

Good News for Our City

How to tell your story and share your faith

SESSION 2

SESSION 2:

Telling Your Story

LAST WEEK'S FOLLOW UP

1. Last week we asked you to pray about obstacles to evangelism and how Christ's power and presence address them. Share with the group any insights from your prayer time.

2. Did you think of two people who do not yet know Christ? Share about them with the group.

Introduction to Session 2

The most effective tool in your arsenal is your story. You know it well and will never have trouble memorizing it! You need only look as far as the life of the apostle Paul to see the effectiveness of using your story. He told of his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus over and over. You do not have to embellish your story or try to make it more than it is—just tell others what Jesus means to you.

Stories move, challenge, and inspire us in a unique way. They are not the only form of effective communication, but they are certainly a special way to express what God is doing and has done in your life. Stories help us see how God's character interacts with our lives. They reveal how theology impacts everyday life.

1. What are some of your favorite stories? What do you like about them?

2. When do you find yourself telling stories?

How to tell a story

All stories have the same basic form.

They begin with an **Exposition**. In this section you lay out the pieces that make up the story. Who are the characters? What is the setting? What is normal life like in this story?

Then we move to the **Crisis**. In this section life is disrupted. A great challenge faces a character in the story. The heart of every story is how characters face this challenge. It gives the story a center that organizes and balances everything else. How the crisis resolves is the theme or thesis of the story.

Finally, we arrive at a **Conclusion**. Here we see the results of how our character faced his or her great challenge.

As we tell our stories, we can follow this basic outline. First, give us the *Exposition*. Who are you? Where did you come from? This is your life before Jesus. What was normal life like apart from Christ?

Then, what was your *Crisis* moment? Was there one large challenge that brought you to faith? What was the conversion like? How did you meet Jesus? Don't be too thrown by the word "crisis." For many, there is not one big crisis event. The challenge may be a pattern. "I was always crushed by a sense that I'm not enough."

Finally, what is the *Conclusion* for you? In one sense, your story is still ongoing! It is not concluded. But as believers we live our lives in the new normal of following Jesus. Tell people what life is like for you now. You may have many decades of life in your story. You don't have to tell everything! Let the crisis organize the information for you.

Workshop

Take some time during group to write out your story below. Be honest. People can sniff out a fake story quickly. We serve a very real God, so give people a real story about Him.

The Exposition

Who are you? Where do you come from? What were your dreams for life? What were some of your biggest hurts and disappointments? How were you trying to accomplish your dreams or address your hurts?

The Crisis

How did Jesus enter into your story? How did you discover His life, death, and resurrection as good news for your life? You may not even focus on the moment you became a Christian but rather on a significant change Christ brought into your life since following Him.

The Conclusion

How is life different now? Look back to the dreams, hurts, and disappointments you mentioned earlier. Are they completely gone (probably not!)? Or do you now face them in a different way? What did you learn about God and yourself? What conclusion are you still waiting for?

Discussion

1. What insights came out of that time? Did anything stand out to you in writing down your own story?

2. If there was one word you would use to describe the theme of your story, what would it be?

Homework

This week practice what you've learned in two ways:

1. Listen to the stories people tell, both in everyday life and in media. Can you identify the exposition, the crisis, and the conclusion? Can you identify a theme?
2. Share your story with one person. It could be a trusted friend, a family member, or someone who doesn't yet know Christ.