

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

John 15:5, NIV



Telling Your Story...

STORIES CARRY POWER. Jesus used stories in his ministry in life-changing ways.

Telling your story is a spiritual growth practice that encourages and builds relationship with others, often on a deep level. It offers an opportunity to reflect upon what God has been doing in and around you. This frequently brings a new realization of—and heartfelt appreciation for—how God has been transforming your life. Our individual stories are each a part of God's larger story. By sharing your story with others, you reveal God's character and thus share his story with others.

When you share how God has been active in your life, it encourages others and helps you become more aware of God's faithfulness. When we listen, we honor each other and our stories. Here are a couple of exercises that will help you begin to share your story.

90-Second Story

With another person or in a small

group, each of you will tell a light-hearted story to the other(s). It could be an embarrassing moment, a fun adventure, a way in which you've taken a risk that worked out well—or didn't work out well—but it must be about you. Each of you should take a minute to plan your 90-second story, using only the following six questions as a guide to shape your story:

- When did it happen?
- Where did it happen?
- Who was involved?
- What happened?
- What action did you take?
- What was the outcome?

After each person has shared his/her story, together respond to the following questions:

- How did it feel to share your story?
- What was it like to listen to the story of another?
- What are some things you heard as you were listening to his/her story?

- Consider questions you might have asked, if you had the time.

3-Minute Story

Begin with a time of reflection, as you prepare to tell another story to a person or small group. This time, tell a 3-minute story—one that goes a bit deeper than the 90-second story, such as: a story from your early faith journey, a commitment or decision you've made in recent months, a joy or struggle you've experienced, people who have helped you grow closer to God. Follow the same guidelines used with your 90-second story, remembering that it must be true, it must be important to you, and it must be tellable in three minutes. This is an opportunity to tell your faith story—and God's story—with others. Debrief your experience together, responding to the questions above.

Other approaches

There are multiple approaches for sharing your faith story: written or spoken, artwork, poetry, dance, drama, music, video. Be creative! The very process of putting your story into

one of these forms is itself a spiritual growth experience.

Making your story accessible to others is another growth step. Share what you've created in community worship, in a small group, in your family, or with a mentor or spiritual companion. Ask someone else to join you in this spiritual growth practice. Bringing hope and encouragement to others through story is a powerful tool of transformation. As disciples of Jesus, we're called to be encouragers of one another in this way.

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." —1 Thessalonians 5:11

Additional resources:

Go to CovChurch.org/resources to find these resources.

- Your Story brochure
- Journeying Together: An Introduction to Spiritual Companionship (prayer experience/retreat)
- "72 Evangelism Training"

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This Growing Deeper practice is part of a series. To learn more about these resources, or to download this and other practices, visit CovChurch.org. To order copies of the Growing Deeper Practices, visit CovBooks.com.