

Pre-Class Assignment  
*(Oh Boy!)*

# REACH

CORE CLASS

## Telling Your Story

Please take the time to go through this material and watch the online video before our class.

**WATCH THE VIDEO FIRST AND THEN PRINT OUT THIS WORKSHEET**

It will really help you tell YOUR story. Remember, no one can argue or disagree with YOUR story. Focus much more on the “after” than the “before.” Please try to end up with a story that is about two (2) minutes long. Please work through this worksheet and then write the bullet points of your story on the lined page. Be prepared to share your story at our REACH Core Class.

As you read the last part of this handout, you will see that once you have a basic version of your story put to memory, you can expand and customize it based on the conversation you are in. May the Lord bless you as you think again about how Jesus has changed your life. May you get countless chances to tell your story with the years you have left on this earth. Let's do whatever it takes to decrease the population of Hell!

Pastor Joe

# TELLING YOUR STORY

We are commanded to share our testimonies—here, there, and over there

Let the whole world know what He has done for you.—Psalm 105:1b (LB)

Every day tell how He saves us. Tell the nations of His glory; tell all peoples the miracles He does.  
—Psalm 96:2-3 (NCV)

1. Recognize that your story is valuable.
  - It is unique! There are no others just like it.
  - It is personal and easy to understand.
  - You are the authority on it. It's difficult to argue with.
  - People love to hear personal stories and they remember them.
  - People can relate to it. It builds a relational bridge.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.—1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

The following section is taken from Bill Hybel's outreach course called, "Just Walk Across the Room."

## Watch Online Video — The Power of the Story

“When a person is open to hearing your faith story, all that he or she really wants to know is what you were like before you met Christ, how you came to know Christ, and what you've been like after submitting your life to Him. In other words, your personal “before-and-after.” This is fundamental to what makes a faith story good!

Review Scripture:

1. Here are some examples of men and women from Scripture who had before-and-after experiences. Draw a line connecting each person to his or her faith story below:

Man who was born with a disability	“I walked in shame, but now I walk in grace!”
Zacchaeus, a wealthy tax collector	“I'd devoted myself to killing followers of Christ, but now I am a devoted one myself.”
The apostle Paul	“I was gripped by greed, but now I'm gripped by the needs of the poor.”
Woman who was caught in adultery	“I was blind, but now I see!”

2. Read 1 Corinthians 2:14-16. Based on these verses, why is it important for Christ-followers to tell their faith-stories in a manner that is simple, succinct, humble, and clear to people who are spiritually unconvinced?

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**Your “Before”**

Just Like the biblical characters noted in #1, you have a “before-and-after” faith story. The following sections will help you craft your personal faith story. Work through questions 3-8 below.

3. What type of person were you before you met Christ? On the lines below, write down five to ten adjectives that come to mind. (If you came to faith at a young age, consider how you would describe what you were like prior to developing a thriving, more mature relationship with Christ.)

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4. From the adjectives you noted in #3, what is the one word in particular that best summarizes your “before” state? Write it here:

Share your answers...

**Your Encounter with Christ**

5. Now describe the circumstances that caused you to submit your life to Jesus Christ. What life-stage were you in? What input did you receive that finally triggered your desire to ask Christ into your life? What was the most significant thing about your making this decision?

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**Your “After”**

6. Now, completing the sentence below, note the primary difference that Christ has made in your life: Since inviting Christ into my life, I’ve become \_\_\_\_\_

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More tools to help you tell your story...On your own, read the following info to help you fine-tune your story.

2. Use common ground issues to share your story.

Possible Ideas:

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How trusting Jesus has

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How trusting Jesus has helped me deal with my... \_\_\_\_\_

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given me...

- |                               |                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| - Worries/Anxiety             | + Inner peace                         |
| - Guilt/Shame                 | + Forgiveness and a fresh start       |
| - Anger/Temper                | + Patience and love                   |
| - Emptiness/Lack of purpose   | + Purpose and meaning in life         |
| - Grief                       | + Comfort and joy                     |
| - Stress/Burnout              | + New power for living                |
| - Low self-esteem             | + Significance—I am valuable to God   |
| - Disappointment              | + Trust in His good plans             |
| - Insecurity                  | + Confidence and sense of security    |
| - Regrets                     | + A second chance at life             |
| - Discontent/Frantic activity | + Contentment and peace               |
| - Fears                       | + Faith to face my fears              |
| - Loneliness                  | + Assurance He's always with me       |
| - Lack of emotional support   | + A church family that supports me    |
| - Addictions/Habits           | + Power to change—freedom             |
| - Despair/Depression          | + Hope                                |
| - Cheap thrills               | + Real, lasting happiness             |
| - Boredom with my life        | + Adventure with God                  |
| - Something was missing       | + A sense of fulfillment              |
| - Bitterness and resentment   | + The ability to be free from my past |
| - Pain of rejection           | + God's unconditional love            |

God allows experiences in my life so I can relate to others who need Christ!

3. Realize you have more than ONE testimony!

- ❖ Different situations may require different testimonies!
- ❖ Choose the testimony that best matches your listener.
- ❖ Realize you can tell about how others' lives have been changed too. Your small group can share your stories with each other.
- ❖ Don't use religious terms or clichés.
- ❖ Ask: "If I were an unbeliever, would this make sense to me?"

## TELL YOUR FRIEND HOW YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN

### Four Parts Of Your Testimony

#### 1. WHAT MY LIFE WAS LIKE BEFORE I MET CHRIST.

- ? What common circumstances would an unbeliever identify with?
- ? What were your attitudes that an unbeliever would identify with?
- ? What was most important to you?
- ? What substitute for God did you use to find meaning in your life? (sports/fitness, success at work, marriage, sex, making money, drugs/alcohol, having fun, entertainment, popularity, hobbies)

#### 2. HOW I REALIZED I NEEDED CHRIST.

- ? What significant steps led up to your conversion?
- ? What needs, hurts, or problems made you dissatisfied with the way you were living without God?
- ? How did God get your attention? What motivated you?

#### 3. HOW I COMMITTED MY LIFE TO CHRIST.

- ? What specifically did you do? Where did it happen?
- ? What did you say in your prayer? Be specific.

#### 4. THE DIFFERENCE IT HAS MADE IN MY LIFE.

- ? What benefits have you experienced or felt?
- ? What problems have been resolved?
- ? How has Jesus helped you change for the better?
- ? How has it helped your relationships?
- ? Give a current example.

**The Testimony Pyramid**



#### SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING YOUR TESTIMONY:

- Pray and ask God to give you the right words.
- Write it out on paper. God honors preparation.
- Keep it short and to the point. Don't lose site of your goal.
- Try to keep your testimony below three minutes.
- Try to share at least one bible verse that God used to bring you to Him.
- Share a story of your life that a non-Christian will identify with.
- Give concrete examples of the changes in your life.
- Be honest about your continuing struggles. Your life is not perfect.
- Don't imply that all of your problems ended when you became a Christian.
- Spend the most time on Part 4, the difference Christ has made.
- Emphasize WHY you received Christ (the benefits of doing it).
- Don't exaggerate or brag about pre-Christian sins.
- Don't make negative remarks about other religions or people.
- Be prepared. Practice it until it feels and sounds natural.
- Read it aloud and edit it to make it conversational.
- Don't talk down to people. Don't sound "preachy."
- Use "I, me, and my" not "You". It's about you—not them.
- Smile!