



# Preparing Your Two-Minute Testimony

All believers should be prepared to share their personal story. It should include how you came to know who Jesus is, your personal need for Christ, how you committed your life to Jesus, and the difference Christ has made in your daily life. While on the mission field, it's also important to make sure that testimony can cross cultures.

It is best to write out your testimony. Often we do not realize areas of weakness in communicating our personal story until we examine it on paper.

There are four steps to preparing your personal testimony:

## **1. What your life was like before you met Christ.**

What common circumstances would a West African identify with? What were your attitudes that a West African could identify with? What was most important to you? What substitute for God did you use to find meaning in your life? (sports/fitness, success at work, marriage, sex, making money, drugs/alcohol, entertainment)

## **2. How you realized you needed Christ.**

What significant steps led up to your conversion? What needs, hurts, or problems made you dissatisfied with the way you were living without God? How did God get your attention? What motivated you?

## **3. How you committed your life to Christ.**

What specifically did you do to step across line? Where did it happen? What did you say in your prayer? Be specific and avoid “churchy” phrases, such as altar, at the invitation, asked Jesus to come into my heart, prayed the sinner’s prayer, etc.

## **4. The difference it has made in my life.**

What benefits have you experienced or felt? What problems have been resolved? How has Jesus helped you change for the better? How has it helped your relationships?

## Examine Your Testimony

When you have completed writing out your testimony, read it out loud and ask yourself: Does it communicate what I really mean to say?

- Have I made my testimony too pastoral, or used “church words” – words only a believer will understand, such as “sinner” or “repented”? Will an interpreter have trouble with any of the words?
- Is there a basic Gospel message somewhere – that Jesus was sent by God to die for our sins, and that He rose again?
- Have I emphasized Christ in my life, rather than my life before Christ?
- Can West Africans relate to this story since they are coming from a different worldview?
  - Avoid idioms, slang or long phrases a translator may struggle with.
  - Don’t talk about money or cultural taboos they might not understand or respect.
  - Don’t refer to geography within the US or Canada.

## Theme-Based Testimonies

Sometimes a person is not ready to receive your full testimony. You may meet someone struggling with a particular issue, and you can offer a short testimony about how God has worked in your life in a similar situation. Ask yourself if you have a testimony about one of the universal themes listed below.

West Africans love Bible stories. Is there a short Bible story you can incorporate into your theme testimony?

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Worries/Anxiety      | Inner Peace        |
| Guilt/Shame          | Forgiveness        |
| Anger/Temper         | Patience and love  |
| Grief                | Purpose in life    |
| Poor health/strength | Comfort and joy    |
| Low self-esteem      | Addictions/Habits  |
| Assurance of heaven  | Loneliness         |
| Marriage problems    | Financial problems |