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Teaching the Art of Sacred Storytelling for Use in Ministry

AbbyLynn Haskell

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

PROJECT PORTFOLIO
TEACHING THE ART OF SACRED STORYTELLING
FOR USE IN MINISTRY



IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY
PORTLAND SEMINARY

BY:
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PORTLAND, OREGON

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This certifies that the doctoral Project Portfolio of

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the Evaluation Committee on March 10, 2022
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Semiotics, Church, and Culture.

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Dedication/Acknowledgments

I dedicate this work in thanksgiving to God and to the many who helped me make this dream a reality, I owe a debt of gratitude. To Dr. Leonard Sweet who inspired and encouraged me to dare this adventure as well as providing me with voluminous knowledge, resources and wisdom. To Dr. Loren Kerns and Dr. Clifford Berger for their leadership, genuine interest and helpful guidance at critical junctures. To Dr. Daniel Lioy whose lightning fast responses, enthusiastic encouragement, crystal clear instruction and keenly perceptive insight consistently cut through the fog of uncertainty. To my cohort comrades Rev. Henry Graf and Rev. John Karle whose humor, supportive feedback and insight were priceless. And to all in my larger class cohort whose conversations, contributions and questions made for such a beautiful seedbed for these ideas to take root and grow. From the wild frontier of ministry in Maine I want to recognize Dr. Ron Baard for taking the risk to invite me to teach for Maine School of Ministry students, for the many hours he invested into helping me with the interviewing research, and for believing in both me and my abilities to pull off this crazy idea. I further recognize Rev. Lisa Steele-Maley's and her joyful willingness to respond to my interest in teaching and work to help me shape a storytelling class that would be of help to Chaplaincy Institute of Maine students. Sally Tinkham who taught me how to build an awesome online learning experience. Rev. Renee Garrett for blazing the trail and encouraging me to blaze my own, my fellow Maine Mafia members who kept my sanity Rev. Seth Jones and Rev. Lori Whittemore and my beloved Acton Congregation who gave me endless support and encouragement as well as the time I needed to invest in seeing this project through to completion.

On the homefront my parents were beyond amazing, finding time to go above and beyond from cooking, cleaning, mending, jumping aboard to deckhand and proofing papers to

help me keep it together. My sister who went spelunking for buried treasure for me and shared the map to an overwhelming abundance that came from Eastern Star Religious Leadership Scholarship awards. My oldest who shares my passion for teaching and is delighted in my successes. My youngest who took a genuine interest in my project as well as his having to learn how to cook his own dinners when his mom just couldn't get to it. My beloved soulmate who kept me going when I didn't think I had anything left. In the face of my rough, awkward and clunky attempts he consistently saw and called out the promise, goodness and beauty giving me the courage to keep on pressing and praying into the discouraging and seemingly impossible unknown. His love is more than I deserve or can ever understand. My prayers of gratitude to God for placing this wildly irrational burning burden in my heart and blessing me with each seemingly insurmountable obstacle and each of these angels named and unnamed to lift and transform in surprising ways this storytelling dream of mine to its next sacred expression.

Epigraph

With many stories like these, he presented his message to them, fitting the stories to their experience and maturity. He was never without a story when he spoke. When he was alone with his disciples, he went over everything, sorting out the tangles, untying the knots.

~Mark 4:33-34 (MSG)

Research Method

This Project utilized a blended methodology that draws upon bibliographic resources, data derived from stakeholder collaboration, and human-centered design and iteration processes to create a heuristic-based, application-oriented Project.

Abstract

Storytelling is of immense value in ministry today for enriching preaching, liturgy, teaching, worship, pastoral care, mission, evangelism and discipleship. I serve as a part-time pastor in rural Maine and have a passion for using storytelling in all these aspects of ministry. I observed an opportunity for teaching storytelling in my local ministry schools and churches.

I designed a curriculum for oral storytelling instruction that includes teaching techniques for sharing personal experiences and the re-telling of myths, legends, wisdom, folklore and Biblical stories for use in preaching, ministry, mission and pastoral care. This storytelling educational program consists of online and in person courses, standalone classes and workshops. Each course, standalone class or workshop is an organized independent unit while being in synergetic connectedness with the others. There are no prerequisites and each course is open to both beginner and experienced storytellers. These are practical courses where students learn to utilize fundamental storytelling techniques. While the tools to listen, learn and tell a story by heart will be consistently repeated in all the courses, each course will focus on different themes, lessons and skills essential to practicing the art and ministry of storytelling.

