

What's YOUR Story?



*P.O. Box 15471
Fort Wayne, IN 46885
(260) 471-4704
www.stjoecommunitychurch.org*

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Introduction:

PRAY

Take a few minutes before you start, and thank God for what He has done in and for you. Praise God for who He is and what He does. Thank Him for His Story the Bible. Thank Him for giving us Our Story through Jesus Christ.

TWO PARTS TO THE STORY

1. God's Story: The Universal Part

Who is God? (According to His Word the Bible)

The Good News – Explaining how to accept Christ.

2. My Personal Story: The Unique Part

Who am I? (New life in Christ)

My Life Lessons

My Life Passion

Part 1: God's Story

The universal part of your Story is the Gospel, the *Good News* of how we can be saved, forgiven, and begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The moment you trust in Christ, you are called and commissioned to be a messenger of the Good News to people who haven't heard or responded to it.

What is God's Story?

1. GOD BECAME A MAN: SO I CAN RELATE TO HIM.

"It is the Good News about God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
Romans 1:3(LB)

2. JESUS DIED FOR MY SINS: SO I DON'T HAVE TO.

"It is this Good News that saves you if you firmly believe it... that Christ died for our sins. 1 Corinthians 15: 2-3 (NLT)

"For God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself, no longer counting men's sins against them but blotting them out. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others."

2 Corinthians 5:19 (LB)

3. JESUS DESTROYED DEATH: SO I CAN HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

"Jesus destroyed death, and through the Good News he showed us the way to have life that cannot be destroyed."

2 Timothy 1:10 (NCV)

4. SALVATION IS A FREE GIFT: SO I DON'T HAVE TO EARN IT.

"People are made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ."

Romans 3:24 (ICB)

5. IT IS BASED ON FAITH – SO ALL I HAVE TO DO IS REPENT AND BELIEVE.

Jesus said, "Repent and believe the good news!"

Mark 1:15 (NIV)

****Memorize these 5 basic truths!****

Part 2: My Personal Story

You are the ones chosen by God... God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you. 1 Peter 2:9 (Mes)

....He has given us this message of restored relationships to tell others. Therefore, we are Christ's representatives.

2 Corinthians 5:19b-20(GWT)

"Why Share My Personal Story (s)?"

A Personal Story is...

The Most Persuasive Form of Communication.

I. THE BIBLE IS FULL OF STORIES

1. DAVID

Come and listen, and I will tell you what God has done for me. Psalm 66:16 (NCV)

2. THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony. John 4:39 (NIV)

3. THE MAN BORN BLIND

I don't know whether he is good or bad, but I know this: I was blind, and now I see! John 9:25 (LB)

4. PETER AND JOHN

We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard. Acts 4:20 (NLT)

5. PAUL

On six different occasions Paul used his personal story to share God's Story with unbelievers. (Acts 22-26)

6. JESUS

Listen carefully. I'm speaking sober truth to you. I speak only of what I know by experience; I give witness only to what I have seen with my own eyes. There is nothing secondhand here, no hearsay. John 3:11 (Mes)

II. GOD COMMANDS US TO SHARE OUR STORY

Let the whole world know what he has done for you. Psalm 105:1b (LB)

Every day tell how he saves us. Tell the nations of his glory; tell all People the miracles he does. Psalm 96:2-3 (NCV)

III. THE VALUE OF MY STORY

- 1. My STORY is unique! No others just like it.**
- 2. It is personal and easy to understand.**
- 3. I am the authority on my life. It's difficult to argue with what I've experienced.**
- 4. People love to hear personal stories and they remember them.**
- 5. People can relate to my experiences. Common experiences build relational bridges.**
- 6. In our postmodern world my life story may be my most effective witness.**

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

IV. THE FOUR PARTS OF MY STORY

- 1. WHAT MY LIFE WAS LIKE BEFORE...**
- 2. HOW I REALIZED I NEEDED...**
- 3. HOW I COMMITTED MY LIFE...**
- 4. THE DIFFERENCE IT HAS MADE IN MY LIFE.**

1. WHAT MY LIFE WAS LIKE BEFORE...

- I Met Christ**
- This Experience.**

- What common circumstances would an unbeliever identify with?
- What were my attitudes that an unbeliever would identify with?
- What was most important to me?
- What substitute for God did I use to find meaning in my life? (sports/fitness, success, marriage, sex, popularity, making money, drugs/alcohol, having fun, entertainment, hobbies.)

2. HOW I REALIZED I NEEDED...

-Christ.

-This Experience.

- What significant steps led up to my conversion?
- What needs, hurts, or problems made me dissatisfied with the way I was living without God?
- How did God get my attention?
- What motivated me?

3. HOW I COMMITTED MY LIFE...

-To Christ.

