

MISSION

► STORY TELLING

During this year in *The Journey*, you have learned a lot about what it means to live a missional life. You've learned that your mission is to share in Jesus' mission to make the gospel known by word and deed to all people across the street, track, and ocean. And after investigating missional living, you began developing the habit of praying missionally and had an opportunity to serve missionally. Now, you will learn how to tell someone the story of your own spiritual journey. If the thought of this makes you a little nervous, just consider the advice of the apostle Peter, who had once fearfully denied Christ himself,

"...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..."

1 PETER 3:15 (NIV)

One way to give the reason for your hope in Jesus is to share your own personal experience of how you came to trust Him. During this series, you will learn to share that experience by writing a 60-second testimony. This exercise will help equip you to tell a brief, attractive story about how and why you became a follower of Jesus. Keep in mind, this exercise is about your own personal journey to faith and not a theological defense of the gospel. You have several weeks to craft your 60-second testimony, so get started now, but don't rush the process. You may find the process to be a rich, spiritual experience in itself. Follow the steps in the process below:

1. **REVIEW THE EXAMPLE** on the next page of what makes a testimony clear and effective.
2. **THINK + SCRIBBLE** on the blank page so you can begin to get your thoughts on paper. You can write, scribble, or draw as you focus on what Jesus has done for you and what knowing Him means to you. Some questions are listed as food for thought. Don't worry about organizing all your thoughts just yet; just try to get them all on paper and use additional blank pages if necessary.
3. **REVIEW THE TIPS** page to help you organize your thoughts and write your testimony in a clear and attractive way.
4. **DRAFT + WRITE** your testimony on the pages provided. Keep it short! Focus on the main points so you will be able to tell your story in about a minute. If you can do this, you will have no problem sharing more details in conversation when you have the opportunity.
5. **PRACTICE TELLING IT NATURALLY** so that it doesn't sound like a formal presentation. If your testimony sounds weird to your ears, practice telling it until you can say it in a casual, conversational style.
6. **SHARE IT WITH YOUR JOURNEY GROUP** to receive feedback and coaching that will help you tell your story more effectively.

► **EXAMPLE**

"I was born and raised in a family that assumed they were Christians. So as I grew up, I assumed that I was a Christian as well, though later I came to think differently. I met a group of students who were living a life that was different than mine. I went to church like they did, but they didn't talk about church and religion as much as they talked about a relationship with God that could be found through the person of Jesus Christ. I began to investigate by attending church and other activities with them to learn more about what they were talking about. There I began to understand what is called the gospel, the good news that Christ did for us what we can't do for ourselves. He died to pay the penalty that needed to be paid for my own sins, so that by receiving Him, I could have new life and a new relationship with God. I came to the place where my heart was surrendered to Him and I began to follow Him. Right away, I noticed changes in my life, like peace that I hadn't known before, and a new hope about life. I knew I was a different person and gained an assurance that if I died, I would be okay with God. My life began growing and changing from that point on."

► **EXPLANATION**

This person begins his testimony by talking about his life before becoming a Christian.

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I was born and raised in a family that assumed they were Christians. So as I grew up, I assumed that I was a Christian as well, though later I came to think differently.

Next, he tells how he became a Christian. Note that he included a simple explanation of the gospel, which is highlighted here.

I met a group of students who were living a life that was different than mine. I went to church like they did, but they didn't talk about church and religion as much as they talked about a relationship with God that could be found through the person of Jesus Christ. I began to investigate by attending church and other activities with them to learn more about what they were talking about. There I began to understand what is called the gospel, the good news that Christ did for us what we can't do for ourselves. He died to pay the penalty that needed to be paid for my own sins, so that by receiving Him, I could have new life and a new relationship with God. I came to the place where my heart was surrendered to Him and I began to follow Him.

Lastly, he describes how his life has changed since becoming a Christian.

Right away, I noticed changes in my life, like peace that I hadn't known before, and a new hope about life. I knew I was a different person and gained an assurance that if I died I would be okay with God. My life began growing and changing from that point on.

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► **THINK + SCRIBBLE**

Food for thought: How has my life changed since becoming a follower of Christ? What has Jesus done for me? How has being a Christian answered my questions about life? What do I enjoy most about being a Christian? What was I searching for before I met Jesus?

Handwriting practice area consisting of 12 horizontal dotted lines.

Use the space below if drawing a picture helps you think.

A large rectangular area outlined with a dotted line, intended for drawing.

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► TIPS

- Organize your testimony around this simple outline to make it easy to follow. You may choose to modify the outline if you want to emphasize or de-emphasize a certain point.

1. Before I became a Christian

2. How I became a Christian

3. Since I became a Christian

- Write your testimony in the way you naturally speak. You aren't presenting a report or preaching a sermon.
- If you choose to quote Scripture, only use a verse or two that relates to the central point of your story and wouldn't require explanation for it to be understood. You may want to paraphrase the verse by using common phrases rather than quoting.
- Avoid Christian jargon (e.g. saved, lost, born again, converted, etc.). These words don't always communicate what you intend.
- Remember that most people you meet will say they believe in God, so you will want to talk about trusting or following Jesus, rather than having a general faith in God.
- Emphasize why you believe Jesus is real and relevant in your life.
- Avoid talking about any church, denomination, or Christian group in a derogatory way.
- Avoid giving the false impression that the Christian life is trouble-free.
- Practice telling your story out loud. If you can't say it in the way you naturally speak in about a minute, it's too long.
- Ask yourself if your testimony would connect with someone on a personal level so that they could identify with your story.

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► DRAFT VERSION

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How I became a Christian

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Since I became a Christian

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▶ FINAL VERSION

Before I became a Christian

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How I became a Christian

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Since I became a Christian

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