Discipleship Content: Sharing Your Story
Section 1: PARTICIPANT PREP

COMPETENCY
“Sharing your story” – Chat Bubble
There is power in story. Jesus told stories to share new truths. We share stories to tell what God has done. We listen to others’ stories to hear how God is intersecting His grace and love in their lives.
We all have a story to share. We might think there’s nothing special about it, but God does not agree. In the Biblical story of the lost sheep (Luke 15) God makes it very clear that each one of us matter to Him. Our stories have life-changing power to others, and they are an amazing opportunity to share God’s love with the world around us.
This tool for sharing your story is simply a 3-part framework to write your story: life before God, meeting God, life with God. The beauty is that no two stories are the same – you might use Scripture in your story, or perhaps you connect the dots between the action steps you took and what was happening in your heart.

ASSIGNMENTS
1. Read the Scriptures below and answer the questions.
2. Read the blog and answer the questions.
3. Write a summary of your story.

Scripture - Read the following passages and answer the questions provided.

Luke 15:1-7 – “Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them. Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

1 Timothy 1:13-16 – “Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 – “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”
Scripture Questions:
1. What is the Shephard’s posture when it comes to the lost sheep?
2. How does the Shephard’s posture shape how we can intentionally engage others?
3. In Paul’s writing to Timothy in 1 Timothy, how is Paul using his own story as a place to engage others? What do you think the impact of Paul’s story would have on the people hearing it?
4. What is the heart of God’s story found in the Ephesians and John passages?
5. If the stories of God and His people are reflected in just these four passages, how does that shape how we can be with our story?

Article - Read the following blog and answer the questions provided.

“Telling Your Story” by Nancy Wurm

We all love to hear stories. Some of us are even pretty good at telling stories. The thing about stories is that we all have one...our story. Maybe you think there’s nothing special about your story. Your life may be fairly routine, not remarkable like other people. After all, you’re not Mark Twain.

God, however, thinks differently. In Luke Chapter 15, the story of the lost sheep, it’s clear that each One of us matters to God. Not only that, our story has the potential to show God’s unconditional love and incredible life-changing power to others. Our stories matter because each one is unique. No one can argue that it’s right or wrong because it’s OUR story. It’s also an easy method and a great tool for sharing God’s love with the world around us.

Here’s a simple process for organizing your story in 3 separate sections. Doing this gives you the option to share a bit of it with someone you’re just getting to know or add details and teach it to a large group. Knowing and practicing your story allows you to share it whenever you sense someone is open to a spiritual conversation. And it’s also a platform for asking questions.

Think of it as creating a dialogue, not a monologue.

Often, when we authentically share our story the other person will follow suit and share theirs. Then we have the basis for a deeper conversation about life and God. Here’s the process:

Part 1: My Life Before God and Jesus
Summarize who you used to be and what you used to believe about spiritual matters in a short paragraph. Here’s my story as an example:

“I grew up thinking God was kind of like of a spiritual Santa Claus. I thought He could see me when I was sleeping, knew when I was awake and definitely knew if I had “been bad or good” as my mother would remind me. So I grew up wanting to stay away from God’s judgment.”

As good storytellers, this is where you allow your audience a moment to comment. Then continue. You may even say “Maybe you can relate” to draw them in.
“I met and married the man of my dreams right after college, but 7 years in we were struggling. When I figured out that I wasn’t going to be able to fix our problems on my own is when I began to wonder about God.”

Now they are leaning in, wondering what you learned.

Part 2: Meeting God and Jesus
If they are open, continue on. If not, you can say “I’d love to tell you what happened if you have a couple more minutes” and see how they respond.

“One night after a particularly bad fight I left and checked into a local hotel. Because I travelled for work, I knew there was likely a bible in the desk drawer so I pulled it out and began flipping through the pages. I didn’t know how to read a bible, but my hand stopped on Psalm 23 and I saw some familiar words that I had heard before, “The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want.” He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters, He restores my soul.” It sounded so peaceful. A little further on “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death” (Yes, I knew that place well), “I fear no evil. Your rod and staff comfort me.” It ends with “Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” I got on my knees that night and told God ‘You can lead from now on. I’ll take the passenger seat while You drive. I can’t fix my problems, but I am hoping that you can.” I was overcome with peace and this sense that I was no longer alone.

Two Thoughts:
a) Don’t underestimate the power of including Scripture in your story. God’s Word has a way to speak directly to people’s hearts.
b) Not everyone has a life-transforming “God moment” like mine. So, share what did happen in your life over time that changed your thinking. Perhaps you had someone sharing with you, or you began streaming church services, or listening to podcasts. Try to connect the dots between the action steps you were taking and what was happening in your heart.

Part 3: Life with God and Jesus
This part can be short and sweet. It’s a summary of what’s changed in your life since putting Jesus in the center. And it opens the door for the other person to respond. And that’s the key. Giving them a chance to share about their life, their beliefs and struggles.

