



REACH

MONTREAL

BE THE CHURCH. LOVE THE CITY. REACH MONTREAL.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION PACKAGE

CONTENTS

- 1. REQUIREMENTS FOR COVENANT MEMBERSHIP**
- 2. PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY: VISION, MISSION, VALUES & STRATEGY**
- 3. STATEMENT OF FAITH & DISTINCTIVES**
- 4. CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE COMMITMENT**
- 5. SEXUAL ETHICS, ORIENTATION & ACTIVITY POSITION STATEMENT**
- 6. MEMBERSHIP COVENANT**
- 7. HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORY**

REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Membership at Reach Montreal is an invitation to be celebrated. We believe that membership in the local church is the biblical pattern for followers of Jesus to experience community and maturity, practice spiritual discipline, and to live as servants both inside and outside of the church. The New Testament most often refers to the church as a “household” or “family,” made up of a particular community of disciples in a particular place. Relationship with God is intended to happen in the context of relationship with fellow believers as we learn to practice the rhythms of a life changed by Jesus Christ.

The earliest description of the church in the Book of Acts shows believers gathering publically for worship, eating together, celebrating and mourning together, sharing resources with each other, praying together, teaching each other, and holding each other accountable (Acts 2:42-47). Membership invites us to know and serve other believers and to be known by and served by other believers. Membership is also the training ground for Christian discipline, maturity, and leadership. If someone makes a good member, often they will make a great leader, as they look to serve and care for others in the church. This is what church membership is all about.

Members of Reach Montreal must meet the following requirements:

- 1)** Are 18 years of age or older.
- 2)** Committed follower of Jesus and have a credible profession of faith and personal testimony.
- 3)** Has been baptized as a believer as taught in Scripture.
- 4)** Demonstrate agreement and alignment with the Philosophy of Ministry, Statement of Faith & Distinctives, Christian Lifestyle Commitment, Sexual Ethics, Orientation & Activity Position Statement, and Membership Covenant of Reach Montreal.
- 5)** Completed our “We Are Reach Montreal” Covenant Membership Class.
- 6)** Completed the [Membership Questionnaire](#).
- 7)** Completed Member Interview with Elder(s) of Reach Montreal.

PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

VISION:

To see every borough of Montreal forever renewed with the good news of Jesus, recognizing Him as our true source of purpose and joy.

MISSION:

To reach all spheres of Montreal culture together with the love of Jesus by living authentic and generous lives.

VALUES:

Jesus & His Gospel: Jesus changes everything. The message and mission of Jesus informs everything we do and do not do as a church. Jesus is the 'why' behind the 'what' of our lives and since he is the only true Head of the church, we strive to follow His lead in all that we do. Our hope is not in 'religious' things we can do for God, but in what God has done for us through Jesus. The best way to explore Jesus is to begin with what he said about himself and how he lived his life. This is our aim as we study the Bible, history, theology, philosophy, and the sciences together in light of who Jesus is.

Community: The church is not simply an event that happens on Sunday, a building people attend, or a weekly gathering for Christians. The church is a people changed by Jesus and committed to live all of life for Jesus. We aim to provide people with meaningful opportunities to explore Jesus and impact our city using events, big and small. This way, we intentionally gather together as the church to be transformed, and we scatter together as the church to transform culture.

Culture: Culture is what most people do most of the time. The decisions of our everyday lives are directly impacted by what we believe about life, purpose, and satisfaction. We not only work to *engage* culture, but also aspire to be *engaging for* culture. In everything we do, we look to represent the hope and love of Jesus in creative and relevant ways as we influence the arts, education, family, media, government, and commerce of our culture.

Authenticity: We don't have it all together, so we don't pretend to. Living life trying to impress God and others is exhausting. We aim to be an accessible, welcoming, and authentic community where it's okay to not be okay. We live life with eyes wide open as

we explore our purpose together and encourage everyone to discover who they are in light of who Jesus is.

