

Writing a Testimony:

Basically it's a "life story" that focuses on the spiritual part of your life. So it's like an autobiography, but it's not really about covering all the areas of your life, but more about explaining how you've grown spiritually. Things that you might include could be:

1. Family's religious background
2. Earliest memories or thoughts of spirituality, God, religion, or church
3. Significant moments of spiritual change, whether growth or not
4. People that have influenced what you believe and how you've learned of God
5. Where you are with God right now
6. Hopes for your spiritual growth in the future

Some of these might apply to you more than others, but the more you can include, the better. It's helpful not just for you to think through it all, but also a blessing for other people to read and hear! Hopefully the things above will outline your journey of spiritual faith, how you got to the point of being baptized now, and look towards the future.

Some suggested structures:

1. Chronological: Start from the beginning and move through the milestones of your spiritual life
2. Thematic: Focus on key themes that have come up repeatedly (love, acceptance, healing, transformation, challenges, etc.)
3. Story-focused: Perhaps there was a specific event or moment that is the central focus, and you build the testimony around it

Other considerations:

1. Pray, and ask God to give you insight and guidance!
2. Is there a particular Bible verse or passage that might be relevant and could be shared?
3. Be honest: Vulnerability makes your story relatable and impactful. Share struggles, doubts, and how you overcame them.
4. Highlight growth: Talk about how your faith deepened or how it transformed your outlook.
5. Avoid "churchy" words--use simple language that anyone, regardless of their background, can understand!

It's not unusual for people to have about a page or two (double spaced) of a story. Approximately 300-600 words. And here are a few other examples:

I have been going to church all of my life, ever since I was born. As I got older and I went to Sunday School, I would learn about God and Jesus. I also learned about Noah's Ark, Daniel in the Lion's Den, Jesus' miracles and many other Bible stories. I remember that my parents would always tell me to pray to God before I eat and before I go to bed. But I don't think that I really understood what it all meant; it was just a part of my life.

As I got older, I began to realize who God actually is. He sent his son Jesus down to earth to die on the cross for us and to save our sins. I began reading one chapter from the Bible every night, starting in the New

Testament. In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus said “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” It helped me understand that Jesus wanted us to love Him as well as the people around us and that love is a very important thing to him. One of my favorite verses is John 3:16 – “For God so love the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but will have eternal life.” It is a promise from God saying that if we believe in him, he will give us eternal life.

When I started high school, things quickly got busy. The first couple of days were okay, but into the second or third week, I felt piled with homework. I was also on the swim team and I also wanted to join the Gardening club. I was afraid that I would not have time to do everything I wanted. This is when I first began to talk to God before I fell asleep. I would talk to him in my head and tell him about my day. I usually try to thank God for what he’s has given me that day. I also ask God to help me with troubles that I’m facing and to help me solve them the way he wants me to. After praying to God, everything fell into its place. I go to swim practice on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and I go to Gardening Club on Thursdays. I always try to get some homework done before swim practice so I don’t have to stay up late trying to finish my homework after.

I finally decided to get baptized when I was thinking one morning before church. I remember my youth pastor saying that you should get baptized when you feel like you want to follow Jesus with your life. I realized that unconsciously I was slowly building this relationship with God and that I wanted God to be with me all through my life.

I want Jesus to guide me through everything I do. I hope that I will remember to pray to God and always go to him when I need help. I also want to remember to praise God when something good happens. I want to try to listen to what God is trying to tell me. God isn’t always going to appear to us in a dream or send an angel to tell us what to do, so I want to be listening so I can be ready to what he asks.

When I was little, my parents always told me stories about Jesus. I had never really thought about them until now. I would hear about the miraculous deeds that he did, his twelve disciples, and most often, his death on the cross. Those stories meant little to me back then. I thought I knew that Jesus was a person up in heaven that had died for me because he loved me. I also knew that I had to pray to him. I took all of these things for granted - eternal life, Jesus, and miracles, because my parents were religious before I was born. Now I realize that I am really very lucky to be born into a religious family, because getting to know that Jesus loved me would be hard if I didn’t hear about him through stories and from church, which I went to - and still go to - every Friday and Sunday. But I really didn’t focus on the religious part of going to church. Instead, I came just to hang out with my friends. It kept going on like that until I moved on into youth group.

