

“Their Story/Your Story/The Story Mission” Tool

INTRO:

Everyone has a story.
Past, Present, Future.
Beginning, Middle, End.

We all come from somewhere and we're all going somewhere. We're all dealing with life somewhere in the middle right now. The art of learning someone's story, and sharing your story are essential to building rich friendships as we live on mission.

The following tool is one simple way to go about learning these skills. It provides a series of questions in the framework of Past, Present, Future.

DISCLAIMERS:

- Don't think about any of this as a rigid one-size fits all formula, so much as guardrails to help you get started and troubleshoot as you go.
- This is not intended to be a one-time, one-shot conversation... unless you're going to be stuck in a quiet, one-on-one setting for 4+ hours with someone.
- Learning their story and sharing your story could take weeks, months or an entire season. This tool is intended to be used over time as you get to know someone in the context of a real, mutual, loving relationship.

FRIENDS WHO DON'T KNOW JESUS:

- Start by listing some friends and neighbors who don't know Jesus. Keep them in mind as you work through the rest of the tool.

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PART 1: THE PAST

We all come from somewhere. Somewhere that includes a physical place (or places), a family of origin and a series of personal experiences. Everyone's past provides the context for their entire story. So getting to know someone requires getting to know their backstory. And inviting someone into your life requires sharing yours.

| THEIR PAST: | YOUR PAST: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where are they from? What was their family like growing up?• What are their past experiences - positive or negative - with church and Christians?• Who are the most important, shaping, and influential people and experiences in their life?• As you get to know them, you're always looking for clues about where they are looking for ultimate joy and satisfaction outside of Jesus. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where are you from? What was your family like growing up?• What are your past experiences - positive or negative - with church and Christians?• Who are the most important, shaping, and influential people and experiences in your life?• As it is helpful, tell them about where you've looked for joy and satisfaction outside of Jesus. How did you realize sin was the real problem in your life? |

PART 2: THE PRESENT

Regardless of our backstories, we all find ourselves right here and now... dealing with life. Some of us are doing that pretty well, others are really struggling. But how they are dealing with life, and how we deal with life give us a lot of opportunities to share the truth and hope of Jesus.

| THEIR PRESENT: | YOUR PRESENT: |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are their beliefs about Jesus, God, the Bible, etc.?• What are their biggest struggles, pains, problems in life?• Where do they look for joy, satisfaction and meaning? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are your beliefs about Jesus, God, the Bible, etc.? More specifically, how did Jesus draw you to Himself?• What are your biggest struggles, pains, problems in life? How does Jesus help you deal with those?• Where are you tempted to look for joy, satisfaction and meaning outside of Jesus? |

PART 3: THE FUTURE

In the midst of dealing with our lives, all of us have certain beliefs about what is broken in this world and what would fix it. We all have dreams and hopes about what "the good life" would look like if we ever got there. Tapping into these hopes and dreams helps us get to know people and see places where they have false hopes outside of Jesus.

| THEIR FUTURE: | YOUR FUTURE: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are their hopes and dreams for the future?• What do they think is the biggest problem in the world? What do they think would fix it?• What would heaven be like for them? Personally and/or societally? If they could make life perfect, what would they change? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are your hopes and dreams? How has Jesus helped reshape what you put your hope in?• How did Jesus convince you that sin is actually the biggest problem in the world? How does Jesus give you hope?• How is life with Jesus, both here and now and eternally better than any other version of utopia possible? |

PART 4: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As we get to know their story and share our story, we are always looking for ways we can share Jesus' story through our story and apply it into their story.

| THEIR STORY: | YOUR STORY: | THE STORY: |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Past shaping experiences: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Past shaping experiences: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is Jesus good news for their story? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present situation: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present situation: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How has Jesus shaped your story and how you can connect that to their story? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future hope: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future hope: | |