

▲ Testimony Writing ▲

Objectives: LEAD participants will be able to tell their testimony in 30 seconds and have an idea of how to expand it into 5 minutes or 30 minutes, and keep it focused on Jesus.

Plan ahead:

- Time required: at least 40 min
- Prepare your own 30 second and 5 minute testimony
- Copy worksheets as required

Supplies:

- Pens, pencils, worksheets

Accompanying documents:

- Their Story and answer key, bottom of this file
 - My Story, bottom of this file
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❖ **Get Started (hook, 6 min)**

Tell your 30 second testimony. Ask if the LEADers want to know more. Tell your 5 minute testimony. Make sure both focus on Jesus, His work and His identity, not on you, as this lesson teaches.

❖ **Learn / observe (book / look, 20 min)**

Who was my testimony about? (Jesus, though obviously you are also part of it!)

How was it structured? (Help them figure out that the basic outline is: Before Jesus, Met Jesus, With Jesus)

Let's look at some testimonies in the Bible. We are familiar with testimonies being somewhat long, so let's start with a longer testimony: Paul's.

Read Acts 22:1-21.

Identify the different parts of Paul's testimony on your worksheet called "Their Story." (Review the different parts. See Answer Key)

Next, let's look at a shorter testimony. Not even 30 seconds. Let's time how long it takes to read this man's testimony:

Read and time how long it takes to read John 9:25b: *One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.*

The first time he tells the story, it is a little longer: **John 9:11** *He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight."*

This man tells how he met Jesus in John 9:11, 15 and 25. Each one gets shorter. These are examples of really short testimonies that focus entirely on Jesus. Now let's be fair - **which part of the testimony is this really?** (Met Jesus.)

Identify the other parts of the blind man's testimony on the worksheet using John 9:1-38. (Do this as a group exercise or in pairs or alone, as you want. See Answer Key.)

The blind man gives us an example of modifying a testimony to fit different situations. Let's put them in a culture more familiar to us and give them names.

The blind man's audience wasn't up for listening a long time, like people in an elevator. Let's call his testimony an **elevator** testimony. And let's put a time limit on it: **30 seconds**.

Paul's testimony is a little longer and more in depth. His situation is different. Who he is in the eyes of his audience is different. The blind man had been a totally unknown beggar. The Jewish leaders wouldn't give him their attention for very long. Paul had been a member of the Jewish leaders. He was well known and well respected. The Jewish leaders were willing to give him more time. They are more like people at a **bus stop**: they are going to be there for a few minutes and are willing to listen for the amount of time until the bus comes (or in Paul's case, their attention goes elsewhere). Let's say that in a situation like this, you have **5 minutes**.

And maybe another situation will come where you have even longer. In Acts 26, Paul tells his story again. This time he's talking to an acquaintance, King Agrippa. In Acts 26:14-18, he gives a lot more detail about what Jesus said on to him the road to Damascus. There may be times when we, too, can give a lot more detail, like when we're talking to a friend at a **coffee shop**. Let's call this the **coffee shop testimony** and it doesn't really have a time limit.

So we have the **Elevator** testimony of 30 seconds, the **Bus Stop** testimony of 5 minutes and the **Coffee Shop** testimony with no time limit. That is the length.

Now let's talk about content again. Each testimony has three main parts and ONE focus. What are the three parts?

- Before Jesus - what did I lack before I met Jesus?
- How Jesus and I met
- Since Jesus - how has He made a difference in my life?

And finally, **there is ONE focus**. Jesus. Why? Because He is what the big story is all about. The whole Old Testament looks forward to Jesus, the Gospels talk about His life and the rest of the New Testament explains the implications of His coming. All of history is about Jesus, one life at a time. So when we talk about our life, let's focus on what Jesus has done. Focus on the story Jesus is writing in your life. That's what matters most.

❖ **Get Practical (took, 10 min minimum)**

Now it's your turn. Open your notebook to the page, "Your Story." We'll spend the rest of this activity working on this. Continue to work on this. On Saturday on Overnights you'll have a chance to give your 30 second testimony. If you'd rather not share yours, or if you want to practice ahead of time, please let me know. But this is a great opportunity to practice in front of a group of friends who support you. The next time you have this chance, your audience may not be as friendly!

A couple other notes.

- Not everyone has a big, flashy conversion like Paul or the blind man. Some are more like Matthew, Peter, James or John, Jesus' disciples. Jesus just stopped by one day and said, come with me. Something in them recognized Him and off they went.

- Some of us grew up in church and feel like we're always been Christians. We've never really had a time "before Jesus". Often if that is the case, there is a time when your faith became your own. It might be a choice Jesus helped you make or a sin Jesus helped you overcome. And after that, your life was somehow different...

Do the best you can and ask me if you have questions. What questions do you have before we start?

❖ **Homework (follow up assignment)**

Write the "Building Blocks" of "Your Story". This is the brainstorming page. When you have the building blocks of your story, write out your 30 second and 5 minute stories. Practice them with another LEADER or a counselor.

▲ Their Story ▲

Answer key

Paul:

BC: before Christ - What was Paul's life like before he knew Jesus?

Act 22:3-5 *"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.*

MC: Met Christ - How did Paul meet Jesus? What events led to his decision?

Acts 22:6-16 *"As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. 7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' 8 And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 10 And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' 11 And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. 12 "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13 came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. 14 And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; 15 for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'*

WC: With Christ - How is his life different now with Jesus in it?

Acts 22:17-21 *"When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' 19 And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. 20 And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.' 21 And he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"*

The blind man:

BC: before Christ - What was Paul's life like before he knew Jesus?

A man blind from birth (John 9:1)

MC: Met Christ - How did Paul meet Jesus? What events led to his decision?

One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see. (John 9:25)

The man called Jesus made mud and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed and received my sight." (John 9:11)

WC: With Christ - How is his life different now with Jesus in it?

Now I see (John 9:25)

John 9:35-38 *Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." 38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.*

▲ Their Story ▲

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BC: before Christ - What was Paul's life like before he knew Jesus?

MC: Met Christ - How did Paul meet Jesus? What events led to his decision?

WC: With Christ - How is his life different now with Jesus in it?

The blind man:

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MC: Met Christ - How did Paul meet Jesus? What events led to his decision?

WC: With Christ - How is his life different now with Jesus in it?

▲ My Story ▲

The Building Blocks

BC: before Christ - What was my life like before I knew Jesus?

MC: Met Christ - How did I meet Jesus? What events led to my decision?

WC: With Christ - How is life different now with Jesus in it?

▲ My Story ▲

Elevator version (30 seconds):

Bus Stop version (5 minutes):