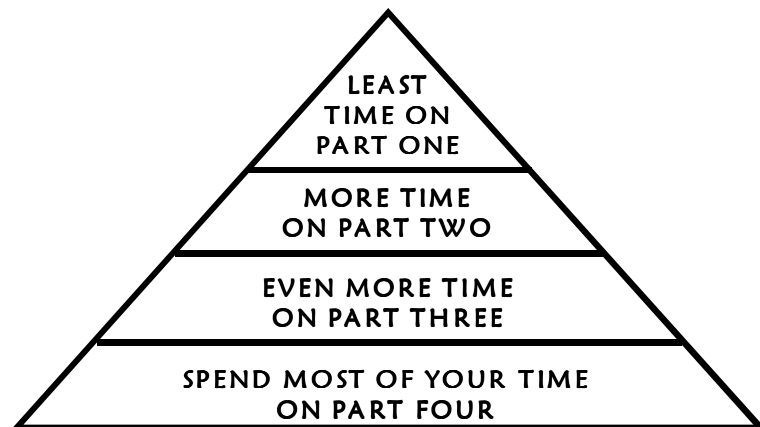
-Through This Experience.

- What specifically did I do? Where did it happen?
- What did I say in my prayer? Be specific.

4. THE DIFFERENCE IT HAS MADE IN MY LIFE.

- What benefits have I experienced or felt?
- What problems have been resolved?
- How has Jesus helped me change for the better?
- How has it helped my relationships?
- Give a current examples.

Testimony Time Management Pyramid



Timing	30 second	3 minute	5 minute
Part 1	5 sec	25 sec	45 sec
Part 2	7 sec	35 sec	1 min
Part 3	8 sec	50 sec	1:15 min
Part 4	10 sec	1:10 min	2:00 min

V. SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING MY STORY

- Pray and ask God to give me the right words.
- Write it out on paper. God honors preparation.
- Keep it short and to the point.
- Don't lose site of your goal.
- Try to keep my testimony below 3 minutes.
- Be succinct. Avoid excessive, unnecessary details.
- Refer to experiences most people have in common.
- Share a slice of my life (a story) that they will identify with.
- Be honest about my continuing struggles.
- My life is not perfect.
- Don't imply that all of my problems ended at conversion.
- Spend the most time on part 4: the difference Christ has made.
- Emphasize WHY I received Christ (the benefits of doing it).
- Mention the benefit of being certain of my destiny when I die.
- Don't exaggerate or brag about pre-conversion sins.
- Don't make negative remarks about other religions or people.
- Don't mention any denomination.
- Don't quote a lot of Scripture. (A maximum of one verse)
- Don't answer questions they haven't asked.
- Give concrete examples of the changes in my life.
- The more specific I am, the more dynamic it will be.
- Avoid using dates, names, and ages. It doesn't matter to them.
- Be prepared. Practice it until it feels and sounds natural.
- Read it aloud and edit it to make it conversational.
- Let a friend read it and make suggestions.
- Speak casually and informally, in a matter-of-fact tone.
- Don't dramatize or embellish my story.
- Don't share mystical experiences. Share on *their* level, not mine.
- Don't talk down to people. Don't sound "preachy."
- Use "I, me, and my" not "You". It's about me – not them.
- Use humor - it reduces tension and relaxes people. Smile
- Choose a central theme. (See list VI.)

TRANSLATING CHRISTIAN WORDS

A cliché lexicon

CHRISTIAN TERM	WHEN TALKING TO SEEKERS
<i>“Blessed”</i>	<i>“Happy”</i>
<i>“I was Born Again”</i>	<i>“I was given a fresh, new start”</i>
<i>“I was Saved”</i>	<i>“My life changed at that moment”</i>
<i>“Jesus is my Lord”</i>	<i>“He’s the Manager/CEO of my Life”</i>
	<i>“I put Jesus in the driver’s seat.”</i>
<i>“I repented”</i>	<i>“I changed my mind” (I did a U-turn)</i>
<i>“I had sinned”</i>	<i>“I knew I’d blown it”</i>
<i>“All are sinners”</i>	<i>“Nobody’s perfect. No one bats 1000”</i>
<i>“I felt convicted”</i>	<i>“I realized that...”</i>
<i>“The Holy Ghost”</i>	<i>“God’s Spirit”</i>

PHRASES TO AVOID IN A STORY TO AN UNBELIEVER

“I just Praise the Lord for...”
“Now I am so blessed”
“Hallelujah!”
“Amen”
“It was glorious”
“I was convicted”
“The Lord laid on my heart”

VI. POSSIBLE STORY THEMES

“Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn..”
 Romans 12:15 (NIV)