This was the real deal. My friends, who were mostly a grade younger than me, were still in the Children’s Ministry. Without them, I was stripped of my main reason of going to church. I started realizing that church was not just about visiting friends and eating snacks. Church was about Jesus. I slowly learned this through the preachings on Sunday, and the small group times on Friday. I remember that we would watch these videos that connected to our teen lives, as there were many examples of real adolescents getting to believe Jesus. This helped me much more in my life. Also, there were many other factors that helped me come to my decision today. Some of them are CMC, retreats, and all of the the VBS’s during the summer. My parents have encouraged me to read the Bible and devotions every day. My mom bought me three devotional books, which I read every day.

I hope that Jesus will work in my life to change me even more, because I know he has a plan for me - as he does with everyone. I want to get baptized because I feel that my life is complete with Christ in it, and that I want a relationship with someone who loves me even more than my parents. I feel like my spiritual life started last year, and I really want to love Him like he loves me.

I was born into a Christian family and baptized as an infant. Throughout my childhood, I grew up punctiliously attending Sunday school and have fervently participated in many Bible story discussions, but I steadily began to loathe the yearly routine. Memorizing Bible verses and engaging in those interesting topics were starting to be taken for granted, thus my faith receded from its vitality. This became my weakness in all aspects of my life because I did not maintain a consistent relationship with God. If I had not fallen into the same temptations and strife against my will and His will, I would not have been the rebellious, selfish, and condescending teenager you see standing here today.

I have always believed that God was the main purpose of life and that each and every one of us is called to be witnesses for Him however, my knowledge of the Bible and God's nature became useless when I never applied it to my daily actions. It was then when God started to portray His unconditional love and mercy through large and small situations in my life. Testimonies after testimonies of people exclaiming the wonders of God's power made me reflect on how He has led me through paths of darkness and despair. Amidst the frequent disappointments of being unable to always attain what I want for my life, God was teaching me that there will always be a better reward if I would continue to seek Him first. This became evident when He took the one thing I loved doing best and closed that path while opening an unexpected alternative.

Throughout high school, I have enjoyed spending time running outdoors and appreciate the aesthetic beauty of God's creation. My inspiration stemmed from elite runners who can demonstrate incredible performances because of their discipline and commitment. This mindset became a foundation for my life- physically, mentally, and spiritually. The most significant running season of my high school years was Cross Country 2006 because my reason for every practices and races were not for the purpose of being the best, but for being God's best. And because of this, my motivation became incredibly stalwart, after committing my passion for God's glory.

So I now stand here before you, proclaiming my faith in God that He is my one and only Savior, and without Him, I am nothing. I hope that I will continue to be God's instrument and convey His love to others through the things that I do and say. If God asked me to run that extra mile with Him, I can now confidently say "Yes."

I've grown up here at since I was in the nursery. With a Christian family, my grandparents, parents, and brother have been very supportive of me in my spiritual walk. I constantly found it comforting to know that I could look to them for help. My walk began with the years in the Children's ministry, where I learned Bible stories like Noah's Ark and Jesus' miracles. Through Sunday School and AWANA, memorizing bible verses was a big thing, and it showed me many encouraging verses- like 1 Timothy 4:12. It says, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity". This taught me that God could help me live a life for Him in many ways, no matter how young I was.

Church always seemed to be a fun place to hang out with friends. After surviving two hours of worship time and Sunday School, I'd rush out with my friends and start playing basketball. But I started taking Sunday School more seriously in 5th grade. My family reminded me that church was not a place to fool around with

friends. It was a place to clear up my mind after a long week and worship God with fellow Christians. Then, I tried to take advantage of every second I had at church singing the worship songs and resisting the temptation of talking during Sunday School to listen for messages. We also got little booklets every week with devotionals on the back, which got me into the habit of doing them.

My faith was definitely strengthened after I joined the youth group. Through the sermons on Sunday and small group times on Friday nights, I found a different purpose in life- to live it out for God rather than for self-gain. Anyone could be a "good person", but I learned Christians act for one unique reason to glorify God. Later in the winter, I went to my first retreat. I think it was another big turning point for me since I had some really good quiet time with God in the cabin and I learned some valuable lessons. Our speaker stressed to us that we will definitely face obstacles that veer us away from Jesus and our ultimate goal of living our lives for Him. But if we can stand strong and keep our focus on Jesus, then we may get to know Him a lot more.

