



FAITH *Shared*

SESSION 2: WHAT IS YOUR STORY?



It is important that before we start trying to explain our faith to others, first we reflect on our own journey.

How did you get to where you are now?

What images come to mind when you think about that journey?

How has God been at work, before you were aware of Him and since?

These are all important questions to think about, and are explored in more depth in our resource [Faith Pictures](#).

This session takes the essence of [Faith Pictures](#), and cover it in one session. However it may be worth thinking about whether that would be a good course to do once you have completed [Faith Shared](#). Through it you think about your story in more depth, and think about images that help you tell your story.

In the session that follows you will think about your own journey with Jesus up to the present, and help you start to think about how you can talk about your faith journey to others.

INTRODUCING

With the participants together, ask the following questions. They only need to be thought about briefly to set the stage for the rest of the session.

- Why do stories matter?
- What stories do you remember/have stayed with you/have had an impact on you?
- As a larger group name 5 or 6 films, books, TV shows you have seen recently and think about them in the following ways:
 1. What is the main theme of film/tv/book
 2. What is a secondary theme within the film/tv/book.

Get the groups to feedback what they thought the primary and secondary theme of the titles they chose were. Explain that this activity is not to find right answers but instead to see what the different groups had to say about the different titles.

- Is there a variety in what different members of the groups see? Ask why that might be? Why do we each see something slightly different in these stories?
- Is it positive, negative, or neither if we each see different things as being more important in certain stories.

Aim: To get the participants thinking about the value of stories to helping others explore faith.

EXPANDING

Video exploring why our stories matter even if we don't think so.

EXPLORING

- Throughout the Bible we find incredible stories of people searching for what it means to follow God faithfully. Abraham and his journey towards trusting God's promise, Joseph learning humility and saving a nation from starvation, Rahab hiding those in need of her protection, Ruth showing fierce loyalty to Naomi, Daniel standing up to a dictator's whims, Saul's ambition, David's foolishness, Peter's hotheadedness, Tabitha's generosity.

Through their, and other stories we can see how God has been at work in the world, and how He has led His followers in the past.

However there is something that it is important for us to remember when we are thinking about the people who have gone before us in the faith, and it may seem like an obvious thing but it is this; the people whose stories we read in the Bible didn't know how their stories were going to end.

- Get the group to think about it in this way:
 - What would we say the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den teaches us about God if Daniel gets eaten?
 - How different is Joseph's story if he doesn't forgive his brothers at the end?
 - What is Abraham's story like if he chooses not to trust God?
- You could do this with other of the characters that your group might be familiar with, but it is important to explore how their story looks different if one key moment is different.
- In the same way that they didn't know what their story would look like, we don't know what ours looks like, but we can think how it would be different if we didn't know God.

Give everyone in your group a piece of paper, and have them draw a line across the middle of it. On one end, get them to write **Birth**, and at the other end **Today**. Give everyone about 10 minutes to think back over their lives, and pick out three or four times that have been key moments in their journey of faith.

- Make it clear that these don't need to be spiritual, or church related moments, but could be very mundane things. God can speak to us as much through boredom and daydreaming as anything else.
- There doesn't need to be any pattern to what they are writing, it could be a sudden profound moment, or it could be a long slow awakening, it could be a revival of a childhood faith, or it could be none of those.

Once you have all done this, pray and ask God to help you recall anything that you might have forgotten about but that is important within your journey. It would be great for anyone in your group who feels comfortable doing so to share some one or two key moments from their story. Encourage people with a variety of experiences to share to see how God has worked in different ways across your lives.

PRAYING

Using the audio prayers on the Faith Shared webpage, give the group some time and space to reflect on the ideas that you have been exploring through this session.