“I can’t tell you that my life changed immediately after that night, but over time as I tried to connect with God most every day through learning to read a Bible and finding others of faith to talk to, gradually the peace I felt in that hotel room, I felt more and more. God did work through all the messy details of my life, putting it together in a good way. He also taught me about Hope in the process. I learned He’s not here to judge me, but to Help me and give me Hope. And, now when I bring my challenges to God, I have this sense that He is right there on this crazy journey with me. It’s been an incredible adventure.

Then, “What about you? I would like to hear your story.”
Reflection and Discussion Questions:
1. Whose story had an impact on your faith? Why was it memorable, freeing, encouraging or inspiring? What shifted in you as a result of you hearing their story?
2. Have you ever heard someone share their story in a way that did not entice you lean in closer to Jesus? Maybe they used Christian language you didn’t understand, or they were overly critical? What can you take away from that experience?
3. What scriptures have impacted your story?
4. When Jesus talks about the lost sheep and goes after it, how does that shape the way you think God is inviting you to go after others?
5. Who are 3 people that you want to share your story with and hear their story?
6. What holds you back from starting the conversation and sharing your story while listening to theirs?
7. Using this 3-part framework, take some time to write out your story.
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Section 2: LEADER GUIDE

SESSION CONTEXT
We all have a story to share. We might think there’s nothing special about it, but God does not agree. In the Biblical story of the lost sheep (Luke 15) God makes it very clear that each one of us matter to Him. Our stories have life-changing power to others, and they are an amazing opportunity to share God’s love with the world around us.

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SESSION OUTLINE
CONNECT [5 mins]
Spend time allowing your group to connect with one another relationally.

CELEBRATE [5 mins]
What have you seen God do in your life since we met last that we can celebrate together?

CHECK-UP [5 mins]
How have you put the competency we learned last time into practice since we last met?

COACH [30 mins]
Coaching Focus Reminder: Overall reminder about this section. Below is the participant guide with added “COACHING BOXES” with questions, thoughts or conversation starters for your discussion. Any of the highlighted questions are “highly suggested” while everything else is at your discretion.

Remember, we have all faced this struggle at some point or another. What or who helped you learn this specific competency? How significant has it been for you to lead your family and others?

COMMUNICATE [2 mins]
Share important information with your group.
What to know before we meet again? Reiterate some of the next steps.
What do I need to know before the next meeting?

CARE [5 mins]
Spend time praying with your group (take specific prayer requests).
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Coaching Opportunity
1. Take a moment to discuss a couple of the scripture reflection questions.
2. Reminder – we want to build upon the questions for engaging in a listening and hearing from God relationship from module 2 – What is God saying? What do I do?
Scripture Questions:
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Coaching Opportunity
A lot of people think they need to be a Bible scholar to share the message of Jesus, but the truth is you don’t need to have it all figured out to share. One of the most genuine ways to share the message of Jesus is to talk about who He is to you and how He shapes your own life. Each of our stories can be used as a conduit when we simply share it and then step back to allow the Holy Spirit to work. It’s so important to remember that God calls all of us, and that He always equips those that He calls.

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Coaching Opportunity
1. Ask participants to share their written story summary with the group. Give permission to edit and rewrite as needed. It might be difficult to share the first time or two, but encourage them because each time will become easier.
2. Remind participants: your story is about God working in you! To prevent a story from detracting from the message of “what your life was like before you knew Christ, how you came to know him, and what your life is like now” there are some things to avoid:
   a. Don’t harshly criticize the church, organizations, or other people
   b. Avoid focusing on denominations or religion (instead focus on your relationship with Jesus)
   c. Steer clear of Christian jargon without defining what you mean by it
3. This tool for sharing your story has the potential to shape the way the participants think about the invitation from God to go after others. There could be hesitation to share their stories, even if God is prompting them to do so. Ask them to share honestly what could be holding them back from using this tool.
4. Discuss any of the other questions listed.

Coaching Opportunity
1. Key Learnings Question – What is one of the key learning you want them to walk away with?
2. Key Learnings Question – How will we use this principle with our families, our co-workers and our volunteers?
3. What are some practical ways I can apply this today?
   a. What is God saying to you about this principle?
   b. What are you going to do about it?
   c. How can I encourage you as you take the next step?
**Additional Resources – Use during session or for participant development.**

1. Watch the video from Dave Nelson speaking at Kensington’s Move Out Gathering. He talks about your story and its impact – [https://youtu.be/gUt9nHC0ZTY?t=1291](https://youtu.be/gUt9nHC0ZTY?t=1291). Start at 21:30 and enjoy his message on the power of story.

2. Read the blog “How do I share my story?” by Cliff Johnson at [https://kensingtonchurch.org/how-do-i-share-the-gospel/](https://kensingtonchurch.org/how-do-i-share-the-gospel/)