Since then, I have definitely faced many bumps in the road on my spiritual walk. For a while, I just stopped having quiet times since I made excuses and didn't really see the importance of it. I was just waiting for some kind of miracle from God that would make me understand everything about Him. Thankfully, multiple sermons throughout the year gave me subtle reminders that reading God's word is actually one of the best ways to continue my search for God. Doubts and questions also constantly lingered over my head. Most of these challenges came up during high school, as I was surrounded by more people who were strong atheists. Even bio class made questions pop up in my head. I kinda had the picture of how God wants us to live, but I was covered with confusion and doubt. However, my quiet times, being on worship team, and continued support from my family and brother have helped me deal with these things. Even after baptism, I'm probably still going to face these challenges, but I'm blessed to be surrounded by a big loving family, including our youth group, that I can ask for help.

I am very thankful for the people whose help has gotten me to today to get baptized. God has stayed faithful to me even when I haven't been to Him, my family has been open to listen, I have my closest friends in youth group, and my pastor has taught me so much. I never really understood baptism until a couple of months ago, when he said baptism could take place anywhere in one's walk with God. It really is the beginning, and today I wanna say I want to keep getting to know God more, and I still have a lot to learn!

I've been coming to this building every Friday and Sunday, for the most part, since the dawn of creation. You guys have been my extended family where these are my parents who have brought me up in Christian ways and never hesitated to treat me like their own, whether good or bad, and these are my brothers and sisters who have not only joined me in my spiritual walk, but guided me the whole way. That's why I feel so comfortable in sharing with you all my testimony of how I became so close with our God.

I guess it all started in the children's worship where everything was said to me in a straight forward manner. My favorite is when you were given bible verses such as "God loves me," but in reality the verse is like eight lines long. But the fact of the matter is that that was how I was taught of God's grace and the miracles he has worked in others and in me. I learned from an extremely young age that God sent his beloved son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross and pay for my sins, and little by little it became second nature. For me, especially on this Easter Sunday, talking about Christ's resurrection is like stating the obvious. Of course I've had doubts, but nothing major that took me lengths to overcome.

Actually, the only thing I can really call a minor struggle was my transition into the youth ministry. Sitting in those pews at that time was like facing the monsters under my bed. I entered a world where I no longer sang “Deep and Wide,” but praises with words I had yet to understand, and sermons where I could not fathom how adults followed along. That was probably the point in my life where I felt the most distant from the Lord. However, one summery Friday night pTim was talking about John 4:13, “Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.’” And for some odd reason, from that point on, everything just began to click. I learned to read the lyrics through one time during worship, process it, then join in the singing and to really try to comprehend what the pastors were trying to tell us, whether it be a message or application.

After that, everything just started to click. It came to me how amazing my life truly is. The Lord has blessed me with everything I can imagine, including two loving parents that sacrifice so much time and energy so that I may live my life to the fullest; a brother who protects me, looks after me, and shields me from all the bad things in life; and an adorable little sister who never fails to make me smile. He’s put food on the table, clothes on my back, and fulfills all my desires in life. I’ve always had the advantage of whenever anything goes wrong, even the silliest things like remembering where I put my homework, I can pray to the Lord and he always answers me. Like one time I prayed that the youth group can come together as one and just praise His name. And after countless nights, I can confidently say that He answered my prayer once again.

This is what brings me to my next topic – baptism. I wonder why it’s taken me so long to publicly confess my love for Christ considering I’ve known it all along. I wish I could tell you of some kind of obstacle that’s kept me from it, but I can’t. And that’s just the thing. God has been so good to me, why haven’t I turned my life over to him yet? Why haven’t I attempted to repay him for all that he’s done? I know it’s impossible, but I need to, I want to try. And that’s why I’m here today. I’m here to say that I love Jesus Christ my Savior with all my heart and that I will live for Him and shine his light everyday whether I’m at school, church, on the computer, or simply with my friends, and I hope that you will all hold me to it.

It took such great love for my God to stand in front of thousands of people, wearing a crown of thorns, to be ridiculed and insulted, and then to take on my sins and die for me. Just thinking of that sacrifice and how much I am thankful for it can will me do anything for Him. If He can get nailed to a cross, I can sacrifice a movie to talk to a non-Christian about the Lord. And so now I declare that this girl, standing before you, is about to turn everything she has, whatever she has, to Him. It’s all for Him. Thank you.

