

Join the Chorus

LUKE 2:8-20; ACTS 8:26-40

3



GOAL

Youth see faithful disciples who have spoken about their faith and are inspired to share their faith with others.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- AT Abstract Thinking
- C Conversation
- CT Concrete Thinking
- D Drama
- G Game
- M Music
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

O God, give me courage to tell my truth, to show my faith, and to speak what the youth need to hear. Amen.

THIS SESSION

For many, the invitation to tell someone else about what God has done is among the hardest aspects of the Christian life. Maybe it's just too personal. It takes courage and vulnerability to open up to another person about how we believe God has moved in our life. Sometimes, it's hard to *Go Tell* because we've seen other people go about this task in obnoxious and harmful ways. We may think it's best to keep it to ourselves.

Yet speaking of our faith to others can change lives and spark personal transformation. A group or community of faith that welcomes questions and encourages people to wonder about God and Jesus fosters confidence to embrace and speak about the good news. Confidence in talking about faith can be found among peers who accept and encourage growth and transformation.

THE BIBLE STORY

The book of Acts tells many stories of the dangers and joys of telling the good news. Acts 8:26-40 tells of a follower of Jesus, Philip, who has a surprise encounter with a high official in the Ethiopian court who is trying to read the book of Isaiah. He asks Philip to explain it to him, which opens the door to a conversation and baptism of the Ethiopian whose life changes dramatically.

In Luke 2:8-20, shepherds are visited by angels who share with them good news of a new birth. After the shepherds find baby Jesus and his family, they too are inspired to share the story with others.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Young people communicate with and among their peers about anything from music and gaming to homework assignments and social activities. Although communicating about one's faith can be intimidating or risky, encouragement comes from peers and groups who hold similar commitments. Young people are more than recipients and passive consumers of communication; they utilize communication channels to coordinate, organize, empower, and gather around causes they care about.

SESSION PREPARATION

Depending on the choices you make:

- “Standing Up” (p. 28): Print copies of the article “Meet Katie Eder” (bit.ly/FMKatieEder).
- “Sharing Faith Stories” (p. 29): Invite an adult guest to join you to model sharing faith stories. Review the tips on Resource Page 1 and plan your own modeling in advance.

GETTING STARTED

TELLING WHAT YOU KNOW

As youth arrive, have them identify topics they can speak about for 10 minutes with no preparation or notes. These could be academic topics or fun things like particular video games, sports teams, or a favorite Netflix show. If a youth cannot think of a topic, invite others to make suggestions. Affirm the expertise shared by the youth. Ask them questions about their topics.

INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE Choose one or more options.

TELLING THE GOOD NEWS

Lead a responsive reading. The leader begins with the first line of the refrain of the song “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” Youth respond with “over the hills and everywhere.” You repeat “Go tell . . .” They ask, “Wait, go tell what?” Finally, you say a line of good news, which they repeat.

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.

Go tell it on the mountain . . .

Wait, go tell what?

You are the messengers of good news.

You are the messengers of good news.



Teaching Tip: If your group is too small or too uncomfortable using their feet, print each letter of the alphabet on a separate sheet of paper. Youth may use these to spell their words.

FOOT SPELLING

Work in teams of three or four. Ask each team a question. The team works together to agree on a one-word answer and then spells out the word using their feet. To do this, they sit next to each other on the floor. The bottoms of the feet are used to form the letters. Use the questions below or make up your own.

-  How's your week/weekend going?
-  What is something exciting in your lives?
-  What word best describes our church?
-  What word comes to mind when you think about Jesus?
-  How do you feel when others talk to you about their faith?
-  How do you feel about talking with others about your faith?

Tell the youth that, in today's session, they will be exploring when and how we talk to others about our faith.

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- ☐ Paper and pens
 - ☐ Timer



During the Advent and Christmas seasons, suggest that teams focus on Christmas carols and songs.

KNOWING ALL THE WORDS

Form pairs or teams of three or four youth. Give each team a pen and paper. Challenge each team to write down the songs that each person in the group knows all the words to. The songs may range from children's songs to church hymns, from Disney songs to currently popular songs. Set a timer for five minutes for teams to complete their lists.

