

Faith Stories: Conversion

How To Prepare & Tell Your Conversion Story



Outline

I. Faith Story: Conversion

II. Biblical Example: Acts 26

III. How to Prepare & Tell



Faith Story: Conversion

- Your **conversion faith story** is your Christian testimony of how you came to know Jesus in a personal and meaningful way.
- If you've known Jesus **since an early age**, your testimony might not match the process given in this presentation. That's okay! You can still write a pilgrim story or a life event story. See CornerstoneWestford.com for more info.

Biblical Example:

Acts 26



Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- Overview
 - v. 1-3 Setting the scene
 - v. 4-11 How Paul lived before Jesus
 - v. 12-15 How Paul met Jesus
 - v. 16-23 How Paul changed because of Jesus

Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- v. 1-3 Paul before King Agrippa
 - What does Paul call his testimony? (v.2)

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.
Always be prepared to give an answer to
everyone who asks you to give the reason
for the hope that you have. But do this
with gentleness and respect,

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV®)



Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- v. 4-11 How Paul lived before Jesus
 - How did Paul live and act before he met Jesus?

Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- v. 4 I (Paul) lived in Jerusalem
- v. 5 I conformed to the strictest religious sect
 - I was a Pharisee - very legalistic and “good”
- v. 6-8 I hoped in promises for my people
- v. 9 I opposed Jesus
- v. 10 I put Jesus' people in prison and murdered them
- v. 11 I was obsessed with persecuting Jesus' followers



Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- v. 12-15 How Paul met Jesus
 - What happened when Paul met Jesus?

Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- v. 12 I was traveling to Damascus to persecute more Christians
- v. 13 At noontime, I saw a light from heaven
 - It blazed around me and my companions
- v. 14 We fell down and God asked, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”
- v. 15 Then I asked, “Who are you, Lord?”

Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- Kicking against the goads
 - Farmers would prod their oxen in the field with sharp sticks, and the oxen would fight back, causing worse pain to themselves
 - God was working on Paul for a while
 - We call this the “hound of heaven”

Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- v. 16-23 How Paul changed because of Jesus
 - How did Paul and his life change after he met Jesus?

Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- v. 16 God appointed me as his servant and witness
- v. 17 God rescued me from the Jews and Gentiles
- v. 18 God sent me to open their eyes and turn them to him
 - 1) Turn away from Satan to God
 - 2) Receive forgiveness of sins
 - 3) Receive a place among the sanctified through faith in Jesus

Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- v. 19 I obeyed and traveled to Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, and to the Gentiles
 - I preached repentance and obedience to God
- v. 21-22 People try to kill me but God is faithful
- v. 23 God wants me to share the gospel with Jews and Gentiles

Acts 26 - Paul's Conversion

- There are three parts to Paul's conversion story:
 1. How Paul lived before Jesus
 2. How Paul met Jesus
 3. How Paul changed because of Jesus

How to Prepare & Tell

How To Prepare

- Three parts to your story:
 1. How you lived before Jesus
 2. How you met Jesus
 3. How Jesus changed you

1) How You Lived Before Jesus

- Part 1 - What my life was like before I became a Christian
 - This can be tricky for those of us raised in the church (simplify it... I understood sin at a basic level)
 - Authenticity and honesty connect with listeners
 - Don't embellish stories or glorify sins (not confession)
 - It's okay to name struggles, but don't dwell on them.

1) How You Lived Before Jesus

- Part 1 - Questions
 - How did you feel before Jesus?
 - What were your desires?
 - What was sin and how did you recognize it?
 - How did you view religion and faith?
 - What made you happy and for how long?

2) How You Met Jesus

- Part 2 - How I became a Christian
 - This is your opportunity to bring Jesus fame
 - This is your conversion moment/timeline
 - This may be the moment you “owned” your faith
 - Explain the gospel and include a Bible verse that impacted you.

2) How You Met Jesus

- Part 2 - Questions
 - What did you feel, think?
 - What made you believe?
 - What made you want to love and obey Jesus?
 - What Bible verses spoke to you?

2) How You Met Jesus

- Part 2 - Gospel Bible Verses
 - Sin - Romans 3:23, James 2:10
 - Punishment - Romans 5:12, 6:23
 - Jesus Saves - John 3:16, John 14:6, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:8-9
 - Confess & Believe - Romans 10:9, 10:13, 1 John 1:9

3) How Jesus Changed You

- Part 3 - How Jesus has changed my life since I began to follow Him
 - Here you can share some differences you or others have noticed in your life
 - Relationships, emotions, anxieties, life plan
 - Everything isn't perfect; you still have ups and downs
 - Include a friendly invitation to chat with you about your story at the very end

How To Prepare

- Write the way you speak; try not to use clichés or churchy language
- Keep your story less than 5 minutes in length
- Approximately **850 words**
- Try it out on friends and family
- Each part doesn't have to be the same length

How To Tell

- Read your testimony word-for-word
 - Don't use it as talking points
 - We're going for quality over quantity
- Don't try and convert anyone, just give your account of how God has worked and invite further conversation
- There is no "bad" or "boring" testimony. God is at work in you and that's amazing!

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9 (NIV®)



Resources

- Examples of real Cornerstone faith stories: <http://www.cornerstonewestford.com/category/faith-stories/>
- CRU — Your Testimony: How To Prepare and Tell Your Story <http://www.cru.org/train-and-grow/how-to-tell-your-story-worksheet.html>
- Relevant Magazine — What We Get Wrong About ‘Giving Our Testimony’ <http://www.relevantmagazine.com/god/what-we-get-wrong-about-giving-our-testimony>