



What does sharing faith look like in our world today? This session gets back to the basics of what it means to share the good news, and how young people can do that today in their own lives.

GAME: Just a minute

Young people need to talk about a topic for one minute without hesitating, repeating or fumbling. They could talk for:

- Just a minute on my favourite TV programme
- Just a minute on my favourite hero or celebrity

Then see if someone can talk for:

- Just a minute on my faith



INTRODUCTION: Story

Share with the group your first experience of sharing your faith with others. What did you say? How did it go? How did you feel? What was the consequence?



“In church circles we talk a lot about sharing faith and spreading the gospel, and there’s good reason for that. The last command Jesus gave before he ascended to heaven was about sharing the good news.”

Read Matthew 28: 16-20 together.



“Perhaps the idea of sharing our faith has become a bit lost, a bit boring, or just a bit of a buzzword. It can start to lose meaning and importance. So today we are going back to basics, looking at 3 things: why we share, what we share, how we share.”

WHY WE SHARE?

“Sharing about God was never meant to be a checklist, a chore, or a challenge, it’s meant to be a response to what we see God doing. The first disciples didn’t tell others about God because they thought that’s what they needed to do to be a good Christian. They saw what Jesus had done, what Jesus had said, they difference he made, the way he healed and they couldn’t help but tell others.

When we look through the Gospels there is a common theme in the people who told others about Jesus: they had seen him do something amazing, heard him say something ground-breaking, they had witnessed something profound and they wanted others to know.

The first witness to the risen Jesus was Mary. **Read John 20: 1-18 together.**

Jesus was crucified on the Friday, and on Sunday morning Mary went to visit his grave. He had been her teacher, her leader, her friend. Now he was dead. She had gone to the grave to grieve and cry but she gets there and the tomb is empty – someone must have stolen the body. I cannot begin to imagine the pain she must have been feeling. Not only had she lost her friend, but now his body had been taken too. As she is standing there a gardener comes up to ask why she's crying and she explains that Jesus, her friend and leader had been murdered and that now somebody has stolen his body. At this point, the gardener says "Mary" and as she turns she sees the man is Jesus. Not dead but alive. Really actually there. In front of her. That is nuts. That is beyond crazy. Now if that happened to you I have no doubt that you would have done exactly what she did. You'd go straight back into town and tell everybody. You'd find everyone that loved Jesus and tell them that he's alive, that you literally just saw him. When people ask how your week has been, you're not going to be like "oh well I bought some flatbreads at the market and I stared at a wall for an hour", you'd be like "MY FRIEND WHO WAS DEAD IS NOT DEAD, I JUST SAW HIM". You see we read this story knowing the ending, we've read it a bunch of times so we forget just how incredible this story is, what this would have been like for Mary. I imagine she didn't just tell people about Jesus, I imagine she yelled and cried and laughed and wouldn't shut up about it for a very long time.

My point is that the people in the Bible who share faith, had a reason to share about Jesus. So what's our reason?

If I'm honest I'm a far greater witness to TV shows than I am to Jesus. Cause when I find a new TV programme that I love, everyone knows about it. I still haven't shut up about Bodyguard. I don't stop talking about Beyoncé, and don't get me started on Hamilton. **[feel free to change these out for your own favourite shows or people]**. Because when we see something amazing, we want to tell others about it right?! We think they'd like it. We think it could help them, or make a difference to their life. Or simply because something is so good that even if other people aren't interested, we just want to talk about it anyway.

So what's our reason to share about Jesus? What has God done in your life, what have you seen or heard that amazes you? What is too good to be true? What are others missing out on? What excites you, makes you hopeful, gives you peace, what has made a difference in your life?

If God doesn't amaze us, are we surprised that we don't bring him up in conversation? So what's your reason?

WHAT DO WE SHARE?

"What you SHARE is going to be different to others, and that's the beauty of it. We will all have different understandings of God, different experiences of God – we all have our own story to tell. So when it comes to sharing our faith there is no one way to do it. Use your story, use your gifts and what comes natural to you, use your circumstances and the situations you are in.

Talking about God isn't reserved for the pulpit or the high street soapbox. It doesn't have to be your whole life story. It can be the good and the bad, the big and the small. It can be sharing about that time you prayed for peace and actually felt peaceful afterwards. It can be sharing how incredible it is that God thought up making giraffes. It can be sharing about your friend whose broken ankle was healed. Whatever you think is worth sharing about God.

Saint Francis of Assisi is thought to have said, “Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words.” This quote gets at the idea that it’s not just what we say but also what we do that can help reveal God to the world. The way that you treat others around you and approach situations in life can say a huge amount about your values, your character and how God has been at work in your life.