When time is up, have teams take turns singing one song at a time from their list. If a team knows all of the words, they receive a point. Other teams that listed the same song must cross it off their list and do not receive a point. When all teams run out of songs to sing, congratulate the team with the most points.

Share with the youth that, in this session, they focus on how to share faith with others using our words. Knowing all the words certainly helps people feel more comfortable sharing their faith.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

PICTURING IT

AT D

Form trios to read and embody Acts 8:26–40. Within each trio, assign roles of Philip, the Ethiopian, and a photographer. Each group reads the Bible story and creates 5–10 photo scenes to retell it. Encourage creativity and the use of props available in the room.

Gather the group and have each trio share their photo story. Begin a discussion about the importance of sharing one's faith like Philip, and the transformation that can come from sharing faith. It may be beneficial to emphasize the Ethiopian's willingness to hear the story.

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- ☐ Bibles
 - ☐ Smartphones
 - ☐ Props (optional)

DRAWING

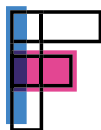
A QC

Invite volunteers to read aloud Luke 2:8–20. Distribute paper and colored pencils. Have youth reconstruct the Bible story as a comic strip. Their comic should have at least three panels.

After everyone has finished, invite them to share their comic strips and discuss what is important to them about the story. Emphasize how the good news is shared: the angels tell the shepherds what they will find; the shepherds tell Mary and Joseph what the angels told them. Invite discussion using these questions:

- ➔ In this story, what is the importance of one group telling another the good news?
- ➔ Do you think people would have heard the good news without being told? Why?
- ➔ How did hearing and sharing the good news change people in this story?

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- ☐ Bibles
 - ☐ Paper
 - ☐ Colored pencils



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or more options.

WHEN WORDS FAIL

C M

Explain that it takes courage to speak about topics that are close to the heart. There is risk of vulnerability and hurt. There is also opportunity for transformation and growth. Show the YouTube video “Shrek the Musical—When Words Fail” (bit.ly/FMWordsFail, 4:01).

Choose from these questions for discussion:

- ➔ Why is it important for Shrek to tell the princess how he feels?

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- ☐ Internet-connected device

- ➔ How might the relationship between Shrek and the princess be transformed if Shrek risks vulnerability by sharing?
- ➔ When have you had to use your words to tell something important?
- ➔ Have you ever felt like your own words might fail? What have you done with these feelings?
- ➔ What can be lost when a person gives into the feeling of their words failing?

☐ Internet-connected device

SPEAKING UP

T C

Introduce the YouTube video about living and sharing faith that President Barack Obama shared while on the campaign trail. Show the YouTube video “Obama: When Times Are Tough, Remember Christ” (bit.ly/FMObamaFaith, 1:55). Answer these or similar questions:

- ➔ What was the risk for Obama to talk about his faith while campaigning?
- ➔ What did he say about Jesus that encourages his own faith and actions?
- ➔ How has Obama’s faith helped him? How does he hope it will help others?
- ➔ What impact can it have on others that Obama talks about his faith?

☐ Copies of “Meet Katie Eder” (bit.ly/FMKatieEder)

STANDING UP

C S

Explain that, for some, speaking about faith includes standing up and acting in faith. Introduce Katie Eder, a young adult who began speaking and organizing other youth around her passions for “repairing the world” during her teen years. Distribute copies of the article “Meet Katie Eder” (bit.ly/FMKatieEder). Have individual youth read different sections of the article and summarize their section for the group. Invite youth to share their summaries. Use these questions to guide discussion.

- ➔ What does *tikkun olam* mean, according to Katie, and how does it influence her actions?
- ➔ How does Katie use her single voice to tell about and stand up in faith?
- ➔ What is Katie able to accomplish by joining her voice with others’ voices?
- ➔ How do speaking out and standing up with others make a difference in helping people or repairing the world?
- ➔ How does God’s good news encourage us to speak out and stand up?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

CONVERSATIONS

C

Form pairs. Have each youth in the pair spend two minutes telling the other person about when they first heard of Jesus. They should pretend that the other has never heard of Jesus. After two minutes, switch roles and repeat the conversation. Gather the youth and discuss how easy or difficult that was to talk about Jesus.

