

YOUR STORY MATTERS

Everyone has a story. Everyone's story matters. Jesus is constantly changing and moving in our lives—that's a story worthy to be heard and the story that we're going to talk about today.

Another word for story is **testimony**. A testimony is a fancy word that means a public profession of a moment with Jesus. It focuses on what Jesus has done and how He has transformed your life. Finding and sharing your story has a couple of goals.

1. It gives you the opportunity to reflect on your life and recognize how God has impacted, directed, and blessed you.
2. It encourages others in their relationships with Christ.
"I want to encourage you in your faith, but I also want to be encouraged by yours." Romans 1:12
3. It brings glory, praise, and honor to Jesus and the life-changing power He has.

PREPARING YOUR STORY.

As you're starting to think through sharing your story, be in prayer. Pray for what God wants you to share, pray for strength and boldness in sharing, and pray for the people that are going to hear your story.

HOW DO I FIND MY STORY?

The story of each of our lives is filled with a bunch of small stories. It's key to be aware of God's presence in our lives. He is constantly moving and doing BIG things and when we become aware of what He's doing we can then find our story.

Stories can be:

- A moment that helped you take your walk with Jesus to a new level.
- A moment you were challenged in your faith and overcame the challenge.
- A moment that a specific event helped you have a deeper understanding of Jesus.
- A moment when you experienced something difficult and you saw Jesus show up in.
- A moment that you served your community and how it transformed your thinking and understanding of life and of Jesus.
- When you started to have a personal relationship with Jesus and how it has changed your life.

Think of moments when you've seen God move in your life, when He's transformed you, when He's revealed something new to you, or when He has taken you to places and opportunities you never expected. These moments are the stories that are worth finding and sharing.

HOW DO I SHARE MY STORY?

It's really up to you! The right way to share your story is based on your personality and your style. Do what feels comfortable and feels most like YOU!

Here are some starting points and suggestions to think through. Feel free to jot down notes!

- 1. **Introduce yourself.** As you're preparing to share, keep in mind who you're sharing your story to. Some people may know you well, others may be meeting you for the first time. Make sure they know a little bit about you before you starting getting into your story. Suggestions: Where you go to school, how many siblings you have, what you enjoy doing, favorite foods, etc.

- 2. **Life before the moment.** Some questions to consider: What was your life like before this story occurred? How did you feel? Did you feel like something was missing? What were you hoping for? How were you needing God to show up in your life?

- 3. **Life during the moment.** What happened in your story? How did God show up? What did you see God do? How were you feeling in this moment?

4. **Life after the moment.** What has life been like since God revealed Himself? What did you learn? How has your relationship with God changed?

5. **Wrap-Up.** What are your hopes for the future? What are your hopes for the people you're sharing with? Thank them and encourage them to be open to what God can do in their lives.

WHO SHOULD I SHARE MY STORY TO?

Our stories are meant to be heard, so we should be sharing to *anyone that is willing to listen*. We can tell our story to our friends, our life group, our cabinmates at camps, and to students in JHM. We never know who needs to be encouraged in their faith or how our story can impact a person, so we should always be willing and ready to share.

WHEN SHOULD I SHARE MY STORY?

You should share your story *as soon as possible!* Now that you've found and written your story, you're ready to share it! Share it during lunch with your friends, at a life group meeting, during a JHM service, or whenever you feel like is the right moment. There is no wrong time to share what God has done in our lives.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that you've found and written your story, let's share it! Head to **saddlebackjhm.com** and fill out the Share My Story form under Next Steps. Once you've filled out the form, a pastor will contact you to set up a time to go over your story. After your meeting, we will talk about the possibility of you sharing it during a JHM service.

Questions? Contact Jessica at jessicag@saddleback.com