

Description

Making Jesus the center of your life can be noticeable to your family and friends. How do you tell them about the relationship that's making you so different all of a sudden? Figure out why and how to share your transformation story in an appealing and sincere way.

Goals

1. Help participants feel accepted, safe, and able to ask questions and grow spiritually.
2. Help participants realize that every follower of Jesus has a unique transformation story to tell.
3. Help participants acknowledge the journey involved in transformation.
4. Teach participants how to share their transformation stories with confidence.

Outline

Starter: "Mia's Transformation"

Story Part 1: Pat (alternate story: James)

Bible Encounter: John 9

Story Part 2: Pat (alternate story: James)

Experience: "Cardboard Testimonies" (supplies needed: cardboard, black markers), 2+ Prayer

Opening

Give a sincere and warm welcome to each person, letting them know you are glad they chose to come to the session. Share the vision for the group, then feel free to use the following language to open the session:

Today, we are going to talk about how we can share with others what God is doing in our lives. We will be calling these our transformation stories.

As we consider our transformation stories, we must ask ourselves: "Have I been transformed by Jesus in a significant area of my life? And if so, can I communicate my transformation in a clear and compelling way?"

In this session, we'll look at a guy who wanted to share his transformation story with a fraternity brother. Then, we'll read about someone in the Bible who encountered Jesus in a profound way and was immediately given the opportunity to share his transformation story with people. And finally, we'll uncover our own transformation stories and learn how to share them.

Starter: "Mia's Transformation"

Share a time where you, or someone you know, experienced a noticeable transformation. What happened?

Answering this question should help the group arrive at the conclusion that transformation is noticeable, and the former and latter states do not look the same.

Story Part 1: Pat

Think about your life since you decided to follow Jesus. In what ways have you changed, or been changing, because of Jesus?

Hopefully, we have all noticed significant transformation in our lives by Jesus. However, communicating the way we have been transformed by Jesus can be a challenging task. Let's look at how a man in Jesus' day communicated his transformation story.

Bible Encounter: John 9

Context: When Jesus came on the scene, the Israelites were living under less-than-ideal circumstances: their disobedience to God's law resulted in God removing his presence and favor from them, allowing them to suffer under the oppression of Roman rule.

As Jesus continued to declare the good news that God's Kingdom was being restored to Israel, a certain sect of Jewish leaders called the Pharisees strictly opposed Jesus. To the Pharisees, Jesus seemingly encouraged Jews to continue disregarding God's law, thus prolonging their experience of judgment.

On one such occasion, Jesus came across a man who was born blind and healed him on the Jews' sacred day called the Sabbath. This one act caused a pretty big uproar in the city, leaving the formerly blind man in the position of having to tell hostile religious leaders about Jesus and how Jesus had transformed him.

1. Imagine you were a passerby in Galilee in this scene. How would you describe the mood and atmosphere?
 - Exciting: A miracle had taken place! A man who was born blind could now see.
 - Tense: The crowd questioned the blind man. The Pharisees continued to question him, and threatened to kick people out of the synagogue. As a result, the man's parents were afraid.
 - Intimidating: The blind man was questioned, gave a testimony, and defended his story four times.
 - Your notes:
2. What strikes you about Jesus and his encounter with the blind man?
 - It was a little strange and mysterious. Jesus chose a very unconventional way to heal this man, then left the scene.
 - Jesus was intentional, acting with purpose. Jesus' actions toward the blind man not only benefited the man, but also served a purpose beyond him. Jesus healed the man with a greater purpose in mind: "so that the work of God might be displayed" (verse 3).
 - Your notes:
3. How would you describe the way the neighbors and the Pharisees responded to the blind man's healing?
 - Neighbors were likely in awe, confusion, and disbelief. Some didn't believe he was the same man. Some believed he was.
 - Some of the Pharisees didn't believe the man was ever blind beforehand. Some were upset Jesus performed a healing on the Sabbath. They attacked the man and scared his family in an effort to discover who Jesus really was. They were more concerned about who Jesus was than the fact the man was healed. They were outraged; verse 28 says they hurled insults at him.
 - Your notes:
4. How did the blind man respond to the Pharisees each time they questioned him?
 - There is a progression from the blind man simply telling his story of transformation to boldly declaring Jesus was a prophet and the Messiah. He began by clearly telling the story of his transformation in verse 13: "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."
 - As the Pharisees got more irritated and asked him who he perceived Jesus to be, the man remained calm and clearly declared who he understood Jesus to be in verse 17: "He is a prophet."
 - The blind man was very clear about what he did and did not know about Jesus. He didn't try to make up an answer. In verse 25: "He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!'"
 - Finally, as the Pharisees' anger created tension and fear, the blind man rose boldly in verse 27, and challenged the Pharisees in public. In verse 31, you can detect a snide remark from the man to the Pharisees indicating his boldness.
 - Your notes:
5. What is different between the way the blind man responded to the Pharisees and the way his parents did? Why do you think he responded differently than his parents?
 - Verse 22 reveals his parents were afraid of the Pharisees because they would be thrown out of the synagogue if they confessed Jesus was the Messiah. As a result, they deflected the response to their son.