Celebration: God does not need us, but he does want us. We are invited and encouraged to serve and love God and share our lives with others. This not only frees us from the pressures of performance, but also releases us to serve and care for people with true joy and appreciation. We are thrilled and humbled to be apart of what God is doing across our city and the world, and look for every opportunity to celebrate, laugh, and re-create together.

Excellence: Rather than settle for the status quo, we always look to improve and refine our events, services, and media. Because in so many ways “the medium is the message,” we aim to use everything God has given us to communicate to culture with beauty and care. We offer and accept constructive feedback to constantly improve in all that we do because God deserves our best.

Family: The church is not simply a community, but a family who together experience the hope, joy, and love of Jesus. We aim to create age-appropriate environments and activities for all ages and life stages to explore Jesus in creative and relevant ways. No matter where you’re coming from or the circumstances you’re facing, we want you to be a part of the family.

Diversity: We avoid uniformity by celebrating unity through diversity. We serve a creative God who gave us the beautiful gifts of race, culture, gender, and language. Jesus’ church is to be a home for people of all colors, shapes, personalities, backgrounds, ages, life stages, ethnicities, and socio-economic differences.

Generosity: We can never out-give God. The love, grace, and hope we are invited to experience in Jesus is a free and generous gift. There is nothing we can do to earn it or lose it. It is entirely an open invitation to accept the life-giving relationship with Him we were created for. This is why we live to meet the real relational, emotional, and economic needs around us. We prioritize giving our time, talents, and resources in order to reach and impact those in need.

Teamwork: People are never a means to an end. We work hard to develop people so that they can grow, serve, and join in the mission of God with the gifts, skills, and resources he has given them. No one person or group controls the church. Rather, we are relentless in developing teams of qualified and called leaders who excel at serving, guiding, and equipping the church as she moves towards Jesus and outwards into culture.

STRATEGY: the vision, mission, and values above are practiced in the following ways:

- 1) **City Groups:** city groups are accessible and authentic communities (approximately 15 people or less) that gather throughout the week to explore the Gospel message, practice community as family, and engage in mission throughout the city. Jesus taught his disciples how to follow him in the everyday stuff of life. City groups serve to teach and demonstrate how we follow Jesus as Lord and Saviour where it matters. Our aim is to have city groups actively serving every borough of Montreal, as the Lord leads.

- 2) **Church Gatherings & Events:** our Sunday gatherings seek to proclaim and celebrate the person and work of Jesus. We offer engaging and age-appropriate learning environments for everyone as we sing, celebrate, pray, and learn from the Bible. We always strive to use art, media, and technology in ways that effectively engage culture and present Jesus with clarity and beauty.

- 3) **Community Engagement:** engaging, serving, and loving our communities is the natural and necessary overflow of a life with Jesus. We actively look for ways to meet relational, emotional, and economic needs for the building up of individuals, families, and neighbourhoods through the love of Jesus. We intentionally look for opportunities to build relationships with people who are skeptical of Christianity, the Bible, and the church in an effort to thoughtfully engage differing beliefs, values, and worldviews.

- 4) **DNA Groups:** DNA stands for “discover, nurture, and act.” These affinity groups of 3-4 (men with men, women with women) provide an intimate and comfortable environment for disciples to develop deep relational connections focused on transparency, transformation, and growth. DNA groups encourage us to discover how the Holy Spirit leads, speaks, and empowers us to live out our identity in Jesus in the context of community.

- 5) **Church Planting:** we aspire to be a church-planting church that supports and initiates new Gospel-centred works both locally and globally. We look for opportunities to partner with new churches, church planting networks, and denominational initiatives with our prayer, relationships, and resources to see the Gospel reach into areas of need.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

BIBLE

We believe the Bible to be the complete Word of God; that the sixty-six books, as originally written, comprising the Old and New Testaments, were verbally inspired by the Spirit of God and were entirely free from error; that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice and the true basis of Christian union.

GOD

We believe that there is one living and true God eternally existing in three persons: God The Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. These three persons are equal in every divine attribute and they have distinct but harmonious offices in the work of Creation, Providence, and Redemption.

