

Worksheet for

Conversion, Convincing and Coping Stories

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Portions of this paper are taken from
Evangelism for the Tongue-Tied
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Your story is powerful! Throughout the Bible, God has used the accounts of ordinary men and women to influence others. Stories are powerful for many reasons.

- First, *they are personal*. The stories you have are not about some high and holy person, but an average person—you!
- Second, *they cannot be argued with*. No one can dispute your experiences. They may dismiss your conclusions as wishful thinking, but they cannot argue with your experience.
- Third, *people love stories*. God has made us this way. What are movies, novels, and TV programs? Stories. The Old Testament from Genesis to Nehemiah is historical stories. What method did Jesus use most often to teach? Stories. God has made us to love and remember stories.
- Fourth, *they invite hope*. If your story relates to the problems the listener is having, then it will give them hope. When you tell someone about how Jesus has changed your life for the better, they will listen.
- Fifth, and most importantly, they are a *biblical method* of spreading the good news. In fact, Scripture records:
 - Jesus commanded the demoniac: *“Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.* (Mark 5:19–20)
 - The example of the woman at the well: *Then leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”* (John 4:28–29)

- The example of the blind man: “*Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know, I was blind but now I see*” (John 9:25).
- Paul’s example: Even with all his theological training, Paul used his conversion story when speaking with his fellow Jews (Acts 22:1–22) and when speaking with King Agrippa (Acts 26:1–23).

The Samaritan woman’s account was evidently powerful because “*many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony*” (John 4:39). How much theology did she have right? Very little! But that did not stop her from telling her story to her friends.

In the same way, the beggar who was healed of his blindness told his story to the Pharisees. They wanted to prove Jesus was sinful. But his story stopped them in their tracks. Here’s the power of a story. Did the man have the answers to all their questions? Of course not. But the simple narration of how Jesus worked in his life confounded and convicted the religious leaders. Personal stories always triumph over theological bickering.

Your stories can also be that powerful!

Different Types of Stories You Have

Many evangelistic programs encourage you to develop your “testimony.” We will deliberately stay away from this word. In evangelical lingo, the word *testimony* has come to mean the story of your conversion. This works well for those who had a definite conversion as an adult or teenager. But if you professed Christ as a young child, you don’t have an adult conversion story. Does that mean you don’t have a story to tell?

The answer to this question is found in thinking more broadly about how God has worked in our lives. There are really three different types of stories you can develop.

- If you were saved as a teen or adult, then develop the story of how you were *converted*.
- But if you were saved as a child, you may be able develop the story of how you were *convinced* as a teen or adult. Many times, individuals who are truly saved as children, have a time of wandering or questioning in their teen or young adult years. Many times you are asking adult type questions. But when you come back to the Lord, you are coming back as an adult. The thoughts you had at that point are directly transferable to non-Christian adults.

- Finally, all of us can develop several stories of how we have *coped* with life's common problems. The difference between the Christian and non-Christian is not that they have problems and we don't. The difference is we have the Lord to rely on during those times.

The following worksheets have been put together to help you think about the different types of stories you may have.

Questions to Help with the Story of Your Conversion

(If you came to Christ as a teen or adult)

Describe your life before you received Christ.

What were your attitudes, needs and problems before you received Christ?

What did your life revolve around?

What were you doing for happiness and security?

How was this life unfulfilling?

How did you realize that it was unfulfilling?

Here are some words that might describe your situation and thinking:

inner emptiness

purposelessness

fear of death

bitterness

sense of guilt

sense of dirtiness

desire for inner peace

loneliness

lack of truth

lack of self-control

general hopelessness

marriage problems

self-centeredness

Describe how you received Christ.

When did you first hear about a relationship with Christ?

What was your reaction?

Why did you change your mind? What happened?

Did any verse stick in your mind during this time?

Describe your life after you received Christ.

How has your life changed since you received Christ?

How is your life better now that you received Christ?

Here are some words to prime your thinking on the benefits you have received in Christ:

clear conscience,	purpose
inner peace,	new confidence,
inner security,	fulfillment,
freedom,	eternal life,
victory over sin,	ability to forgive others,
sense of God's forgiveness,	desire to read the Bible,
new concern for others,	the power to change,
new love for God,	help with weakness,
power and strength,	new awareness of sin,
new attitudes,	new concern for others,
benefits to my marriage,	benefits to my children

Questions to Help with the Story of Your Adult Convincing
(If you came to Christ as a child)

Describe your life before you came back to Christ.

What were your attitudes, needs and problems?

What did your life revolve around?

What were you doing for happiness and security?

How was this unfulfilling?

How did you realize that it was unfulfilling?

Here are some words that might describe your situation and thinking at that time:

inner emptiness,
fear of death,
sense of guilt,
desire for inner peace,
lack of truth,
general hopelessness,
self-centeredness

purposelessness,
bitterness,
sense of dirtiness,
loneliness,
lack of self-control,
marriage problems,

Describe how you became convinced of following Jesus.

How did God begin to work to bring you back?

What thoughts were you having that began to change your mind?

Why convinced you to change your mind? What happened?

Did any verse stick in your mind during this time?

Describe your life after you committed your life to follow Christ.

How has your life changed?

How is your life better now?

Here are some words to prime your thinking on the benefits of committing your life to following Christ:

clear conscience,	purpose
inner peace,	new confidence,
inner security,	fulfillment,
freedom,	eternal life,
victory over sin,	ability to forgive others,
sense of God's forgiveness,	desire to read the Bible,
new concern for others,	the power to change,
new love for God,	help with weakness,
power and strength,	new awareness of sin,
new attitudes,	new concern for others,
benefits to my marriage,	benefits to my children

Questions to Help with Your Coping Stories

(For all of us)

Describe the crisis or stress in your life.

Here are some types of problems to prime your thinking:

marital problems, losing a child to death,
financial problems, parenting problems,
dating betrayal friendship betrayal
work problems, addiction problems,
severe health problems, moving stress,
infertility, depression,
an accident, stress from a new baby,
stress from a promotion,
stress from dealing with someone who has one of the above problems.

Describe how knowing Jesus helped you cope with that hard time.

How did you handle the problem?

How would you have handled the problem before you were a Christian?

What practical difference did it make that you had the Lord during that time?

Did any verse stick in your mind during this time?

Questions to Help You Refine and Use Your Stories

- Did you write it out?
- Does it flow logically?
- Did you follow the dos and don'ts above?
- Is it relatively brief and to the point so that it will fit in a conversation?
- Have you practiced it with a friend and spiritual leader to hear their feedback?
- Have you written talking points some place where you will see them regularly, like the flyleaf of your Bible?