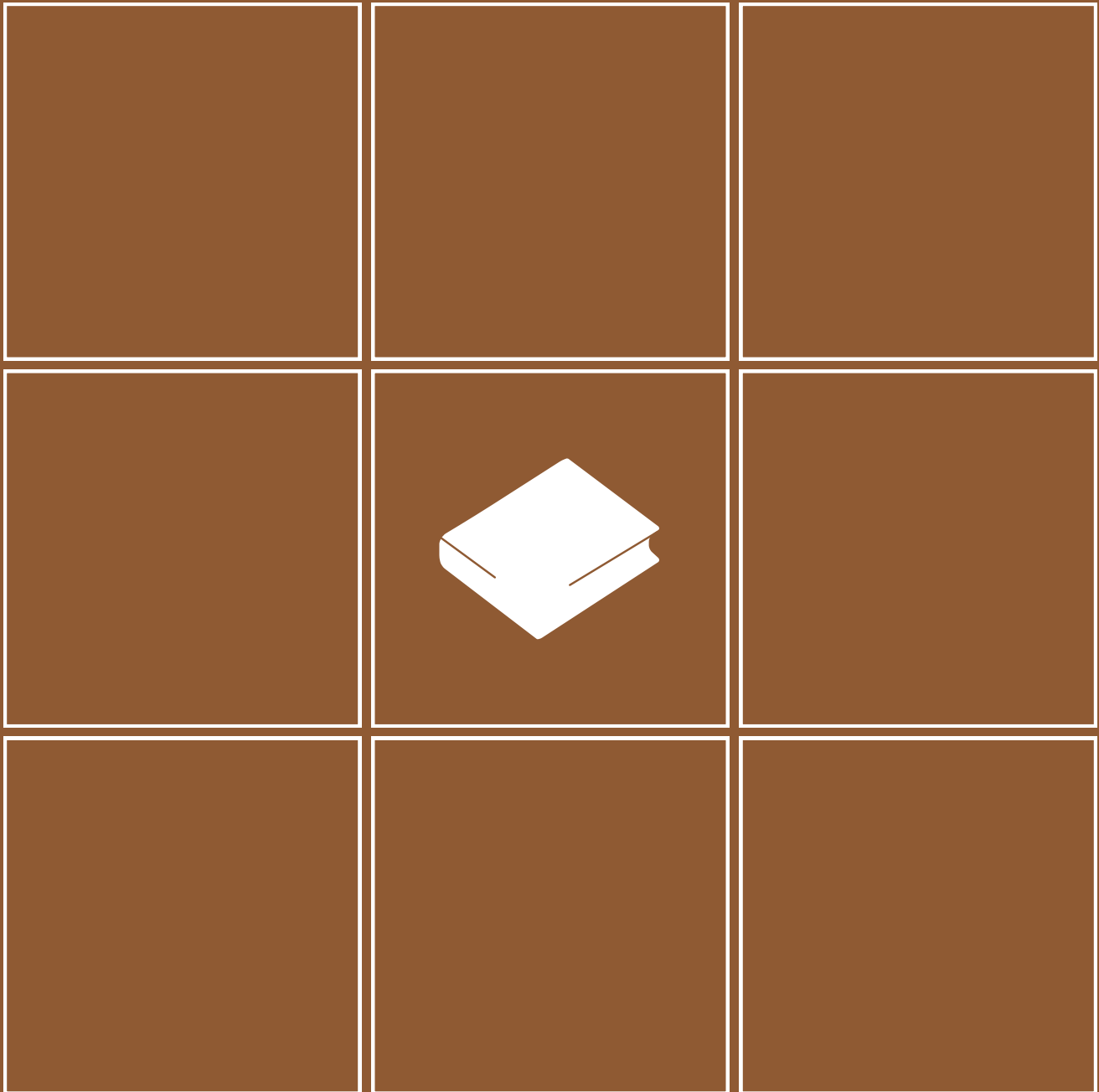


# EVERYDAY EVANGELISM

*Telling your Story*



# TELLING YOUR STORY

## *Small Group Study Guide*

### Overview

**“As much as we think we’re fact-based people, we’re way more relational than that. What we are persuaded by is stories; people’s personal experiences.”**

Some people are more persuaded by stories than facts. Our entire legal system runs on testimony. The Bible is mostly narrative. And one of the most powerful tools we have for sharing our faith isn’t an argument or a framework, it’s the story of what actually happened to us. This teaching challenges every follower of Jesus to learn how to tell their story: in one minute, in five, in twenty. Not a polished presentation, just the honest arc of before, encounter, and after. This guide will help your group practice together.

### Key Ideas

Three movements from the teaching:

1. Testimony is powerful. People are persuaded by personal stories far more than by facts, arguments, or advertising.
2. Every testimony has three parts: Before (who you were), The Encounter (what happened with God), and After (what’s different now).
3. Your testimony can be practiced and refined in 1 minute, 3 minutes, 10 minutes, 20 minutes. It’s a skill, not a gift. And what you have right now is already enough.

### Icebreaker

Choose one to open your time together (5–10 min):

1. When was the last time someone’s personal story changed your mind about something or moved you in a way facts alone never could? What was it?
2. Have you ever heard someone’s faith story and thought, “That’s exactly what I needed to hear” or “That sounds like me”? What made it land?

