

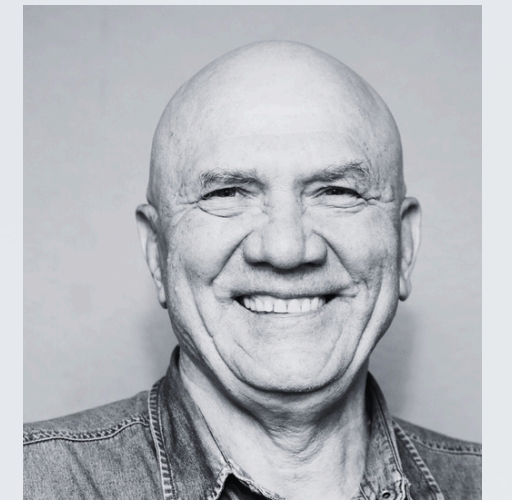


WITH
LISA MCINNES-SMITH

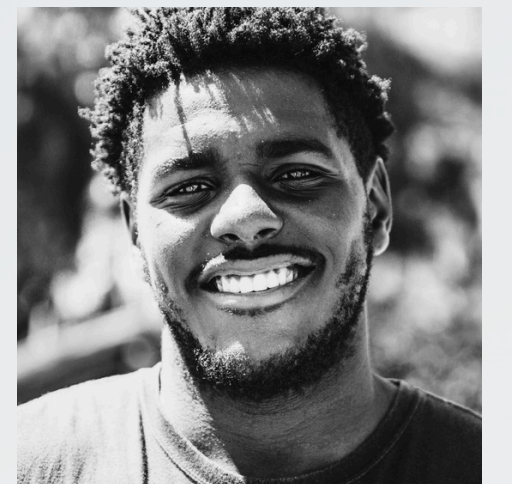
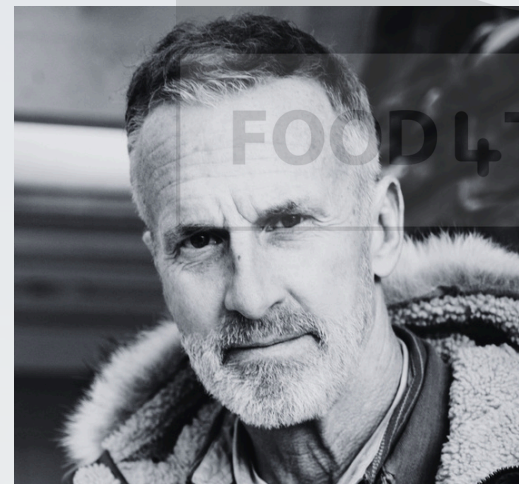
SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

WHAT'S YOUR WHY?



“YOUR TESTIMONY IS THE BRIDGE GOD BUILT TO REACH SOMEONE ELSE’S HEART.”



THE DO'S

- Be brave! What you have is valuable to share with others
- Have spiritual discussions one-on-one vs. a group setting
- Remember, initially, it's less about our faith/experience, more about theirs
- Be curious! Ask questions...e.g. *"What's your journey?"*
- When listening to others sharing their thoughts, actively listen; smile and nod - avoid finishing their sentences
- Develop EQ (Emotional Intelligence). Learn to gauge the room/and your audience
- Be friendly! Smile. Have a genuine interest in others – aka, "Love Your Neighbour."
- Go with what they want to talk about vs. talking "our bit."



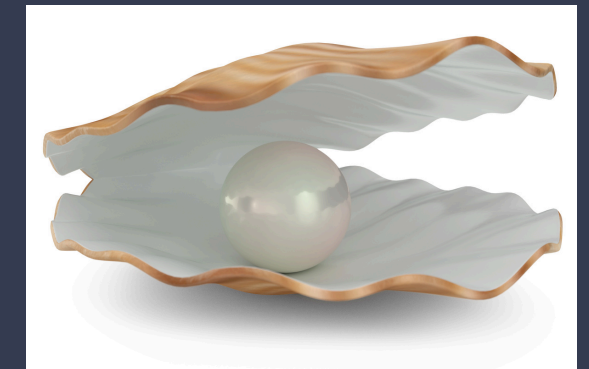
THE DO'S

- Foster a safe environment in which sharing is easy
- LISTEN to the objections – we're not talking at people, but with them
- Only give the amount of information on your testimony that's appropriate
- Give *a little slice* of a moment when God has shown up for you
- Leave gaps – space...for people to ask follow up questions
- Use the word GOD vs. Jesus/Holy Spirit
- Tell other people's stories (family/friends) which may have an impact
- Care enough to give them something they need; introductions/podcasts etc



