

# WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

“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



## GATHER

Icebreaker – Find Your Twin

This game is played in rounds, and in each round members of the group need to find their twin and ask 3 or 4 set questions. The leader of the activity gives direction for how each person is to find their twin in each round ie. Round 1- find someone the same height as you, round 2- find someone who is in the same year at school, round 3- find someone who like the same type of music, etc. When everybody has found their twin they ask each other the 3 or 4 set questions (ie. What's your name? How would you spend your last \$10.00? What's the best thing about youth group? Etc.).

After finding your twin and asking the questions for that round, swap one item with each other (ie. shoe, sock, necklace, hat, keys, etc.) and then move on to the next round. At the conclusion of all the rounds you should have a collection of items from the people you met. Ask a few people in the group to stand up and share what items they have, who they're from, and the answers to the questions, then return the items to their owners. After a few people have shared, make sure everyone returns the items.

## PROCLAIM

Stories have the ability to inspire, to teach, to spark emotions and to change us. A good story challenges us and makes us see things differently. A good story makes us want to keep turning the next page and leaves us wanting to know more. Let's listen to this story of three trees who were dreaming about what they wanted to become and take this journey with them:

Read: The tale of the three trees (Script or Video)

**VIDEO LINK:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5qRzTOpOnk>

**SCRIPT LINK:** <https://bible.org/illustration/story-three-trees>

Questions: We all have a story to tell and things about our lives that are completely unique to us.

What examples can you think of stories Jesus told to teach and inspire?

Why do you think crowds of people followed Jesus and gathered round him just to hear him speak?

Let's hear Fran's story and allow it to inspire us in our own faith journeys.

Watch: What's your story? **LINK:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wouU31\\_RQUw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wouU31_RQUw)

Reflect on the video. What parts of Fran's story could you relate to? Has there been a time when you have had to make a choice to say yes to God or to deny your faith? What difference does it make having faith in Jesus? What things help you to feel close to God and to grow in your faith?

## BREAK

Activity:

Using large sheets of paper, ask the young people to draw a winding road from the bottom of their page to the top. At various points along the road we are going to draw road signs to show the significant moments in our lives that have directed us and led us to where we are today. Guide the young people through each step and then give them time to reflect on each question. Maybe have some music playing to help them focus and reflect on their story.



Sign 1: Who has influenced you most in your life? Parents? Grandparents? Why are they so important to you?

Sign 2: What moments in your life have been the happiest? Tell us about your most joyful memories of childhood.

Sign 3: When have you struggled and been through times of difficulty? How did you get through these sad times in your life?

Sign 4: What have been your greatest achievements so far? What moments in your life are you proud of?

Sign 5: Tell us about your hopes for the future. What is your dream? What things are you afraid of in your future that could stop you achieving your dream? What do you think God is calling you to do?

**Looking back over all of these memories, hopes, struggles and dreams, what part has God played in it all? Can you recognise where God has guided you? Have you seen the love of God in any of the people you have encountered throughout your life so far? What part does God have to play in your future?**

Once the young people have taken time to reflect on these questions and have written their responses onto their road, give them the opportunity to share their journey with a partner or in small groups. Encourage them to respect and listen to each others stories and to recognise that everyone has their own path which they are uniquely called on by God. It takes a lot of courage to share your story with others so facilitate this discussion however you feel will best help your group to feel comfortable and safe to share. This could be through the sharing of your own story at various points throughout the questions to lead by example and allow them to follow.

# SEND

Pray:

Last night I had a dream. I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonged to me, the other to the Lord. After the last scene of my life flashed before me, I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that at many times along the path of my life, especially at the very lowest and saddest times, there was only one set of footprints. This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it. "Lord, you said once I decided to follow you, You'd walk with me all the way. But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life, there was only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me." The Lord replied, "My son, my precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of suffering, when you could see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Use the footprints in the sand prayer to lead into a time of intercessions. Invite the young people to share a prayer based on their reflections on their journeys so far. It could be to thank God for a person who has influenced them, to pray for a difficult situation in their lives or for any other intention they feel they would like to pray for. Create a path of footprints leading to a crucifix or image of Jesus. On each of the footprints, write or print a different piece of scripture telling of how God is always with us and loves us. ( find them on Bible gateway) Have each of the young people take away a footprint with them and challenge them to share this piece of scripture with someone at home or at school the next day. This challenge gives them the opportunity to share their faith and to open the conversation of sharing their story and their journey of faith with others.

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