

Test It

This is the best way to fine-tune your testimony. Write it out, commit it to memory, and then share it with your friends or family. Ideally, try to find a non-Christian to listen to your testimony and give you their perspective on it; in this way it also becomes an evangelism tool.

Three Points to Keep in Mind When Sharing Your Faith:

1. Ask questions and listen; respect the other person.
2. Be a reflective listener. This means to discern the need by asking questions back. An example of this is found in Acts 8:28–34.
3. Don't be a silent witness; trust God with the results. "So is my word that goes out from my mouth; it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

"Successful witnessing is stepping out in faith to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and expecting God to work."
— *Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ Founder*

Questions To Start a Spiritual Discussion

1. If you could describe your life in one word, what word would you choose?
2. What three things do you most desire out of life?
3. If you were to die tonight, what would you say to God to let you into heaven?
4. (After you share the gospel) What is the one thing keeping you from trusting in Christ?

Preparing a 3-5 Minute Testimony

What is a testimony? A testimony is nothing more than your story—more specifically, a story about your relationship with God. Because of what Christ has done, you have an intimate, personal relationship with God himself—share that! Your own personal story is a great framework around which you can weave the gospel message and Scripture verses, while at the same time connecting at a deeper level and developing a relationship with the person you're talking to. A story also adds credibility, as it takes verses of Scripture or gospel truths that might otherwise mean nothing to someone, and makes it meaningful by showing how it had real, tangible meaning for and effect on you.

Tips for Developing a Short Gospel Testimony

It's a Story

People want to know about people. Your personal story can reach people in ways that pure doctrine simply cannot. There are many ways you can share your story, and many stories of yours to share. For example, you may want to follow this three-point outline:

1. Life before knowing Christ
2. How you came to receive Christ
3. Life after you received Christ

But at the same time, don't limit yourself to this format! Share any story or specific incident that reveals something of your personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ that someone else can relate to.

Write It Down

Giving your testimony is not as easy as you might think. Writing it down ahead of time works to prevent rambling and a lack of focus due to nervousness when speaking your testimony. Writing it also helps develop a focused, methodical story. And so far as timing goes, 120–130 words (1/2 page) equals about a one-minute testimony.

Visualize

By adding details and allowing a listener to visualize your story, it becomes more real, and more personal. Try to take abstract truths (e.g., “God is all-powerful”) and make them real through examples (e.g., “I saw God's sovereign power in my life through . . .”). If at all possible, use pictures of places or people to make your story all the more real to whoever is listening.

Make It Accessible

Although at first obvious, it is easy to forget when sharing a testimony that you are sharing with non-Christians.

- Consider their point of view; for example, they don't know God personally through Jesus Christ, they might not care or know what it means to be brought up in a Christian home or not, or they might not consider the Bible worth listening to.
- Avoid Christian jargon; stay away from words that have special meaning for church-goers, but that someone lost might not understand: “lost, saved, born again, sanctified, salvation,” etc. If you must use Christian words, be sure to explain them carefully.

- Don't take anything for granted—always assume the person you're talking to has no knowledge of the Gospel, unless you can tell otherwise, but at the same time show them respect as an intelligent human being.
- Keep in mind the culture to which you will be communicating. Avoid using American slang or cultural icons that will be irrelevant or misunderstood by people from other cultural backgrounds.

Connect With Your Audience

The more and deeper someone can relate to your story, the more effective it will be. Therefore, don't be afraid to share some of your deeper feelings. If someone can place themselves in your shoes, and see your heart, or their own heart in your experiences, then they can better understand not only where you are coming from, but also the relationship with God you are trying to share.

Be Direct

It is good to have a consistent angle or theme (e.g., working through alcoholism, loneliness, condemnation, etc.). Try to find a good balance between giving good, pertinent details about your story while at the same time not getting lost in them. You might find it effective to work out individually the who, what, when, where, and why of your story; keep in mind that the chronological order might not be the best order. Especially do not talk too much about how bad you used to be. Keep your language also as simple and direct as possible, so that it is easy to understand.