Cardinal Basil Hume once said “If every single person is made in the image and likeness of God, then every single person can tell me something about God that nobody else can. That makes me very anxious to listen to everybody, because they may be saying something that only they can say.” Our stories matter. Like pieces of a mosaic, when we come together each telling our own God-stories we build a bigger picture of who God is and what he is like, and help point people to their creator.”

HOW DO WE SHARE?

Ask everyone to close their eyes. “When you imagine someone talking about their faith what picture springs to mind? Now the chances are, what you pictured probably fits into 1 of 3 groups. 1) A preacher on a Sunday 2) A door-to-door evangelist or 3) Someone in school answering a friend’s question about Jesus. Those things can be helpful in their own right, and speaking to our friends at school is a natural way to talk about our faith. We’re in school around 7 hours a day, we chat to our friends in school, so it makes sense for that to be a way we might share out faith.

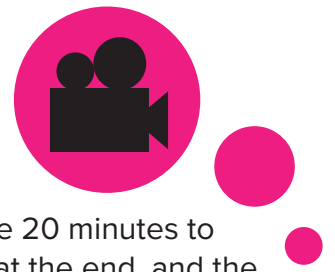
But what if I showed you a picture of someone vlogging on YouTube for who faith is part of their everyday update. What if I showed someone’s Snapchat story where they don’t just show you what they ate for dinner, but talk about their answered prayers too. Or an Instagram post sharing a beautiful sunset and how that made them think of God.

According to Google’s Generation Z report, 7 in 10 teens in the US watch more than 3 hours of online video a day. 75% of young people surveyed said that watch YouTube daily! For most of us, we’re present on social media every day. If the places where people would have witnessed to God in Bible times were the market places and the temples, our spaces today are surely school and online. It’s where we spend most of our time, it’s where we are. And if we think about it, that is the coolest opportunity! Never before in history have we had the opportunity to talk to billions of people across the world. Never before have we had the opportunity to share our faith someone we’ve never met on the other side of the globe. We have at our fingertips the opportunity to tell others what we have witnessed God doing. When we think about how we share our faith today, have we forgotten social media? If Snapchat and Instagram are an extension of us and our lives, then God is as much a part of our lives as our latest selfie game. Right?

When it comes to how we share our faith, it’s as diverse as we are. If you love writing songs, write a song about God. If you like to paint, paint God. If you love deep chats over coffee, share your faith there. If you make videos online, then use that platform to talk about what God said to you today. Next time you see something that makes you think of God, snap it and share it on Instagram and write in the caption about God. YouTube is an incredible space to get creative and have our voice heard: vlogs, sit-down videos, artsy videos, even gamer vids. So why not bring God into that space?

Let’s find our reason to share. Let’s remember that we all have something to say. Let’s use the passions and gifts we’ve been given to point to something bigger than all of us. A God worth sharing about.”

ACTIVITY: Video Challenge



Split the young people into teams with 2-5 young people in each group.

“We’re going to do a fun, quick challenge in teams. In your small groups you have 20 minutes to make a video sharing your faith. Then we’re going to watch them back together at the end, and the video with the most votes will win a prize. There’s a few rules:”

1. You’ve got to tell a real story from someone’s life in the group. Chat with each other and share your God stories, what’s your reason? What have you got that you’re inspired to share?
2. Everyone in the group has got to be involved in planning the video, making the video or being in the video.
3. The video can’t be more than 3 minutes long.
4. Get creative and think about how you could tell the story. Do you use words or not, do you sit down and talk to the camera, or do you make a more artsy video. Do you write and record a song? If you have time you could even edit it quickly on your phones.
5. [Add in a silly rule here, for example: they have to get the word “humpty-dumpty” into the video somehow.]

After 20 minutes, get the teams back together and watch the videos on a laptop, TV screen or

SHARE Film School

“Sharing your faith can be fun, creative and is a natural response to the incredible things we see God doing. If you enjoyed the challenge, and you want to think more about sharing your faith on YouTube, then Youthscape are running a film school you might be interested in.”

Show the SHARE video sent with this resource.

“SHARE is a 5-day residential for anyone aged 15-19. It’s a fantastic opportunity to get together with other young people, learning how to shoot, edit and share videos, and how to tell stories that will make a difference. It’s full of masterclasses and workshops where you can get hands-on experience. Every morning kicks off with worship and a time to connect with God, and there’s different social events each evening where you can have fun and get to know people. You don’t need a fancy camera or any prior knowledge on how to shoot or edit videos – just come and bring whatever you’ve got. If you’re nervous, see if a friend wants to come with you!

There’s just 20 spaces each year so to find out more details, dates, or to apply head to youthscape.co.uk/share or talk to your youth leader.”