

Putting Together Your Gospel Story

Remember, YOUR story is a part of the ULTIMATE Story—God’s Story. Even though you are telling your story here, it should end up more focused on God and how Jesus rescued and saved you. You should not end up looking like the hero in this story—God should be the hero!

CREATION

The Key Question here is: Who or What most shaped who you thought you were, and where you got your real value and “identity” in life from?

Tell a little bit about what shaped you into the person you were becoming. Something that gave you your “identity”, something really good or really bad that happened early in your life. The influence of good or bad friends, music and films... a particular group of friends etc.

FALL

The Key Question here is: Why was your relationship with God and others, (and anything else in your life), NOT the way it was supposed to be? (Like God created it...)

What was happening in your life that was “broken”—NOT the way God created it and you to be? Relationships? Health? Respect for parents, teachers, your self? What types of sins were you falling into and what were the effects of this? Be sure to include specific sins from your life (*behaviors and attitude sins*). What types of things (other than trusting God) did you try to use to “fix” your life...but they didn’t work? Include something you had been looking to “save” you in your life that ultimately failed.

REDEMPTION

The Key Question is: How has Jesus paid the penalty for your sins (when He died on the Cross) and how you came to put your faith and trust in Him to save you and restore your life to the way God intended it to be?

How did you come to find out about and know Jesus, and place your trust in Him and receive his forgiveness and new life.

RESTORATION

The Key Question here is: What has changed and is changing in your life now? AND... Who and what is the focus of your life today?

Explain how the patterns of sins you mentioned above, and the effects of these sins in your life, are being changed by Jesus. How is God restoring you from the affects of your past sins? How is God changing you and using you now? What difference is he making in your life?

Be sure to include at least two examples of how the Gospel (Jesus at work in your life) is changing and restoring your life, relationships (with God and others) or any other part of your life that is being restored. This is where the Good News of the Gospel and what Jesus has done shows up in your everyday life. Also include a little about your hope in eternal life...now you will live forever with Jesus!

Story Tips

- Make your story about 3-5 minutes long
- Don't get "preachy" or "churchy" in your story, but tell your real story
- Use normal, every day language to tell your story
- Keep God and Jesus the "main characters" in your story...don't focus on how "bad" you were and all the things you did wrong—make Jesus look awesome in your story!
- Practice telling your story with close friends and family so you will be prepared when needed
- Don't worry about what others will think of your story—remember—it's YOUR story, they can't really argue with what has happened in your life 😊
- Don't try and tell every single truth about God or the Bible in your story. Let people ask questions as you go or at the end and then fill in the details
- Pray silently to God before and during the telling of your story, asking Him to make sense of it to others and to use your life and story for His glory—God is the one who changes people!

My Story

Creation

Fall

Redemption

Restoration

SAMPLE GOSPEL STORIES

Kristy's Story

I was the oldest of 5 kids in my family. I have a younger brother and 3 younger sisters. We're all pretty close and get along, I guess. My father was in the military so we moved around A LOT. We moved like 8 times between kindergarten and 7th grade. So I learned how to make friends pretty quickly... but I was always pretty worried about being the "new kid" and what people thought about me. I wasn't very athletic, so I never fit in with the sports—jock kids, so I ended up listening to a lot of music and hanging out around any of the local musicians I could find. I REALLY wanted to fit in with them and find a set of friends who would just accept me for who I was.

Since I wasn't very close with my Dad, I ended up looking for acceptance from most of the boys I met. Most of them seemed to reject me or were only interested in one thing—seeing what they could "get off of me". I never felt that awesome or attractive, so I ended up trying to "dress to impress" and show off what little physical assets I thought I had. I also started to give myself away physically...in little ways at first...making out and sorta going "too far"...but I did whatever it took to keep a boy's attention and keep him calling me back. Eventually I talked myself into believing that guy after guy really cared about me and I started having sex with some of them. The crazy thing was, that after I had sex with them they usually disappeared and rejected me, which only made me feel worse and then I would try harder to find love and acceptance.

