

## Personal Testimony

Witness and  
Prayer

Eventually, authentic Christian witness and prayer will make people want to know: “What does she have that I don’t?” At this point, a powerful evangelistic tool is the personal testimony.

There are various kinds of personal testimonies, but the most important is that of our conversion. This is the story of how we discovered Jesus and his saving mercy: when we realize that Jesus died on the cross for me, for my sins, and that without this supreme act of love we would have no hope of eternal life. To be a true conversion, however, discovery is not enough – we need to respond by saying ‘yes’ to Jesus, thus becoming true disciples.

Whether dramatic or serene, a testimony can inspire others to draw closer to Jesus Christ, to change their ways, and to be reconciled with Him and the Church. It can also attract those outside the fold to consider the Catholic faith: it is an irrefutable form of Christian witness. In essence, sharing our testimony does several things: it enables us to realize how God has worked in our lives, gives Him the glory that He deserves, and encourages others to open their lives to Jesus, too. So, will you write yours this year?

### Kinds of Conversions:

Though for most of us, our narrative begins with our parents’ faith at our Baptism, to write a personal conversion testimony we have to be more specific. Most of our stories fall into one of these categories:

1. Adult Conversion Moment – like St. Paul
2. Season of Adult Conversion – the discovery and change of life occurred more gradually
3. Faithful One’s Whole Life – with key moments of decision to follow Christ



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Once we have identified our conversion, the following structure is helpful for crafting the testimony for oral and written use. We can determine the specific details of the beginning, middle and end by asking three questions:

- 1) What was my life like before my conversion?
- 2) What was the turning point, or how did I discover the Good News and decide to live for Jesus?
- 3) How did my life change as a result?

**Further helpful tips:**

- \* Write it down, aiming for 500-600 words. People might tune out it if it's too long
- \* Find an experience from your faith journey that other people might identify with, such as pride or searching for happiness
- \* Keep it simple and clear, using the three-part structure described above
- \* Avoid religious jargon and use language that is understandable for people at any stage in their faith

*Note: thanks to Catholic Christian Outreach. The above material was adapted with permission from their 'Courageous Catholic' program manual.*