



## HOW TO DEVELOP A PERSONAL TESTIMONY (Sabbath School Program)

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### **Suggested Songs**

*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* No. 369 “Bringing in the Sheaves.”

*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* No. 367 “Rescue the Perishing.”

### **Morning Scripture Reading:** Romans 1:16

*Community outreach is one of the principle purposes of Sabbath School. The focus of this program is to present some ideas on how Sabbath School members can construct a personal testimony and use it to present the gospel to friends, neighbors, work associates, etc.*

### **Presentation ideas**

You can interview some people about their personal witnessing experiences. You can set up a “trial and error” skit showing how some people witness the wrong way and some the right way. You can have a team of people present the various sections of the program. You can divide into small groups and have the Sabbath School members construct personal testimonies.

### **Personal experience speaks loudly**

Good news is difficult to keep to yourself! Your son bursts into the room with the good news that his team won the game! A nervous couple gets the word that their home loan has been approved — that’s good news! Each of these “good news” messages bring excitement as the joys of the experience are shared.

Talking about Jesus should be just as exciting. When we recognize His leading in our lives, we just have to share it. That is what is called a “personal testimony.”

How can you give an effective witness to someone about Jesus? What do you do first? We sometimes tend to begin with explaining a prophecy and burying people under a stack of chronological and historical facts? Prophecies are always important, but not always the best place to begin.

### **Personal witness in the Bible**

Let’s take a look at how the early disciples did it. Once they committed themselves to the Lord, the Holy Spirit got them excited and enthusiastic. They called it gospel — “good news.” Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is good news!” (Romans 1:16).

These early disciples told people about what had happened to them personally. Ellen G White counsels us to follow their example. “We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience.”—*Desire of Ages*, p. 347.

A key example is the Samaritan woman in John 4. John captured her enthusiasm when he wrote about the incident: “Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did’ (John 4:28, 29). She didn’t elaborate on the “everything I ever did.” She was enthusiastic because of a new conviction in her soul: “Could this be the Messiah?” (v. 29). That conviction got the townspeople excited: “They came out of the town and made their way toward him” (v. 30).

### **How do you build your own testimony?**

Take a pencil and paper and outline your experience. Then memorize the outline. That will help you put it into perspective. Then you will be ready to tell anyone anytime about your own experience.

This personal testimony is not a detailed confession of all the mistakes and nonreligious things you may have done. It is an expression of how at some point the Lord made a difference.

Maybe you have been more or less decent most of your life and you don’t have some horrible, ungodly things to relate. Nevertheless, at some point in your life the Lord made a distinct difference. That’s what you put in your personal testimony.

- Tell where you came from. Let them know it was a jungle out there. Let them know you discovered that ultimately there was no gratification being outside of Christ. Not in the long run!
- Tell how you became a disciple. Let them know how Jesus found you. Maybe it was an out-and-out miracle. Tell them that. Maybe it was a slow, tough road. Tell them that. Let your own personality paint the picture of the change that happened to you personally.
- Let them know that the gospel is always gain. Tell them what your life has been like since you became a disciple. Tell them about the joy and peace you now feel. Tell them about some corrections the Lord applied so you could grow in grace. Tell them that there is nothing better than being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Make it exciting**

Most of all—make it exciting. No one is going to listen to a dead testimony. They are having more fun than that already! Smile, talk with enthusiasm, and watch the results.

Someone once sat down with a pencil and paper and made a list of the events and incidents that had happened over the past three months. Then the person asked herself, “How has the Lord led in this instance?” You will be amazed at the results. We take too much for granted, and do not take enough time to praise the Lord.

Is this kind of activity just wishful thinking? Is it just sentimentality? No way. When you take the time to develop a personal testimony, and see the hand of God in your life; take the time

to reflect, and identify specific ways in which the Lord has led in the recent past, your personal testimony takes on a life of its own, and as the Bible says, “They came out of the town and made their way toward him.”

### **Testifying with a testimony**

Now that you have a testimony, all you have to do is talk to someone. There doesn't have to be anything formal about this kind of conversation. It can be in a group. It can be between a couple of friends. It's a kind of “Hey, guess what?” conversation. It can even be a “You know what?” exchange with complete strangers you happen to strike up a conversation with.

Memorize a couple of Bible texts that talk about some positive benefits of believing and following the gospel. “Guess what, I read that ‘all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose’ (Romans 8:28). That sounds like good news to me! Here's what happened to me . . . . The same thing can happen to you. Here's how it works . . . .”

### **Conclusion**

A personal testimony is always a good way to share your faith. A personal testimony is always effective. Design one for yourself. Try it out, improve it, and watch the Lord use it.