

Offering Your Testimony or Witness

Sharing your faith or testimony—also called witnessing—is a profound and personal activity. Yet it is also a public activity and should be done well.

These guidelines are designed to help you offer your witness in a succinct and meaningful way. Please do not receive this training as if you are being asked to speak and then told what to say. Our view is that when people are compelled to share their faith, they want to be **effective** and **effective** faith-sharing moves people.

The crux of the training is:

- The talk should be brief: aim for **no more than three** (3) minutes.
- The format to follow is **Incident—Action—Benefit**
- The **Incident** is a two minute or less story from a person’s own experience
- The **Action** is what the speaker wants us to do (usually less than 5 words)
- The **Benefit** is the expected result from the Action—a phrase or sentence at most.

To expand on these principles a little—

Some people who want to do faith-sharing have a tendency and desire to describe an upcoming event or agency they believe does good work. Resist this temptation!! Your task is to tell a brief story (2 minutes or so) that is designed to show how God is at work in your life, forming you into a disciple.

You are not being asked to give facts or figures about an organization or upcoming opportunity. You are not being asked to describe a typical day in the area about which you are passionate. All of this is too broad. Think narrow. Think incident. Remember: You have been asked to speak in order to tell something of your story—on which you are an expert.

The **incident** may be something that happened while you were serving in a particular way. It may be an incident from your childhood or youth or from your work place or home. It may be a conversation. But remember--there is no lead up—like “I am so glad I was asked to speak today” or “I was very nervous when I was asked to talk I ...” You just jump right in with the incident beginning: “Last week”; “When I was six . . .” or “In January 2007 ...” The key is in the brevity and the poignancy of the incident.

Here is just one simple example of an incident:

“Last September I learned to hang dry wall. It was kind of odd to see me with a tape measure in one hand and a utility knife in the other—particularly since I am not usually allowed to use a hot glue gun. But that day, working on a Habitat for Humanity House, in 100 degree heat, with work boots that did not fit but that I insisted on wearing so I would look like a construction worker, sweating profusely and complaining all the while, I cut and hung 8 pieces of drywall in

one room and pieced together 2 window openings. At the end of the day I was proud of my new skill but more importantly I made a difference to one family that day.”

That’s it—just a tiny incident—a brief story—visual, active, mine. When people connect with your story, they will be moved to find out more about important projects, agencies, etc.

Then comes the **action**—what do you want your listeners to do? Based on the story above—there are a range of possible actions:

- Volunteer for Habitat for Humanity.
- Reach out of your comfort zone.
- Say yes to God!
- Give of yourself.
- Volunteer!

(The fewer words the better—two or three is better than four or five)

And then comes the **benefit**—if the listener does what you urge—what will happen? Here are a few examples based on the above incident:

- You will make a difference.
- One person will be better off.
- The gospel will become real.

Sometimes you need a little transition from incident to action and benefit—but not more than a sentence.

We hope these guidelines are helpful—not only in preparing you for upcoming Ministry Moment but for seeing how your own faith has been formed and how you can use your story to share faith in order that others might grow closer to God.