

# Royal Redeemer Lutheran Church

Liberty Township, OH



## HOW TO WRITE & TELL YOUR FAITH STORY

***“These [trials] have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” 1 Peter 1:7***

Along the journey of your life so far, God has been placing deposits in your heart: faith stories! When you look back at the memorable events of your life, you will discover the fingerprints of God in the people, things, and insights you have been given along the way.

There are at least three kinds of stories to consider:

1. **Your “Before and After” Story** Some people call this your “testimony”. It answers the question, “What difference does your relationship with God make in your life?” It might take the shape of, “Before I had a living relationship with Jesus Christ, I ..... Now that I have that relationship....” This is the most important story you can share with someone who is searching spiritually.
2. **Glory Stories** relate how you have experienced God’s presence and love at special times in your life. Perhaps a beautiful sunrise or sunset, a moment when you felt filled with love or hope, a time when you sensed God speaking to you, or a time when you felt overwhelmed by the blessings in your life. A good story to share with someone who doubts the reality or presence of God.
3. **Grace Stories** relate how you have experienced God’s unconditional love despite the person you are or the things you have done. Often, these are very low points in your life when you experienced God’s providing, perhaps even in a way you could not see at the time. These humbling stories highlight your weakness – and God’s faithful strength.

To begin constructing a faith story:

1. **Reflection** Spend some time writing down your thoughts on the following questions:
  - What are the times/events in my life when my relationship with God went to a new level? What spurred the change? How did my understanding or experience of God change as a result?
  - What are the three most significant low events in my life? As I look back on each time, where do I see God's "fingerprints"? When did I know I had turned a corner in my journey toward wholeness? What people or resources did God provide along the way?
  - What are the three most significant high events in my life? As I look back on each time, where do I see God's "fingerprints"? How do I know now that those blessings were from His hand?
  - One person who has helped me toward a better understanding or experience of God is \_\_\_\_\_. As a result, I now see that God is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - One place that is a "holy" place for me, a place where I experience God's presence, is \_\_\_\_\_. When I am in that place, I experience God's \_\_\_\_\_.
2. **Prayer** As you reflect on the above, ask God's Spirit to open your heart to remember clearly, to provide comfort and encouragement for painful memories, and to reveal His presence along the journey of your life.
3. **Write** Trusting in God to give you the words, write your story.
  - Your "Before and After" story should not be more than 100 words.
  - Your other stories should not be more than one page typewritten (single space) or two pages handwritten. Generally speaking, you want to aim for five minutes or less (three is better).
  - Every story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Set the stage, tell how things developed, and how it worked out.
  - Conclude with a short (one sentence) statement of what you discovered through this experience.
  - Read through your story, and ask a trusted friend to review. All faith stories should ultimately point to God. Does yours?

Five ways to kill a faith story:

1. **Too sensational** Sensational stories are fun to tell and listen to, but are less likely to connect on a heart level with your listener. The amazing details often become the focus, rather than our amazing God. An encounter with God in the midst of everyday life is more likely to have an impact.
2. **Too long-winded** Most faith stories are way too long. Know your point and make it. Keep it brief and leave it up to your listener to end the conversation or keep it going by asking questions.
3. **Too fuzzy** Most faith stories are convoluted because the teller has not thought through the point of their story. Or the teller is trying to convey every point of their entire faith journey in one story. Keep it simple and to the point.
4. **Too much religious jargon** "Jesus Christ earned my salvation through his atoning sacrifice." is certainly true but not likely to make sense to someone who has spent little time in church. Say it in words that anyone could understand.
5. **Too much superiority** Faith stories that make you look wonderful point to you, not God. And, they confirm the fear of someone who may worry he has to become

“religious” in order to follow Christ. Stories told from a humble heart powerfully point to a generous and loving God.