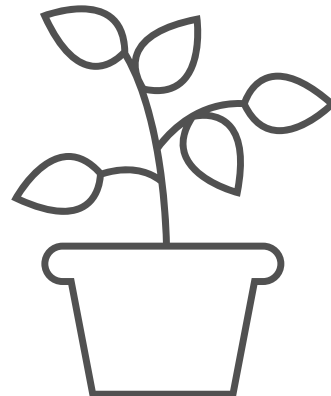
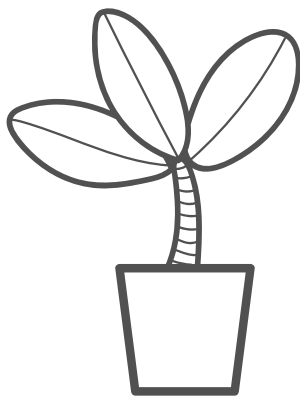


# The Timeline

A GUIDE TO TELLING YOUR STORY



Icon Ministries

Disciples everywhere loving like Jesus

# How to tell your story

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## Step #1 (20 Minutes)

List as many critical incidents of your life as you can recall. Put each incident on a small yellow Post-it note and place each of them on the poster board. Don't ponder their meaning or dwell on their significance. Just remember and list incidents without evaluation or sequence. Brainstorm!

## Step #2 (15-20 Minutes)

Transfer the painful or negative incidents from the yellow Post-it notes only pink Post-it notes. Continue brainstorming, adding incidents on yellow or pink Post-it notes to the poster board as they come to mind.

## Step #3 (10-15 Minutes)

Lay the yellow and pink Post-it notes out in a rough chronological order across the top of the poster board, leaving the top two inches blank. Events occurring around the same time can be layered down the poster board. Continue brainstorming, adding incidents to the poster board as they come to mind.

## Step #4 (10-15 Minutes)

Look for natural breaks in the flow of incidents. Break them into chapters that correspond to the breaks. We may recognize four or five phases or chapters of development, each divided by certain prominent critical incidents. The chapters may contain several mini-stories (critical incidents) that together make up the chapter's general theme. Give a creative/memorable title to each of the chapters in order to represent a significant theme for that particular phase. Put that chapter title on the top of the poster board (4-6 chapters.) Continue brainstorming, adding incidents to the poster board as they come to mind.

## Step #5 (10 Minutes)

Cease brainstorming. Begin to reflect on what lessons were learned from each chapter. Record initial lessons on blue Post-it notes and put at the bottom of the chapter. This is just some initial reflection and interpretation. We will be spending the next few weeks digging deeper into our poster boards/timelines.



# Building a timeline

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## Birth to 5 years

Parents: (brief history)

Names

Birth dates

Marriage date

Death dates

Your birth: (full name and nickname)

When

Where

Surrounding conditions, circumstances

Your childhood health

Mother:

Personality and characteristics

Temperament

Family stories about her

Her role in the home

Father:

Personality and characteristics

Temperament

Family stories about him

His role in the home

Brothers and sisters:

Names

Birth dates

Talents

Role in the home

Child rearing philosophy of parents:

family rules, discipline, etc.

Earliest memories of grandparents:

Visits

Holidays, customs or traditions

Earliest childhood memories

## Childhood (5-12 years)

School days:

Schools attended (names, what the building was like, transportation, etc.)

Special teachers (humorous situations, good and bad)

Friends (influences)

Special activities (achievements)

Relatives

Animals and pets

Hobbies

Jobs or chores:

Responsibilities at home (before and after school)

Elsewhere

Family life:

Fun times together (mode of travel)

Family projects

Financial conditions

Moves and why?

