

# Sharing Our Faith Stories with Words

"Does anyone have suggestions or methods for getting more comfortable in sharing our faith stories when speaking to others?" queried Darlene at a recent evangelization training session. Not knowing how to share faith stories can block us from telling others how Jesus has touched and worked in our lives. Times when we might have "shared the Gospel with skin on it" are missed and sometimes regrets about this can paralyze us from trying to share faith stories.

Let us look at some simple and effective practices that can help us to, "Take note of the many opportunities to support another's faith, to share faith, and to help build up Jesus' kingdom in our homes and workplaces, among our neighbors and friends" in the future. (*Go and Make Disciples*, section 136A)

Below is a list of some of the suggestions made to Darlene—and to all of us—about how to become more comfortable sharing our faith stories with words:

- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in recalling and telling our faith stories.
- Listen to or read the faith stories of others (personal witnesses, Saints' lives, Scripture stories). Notice how the focus of these stories is on what God in Jesus Christ has done for them.
- Take time to reflect on our religious experiences, times when we know that God was near (birth of a child, death of loved one, success at work, loss of a job, etc.).
- Write five or six faith stories down in less than 200 words each and keep them in a journal (paper or electronic, private or online). Read back over them every six months and add more stories.
- Record audio or video of our faith stories (each no more than 2 to 3 minutes in length). Play them back every six months and add more stories or re-record ones we realize we can speak better about now. (This practice will also give us some idea of how we sound to others.)
- Connect our faith stories to family photos, video clips, or objects from everyday life, that will help us tell our faith stories in memorable and inviting ways.
- When we realize that we missed an opportunity to share a faith story with someone, rejoice! Thank Jesus for realizing that. Ask him to open our eyes to other opportunities that we normally miss.
- Use our imagination. When we miss an opportunity and later realize it, imagine for a few moments what we will say when the next such opportunity arises to share a faith story.
- Practice sharing our faith stories one-to-one with one other person we trust. Ask them for feedback on how these stories sound to them.

- Ask someone who does a very good job of sharing personal faith stories to be our mentor, so we can learn how to do this more effectively.
- Become part of a small faith-sharing group or Bible study group where we share regularly how Scripture and faith intersect with our daily lives.
- Accept that we will never notice and use every opportunity in daily life to share our faith with words. Have patience. It can take years to make progress in telling our faith stories more effectively. That is OK.
- One practical resource that can help us share your faith stories is:

***Discovering My Experience of God: Awareness and Witness***

by Frank P. Desiano and Kenneth Boyack (Paulist Press, 2009)

[http://www.pncea.org/store/item.asp?ITEM\\_ID=25&DEPARTMENT\\_ID=45](http://www.pncea.org/store/item.asp?ITEM_ID=25&DEPARTMENT_ID=45)

**Reflection Questions for Small Group Sharing—4 or 5 people (25-40 mins.)**

1. Recall a faith story you heard someone else tell in everyday life or at a church event. What struck you most about that story or about the person who told it?
2. Which two or three of the 13 concrete suggestions for preparing faith stories (above) have you or someone else you know tried? What happened?
3. Which of these 13 suggestions would you most like to try? Why?
4. Why do you think “telling faith stories” is important for effective Catholic evangelization?
5. What other suggestions might you offer to someone who wants to learn how to share personal faith stories?