

# Main Street Church - Life Group Guide

**Message:** Stories Matter

**Speaker:** Kevin Fricker

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# STORIES MATTER

## **Connect** (20min)

*\*Break into groups of 3-4 people to enhance this sharing & prayer time.*

### **1. Stories Matter**

*"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." – King Jesus, John 16:33.*

*I think understanding your life as a story is a really terrific way of knowing where you are and knowing who you are. If you have a beautiful story, it has to have conflict. If you don't have conflict, it can't be a story. One of the things I love about our source text as Christians, the Bible, is that it teaches us not to avoid conflict. And it teaches us that before the fall of man, in Paradise, there was conflict. God wants conflict to be a part of your life. I think, in the grand epic, Jesus is the hero of our stories. And our stories, as they were, are subplots in a grand epic and our job is not to be the hero of any story. Our job is to be a saint in a story that he is telling. – Donald Miller*

a. What genres of stories (in books or film) do you enjoy and connect with the most?

*Drama, Action, Adventure, Mystery, Thriller, Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Comedy, Romance, Historical...*

b. What kind of story genre(s) has your life been this past week?

Briefly share a blessing (high) and a battle (low) from this past week in your life.

c. Take a moment to thank God and pray for one another in response to your stories.

## **Message Discussion** (50min)

*Stories matter because they change lives. We tell stories because people matter. – Kevin Fricker*

### **1. Characters**

a. If you could be a character from any movie in real life, who would you be?

b. Read [☞ Matthew 9:10-11, 11:19, Mark 2:15, Luke 15:1](#).

Does it surprise you that *Jesus liked people who were nothing like Jesus*? Why or why not?

What can we learn about Jesus and people from this? How does this encourage or challenge you?

### **2. Before & After Story**

a. Read [☞ Mark 5:1-18](#). What do you learn from this story?

b. Describe the man's life (story) before Jesus. What was his reality?

c. Describe the man's life (story) after Jesus. What changed?

d. How do you think this experience impacted the disciples and the people who knew this man's story?

### **3. Telling Your Story**

Ask your group to complete the **Telling My Story** section (p.2), then have them share their "before and after" because of their encounter with Christ (p.3). Split into smaller groups of 3-4 people to enhance sharing.

## TELLING MY STORY

### PART A – IDENTIFYING THE TESTIMONY THEMES OF MY LIFE

The following examples are areas/themes in life that Jesus may have changed you or be changing you. Consider them together and share your Top 3 with your small group.

Worries/Anxiety.....	to	Inner Peace
Guilt/Shame.....	to	Forgiveness
Anger/Temper.....	to	Patience and love
Emptiness/Lack of Purpose...	to	Purpose in life
Grief.....	to	Comfort and joy
Stress/Burnout.....	to	Rest & renewal
Low self-esteem.....	to	Significance to God
Poor health.....	to	Strength to live
Disappointment.....	to	Trust in his good plans
Insecurity.....	to	Confidence and security
Regrets.....	to	A second chance at life
Discontent-Always busy.....	to	Contentment and peace
Fears.....	to	Faith to face my fears
Loneliness.....	to	He's always with me
Addictions/Habits.....	to	Freedom
Self-centeredness.....	to	Love for others
Despair/Depression.....	to	Hope
Cheap thrills.....	to	Holy happiness
Boredom with my life.....	to	Adventure with God
Fear of Death.....	to	Assurance of Heaven
Discontentment.....	to	Contentment
Bitterness & Resentment.....	to	Forgiveness
Pain of rejection.....	to	God's unconditional love
Marriage Problems.....	to	Changes in my marriage
Financial Problems.....	to	Changes in my finances
Business Problems.....	to	Changes in my business
_____	to	_____

**The Top 3 that connect with my story are:**

a.

b.

c.

## **TELLING MY STORY**

### **PART B - WRITING MY TESTIMONY**

#### **1. What my life was like before I met Christ.**

What common circumstances would an unbeliever identify with?

What were your attitudes that an unbeliever would identify with?

What was most important to you? What substitute for God did you use to find meaning in your life?

(sports/fitness, success at work, marriage, sex, making money, drugs/alcohol, entertainment, popularity, hobbies)

#### **2. How I realized I needed Christ.**

What significant steps led up to your conversion? What needs, hurts, or problems made you dissatisfied with the way you were living without God? (Choose a theme) How did God get your attention? What motivated you?

#### **3. How I committed my life to Christ.**

What specifically did you do to step across line? Where did it happen? What did you say in your prayer? Be specific.

#### **4. The difference Jesus has made in my life.**

What benefits have you experienced or felt? What problems have been resolved?

How has Jesus helped you change? How has He helped your relationships? Give a current example.

## **BLESS & Pray** (20min)

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### **B.L.E.S.S.**

Walk through this together.

#### **B – Begin with Prayer**

- > Who are you currently praying for to come to know Jesus?

#### **L – Listen with Care**

- > One of the ways to listen is by asking questions.
- > What are some questions you could ask that would open the door for someone to share about themselves?
- > Listen for points of connection with your story, and *The Grand Story* of the gospel?

#### **E – Eat Together**

- > Jesus was famous for sharing meals with a variety of people.
- > Who can you eat with (or have a coffee with) that is far from God?

#### **S – Serve in Love**

- > What are some ways that you can serve others.
- > Are there ways that our group can serve together?

#### **S – Share your Story**

- > Share your story in such a way that demonstrates that God is also at work in their life.

### **PRAY**

Pray for open hearts and opportunities.

As you pray for one another, take some time to pray for people in your lives who aren't yet in a relationship with Jesus. Pray that the Lord will give you an opportunity to B.L.E.S.S them in the coming days or weeks.

### **2 Corinthians 5:11-21 -- *We Are God's Ambassadors***

<sup>11</sup> Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. <sup>12</sup> Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. <sup>13</sup> If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. <sup>14</sup> Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. <sup>15</sup> He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them. <sup>16</sup> So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now!

<sup>17</sup> This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. **The old life is gone; a new life has begun!**

<sup>18</sup> And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. <sup>19</sup> For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> **So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"** <sup>21</sup> For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.