God The Father: We believe in God the Father; an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayers, and He saves from sin and eternal death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

God The Son: We believe in the eternal existence of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles and His teachings. We believe in His substitutionary, atoning death for the sins of all people, His bodily resurrection, His ascension into Heaven, and His intercession for believers, and His personal, visible return to earth.

God The Holy Spirit: We believe in the absolute and essential Deity and Personality of the Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. We believe furthermore that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the Day of Redemption.

MAN

We believe that mankind was created, male and female, by God in His own image and likeness; that, by choice, he fell from innocence into sin; that by doing so, he incurred the wrath of God which resulted in physical and spiritual death. We believe that Adam's entire posterity is born with an inherited sinful nature and is, therefore, alienated from God. We believe that man is inherently sinful and of himself utterly unable to remedy his lost condition.

SATAN

We believe that Satan is man's great tempter; the enemy of God and Christ; the accuser of the saints. He is destined to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, to suffer eternal punishment in a place prepared for him and his angels.

SALVATION

We believe that salvation is by the sovereign, electing grace of God; that by the appointment of the Father, Christ voluntarily suffered a vicarious (substitutionary), expiatory (paying the penalty for sin) and propitiatory (appeasing the wrath of God) death; that justification is by faith alone in the all-sufficient sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord

Jesus Christ and that those whom God has effectually called shall be divinely preserved and finally perfected in the image of the Lord.

FUTURE THINGS

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the resurrection of all people, in the eternal life of the redeemed and the eternal suffering of the unredeemed.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that a church is a company of Christ-followers, called out from the world, separated unto the Lord Jesus Christ, voluntarily associated for the ministry of the Word, the mutual edification of its members, the propagation of the faith and the observance of the ordinances. We believe that it is a sovereign, independent body, exercising its own divinely awarded gifts, precepts and privileges under the Lordship of Christ, the Great Head of the Church, and under the care and leadership of called and qualified elders and deacons. Following the practice of the early church, we gather together for corporate worship on Sunday and practise community, fellowship, prayer, and discipleship together in everyday life.

ORDINANCES

We believe that there are only two ordinances for the church, as observed in the New Testament:

1) *Baptism*, which is the immersion of the believer in water, in obedience to Christ's command and in identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

**Baptism is intended only for those who have professed faith in Jesus Christ and can give sufficient testimony to the core beliefs of the Christian faith. We baptize by immersion not only because it is the original significance of the word, but also because it best demonstrates the spiritual reality of baptism, symbolizing our death and resurrection in Christ. If you have not been baptized, we ask that you take this step before becoming a Covenant Member of Reach Montreal.*

2) *The Lord's Supper/Communion*, which is the memorial wherein the believer partakes of the two elements (the bread and the cup), which symbolize the Lord's broken body and shed blood, proclaiming His death until His return.

CHURCH AND STATE

We believe in the separation of church and state and that God has entrusted churches and governments with different kinds of authority.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of Divine appointment for the interest and good order of society; that those in authority are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the laws of God.

MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

It is the biblical position that marriage involves the union of one man and one woman in permanent sacred fidelity. Marriage is a good gift from God that should be celebrated within His standards of honour and holiness. Therefore, sexual intimacy is properly

exercised and pursued within the confines of this marital relationship. Sexual immorality, defined as any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of the sacred marital relationship between one man and one woman, is clearly and expressly prohibited by the Lord. We believe that all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or even lustful intent toward such, as sinful, inappropriate for believers, and ultimately unsatisfying.

DISTINCTIVES

WE ARE FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST

We are a member church of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist churches (fellowship.ca), which is a voluntary association of approximately 500 churches organized into 5 regions across Canada formed in 1953: Pacific, Prairies, Central (Ontario and Anglophone Quebec), Quebec (Francophone Quebec), and Atlantic. Membership in the Fellowship requires that each church be in agreement with the [Fellowship's Affirmation of Faith](#) and encourages each church to freely choose which local, national, and international projects they desire to participate in and invest in.

