



Small Group Curriculum

Appendix

Appendix A

Minute to Witness:

HOW TO WRITE YOUR ONE-MINUTE TESTIMONY

Your Story Before Christ (20 Seconds)

There was a time in my life when . . . (Use 2 adjectives to describe your life before Christ.)

1.

2.

The Gospel (20 Seconds)

Then someone shared a story with me that changed my life . . . (*Share how you heard the Gospel and trusted in Christ as your Lord and Savior. Make sure to include the highlights of the Gospel.*)

Note: Believers who can't remember their time before Christ should have a greater emphasis on Christ's sustenance through hard times.

Life After Trusting Christ (20 Seconds)

After I trusted in Christ . . . (Share a couple of ways how life changed. Be honest.)

Concluding Question

Do you have a story like that?

Standard Example

There was a time in my life when I wrestled with meaninglessness and purposelessness. What is the point of life? Am I supposed to just go to school get a job, make money, die, and be forgotten? And help the next generation do the same? Why am I here?

Then someone shared a story with me that changed my life: I was created to be in relationship with God, but my sins (the wrong things I had done) had separated me from a pure and holy God. There was nothing I could do to wipe my soul clean and restore that relationship. The cost of my sin was death, and it had to be paid for. But, 2,000 years ago God sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life, die on the cross for my sins, and rise again from the dead. Then they explained that all who place their trust in Him can have eternal life. So, I did that.

After I trusted in Christ, my life has radically changed. I have new love, joy, and peace in my heart that I never knew. I am right with God and understand the purpose I was made for. To be sure, I still have many trials in my life, but I no longer walk them alone. I know live to know Him more and make Him known.

Do you have a story like that?

Believer at a Young Age Example #1

There was a time in my life when I wrestled with serious depression and anxiety. While things were ok externally, there was a dark cloud over my life. I felt like my soul was walking through deep waters with no end in sight. I saw others deal with similar situations and the isolation that it brings. But even in that difficult time, I was not alone.

You see, many years ago, someone had shared a story with me that changed my life. They said I was created to be in a life-giving relationship with God, but that my sins (the wrong things I had done) had separated me from a pure and holy God. There was nothing I could do to wipe my soul clean and restore that life-giving relationship. The cost of my sin was death, and it had to be paid for. But, 2,000 years ago God sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life, die on the cross for my sins, and rise again from the dead. Then they explained that all who place their trust in Him can have eternal life. So, I did that.

After I trusted in Christ, my life changed. I began to have a new love, joy, and peace in my heart that I never knew. I am right with God and have a personal relationship with Him. I know that He is with me even when it is hard. To be sure, I still have many trials in my life, and still battle with depression and anxiety, but God is holding me every step of the way.

Do you have a story like that?

Believer at a Young Age Example #2

There was a time in my life when I began to think seriously about eternity. No one knows how much time they have on this earth, and I knew that I was not right before God because of the sin in my life (all the wrong things I'd done). The cost of my sin was death and eternal separation from God. God is absolutely pure, so He cannot be in the presence of sin, and I knew that meant He couldn't be in my presence either as a sinner.

But someone shared a story with me that changed my life: while there was no way for me on my own to wipe my soul clean, God had made a way. Two thousand years ago God sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life, die on the cross for my sins, and rise again from the dead. They explained that all who place their trust in Him have their sins forgiven and a relationship with God restored. At that moment, I stopped trying to save myself and placed my trusted in Jesus and His finished work.

After I trusted in Christ, my life radically changed. I had new love, joy, and peace in my heart that I never knew. I was right with God and began a relationship with Him. And He is continually transforming my life. To be sure, I still go through many trials and hardships, but I have found life in abundance.

Do you have a story like that?

Appendix B

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: 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)

*This would be used in the MyStory tract template.

Appendix C

Friday Go Team Strategy

GETTING PEOPLE TO STOP:

Ask a simple question, something like, “Excuse me, may I ask you a question?”

GETTING THEIR PERMISSION:

Ask the individual(s) if they’d be interested in taking a short questionnaire concerning spiritual things.