When we were moving around the country growing up, I would often attend church with my new neighbors, or spend the summers going to VBS (Vacation Bible School). I really liked those times and remember thinking, "I really do believe in God and wish I knew him better." I learned a lot about God and remember learning that God loved me and was also saving me sexually and physically for marriage. It was not pleasing to God to have sex before marriage because I belonged to Him and He loved me and had a more perfect plan for my life. How awesome that sounded all those years, but I still wanted to be loved NOW—TODAY by someone here, for who I was. And I seemed to try anything and everything on my own to get that love.

After I got out of high school we ended up moving back to Washington. I met up with some old friends who I had known really well from grade school. They were AWESOME to me and really seemed to accept me and be interested in ME—who I was today. Even some of the cute guys were really cool to me, but weren't trying to get me to sleep with them, they were just really cool. My friend Emily was so awesome. One night we stayed up really late at her house and talked until like 4 in the morning. I told her everything that had been going on in my life and how really crappy I felt inside because of how I had been giving myself away for years to these guys who all sucked and never cared for me anyway. I also told her I was starting to feel pretty guilty with God about all of this.

Emily was a Christian and had been since I met her years ago. She told me that night that she loved me and so did God. She told me that God loved me enough to send Jesus to Earth on a rescue mission to come and show me God's love. I told her, "I know that, but that was so long ago and I have done all these things that are wrong and I feel

like God is probably pissed at me and I will never be loved or find a guy to marry and love me.”

Emily said, “You are looking for a perfect guy. One who will love you—skinny or fat, smart or silly. A guy who will never leave you or find another woman he loves more. That guy is Jesus. He is the only perfect man that ever lived, and He DOES love you Kristy. All those years of trying to find acceptance and giving yourself away to boys was sinful. That sucks, and it has separated you from a closer relationship with God. But Jesus came to show you his love by giving His life on the cross to pay the penalty for all of your—and my sins. And God has accepted his sacrifice in place of our sins. If you believe this Kristy, and trust Jesus with your life, you can have the love and relationship you have always wanted—with Jesus who is the perfect guy! Nothing you have done or can do will ever cause Jesus to love you any more or any less, He already died in your place and wants you to trust Him... do you trust Jesus Kristy?

I really wanted to...my heart broke that night, and Emily helped me tell Jesus everything I was feeling in a prayer and I asked Him to forgive me and love me and help me live in a new way. Emily assured me that I was forgiven and now Jesus would live with me and love me and give me a new life if I continued to trust Him.

In the last year everything has begun to change for me. I still don't have a steady boyfriend, but I am beginning to feel like Jesus is so much more important to me than any guy could ever be. I am learning that when I feel ugly or stupid that God does not see me that way. I am a new person now—a daughter of God's who was rescued and is loved by Jesus. AMAZING! ME??? That gives me a whole lot of strength when I need it. God has been sort of re-writing my story...I am finding new friends that also love God and have been rescued by Jesus...and these friends accept me for who I am right now...they are showing me God's love in person, and it's pretty cool. I don't know everything about God or the Bible, but I want everyone to know that they don't have to try and prove themselves or be someone they're not to be loved. God loves them!

When I look back at the person I was over the past few years...giving myself away to find love... I thank God that I AM LOVED and don't have to do ANYTHING for His love. That is so amazing!

Nate's Story

I'm not sure how to tell you about my life...it's kind of crazy to me too. After years of being a normal kid...going to school, trying hard to get good grades...going to Church and youth group, I started playing music. Guitar actually. It made me feel awesome. Important. Alive. Like I had something special to give—you know? I decided I wanted to become a “rock star” as a career...can you do that??? I was gonna—instead of an electrical engineer like my Dad wanted. I have three sisters—two older, one younger—and my Dad always wanted me to have a “reliable job” like the one he's had for the last 30+ years. Yikes! I could never do that...

