

## 02\_SIGN language

### Does My Sign Make Sense?

#### BY THE END OF THIS SESSION ...

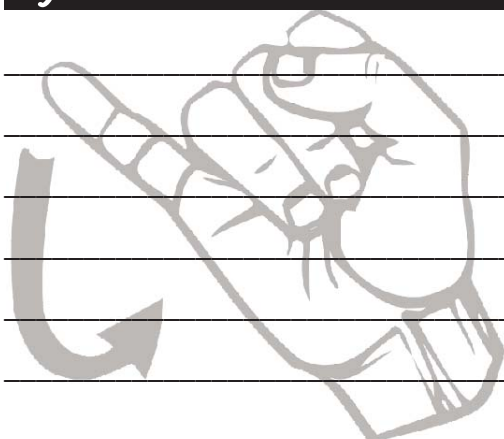
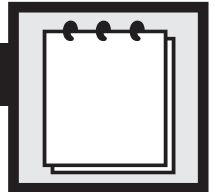
I'll know how to share My Story, and will have practiced drawing and explaining *The Big Story*. With some mid-week practice, I'll be able to share my testimony in under 100 words by next week's session.

#### Video: *Setting the Scene*



- ❖ Common language makes communication possible
- ❖ A communication conundrum in a Malaysian diner
- ❖ Sign Language makes complex concepts tangible and real
- ❖ In a world deaf to religious jargon, our stories and parables provide a currency of common communication
- ❖ Stories sneak past defences and ground *The Big Story*
- ❖ Session 02 focus: clear communication for a Sign that makes sense: testimony, bridges, questions, analogies

#### *my thoughts*



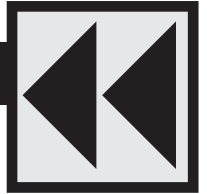
#### *take it to God*



Are you aware that you have a story to tell? No one can truly encounter God and stay the same. *How has your life changed?* Spend a few minutes in prayer, thanking Jesus for what He's done in and for you. Then, wait for a minute on God in silence as you ask Him to bring to mind the major work of transformation in your life. We're all a work in progress, so this isn't a call to dress up our struggles and make like we're perfect. But if you've aligned and submitted your life to Jesus, and are stumbling forward in His direction, then you'll have tasted eternal life (John 7:17, 38; 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:16-19; Galatians 5:16-25). What's the heart of your story? *Thank God.*

## recapping

- ☞ What were you most inspired or challenged by in the devotions from the last week?
- ☞ Did you get any opportunities over this last week to point people to Jesus, especially the five friends in your prayers? (Don't forget to keep praying for them—make this a habit.)
- ☞ Okay, here's the big one. *I hope you practiced sharing THE BIG STORY, because ...*

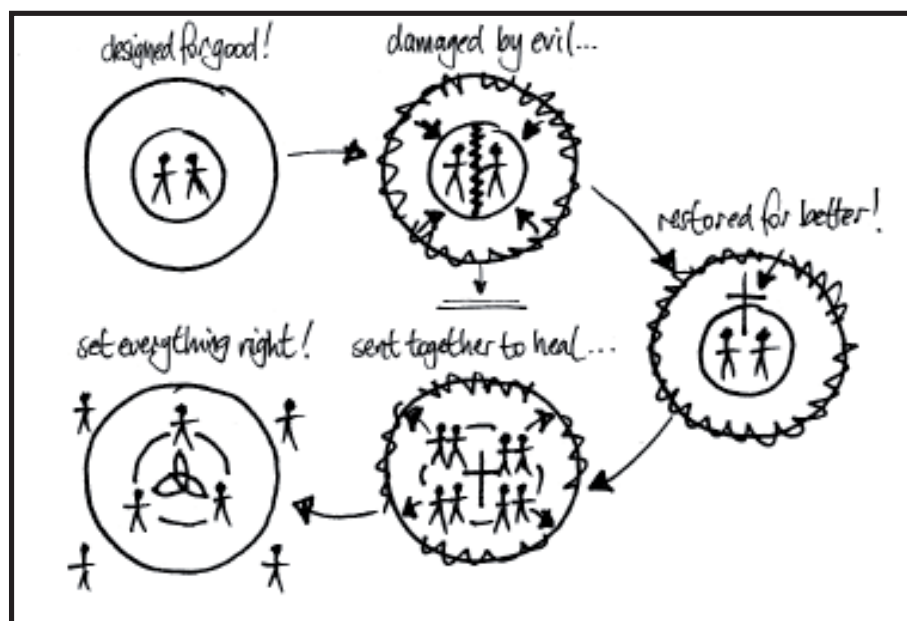


## try this



For the next 15 minutes, break into pairs, grab a pen and paper, and role play sharing *The Big Story* that you learned last week. *The five key phrases* should guide you through: *designed for good* >> *damaged by evil* >> *restored for better* >> *sent together to heal* >> *set everything right*. This will probably feel pretty messy, but that's okay. Evangelism often is. The key is practice.

