



SHARING FAITH STORIES

A TOOL FOR FAMILIES



Fuller Youth Institute

One youth pastor we know wanted to explore not only how many parents were talking with their kids about what God was showing them as parents in the here-and-now, but also how many were telling their kids about their experiences with God in the past. **The youth pastor asked twenty high school students on a short-term mission trip if they knew how their parents decided to follow Christ.**

Want to guess how many knew?

We'll give you a hint.

The answer starts with the letter Z.

If we asked your kids what led you to follow Jesus, what do you think they would say?

Of course, we all have stories, and we may think (or know) we've shared them. What matters is what our kids remember—what they've internalized over time. For many of us, there have been stops and starts along the way in our faith journeys. And in all of us God is at work, adding to a new chapter of our story each day. **Stop for a moment and consider how you think your own kids may answer this question if they were asked right now, and what conversations may have shaped their perceptions.**

What can you do to let your kids know more about how following Jesus has changed you?

First, think about your story of faith. If you have never written a testimony before, begin thinking about key times when you had questions, the people you went to for guidance, and the ways your questions were answered. If you need to, **write down some of your thoughts so you can recall them easily when you're ready to share.**

How is your faith growing or being challenged now?

Next, consider how following Jesus impacts your life today. Where do you notice God working in your life and family? These reflections don't have to be profound or more "spiritual" than you really are. Give your kids a glimpse of your actual faith, not just the faith you wish you had. **Jot down a few things that come to mind here.**

When do you tend to have your best faith-related conversations with your kids?

Crafting a meaningful moment doesn't have to be hard. Start by choosing a time and space where those conversations naturally happen already. If you need some help getting the conversation going, here are a handful of ideas:

- **Use Scripture to get you started.**

Is there a passage or character in the Bible that has been deeply meaningful in your life? Read about it together, and talk about why the verses had such an impact on you.

- **Create family "storylines."**

Have each member draw a line on a piece of paper, writing "birth" at one end of the line and their present age at the other. Then, fill in the space between with key life moments to create a timeline. Share about some of those important moments in your life, and invite your children to share about theirs.

- **Get out the family photo albums or some favorite digital or online photos.**

Use them as a jumping-off point to talk about your own childhood. What were some of the challenges you faced? The questions you asked? Who helped you along the way?

□ **Create conversation prompts.**

Write out phrases such as “I was most afraid when ...”, “I wasn’t sure God existed when ...”, “I felt most loved when ...”, “The happiest time of my life was ...” on cards, craft sticks, checkers—whatever you want! Take turns drawing a question to get conversations going.

□ **Share about your struggles.**

Don’t be afraid to be open with older kids and teenagers about some of your current challenges and questions, and how you’re wrestling with God today. Your vulnerability about faith struggles and the big questions of life will help your kids feel safe to bring those same questions to God—and perhaps to you.

□ **Finally, don't lose your nerve!**

Set yourself a goal (e.g., this week, this month, or this year) to talk with your kids about your journey of faith, and follow through.

We’d love to see your family sharing your stories! Post a photo on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter with the hashtag **#StickyFaith** and tell us about it.

* Portions of this resource adapted from chapter 8 of *The Sticky Faith Guide for Your Family* by Dr. Kara Powell. Find the book at www.fulleryouthinstitute.org/stickyfaith.

Copyright 2018 Fuller Youth Institute