SHARING FAITH STORIES

C D

Distribute copies of Resource Page 1. Invite volunteers to take turns reading aloud the tips. Encourage youth to ask questions for clarification about the tips.

Introduce your adult guest and explain that the two of you will model a faith-sharing conversation. Invite the youth to notice which tips from the Resource Page they can identify during the conversation. Following your brief conversation, ask youth what they noticed about faith-sharing from your exchange.

Form pairs and have each group engage in a faith-sharing conversation. Gather the youth and discuss how easy or difficult that was to have the conversation.

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- ☐ Copies of Resource Page 1
 - ☐ Adult guest



Teaching Tip: Invite an adult guest to join you to model sharing faith stories. Review the tips on Resource Page 1 and plan your modeling in advance.

DESIGNING A T-SHIRT

A CT

Begin discussion using these questions:

- ➔ Where do we tend to wear T-shirts?
- ➔ What do our T-shirts tell others about who we are?
- ➔ What can you learn about another person by reading their T-shirt?

Invite youth to work alone or in small groups to design a T-shirt with a message or reflection about what they feel is important about their faith. Encourage them to think about a design that would be effective in piquing the curiosity of others. Share the T-shirt designs and their messages.

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- ☐ Paper
 - ☐ Colored pencils



Teaching Tip: If your group has the resources, consider having a favorite design printed as a group shirt that represents the group and functions as a tool for sharing God's good news.



FOLLOWING JESUS

NOTICING

CT AT

For the week ahead, challenge youth to notice when and where they see God at work. Think about what is happening in those instances. How can they tell someone about what they notice in God's work? In the next session, check in on what they noticed. Remind them that talking about God at work is sharing the good news.

JESUS SAYS "GO!"

CT

Gather in a circle. Have youth send each other out using Jesus' words from Matthew 28:18–20.

- Turn to the person on your right and say, "Jesus said, 'Go!'" Have each person do the same, one by one.
- Turn to the person on your left and say, "Jesus says, 'Tell!'" Have each person do the same, one by one.
- Each person looks to the center and says, in unison, "Jesus says, 'I am with you.'"
- Let everyone say together, "Amen!"

Ten Tips for Sharing Your Faith

God calls you to share your faith just as *you are*. You do not have to be anyone but yourself! Here are some tips to help.

1

Pray for yourself before you share your faith and pray for the person you are sharing with. Prayer reminds you that God is with you no matter what, and you are not alone.

2

Share your faith with someone who you know is genuinely interested in you. Start by saying something like, “I know I’m important to you, and I want to share with you something that is important about me.”

3

Ask about their faith history. Others may have a different faith or have had a traumatic experience with faith in their past. If that is the case, let them know that you are really happy in your faith or at your church if they ever want to hear about it. Don’t put any pressure on others to believe the same way you believe.

4

Share what is important to you. If your favorite part of church is hearing the stories in the Bible or getting to know people of different ages, share that. Share about your feelings of being accepted or why you belong. You do not have to share about sins or baptism or resurrection. Those are usually conversations for later.

5

Have a story to tell. People like to hear stories more than they like to hear rules to live by. Tell a story about when your faith or your church made a difference in your life. Remember that Jesus rarely lectured people. He preferred to tell stories (*parables*).

6

Don’t surprise someone with a talk about your faith. We do not want others feeling trapped or like they have to give the right response. Let them know in advance that you want to talk to them about your faith; let them tell you a good time for them. You might plan to share your faith with someone before doing something fun, like going to a movie.

7

You don’t have to have all the answers. Most people do not need Bible experts or church experts to talk with them about faith. Almost no one has all the answers about anything. We often connect with others because we share our struggles with them. Do not feel pressure to be perfect when talking about your faith.

8

Listen to the other person. After you share, the other person may also want to share about their faith. Listening is an important part of sharing. Caring about others is central to our own faith. Demonstrating compassion is more important than converting someone else to your beliefs.

9

Share on Instagram, Twitter, or TikTok. If talking with someone about your faith is too uncomfortable, share on social media. It can be as simple as “I heard this great story about Jesus today . . .”

10

Invite others to church. If it is easier, invite your friends or family members to attend an event with you at church. Let the church do the work of sharing the story of the faith. Sometimes just an invitation is enough.