THE DON'TS

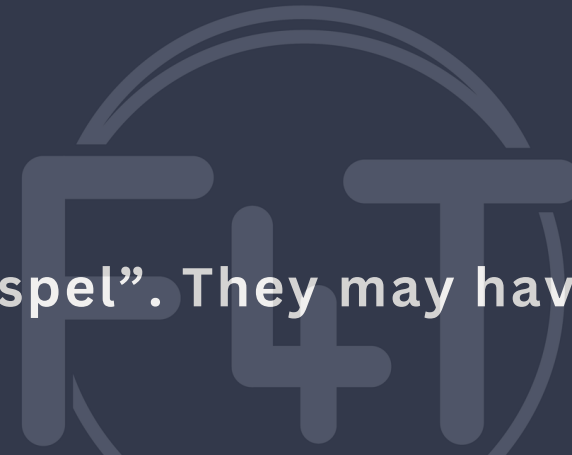
- Throw your pearls to the pigs – do a temperature test before you launch into a big spiritual conversation. You can only open the door; you can't shove people through
- Rule people out because you think they're not interested
- Think you have to be a perfect Christian to share – come as you are
- When telling your testimony, don't tell your whole life story – this isn't your autobiography
- Talk too much!!! Most people overshare, less is more. Keep it to 10 mins max (for a full testimony)
- Try and win an argument - be humble, be calm
- Be itching to share your same version of the story, e.g. "I had that happen too..." Go deeper into their story.



FOOD 4 THOUGHT

THE DON'TS

- Be pushy. We're not trying to sell them anything
- Think you have to have all the answers
- Use Christianese or say words like "the gospel". They may have no idea what this is! Using, "Good News" is helpful
- Explain the whole bible – just give them A TASTE. Something that God has done in your life that surprised you
- Try and defend God as if you're his spokesperson – the definitive of truth. He doesn't need your help
- Only see your non-Christian friends because you want them to get saved - you need to form genuine friendships!!! People will see through you



FOOD 4 THOUGHT



SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

HOW TO START A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

FOOD 4 THOUGHT



“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

- 1 Peter 3: 15 (NIV)

HOW TO START A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

REMEMBER TO BE CURIOUS!!!

1 Give a compliment!

Go deeper than the surface level, “I like your jacket.” Notice something truly admirable about someone you come into contact with. e.g. “You’re a very gifted pilates instructor. I love your genuine style of leading, you can tell you really love what you do.” There’s no better way to open up a deeper conversation than to give a genuine compliment.

2 Avoid surface level conversations

Instead of commenting on the football when you’re at the dog park talking to a stranger, try giving a positive, declaration or question. e.g. “Hasn’t the sunshine been delightful? It feels like a kiss from heaven.”

3 Ask simple but provoking questions

After some level of trust has been built, pose a question which will spark spiritual conversation. e.g. Have you ever had a spiritual encounter? Have you ever had a prayer answered? What’s Important in your life right now? (WIN) Have you felt something in your life that felt supernatural? (Make sure you can also answer this when it’s thrown back at you!)



HOW TO START A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

REMEMBER TO BE CURIOUS!!!

➤ **OPPORTUNITY 1: WHEN GOD/CHURCH IS SPOKEN ABOUT NEGATIVELY...**

“That’s funny, that’s not my experience...my experience is...”

“Ooo, that’s harsh!”

➤ **OPPORTUNITY 2: WHEN A NON-CHRISTIAN GIVES A SMALL WINDOW INTO THEIR OWN VALUES/FAITH/BELIEFS...**

“How do you know that?” /“What makes you believe that?”

“Do you have a clear purpose for your life?”/“What’s the source of your joy?”

“Are you religious or secular?”/ “Do you practice any faith?”

➤ **OPPORTUNITY 3: WHEN SOMEONE BLASPHEMES, “JESUS CHRIST”**

“Oh, do you know him too?”

“Oh, are you referring to my friend, Jesus?”



HOW TO START A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

➤ **OPPORTUNITY 4: WHEN THERE'S AN EASY "IN" TO BRING UP SPIRITUAL MATTERS**

“What’s your faith background, if any...”

“What’s your interest in spiritual things?”

“I was raised Christian, how about you?”

“When life’s tough, where do you go for strength?”

