TELLING YOUR FAITH STORY USING A BIBLE STORY

Learn how to share your testimony using a Biblical story that will allow you to share the Gospel with those who have never heard.
Let’s learn how to share your faith story!

As you travel on the mission field or even in your own community, you will find many people who have little if any knowledge of the Bible or understanding of God. However, they face the same issues in life you have faced. Most peoples of the world process information using stories. Your story of faith will can communicate the message of Christ to people who might never attend church.

Your faith story can make an impact on unbelievers.
Your story of faith is not just about knowing how to be saved, but coming into a relationship with a living God. As you share how God has transformed you, guided you, perhaps even broken and healed you, others can be truly blessed. The story of how God has worked in your life can make a impact on unbelievers. There are three reasons why your personal faith story can impact people:
1. People are interested in knowing you and hearing about your life.
2. People can relate your story to their own lives.
3. People can't argue with the fact that your life has been changed.

You may have never shared your faith story before.
You may think that you do not have a personal testimony that is worth sharing. However, your story will make sense as you share from your heart what Jesus means to you. God works in our lives differently. Yet, our experience can help others come to faith in Christ.

Many unbelievers are not familiar with Bible stories.
Telling your story gives you an opportunity to tell a Bible story. They may have never read or heard of the Bible. As they listen to your story they can also hear a story from the Bible. Using a Bible story is a great way to help you communicate what God means to you. A story from God’s word that illustrates or helps provide a basis for your story and adds to the power of your witness. People like to hear stories and they remember them long after they forgot most everything else we said.

The Holy Spirit can use your story to speak to people’s heart.
People may be turned off by preaching or easily refute the claims of scripture, but they cannot deny what God has done in your life. As they hear you share your struggles, they can identify with you and realize that there is hope for them. As you share your faith story, the Holy Spirit can speak to people and draw them to faith in Jesus Christ. Sharing your faith story will also draw you closer to Christ. Paul wrote to Philemon saying, “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.” (Philemon 1:6)

This guide is designed to help you write the story of your Christian life, using a Bible story as a foundation.
Let’s Get Ready

**Step 1: Realize the Power of Your Christian Story**
First and foremost - remember - there is power in your story! Revelation 12:11 says *we overcome our enemy by the blood of the Lamb* (Jesus) *and by the word of our faith story* (what God has done for us). No matter how you came to place your faith in Jesus, your faith story can speak to others and be used to draw them to Jesus, just as you were drawn.

**Step 2: Study an Example of a Testimony from the Bible**
Read Acts 26: The Apostle Paul gives his testimony before government officials.

In verse 2 why did he share his testimony?

What did he say about his life before coming to know Jesus? Vs.5

How did he come to know Jesus? Vs.12-18

How was his life changed? Vs.22, 25, 29

**Step 3: Spend Time in Thought Preparation**
There are a few things to consider before you start writing your faith story.
Think about your life before you met the Lord.

What was going on in your life leading up to your conversion?

What problems or needs were you facing at the time?

How did your life change after that?
What lessons in life has God taught you?

How has your relationship with God affected and changed you?

How did God sustain you through a difficult time and what was the joy or peace you experienced?

**Step 4: Start with a Simple 3-Point Outline**

A three-point approach is very effective in communicating your personal faith story. The outline focuses on **before** you trusted Christ, **how** you came to trust him, and the difference in your life **since** you’ve been walking with him.

**Before:** Simply tell what your life was like before you surrendered to Christ. What were you searching for before coming to know Christ? What was the key problem, emotion, situation or attitude you were dealing with; personal pride, anger, control, selfishness? What motivated you? What were your actions? How did you try to satisfy your inner needs? Examples of inner needs are loneliness, fear of death, insecurity. Possible ways to fill those needs include work, money, drugs, relationships, sports, sex.

