



Session Ten: Sharing “*truth*” in a pluralistic society

“In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect ...” *1 Peter 3:15*

GOAL

Pause and look at the larger landscape of religion in Canada. How do we situate the Jesus Story among many other stories?

Practice Review

- Did you get a chance to *TELL* your story to someone this week?
- What did that look like?
- Was this a challenging process? Why?
- Are there some new *NOTICING, PRAYING, LISTENING* or *LOVING* stories to share?

Telling Our Stories

- How has your motivation for bearing witness been shifting during these weeks?
- Why would you want to share your faith story with a friend or family member? What would motivate you to do that?
- Were you part of a faith community before you believed in Jesus? Or did you come to belief, then found a church? (Belong, Believe)

Discover

Discuss “PLAUSIBILITY STRUCTURES / RELIGION IN CANADA [RESOURCE #12]

- What plausibility structures would Francis Collins and Kirsten Powers say they were starting with?
- What plausibility structures were you starting with in your journey to faith?

Video clip: *Religious landscape in Canada*

Video clip: *Shawna/Christine*

- What plausibility structure would you say Shawna and Christine are working with?

Explore

“Christians do not meet their partners in dialogue as those who possess the truth and the holiness of God but as those who bear witness to a truth and holiness that are God’s judgment on them and who are ready to hear the judgment spoken through the lips and life of their partner of another faith.” (Lesslie Newbigin, 1995: 181-182)

- Do we POSSESS/HOLD the truth and holiness of God? Are we offended or angered when people don’t believe what we believe? Should we try to PERSUADE/CONVINCE people to believe what we believe?
- What does it mean to BEAR WITNESS to truth?

Connecting Word and Deed

The habits or practices that help us to connect our desire to live as godly, loving Christians (deeds) alongside our desire to communicate to others the “good news” that we have found in Jesus (words). These practices are spiritual discernment exercises. We need to learn how to pay attention to what God the Holy Spirit is already doing in the lives of the people within our spheres of influence. Our task is not to “evangelize” our friends; our task is to bear faithful witness as we participate with what God is already doing in their lives.



The Practice: Tell Your Story

The goal here is to not to intellectually tear them a new one. It’s NOT to find just the right arguments to pound them into the dirt. It’s NOT even to tell the Big Story of the universe and everything. The goal is to talk about you. To tell your story. (Look back at Session 6)

- Talk about how God made peace with you. Nothing fancy.
- Some of us have never thought much about our own story. Now is the time to start giving it some thought. This practice promotes gratitude in you by becoming aware of the many ways God has been present in your life.
- **How will you adjust your story for your friend given their starting point?**

Assignment: In the course of LISTENING to your friends and LOVING them, an opportunity may emerge to share your personal story of coming to faith (like Kirsten shared hers). You don’t have to “tell the Gospel in a nutshell” – leave that for another day – just TELL your story.

Prayer

God of the Universe, who notices us, who draws us to yourself, who listens to us; please give me ears to truly hear the stories of my friends. Father, help me to find the space to share my story with my friend _____. God, as we co-labour together in the life of my friend, will you continue to draw him/her to Jesus, and to the same renewal of spirit that I have found in relationship with You. Amen.

Homework: “BELONG, BELIEVE” BY STUART MURRAY [RESOURCE #11]

Go back to your Personal Story. Reflect on the connection points between your friend’s story and your own. Continue to develop your Personal Story for sharing with the group in Session 11.