**For those struggling, use the hand-drawn diagram below as a help. And if your group really bombs on this task, perhaps take some time to re-watch the DVD clip from last week.**



## truth time



- ☞ Do you think you've got a story to tell? Why, or why not?
- ☞ When an opportunity to point people to Jesus arises, are you an *avoider* or an *erupter*?<sup>3</sup>

I tend to  
shut down

I tend to spew the  
truth on people

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

- ☞ How transparent about your faith are you with your friends and family who aren't Christian? Do you "edit" yourself, or are you authentic, open, and honest? Why?

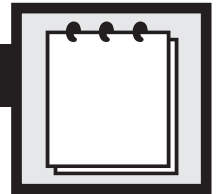
<sup>3</sup> This question, and many of the suggestions on sharing your story, comes from Bill Hybels' excellent book, *Just Walk Across the Room* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006).

## Video: *Sharing your Story + The Big Story*



- ❖ Two minutes sustained attention is optimistic, so what to say?
- ❖ Start with good questions >> listen for ways to connect their story to the Gospel
- ❖ Use your “testimony” to bridge from their story to *The Big Story*
- ❖ Your testimony is a before and after story: what was life like before accepting Christ + how I came to accept Christ + how life has changed since
- ❖ The central question: “What makes Jesus *good news* for me?” ... striving > grateful; self-destructive > healthy; guilty > liberated; fearful > confident; despairing > hopeful; confused > clear
- ❖ Your story mirrors *The Big Story* five-scene pattern
- ❖ Be real, natural, and brief (avoid long-windedness, fuzziness, religiosity, and superiority)
- ❖ “How God transformed me, He can do this for you too, if you let Him”

## *my thoughts*



## *try this*



- ☛ What’s the hard-evidence in your life of the Gospel’s power? Why is Jesus good news for you?
- ☛ Rather than watch a video of someone else’s testimony, perhaps a couple of you feel comfortable, off the cuff, sharing your story. Remember, keep it to one theme of transformation, don’t dress it up, and keep it well under two minutes.

We don’t have the time right now for you to write your testimony ... but this is so important that I’m **flagging something you need to do before you meet next week.**

Here’s the challenge: *Write out your story in 100 words or less.* Be strict with this. You’re lucky to get more than **45 seconds** of sustained attention to share why you’re a Christian, and point people to Jesus.

**Now, here are 3 levels of challenge depending on your boldness:**

**Level 1:** Get onto <http://pathways.kbc.org.au/passing-it-on/> and **upload your story.** This gives everyone the chance to celebrate how great God is through what He’s done in you, and even gives others a way to comment in response, helping you sharpen your story.

**Level 2:** Practice sharing your story in a natural way, without notes. Then, grab a handy-cam and **video your testimony**, uploading it to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) (it’s easy to start an account).

**Level 3:** Adding to the first two levels, you could then either send the you-tube link to some friends—say it was a task for a group at church—and ask for some honest feedback. Did it make sense? Any questions? Does it sound stupid, or is it interesting? For the really bold, take the same approach (“doing this task as part of a Christian group I’m in ...”) and share your testimony in person with a friend, maybe even linking in *The Big Story*. Get feedback. *And pray at all times!*

**Whatever level you choose, next week’s session kicks off with everyone sharing their 45 second story ... so get cracking!**

## Optional mid session break point

### Tips for More Effective Signing

So, you've got *The Big Story* clear in your head, and you're looking for ways to share something of your own journey. But there are still so many language barriers to cross.

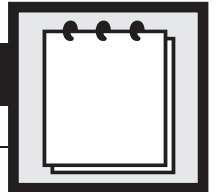
- ☛ Think of just one of the five people you're praying for and trying to reach. What are the key barriers to pointing them to Jesus? Where does communication break down? And have you built a relational bridge strong enough to directly share your story and *The Big Story*?

#### Video: Tip #/ Relational Bridges



- ❖ The Networker ... using and abusing, then discarding contacts to make a sale
- ❖ Love. Love. Love. Deeds + Words, where your radical and unconditional love prompts Questions
- ❖ Risking Conversational Bridges to shift from the everyday to eternity
- ❖ Find Kingdom connections in their frustrations, hopes, desires, and beliefs
- ❖ "Hey, this is kind of out of the blue, but what do you make of the whole 'God' thing?"

