

God's Story and Yours

God's story goes like this...

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He made people in his image to reign over his world by his word.

The first man and woman rebelled against God, and all humanity followed. Claiming to be wise, we became fools and traded the truth of God for the lie that we could live and reign without him.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loves us, sent his Son to pay for our sins. He has made us alive together with Christ and is reconciling to himself all things in heaven and earth by making peace through the blood of his cross.

We now wait for the day when all things will be made new and we will worship Jesus in a garden city, seeing him face-to-face and singing with all the saints, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain."

This is God's big story, and he's weaving each of our stories together with his for the glory of Jesus. Telling your story is a powerful way to share the good news of Jesus with others. And what better time to do that than Easter?

The Hero of the Story

You can tell a lot about people by how they tell their stories. Who is the hero? What obstacle do they overcome? What power does the hero use to win? Many of us tell stories with ourselves as the hero, or share testimonies of how this book or that teacher changed our lives...and can change yours too!

This isn't surprising. We were made to worship God. One theologian says it like this: we were built to brag. God is worthy of worship, and our lives are meant to worship him. Tragically, sin has us boasting about lesser things, and the stories of our world reflect that.

As followers of Jesus, our stories put Jesus front and center. We say yes and amen to *Ephesians 2*—we were enemies of God, but God loved us and saved us by his grace in Jesus Christ. So we learn to re-tell our stories—bragging about the hero who died to save the villains so that we could become his friends.

Preparing Your Easter Story

As we learn to tell our story, we can ask God to lead us, and look to his story for guidance. A basic outline goes like this: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration.

Creation

Our stories begin with where we came from and where God was in our upbringing.

“Growing up... “

- What did you think about Jesus?

Fall

Eventually, we began living (or at least become aware of) our own version of life without God. This may be a series of habits or decisions that are demonstrably sinful. Some of our stories will highlight a tragic event or personal crisis that made us aware of our need for a savior.

“My life was...”

- What event, decisions, or habits marked or exemplified this ‘fall’?

Redemption

Our stories take a turn when Jesus enters in.

“Then I heard the good news...”

- What was it about Jesus that drew you to trust in him?

Make it clear that Jesus is the hero. You could say something like, “I believed that Christ died from my sins and rose from the grave” or “all of a sudden, I couldn’t deny God’s grace in sending his son for me.” Another option is to quote a bible passage that makes the good news very clear, such as *John 3:16*, *Romans 5:8*, or *1 John 4:10*.

New Creation

The bible ends with Jesus on the throne, reigning over a new creation. However, our stories are not finished yet. We live in a real world, but with real hope.

- How has new life in Jesus changed the way you think about yourself?
- What future are you longing or hoping for?

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

If you feel stuck, try using the two archetypes from the parable of the prodigal son. Were you more reckless or a religious rule-follower? Whatever you *were*, you are not that any more. Talk about the way Jesus saved you from that and how he’s showing you a new way of life.

You could also try contrasting your core identity (how you view yourself) before and after Christ.

A Sample Story

Growing Up...

Growing up, I saw Jesus as a divine addition to your squad if you needed comfort and courage. Life wasn't about God, life was about girls.

My life was...

I was driven by my need be seen as somebody special. This led to a pursuit of excellence in art, hookups, and blackouts as I did anything I could to be accepted. By the time I moved to LA, I already felt exhausted and felt empty.

Then I heard...

Then I heard about the risen Jesus. Not the divine hype man, but the King of all things who became a man so he could save us. The Jesus who died but rose from the grave and offers new life to all who follow him.

Now...

I'm not saying following Jesus has made life "all good all the time." But every day he shows me I am not defined by my failures or successes, but by the love of the one one who conquered death.