MOURN

How Trusting Jesus has helped me deal with my...
 Worries / Anxiety
 Guilt/Shame
 Anger / Temper
 Emptiness/Lack of Purpose
 Grief
 Stress / Burnout
 Low self-esteem
 Poor health
 Disappointment
 Insecurity
 Regrets
 Discontent / frantic activity
 Fears
 Loneliness
 Lack of emotional support
 Addictions / Habits
 Self-centeredness
 Despair / Depression
 Cheap thrills
 Boredom with my life
 Fear of Death
 “Something was missing”
 Bitterness & resentment
 Pain of rejection
 Marriage Problems
 Financial Problems
 Business Problems

REJOICE

How Trusting Jesus has given me
 Inner Peace
 Forgiveness and a fresh start
 Patience and love
 Purpose in life and meaning
 Comfort and Joy
 New energy and power for living
 Significance. I am valuable to God
 Strength to go on
 Trust in his good plans
 Confidence and sense of security
 A second chance at life
 Contentment and peace
 Faith to face my fears
 Assurance He’s always with me.
 A church family that supports me.
 Power to change. Freedom
 Love for other people
 Hope
 Real, lasting happiness
 Adventure with God
 Assurance of heaven
 A sense of fulfillment
 Freedom from my Past
 God’s unconditional love
 Positive changes in my marriage
 Positive changes in my finances
 Positive changes in my business

God allows experiences in my life so...

I can relate to others who need Christ!

VII. COMMON GROUND CIRCUMSTANCES

“Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever. I didn’t take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ—but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I’ve become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did all this because of the Message. I didn’t just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!”

I Corinthians 9 (MSG)

Find common ground with People.

EXAMPLES OF MAJOR CHANGES:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption | <input type="checkbox"/> Breaking a bad habit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial gain | <input type="checkbox"/> Raising kids |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage strengthened or restored | <input type="checkbox"/> New baby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New business | <input type="checkbox"/> New friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New home | <input type="checkbox"/> New marriage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New job | <input type="checkbox"/> Success |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewed love | <input type="checkbox"/> Restored relationships |

EXAMPLES OF MAJOR CRISES:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> Accident |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Abortion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy | <input type="checkbox"/> Broken dream |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> Death |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression | <input type="checkbox"/> Disease |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Empty nest | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infertility | <input type="checkbox"/> Incest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jail | <input type="checkbox"/> Rape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surgery | |

VIII. I HAVE MORE THAN ONE STORY

- Different situations will require different stories!
- Choose the story that best matches my listener.
- Ask: “If I were an unbeliever, would this make sense?”
- Don’t use religious terms or clichés or broad generalities.

IX. HOW TO LEAD INTO MY STORY

1. **Pray:** Say a QUICK prayer silently.

“Lord Help me speak and help them hear.”

2. **Listen** for problems/needs that Jesus has helped me with.

“You know, that used to be a big issue in my life too... In fact, I felt pretty... (hopeless, frustrated, etc.) But then I discovered something that made a major difference in my life.”

3. **Refer** to something in the news or on TV that deals with a common need or problem.

“Did you read about... I can sure identify with how those people feel. It wasn’t that long ago that I struggled with that too. But then something happened that changed everything for me...”

4. **Start** with a statement they’d agree with or a situation they relate to.

“It seems like life is getting faster and faster.”
“Sometimes life just gets so complicated.”
“Life doesn’t always turn out the way you planned it.”

X. BE PREPARED

But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you... 1 Peter 3:15

Note: (The following information is required when sharing in large group settings. For weekly service presentations a written copy of your story needs to be submitted to the weekly service coordinator.)

1. Write it out.

- Have a spiritual mentor, pastor, or small group leader critique the written and verbal presentation of your story.
- Your story becomes a powerful transferable tool for your personal outreach and the outreach of our Church family. Copies of your story could be given to and shared with friends, coworkers, family, neighbors, ext.

2. Time it.

- It should take **3 minutes** to present unless specified otherwise. (You should also be able to share a 30sec-1 min story.)

3. Read it. (When speaking publicly in front of groups)

- Allows you to stay on task (avoiding unnecessary details) and on time (helps to hold people's attention and respect other's time.)
- Your story builds confidence in the St. Joe family. It allows others to see that they don't need to be a good public speaker, they could get up and READ their story.

Suggestions:

- Read it over and over again until it becomes natural.
- Practice reading it in front of a mirror.
- Read it to someone and have them critique you on how it was presented. *(This is a great way to share your story with people who need to hear it!)*
- Video tape yourself.
- There is no better way to be prepared than practice.
- Share your story as often as you can with anyone willing to listen.

Top 10 List

List the names of 10 people who have not heard your story.

Begin praying and looking for an opportunity to lead these people to God's Story through Your Story.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NOTES