



One of the most important steps in the life of faith is baptism. For all of church history, baptism has been the primary way that a person has publicly identified with Jesus as their Lord and with God's Kingdom as their life's pursuit. We are so excited that you are taking this step in your relationship with Jesus.

Here are some details that should help in your preparation:

1. Testimony:

- a. Below are a few guides to help you prepare to share your story/testimony. Sharing your story of God at work in your life is very powerful and encouraging to the whole church.
- b. You can share/read your testimony live – the day of your baptism OR you can choose to schedule a video session to record your story.
- c. Practice with a friend or family member to make sure your story is clear and covers all the basic parts mentioned in the guide.

2. VIDEO Testimony (optional):

- a. After you've written out your story – memorize it! It's ok if it's not word-for-word, but your video will have a much greater impact if you are free from a script.
- b. Video shoot, what NOT to wear – White, Graphic Tees, or small pinstripe designs. Also avoid shirts with large branding or logos.

3. Clothing:

- a. Wear shorts (or pants) dark colors.
- b. Wear your grey "Renewed" baptism t-shirt (provided by church). Let us know your **t-shirt size** and we'll have it available for you.
- c. Bring a towel, change of clothes and bag for your wet items afterward.

4. Procedure:

- a. Meet Pastor Doug (or whoever is baptizing you) at the baptism tank 15 minutes before the service starts to review basic details.
- b. At the appropriate time in the service, the candidate enters the baptism pool (the water will be heated).
- c. The pastor will ask, "Do you trust in Christ as your Savior and believe that he has forgiven your sins?"
- d. The pastor will direct you to kneel in the water.
- e. The pastor will dip you forward into the water 3 times, allowing you to get your breath after each dip.
- f. You will be celebrated by God's people with cheers and applause -- this is a joyous occasion!
- g. Someone will pray for you before you leave the tank. You can ask someone to pray for you (like a relative, friend, ministry leader) or the person baptizing you will pray for you.
- h. We encourage you to invite family and friends to the service so that they may witness your step of faith and celebrate with you!
- i. Get to service early to save seats if needed.
- j. Baptisms are typically at the very beginning of the service.

# How to Tell Your Story

Jesus didn't preach a lot of three-point sermons, but he told a ton of stories. Why? People are interested in other people, not abstract ideas. Imagine trying to convince the person next door he or she is a sinner and desperately needs Christ. Yeah, right! But what if you share with him or her about your life and what Christ means to you? He or she may be willing to talk about the gospel after hearing a sincere personal testimony.

Where to start?

You may find it helps to write your story and practice it. Then when you have an opportunity to share with someone, you can do so with confidence. Your story should include three main parts:

1. My life before knowing Christ. You may want to talk about a specific problem with which you struggled. What life issues were you dealing with? Looking back, how was God working in your life? Who was God using in your life to reach you?
2. How I came into a personal relationship with Christ. Again, be specific—don't just say, "I came to know Christ." Tell how it happened. How did it feel? What did it mean to you to take this step of faith? In what way was Jesus real to you?
3. My life after Christ. How are you a different person as a result of having Christ in your life? What does he mean to you? If you became a Christian as a young child, emphasize this last point.

A few storytelling tips:

- Keep it brief—two to five minutes (and two or three paragraphs) is plenty.
- Give enough details to arouse interest.
- Ask God for wisdom and guidance, and trust the Holy Spirit to do his work in his timing in the other person's heart.
- Some questions to think about: Why does God's presence in my life make a difference? How is he working in and through me right now?
- Centering your story around a theme can be helpful. Christ means different things to different people—and different things at different times in our life. What about your relationship with Christ is most powerful in your life—freedom, mercy, love, joy?

A few traps to avoid:

- Don't speak "Christianese." "I felt it was God's will" and "Jesus shed his blood for our sins" mean nothing to most unchurched people.
- Don't give the impression the Christian life is a bed of roses. Be honest and realistic.
- Don't preach, and don't speak in a judgmental or critical way. Convey an attitude of love and acceptance.

God has an unending supply of creativity; ask him to use your story to impact people's lives. And just think of the fun you'll have someday tracking down those people in heaven to discover how your story blended with theirs!

- By Karen Langley (used with permission)