment of the class critiques this style: - "If Catholicism is true, Mormonism is false; Catholicism is true; therefore Mormonism is false" (07:45-08:38, 09:24-12:11).

The class point: - the structure may be logically valid, - but it's not useful unless premises are justified (soundness).

Missionary application

Never run "I'm right, therefore you're wrong" as your core method.

Avoid these patterns: - "My tradition is true, so your scripture is false." - "You failed to disprove my church, so I win." - "My authority claim is assumed, so your argument auto-fails."

Do this instead: 1. clarify each premise, 2. ask what justifies each premise, 3. expose when a premise is asserted but not established.

Part 3: The Proverbs 26 Tactical Pair (Centerpiece of the class)

The class repeatedly applies: - Proverbs 26:4 "answer not a fool according to his folly" - Proverbs 26:5 "answer a fool according to his folly" Transcript treatment around (34:01-37:52).

How the class interprets this pair

1. Do not grant false assumptions (v.4).
2. Do challenge faulty assumptions so they are not left unexamined (v.5).

Missionary operational model

Use a two-step sequence every time:

Step A: Refuse the loaded frame - "I don't grant that premise yet." - "Let's test that assumption first."

Step B: Run internal critique - "Given your own standard, how does this not collapse into circularity/contradiction?"

This is exactly how the class handles: - Trinity identity boundaries, - canon closure claims, - Sola Scriptura final-authority claims.

Part 4: Presuppositions the class says Protestants assume

The session identifies recurring Protestant assumptions about scripture (52:13-53:28, 1:15:41-1:16:20):

1. their canon is fixed and known by divine authority,
2. that canon is infallible in the way asserted,
3. that canon is sufficient and final as authority.

The class strategy is to repeatedly ask: - Where did God publicly identify your exact canon? - Where did God declare that canon alone is sufficient/final?

Transcript anchors: - direct question set in (55:11-56:07), - repetition that opponents cannot produce public divine identification in (58:06-58:24) and (1:06:04-1:06:48).

Missionary note

Whether one agrees fully with the class conclusions or not, the tactical lesson is clear: - demand justification for the authority standard before accepting critiques built on it.

Part 5: The "internal critique" method in missionary language

The class defines internal critique as (paraphrasing transcript): - show your counterpart's position failing by its own principles, - without borrowing your worldview as the first premise.

Anchors: - (50:02-51:19), - clarifications in Q&A (1:27:20-1:29:18).

Missionary script formula

Use this every time: 1. "I want to represent your view fairly first." 2. "Is this your standard: [repeat their standard]?" 3. "Can your critique of us work without presupposing that standard?" 4. "Can that standard itself be justified non-circularly?" 5. "If not, should we pause judging conclusions and re-evaluate method first?"

This keeps you calm, respectful, and hard to dismiss.

Part 6: "Dodging bullets" vs "disarming" in field use

The class allows both modes (30:24-31:43):

Mode 1: Bullet-dodging (when to use)

Use when someone has sincere, specific questions. Examples from class: - polygamy, - Book of Abraham, - priesthood/race, - first vision accounts, - etc.

Meaning: - provide historical context, - answer directly, - be transparent.

Mode 2: Disarming (when to use)

Use when someone is hostile, rapid-firing, or not actually listening.

Meaning: - stop chasing every allegation, - interrogate their authority basis, - expose unjustified assumptions.

The class explicitly ties this to "gish gallop" contexts and hostile exchanges (32:15-32:55).

Decision rule for missionaries

Ask early: - "Are you looking for understanding, or trying to score points?"

If sincere -> answer specifics. If combative -> shift to presupposition audit.

Part 7: Key question bank (transcript-aligned)

Use these exact categories from the class style.

A. Authority challenge questions

- “Where and when did God publicly identify your canon?”
- “Where did God declare your canon as final authority?”
- “If God did not state this, why should I treat it as binding?”

B. Method challenge questions

- “Can you show my worldview is wrong without assuming your own is right first?”
- “Is your argument valid only, or also sound (premises justified)?”

C. Interpretation challenge questions

- “Even if we grant your canon claim, who is the final adjudicator of interpretation?”
- “If interpretation authority is denied, why does your local teacher become functional final authority anyway?”

D. Circularity challenge questions

- “Are you proving your standard by that same standard?”
- “If yes, how is that not question-begging?”