**How:** How were you converted? Simply tell the events and circumstances that caused you to consider Christ as the solution to your searching. The time, place, and your age is not as important the how you came to accept Christ. Take time to identify the steps that brought you to the point of trusting Christ. Where were you? What was happening at the time? What people or problems influenced your decision?

**Since:** How has your life in Christ made a difference? How has his forgiveness impacted you? How have your thoughts, attitudes and emotions changed? Share how Christ is meeting your needs and what a relationship with him means to you now.
LET’S WRITE OUT YOUR FAITH STORY

These tips and suggestions will help you effectively tell others what God has done in your life with sincerity, clarity, and impact!

**Stick to the point**
Your conversion and new life in Christ should be the main points. Keeping your story to less than 10 minutes will ensure that more people will remember what you had to say. While you can write and tell a long narrative of your life, a short concise presentation of what God has done for you will communicate effectively to unbelievers.

**Be honest**
Don't exaggerate or dramatize your life for effect.

The simple truth of what God has done in your life is all the Holy Spirit needs to convict others of their sin and convince them of God’s love and grace.

**Be specific**
Include events, genuine feelings and personal insights that clarify your main point. This makes your testimony tangible - something others can relate to.

**Be current**
Tell what is happening in your life with God now, today.

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**Avoid Religious Terms**
Here are some examples of what to avoid and options of what you can use instead.

**Born again**: spiritual birth, spiritual renewal, to come alive spiritually, given a new life, etc.

**Saved**: rescued, delivered from despair, found hope for life, found purpose for living, realized that my security was in Jesus, etc.

**Lost**: heading in the wrong direction, separated from God, had no hope, etc.

**Gospel**: God's message to man, the good news about Christ's purpose on earth, Jesus’ message of love and security, etc.

**Sin**: rejecting God, missing the mark, falling away from the right path, a crime against God's law, disobedience to God, wrong doings, etc.

**Repent**: admit a wrong, change one's mind, heart or attitude, make a decision to turn away, turn around, a 180 degree turn from what you were doing, etc.

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**Avoid Idiomatic Expressions**
Most do not translate, here are some examples of what you could say instead.

*I was a real wimp*: I complained all the time

*Nobody gives a hoot*: I felt that no one cared

*I was all washed up*: I couldn’t continue any longer

*A God shaped vacuum*: I felt incomplete or empty inside
**OK, LETS DO IT**

It’s time to begin writing!
You have to put it down on paper to organize your thoughts.
So get started! Take some time and use the space provided to write down your thoughts.
Remember, less than 10 minutes!

**Begin: What my life was like before I came to know Jesus:**

| Be general about your life before Christ. You don’t want the hearer to dwell on your sins. Details of your sins are not necessary, just the direction your life was going. General descriptions of sin have broader impact. If you say, “I was rebellious and did lots of wrong things” or “I was prideful and wanted to control my life” then the hearer may identify by thinking, “I bet s/he was a lot like me” Describing feelings is helpful (e.g., pain, loneliness, emptiness, uncertainty of eternity, pride, selfish etc.), but avoid needless sin details. |
Describe: How I came to put my faith in Jesus:

When and where is not as important as how you came to know Jesus. Make sure this section included some description of the Gospel.

We are sinners who choose to disobey God. (How did you realize you were a sinner?)
Jesus was God's son who came to the world as a man to forgive us our sins. (State clearly who Jesus is.)
Jesus lived a perfect life, but because of his love he died to forgive us of our sins. (Describe what Jesus did.)
Jesus rose from the dead to give us victory over death. (Include the forgiveness that Jesus provides.)

