



Building a Storytelling Culture at First McKinney Vision



“And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” 2 Corinthians 3:3

The Church Has Always Been a Storytelling Movement

Through Scripture, testimonies, parables and witness, the Christian faith has been transmitted through narrative for more than 2,000 years. Story is how we remember what God has done and recognize what he is doing now.

Why Storytelling Matters

- Stories build emotional connections and establish trust.
- Stories foster belonging; people follow what they feel connected to.
- Storytelling conveys our mission.
- **Facts inform; stories transform.**

Real-life stories of transformation consistently increase:

- Volunteer signups
- Giving
- Attendance
- Digital Discipleship and engagement

A storytelling culture is one where:

- Staff and ministry leaders actively seek out stories (Just like evangelism, **testimony is everyone's job.**)
- People are regularly invited to share what God is doing
- Testimonies are normalized
- Storytelling is a strategic tool to: clarify who we are, reinforce why we exist, and inspire people into action

Practical Guide for Staff

We are especially looking for stories that show transformation in these areas:

- Salvation and Baptisms
- Worship – Life transformation and the pouring out that flows from it
- Live in Community – Life Groups, Midweek, Bible Studies, Students and Kids
- Serve – Missions, Outreach, First Impressions
- Discipleship – D-Groups, being discipled, discipling others
- Giving – Transformational view of time, talents, and treasures

What makes a “Good Story”?

A strong ministry story usually includes:

- A real person - someone that is not leadership, staff, or a “Saint” of the church
- A problem or tension – pain, disappointment, searching, challenge, or need
- What God did – the turning point, encounter, change, or process
- How life changed – new habits, healed relationships, different priorities, renewed hope

Guiding values:

- Authenticity > polish; we are not looking for perfect people
- Specific > vague
- Human; we are looking for God’s real work in real lives > generic

What we’re asking every staff member to do:

- Routinely look for stories in your ministry area and identify people who have experienced transformation.
- Commit, as a ministry area, to collecting at least one story (for the whole ministry) every four to six weeks.
- Personally ask people to consider sharing their story and obtain their permission.
- Submit the story through the [“Share Your Story” Jotform](#). It is best if you submit the form, but individuals may also complete it themselves. Please keep in mind that we are less likely to capture stories when there are obstacles to overcome.
- Support and speak positively about our storytelling culture.

Story Capture Workflow:

- Watch for God-at-work moments in your ministry area, personally invite the person to share, and complete the Jotform.
- Communications will review the submission with the Worship and Leadership teams:
 - Evaluate clarity, impact and sensitivity.
 - Consider timing: Does it tie in to a sermon series, season or outreach initiative?
 - Identify which Discipleship Pathway the story emphasizes.
 - Reach out to the individual with next steps.
 - Schedule filming with the individual and the videographer.

Appendix A *How to Invite Someone to Share Their Story

Suggested Script for Staff

- Your faith journey and the way God has been working in your life is truly inspiring. It's a beautiful testimony that I believe could impact and encourage many others in their journey with Christ.
- I'd love to invite you to be a part of a special project where we film personal testimonies to share during our upcoming services. This is a wonderful opportunity to live out what God calls us to in 1 Peter 3:15, where we are encouraged to always be prepared to share the reason for the hope we have in Him.
- Your story is powerful evidence of God's love and transformation, and sharing it can serve as a beacon of hope and encouragement for others. Remember, your testimony is less about you and all about God's work in your life — and no one can argue with the personal change you've experienced through His grace.
- Would you be open to sharing your testimony through video? I am excited about the potential impact your story could have!

Next Steps:

- Determine who will submit the "Share your Story" Jotform (either you or them)
- I'll let our Communications team know to expect a submission
- They will reach out to learn more about your story and take it from there.

Appendix B *Interview Topics to Help People Prepare

You can share these prompts with the person before filming, or use them in conversation:

- Tell us a bit about yourself and your connection to First McKinney.
- What were you experiencing before this life-changing event or season?
- Include any relevant background: lifestyle, friends, family, expectations.
- What were you searching for? What pain or disappointment were you facing?
- What happened? What did God do?
- Describe the circumstances that led you to consider following Christ or leaning into Him more deeply.
- Explain the event, encounter, or turning point.
- Mention any key people or steps along the way.
- Share any Bible passages that were significant during this time.
- How has your life changed since then?
- What positive changes have you seen in your character, relationships, or values?
- How have you been able to handle past pain, anger, or resentment differently?
- How did a ministry, group, event, or person at First McKinney help?
- What obstacles did you face along the way?
- What encouragement would you offer to someone in a similar place?
- Is there anything you want us to avoid or especially emphasize in your story?

I'm [name], and this is how Jesus is teaching me to live and love like Him.