

1. **You have a testimony.** If you are a Christian, you have a testimony. That doesn't have to mean a conversion experience where you can give a specific date where you prayed the "sinner's prayer". Even if you can give a date, that might not be the most relevant testimony for you right now. Maybe it should be about times in your life where your relationship to God made a difference such as family separations, deaths or tragedies or in your personal struggles. It might be where God comforted you or gave you victory. You might just need to talk about the blessings in your life and give glory to God for them. It might even be an ongoing struggle in your life and how God and your Christian brothers and sisters are supporting you in it. Of course, it might also be a conversion experience. But the point is that if you have a relationship with Christ, your testimony is simply telling about that relationship. Read Hebrews 11 to see the gamut of testimonies that faith can produce. Pray about what in your life God is leading you to tell about and, in that story, give glory to Him.

2. **Excuses.** You may feel that your testimony is boring or too ordinary. Or unimportant. Or that it wouldn't be relevant, especially to someone in Mexico. Or that your walk with Christ isn't good enough for you to be giving a testimony. Or it might be painful to remember let alone talk about things God has dealt with in your life. Or it would be impossible for you to give your testimony in public so why write it? Or that there are a lot of "more spiritual" people on the team whose testimonies would be better. Or (fill in the blank) _____. Here's the facts:

- God created you to give glory to Him in your life. (Exodus 9:16)
- He commands you to share Him with others. (Matthew 28:19)
- Your testimony is just what some particular person out there needs to hear. (Luke 8:39)
- He will supernaturally give you the words and strength to testify for Him. (Mark 13:11)

On a more earthly note, we will hunt you down and make sure that your testimony is written out. ☺ Writing your testimony is not optional for this trip. This includes both youth and adults. Only pastors and the site leaders are exceptions.

3. **Won't be forced.** No one will be forced to give his or her testimony in Mexico. On each site team, around six people might get to give their testimonies. Maybe more. Your testimonies will be a valuable resource for messages, prison ministry, even VBS. But we recognize that not everyone is ready to speak up front.

4. **Details.** On the back of this page are an outline and a space to write. Here's some other stuff to consider:

- Your testimony will get translated into Spanish by one of our translators before we go. If you give it, you have the option of reading it in Spanish but the expectation is that you would give it in English using a translator.
- Use simple phrases – this helps the translator. Avoid slang that might not translate easily such as "It was totally sick." Maybe the translator recognizes that that means "Fue muy bueno" (it was very good) or maybe not. ☺
- Be careful in your use of dramatic impact unless it is the core of your story. Be aware that some of the churches we partner with are pretty conservative. Be sensitive to this in the details you give in your story. For example, if drugs or alcohol is central to what God has done in your life you can be somewhat specific. It's okay to say that you were using and in the grip of it but don't focus on giving details of what you did, focus instead on what God did to rescue you. If divorce is central to your witness (i.e. your parents divorced), say so but emphasize how God helped you deal with it rather than the drama of it. Some things are best dealt with in general terms like "I was doing bad things that displeased God and dragged me down." Examples of this would be pornography or sexual activity. If you have doubts, talk to Caden, Jeremiah, Jorge, Carlos, or John to about what details to reveal.
- Again, the point of your story is not you or your problems – or even your victories. Instead, the focus is on God who put your feet on solid ground. Let's give glory to Him.

1. Begin by thanking God for the opportunity to be with them. If you can do that in Spanish, it will be even more effective.

Name: _____

2. Find something you can affirm about their country, church or people. Perhaps it is something you've seen or someone has done for you. For example, "Thank you for welcoming me to your beautiful country." or "I have enjoyed making new friends here."

3. Bring a greeting from our church. For example, "I bring you greetings from your brothers and sisters in Christ in the United States." or "I bring you greetings from my church in Bonsall, California, they are praying for us while I am here in Ensenada."

4. Tell a little about yourself next. Tell about your family, school, interests, and activities. If you have relatives on the team, mention that.

5. Tell how you came to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Maybe you don't have a dramatic conversion to share – or even a specific date or occasion. That's fine, just tell your story. Don't feel you need to pinpoint a time and place where you accepted Christ if you don't remember. Perhaps you've had an awareness of God since you were a child. You might tell how God became real and personal in your life in a fresh way, say, at a camp experience or something like that. You don't have to be a preacher or an evangelist – you're simply sharing your story. In telling your story you are witnessing for Jesus Christ. Every Christian can say, "This is what God has done in my life." Who we are is more important than what we say.

6. State how your life is different since you came to know Jesus in a personal way. Or, you can state what need you had and how God has met that need. You can use word pictures here: "I was dirty and now I'm clean." or "I was lost and now I'm found." Or you might tell about how God used you in some way through some experience of serving Him.

7. End with a Bible verse. Use a verse that has special meaning to you. You can use one that goes along with your testimony or as a challenge to you and those who are listening.