Students who have taken my classes are active laity, people who are discerning a call to ordained ministry and ordained clergy. Those who have taken my classes have reported feeling excited, encouraged and motivated to include their newly gained story gathering and storytelling skills in their sermons, chaplaincy care, mission work and Christian education. I have collected feedback forms from over 65% of the students. I have used their feedback to modify and improve the curriculum. From the core material of this curriculum I have continued to customize workshops and classes that fit the individual requests of churches, ministry schools and retreat centers seeking to offer storytelling education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication/Acknowledgments	iii
Epigraph	v
Research Method	vi
Abstract	vii
Introduction	1
Discovery	1
Design	2
Delivery	3
Standalone Classes	4
Experience Evaluation	5
Looking Ahead	6
Final Reflection	7
Project	9
Introduction	9
NPO	10
Project	10
Project Scope	11
Courses	11
Standalone Classes	11

BENCHMARKS	12
Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual Worship & World	20
Syllabus	20
Bibliography	26
Classroom Webpage Screenshot and Contents	27
Lecture Notes with Slides	28
Session #1	28
Introduction to Biblical Storytelling	28
Invitation to Play & Sacred Storytelling	31
Doodling the Story and John Walsh	36
Session #2	41
Stories in print need to be heard out loud	42
Internalizing a Story and Thomas Boomershine	43
Storytelling is inherently evangelical	44
The Back Story and Leonard Sweet	47
The Memory Palace and Storied Objects	49
Session #3	53
Storytelling as a Concert of Participation Art and Ken Medema	53
EPIC, Narraphor and Leonard Sweet	53
EPIC Narraphoric Storytelling Lab	55

“Yes and” Rule of Improv	62
Listening To and Telling Difficult Stories.....	62
Session #4	64
Sound Mystery, Ministry and Leonard Sweet	65
Culture Keeping Storytelling and Annette Simmons.....	66
Church Angel Stories and Walter Wink	68
Story Teller as Story Medic and Annette Simmons.....	70
Weaponized Storytelling.....	70
Hope and Compassion Stories	71
Using Imagination and Stephen Carnahan.....	73
Biblical Storytelling for Lent & Easter	74
Syllabus.....	74
Bibliography	80
Classroom webpage screenshot and contents	82
Lecture Notes and Slides	83
Session #1	83
Garden Stories and Introduction to Sacred Storytelling	83
Storytelling as Playing in the Garden	85
Doodling the Story and John Walsh	89
TOV and Rev. Henry Graf.....	92

Session #2	95
Fire Stories	95
Verbs in Storytelling and Ray Gombach	95
Memory Palace and Object Story Learning.....	102
Story Gathering Work and Storied Objects	103
Imagination and Your Storytelling and Audience	103
Session #3	107
Table Stories and Leonard Sweet	107
Communion Stories	110
Sankofa Story as told by Valerie Tutson	116
Narraphoric Storytelling Lab	116
Listening & Telling Difficult Stories	118
Session #4	120
Storytelling and The Lowry Loop - Eugene Lowry.....	120
We know more than we can tell and Michael Polanyi.....	120
Mandorla and Leonard Sweet	121
Stories on The Lowry Loop	124
Kinesthetic Story Learning	126
Stories are how our brains code what is important	127
Storytelling and the Peace in Paradox Phenomenon.....	128

Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas	130
Syllabus.....	130
Bibliography	137
Required Readings List	137
Lecture Notes with Slides	139
Session #1	140
Catching up with Jesus and becoming like children.....	140
Doodling The Story and John Walsh.....	144
Hope and Peace and the Fig Tree	146
The Importance of Paradox and Conflict.....	147
Session #2	149
The Memory Palace and Storied Objects.....	150
Experiential Storytelling and Mark Miller.....	155
Play Kahoot Game	157
Worship as Collaboration rather Than Performance	157
Session #3	161
Auditory Inception & Christmas Carols	161
Imaginative Listening with Rev. Stephen Carnahan.....	163
The 70 Faces of Torah and Michael Novelli	164
Exploring Love in our Advent Bible Stories	165

