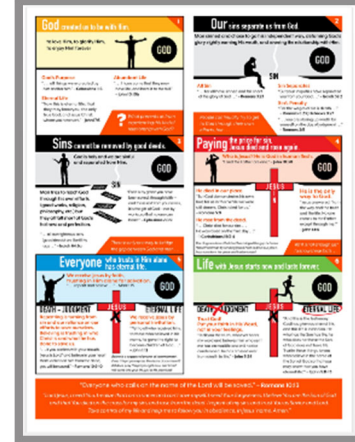


500-Word Testimony: General Instructions and Examples

This testimony can be written out in the MyStory tract template that has the steps for sharing the Gospel on the back. It can be found at grace.church/mystory.



OUTLINE

1. Before I Came to Christ

Write a short sketch of what your life was like before you became a Christian. What were your needs? What were some positive or negative solutions you may have tried?

2. How I Came to Christ

Explain how, specifically, you took the step of becoming a Christian. Describe the circumstances. Share steps you took. Briefly include the Gospel.

3. After I Came to Christ

Relate to the changes in your life. Show the difference Christ makes. Align your 'Before Christ' needs/solutions with Christ's solutions.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING THE MORE SPECIFIC CONTENT

- Make it sound conversational. Prepare it to be spoken. Avoid literary sounding statements like, "I viewed the crimson sunset and pondered." Use your everyday vocabulary.
- Say "I" and "me", not "you" (share, don't preach). This helps keep the testimony warm and personal. People like to hear experiences of others told in the first person.
- Avoid religious words, phrases, and jargon like atonement, redemption, etc.

- Generalize so more people can identify with your story. Don't name specific churches, denominations, or groups. Avoid using dates and ages. (e.g., "I was seven years old when I became a Christian" or "We moved to the city in 1956.")
- Include some humor and human interest. When a person smiles or laughs, it reduces tension. Humor is disarming and increases attention.
- One or two word pictures increase interest. Don't just say, "I grew up on my folk's farm." You might briefly describe the farm so a person listening can visualize it.
- In the "Before Christ" section, include both good and bad aspects of your life. Have a cushion of interesting non-spiritual material at the beginning.
 - Examples of "good aspects" would be that maybe you wanted to excel, desired education, had concern for others, or were hard-working.
 - Examples of "bad aspects" would be that maybe you were selfish, had an inferiority complex, wanted to get ahead at any cost, had a temper, or were greedy for finances.
 In the "How I Came to Christ" section,
 - Communicate the Gospel clearly and briefly. You need to include:
 - The fact of sin
 - The penalty of sin
 - Christ's payment of the penalty
 - The requirement to receive Christ
 - Make the Bible the authority.
 - Use the word "pray" when referring to receiving Christ. The word pray communicates what a person needs to do. (e.g., "I prayed and asked Christ to come into my life and give me the gift of eternal life.")
- In the "After I Came to Christ" section, quickly conclude with two or three personal benefits of becoming a Christian. (These may be current benefits.)
- The last sentence of your testimony should be something like, "But the greatest benefit is that I know I have eternal life." The listener often comments on the last thing you say in your testimony. If the listener's comment is on eternal life, the door is open for presenting the Gospel.
- Avoid dogmatic statements which skeptics can question. Some examples include:
 - Poor: "I prayed and I know Christ came in."
 - Poor: "God has given me a wonderful husband (or wife or three children)."
 - Good: "I prayed and asked Christ into my life. Since then I have experienced peace . . ."
- Sound adult, not juvenile. Reflect an adult point of view even if you were converted at an early age.
 - Poor: "My dad helped me to understand about Jesus."
 - Good: "I had great talks with my parents. One day, my dad and I discussed in some detail who Jesus Christ really is."
- Simplify. Reduce "clutter." Mention only a limited number of people you know and events such as moves, meetings, or jobs you have had. Use only first names when possible:
 - Poor: "Bill Smith, Thomas VanBuren, and his cousin Ed Matthews came by my office at ACME Plumbing and Appliance Company . . ."
 - Good: "Bill and two other men talked to me at work one day . . ."
- Combine information like, "After living in five states and attending six universities, I found myself at my first engineering job."

EXAMPLE TESTIMONY FOR MYSTORY: DAVE GIBSON

For 17 years of my life, I was seeking answers to life's two most important questions: "What is my purpose in life?", and "Where will I spend eternity?"

While growing up, our family regularly attended church, and I learned about God. But early on, I became very disillusioned with the church and organized religion as I observed the inconsistencies in the lives of many within the church. All of those years I had head knowledge about God, but I never grasped how to know Him personally. I had a little religion but no relationship.

The philosopher Pascal once said, "There is a God shaped void in the heart of every man that can only be filled by God Himself through His Son Jesus Christ." I was trying to fill this emptiness in my life and find a sense of purpose through success in sports, academics, and finding acceptance and approval from others. Outwardly, my life may have appeared successful and fulfilling, but inwardly, I was very empty and searching for purpose.

Early in my senior year in high school, I received a phone call that really shook me to the core. I was told my good friend Mark had committed suicide, and for the first time, I began to search and ask serious questions about life.

Shortly after this incident, a guest speaker gave a talk in our church entitled "The Ultimate Rejection" taken from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7. He described the final day of judgment when we stand before God and He will say to many, "Depart from Me; I never knew you." It was as though the Lord was speaking directly to me.

He then shared that God created us to love Him and enjoy a relationship with Him forever; but our sins have separated us from God and none of our good deeds will save us. That day I turned from my sin and by faith prayed to receive Jesus Christ into my life.

The Lord filled the emptiness and gave me a new sense of purpose and direction. I also gained a certainty that I would spend eternity in heaven. Life has not always been easy and my problems did not all go away, but I now have a security in knowing I am deeply loved by the Lord, completely forgiven, totally accepted by God, and absolutely complete in Christ.

After college, I served with the ministry of The Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and later as a Missions Pastor. I've also been blessed with a beautiful wife and five wonderful children, all who love the Lord. My ambition in life is to know Him and make Him known. Please read the following pages* with an open mind and open heart and ask God to speak to you, "You will seek Me and find me if you search for Me with all of your heart." (Jeremiah 29:9-11)