I regularly see people up at this pulpit sharing their testimonies. I’ve always imagined the day that I would be in their situation and be the person sharing the testimony but here I am now doing just that.

Ever since I was born, this church has been the church that I attend regularly... both on Friday nights and Sunday mornings. Interestingly enough, I’ve never complained about going to church. It was rather fascinating and I looked forward to it. Besides, I got to see all of my church friends like Ben, Arnold, Derrick, Alex and others. I believe that most of my spiritual life developed from going to church... it has influenced my spiritual life the most.

I don’t remember actually being “introduced” exactly to Christianity. It’s as if I grew up naturally knowing that the Lord exists and that Jesus died on the cross for my sins. Throughout my life, instead of questioning myself “how can there be a God,” my question was “how can people believe that there is no God?”

Unlike many people, I never really had any spiritual ups and downs in my life... its more of a plateau. In June 2001, I fractured my left arm. After the surgery, my hand and fingers still could not function. I was in total agony because I was frustrated and in pain. I was not certain whether my hand would recover or not. I would cry every night and ask God "why me." I prayed and prayed for my recovery but it did not show any improvement. I started complaining to God. My dad helped me realize that sometimes God builds up people's faith through loss and suffering. 5 months after earnest praying, my fingers started to move... my prayers were answered.

My relationship with God didn't get worse but it wasn't exactly improving either. However, I did have some sort of spiritual revitalization two years ago when I went to a Christian camp up in Brant Lake, New York called Pilgrim Camp. For two weeks, my spiritual life improved considerably. Everyone there cared about the same things I did and during that time, I felt like I belonged to the family of God. This thought gave a sense of peace.

Regarding baptism, I always felt like it was something that would occur eventually and I was kind of procrastinating. I didn't feel the sense of urgency to get baptized. My main "excuse" was that I felt like I wasn't close enough to God which, to be honest, wasn't exactly a lie. Until one night on November 29, 2005, I had a conversation with my dad about my spiritual life which resulted in my official acceptance of Christ into my heart. I felt the Holy Spirit move me from within on that night.

So now, I stand here to proclaim my faith. I know there is a long road ahead of me but I can conquer it because I have Jesus with me. I thank God for everything He's done and the people He's placed in my life. I want to thank all my Sunday school teachers and Pastor Tim who have taught me so much. My mom and dad have really aided me and given me spiritual guidance throughout my life. They constantly prayed for my salvation. They would answer any questions I had about God, His love, His creation. Even my sister would constantly remind me to read the Bible or something. They've done so much for me and I sincerely thank them from the bottom of my heart.

Now, I'm born again and there is a new life ahead of me. I still have a lot to learn and I humbly hope my brothers and sisters will assist me in my spiritual growth.

I am the type of person who loves to be loved. I will do all sorts of things to gain other people's approval. But this need to be loved by everyone has caused me a lot of heartbreak and hurt.

I began to realize this at a retreat a few years ago. I am a loud, joyful person and some people don't like that. During a meal mixer I was trying to be friendly and talk to some people I didn't know at my table but they did not seem to reciprocate in a way I expected. They were just not very friendly and that really upset me. After lunch I went to my workshop feeling distraught and not excited for the lesson that was going to be told. To my surprise it applied directly to what happened earlier that day and I knew that God put that situation in my life for a reason. In that workshop, I learned that I don't need to change myself for anyone or get upset when someone doesn't like me. The only one that I need love from is God.

In one relationship that I was in, I found myself changing a lot of things to fit my boyfriend's mold of a perfect girlfriend. I was trying to make the relationship work by doing things I normally would not do to please him and to make him love me more. For example, if we wanted to secretly spend time together, I would feel the pressure to do that to make him happy and keep our relationship going. And even in our physical relationship, sometimes I threw my morals out the window to try to make it work.

But eventually I realized that I shouldn't try to earn his love to be with him. And more importantly, that I didn't need to earn the love of anyone. It sounds kinda strange to say this, but it's just like the Bruno Mars song when he says, "Girl, you're amazing, just the way you are." God loves me just the way I am.