

EXERCISE

Write and Share Your Story

Peter, Jesus's close friend and follower, challenged us in this way: "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).

Your answer is your story.

This week, use this worksheet to think through and write out your gospel story. You don't have to write a book! Just compose a simple three- to five-minute version of your story in those three parts. Once you have written your story out, practice it out loud several times until you feel like you are comfortable and could do it from memory. Next week in small group, take turns sharing your stories with one another. Take time to both practice intentional listening and then offer encouragement to one another.

Part 1: My Life before Christ

What was your life like before you met Jesus? Or if you grew up in church knowing all about Jesus, what was your life like before you got serious about following him? What were your attitudes and actions before Christ? What previous beliefs did I have about God or faith? What things did I look to for identity and purpose?

Part 2: How I Met Christ

How did you become a Christ-follower? Did you go through a particularly tough time in your life that led you to God? Did a friend invite you to a church service? Did a family member introduce you to Jesus? Did an experience inspire you to get serious about committing your life to Jesus? What truths did I embrace about the cross of Jesus in that moment?

Part 3: My Life with Christ

What difference has Jesus made in your life? What is your new identity and purpose? How has knowing Jesus impacted the way that you walk through good and hard times? How has it changed my relationships? People will be more impacted when you are honest about the challenges you continue to face even since choosing to follow Jesus. Talk about how your life is different and how God is growing you in certain areas, but make sure you're sincere about how it's a process and how you still often get it wrong. Saint Francis Xavier said it well: "Speak to them the great mercy of God.... Sometimes people are helped by your telling of your own lamentable past."

Part 4: Hope in Christ

How does the hope of the gospel inform your life concerning the future? How does the promise of his presence impact the way you view the challenges that lay ahead, your purpose in life, etc. Add a line about the present hope How does the promise of his return give you comfort in difficulty or uncertainty? How does the prospect of seeing Jesus face to face fuel your worship.

My Story...

