

TELLING YOUR STORY (2)

Questions which can help us to think of what we might tell others:

- Which people or experiences have most influenced my own faith journey?
- What are the milestones in my faith journey?
- When did I first become aware of God in my life?
- How has this awareness developed?
- What are the things about Jesus that make him special to me?
- How have I experienced the Holy Spirit in my life and what difference has this made?
- What difference has my faith made in my life recently?
- What place does the Church play in my faith journey?
- Have there been times when God has seemed absent?
- What did I learn from these times?
- What doubts and questions remain with me?
- What am I most sure about in terms of my faith?

Tips for storytelling

Focus on God.

Make sure the story is about God as well as you. To prevent us sounding ‘preachy’– make sure we tell our story, and don’t insist that it should be their story.

Mind your language, by avoiding:

jargon, exaggeration, too much content, repetition, irrelevance, hidden assumptions, arrogance, criticism of others.

See how other people have told their stories here:

www.trurodiocese.org.uk/vision-strategy/our-faith-stories

“ Make it attractive, make good people wish it were true, and then show that it is. ”

Blaise Pascal. French mathematician, physicist, inventor, writer and Christian philosopher 1623-1662

RESOURCES TO HELP

See the Diocesan website and related pages here:

www.trurodiocese.org.uk/mission

Serving Others – A Simple Guide and Leading the Way Resources can be found here: www.trurodiocese.org.uk/discipleship or copies can be obtained from Pauline Burdett. pauline.burdett@truroanglican.org.uk

Websites

www.trypraying.org ‘Trypraying’ encourages people to try the Christian faith for themselves, simply by praying for a week. A free booklet and/or app is available from the website. This is something you could give to a friend and talk about afterwards.

www.rejesus.co.uk Packed full of information about Jesus’ life and his significance, and what it means to follow in his footsteps.

www.christianity.org.uk The website of the Christian Enquiry Agency, which seeks to inform people about Jesus Christ and Christianity. You can ask questions, order a free booklet or request prayers here.

Courses

Pilgrim www.pilgrimcourse.org – particularly the “Follow” stage is something to invite friends to take part in

Sharing our Faith and Answering Tough Questions – locally produced material can be found here: www.trurodiocese.org.uk/vision-strategy/discipleship-groups/way-of-life-resources

Books

Telling our faith story by Janet Price

How to explain your faith by John Pritchard

Being Christian by Rowan Williams – this is the sort of book you could lend to someone, or which will help you to understand your own faith better.

Conversations with Jesus of Nazareth by Simon Parke – another book to lend a friend, to help them explore the person of Jesus.

The Simple Guide series were inspired by the ‘Living Faith’ materials produced by the Diocese of Oxford – with thanks.



FAITH SHARING
A SIMPLE GUIDE

‘Journeying out’ in our faith is about sharing the love of God through acts of service and through our words.

As disciples of Jesus we are called to share the Good News of his story (and our story) with others. We need to do this with enthusiasm and with humility, making sure we listen to others as well as share our beliefs. But how? We will need sensitivity, confidence and clarity, making sure that our lives bear witness to what we say, that our actions speak as well as our words. The aim of this Simple Guide is to relieve the stress and to help readers see that sharing our faith story can be a natural part of our everyday lives and relationships.

Jesus said: ‘I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.’ *John 10:10*



A PRAYER

*Eternal God,
giver of love and power,
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world
to preach the gospel of his Kingdom:
confirm in us this mission,
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*



“THIS ISN’T FOR ME”

Sharing the love of God with others in both deeds and words, is not only for the keen enthusiasts; it is something that the Worldwide Anglican Church owns, as it is illustrated by three of the “5 Marks of Mission”:

- To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service

“ Evangelism means carrying Jesus in your heart and giving the presence of Jesus to someone else ”

Attributed to Mother Teresa

Speaking of our faith can be a hard thing to do. So we often feel more comfortable with nurturing people or responding to need. However, proclamation is an important part of building genuine and honest relationships with people as we share our lives with them. Friends will often ask questions and are ready to listen to our experience of the Christian story

“ My friend is rather shy, but she formed a bridge and Jesus Christ walked over it. ”

A new Christian.

Also important is the willingness to invite people to attend special festival services, mid-week events or weekly worship, so that they get to know more Christians. We can also offer books, videos or courses for people to engage with (see the back page for suggestions). The ‘Christianity – an introduction’ leaflet in this series can also be a conversation-starter.

“ Evangelism is helping people to belong so that they can believe. ”

John Finnev. Suffragan Bishop of Pontefract 1993–1998.



Common reasons why people struggle with the idea of sharing their faith:

- Some feel that religion is a private business; we ought not to talk about it.

But if our faith is the most important thing in our lives – should we not be willing to share it with others?

‘Have reverence for Christ in your hearts, and honour him as Lord. Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you (but do it with gentleness and respect)’. 1 Peter 3:15&16

- Some are afraid that they don’t know enough about the Christian faith themselves and so cannot explain it to others.

Then why not ask someone to join you in attending a course, so that you can learn and grow together? Or why not agree to read a book at the same time, and then discuss it with your friend?

“ The vast majority of Christians came to such a position not through some crisis, but through a process. To put it another way, people are converted more through relationships than through techniques or special efforts. ”

Gavin Reid. Bishop of Maidstone 1992 -2001.

- Sometimes we struggle in our own faith, and so feel we have nothing to share with others.

The Christian faith, for most, is the very real story of doubts and questions, struggles and failures that can actually speak powerfully to people.

- Perhaps all your friends are already Christians – then maybe it is time to make some more!

What other interests do you have? What clubs or activities could you join in with locally? Perhaps there are families or groups whom you might befriend or help.

‘It is not the Church of God that has a mission to the world, but the God of mission who has a Church in the world.’

Tim Dearborn. Associate Director for faith and development at World Vision International.

TELLING YOUR STORY (1)

Remember that being invited to share about our faith is a privilege, generally earned after you have spent time listening carefully and lovingly to your friend’s story. Telling your story does not mean launching into a theological treatise but sharing your life story and what your faith means to you, honestly. Sometimes you will only have the opportunity to share a part of your story that might be relevant to the person you are talking to, which is why it’s good to be familiar with the whole of your story.

Preparing to tell your story!

- In order to do this well it is helpful to provide a framework so that our story flows, doesn’t take too long, and we find it easy to remember what we want to say.
- The content of the Christian faith is better told through a real story than through a theoretical lecture about beliefs and doctrine.
- You could get together with some friends from your church, and tell each other your stories to get used to telling them and to how people might react.

The 4 ‘P’s’ Framework can help you to prepare what to say

People

With which character or characters in the Bible do you identify?

How do the lives of Christians in the past encourage/challenge the way we live the Christian faith today?

Passages

What bible passage[s] have been important to you in your journey?

Psalms

Using Psalm 23, describe the times when these different things, or experiences similar to them, have happened to you – what have you learnt about God in these times?

Places

Is there a place where you know the presence of God in a special way? What have these places taught you about the Christian faith? (Such places can range from Spring Harvest to Walsingham, from Iona to your parish church).