#### my thoughts



#### talking point



- ☛ Connect the dots! Ever seen the Christian version of the Networker? What would Jesus do? Is there a "right time" in a relationship to point people to Jesus? How do you know? And when the time comes, what kind of tips do you have for reading people and reaching out in love?
- ☛ Think of one of the five in your prayers ... how obvious, extravagant, and continuous is your love? How have you shown that you care? Are you willing to extend that love by sharing Christ?

#### Video: Tip #/ Conversational Bridges



#### try this



The key to **conversational bridges** is that they work for you. As a group, spend ten minutes coming up with as many conversational bridges as you can. *Record your top 10 below.* Whether it's a statement or a question, keep your non-Christian friends and family in mind, *and only write bridges you would genuinely be prepared to use.*

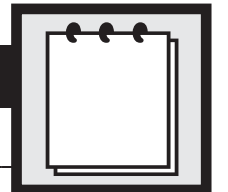
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## Video: Tip #2 Answering Tough Questions



- ❖ Sharing the Gospel naturally raises tough questions in return—don't freak out!
- ❖ (1) We're limited and biased, so we all have to trust someone. If God exists and is not silent, then His Word is the highest authority for appeal. He tells us things we can't know for ourselves, which make the most sense of our existence. Plus, we're warranted to trust our experiences. So don't be bullied as though you have "faith" and others have "facts."
- ❖ (2) Faith has its reasons. There are excellent warrants justifying Christian belief, so you can squarely face tough questions and follow the evidence where it seems to lead—to Christ. Start with your own questions, and research the answers.
- ❖ (3) Ask questions to find their sticking point. Then, ask (a) what do you mean by that?; (b) how do you know that's true?; (c) where'd you get your information?; (d) what if you're wrong? Admit when you don't know, and draw the discussion to Jesus and the Gospel.

## my thoughts




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## talking point



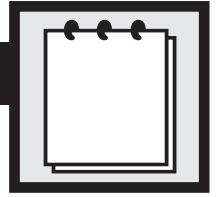
- 🗣️ What's the most common faith question you get asked? Any tips for fielding tough questions?
- 🗣️ In general, how have you gone answering tough questions? How have people responded when you've admitted "I don't know!"
- 🗣️ What's the first tough question you want to search out answers for?

## Video: Tip #3 Sharing Helpful Analogies



- ❖ Sharing *The Big Story* will bring up questions and objections blocking their ears
- ❖ Analogies help with this, starting with something familiar and concrete, making sense of what you're trying to explain
- ❖ *The Gift Analogy*
- ❖ *The Judge Analogy*

## my thoughts



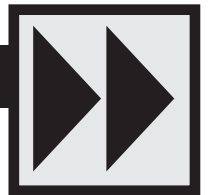
- 🗨️ What analogies have you found most helpful while pointing people to Jesus? Jot some notes.
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## big ideas (wrap up)



- \* We Need Common Language for our Sign to make sense. Stories are the key
- \* Your story is a mirror of *The Big Story*, but keep it brief, focused, coherent, and true!
- \* Loving deeds pave the way for loving words, and love gives even when the other walks
- \* Conversational Bridges take courage, but can naturally follow from their story
- \* All beliefs require faith, but our faith has good reasons ... so search out good answers, but lead with good questions and humility
- \* Like Signs for the spiritually deaf, the right analogy can unplug ears to hear the Gospel

## where to from here?



Time's always short, so chances are you've skimmed over quite a bit of the material this week. As you do the five weekly devotions, be sure to follow the **recapping** guide (◀◀) and read back over the pages highlighted. What jumps out at you? What can you put into practice right away? Well, next week is our last session, so here are the next steps to being an effective Sign who points people to Jesus:

- **Write out your story and take on the 3 levels of challenge** ... remember, keep it *under 100 words (45 seconds)* and be sure to post it to <http://pathways.kbc.org.au/passing-it-on/>. You'll be sharing this straight up next week, so practice your delivery, and seriously pray over whether you should post it to you-tube or run it by a close friend not following Jesus.
- Work through the **5 devotions** following this session, one per week day. Really ask God to open your heart and speak through His Word, to equip yourself for mission.
- Keep **praying for the 5 people** God laid on your heart. And in the lead up to "Church in the Park" think how you might best invite them along. Remember, without prayer and God's drawing, nothing significant will happen (John 6:44).
- If you missed out on the first week, then check out the video of how to share **The Big Story** (<http://pathways.kbc.org.au/passing-it-on/>), and practice it up till it flows easily.
- Next week we're looking at how to be intentional in reaching out to people with this Gospel message—being a Sign Writer. So consider spending some time in **prayer and fasting** for how God would have you **apply all that we've explored**.