



Leader's Notes

Training Overview

Uses

This training can be used one-on-one, in small groups, or in large groups. For large-group presentations, allow time for participants to reflect and share their stories in small groups during the training.

Time

Approximately 30 minutes one-on-one;
1 - 1 ½ hours for group workshop

Preparation

Your role is to model by telling your own Story of Now (SON). Before you train others, go through the slides with the worksheet by yourself or with a friend so you can comfortably articulate your own story.

The training includes three sections:

1. **Reflect** focuses on God's story and how he is present in the participant's life.
2. **Connect** focuses on how the participant(s) can connect spiritually with her friends through their stories.
3. **Invite** asks the participant(s) to go deeper in her relationship with her friend and to invite her friend to take a step toward discovering Jesus.

Training Packet Contents

- PowerPoint slides
- Leader notes with slide-by-slide talking points
- Participant worksheet

Overview of Slides

Note: Italics indicate suggested phrasing.

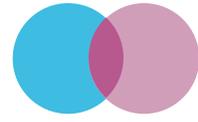
Introduction

Slide 1: Ask the participants: *"If you were to give me your testimony, what would you include?"* Have participants respond and interact so they can see what they normally associate with "sharing their testimony." This will help to clarify the difference between sharing a testimony and the Story of Now.

Share: *If a testimony is a full-length film about how someone started following Jesus, the Story of Now is an intriguing snapshot of what daily life with Jesus is like. It is meant to open up conversations with women to see what it might look like for Jesus to interact with them in the midst of stress, pain, or hope.*

Slide 2: Share: *Today we want to help you REFLECT on how God is moving in your life, CONNECT with friends who are far from God, and ask the Holy Spirit to inspire you with ways to INVITE your friends to take steps toward Jesus.*

REFLECT Section



Slide 3: Share your story of what you're struggling with – something stressful or difficult but still relatable. In any situation, there are negative and positive emotions. Help participants see that even if things are going well, we always have areas we struggle with. Life is complex, and it's OK to feel a range of emotions.

Slide 4: Say: *Describe in one word how you are doing. Write it on your worksheet but don't say it out loud. The word bank on the slide will help you identify your feelings. If you don't find a word on the list that stands out, choose another word.*

Fill in the blanks in this sentence:

I am _____ because _____ .

Example:

I am anxious because my sister is going through a rough time.

Ask participants to share their sentence or words. This process builds solidarity and helps them realize they aren't alone in their struggles.

Slide 5: After four to six women share their word, ask: *What is a situation, issue, or relationship that is difficult for you right now? Write it on your worksheet.*

This begins to move thoughts from a surface level to a deeper level. You're not just sharing what you're struggling with, but why you're struggling.

Example of taking your sentence to a deeper level:

I'm feeling anxious because I got in a fight with my sister. We have had a rocky relationship, and I want things to be better with her. I hope she will forgive me for a misunderstanding we had.

Give women five minutes to share in pairs what they wrote. This builds relationships and helps each woman begin to tell her story of what is happening in her life.

Slide 6: Say: *From the word bank on the slide, choose a word that describes what your friendship with Jesus is like currently.*

Jesus has been _____ as I've struggled with _____ .

Example:

Jesus has been a comforter as I've struggled with depression.

Slide 7: Have a few women share how Jesus has been real in their struggles. This transitions the participants from identifying their feelings to looking toward Jesus and how they experience his presence. It helps them talk authentically about their relationship with him. This is their Story of Now.

Slide 8: Affirm the women by telling them their stories matter. Remind them that Jesus is present in their lives and in their struggles, and he is able to change their stories.

Story Challenges

Some women will have challenges in sharing their stories. Women who dominate the conversation, share too intimately for the group, or need professional help will need to be gently but firmly led in these groups. It is best to talk with them individually about how they can contribute to the group in helpful ways or find the help they need outside of the group.

CONNECT Section

Slide 9: **Say:** *We're shifting from reflecting on our own stories of how Jesus is present in our struggles to how we can connect with our friends and their struggles.*

Slide 10: Help participants think about common ground (interests, struggles, etc.) they share with women who don't know Jesus. This common ground is where conversations about Jesus can begin. It leads to the connection moment with friends who don't know Jesus yet. Your story, her story, and God's story intersect here.

Ask participants to **list on their worksheet** the places where they interact with women who aren't Christians, and the names of friends who aren't Christians.

Slide 11: Give an example of when you recently made this connection with a friend who doesn't know Jesus. You don't need to have shared the Gospel with the friend, just a snapshot of what your life with Jesus looks like.

Say: *Think about a recent conversation with a friend who doesn't know Jesus. How could you empathize with or relate to her struggles? This slide shows some questions to help you connect with your friend.*

Slide 12: **Do's and don'ts of connecting:** Invite a woman to do a brief role-play (about two minutes) illustrating missed connections. Have her share an issue she's struggling with. While she's sharing, go over-the-top with looking at your phone, giving her advice, interrupting, and comparing your situation with hers.

INVITE Section

Slide 13: **Say:** *We've discussed reflecting on our stories and connecting with our friends' stories. Now we're going to focus on how to invite our friends to hear about Jesus' presence in our lives.*

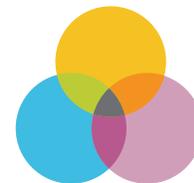
Slide 14: Often we don't know where our friends are spiritually until we ask them. They may not be ready to go to church, begin a Bible study, or choose to follow Jesus the day we're talking with them.

Have the women pray in pairs for their friends who don't know Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to inspire participants with relationally sensitive ways to invite their friends to meet Jesus. Have the women **write on the back of their worksheet** the next steps that came to mind when they talked and prayed. Remind them they can pray silently for the Holy Spirit's guidance while they're connecting with their friends.

Slide 15: Share a real faith story from your own life.

Example:

A friend shares how she's been struggling with a situation and feeling alone. Though we may not have gone through this same situation, many of us can relate to loneliness.



Here's how this might look: "I'm so sorry to hear about (her situation). It's difficult to feel alone. I've never gone through (her situation), but I felt lonely when (a situation in your life). May I share a story of what's helped me? Even though I was struggling, Jesus showed up through (how he has become real to you). He reminded me that he is (the characteristic of his friendship)."

Slide 16: Have women pair up and role-play how to share their Story of Now. They can use the example given above or something from their own life.

Slide 17: This slide transitions to the topic of how to include the Gospel after sharing your story. Some women are ready to hear the Gospel and respond. We want to be ready to share with them how Jesus can become part of their story.

Slide 18: This slide encourages participants to take a risk in sharing the Gospel with their friend. Help them discern if their friend is receptive to hearing the Gospel. Suggest they observe the person's verbal and non-verbal cues like they would in any other conversation. Encourage them to ask their friend if it's OK to share how God's story can be real in her life.

Share about a time you took this risk, regardless of the outcome.

Slide 19: Read aloud Romans 5:8 (ESV) and Romans 10:9-10, 13 (ESV), shown on the slide.

Slide 20: It's often helpful to invite friends to respond to the Gospel by saying something like, "If you're ready for God to make this real in your life, we can pray together for this to become your story."

Sometimes friends don't begin a relationship with Jesus unless they are invited to do so. Model how to do that by returning to **slide 19**, showing the highlighted words of **confess, believe** and **call** on (invite) Jesus to lead their lives.

Slide 21: In small groups, have the women pray for each other to be bold and faithful in sharing their Story of Now. Suggest they message the friend they prayed for earlier in the training to set up a time to meet with her during the next week.

Start a group text for the participants to encourage each other, send prayer requests and updates about connecting with their friends and sharing their Story of Now.