Everything started to be focused on music and image and all of that. I became pretty good at playing the guitar, but not like some sort of virtuoso really, just above average, but I loved it and started to fall into everything that the rock and roll lifestyle seemed to offer, and promise. I started smoking marijuana and drinking because everyone else I hung out with did and expected me to too...gotta live up to the image ya know... but all the time I was still this guy who believed what I grew up learning in church. That was kinda weird, but I did believe that Jesus was God and that he came to this Earth to die for our sins and all of that. In fact, I could be hammered drunk at a party and totally tell you this stuff and how cool God really was. But none of this “head knowledge” or belief really made any difference in my life. I pretty much did whatever I wanted to do. I was just like Adam and Eve in the Bible trying to manage the knowledge of right or wrong—good and evil—for myself. Rule my own life, ya know? The only problem was, it was going nowhere and deep down inside I knew it. And my life started coming apart and it was freaking my family out. My life started sucking and I had little to do with all of my old “church friends”. I guess I was just feeling guilty about my choices and behavior, even though it all seemed pretty cool to me still...sort of...

I started hanging out with this guy Steve, another guitar player I knew and a few other guys he hung out with (one girl was totally hot and I really liked her) and I sorta started to let down...be my real self around them. They were really cool—and these people said they loved Jesus and all—but I felt easy around them. They knew my dreams of becoming a professional musician and always came to see me play whenever I did a show or anything, but they didn't seem that impressed with me, but kinda just loved me—ya know? I really need that...wanted that.

One of Steve's friends named Jason told me a story one night. It was from olden times and was about kings and kingdoms and how awesome it was to live in a kingdom, back in the day, and to be loved and protected and well taken care of by a king. He said that if you lived inside a kingdom back then, you were super thankful, because outside the kingdom walls was war and fighting and starvation and everyone had to fend for themselves. But living under the rule and protection of the king was awesome because the king took care of you and protected you and met all of your needs.

Jason said that if you lived in those times, and lived within the kingdom, you would be stoked and wake up in the morning super thankful and wonder, “How could I ever repay this king for all that he has done for me? He has saved me and protected me and meets all my needs... and any job that the king would give you in his kingdom you would work your butt off because you were so thankful and wanted to show the king your love in return.

He told me that this is how Jesus was as our King. And that he wanted to save us... that he loved us and protected us, and that he wanted us to live our lives for Him now. Not that we had to prove anything or repay Him or anything, but that He hoped that our love for Him would lead us to ask: “How could I live my life to show this King how much I love him and how thankful I am?” When Jason told me that story I asked Steve what he thought and what I should do. Steve said that he really loved that story and it was true. That Jesus had come to save us from our self and sinful lives and protect us and give us life in His kingdom. That was what he wanted for us.

I asked him. “If I believe this, will I have to give up playing in bands and pursuing music?” Steve said he didn’t know, but that God probably gave me this talent as a way of serving Him in His kingdom, but I needed to ask God that question. Right then I seemed to understand everything differently. God really DID love me, and had made me and given me these talents and desires, BUT he wanted to save me for himself and have me use my talents for Him...to make Him famous, not myself.

As crazy as it sounds, that day I asked God to forgive me for trying to live my life only for my own fame and fortune and asked Him to show me how to love Him and use my life in any way He wanted. I was a little scared by all of this because I really loved music and was afraid I might end up a Jesus freak or something, but I had a sense of peace and trust, so I sorta “let go” of my dreams and plans” and asked God to reshape them. Yikes!

I’m still playing guitar now—in fact I am in three different bands. One of them is a band with some other Christians I know, which is actually really cool. I’m learning a lot. My own band is made up of me and another Christian and two other guys that are not yet believers in Jesus. God has been teaching me a lot about myself through these two guys, which is making me love them. I really want them to come to understand our King Jesus and how much He loves them too. I am asking God to show me how to do this and explain all of this to them. My relationship with my family is a lot better now (even though my folks still wish I had a “real career”). Instead of trying to hide a bunch of stuff in my life from them, I am now able to live openly and real with them—so much easier!

I am still anxious to see how God uses these talents and desires He gave me...I am just glad that I am now “off the throne” and the King is in charge!