

## Sharing Testimonies

### WITNESSING TO WHO GOD IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE

We often assume that a testimony is the story of how we came to faith, and sometimes the rest of the story up until the present day. However, it's much simpler than that: a testimony testifies about God!

A testimony is a precious way of talking about God, both for yourself to remember and acknowledge God and for the person listening. A testimony is more personal and often more relatable than a Bible story, a list of points and theories, or a theological discussion. It grounds God in everyday life and confirms what the Bible says about Him. It can also help the listener to spot God in their own life through your example.

When we share a testimony, it is an opportunity to reveal God and to proclaim His work in and through you. This could be anything from a short answer of a question to a much longer story. It could be from 50 years ago or 5 minutes ago. It is also important to note that the purpose of a testimony is not to show how blessed you are or to always give a "happy ending". Whatever the story reveals about yourself, the point is to reveal God in your story.

### Short Answer

Every question is an opportunity to testify about God. For example:

**Question** – How are you?

**Answer option 1** – I'm ok, but my health isn't great at the moment. It's fine though.

**Answer option 2** – I'm ok, but my health isn't great at the moment. God has been so faithful though, surrounding me with people and helpful advice. It's not easy, but I'm so glad God is with me.

We tell many stories every day, whether we are being asked about what happened over the weekend or spending time with a friend and complaining about loadshedding: "Yo! Loadshedding this morning meant that..."; "I had a hectic weekend..."; "I can't wait for next week when...". How often do you include God in these stories?

NB:// When on the trip, you do not need to turn everything you say into a testimony. Rather, the following exercise is to increase your confidence in this area and to help you spot opportunities to testify about God.

1. In pairs, ask each other questions and try to naturally include a testimony in your answer. (Ask the Wycliffe team what sort of questions you may be asked by the community you are visiting so that you can practice)

### Example Story

Maybe you are giving a message or sermon, leading a Bible study, or sharing a Bible story. This is a great opportunity to include a testimony as an example or demonstration of what you are sharing. It could be that you struggle with the characteristic of God you are talking about - talk about that and

the journey God is taking you on. You may not have an example of this truth about God in your life, but you know someone who does - tell their story. If the situation allows, ask others to share their own testimonies to encourage the group and to glorify God.

### Longer Story

Maybe you are asked to share your testimony of coming to faith and your faith journey. We can be tempted to share the whole story, to include EVERYTHING. However, this can become overwhelming for the listener and very long (especially if we have been a Christian for a while). Instead, it can be more impactful to highlight a theme (there will be several), or a characteristic of God that stands out in the story of your life. Rather than sharing a mixed message of the wonderful things God has done, testify to His fatherhood/guidance/protection at different times throughout your journey.

Most importantly, ask for the Holy Spirit to guide and speak through you. The testimony of God in your story may be exactly what someone needs to hear or may be exactly what you need to remember. Your testimony will take many shapes and carry different messages; don't feel worried about saying the right thing, but instead share what God brings to mind about your story and allow Him to show you what He has done.

2. Spend time thinking about your faith story and highlight key themes and characteristics of God that stand out to you.

3. Spend time with God: ask Him to reveal to you what He would have you share if this opportunity arises (whether on the mission trip, or at other times in the coming weeks).