Relating a Simple Testimony of God Working in Your Life

What is it? A simple testimony /personal story describes a conversion. Conversion involves a response to God's call to *turn from* something, in conjunction with His beckoning to *turn to* the Person of Jesus Christ. This simple testimony could focus on a major change which affected the course of your entire life, or a small change which drew you even closer to God than you were before. The focus should be on your relationship with Him. A testimony is a valuable tool as it models conversion of mind and heart, fosters belief, cultivates relationships, and clarifies misconceptions about the Catholic faith. Lastly, identifying the "wonderful works of God" in your life renders the Faith *attractive* to those who hear it by manifesting the beauty of God's grace at work in your life.

When should I use it? Your simple testimony /personal story should be used whenever someone asks you a question such as how Christ has affected your life, or why you are a Catholic, what is your lived relationship with God, or why you are a follower of Christ. (See 1 Pet. 3:15). It can also be used when family members are away from the Church and have questions, in study groups with friends, in the OCIA process, with strangers when they recognize that you are a Christian, etc.

Prompts to help you consider the content of your <u>5-minute</u> testimony / personal story:

Choose a specific time of conversion which caused either a major change or a small change. *Below each prompt, consider writing one word that will remind you of what you wish to say.*

1) In general terms, briefly describe your life before this change of heart /conversion took place. Did you have a relationship with God? (suggested time: 1 minute)

2) What was the event(s) / element(s) that caused this change? How did you encounter God at this point, coming to know Him better? Describe it in a story. (suggested time: 2 minutes)

3) Explain what difference this change of mind and heart/conversion have made in your life. Focus on your relationship with God, mentioning Him by name. In closing, what would be one word or phrase that summarizes your journey thus far with God? (2 mi)

Some Suggestions:

- Be yourself; ask the Holy Spirit for courage and trust Him; enjoy the process.
- Avoid mentioning any specific sins, particularly sexual sins. It is sufficient to state, for example, that you were "headed down the wrong path."
- Keep it simple. Don't use Catholic terminology that may be unfamiliar.
- Don't criticize other Christians or religious groups.

Your story with God should reveal you as a real person, imperfect yet seeking holiness.
Your source of confidence is God's abundant mercy. Remember – IT'S ABOUT HIM.

Adapted from Association for Catechumenal Ministry (ACM) Ann Lankford, Office for Discipleship Formation