

## How to Give Your Testimony

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First of all, live in a state of grace, have a dedicated prayer life, trust and rely on the Holy Spirit.

### PRAYER to THE HOLY SPIRIT

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do, give me Your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that You desire of me and to accept all that You permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will – Amen.

The Holy Bible promises us the following:

Acts 1:8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” *The Holy Spirit makes us ‘Jesus Witnesses’ not ‘Jehovahs Witnesses.’ We are the New Covenant People of God.*

Mark 13: 9-11 “But take heed to yourselves; for they will deliver you up to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.”

Luke 12: 11-12 “And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious how or what you are to answer or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. We will speak boldly before Courts and Authorities.”

1 Corinthians 12: 3 “Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says ‘Jesus be cursed!’ and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.”

2 Timothy 1: 7 “for God did not give us a spirit of timidity (or fear) but a spirit of power and love and self-control.” *‘Do not be afraid’ or ‘Fear not’ is the dominant*

*theme in Scripture. Scripture Scholars tell us this phrase is found 366 times in the bible.*

**W**-itness for Christ by your life and words:

Matthew 4:19 – *“Come Follow me and I will make you fishers of Men.”*

John 15:8 – *“By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”*

**Faith of Our Fathers** – This is an old classic hymn that inspires me to evangelize and share with others how JESUS has changed my life. We must evangelize until we die, life is short – eternity is forever.

V: Faith of our fathers, living still,  
in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;

O how our hearts beat high  
with joy whene'er we hear that glorious word!

R: Faith of our fathers, holy faith!

We will be true to thee till death.

### **How to Share Your Personal Faith Story**

What is the Gospel? G O S P E L... **G**od's **O**nly **S**on **P**rovides **E**ternal **L**ife

How do we spread the Gospel? G O S P E L... **G**o **O**ut, **S**erve and **P**reach, **E**vangelize and **L**ove.

Goal: to share part of my life in a personal manner, explaining why I am a Catholic or why I have a faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Objective: to be able to share concisely and effectively your personal journey of faith. I like to call it 'My great adventure with Jesus.'

“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses” (Pope Paul VI, *On Evangelization in the Modern World*).

## **I. Preliminary Considerations**

### **A. The Holy Spirit**

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

1 Corinthians 4:20 “For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.”

### **B. We are the bait**

Matthew 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

2 Corinthians 3:2-3 “You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all men; and you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”

### **C. Be ready**

1 Peter 3:15 “...but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”

### **D. St Paul used personal stories to evangelize**

Acts 22:1-21 "Brethren and fathers, hear the defense which I now make before you." And when they heard that he addressed them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet. And he said: "I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cili'cia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gama'li-el, educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as you all are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, as the high priest and the whole council of elders bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brethren, and I journeyed to Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. "As I made my journey and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying

to me, `Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' And I answered, `Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, `I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.' Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. And I said, `What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, `Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' And when I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. "And one Anani'as, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing by me said to me, `Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And in that very hour I received my sight and saw him. And he said, `The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Just One and to hear a voice from his mouth; for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'" "When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance and saw him saying to me, `Make haste and get quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' And I said, `Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in thee. And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by and approving, and keeping the garments of those who killed him.' And he said to me, `Depart; for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" Up to this word they listened to him; then they lifted up their voices and said, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he ought not to live."

Acts 26:1-29 Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: "I think myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, because you are especially familiar with all customs and controversies of the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. "My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and at Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. And now I stand here on trial for hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! Why is it

thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And I did so in Jerusalem; I not only shut up many of the saints in prison, by authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme; and in raging fury against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities. "Thus I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.' And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles -- to whom I send you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance. For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles." And as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are mad; your great learning is turning you mad." But Paul said, "I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth. For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time you think to make me a Christian!" And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am -- except for these chains."

Philippians 3:4-16 Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

1 Timothy 1:12-17 I thank him who has given me strength for this, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful by appointing me to his service, though I formerly blasphemed and persecuted and insulted him; but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinners; but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### **A. First: Select One Concept event when you share your testimony**

Keep your story simple and centered around one event from:

Fear	to	Courage
Hatred	to	Love
Weakness	to	Strength
Aimlessness	to	Purpose
Despair	to	Hope
Sickness	to	Health
Guilt	to	Acceptance
Bondage	to	Freedom
Loneliness	to	Community
Rebelliousness	to	Obedience
Darkened Intellect	to	Faith Seeking Understanding

## **B. Second: Arrange into Three Parts**

***Part 1. Before you gave your life to the Lord*** – (Acts 22:1-5; 26:4-5, 9-10). Give some background; your family, age, work, interest, etc. Speak about the good part of you past. Relate the problem area, or bad part of your life. Don't overemphasize the bad things that happened. Use concrete details and make it colorful, interesting and humorous.

***Part 2. God's intervention and your conversion*** – (Acts 26:12-19). Relate it as a fact, don't just say it happened. Say what happened, be specific. Concentrate on Christ, not only on yourself. Emphasize the reality of Christ and your new relationship with Him. The key is what God did and your response to that. That main point of the entire conversion story is Jesus Christ and the change He has brought about in your life.

***3. Your Life since then*** – Express specifically and clearly, the difference - what is new; how are you different. Highlight that cathartic moment. Make the change significant and attractive. Make it look like something someone would want, but don't exaggerate. Don't give the impression that 'life is a bowl of cherries.' Share

*the benefits of having a new (or deeper) relationship with Christ. For example, share your new outlook on life, forgiveness, freedom from fear, anger, etc. The key is that you are different because of your encounter with JESUS.*

### **Sharing Your Testimony is Simple:**

**1) I was....2) Jesus did... 3) I am...**

**C. The name of "Jesus"** must be used over and over again. In other words, when you share your testimony, remember the ABCs.

**Always**

**Be**

**Christ centered.**

“The name of Jesus is the glory of preachers” (St Bernardine of Sienna, 1380-1444 AD). The name of Jesus is that quiet song in the storm of life. The name of Jesus is like honey on my lips, the name of Jesus is my melody at midnight and the name of Jesus is that constant hymn in my heart. I will repeat the sweet name of Jesus every moment of the day, into the night and in my dreams. YES! Jesus is my hope (cf. 1Timothy 1:1)!

Every baptized Catholic should aspire to inspire before we expire by:

**C**-alling

**A**-ll

**T**-hrough

**H**-istory

**O**-n

**L**-iving

**I-n**

**C-hrist**

Matthew 9:37-38 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

*Because He lives I can face tomorrow*

*Because He lives all fear is gone*

*Because I know He holds the future, so life is worth the living*

*Just because He lives.*

*The World offers us Silver and Gold, Silver and God –but I'd rather have JESUS than Silver and Gold!*

### **Prayer for Evangelization**

“Lord, in all the world you are present yet the world has not known you. In all of creation your Glory has been revealed, yet blinded are the eyes that see! By your Holy Spirit we pray that your Word will issue forth to the hearts of men, to enlighten, to save, to sanctify and to set them free. Send us as flaming torches to illumine the darkness so prevalent in this generation. Help me to carry the Good News on my lips and heart, to those who will listen, and convince those who will not, that the love of God has been bestowed upon everyone who turns from sin and death, we pray through Christ Our Lord, Amen. Our Lady of Victory – Pray for us!