



SHARING LIFE STORIES

It is a great practice to take time to share your life story with each other to build trust and deepen relationships within your community group.

We have found that almost everyone is willing to talk about their own life, even those who initially seemed resistant warm up to the idea after seeing others do it.

Prep

Share this handout with the group. Set aside 1 session per 2 people. If you have couples in your group, set aside 1 session per couple. Example: if you have 5 couples, set aside 5 sessions to share life stories. We recommend meeting biweekly for 1.5 hours. Then, go ahead and map out dates and times of sessions. After you have dates and time, decide what order you will go in, or at least who is willing to go first. Plan to share for 15 minutes. Also, know that you can share or leave out any parts of your story that you want. There's no wrong way to tell your own life story!

Structure

First, share a meal or bring your own dinner and practice "breaking bread together". While eating, share updates from the week. Then, have 2 people share their life story, each goes individually one at a time. Some groups may do this in their first year of meeting, while other groups may circle back to this 5 years in... there is no wrong time to share life stories. For my group, we shared stories when we started 4 years ago, but some people have changed since then and I have forgotten some of the details so it would be helpful to do this practice again.

Some people will go longer than 15 minutes and some will go short, try to be gracious with each other but also leave time for questions. Try to model roughly 15 minutes sharing and then 10-15 minutes for questions. After someone shares, pray over that person.

To begin writing and preparing your life story, see the next page on where to start.

If you have questions or run into issues, please reach out to Sterling White at sterling.white@hppres.org.

Individual Prep

Pick 3-5 formative experiences and/or significant relationships across different stages of your life that best tell your life story and explain who you are and how God has worked in your life.

These Might Include:

- Heritage – What geographic or family factors influenced you? Why?
- Heroes – What relationships played a major factor in influencing your character or shaping your direction (positively or negatively)? How? Why?
- Hard Times – What experiences were especially painful? Why? How did they make you feel?
- High Points – What experiences were highlights of your life? What led to these great moments? What did you learn from them?
- Hand of God – What were your most transfiguring experiences or discoveries about God? When and how have you seen God's sovereignty and grace in your life story? How does "my story" fit into "God's Story"?

Especially think about which of these factors most shaped your faith journey and share these.

As you think about the different stages of your life (e.g. growing up, college/graduate school, early adulthood, marriage, new job, last few years, etc.) focus on the ones that were most impactful and spend more time on those rather than giving lots of detail for every stage of life.