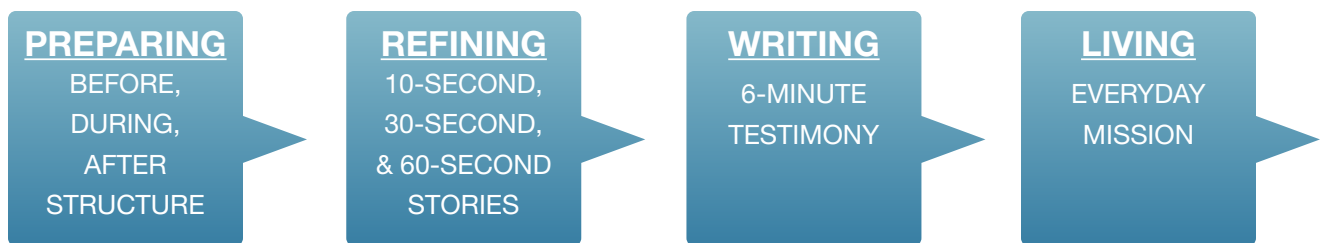




Sharing Your Story

You are on mission everyday. Your actions, your attitude, your work ethic, and how you lead your family all tell a story of what God has done and is doing in your life. From a simple act of kindness to a sacrifice of great proportions, you are representing the Kingdom everyday. However, most of us feel poorly-equipped and unprepared when it comes to sharing our faith with words.

This guide will help you grow in your ability to tell your story of beginning a relationship with Jesus. It will help you craft short versions of your story for the day-to-day opportunities you will get to share your testimony, and it will help you write out a longer version for a more formal public setting. The process will look something like this:



PREPARING YOUR STORY

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere... Acts 1:8a

Witnesses tell their story. They aren't lawyers tasked with proving a case, or judges with the job of deciding a case. They simply tell their story from their perspective. When you open up your mouth to tell the story of what Jesus has done in your life you are being His witness.

Many people look to the testimony the Apostle Paul gave in Acts 22 as a biblical example for how to share their story. Paul's story can be broken down into three easy parts that you can imitate for your testimony. Read through the scriptures to see how Paul shares his story.

1. Before (Acts 22:1-5)
2. During (Acts 22:6-11)
3. After (Acts 22:12-21)

BEFORE

Many people have deep inner needs before they begin a relationship with Jesus. What were some of your unsatisfied inner needs before you came to know Jesus. Circle all that apply and/or write in others from your story.

No direction	Emptiness	Fearful	_____
Something missing	Desire to be in control	Driven	_____
Loneliness	Fear of death	Lack of significance	_____

DURING

Jesus uses many different ways to bring us to a place that results in a relationship with Him. We have diverse backgrounds and varied experiences. The following terms identify a few ways Jesus uses to bring many of us to Him. Circle any that apply to you and/or write down others that play a part in your story.

Jesus brought me to Him through:

Revival/Crusade	Church service	A Bible Study	_____
A friend	Vacation Bible School	A dream	_____
A parent	Youth Camp	Reading the Bible	_____

AFTER

Since Jesus became your Lord and Savior many things have changed in your life. Some of these changes are visible; some of them are internal. Use these keywords as a springboard to describe your life and the evidence of your life having changed. Circle all that apply and/or write in additional keywords relevant to your life.

Joy	Love	Gentleness	_____
Peace	Self-control	Goodness	_____
Kindness	Faithfulness	Patience	_____

REFINING YOUR STORY

If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. 1 Peter 3:15b

To implant your story firmly in your head, you should develop a ten-second testimony that forms the basis for a more complete story. You can use the words you circled and wrote-in from your before, during, and after notes above. For example:

Before: There was a time in my life when I was hopeless and confused;
During: then I had an encounter with Jesus at a church service that changed my life.
After: Ever since that day I have had a purpose for living.

Another example could be:

Before: I grew up believing I would go to heaven because I went to church and was a good person.
During: However, God used a low point in my life to help me realize I needed a Savior.
After: Now I know that my hope for the present and the future is in what Jesus has done for me.

Write yours here:

Before: _____
During: _____
After: _____

ALWAYS BE READY

Each circumstance you find yourself in to share your story will be different from another. Sometimes you will only have a few seconds. At other times you can share larger portions of your story and go into greater detail. Shaping your story into differing lengths can be helpful.

The examples below will show you the same story expanded into ten, thirty, and sixty-second versions:

TEN-SECONDS

Before: There was a time in my life when I had no lasting peace and joy,
During: but my uncle told me that was because I didn't have a personal relationship with Jesus. I started following Jesus as a disciple
After: and I discovered the reality of true peace and joy.

THIRTY-SECONDS

Before: When I was younger I couldn't find any lasting peace or joy in anything or anyone. I had an emptiness in me that friends, relationships, hobbies and activity couldn't satisfy.
During: One day, my uncle told me how Jesus died so that my life could have meaning and direction. I realized that my sin separated me from God and that I needed forgiveness. So, I prayed and asked God to forgive me and I started following Him as His disciple, learning to live like Him.
After: Since that time I have learned that the Bible provides all the answers I need. No matter what comes along, God's peace and joy are mine forever.
