

Sharing Your Spiritual Story

Instructor Guide



Church Renewal Resource
Evangelism Ministries USA/Canada Region
Church of the Nazarene

Acknowledgments

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Preparation Checklist

The following information will help you prepare to instruct this module.

- ☐ Review the material and make notes of specific areas for special emphasis.
- ☐ Check to ensure the following materials are available:
 - ☐ PowerPoint presentations
 - ☐ Participant booklet (copy as needed)
- ☐ Gather the following materials:
 - ☐ Pens and/or pencils
 - ☐ Other material you want to use
- ☐ Check the classroom for:
 - ☐ Projector
 - ☐ Sufficient number of tables and chairs for the participants
- ☐ Arrange the room so each team sits around an individual table and you have ample room to move among the teams.

SHARING YOUR SPIRITUAL STORY

The table below identifies each module section, the time allotted for each section, and a brief description of the section's objective. When you are familiar with this module, you may want to teach from this page rather than the detailed information.

MODULE AT A GLANCE			
Section	Time	Page	Brief Description
I. Module Introduction	5 Minutes	5	Introduce module, purpose, and objective.
II. Lecture	30 Minutes	6	The facilitator presents biblical support for sharing one's spiritual story and elements to include and exclude.
III. Small Group Exercise	15 Minutes	11	Participants team up in pairs to share their spiritual story and provide feedback to each other.
IV. Action Planning/Reporting	20 Minutes	12	Participants plan to tell other faith stories inside and outside the church
V. Module Wrap-up	5 Minutes	13	Close the module with your final comments regarding the topic.
Total Module Time:		75 minutes	

I. Module Introduction

(5 Minutes)

Distribute Participant Material. Let the participants know the material is theirs to keep and encourage them to take notes.

The participant material includes:

- Purpose
- Objective
- “Fill-in-the-Blanks” for the Lecture
- Application Exercises

*The purpose of this module is to:
Equip believers to share their
spiritual stories*

The objectives for this module are:

- To develop an effective spiritual story;
- To increase the confidence level of believers in sharing their spiritual story.

Notes

Slide 2

II. Lecture

Notes

(25 Minutes)

The following information on sharing your spiritual story is based on I Peter 3:15-16. The text is provided for your reference. When making the presentation, consider asking two participants to read the text.

I PETER 3:15-16 "But in your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord. 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, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." (NIV)

Slide 3

Begin painting the picture with a courtroom scene:

Imagine what would happen if a star witness took the stand and said, "Your honor, I'm here to be a silent witness. Speaking really isn't my gift. So, I'm just going to sit here in the witness stand and be a silent witness." The judge may well toss him or her in jail for contempt of court.

Some believers have been deceived by the enemy into thinking that being a silent witness is enough. Yes, we are to be salt and light. Our lives need to reflect the transforming work of Christ. Scripture makes it clear, being a "silent witness" is not enough. All believers are to be prepared to give a verbal witness for when the opportunity arises.

I. Scriptural Guidance from I Peter 3:15-16

- A. Being prepared to share my spiritual story is connected to Jesus being **LORD** of my heart (vs. 15).

II. Lecture Cont.

Notes

The two are closely tied to one another. If Jesus is Lord in our hearts and lives – if we have surrendered control to Him and have been filled with the Spirit – we will prepare to tell our spiritual story. That is why we are here today. This same connection between the lordship of Jesus in our lives and sharing our spiritual story can be seen in Acts 1:8: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses . . .”

- B. I am to be **PREPARED** to share my spiritual story.

It does not matter if it is at work, the post office, or the grocery store. We are always to be prepared, no matter what the circumstances or situation. Sharing our spiritual story is not to be limited to the four walls of the church.

- C. I am to share my spiritual story with **GENTLENESS** (vs. 15).

We are not to blast away with our gospel gun or Bible bazooka. Finger wagging is ineffective. You catch more flies with honey than vinegar.

- D. I am to share my spiritual story with an attitude of **RESPECT** for the other person (vs. 15).

It is true people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Nothing screams “I don't care” louder than a lack of respect, which can be communicated by tone and demeanor.

- E. I am to share my spiritual story in a way that keeps my conscience **CLEAR** (vs. 16).

The Holy Spirit will be faithful to speak to our conscience and provide instruction, correction, and direction.

