

Discussion Point from Jim Krueger's Talks on Telling Your Story

Thanks for coming to Winterfest! Below are a few of the key ideas and questions we hope you took from Jim Krueger's sessions.

From Revelation 12:11

“They triumphed over him [the devil]
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony...”

We are all called to be story-tellers. One of the best places to start when sharing Jesus with someone is by sharing what God has done in your life- your story.

Exploring how creation glorifies God in its complexity, considering logical ideas or apologetic arguments for God are good! But if you try to debate someone into becoming a christian, you may run into someone who is more clever or knowledgeable than you are.

If you share your story, it's just that- *your* story. Plus, you're seeking to build bridges and empathy instead of “winning” an argument. Sharing stories is about letting another person see how they might themselves in your story (how they relate).

Sometimes we feel like we don't have much of a story to tell or we don't put thought ahead of time into what we would say. Let's put some thought into our stories.

The Set-up (where your story begins)

Talk about your childhood. Your family.

What was your favorite toy or the thing you first loved? How does this relate to how you do or did see or understand God?

What was your greatest fear as a child? Or what were you most afraid of losing? This often reveals our first idols.

Note: Who we are at the beginning of our story is not who we will be at the end. We grow and change.

The Catalyst (rebellling against the status quo from the set-up)

What is the thing or event that made you realize that you did not have all the answers or that your view of God was too small? This is often where leads a person has become a believer or when God became real or more real to them.

This is not where you “have it all figured out”, this is what launches you into faith or deeper faith. It's what happened in your life regardless of whether it was an event, something external or internal, big or small, tragic or awesome or mundane.

Note: This is a key part to your story. The point is not to impress people with how bad our life or our sins were. The point is what God is doing in our lives. This is why it's not a contest to see who has the most “dramatic” story.

The Quest (life since the catalyst and where we still are in our stories)

How has your life changed since the catalyst? How has your view/understanding/relationship with God changed?

This often builds to a part of your story when things still went bad. If a dark time has come since the catalyst, how has your faith made a difference?

People in scripture still experienced tragedy after experiencing close connection with God. Be real about your growth *and* your awkward moments, your aspirations, and your continuing struggles.

Note: Not all stories are the same, but for many of us, this may be the most important part of your story.

How do you see life differently or relate differently to who you were in the set-up?

Revelation 12:11 continues

“... they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”

People want to not be afraid. They want to know if your faith becomes their faith it makes a difference now.

Some additional questions to consider:

If your life were being made into a screenplay, what would be the highlights?

What does God want to do uniquely in your story?

What is the thing about my faith that I *don't* want people to know? What's the question I hope they won't ask me about the Bible? What's the "worst" part about my faith?

What's most likely for someone to not like about my faith or me as a christian?

How can I increase my vulnerability in front of people without being afraid to be vulnerable? How can I be more honest in the way I tell my story?

Here's a few closing ideas:

- Aim for about 20 minutes tops in a single telling.
- Practice. Share with each other. Give good feedback.
- Avoid using Christian jargon or phrases that would be strange or confusing to someone that hasn't been in the church.
- Stories seem to be best shared in small settings over food. Just saying.
- Your story isn't finished. It will continue to grow and change with time. Any given conversation may be better suited for some specific parts of your story over others. That is okay.
- None of this is about embellishing, fixing, selling, or otherwise being fake with your story. It is about putting some thought into *how* you share one of the most important things you have to share. It's about being more genuine and vulnerable with other people.