“What are you curious about when it comes to an afterlife?”

“I really believe in God.”

“What chapter am I meeting you at on your spiritual journey...?”

Be observant: e.g. “Is that a cross tattoo? What does that symbolise for you?” “Is that an alter?”
What does that symbolise in your culture/religion?



HOW TO START A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

READ THE ROOM...

➤ OPPORTUNITY 5: WHEN THERE IS A SAFE SPACE TO HAVE THE BIG CONVERSATIONS

Pose a statement to provoke thoughtful conversation...we are not looking for a fight or a debate. Resist the urge to prove the other person right, or convince them of your belief.

e.g. TRUE OR FALSE...

“A baby in my arms is just as valuable as in my womb.”

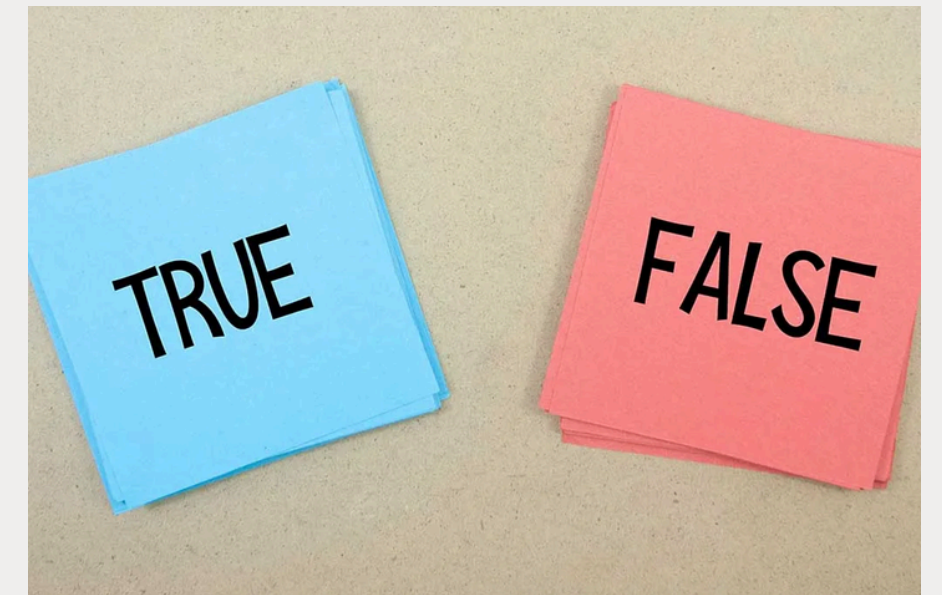
“Suffering can have a purpose, even if we don’t fully understand it.”

“Our actions today have eternal consequences.”

“Forgiveness is more powerful than revenge.”

“The search for meaning is a part of being human.”

“Every person has a soul that lives beyond their physical body.”



SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

HOW TO HANDLE OBJECTIONS

F4T

FOOD 4 THOUGHT



“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”

- James 1: 19(NIV)

OBJECTIONS - GENERAL

- Keep your voice lower and slower...loud, high voices cause tension
- If you don't have a good answer, that's okay. Simply say, "I'll ask some people that and get back to you."
- Your job is not to argue or debate. Save the relationship. Put people above the problem - you can't win an argument and still win the person.
- Get out of a political conversation and into a people solution. (e.g. when someone brings up priests & sexual abuse or misused funds in institutions).
- Deflect and move on to something positive (e.g. I'm sorry you don't feel God has answered your prayers, would you like me to pray for something specific...?)



COMMON OBJECTIONS

➤ **“I DON’T BELIEVE IN GOD...”**

“Was there a time, when you were younger that you did? If so, what changed?”

➤ **“I DON’T BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE.”**

“That’s fair – a lot of people feel that way. Out of curiosity, have you ever actually read it or looked into its background?”