WE ARE REFORMED

Reflecting the key theological distinctives of historic reformed theology, we ascribe to the *Five Solas* derived from the Protestant Reformation: *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), *Sola Gratia* (by grace alone), *Sola Fide* (through faith alone), *Sola Christus* (in Christ alone), and *Soli Deo Gloria* (for the glory of God alone). We hold to the authority of Scripture, the centrality of the Gospel in all of life, the sovereignty of God, salvation by grace through faith, the essential role of the local church for Christian doctrine and devotion, and the necessity of evangelism, missional innovation and cultural engagement.

WE ARE ELDER LED

We believe that the local church should be led by a qualified team of male elders/pastors under the primary authority and leadership of Jesus as the true Head and Shepherd of His Church (1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Pet 5:1-4). As shepherds and overseers of a local church, elders/pastors are entrusted with protecting, leading, equipping, disciplining, and caring for the corporate church and its individual members, as well as the oversight of all ministry, operations and finances of the church.

WE ARE COMPLEMENTARIAN

We believe that women and men are absolutely equal in essence, dignity, value, competence, and gifting, but are distinct by divine design. As part of God's created order, women and men have different yet complementary roles and responsibilities in the home and in the church. Within the local church, women and men are both invited to lead in a variety of ways for the health, growth, and maturity of the church. We believe that Scripture reserves the office, responsibility, and function of elder/pastor for called and qualified men and will always strive to honour and celebrate the spiritual gifts and leadership of women and men as Scripture allows.

CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE COMMITMENT

Reach Montreal's mission, values, and community life are formed by a commitment to the person and work of Jesus Christ and evidenced by members who pursue truth and excellence with grace and diligence, treat people and ideas with charity and respect, and think critically and constructively about complex issues.

Believers should strive to put certain attitudes and actions to death while showing love and serving others by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is vital that each person who accepts the invitation to become a member of Reach Montreal carefully considers and sincerely embraces this lifestyle covenant.

Members of Reach Montreal commit themselves to:

- cultivate Christian virtues such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, compassion, humility, forgiveness, peacemaking, mercy and justice (Gal 5:22-23).
- practice chastity unless married and, if married, complete fidelity within heterosexual and monogamous marriage; observe modesty, purity and appropriate intimacy in all relationships, reserve sexual expressions of intimacy for marriage, and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex and pornography (Rom 13:11-14; 1 Cor 6:15-20, 10:8; Eph 5:3; 1 Thess 4:1-8; Heb 13:4).
- refrain from illegal drug use, drunkenness, gossip, overconsumption of media (print, television, video games, social media, internet, recreation) and other sinful behavior as the Bible teaches, and treat all persons with respect and dignity by upholding their God-given worth from conception to death (Rom 1:28-32, 13:13; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:18; James 3:3-18).
- submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by following the biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another, with the aim of such discipline being repentance and restoration and openly receive direct and loving discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers and leaders of the church (Psalm 141:5; Matt 18:15–20; 1 Cor 5:9-13; Heb 12:5-11).
- confess my sin to God and to fellow believers, repent and seek help to put my sin to death and encourage other members in their pursuit of the same (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5; James 5:16; 1 John 1:6-10).
- submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church (Eph 4:1-3; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:5).

SEXUAL ETHICS, ORIENTATION & ACTIVITY POSITION STATEMENT

People face significant challenges in practicing biblical sexual health within a highly sexualized culture. A biblical view of sexuality holds that a person's decisions regarding his or her body are physically, spiritually and emotionally inseparable. Such decisions affect a person's ability to live out God's intention for wholeness in relationship to God, to one's (future) spouse, to others in the community, and to oneself. Further, according to the Bible, sexual intimacy is reserved for marriage between one man and one woman, and within that marriage bond it is God's intention that it be enjoyed as a means for marital intimacy and procreation. Honouring and upholding these principles, members of Reach Montreal strive for purity of thought and relationship, respectful modesty, personal responsibility for actions taken, and avoidance of contexts where temptation to compromise would be particularly strong.

