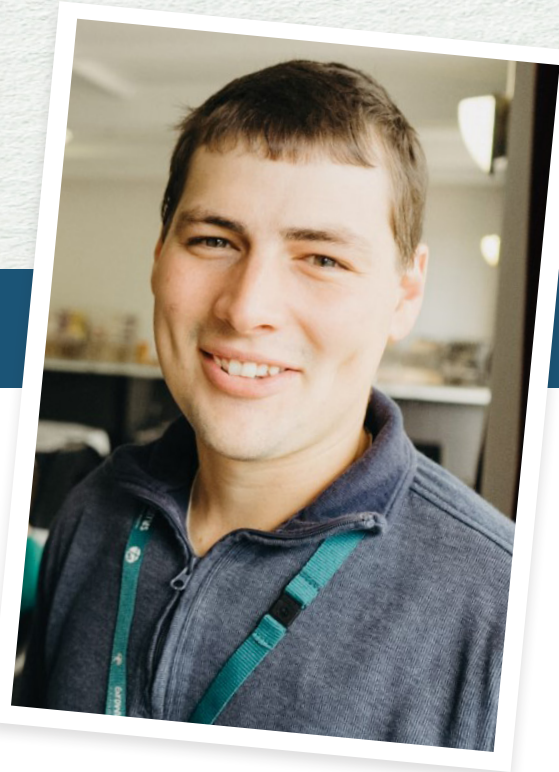




Talking POINTS

VOLUME 2
SESSION 3

WHAT IS MY TESTIMONY?



story

I was traveling on an international Lutheran Youth Encounter team of 7 people, aged 22 and 23, around the USA, Germany and Denmark.

We were essentially a traveling band and would play concerts for churches, youth groups and camps. In Europe we were playing in more state schools and were able to talk about God openly.

During our concert we would sing songs, have sing-along songs, drama, puppets and a sharing or testimony time. Usually with the sing-alongs we would hand out percussion instruments for audience participation and fun. I was the lead singer so because I did not have an instrument I was free to roam the room to hand out these instruments.

One day in Denmark we were playing a concert to a large group of high school students. During the song as I was handing out the instruments I noticed a boy at the back who was not really involved during the concert so I thought I might give him a chance to join in. He put his head down and hugged his legs close to his body. Big answer "no, he was not interested at all."

At the end of the concert he came up to me as we were packing up the cords and instruments. He said, "I am sorry I didn't take the instrument but I couldn't join in with something I don't believe. It is clear watching you sing that you really believe in this stuff. I have 2 minutes before I have my next class. Tell me why I should believe in God."

Christine

reflect

1. Have you ever had someone ask you why you believe in God? How did you answer them?
2. How would you describe God's relationship with you and your relationship with God?

context

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:13-16

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. **Matthew 28:19-20**

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" **Romans 10:9-15**



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, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. **1 Peter 3:15b-18**

read

Read and discuss how faith is being shared:

Acts 17:16-34

Paul uses an intellectual approach and enters a debate about his faith when he is asked to explain his ideas.

John 9:17-33

The blind man gives his testimony.

John 4:28-30 and 39-42

The woman invites people to come and hear Jesus.

Mark 5:18-20

The man went home to his own people and shared his testimony.

Acts 13:42-44

Paul and Barnabas give instruction and teaching and also invest their time with the people.

talk

1. How do you feel about the statement 'always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have'?
2. Is there a wrong or right way to give your personal testimony?
3. What criteria does a testimony need for its effectiveness?
4. Which style best suits your personality? Some give testimony to something that happened to them and changed their life dramatically, some invest time, some give instruction, some share relationally, others invite people to hear the word, some are in for a debate and confrontation.

pray

- That God gives you the words to speak when you need to share your faith
- That God gives you an opportunity to share your faith with fellow believers and non-believers
- That the Holy Spirit gives you the strength and conviction to boldly profess your faith
- For guidance to be a great witness to your faith

bless

Bless each other with these words or make up your own.

May the Holy Spirit strengthen you in your faith and give you the words to use to be a faithful witness. Amen.

notes _____
