

8. CHRIST-IN-ME STORY

Many students have learned how to write their testimonies, yet many testimony “formulas” cause their stories to sound canned and disingenuous. Instead of giving them a prepackaged formula, a better approach is to help them learn how to genuinely articulate what God’s doing in their lives. Here’s how you can do this:

Step One—Snapshots. Help students visualize their Christ-in-Me stories by looking at different “snapshots” from their lives. Tell them to think of their lives as a scrapbook of memory pictures. Encourage them to think through significant relationships, experiences, and events—both the comfortable ones and the difficult ones. Have them reflect on how God has been working through every detail of their lives and how God has been creating His story in them.

Step Two—Questions. Have students ask the following questions about their snapshots:

- Can I see God at work in ways I’ve never noticed before? If yes, how?
- What situations or events have brought about the greatest transformations in my life?
- If I could write one or two lessons from my life, what would they be (what has God taught me)?

Step Three—Timeline. Have students browse back through their “snapshots” one more time and pick the key events or experiences that transformed them most. Have them look for learning times, painful experiences that God used, or key relationships. While most students will have dozens of significant snapshots, they need to trim their Christ-in-Me stories to three or four of the most significant ones.

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Then have them create simple symbols or drawings for these snapshots and place them on a timeline. This little trick will help them remember how to communicate their Christ-in-Me stories to others, because it gives their stories frameworks that are easy to understand and mentally storable. Plus, they can draw their timelines on napkins or pieces of paper when telling someone their stories.

Two important points to remember: First, students' pictures can represent both positive and difficult experiences—just so long as the pictures represent how God has used life circumstances or people to challenge, change, and shape them. Second, since these are Christ-in-Me stories, be sure students include how they came to follow Christ as one of the symbols on their timelines.

Step Four—Practice. Have students practice with each other until they can share their stories effortlessly.³⁷