Additionally, Reach Montreal aspires to be a community where everyone is welcome to begin or continue their pursuit of the Christian faith. Rather than evaluate our church based on beliefs about sensitive and controversial topics like sexuality, we invite anyone to develop relationships with our church leaders and members to explore how we practice love for our neighbour, regardless of their current beliefs and lifestyle. The statement below expresses the position Reach Montreal holds regarding the place of sexual activity in the life of the follower of Jesus Christ.

BELIEFS

- 1) We believe that regardless of sexual orientation, sexual activity, or sexual identity, every one of us is equally sinful and yet more infinitely loved by God.
- 2) We believe that human sexuality is a gift from God. We believe that many of us struggle with some degree of brokenness in this area. While we believe that our sexuality has been designed by God for our good and our pleasure we also understand that we have been guilty at times of distorting it and becoming mastered by it.
- 3) We believe there should be no "us" and "them" rhetoric in our conversations, positions, or practices on sexuality. Many of us struggle in a variety of ways.
- 4) We believe that Christ-followers are called to be sexually active only in a loving, respectful, passionate manner within a heterosexual, monogamous, exclusive, covenant relationship of marriage.

- 5) We believe that the emphasis in Scripture is on sexual activity rather than sexual temptation or sexual orientation. We affirm therefore that it is the condoning or practicing of sexual activity outside the boundaries of a heterosexual, monogamous, exclusive, covenant relationship of marriage that is contrary to the teaching of Scripture and outside of God's intended purpose for sexuality.
- 6) We believe that the issue of whether people can be born with a specific orientation or attraction that differs from the teaching of Scripture or that such orientation or attraction is caused by early childhood experiences should not determine our sexual ethics as Christ-followers.
- 7) We believe that many people who follow Jesus, regardless of their sexual orientation or attraction, may be called to a life of celibacy for the sake of the Gospel and that we should celebrate this choice as a gift offered to God and others.
- 8) We believe that since the unique ethics of Jesus are based on God's original design rather than later religious developments, following them universally would lead to human flourishing. However, we also believe that these ethics should not be expected from or forced upon those who do not claim to follow Jesus. Jesus' teaching is for Jesus' disciples. We therefore will work against hate speech and hate crimes in this area. We affirm the right of all law-abiding people to earn a living and to live lives that are free of harassment.
- 9) All people who want to explore the teachings of Jesus are welcome at Reach Montreal and we invite all spiritual seekers to be a part of our church community.
- 10) We believe that the most important orientation is not our sexual orientation but our spiritual orientation. We believe that God calls us into a relationship in which our core orientation is toward him. Jesus invites all people to a new orientation.

KEY BIBLICAL TEXTS

- Matthew 5-7 (The Sermon on the Mount)
- Matthew 19 (Marriage & Singleness for the Kingdom)
- 1 Corinthians 7 (The Gifts of Marriage & Singleness)
- Romans 3:23-24 (Our Shared Status as Broken People)
- Titus 3:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 1 Peter 3:15-16 (Our Attitude of Grace, Gentleness, & Respect)
- Philippians 3:13-14 (Freedom from the Pains of Our Past)
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17 (Becoming Our True Selves)
- 1 John 4:7-21 (The Priority of Love)

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

The Reach Montreal Membership Covenant lists the mutual commitments, expectations, and responsibilities between each individual member and elder of our church. It is the responsibility of each covenant member to have carefully read and considered the beliefs, positions, and expectations reflected above in their entirety and address any questions or concerns with an elder prior to committing to the terms of the membership covenant.

The elders of Reach Montreal covenant...

- to identify, train, and appoint elders, deacons and leaders according to the criteria of Scripture and with thoughtful and prayerful consideration for the health and maturity of Reach Montreal.
- to prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward all resources to the best of their ability based on Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- to care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth, and love.
- to provide teaching, counsel, and encouragement from the whole of Scripture.
- to equip the members of the church for the work of ministry and the building up of the body as a way to fulfill the Great Commission.
- to protect against false teachers and teaching and rebuke anyone who opposes sound doctrine; and guard against any destructive or divisive teachings, persons or behaviours that violate any of the core beliefs and practices of Reach Montreal.
- to lovingly and prayerfully exercise protective, corrective, and restorative discipline when necessary, for the glory of God, the good of the one disciplined, and the health of the church as a whole.
- to set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below.

