

How to Use the *Life's Story: Brokenness to Beauty* Gospel Conversation Guide

We live in a day where increasing numbers of people in the United States identify as Nones (no religious affiliation) or Dones (dechurched or formerly churchd). But the Great Commission is as clear for the church today as ever, and the need has never been greater for disciple-makers than now. How do we communicate the good news in a culture where the Bible is less known, the church is less respected, and yet our broken world cries for a better story?

We begin where the Bible begins with the good news: all the way back to creation. God is on a rescue mission of redemption seen through the larger biblical plotline of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. Helping spiritually lost people see the one true Story in the Bible is a bit like putting a puzzle together. We start with the border and then we fill in the rest. *Life's Story: Brokenness to Beauty* helps a person see the bigger Story God is telling.

People are more interested in their own story than any other. But when they see their story in another story, whether it's a movie, a novel, or someone's testimony, they want to know more. Helping people see their story in God's Redemptive Story will help them to see not only their need, but why and how Jesus alone can fill their deepest need.

The Main Points of the Story

The idea of the booklet is that every person—every life—has a story. The only way a person's story can make sense is by surrendering our story to the greater Story of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. The booklet overviews the four main parts of the gospel Story with four statements:

We have a BEAUTIFUL WORLD (Creation)

Our World Is BROKEN BY SIN (Fall)

We Are Still BELOVED BY GOD (Redemption)

We Must BELIEVE ON JESUS (Restoration)

2. Then, each of these statements has a diagram illustrating the main point, with statements about each listed:

A circle (earth) for a Beautiful World

A crack in the circle (sin) for Broken by Sin

A heart around the circle (love of God) for Beloved by God

A cross (believe) over the diagram for Believe on Jesus

3. A verse or verses follow the diagram to give biblical support for the content:

Romans 1:20 for Beautiful World

Romans 3:23; 6:23 for Broken by Sin

Romans 5:8 for Beloved by God

Romans 10:9-10 for Believe on Jesus

4. Two main ideas are noted for each:

Beautiful World: (1) There is great beauty in God's creation; (2) We are beautifully created in His image

Broken World: (1) Sin brings death and separation from God; (2) There is nothing we can do to fix ourselves

Beloved by God: (1) God still loves us in spite our sin; (2) God sent His Son to die in our place

Believe on Jesus: (1) Confess that Jesus is Lord (2) Trust in Him with all your heart

This final point allows you the opportunity to explain restoration further. First, we are restored to God's purpose in creating us to serve Him in this life; second, we are restored ultimately when God makes all things new.

The booklet concludes with a simple prayer that can be used to help a person receive Christ. Finally, there is information about telling someone about the decision as well as a place to put the church's information.

Sharing the Story

The booklet is designed to be a conversation guide: the more you use it the less you read it and the more you simply point out the primary features. However, you can simply read it to someone and lead them to faith!

1. The booklet has six panels including the cover. Each of the panels inside the cover are numbered for you to follow along. Take some time to review all the panels and the content. The content answers the big questions of life including:

- How did everything get here?
- What's gone wrong in our world?
- What can be done about it?
- What does the future hold?

2. When you use this with someone, fold the pages so that only the panel you are sharing with them is visible. Folding it out all the way only offers a distraction rather than keeping the focus on each point. You can practice folding each panel over then flipping it when necessary in this order:

COVER:

- (1) We have a Beautiful World
- (2) We are Broken by Sin
- (3) We are Beloved by God
- (4) We must Believe on Jesus
- (5) Call on Him Now

3. One of the best ways to learn to share this confidently is to role play with a fellow believer. I did this recently at a D-Now I led, sharing with the youth pastor. Just like a musician practicing her scales or a football player his drills, the more you rehearse using the booklet the more comfortable you will be in using it.

4. You can be more conversational just by asking key questions related to each panel. Here are the ones I typically use:

Beautiful world:

Isn't it a beautiful world (no one has said no on this on four continents to me!). You can talk about nature, animals, plants, etc.

We are different than anything else in the world, aren't we? You can talk about how we think about things and invent; how we are artistic, making music and building museums; and how we all seem to worship something (we all want more, something ultimate)

Broken world:

But something's gone wrong in our world, hasn't it?

A specific question I ask: Have you ever noticed we don't have to teach children to disobey? It's in their nature.

Beloved by God:

What can be done about the brokenness in our world and our lives?

Believe on Jesus:

How can my story move from brokenness to beauty?

4. Some basics on sharing Jesus:

(1) The power is not in your ability but in the gospel Story. Jesus did the work; we simply share the good news!

(2) We have the resource of prayer and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit as we witness. He will guide us as He guided Philip to the Ethiopian (Acts 8:25-40).

(3) Think of having a conversation rather than giving a presentation. The more you review the booklet the more you can see ways to integrate your own story of Jesus changing your life as you share.

Other resources that go with Life's Story:

Sharing Jesus, Showing Kindness by LBS Director Alvin Reid

D-Life by pastor Bill Wilks