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Slide 5

II. Lecture Cont.

Notes

II. Elements of Effective Spiritual Stories (The Apostle Paul's Model)

A. Before and After Model:

1. How did your spiritual condition **AFFECT** your behavior, feelings, and relationships?
2. Describe your life **BEFORE** Christ.
3. Ask the participants to give some characteristics of their lives before Christ. Use some of the following examples to get them started:
 - a. Lack of assurance they would go to heaven
 - b. Fear of death
 - c. Insecurities
 - d. Lack of direction
 - e. Lack of purpose
 - f. Lack of meaning in life
 - g. Guilt
4. What made you start thinking about spiritual matters?

Pause and give participants two minutes to jot down some notes on their life before Christ.

B. Describe how you **CAME** to Christ.

C. Describe the **DIFFERENCE** Christ has made in your life.

1. How did your new spiritual condition affect your behavior, feelings, and relationships?
2. Some examples:
 - a. Assurance they would go to heaven
 - b. No fear of death
 - c. Fewer insecurities
 - d. Direction
 - e. Purpose
 - f. Meaning in life
 - g. No guilt

Slide 6

Slide 7

Slide 8

II. Lecture Cont.

Notes

III. Elements of Effective Spiritual Stories (Timothy's Model)

Not all testimonies fit into the “before and after” format typical of adult conversions. If you were raised in the church or came to know Christ as Savior early in your life, you still have a testimony. It is unique to you and can be a powerful influence when shared with non-Christians. While the “before and after” style testimony is characteristic of the Apostle Paul, yours may be more like Timothy who was raised by a godly mother and grandmother. Over time you kept saying, “Yes” to Jesus.

Here are some questions by which you may **CONSTRUCT** an effective testimony:

1. Who or what were the influences that **MOVED** you closer to God?
2. What were the memorable events, moments or conversations that **ENCOURAGED** you to want God in your life?
3. Describe spiritual decisions you made along the way.
4. How has God **HELPED** you in your faith journey?
 - What are some answers to prayer?
 - When has God guided you?
 - How has He treated you when you failed?
 - What are some expressions of God's love toward you?

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Pause and give participants two minutes to jot down some notes about the difference Christ has made in their life.

II. Lecture Cont.

Notes

IV. Pitfalls to Avoid

A. Glorifying **SIN**.

Have you ever heard someone talk about their life before Christ and it sounded as though they miss the pigsty? The last thing you want to do in telling your spiritual story is to cause someone to be tempted to sin.

B. Using Christian **JARGON**.

There are a lot of terms Christians use which are not commonly understood. Ask the participants for examples. Some answers may be:

1. Sin
2. Salvation
3. Entire sanctification
4. Justification
5. Born again
6. Prayed through
7. Redemption

There are many words and terms which mean a lot to Christians, but have no meaning to pre-believers. If they do not understand the words we use, we might as well be talking in Latin. It is like trying to pick up an FM radio signal on the AM dial. Our message needs to be on their frequency. We are not advocating changing the message, rather using terminology that will convey the intended meaning.

Share your spiritual story as an example. Keep it within four minutes.

Slide 10

III. Small Group Exercise

Notes

(15 minutes)

Make sure everyone has a partner. Instruct them to share their spiritual story with their partner and provide feedback to each other.

- Call time after four minutes. Allow two minutes for feedback.
- Tell them to switch roles and call time after four minutes. Allow two minutes for feedback.

Instructions in Participant's Guide

1. Pair up and share your spiritual story within four minutes.
(Feel free to refer back to your notes on page seven.)
2. Provide feedback to your partner using the following guidelines:
 - a. Strong Points of the Spiritual Story
 - b. Ways to Improve
3. Checklist
 - a. Life before Christ was clearly explained.
 - b. Sin was not glorified.
 - c. How they came to Christ was clearly explained.
 - d. How I can become a Christian was clear.
 - e. The difference Jesus has made was clearly explained.
 - f. Jargon was avoided.
 - g. Length (within 4 minutes).

Slide 11

IV. Action Planning/Reporting

(10 minutes)

This section gives the participants an opportunity to discuss their plans for using this information, as well as how they will share the information with others.

1. Plan occasions when testimonies can be shared in worship and in small groups.
2. List unchurched people you know who have not heard your spiritual story.
3. Tell of times when God answered prayer.
4. Review and recite other stories that express your faith, i.e. a sense of God's presence, personal peace, courage to do what is right.

Notes

Slide 12

V. Module Wrap-Up

Notes

(5 minutes)

This section provides an opportunity to close the module.

- Ask participants to share their thoughts about the module.
- Answer any questions and provide encouragement.

For more information, find us online at:

www.usacanadaregion.org/training-modules

or

Email us at VibrantChurch@nazarene.org