

How To Give An Effective, Yet Brief Testimony

(Taken and compiled from: Discipleship Journal, Campus Crusade for Christ and Navigators.com)

Your testimony can be a large part of your witness, so as a Christian you need to be ready to share your personal journey to salvation - a brief, 3-minute description of what your life was like before you met Christ (1 minute), how you became a Christian (1 minute), and the difference Christ has made in your life (1 minute).

BEFORE I TRUSTED CHRIST - A short sketch of what your life was like before you became a Christian

1. Use words that communicate inner needs:
 - Lack of peace
 - Fear of death
 - Something missing
 - No meaning to life
 - Desire to be in control
 - Loneliness
 - Lack of security
 - Lack of purpose
 - Lack of significance
 - No real friends, etc.
2. List ways you used to seek to satisfy inner needs:
 - Marriage/family
 - Work
 - Drugs/alcohol
 - Sports/fitness
 - Money
 - Hobbies/entertainment/parties
 - Sex
 - Education, etc.
3. Use "I and me" not "you." The goal is to honestly share, not to preach.
4. Dates, times, everyone's specific names, church affiliations, where everyone worked, etc. are not essential to what you have to share, so don't try to communicate all the details.

HOW I TRUSTED CHRIST - how you specifically took the step of becoming a Christian

1. Briefly describe the circumstances that caused you to see Christ as the solution to your inner needs.
2. State specifically the steps you took to become a Christian.
3. Seek to communicate the Gospel clearly and briefly (all have sinned, sin's penalty, Christ paid the penalty, we must receive Christ for ourselves).

4. Avoid using religious words (or briefly define them):

<u>Religious Words</u>	<u>Possible Substitutes</u>
Believe	Made a decision to follow Christ...
Accepted Christ	Made a decision to follow Christ
Sin	Kept God at arm's length, broke God's commands, turned my back on God
Went forward	Decided to follow Christ
Under the blood	God forgave me of my failures
Prayed through	Sincerely prayed
Saved/ born again	Entered into a relationship with God through Jesus....
Christian	Committed Christian, real Christian, follower of Jesus...

SINCE I'VE TRUSTED CHRIST - communicate the changes in your life

1. Whatever "inner needs" you started with, seek to communicate how they were met in Christ. DO NOT SPEAK AS IF ALL YOUR PROBLEMS WENT AWAY AT YOUR CONVERSION.
2. Communicate your assurance of eternal life.
3. Share a significant verse or two.
4. End with a question or an invitation if you are sharing with an individual(s):
 - Has anything like this ever happened to you?
 - May I share with you how the Bible says you can know that you have eternal life?
 - Do you have any thoughts or questions about what I just shared?
 - Well, that's what happened to me. If you'd ever like to talk more about it, I'd love to!
 - If you are interested, I'd like to share more with you sometime.
 - Etc.

AS YOU PREPARE TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY, KEEP IN MIND TWO THINGS:

(Extracted from *Share Jesus Without Fear* Workbook, Revised Edition, William Fay and Ralph Hodge, LifeWay Press)

1. A testimony is not an argument. Sharing Jesus must be motivated by a loving desire to guide a lost person from darkness to light and from hopelessness to hope. It must not be motivated by a desire merely to prove a lost person wrong.
2. A testimony must be supported by a Christian lifestyle. Be consistent in living the faith you proclaim, "keeping your conscience clear, so that when you are accused, those who denounce your Christian life will be put to shame" (1 Pet.3:16). Consistent Christian living substantiates your testimony and gives credibility to your witness. It is difficult for a lost person to believe the claims of a Christian whose life runs contrary to the standards of Christ.