

TIPS FOR LAY WITNESSES

“Know that the greatest service that man can offer to God is to help convert souls.”

~St. Rose of Lima

What is a Lay Witness Talk?

A lay witness talk is a personal story about your faith journey or experience, focusing the message around your encounter with Jesus Christ. The purpose is to articulate God’s influence in your life which in turn can point others to Jesus.

Why be a Lay Witness?

- One of the most effective means of communicating what it means to be a Christian disciple is through personal story.
- Your story is real and shows that your belief is authentic and is evidence that God is real and active in your life.
- Your story can open the door for the Holy Spirit for others.
- Your faith story demonstrates the power of God.

When are Lay Witness Talks?

- Lay witness talks, at a minimum, should be given during the CSR weekends, but can be given throughout the year as a reminder of the importance of the stewardship way of life.
- These talks are usually given after the homily (they may also be given after the post-Communion prayer and before the final blessing or before Mass begins). Ultimately it is the decision of the celebrant when the talk can occur.
- These talks should be 2 to 3 minutes in length.

How do you capture your faith journey story?

- Reflect on the definition of stewardship when preparing your story:
 - The grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God’s gifts and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.
- Pray, that the Holy Spirit will reveal ways he has been working through you and through others.
- Reflect on your life and major events.
- Ask yourself, where was God through your life?
- In what ways were you drawn closer to God?
- Where are you now on your journey of faith?
- Write your reflections and thoughts on paper. Writing it down helps to solidify your story.



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How do you prepare your personal narrative? (continued)

- As you write, focus on how your story brings glory to God. These questions/comments might help you get started:
 1. Introduce yourself:
 - a. Name, family members, how long you have been a parishioner, etc.
 2. What was your early church experience?
 - a. Consider what important events, people, situations have shaped your faith life.
 - b. If you left the Church, why and what brought you back?
 3. Who was a part of your early church experience?
 - a. Family, friend, youth minister, priest, religious sister?
 4. How did these experiences spark a deeper exploration of God in your life?
 - a. How did you feel afterwards?
 - b. What was the point that caused a change within you?
 5. How has your life been transformed as a Christian Disciple since that encounter?
 - a. Where has God been leading you?
 - b. How have you shared your gifts with others?
 6. What does the stewardship way of life mean to you?
 - a. Focus on who you are becoming more than what you do in the parish.
 7. The result will be a personal story that:
 - a. Gives a relatable recap of your early church experience and who played a part in it.
 - b. Explains how your life has changed, become closer to God and used your gifts in your life, other people’s lives, and your community.

Dos and Don’ts?

Do....

- Be authentic & genuine
- Be clear and concise in your message
- Share your JOY!
- Focus on your moment of encounter with Jesus

Don’t....

- Be too critical of your former self
- Teach and preach
- Give too many details that won’t matter to your listeners
- Make your life today seem like a fairy tale

