

Constructing a Testimony (via Will McRaney)

Sharing a personal testimony may be the most powerful tool available to the willing witness. A testimony is effective in all cultures, especially the postmodern culture the church is now facing in America. Your life story is often interesting to others, even those usually unwilling to talk about religious matters.

Stories have a way of breaking down barriers. People usually turn off their critical thinking skills and drop their guards to listen to a story.

Three Major Components of a Testimony

1. Life before Christ (front)
2. Coming to know/trust Christ (middle)
3. Life after Christ (back)

(See Paul's testimony in Acts 22:3–25.)

Two Major Kinds of Testimonies

- Salvation - Focus on how you came to trust Christ.
- Situation (present impact) - Focus on how Jesus is impacting your life in relation to typical human needs, problems, and issues.

Do's Shaping Your Testimony

- Write what your life was like before you came to know Christ.
- Write how you came to know you were lost and how you came to see Jesus as the forgiver and leader of your life.
- Write out the major one or two positive differences/changes Christ is making in your life.
- Write it in understandable language, removing religious terms that would not be commonly understood.
- Try to develop your testimony around one major theme with supporting information.
- The testimony should be prepared to be shared in about three minutes if it's shared without dialogue.
- Keep your testimony on point without too many details that could distract people from seeing Christ.

Testimony Don'ts

- Don't embellish details or worry that your testimony is not exciting enough to share.
- Don't use too many Scriptures (aim for one to three).
- Don't feel that you have to share all your testimony at once if the situation warrants a delay.
- Don't be negative about other religions or in any matter if possible.

Sharing Do's

- Learn to ask people questions about themselves. This will usually lead to the lost person asking you about yourself.
- Learn to share your testimony from any starting point front, middle, back; or middle, back, front; and even back, front, middle.
- Focus on how your story connects with the lost person, not just on telling your story.
- Be natural and authentic, not someone you are not.
- Practice sharing your testimony with Christian friends, get feedback, and make adjustments.
- Close in such a way as to lead the person to Christ, not away from him if they do not receive Christ in that setting. (Ask them to go on the “taste and see” journey.)
- Share in the confidence of Christ as you relive your experiences.