



**Length:** ½ hour

**Elements:** Incorporate spiritual Detox, the Gospel, and journaling.

**Goal:** Women come away with an appetite to learn more about God, desiring to add journaling/reflection time to their daily life and to join a small group.

**Atmosphere:** Create a relaxed, comfy setting (large pillows, soft instrumental music for journaling time, non-flame candles).

**Preparation:**

- Set up room as described in "Atmosphere."
- Cut and print soul rest cards and put in a container. (See Page 6 of this document for the template for these cards.)
- Have prayer journals and pens added to the welcome bags or prepare to pass them out in the session.
- Ask breakout session coordinator for invites and sign-up sheet for the small group.

# COACHING NOTES FOR SHARING YOUR STORY AND THE GOSPEL SECTION

Keep both “Sharing Your Story” and “Sharing the Gospel” sections short, authentic, transparent, and conversational (vs. presentation or memorization; not formula-like or formalized).

## Sharing Your Story

Remember, this is a brief five-minute story of an experience in your life. There will be echoes of the Gospel, but take care not to overelaborate the Gospel. Your story will be longer than the Gospel-sharing portion.

## Your Story Preparation

Ask yourself:

- What would you say about your own life, about not having rest or peace?
- How is each day different because of Jesus' presence in your life?
- How would you connect your story with God's story of redemption through Jesus Christ?

## Sharing the Gospel

Use relatable terms. Some examples:

- A love like you've never known
- “Mistakes” or “shame” instead of “sin”
- Rescue, redemption, or restoration
- Bound and freed

Examples of brief ways to express the Gospel:

- *God freed me from my mistakes and failures by giving His Son, Jesus, to die and rise back to life. All I need to do is turn to God and believe and He gives me power to live differently.*
- *In my searching, I was surprised to find that there is a way to know God! God provided a way for us to come to Him through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.*
- *God took what was broken inside of me, healed me through Jesus, and gave me power to live differently because of His leadership in my life.*
- *God loved me so much that He gave His Son that anyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*
- *He lived the life I couldn't and died the death I should've.*
- More options; use your own words.

Every Spirit Session leader should be ready to have a personal conversation about Christ with those who may ask. We recommend Stonecroft's “Your Story” training.



## UNPLUG: JOURNALING SESSION

Give a journal and pen to each participant as they enter (or include in welcome bag).

### Opening:

(Suggested phrasing to personalize)

*This session is going to give you time to pause and detox from the business of life, even the busyness of everything that's going on here today.*

*Let's take a deep breath and just relax.*

Have women choose a Soul Rest Card from the container — give them the option to choose again if they don't like what they chose. Give several minutes for women to read and write about what their Soul Rest Card brings to mind.

30 minute or longer sessions: Offer a second set of cards to journal on.

(Suggested phrasing to personalize)

*One of the ways we can learn to detox from things going on within and around us is through journaling. We have just journaled for a few minutes here to help center ourselves and relax. Journaling allows us to slow down. It helps us think, ponder, contemplate what we read and hear. It's a conversation. Sometimes this conversation is with ourselves, a time to evaluate and reflect.*

#### **Journaling has benefits:**

- **Mental Benefits:** *Journaling is an effective way to process what's happening in our lives — whether it's happy, sad, frustrating, a feeling of failure, or a dark time. It helps us process how we feel, what we might say, or how a circumstance affects us.*
- **Health Benefits:** *Journaling has scientifically been shown to provide health benefits. According to a 2005 BJ Psych Advances Magazine article, journaling or expressive writing can improve the immune system, reduce blood pressure, improve lung and liver function, reduce trips to general practitioners, and more.*
- **Personal Benefits:** *I've personally found journaling to be great for just pouring out struggles. (Add your personal insights.)*

*We are going to spend a little more time journaling shortly, but before we do I'd like to tell you a little about myself and my journey in life — things I've experienced that have provided me lots of opportunity for feeling the need to journal and write out my thoughts.*

Facilitator shares five to seven minute story of a struggle/crisis/dark time in her life.

Give five minutes for women to journal thoughts about a struggle they are going through or have been through.

