

Missions to Mexico

How to Give Your Testimony

Testimonies are a wonderful way to communicate what God has done. It is real, it helps us relate to non-believers, it is interesting, and it cannot be argued with. It is our most vital tool in relating to non-Christians. Every believer should be able to tell their testimony in a short, condensed form. They should also be able to relate recent events of answered prayer, or things God has done for them. This brings God to life before the non-believer.

During the week you are here, your group will have ample opportunity to share what God has done in their lives. Your Mexican brothers and sisters, and non-believers will be excited to hear from you. It will allow you to be able to relate to them and take away the cultural barriers.

We like to have two testimonies at each event. Counting the church outreaches, and VBS outreaches, your group will be sharing about 8 times. This makes a total of about 16 testimonies needed. Twelve or so of your testimonies will be for children. Make sure these testimonies refer to some event in your life when you were a child. This will help you identify with them better.

Following is some helpful advice for those giving their testimonies, and those who will be translating (if other than us)

PREPARATION

1. Write out your testimony. This could be one of the most important factors to giving a clear, concise, and impactful testimony. Often, people, especially teens, get nervous and forget what they want to say, or find themselves forgetting important parts. Writing it down helps to prevent this, and gives the interpreter a chance to see what is going to be said. **We strongly recommend you write out your testimony.**
2. Back the testimony with prayer.
3. Pray as you go.

PRESENTATION

1. Be definite, specific, and contemporary.
2. Be careful of your terminology. Don't use generalization or ambiguous terms.
3. Show concern to the one you are testifying to. Show interest in them.
4. Remember this is a testimony of what Christ has done for you. This should show in your voice, actions, and facial expressions.
6. Point to Jesus. Keep your testimony to the point. Five minutes is the maximum.

CONTENT

1. Begin with thanksgiving and praise, thanking God for the truth-the Word of God, for Christian service, for being able to serve Him, and for a true relationship with Him.
2. Don't run down another person's belief. Tell of current answers to prayer.
3. Tell of your relationship to Christ.

4. Give a comparison of what you used to be like, and what has changed since the Savior came into your life.
6. It's best to present a single spiritual truth rather than a rambling story of your life. Emphasize a point and then stop.
7. Include something about the power of God-His love, mercy and grace.

Considerations When Speaking Through An Interpreter

The speaker/interpreter relationship is a dependent partnership comparable to performing a duet. The following suggestions are offered to help speakers make a more successful presentation through an interpreter:

1. Divide your material into short, meaningful sentences.
2. Use simple everyday language. Avoid slang, which may be difficult to translate. Stay away from technical or specialized language.
3. Talk to the audience. Remember, whether they understand you or not, you are speaking to them, not the interpreter. Speak loudly enough for the audience to hear you, not just the interpreter.
4. Practice with the interpreter ahead of time whenever possible. Speaking through an interpreter can be very confusing at first.
5. Give any scriptural references to the interpreter ahead of time so that he/she can be ready to read it in Spanish.

Preparation For The Interpreter

The interpreter must speak very fluent (native speaker or close). Someone who has had 2 or 3 years of Spanish, unless very unusual, will not qualify to communicate with ease and accuracy. If you don't have someone who can speak Spanish well enough to interpret, we can help in this area.

1. Familiarize yourself with the material you will be translating.
2. Practice interpreting everyday conversations to get used to the mental process of hearing, remembering, and interpreting.
3. Use normal facial expressions and body motions to convey the thoughts expressed by the speaker. You are the visual and verbal representation of the speaker's thoughts and feelings.
4. Use complete sentences or phrases whenever possible so that your audience is not left "hanging" for the rest of the thought.
5. Convey the total idea rather than a word-for-word translation.
7. Never translate in the third person. You are speaking as if you are the one giving the testimony.
8. Remember to speak loudly enough for everyone to hear.
9. Carry your Bible in front of the group and read the verse from the Bible, even when it is memorized. It is your mark of authority.
10. Do not underestimate the intelligence of audience. Education and wealth do not determine a person's ability to understand.

Considerations When Selecting An Interpreter

1. They must be an evangelical Christian with a genuine love for unbelievers.
2. They should speak, read and write Spanish and English fluently. They should be able to communicate expressions and thoughts, which are readily understood by the people of Mexico.
3. The interpreter should have some previous experience.
4. Age and position are important in Mexico. The interpreter should demonstrate maturity to deserve respect of the Mexican people.

5. The interpreter must be dedicated to doing their best.
6. The interpreter should have a friendly appearance and personality.

Training Techniques

1. Practice what you will say beforehand; such as sermons, testimonies, stories and Bible studies. Then you have time to iron out vocabulary, and poor working sentences before you have an audience. Avoid using American expressions and difficult vocabulary.
2. Have the speaker use short, clear phrases. This is probably the most important technique in translating, because it makes translating much easier.
3. You don't have to try and remember a whole paragraph.
4. It helps to convey the emotion of the speaker without long pauses. The audience can catch the emphasis of phrases and expressions.
5. Just as you translate the words, you must also express the emotions and the expressions of the speaker. Follow the speaker in putting emphasis on an important word of facial and body expressions.
6. Talk in the first person if the speaker does. In other words talk as if you were the speaker. If the speaker says, "I am glad to be here" you say, "Yo estoy contento..." .