### Watch the Video

## Discussion Questions

### Part 1: Why Testimony Works

*Key idea: Stories persuade in ways that arguments can't.*

1. Jay says our legal system runs on testimony. People go to jail based on the word of a witness. What does that say about how much weight we actually give to personal experience?
2. He observes that a documentary is more powerful than reading the same facts in a history book. Why do you think that is? What does a face and a voice add that text alone can't?
3. The majority of the Bible, he notes, is narrative. People wrote down what they experienced and saw. How does that shape the way you read Scripture? Does it change anything about how you've approached it?

### Part 2: The Three-Part Shape of a Testimony

*Key idea: Before → Encounter → After. Simple, honest, repeatable.*

1. Paul's testimony in Acts follows this arc: here's who I was, here's what happened on the road, here's what it's meant since. Walk through your own story with that structure in your head. What would go in each section?
2. Jay notes that the "before" might be 20 years, the encounter might be one hour, and the "after" is everything since. Which part is hardest for you to talk about? Which comes most naturally?
3. He says people often feel their testimony isn't interesting, especially if they grew up in church. Why do we underestimate our own stories? What do others see in them that we can't?

### Part 3: Your Story Is Already Enough

*Key idea: You don't learn faith and then share it. You share it and learn it.*

1. Jay quotes Philemon 1:6: Share your faith so you learn your faith. That's the reverse of how most of us think about it. What does it mean that sharing is itself a way of growing?
2. He says someone is still living in your "before." Someone is in the middle of what you came through. How does that reframe the question of whether your story is "interesting enough" to share?
3. What would it take for you to record a one-minute version of your testimony this week? What feels scary about that? What might happen if you did it anyway?

## Scripture

Read one or more of these together and discuss how they connect to the teaching:

- Acts 26:1–23 - Paul's testimony before King Agrippa: before, encounter on the road, after

- John 20:30–31 - John writes so that readers might believe; testimony with a purpose
- John 9:25 - The blind man’s simple testimony: “One thing I know, I was blind, now I see”
- Revelation 12:11 - They overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony
- Philemon 1:6 - Be active in sharing your faith so that you have a full understanding of every good thing you have in Christ
- Luke 8:38–39 - The healed man is sent back to tell his own people what God has done for him

## Testimony Workshop

Use this section to draft and practice your story together:

Use the framework below to sketch the three parts of your testimony. Don’t try to make it polished. Just be honest. Write in whatever comes to mind first.

BEFORE	THE ENCOUNTER	AFTER
<p>Who were you?</p> <p>What were you looking for?</p> <p>What was missing or broken?</p>	<p>What happened?</p> <p>When/how did God show up?</p> <p>What shifted?</p>	<p>What’s different now?</p> <p>What does your life with God look like?</p> <p>What do you know now that you didn’t then?</p>

## The Four Versions

Once you have the shape of your story, practice telling it in different lengths. Each version is useful in a different context.

**1 minute** - No Bible verses. Just the core arc: who I was, what happened, what’s different. Natural conversation.

**3 minutes** - A little more color on each section. Still no jargon. Conversational and warm.

**10 minutes** - Room for detail, emotion, and specific moments. A verse or two might fit here naturally.

**20 minutes** - The full story. Deeper reflection, more Scripture, a clear invitation at the end.

## Application

This week, take one of these steps:

1. Draft your one-minute testimony using the Before / Encounter / After framework. Write it down or record a voice memo.
2. Share your draft with one person in this group. Ask them: Does this make sense? Is there something here I'm underselling?
3. Record a short video of yourself telling your story and send it to two or three friends who follow Jesus. Ask for honest feedback.
4. When you're ready, share it with a handful of people who don't follow Jesus. Frame it simply as "I've been working on being able to tell my story. Can I share it with you?" Get ready to follow up with these people in person. They'll probably ask you for a follow-up given the connection you're about to make!

## Group Practice

The best way to end this session:

Give everyone five to ten minutes to write out a rough sketch of their testimony using the framework above. Then go around the group and have each person share a one-minute version. After each person shares, the group briefly responds:

- What stood out to you?
- What part would you want to hear more of?
- Is there something in this story you didn't know, or that surprised you?

## Ministry Time

When a person finishes, have the person to their left pray a brief prayer for them, listening to the Holy Spirit and ministering blessing and prophetic encouragement. This models how simply we can ask the Holy Spirit to come alongside as people share stories in this group and beyond.

## Closing Prayer

After everyone finishes, close with this prayer:

God, thank you that our stories matter. Thank you for what you've done in our lives, and that it is worth sharing with others, not because it's impressive, but because someone out there is still living in our "before". Give us the courage to open our mouths and make our stories winsome and true. And let the telling of them deepen our own faith, even as it opens doors for others.

Amen.

## Leader Notes

Tips for facilitating this discussion well:

- This session works best when it ends with the actual practice of people telling their stories out loud, not just talking about telling them. Protect time for the Group Practice section.
- People who grew up in church often feel their story is boring. Gently push back on this. Help them see the specific moments where God became real to them, even within a “normal” faith upbringing.
- The three-part framework (Before / Encounter / After) is simple enough to introduce at the start of the session and use as a scaffold throughout. You don’t need to explain it at length. Just point to it.
- The recording idea from the teaching is worth taking seriously as a challenge, not just a suggestion. Consider making it a group commitment: everyone records a one-minute version and shares it with the group before next week.
- Philemon 1:6 is an underused verse. The idea that sharing your faith is how you learn your faith, not a downstream result of it. This is worth dwelling on. It reframes the whole exercise from performance to formation.