Christmas Cocoa Chat Pass	166
Session #4	169
Kinesthetic Story Learning	169
Interplay.org ~ Unlocking the Wisdom of your Body	169
Culture Keeping Storytelling and Annette Simmons.....	169
Church Angel Stories and Walter Wink	171
Sacred Storytelling Lab Half Day Online.....	177
Welcome and Itinerary.....	177
Lecture Notes with Slides	178
Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline.....	179
Learning a Story by Heart	182
Sharing Our Stories	186
Sacred Storytelling Lab Day Long In Person	188
Welcome and Itinerary.....	188
Lecture Notes	190
Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline.....	190
Learning a Story by Heart	191
Telling Your Story by Heart.....	192
Healing Through Sacred Storytelling	192
Sacred Storytelling Labs for Retreat.....	194

Welcome and Itinerary.....	194
Lecture Notes	195
Sacred Storytelling as a Spiritual Discipline	195
Practicing the Art of Sacred Storytelling Through Doodling.....	196
Healing Through Sacred Storytelling	197
Practicing the Art of Sacred Storytelling Through Hand Dancing and Prayer Walking.....	199
Healing Through Sacred Storytelling	201
Course Description.....	201
Bibliography	201
Lecture Notes	203
Storytelling As Spiritual Practice	203
Kenosis & Pleurosis	204
Deepening & Reaching	205
Sacred Originates in the Particular which is ultimately Universal	205
Story Gathering.....	206
Story Gathering Caution	206
Story Gathering Care	206
Weddings & Funerals	207
Narrative Therapy	207
Encountering Conflict.....	208

Story Discernment	209
Cortisol.....	209
Adrenaline.....	209
Oxytocin.....	210
Dopamine.....	210
Endorphins	211
Story Technology	212
The Hero's Journey – Joseph Campbell	212
The Dramatic Arc – Gustav Freytag.....	213
Wonder & Awe - Angus Fletcher.....	214
The Stretch	215
Plot Twist.....	215
Seeing the Impossible	215
Children in ICU Storytelling Research.....	216
Culture Keeping.....	216
Fear & Blame Stories.....	218
Hope & Compassion Stories	218
Sunrise Boat Church Story.....	220
Assessment.....	222
Project Launch Plan	226

Project Description.....	226
Audience	226
Development Timeline.....	227
Development Process.....	228
Appendices.....	230
Appendix A: Milestone 1 The NPO Charter.....	231
Appendix B: Milestone 2 NPO Topic Expertise Essay	248
SECTION 1: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	249
The Spiritual Practice of Oral Storytelling in the Biblical World	249
Textual Discussions	250
Creating: Genesis 1:27; 2:7	250
Deepening: Deuteronomy 26:1-11	251
Reaching: Mark 4:33-34.....	254
Synthesis of Themes, Values, and Commitments.....	255
SECTION 2: TOPIC HISTORY AND KEY VOICES.....	257
Topic History	257
Storytelling in the Jewish tradition.....	257
Storytelling in the Christian tradition	261
Key Voices.....	263
Thomas Boomersshine: Storytelling Scripture	263

Leonard Sweet: Narraphors and EPIC Storytelling Preaching.....	264
Donald Miller: Storytelling for Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals	267
Annette Simmons: Culture Keeping Storytelling.....	268
Shonaleigh Cumbers, Renee Garrett: Storytelling in Pastoral Care	270
SECTION 3: SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION	272
Appendix C: Milestone 3 Design Workshop Report	276
NPO Statement.....	276
NPO Scope and Constraints.....	276
NPO Context.....	276
Root Causes	277
Three Big Ideas	277
Definition of ‘Done’	278
3 Napkin Pitches	278
Design Workshop Stakeholders.....	281
One-On-One Interviews.....	281
3–5 Key Biblical Texts	281
Annotated Bibliography.....	281
Appendix A: Design Workshop Description	284
Design Workshop Documentation.....	285
1-Page Post-Workshop Message to Stakeholders.....	286

One-On-One Interviews Documentation	287
Appendix D: Milestone 4 Design Research Report.....	295
PROTOTYPE #1 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS	297
Biblical Storytelling for Advent and Christmas.....	297
PROTOTYPE #2 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS	298
Exploring Your Spiritual Journey	298
PROTOTYPE #3 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS	300
Preaching as Sacred Storytelling	300
MOST VIABLE PROTOTYPE.....	302
APPENDICES	303
STORYBOARDS	303
RECRUITING SCREENER.....	303
INTERVIEW SCRIPT	304
Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas.....	306
Exploring Your Spiritual Journey.....	310
Preaching as Sacred Storytelling	316
DOCUMENTATION OF PROTOTYPE	321
Biblical Storytelling for Advent and Christmas	321
Exploring Your Spiritual Journey.....	321
Preaching as Sacred Storytelling	321