Homes, neighbors, neighborhood

Community (size and populations, important buildings, landmarks)

Family difficulties:

Sickness and grievances

Accidents

Operations

Death of loved ones

Religion practiced in the home

Vacations or trips

Thrilling experiences

# Building a timeline

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## Teenage Years (13-19)

### High School:

Courses and achievements  
Activities, sports, clubs, offices  
Honors and awards  
Influential teachers  
Service groups  
Important decisions  
Special friends  
Daring escapades

Social life: dances, movies, music, dating,  
summer outings, church functions

Talents and hobbies

### Jobs and work experiences:

Including summer and part-time work  
First full-time job  
Vacations and travel

### Religion:

Attendance  
Classes taught  
Youth groups  
Influential teachers, pastors, leaders  
Religious experience

### Military:

Why entered, what branch and why chosen  
Feeling at time of entry  
Basic training  
Special development training  
Promotions and honors  
Combat duty  
Friends and social life  
Conflict between personal standards and  
military life  
What liked and disliked about military life

## Courtship and Marriage

### Meeting your spouse:

First impression  
Special dates  
Length of engagement

### Marriage:

Date  
Place  
By whom

### Wedding and reception

Maid of honor  
Best man  
Honeymoon

### Meeting of In-laws:

Mate's personality: what convinced you most in choice  
of spouse

### Married life:

Settling down  
Making ends meet  
Your own home  
Starting housekeeping  
Job hunting  
Spats and adjustments

### Vocation:

What career(s) and how selected  
Changes, promotions, transfers, re-training, etc.  
Important positions held  
Main job problems, failures, successes  
Effect of job on family  
Effect of job on personal beliefs and standards  
Details on how your job was done  
Membership in unions, business or professional  
organizations  
Unusual job experiences

# Building a timeline

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## Married Life and Children

Children:

Names

Dates and places of birth

Health of mother before and after

How father fared

Characteristics and differences

Talents and hobbies

Growing up (daily routine in home)

Humorous episodes

Problems

Joys and sorrows

Accomplishments

Family traditions

Family vacations

Grandchildren:

How many?

Just as much joy?

Where they live?

How their parents raise them

Things done together

Trips to visit them and vice versa

## Middle Age and Towards Retirement

General life pattern changing:

More time on hands

A little more money left over now

Different and new interests

New employment

New friends and associates

New hobbies (genealogy, golf, reading, music, art, books)

Health

Civic and political activities:

Positions held

Services rendered

Politics

Political issues you were involved in

Memorable campaigns New business ventures

Memorable travels

New and different homes

Retirement:

Impact (financial, family, leisure time, volunteer activities)

Other special events

## What is a Critical Incident?

A critical incident can be any key relationship, event, or circumstance that has had significant influence in shaping your life, whether that incident was positive or negative. What have been some central images, stories, events, or people in your life? Perhaps it was a gift given, a promise broken, parents' relationship broken, the loving attention of an adult, a trip to another part of the world. If the story of your life was being told, what would be the scenes that the writer would have to capture? What comes to mind?

## ABOUT LISTENING

Listening to our disciple's life story is important because we are searching for the work of God throughout his life. Even childhood events are significant because from conception God prepares each of His children for their eternal purpose. **Our aim in listening is to join in the Lord's purpose for our disciple's life and not to try and fit that disciple into our ministry agenda.**

Often a person will be intimidated to have someone genuinely listen to them for the first time. It is not unusual for it to take months for trust to be built between the discipler and disciple. How I teach my disciple to be listened to is by asking questions and then giving them plenty of time to answer. It is important for both the discipler and the disciple to be comfortable in silence. It is in the silence that the disciple can formulate his answers as well as work up the courage to give the answer. Often the disciple will know the answer to the question but needs time to muster up the courage to give the answer. **Listening is one of the first skills in teaching someone how to make disciples.**

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Disciple-making at its core is learning--and demonstrating--how to relate lovingly to God and to others. There's no secret formula, nor is there a one-size-fits-all plan for disciple-making, BUT there are examples to follow and certainly adventures to be had. Don't let your fear, your insecurities, or your busyness get in the way. If you know how to be a friend, you already know most of what you need to be a disciple-maker. Take one step with the God you trust and the Holy Spirit that enables you...



YOU ARE THE  
RIGHT PERSON  
FOR THIS JOB!

*Rooting for you,*

THE ICON MINISTRIES TEAM