Trusting Jesus as Lord of our life provided us with forgiveness and eternal life. (Trusting requires faith)

Be clear and avoid religious jargon like ‘I got saved, or walking the aisle’, or ‘asked Jesus into my heart’, etc.
Conclude: What Christ has done in my life since I accepted Him as Lord:

Be specific. Talk about assurance of forgiveness, personal peace, God’s direction in your life, joy in living the Christian life. Don’t focus on material blessings but spiritual blessings and victory. Don’t focus on the things that Christians shouldn’t do, but focus on how Christ changes our attitudes and desires.
NOW, LET’S TEST IT OUT ON FRIENDS

It is easier to share your story with friends than strangers. Start there. Divide into groups of three or find two friends who will listen to your story and give you feedback.

Read your story aloud to your friend(s) like you wrote it down.

Before reading ask your friends to look for the following things:

1. Religious or church terms that people might not understand.
2. Idiomatic expressions that might not be understood in another culture.
3. Areas of your story that is unclear or confusing.

Listen to the feedback from your friends. Don’t get defensive. Receive their comments as positive criticism. They want to help you do a better job communicating your story and share Jesus with others.

Feedback:

Make corrections and read it aloud again to your friends. Listen for additional comments and corrections.

Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”
LET’S INSERT A BIBLICAL STORY INSIDE YOUR STORY

Most of the people in the world are oral communicators. This means that they process information orally. They do not easily remember or even understand abstract ideas. However, when they hear a story, the story has value and communicates an idea or truth. By using a Bible story in combination with your own faith story, you are able to effectively communicate the story of faith in Christ.

How do I pick a story?

Pick a story that communicates a biblical truth related to your testimony. The story does not have to be an exact example of your life. However, the story should provide a truth related to your life. For example, if your life struggle was to find forgiveness, look for a story that demonstrates forgiveness (Jesus forgiving the lame man). If you were prideful before coming to know the Lord, look for a story that demonstrates the how pride destroys relationships (Saul and David). If you were constantly searching for purpose in life, look for a story about someone who was searching for purpose and meaning (Nicodemus and Jesus). Look at the story list in the back for ideas.

How do I craft the story?

You should be able to tell the story in your own words. Begin by reading the biblical account in a modern translation. You can leave out extraneous passages that do not pertain to the story. Do not add details that are not in the biblical account. You may add a clarification phrase, but do not try to interpret the story or make commentary on the story. Let the words of scripture speak for themselves. The story should be about 300-600 words. Write the story down and make the appropriate changes.
How do I tell the story?

The story part of your testimony should be told with some dramatic flair. You don’t want to overdo it, but small gestures and voice inflection will add to the quality of the story. Break the story down into paragraphs of 2-4 sentences. This will help you to memorize the story. As you end the story take a deep breath before continuing with your own faith story. This allows your listeners to know the story has ended. Practice telling the story out loud. Now tell your story to a friend(s). Try not to read it word for word, but tell it like a story.
Ask your friend to listen for the following and give you feedback:

- Was the story clear?
- Did it make sense?
- Were element or ideas added that are not in the scripture story?
- Were there parts of the story that could have been left out and not affect the idea of the story?
- Was there any commentary (doctrinal explanations) added to the story?
- Did the story illustrate a truth related to the testimony.
- Was it clear when the Bible story began and ended.
NOW, LET’S FINISH IT OFF

Write your final draft below. Then practice saying it to others. Be ready to share at any moment.

Hello, my name is:

I live in:

Before following Christ, (or back when I was younger, or before I discover a purpose in life, or before I realized I needed God...)

Let me tell you a story from God’s Word about (example “a man who had no purpose till he met Jesus”)...

The reason I like this story is...

One day I (include a BRIEF Gospel presentation)...

Today my life as a Christian is (or since I put my faith and trust in Jesus, or after I turned my life over to Jesus)...

Since coming to know Jesus, my greatest joy has been...

My prayer for each of you is that you too will come to know Jesus and find the ______________ ___________________________ (describe what you shared as your greatest joy in Christ, i.e. peace, forgiveness, purpose, etc) that Jesus has given me. God bless you!

Jesus said: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

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These materials may be reproduced and used to train short-term missionaries and others who wish to effectively share their faith story.