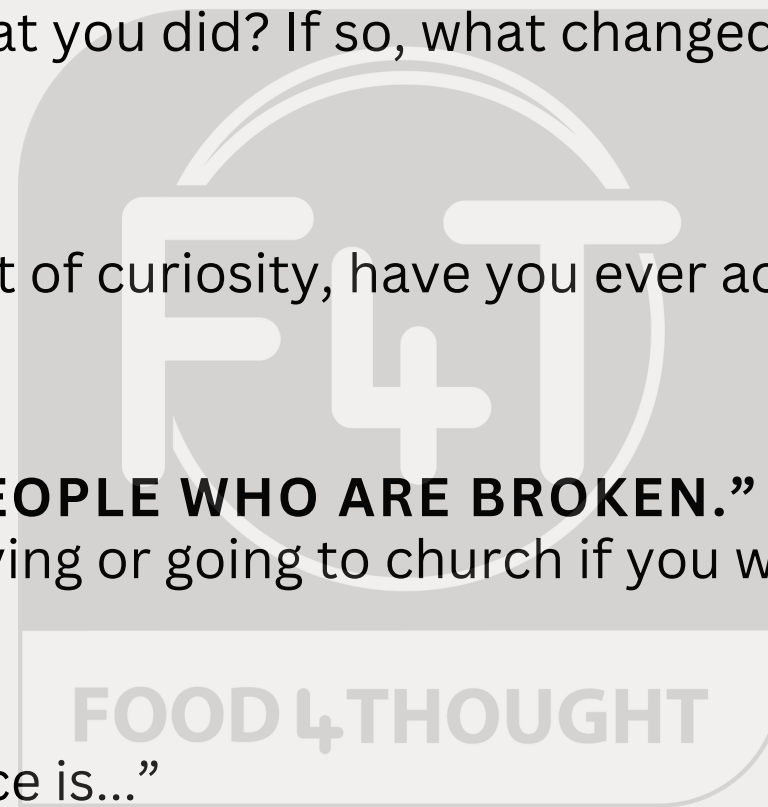
➤ **“I THINK FAITH AND CHURCH ARE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE BROKEN.”**

“So, you’re saying you would considering praying or going to church if you were having a tough time...?”

“That’s not been my experience, my experience is...”

➤ **“I DON’T NEED ALL THAT RELIGION STUFF, I’M A GOOD PERSON, I HAVE A GOOD MORAL COMPASS...”**

“That’s great that you feel you have a good moral compass...but in my experience, a connection with God is far more than being a good person. For example, when life throws you a curveball, sickness, death, or a major calamity, it becomes clear we need something bigger than ourselves” (then give a 1- min slice of your own experience).



COMMON OBJECTIONS

➤ **“I THINK GOD IS WITHIN ALL OF US!”**

“Really? I don’t think God’s inhabiting evil people.”

“The bible says we need to invite God into our hearts...Ephesians 3:17 says Christ dwells in your hearts through faith.”

➤ **“I BELIEVE THAT ALL FAITHS ESSENTIALLY WORSHIP THE SAME GOD.”**

“I don’t. Lots of paths lead to the devil/evil.”

“That’s a common belief but I don’t because in the bible, Jesus says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

➤ **“I GUESS I BELIEVE IN SOMETHING, BUT I’M NOT GOING TO BE GOING TO CHURCH OR ANYTHING. SUNDAY’S IS FAMILY DAY...”**

Agreement that Sunday is a sacred day – it is a time of spiritual and physical rest and rejuvenation that gives us the strength and focus to tackle a new week.

Some churches do services/meet ups on other days/nights. Is it the day that’s an issues or is it something else?

Move conversation away from church and focus it on a personal relationship.



SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

SLICE OF LIFE THE MINI-TESTIMONY



“Therefore, as God’s chosen people... clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience... And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

- Colossians 3:12-14 (NIV)

FOOD 4 THOUGHT

A “SLICE OF LIFE” - PRACTICAL

- MAKE A LIST OF AT LEAST 3-5 OCCASIONS WHERE GOD HAS SHOWN UP OR LITTLE SNIPPETS WHERE GOD HAS TOUCHED YOUR LIFE (JUST A COUPLE OF TOP-LEVEL ITEMS)
- SHARE JUST A BRIEF 1-LINE OVERVIEW OF THESE WITH A TRUSTED PERSON. ASK WHICH ONE SPARKS THEIR CURIOSITY THE MOST.
- NOW FLESH OUT THAT STORY! USE BULLET POINTS. NO MORE THAN 2-3 MINS MAX.



SLICE OF LIFE - TOP TIPS

- Keep to 1-2 mins
- Give enough background/set scene
- Start with a strong, simple opening line
- Add a line of humour (lighten the mood/laugh at yourself)
- End with the hook/offer



PRACTICE ON FRIENDS, GET FEEDBACK!
WHAT YOU REPEAT, YOU KEEP!



SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

SLICE OF LIFE EXAMPLE



Manuela Simeoni



SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

FULL TESTIMONY/STORY



FULL TESTIMONY - TIPS

- Everyone has a story/testimony! Write it down and perfect it
- Short, lean sentences are best - make it punchy
- Start with a strong opening sentence
- Don't monologue - make it a conversation - stop and see if the audience wants more
- Make it relevant to your audience - adapt if necessary
- Have a 5,10-40 minute version depending on the situation!
- You don't have to share everything - only what you feel comfortable with
- Focus on your faith journey
- Finish with an offer/challenge/hook to incite more conversation
- Say it out loud regularly to remove any triggering emotional moments - it's not therapy, it's storytelling



SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY SAMPLE 1 (FULL VERSION)



FOOD 4 THOUGHT



SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

TESTIMONY SAMPLE 2

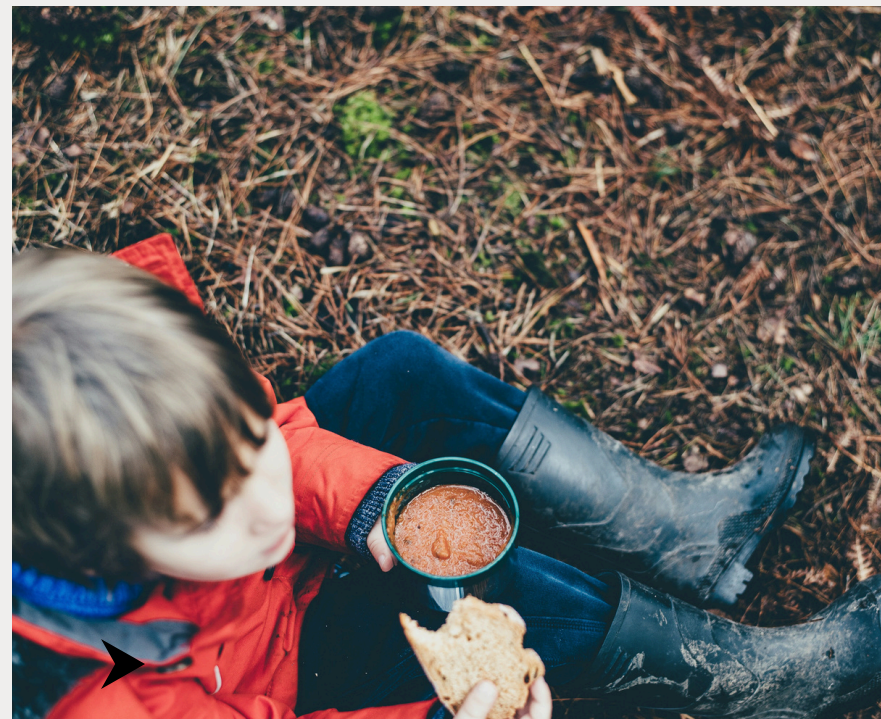
ELEVATOR PITCH VERSION



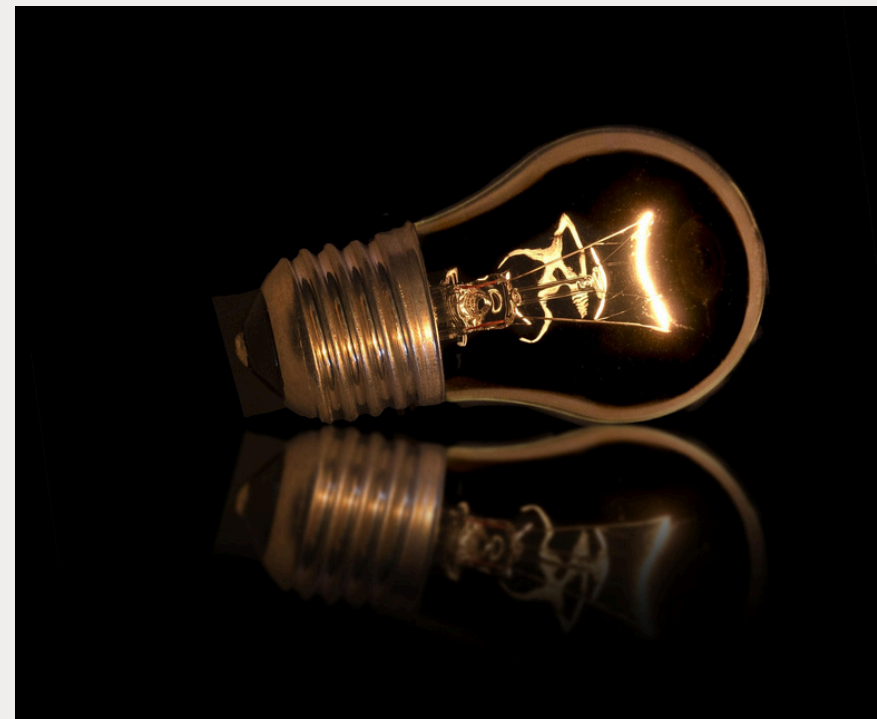
SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