Example:

“Hi my name is _____ and this is _____. We are from Grace Church in Eden Prairie, and we are out in the community trying to determine people’s religious preferences around the area of the church and perhaps have an opportunity to share our faith. We have a brief four-point questionnaire. Would you be willing to take a minute or two and assist us?”

GET TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THEM PERSONALLY:

This shows that you care about them.

Example Questions:

- “Where are you from?”
- “What do you do for a living?”
- (for students) “What are you studying?”

DETERMINE WHAT THEY BELIEVE:

Asking these questions will help you. For groups, address each person individually.

- “Would you classify yourself as spiritual, religious, atheist, or agnostic?”
- “To you, who is Jesus Christ?”
- “Do you believe in an afterlife?”
 - If yes, ask, “Can you describe it?”
 - If they believe in heaven/hell, ask, “How does a person get to heaven?”
 - If they are unsure or hoping there’s a heaven or an afterlife, you can ask, “If you could know for sure without having to wonder, would you want to know?”
 - If they believe anything else, you can ask, “How do you know that’s true?”
- Possible Question instead of Q4 would be, “If you died today and stood before God, and He asked, ‘Why should I let you into heaven?’, what would you say?”

CONCLUDE THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

Thank them for their time, and let them know they are free to go, but introduce yourselves as biblical Christians and ask them, “If you still have a few more minutes, these are THE ultimate questions of life (God/no God, what’s my purpose, what happens when I die). May we ask some follow-up questions based on your responses? Would that be okay?”

Appendix D

Discovery Bible Study

Discovery Bible Study (DBS) is an easy method to teach a new believer to study God's Word. Simply have them go through a passage each day such as a chapter or predetermined section of Scripture and answer the following six questions as they go.

1. What does the passage say about God?

2. What does the passage say about me?

3. Is there a promise to trust?

4. Is there a command to obey?

5. How am I going to apply this to my life?

6. Who am I going to share it with?

Suggested Starting Point: Read through the Gospel of John.

Appendix E

10 Common Questions about Christianity

CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

1. Is there really a God?
2. Why believe in miracles?
3. Isn't Christianity just a psychological crutch?
4. How accurate is the Bible?
5. Why do the innocent suffer?
6. Is Christ the only way to God?
7. Will God judge those who never heard about Christ?
8. Isn't salvation by faith too simple?
9. What does the Bible mean by believe?
10. Can anyone be sure of his or her salvation?

For help, you can reference **GotQuestions.org** or **CARM.org**.

(Adapted from *Connexions: Heart for the Harvest*, pg. 17)

Appendix F

Listening Advice

- **Listen for expression of interests** in the areas of personal background, family, vocation, hobbies, recreation, and culture.
This is the KEY to developing common ground.
- **Listen for expression of felt needs.** This is what they are willing to admit about their job, marriage, family, physical, and emotional needs.
This is the KEY to gaining personal insight.
- **Listen without pressure or condescension** for expression of previous or present religious experience. Especially not whether it is negative or positive.
This is the KEY to perceiving their spiritual temperature.
- **Listen for expressions or caricatures of Christianity** (e.g., boring, narrow-minded, hypocritical).
This is the KEY to understanding their perception of Christians.

(Adapted from *Connexions: Heart for the Harvest*, pg. 18-19)

Appendix G

Responses That Stimulate Discussion

When you are stating your position, prefacing your remarks with a tentative statement can promote an atmosphere of openness and enhances the quality of the discussion. Consider these examples:

- I understand what you are saying, but can I share how I see it?
- I'm just wondering, have you ever considered _____?
- So, how would you answer _____?
- Have you ever considered the evidence for _____?

When you want the person to say more, consider these questions:

- I'm not sure I understand what you are saying, tell me more?
- Is this what you are saying _____?
- What do you mean by the term _____?
- I'm not sure I see where the conflict is?

When you want to express your disagreement, you can say something like:

- What you are saying raises some red flags in my mind.
- My perception on the issue is a little bit different. Here is how I see it.
- I'm not piecing together the facts in the same way.
- Correct me if I am wrong, but I see a conflict between _____ and _____.

When you agree, you could say something like:

- That's really good. I've never heard it put that way before.

(Adapted from *Connexions: Heart for the Harvest*, pg. 43-44)