As a member of Reach Montreal I covenant...

- to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues pertaining to Christian doctrine and devotion.
- to actively pursue the Lord Jesus Christ through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship with other believers in community & the practice of spiritual disciplines such as sabbath rest, fasting, silence & solitude, and corporate worship.

- to follow the commands and example of Jesus by participating in the ordinances prescribed to His Church: **1)** by being baptized as an outward symbol of an inward conversion; **2)** by regularly remembering and celebrating the person and work of Christ through communion.
- to regularly participate in the life of Reach Montreal by attending weekly worship services, engaging in gospel-centered community, serving others inside and outside of the church, and joining a City Group.
- to steward the resources God has gifted to me, including my time, spiritual gifts, natural talents, material possessions, and finances. This includes consistent and intentional financial giving, service, and participation in community that is generous, cheerful, and sacrificial.
- by God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk in holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ.
- to refrain from such activities that Scripture deems unbecoming of Christian living, in accordance with the Christian Lifestyle Commitment above.
- to honestly express my present struggles and temptations to others, by confessing sin in an act of repentance and personal growth.
- to pursue holiness in all areas of life as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, by God's grace through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- to submit to the discipline of God through His Holy Spirit by: following the biblical procedures for church discipline where sin is evident in another—the hope of such discipline being repentance and restoration; and receiving loving and truthful discipline when approached biblically by fellow believers or elders of Reach Montreal.
- to submit to the elders and other appointed leaders of the church and diligently strive for unity and peace within the church.
- to do the following should I leave the church for any righteous reason(s): notify the appropriate leadership of my reason(s) and seek another church with which I can carry out my biblical responsibilities as a believer in a local church.

By my agreement below I affirm that:

- I have accepted the invitation to become a member of Reach Montreal with all the mutual benefits and responsibilities that are involved.
- I understand that by becoming a member of Reach Montreal I have also become a representative of Reach Montreal and am responsible for the overall unity, health, and growth of the church and its leadership and membership.

- I have carefully read and considered Reach Montreal's Philosophy of Ministry, Statement of Faith & Distinctives, Christian Lifestyle Commitment, Sexual Ethics, Orientation & Activity Position Statement, and Membership Covenant and will join in fulfilling all the responsibilities listed as a member of Reach Montreal.

If you affirm this covenant, please fill out the Membership Application [found online here](#). An elder will be in touch with you shortly after receiving and reviewing your application to discuss next steps.

If you have any questions about anything listed in this Covenant Membership Information Package, please email membership@reachmtl.com and we'll be happy to answer your questions.

HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORY

1 Peter 3:15 teaches believers to “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” Sharing our testimonies or stories with others is a powerful reminder of the grace of God, the power of the Gospel, and the work of Jesus.

One key thing to remember as you think through your story is that *you are not the hero of your story*. Remember that your story isn't about you, but about how God has pursued, rescued, and changed you through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. With this in mind, it is always great to incorporate at least one key Scripture or life verse that captures a major aspect of your testimony.

Think through the following structure as you organize your story:

- **CREATION:** what's your background (family of origin, where you grew up, exposure to religion/Christianity, etc.)? What were you taught about God, Christianity, and Jesus?
- **FALL:** what was life like before you met Jesus? Challenges, difficulties, etc.? Where did you get your identity, security, happiness, and value from? How did those things let you down? How did the Gospel message first challenge you and become attractive to you?
- **REDEMPTION:** when and how did your view of Jesus change? Why did you finally surrender your life to Christ? When did this happen and how? What specific 'good news' about Jesus and the Christian message gripped you the most?
- **NEW CREATION:** how is life different now? What motivates you now? What has changed in your attitude, perspective & character? What are your future goals and hopes as you follow Jesus?