

YOUR TESTIMONY



The Power of a Testimony

In 1975, Pope Paul VI wrote that people listen more to witnesses than they do to teachers. Why is this? What is so powerful about personal testimony?

We see in the Gospels that telling stories is an effective way to share truths about God and the faith. Jesus tells stories (parables) but also shares His own story with His closest disciples, telling them about His relationship to the Father, **who through Baptism also our Father.**

After Pentecost, the Apostles went out into the world and told people about the Good News: Jesus came to save us. They shared stories about their friend Jesus, who He is and what He had done for them and for all people.

True Christian disciples want to tell others about their truest best friend, Jesus.

Giving a testimony involves just that: authentically telling people about your relationship with Jesus and the influence he has had on your life.

Why Should Parents Give a Personal Witness?

The family has been called the "domestic church," which means that the family is where we first learn who God is and about the faith.

So as parents, you are called to be witnesses of the faith to your family. You are called to not only show your kids how to live the faith but also to tell them as faith sharers about your best friend, Jesus, and also why you believe in Him.

Many parents do not realize they have stories of faith to share with their kids. These stories do not need to be dramatic stories of conversion or miracles.

Many of us will look back on our lives at moments of surprise assistance and good fortune thinking we are lucky...

But these are God's grace at work!

Testifying to small ways that God's grace has been present and at work in your life are still "God moments" that ought to be shared in a testimony.

"Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."

POPE ST. PAUL VI

READ ACTS 26

Read Acts 26 in the Bible to see how St. Paul shares his testimony in 4 parts:

1. Life before Jesus (Acts 26:1-11)
2. Coming to know Jesus (Acts 26:12-18)
3. Life in Jesus (Acts 26:19-23)
4. Inviting others to know Jesus (Acts 26:27-29)

How To Share Your Testimony

Remember that sharing your testimony involves telling people about your relationship with Jesus and the influence he has had on your life.

REFLECT

Don't know what you want to share in your testimony?

Reflect on your own life journey and the role God and faith have played in it.

- What "God moments" or moments of grace have there been in my life?
- How have I encountered or experienced Jesus in my life?
- What changes have occurred in my life and/or how am I living differently because of my relationship with Jesus?
- How has a relationship with Jesus allowed me to live a life that is freer, fuller, and more joyful?
- What do you want your kids to know about having a relationship with Jesus?
- What role does Jesus play in your life?
- **Why do you believe in Jesus?**

TESTIMONY TIPS

Then share your reflections in a testimony with your children.

Here are some tips to help you write and give your testimony to your family:

- **AVOID EXTREMES:** try not to come across as a saint but also don't dwell on your sins
- **BE HONEST:** don't sugarcoat your personal witness and be honest
 - Share if you have struggled or struggle with Church teaching, liturgy, or people in an appropriate way that draws attention to the fact you are doing your best to love God and His Church
- **BE CONCRETE:** give identifiable moments as well as details your kids can relate to like describing experiences, places, and persons
- **SIMPLICITY:** be brief (3-5 minutes) and include a 'plot' or 'thread' that is clear and easy to follow centered on Jesus and your relationship with Him
- **SIGNIFICANCE:** Emphasize how a relationship with Jesus leads you to live a freer, fuller, and more joyful life because your kids need to know the significance of a relationship with Jesus

SHARE

If you have never shared your testimony with your kids, consider picking a time to gather as a family this week to share it. You could make a celebration out of it like ordering in dinner and watching a faith-based movie afterwards. Or maybe you would rather share your testimony while taking a family hike. However you decided to do it, make it a priority to share your testimony of Jesus' amazing work in your life with your kids this week.

Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you.

1 PETER 3:15

TESTIMONY RESOURCES

"A Child's First Catechist"

<https://stories.catholic.sg/video-stories/a-childs-first-catechist/>

"Being a Family of Faith- The Importance of Parents' Personal Witness"

<https://www.sadlier.com/religion/blog/being-a-family-of-faith-importance-of-parents-personal-witness-to-teach-kids-the-catholic-faith>

DON'T STOP THERE

After Mass, after religion class, car rides home after youth group, during the 40 hours of drivers ed, or after the dinnertime prayer are just a few great places to bring God into the conversation with your child or teen.

The more they practice talking and reflecting on faith the more routine sharing becomes!

Always be intentionally looking for opportunities to open even small conversations about faith and the relationship you have with God, and watch the faith of your child or teen follow in your footsteps.