- As already mentioned in the responses to question 4, the blind man was very confident and bold by standing up to the Pharisees.
- The difference in their responses could be that the parents did not meet Jesus personally and were not transformed in any significant way by his power and love. However, the man who was once blind had his whole life transformed by Jesus. He was so elated to be able to see for the first time in his life. He was so appreciative, confident and sure of his transformation that he couldn't possibly deny he was transformed, nor the One who transformed him.
- Your notes:

6. The blind man was immediately given the chance to tell his neighbors about his transformation. As God brings opportunities to share your transformation with your friends, what thoughts or feelings arise?

- Some participants may feel completely elated at being set free by the power and love of Jesus, and therefore can't wait to share with others about their transformation.
- Some may still be unsure of their decision and may not feel confident communicating who Jesus is and how he can transform others.
- Some may be afraid to share Jesus with others due to potential ridicule, threats they'll lose family or friends, or a variety of other reasons.
- No matter where people are, affirm and encourage them. The hope for this session is that, by discovering how Jesus has transformed their own lives, a great joy and appreciation will arise and overflow into sharing transformation stories with others.
- Your notes:

7. When the blind man told his transformation, what details did he say about who Jesus was to him and how Jesus transformed him?

- It is important for your group to understand the components of the man's transformation because these are the same components the session will help them discover about their own transformation.
- His transformation story contains very significant components: 1) the state he was in before, 2) how he encountered Jesus, 3) what Jesus did to transform him, 4) the results of his transformation, and 5) who he understands Jesus to be as a result.
- He was clearly blind. Jesus came across his path to display the works of God, revealing that God was present to Israel. Jesus then spit to make mud, spread it on his eyes and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The result was he could see clearly. As a result, the man understood Jesus to be a prophet (verse 17).
- Your notes:

8. When you think about how you've been changing recently, what do you understand Jesus' role to be and how exactly is he changing you?

- Because of the variety of ways participants came to follow Jesus, there will be a variety of answers. Some may have come to know Jesus as: their healer (be it physical, emotional or relational); Savior from their sins; the One who loved and comforted them. No matter their responses, you are not looking for a "correct" response. The point is to help them identify what role they came to realize Jesus took in their transformation.
- Your notes:

9. What about Jesus will you be sure to communicate as you share your transformation story?
- The point of your story is not just the particulars of your encounter, but a description of who you've encountered.
 - Your notes:

Experience: "Cardboard Testimonies," 2+ Prayer

"Cardboard Testimonies" If you were to write one phrase describing your state before Jesus became your Lord, and one phrase describing your state after Jesus became your Lord, what would they say?

If a participant appears to be having trouble articulating their transformation, consider saying something like "Is anyone having difficulty coming up with an example to write on your board? If so, don't feel pressured to make something up. We want this to be an honest exercise."

2+ Prayer Who are two people in your life you'd like to hear the great news of how God's transformed your life? Write their names on your 2+ Prayer handout (or 2+ Prayer Card).

What steps will you take to share your transformation story with them this week? Write them on your 2+ Prayer handout (or 2+ Prayer Card).

2+ Prayer

My commitment to pray consistently for the conversion of two friends and for the boldness in taking opportunity to witness to them.

GETTING STARTED

- Acknowledge dependence on God's grace to draw your friends to Christ
- Identify two not-yet Christians for whom you will pray
- Develop a friendship with them
- Choose a prayer partner and pray together for your friends

WHILE I PRAY, I'LL BUILD MY FRIENDSHIP THROUGH:

- Spending time with them every week
- Getting to know them through sports, majors, hobbies, arts, experience with other Christians, and beliefs about Christ
- Serving them in different ways
- Taking risks by inviting them to: GIG, church, chapter meetings, socials, or asking them to read a Christian book
- Sharing my transformation story with them

I PRAY FOR: (LIST NAMES)

- 1.
- 2.

MY PRAYER PARTNER IS:

Name _____
E-mail _____
Phone _____

MY NEXT STEPS:

- 1.
- 2.

John 9 NIV

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

6 Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

8 His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some claimed that he was.

Others said, "No, he only looks like him."

But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

10 "How then were your eyes opened?" they demanded.

11 He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

12 "Where is this man?" they asked him.

"I don't know," he said.

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. 14 Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. 15 Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

But others asked, "How can a sinner do such miraculous signs?" So they were divided.

17 Finally they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

The man replied, "He is a prophet."

18 The Jews still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. 19 "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

20 "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. 21 But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. 23 That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

24 A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

25 He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

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John 9 NIV (cont.)

26 Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"

27 He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

28 Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! 29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from."

30 The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will. 32 Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

34 To this they replied, "You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they threw him out.

Spiritual Blindness

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

36 "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him."

37 Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you."

38 Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.

39 Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind."

40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?"

41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."