



YOUR LIGHT SHINES



Know and Tell Your Story

YOUR LIGHT SHINES: KNOW AND TELL YOUR STORY

As we seek to be followers of Jesus who are more comfortable with sharing our stories with unchurched family and friends, one way to prepare for the conversations that arise about faith is to get to know and reflect on our own story with God. The goals of this exercise are twofold: to grow as disciples as we engage in this practice of mapping out our faith story with God (know), as well as identify the moments where we can see the faithfulness of God and then consider how we may be able to share that part of our story with others in conversation (tell).

THE PLAN:

- We will engage in this exercise as a whole congregation (adults & students), and as we go, we will have the opportunity to hear the stories of members during worship, as well as in small groups on and around Sunday, January 30.
- On that day and during the week that follows, we will provide numerous opportunities for groups to gather to share from their stories with one another for a time of mutual encouragement as well as practicing speaking about our faith.
- This will happen in Vine Classes, on Zoom groups, in Small Groups that already meet and at other designated times.
- You will have the opportunity to register for a particular time if you are not currently part of a group that is planning to participate.
- We are looking forward to a great opportunity to learn more about each other within the FPC family. This will be a good time for mutual encouragement!
- These groups will also provide us with the opportunity to practice “off the spot,” so when we are in a conversation with someone who doesn’t know Jesus, we will be able to recall and draw on the experience of sharing the stories with others before that moment.
- We are not asking you to prepare to share your entire Christian testimony/conversion story. As you map out your timeline, be mindful of the particular moments, highs and lows that resonate with you in this season as you look back. During the small group times, you will be asked to share *out of* your story, not your whole story. You can plan to talk about just one part of your story.

Remember, everyone has a different journey with God. There is no pressure for your story to be like anyone else’s, and no one’s story is “boring”!

MAPPING OUT A SPIRITUAL TIMELINE

Carve out about an hour (or longer if you wish) for this exercise. You may want to find a quiet place where you will be more likely to be free from distractions so you can engage with the prompts. As you look at the Timeline on the pages that follow, use these sections and question prompts to help you as you reflect. See the sample timeline page for further help.

TIMELINE

- You can decide how much “space” you want to give to each season as there may be more to note in one season than another (e.g. more may have happened growth wise in your 30s than in your first 10 years).
- If you are 30+, You may also choose to just focus on certain seasons of your life in order to dig deeper into your timeline of faith. There is no pressure to record every single event of your life! Prayerfully, consider what stands out as you map along the green portion.
- You may find it helpful to refer to the sample page on the back of the booklet to get ideas on how to structure your timeline.

HIGH POINTS: HIGHLIGHTS, JOYS, AND GRATITUDE

- What have been some of the best moments in your life?
- What moments or experiences did God use to promote growth?
- What blessings did you receive?
- Reflect on those who have touched your life with kindness & pointed you to Jesus.

LOW POINTS: LOSSES, HURTS, AND NEGATIVE INFLUENCES

- Note the low points in your story.
- As you reflect on pain or hard things you have experienced, how have you seen God's healing and restoration? If you don't feel you have, reflect on steps God may be calling you to take to know his love, forgiveness, and power as you remember your suffering during that time and the effects it has had on your story.

YOUR WALK WITH GOD

- Here is a place to map out how your understanding of God and your faith in Him was growing over the course of the timeline of your life. Draw on your highs and lows.
- Looking back, how do you recognize God's hand at work in the steps of your story?
- Who did you understand God to be in each season?

PREPARE TO SHARE

- Now that you have completed the timeline, and reflected on the questions, consider what moments stand out that you might want to share. Highlight these on your map.
- Take a few minutes to consider how you will talk about that part of your story.
 - What are the important details to communicate?
 - How does this story point to growth in your relationship and understanding of God?
 - How did God meet you in this part of your story, and how would you talk about that experience?
 - How might sharing this part of your story be a help or a blessing to someone else?

TIMELINE

Abbreviated Sample

Draw some vertical lines on this timeline to delineate different seasons of your life (childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, etc.). You may opt to map it out by decade.

20s

25

30-31

35

40

50



College life
met husband
graduated!

→ at Park Co.
First job

→ Married
moved to GA

→ Kids
born!

→ Dad Died

→ Kids
maturing

→ Empty
Nest
Season begins

HIGH POINTS

- new friends
- feeling more settled as a couple
- work mentor → was Christian + shared with me

- miracle of birth
- childhood
- Neighborhood friend to mentor me - invited to Church

- Friends inviting to small gr.
- Neighbor friend helping me

- Celebrating Kids' success

YOUR WALK WITH GOD

Non-existent → Curiosity but not engaged in Church or faith

felt like we wanted to have community for kids to be a part of - good values. Still not very personally connected to God

angry with God → why the suffering? drifted away

began reading Bible and attending small gr → Church asking honest questions

- learning how to trust with hard transitions
- learning about prayer
- humility

LOW POINTS

- Evandied
- Ignored God and did my own thing.

lost job - frustrated career wise

Dad's death: unexpected - grief - confusion dark season

- Struggling with marriage - needing to do more as a couple to connect
- grief over kids gone