

HOW TO PREPARE AND COMMUNICATE

YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY

The purpose of a personal testimony is to present how you received Christ and how Jesus has affected your life.

Paul's testimony, addressed to different audiences, will help us as we prepare our personal one. You can look up the verses yourself: Acts 21:37-22:21. As we see in this example, Paul generally divided his testimony into three parts:

1. Before (Acts 22:1-5)
2. How (Acts 22:6-11)
3. After (Acts 22:12-21)

Paul also adjusted the emphasis in relation to the audience addressed.

How to prepare your personal testimony

- Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you write.
- Follow a three-point outline:
 1. Before I received Christ.
 2. How I received Christ.
 3. After I received Christ.

Questions to consider as you write your personal testimony.

1. Before I received Christ.
 - What was my life like? What were my attitudes, needs, problems?
 - Around what did my life revolve the most? From what did I get my security or happiness?
 - How did those areas begin to disappoint me?
 - To what source did I look for security, peace of mind, happiness?

2. How I received Christ

- When was the first time I heard the gospel?
- What were my initial reactions?
- When did my attitude begin to change? Why?
- What were the final struggles that went through my mind just before I accepted Christ?
- Even though there were struggles, why did I decide to accept Christ?

3. After I received Christ.

- Specific changes and illustrations about the changes Christ has made in my life, actions and attitudes.
- How long did it take before I noticed changes?

Why am I motivated differently?

4. What if I received Christ at an early age?

- If you received Christ at an early age, you will be able to follow the three-point outline. However, you will probably put a greater emphasis on your life after receiving Christ and make it very clear that it was a personal decision and not because you grew up in a Christian family.

Please carefully consider your audience when giving your personal testimony. It is significant that we may be sharing with people who might have never before heard about Christ. It will be especially important to help them realize that this is a personal decision, and that anyone in the world can put his faith in Christ - no matter what religious background he comes from.

The following is a sample testimony from A., an Albanian staff member of Campus Crusade for Christ.

As I grew up I was taught materialism at school and believed that there is no God. The existence of God didn't bother my mind until my last year at college. That year I was rooming with a Catholic friend (I come from a Muslim family). She would tell me the story of Jesus, but without explaining why the Roman soldiers nailed Him on the cross. So, my answer to her story would be, "This is nonsense, Jesus is simply a myth."

In December of my last year in college, a group of Christian students came to my dorm to tell us about the love of God through Christ. A woman from this group promised to pray for me when she left. In January, I started going to different churches that had just started their ministries. I was just curious to see what the life of these religious people was like.

In one of the churches I went to, I was very attracted by the joy the people had there. But it wasn't until the beginning of June when I first heard the full gospel.

I was interpreting for an American woman in the dorms. As she explained to me that everyone is sinful, she asked me if I believed that I was sinful too. My answer was, "I've not stolen; I've not killed anyone or desired for anyone to die." So she stopped and explained to me the concept of sin as everything contrary to what God wants us to do. I then understood that I was sinful.

Looking back at my life, I realized that I was not perfect and that I had failed in many ways, such as lying, being ambitious, being angry or vengeful. After the woman explained to me that Jesus had died on the cross for everyone's sin, it seemed reasonable for me to receive Jesus into my life. So I invited Jesus to come into my life, thanking Him for dying on the cross for me and asking Him to be in control of my life.

Just after that, I went to help translate for a group of people. They were spending the summer by sharing Jesus with Albanians. Two things that attracted me the most were their personal relationships with God, who was so personal for them, and their love and care for each other. After that summer, I prayed that I myself would have those two characteristics. Since then, God has been very personal to me, and it has been a joy growing in Him.