

Telling your faith story . telling the old story of Jesus and his love  
Rev. Kathy Goodrich, Yellowstone Presbytery

**15** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, **16** keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

I Pet. 3:15-16 NIV

### The power of story, particularly in today's culture

Opportunities for Equipping - See flier on Whitworth Institute for Ministry this summer . how to be and make disciples in the 21<sup>st</sup> century featuring Mike Breen (church planter) on making disciples, Brenda Salter-McNeill on Esther and reconciliation; and much more  
[www.whitworth.edu/wim](http://www.whitworth.edu/wim)

PCUSA Evangelism and Discipleship /conf . BE the Light: Go Disciple Live in August features Mike Breen on Disciplemaking, Casey Fitzgerald on Storytelling; Ralph Watkins  
<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/evangelism-church-growth/go-disciple-live-be-light/>

What and Why - Telling God's BIG story and how God has worked in my story and life, runs through the Bible. And, God SO loved the world (John 3:16-17) God came, and gave his only son, and God loves EACH one and goes out searching and then rejoices when the lost is found i.e. Luke 15!

It is an integral part of being a disciple and making disciples. We are commanded to share . Matt. 28:18-20; I Pet. 3: 15-16, ò

Deut. 6:7\*\* we are to declare/share the mighty acts of God from Creation to God's love for and work in our lives.

Zaccheus Luke 19:1-10; Samaritan woman at the well John 4:4-30-42; Mary John 20:1-18; Jesus and Paul Phil. 3; Acts is full of the stories being shared

Pray

Create open doors, opportunities for the Holy Spirit in the person or group hearing it.

What is my spirit, motivation as I speak . with respect, humility and God's love? I Cor 13: As well as letting the light shine, being contagious

See Faith sharing handout

In our culture with bad misconceptions of Christianity and many spiritually searching people, you may be the only person whom someone may listen to.

Throughout - connect your personal story to God's BIG story with clarity about Jesus.

Conflict

Change

Outcomes, and that we are works in progress Phil 1: 6 & 2:12 13

How do we model and equip & encourage ourselves and those in our congregations:

- a. to sink our roots deep into Jesus, stay connect with the creator and lover of our souls?
- b. to pray for others and opportunities share God's Good News/BIG story and then our story of faith
- c. To practice the spiritual disciplines that help me to be more transformed into the image of Christ so I embody Christ and his character, so my life is congruent with my words/story?
- d. to learn the spiritual practice of reflection, noticing/paying attention to the Spirit of God's work in unexpected ways, places, people, including doubts, suffering, struggle and dark times and the dark night of the soul
- e. to include stories/testimonies into worship and all aspects of congregational life, corporately and 1-1 (See *Tell It Like It Is* below)

Reflect on and write your story then PRACTICE! Today in pairs, and with others!

A few recommended resources:

ENGAGE booklet series by PCUSA, ENGAGE the Gospel's Discipleship's Mission

*Simply Good News: Why the Gospel Is News and What Makes It Good* by N. T Wright

*Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in your Kids* (as congregation) . Kara Powell

*The Sticky Faith Guide for your Family* . Kara Powell

*Spiritual Autobiography: Discovering and Sharing Your Spiritual Story* by Richard Peace

*Tell It Like It Is: Reclaiming the Practice of Testimony* by [Lillian Daniel](#)

This is practical theology at its best. The book is theologically grounded, reflects on actual practice, and provides a useful model for all our churches. We learn that the gift of testimony not only strengthens worship and community caring, testimony can even reshape administration and committee meetings.

The book is itself the testimony of a gifted and wise pastor, and like all faithful testimony, it convicts us and changes us, too. (David Bartlett, Professor of New Testament, Columbia Theological Seminary)

This marvelous book by Lillian Daniel is so much more than a book *about* testimony. The book itself is a testimony to the powerful ways God works when people are invited to tell others what they have seen and heard and touched of God's presence in their lives.

These pages are populated with real people who may have more questions than answers. And yet, by speaking from the heart, they point us to the mysterious reality that crackles just below the surface of life. Without question, this book has the power to transform congregations, as Daniel's own congregation was wondrously transformed by the practice of testimony. (Martin B. Copenhaver, president, Andover Newton Theological School)