



Touching base (5 minutes)

Open in prayer as is helpful for your group.

If this is your first session take time to introduce yourselves and set any ground rules you want to for your time together.

If you met previously take the opportunity either as a group or in pairs to check in with each other about how your response from last time has gone.



Introduction: This is quite a practical session, in which people will be given the opportunity to form and practice their faith stories.

Opening question(s) (5 minutes)

Why is sharing my story so much better than just explaining my beliefs?



Understanding the information (10 minutes)

Share these thoughts in your own words or read them together:

After Jesus healed a man born blind the religious leaders quizzed him, trying to catch Jesus out: “A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. ‘Give glory to God by telling the truth,’ they said. ‘We know this man is a sinner.’ He replied, ‘Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!’” (John 9:24-25)



The man couldn’t answer all their questions, but he could tell them his story. In a context of so many different voices and points of view around us our experiences have more credibility than our ideas and can help point others to the presence of God. Being prepared to give an answer to those who ask is less about witnessing to the depth of our knowledge about God, and more about sharing the genuine story of how we know Him in our daily lives.

If we get the opportunity, the best way of telling our story is naturally and spontaneously. But some people might find that having a framework can help us to know how to start. The handout this session gives some suggested outlines.

Reading the Bible (15 minutes)

Read Acts 22: 1-21 in which Paul shares his story.

Discuss the Discovery Bible Study questions:

What does this passage teach me about God?

What does this passage teach me about people?

How does this passage call me to obey God?

What might I do in response to this this week?



Time to practise. (30 minutes)

Ask people to look at the various ideas for ways to share your faith story. Give them time to briefly prepare, and then to share the stories with one another as far as they feel able.



Responding to God's leading (5 minutes)

Give people an opportunity to think about, "What might God be showing me and how might I respond?" They may like to write this down and/or share it with the group and/or share it with one other person. A friendly question is to ask each other, "Is there anything that would be helpful to ask you next time?"



Group prayer (5 minutes)

Give thanks together for the stories you have heard.





SHARING YOUR STORY:

SOME IDEAS

THE THREE PS

People

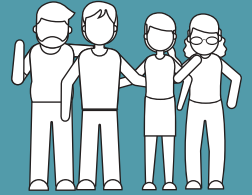
The character or characters I most identify with in the Bible are...because...

Passages

The bible passage(s) which have been important to me in my journey are...because...

Places

A place where I know the presence of God in a special way is...because....



SOME HELPFUL QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

Which people or experiences have most influenced my own faith journey?

What are the milestones in my faith journey?

When did I first become aware of God in my life?

What are the things about Jesus that makes him special to me?

Have there been times when God has seemed absent?

How did I learn from these times?

What doubts and questions remain with me?



BEFORE - DURING - AFTER

If you have experienced a significant change in your life of faith you could share it by sharing what your life was like before coming to God, what happened or made you turn to Him, and what difference He has made to you.



REMEMBER - REACT - RESULT



If your story is much more of a process then you could share the way in which you were drawn into Christ over a period of time; perhaps you were brought up in a Christian household, and it was over a period of time that your faith became personal to you. As you grew in faith, you reacted differently to circumstances in your life as the Holy Spirit led you. The result may be just as dramatic as that experienced by Damascus road types, but not as obvious.