

# HOW TO NURTURE A FAITH-SHARING CULTURE

## PRACTICE 5 – TELL FAITH STORIES

### SUMMARY

Each month share a story of how someone came to faith at your gatherings.

### EXPLANATION

We've already identified that stories are a powerful way of igniting an evangelistic culture. When we hear stories of how people have come to faith it does a number of things. Firstly, hearing stories reminds us that God is at work in ordinary people's lives drawing them to himself, people like those we long to see come to faith in Christ. Secondly, it encourages thanksgiving in us for what God has done, which fuels faith for what he might do. Thirdly, if well told, hearing stories highlights the role that ordinary Christians play in helping others come to faith.

For those who already use This Time Tomorrow (where a church member is interviewed in a service about where they will be This Time Tomorrow, what they do there and how people can pray for them), you could simply insert an additional question alongside the suggested four from LICC: 'Tell us how you came to faith'.<sup>1</sup> Or alternate This Time Tomorrow with a story of someone's journey to faith.

The main problem people normally raise is that they don't have many stories to tell. However, once you have worked through all your existing congregation members (which may take 4, 40, or 400 months), there are plenty of other sources to draw on (see resources below). And hopefully as a result of some of these practices, there may be new stories to tell in the coming years.

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‘Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me everything I've ever done”.’  
John 4:39

### TIPS

- Most people are very nervous about telling their story, so normally the best way to encourage them is to use an interview format. This enables you to guide the person and keep control of the situation. Take time to walk through the questions you are going to ask with the person ahead of the interview and help them think through their answers. If you have someone in your context who is good at interviewing, invite them to do so. It isn't everyone's gift. A basic structure can be as simple as:
  - What was life like before you became a Christian?
  - What led you to consider the Christian faith?
  - What difference has it made to your life?
- Or for those who have grown up in a Christian home:
  - What part did faith play in your early life?
  - When did you own that faith for yourself?
  - What difference does it make to your life?
- Try to tease out who helped the interviewee on their journey. The vast majority of people come to faith because someone they know shows and shares the faith with them. The more we can evidence this in the life of those we interview, the more we help our people see the role they could play. Try a question like, 'So who was key to you coming to faith?' Follow it up with, 'So how did they show and share the faith with you?'
- Be aware of language. For some people it may better to conduct the interview talking about church: When did you first attend church? What do you find helpful about attending church? What difference does it make to your daily life?

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LEAD ON

- Most people have ordinary stories, and often think no one will be interested in hearing their story. However, our experience is that these make the best stories. Dramatic conversion stories are wonderful, but are also not the norm and therefore don't always relate to most people. When people hear ordinary stories, they think 'That could be me'. It helps to remember: there are no second-class stories, but there are second class ways to tell your story. Part of our role is to help people tell their stories well.
- During the pandemic lockdowns, many churches discovered that some people, who were not prepared to stand up in front of a congregation, were happy to record themselves on their phone. So, if you have someone who is particularly nervous about sharing their story, either interview them using Zoom and record it, or ask them to do it on their phone. Give clear guidance about what you are asking them to do, how long you want it to be and where it will be used – some people may not want it to be available forever online.



- Please include children and young people, where appropriate. And if you lack significant diversity of age, gender and ethnicity within your own congregation see if you can invite people in from neighbouring churches where there may be more.
- Finally, try to post and share the stories in as many places as possible. With permission, can they be recorded and placed on your church Facebook page, YouTube channel, Insta account and so on? Can a written version be included in the parish magazine, the local newspaper, on your website? Can they be shown or shared at the home group meeting, children or youth group?

Last summer at our church we interviewed people for each Sunday service through the summer. We deliberately didn't choose the more well-known members of the congregation. They told their stories of how they came to faith. People loved it, and not only learnt new things about those interviewed, but also were encouraged in their own faith sharing.

For stories of people living out the Christian faith in their Monday to Saturday lives LICC have produced a great video series based on their 6Ms.

**RESOURCES**

Here are a variety of places you can find stories of people coming to faith.

- [www.christianityexplored.org](http://www.christianityexplored.org). Nicely produced variety of stories.
- [www.eauk.org](http://www.eauk.org). Again, good variety of stories.
- [www.waldringfieldbc.org.uk](http://www.waldringfieldbc.org.uk), Waldringfield Baptist Church, less polished, but still good.
- [www.iamsecond.com/film](http://www.iamsecond.com/film). Very professionally produced and American, but has a helpful facility to search by stories according to category i.e. identity, addiction.
- [www.westminsterchapel.org.uk](http://www.westminsterchapel.org.uk). Great variety of stories with good ethnic and age mix.
- [www.reachingthenones.org](http://www.reachingthenones.org). Interviews with those from Gen Z and Gen Y talking about their experience of coming to faith, filmed as part of the Reaching the 'Nones' project.

1. Where will you be 'This Time Tomorrow?' What do you do there? What are your challenges and joys? How can we pray for you?