(Suggested phrasing to personalize)

*The last benefit of Journaling we'll discuss today is the spiritual benefit.*

- *Spiritual Benefits: The Psalms in the Bible are a whole book of journaling.*

*David, a great king of Israel, wrote them as a way of being honest with God.*

*He wrote about anger, fear, depression, joy and longings. They provide a model for how we too can be honest with God through journaling.*

*Personally, journaling helped me a lot through the rough times in life — and it's also a great way to express what's going on inside during the happy times. It helps us think through feelings and emotions. And yes, for me, it helped turn my thoughts to God.*

*What I found through (crisis/struggle) is that I couldn't handle it on my own. (I couldn't find peace on my own, I couldn't overcome on my own — or whatever applies to your struggle.) I found it was a soul issue — I needed spiritual help.*

*It was when I turned to Jesus Christ in this situation that it made the difference.*

If it was an immediate turn, share; if it was a process, share — be open and transparent! Share the Gospel in a short, conversational, concise way. (See examples in coaching notes.)

## Wrap Up

*Now that you've experienced a short time to relax and express yourself through something you read on the Soul Rest Cards and something you've experienced, I hope it's given you inspiration to continue doing this at home — kind of a miniretreat to prepare for the day or unwind from the day.*

*You might want to look for a good book of quotes, a devotional, or the Bible to help focus your thoughts. Using the Bible (or other spiritual writings) as a springboard for personal journaling is great because it not only helps us detox and get rid of thoughts and feelings we have, but helps us replace them with true, good, and pure thoughts.*

*Time alone every day really does help rejuvenate you spiritually and helps you kind of reset.*

Pass out "20 Minutes to a Fresh Start Daily" handout and small group invite. (The template for this handout is found on Page 5 of this document.)

Briefly review the handout: Pray - Read - Plan - Journal - Exhale - Meet the Day!

(Suggested phrasing to personalize)

*We'll be starting the book [book name] next [date]. We'll discuss [short description].*

*I'll be leading the discussion; it's at [location]. I'd love for you to come!*

*Just sign up at the back. We'll have the books for you at the first meeting.*

*I'll be here for a few minutes and also after the event if you have any questions or would like to talk more about journaling, my story, or about the difference Jesus Christ has made in my life and can make in yours.*



## 20 MINUTES TO A FRESH START DAILY

Begin the day by directing yourself to healthy life-giving practices that will provide a morning detox and store a reserve of balance and rest for the day ahead.

### **1 – 5 minutes**

**Pray (or Pause)** – Before you do anything, take time to sit quietly, listen to music, or gaze at beautiful scenery. Acknowledge and thank God, pray about your day and your relationships.

### **6 – 10 minutes**

**Read** – Take time to read inspiring material. Read the Bible, a study or devotion written by a minister or scholar you respect. If you aren't religious, don't skip this step, choose an inspiring biography or motivational book that causes you to reflect on your life and choices. You may want to read on a digital device, so download a Bible or devotion app. Try to avoid plugging directly into the internet during this time. Download items that can be access through an app.

### **10 – 13 minutes**

**Plan** – Mentally walk through your day. This will help seize control of the day, alleviate stress, and keep you on track as the day progresses. Don't try to immediately handle any of the to-dos you think of – just plan.

### **13 – 18 minutes**

**Journal** – Write out your thoughts from your prayer time and reading. This could be done during prayer and reading or after. Put on paper the thoughts you had for planning your day. Use either pen and paper or a journaling/notes app on your computer. But don't plug into the internet yet.

### **18 - 20 minutes**

**Exhale** – Take just a minute or two to sit quietly; take a few deep breaths and exhale.

**Smile at the day ahead!**

*The best remedy for those who are frightened, lonely or unhappy is to go outside; somewhere they can be alone, alone with the sky, nature and God. For then and only then can you feel that everything is as it should be and that God wants people to be happy amid nature's beauty and simplicity.*

– Anne Frank

*Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?*

– Rory Vaden

*'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the LORD. 'They are plans for good and not disaster, to give you a future and a hope.'*

– Jeremiah, The Bible

*We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature – trees, flowers, grass – grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence. ... We need silence to be able to touch souls.*

– Mother Teresa

*My feet are tired, but my soul is at rest.*

– Rosa Parks

*I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.*

– Thomas Edison

*I've learned that making a "living" is not the same thing as making a "life."*

– Maya Angelou

*The very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.*

– Jesus Christ