Part 8: What to do after disarming (critical class warning)

A key warning in the transcript: - if you only break a worldview and provide no replacement, people can drift into atheism (06:18-07:01, 33:15-33:30).

Missionary rule

Never end with deconstruction only. Always move to constructive invitation:

1. Restoration claim summary:

- God calls prophets,
- authority can be lost,
- priesthood/revelation restored.

1. Evidence and witness:

- one coherent argument,
- one scripture anchor,
- one honest testimony.

1. Action invite:

- read,
- pray,
- ask God sincerely,
- act on answers.

The class strongly keeps spiritual witness central (opening Holland segment and ending Q&A around 1:25:24-1:27:04).

Part 9: Tactics for specific conversation types

9.1 Protestant/Evangelical

Primary class focus.

Goal: - reveal unjustified canon/sufficiency/finality assumptions, - force standards to be justified before anti-LDS conclusions are treated as decisive.

Do: - challenge presuppositions politely, - ask for public divine warrant, - press interpretation problem.

Don't: - respond with pure counter-assertion, - rely on “we're right because we're right” symmetry.

9.2 Atheist

Class notes that presuppositional critique can be strong against atheism as well (18:27-19:27, 51:19-51:54).

Goal: - test whether their worldview grounds objective morality, meaning, and rational obligation.

9.3 Catholic/Orthodox

Class says approach differs and should be treated separately (05:21-05:44).

Missionary takeaway: - do not use exact same script from Protestant conversations; - authority/historicity dialogue has different entry points.

Part 10: Tone controls (how not to become “Bible-bashing”)

The class openly acknowledges apologetics can be abused (03:22-03:36).

Use these constraints: - no mockery, - no speed-overwhelm, - no quoting to intimidate, - no humiliating someone publicly.

Required stance: - patient, kind, and clear.

One participant in transcript says it plainly: - if nothing else, “we're not jerks” (26:29-26:49).

That line is mission gold.

Part 11: Companion training drills (transcript-faithful)

Run these weekly.

Drill 1: Valid vs sound rapid-fire

- companion gives 5 syllogisms,
- you classify valid/sound in under 20 seconds each,
- then rewrite one unsound argument into a better form.

Purpose: internalize the class's logic segment (11:06-14:21).

Drill 2: Presupposition extraction

- companion gives a critique of LDS doctrine,
- you identify hidden assumptions in that critique,
- you ask 3 authority-justification questions.

Drill 3: Proverbs 26 sequence

- practice "don't grant premise" then "challenge premise".
- must be calm and short.

Drill 4: Deconstruct -> reconstruct

- after critique, give:
 1. restoration summary,
 2. testimony,
 3. concrete invitation.

No invitation = incomplete conversation.

Part 12: End-to-end missionary script (from transcript method)

Scenario: "Mormons aren't Christian because they reject the Trinity."

Response model:

1. Clarify: "When you say 'Christian,' are you defining that by Nicene trinitarianism specifically?"
2. Identify presupposition: "So your premise is: trinitarian doctrine is the required test for Christian identity."
3. Refuse unexamined premise: "I don't grant that automatically. Can we test it first?"
4. Method question: "Where did God publicly define Christian identity that way in the form you're requiring?"
5. Consistency question: "Can you critique my position without presupposing your tradition's framework first?"
6. Constructive alternative: "Our claim is centered on Jesus Christ, covenant discipleship, priesthood authority, and modern revelation."
7. Invitation: "Would you read 3 Nephi 11 and Moroni 10, then ask God directly with real intent?"

Part 13: Guardrails from the transcript's own balance

The class repeatedly balances reason and Spirit: - use evidence and reasons, - but do not replace conversion with argument performance.

Anchor moments: - Elder Holland segment on reasons + spiritual witness (03:36-04:35), - closing Q&A emphasizing testimony and Spirit (1:25:24-1:27:04).

Missionary bottom line

Arguments can open doors. Only God converts hearts.

Part 14: Final one-page memory card

Remember this sequence:

1. Clarify claim.
2. Identify presupposition.
3. Ask for justification.
4. Test internal coherence.
5. Refuse circular closure.
6. Offer Restoration alternative.
7. Invite prayerful action.

If you do these seven steps with charity, you will defend the Church better, avoid shallow debates, and help people actually move toward God.

Source

- [Apologetics 101 - The Weakness of Protestantism \(YouTube\)](#)
- Transcript provided by user in-chat (timestamped teaching excerpts)