CRAFTING YOUR STORY

CRAFT TWO VERSIONS: ELEVATOR PITCH (2-3 MINS) & FULL TESTIMONY (10MINS MAX)



➤ BEGINNING



➤ MIDDLE



➤ END

HOOK ➤



SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

CRAFTING YOUR TESTIMONY FULL VERSION - AKA, "THE FORMULA"

1. BEFORE FAITH - IF RELEVANT
2. THE TURNING POINT
3. THE CHANGE
4. CURRENT WALK WITH GOD
5. CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY
6. WHY YOUR FAITH MATTERS
7. MESSAGE TO OTHERS



CRAFTING YOUR STORY - THE CHECKLIST

HAVE YOU:



1. Told us where you are from?
2. Touched on whether they were raised Christian or not?
3. Shared how God turned up/become real to you?
4. Inspired you?
5. Have you left gaps to aid effective listening?
6. Ended on a hook?
7. Given good eye contact?
8. Spoken clearly/loudly?
9. Used good body language?



SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

HOW TO LEAVE A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION



FOOD 4 THOUGHT



GIVE RESOURCES



PODCAST

“Hey Kate, LOVED our convo yesterday about white witches...



Really got me thinking. Found this great podcast, just had a listen, think you'd find it interesting. Love to hear what you think...”



BOOKS

“Hi Paul, thanks for the riveting conversation yesterday about the difference between Christians and Catholics. ✝

I've found this author to be really educated on this area. Would definitely recommend reading if you're considering which one works for you. Chapter 5 was fascinating! Just bought it for you on Amazon, let me know when it arrives!”



ARTICLES/VIDEOS

“Hi Michael, couldn't stop thinking about our chat yesterday. 🛶

Pastor John Smith has a cracking video on this topic, here's the link:

Does this answer your question better?”

SHARING YOUR FAITH & TESTIMONY

SUMMARY/HOMEWORK

USING EVERYTHING YOU HAVE LEARNED IN THIS COURSE, TRY ROLE PLAYING THE FOLLOWING SCENARIOS WITH A FELLOW CHRISTIAN/S. THEN DEBRIEF!



SPIRITUAL CONVOS - PRACTICE SENARIOS

➤ CHURCH HURT

Nikki says, "I used to go to church, but after what happened with that youth pastor, I was done. Christians are hypocrites."

➤ BURN OUT

Lachie says, "I'm just done. Tired of chasing stuff. Tired of pretending I've got it all together."

➤ TRAGEDY IN THE NEWS

Tom says, "I don't know how people still believe in God after what happened in that school shooting."

➤ ASTROLOGY GIRL

Alana says, "I'm a Taurus, which explains why I'm stubborn. The stars are so accurate, don't you think?"

FORMULA

1. LISTEN & VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS
2. ASK QUESTIONS - GET CURIOUS
3. GIVE A SHORT SLICE OF LIFE
4. GIVE AN OFFER
5. LEAVE THEM WITH A RESOURCE (if appropriate)

Remember: You're not trying to win an argument - you're planting seeds.

SPIRITUAL CONVOS - PRACTICE SENARIOS

➤ THE KIND ATHEIST

Zoe says, "I'm an atheist but I try to live a good life. If there's a God, I'd hope He'd be fine with that."

➤ GRIEF & LOSS

Jason just lost his mum to cancer. He says, "I don't know where she is now. I like to think she's watching over me somehow."

➤ AFTER A SCARY EXPERIENCE

Moira says, "I should've died in that car accident. Something was watching over me... I don't know what."

➤ SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS

Liv says, "I'm not religious, but I believe everything's connected. There's definitely more out there."

FORMULA

1. LISTEN & VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS
2. ASK QUESTIONS - GET CURIOUS
3. GIVE A SHORT SLICE OF LIFE
4. GIVE AN OFFER
5. LEAVE THEM WITH A RESOURCE (if appropriate)


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