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION NOTES.....	321
Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas Prototype Notes	322
Exploring Your Spiritual Journey Prototype Notes.....	330
Preaching as Sacred Storytelling Seminar Prototype Notes.....	336
Appendix E: Milestone 5 Project Appendix Document	339
Total Feedback from All Classes.....	339
Bibliography	368

Introduction

Discovery

The Maine School of Ministry (MESOM) and the Chaplaincy Institute of Maine (CHIME) both welcomed an interest in my teaching storytelling to their students. The dean of MESOM, Dr. Ron Baard was a primary stakeholder. MESOM is associated with the United Church of Christ, a mainline protestant tradition. CHIME is an interfaith school. Both schools are small and draw from a population that has been identified as the “least religious state in the nation.” Ministry students and pastors in Maine are generally in mid-life range with a large part of the population in or close to retirement. At the outset from my discovery session where participants included pastors, teachers, storytellers, the dean of MESOM and an author, we all had envisioned in-person classes. All my one-on-one research with interviews with stakeholders who are professional storytellers in ministry took place in the fall of 2019. At that time all the storytellers I interviewed clearly supported the belief that the art of oral storytelling when used in ministry must necessarily be taught in-person. While I agreed with their strongly held belief I still thought trying to include an online aspect of the curriculum was important. I had thought I would be building a YouTube channel with oral storytelling teaching resources. The aim of the YouTube channel was to spark larger public interest and invite people from a larger online audience to attend the in-person storytelling classes. Then the pandemic happened and by April 2020 I was pivoting from building an in-person curriculum to crafting an online storytelling educational experience. At the Discovery Session the concern was raised that pastors and teachers may not attempt the art of oral storytelling fearing it being too technically demanding to accomplish. Another concern raised was that people would be reluctant to sign up as the amount

of time needed to adequately learn the techniques and stories was too time consuming. These original concerns were helpful in the process of designing this curriculum.

Design

For the Zoom Design Workshop, four of the stakeholders were Maine School of Ministry (MESOM) students enrolled in “Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual Worship and World.” Two of the stakeholders were professional clergy. Stakeholders filled out a “Pains & Gains” survey and were introduced to the “Mission Impossible” question: How do we develop a virtual/hybrid Biblical Storytelling Class that is exciting to attend that inspires others to want to join? Each group developed three to four different ideas and came back to report on each of the ideas to the group as a whole. Participants voted on their top three favorite ideas and then small groups developed a “Napkin Pitch” for each favorite class idea. I was extremely satisfied with how the workshop went and the results that were developed.

Three big ideas emerged from our workshop:

- Supportive Small Group – This small group would meet more frequently than a class. Participants would regularly share their storytelling work in a Zoom or in-person format.
- Themed Biblical Storytelling Class – This class would be crafted around a theme that would topically engage people’s interest. Biblical storytelling skills would be taught while delving into the theme through select Biblical stories.
- Personalizing the Sacred Story – This class is about helping people come to know and be able to share their story as a part of The Story.

I interviewed three people, one-on-one regarding these ideas, the Dean of MESOM, a professional storyteller and storytelling coach and a high school teacher who excels at using Zoom and Google Classroom to keep students active and engaged.

The Most Viable Prototype from the gathered data including numerous prototype iteration interviews was a storytelling educational program for MESOM that consists of a synthesis of four individual storytelling courses. There is a high degree of energy and support for these classes to be included as part of the Biblical studies and practical preaching courses offered in the MESOM curriculum.

Delivery

My storytelling educational project consists of online and in person courses. Each course or class is an organized independent unit while being in synergetic connectedness with the others. There are no prerequisites and each course is open to both beginner and experienced storytellers. These are practical courses and classes where students learn to utilize fundamental storytelling techniques. While some of the storytelling material will repeat, each course will focus on different themes, lessons and skills essential to practicing the art and ministry of storytelling.

The courses were designed to take place through Zoom. The curriculum materials include a syllabus, bibliography, classroom webpage and corresponding instructor's notes for each class. The courses survey a number of different techniques for learning and telling Bible stories. Course participants will develop and share their own Biblical Storytelling art through pre-recording and live virtual presentations. Each course consists of twenty-four hours of in-class instruction. Names of the courses developed:

- Biblical Storytelling for the Virtual Worship and World

- Biblical Storytelling for Lent and Easter
- Biblical Storytelling for Advent and Christmas

Standalone Classes

These standalone classes were designed to take place either in person or on Zoom but not a hybrid of both online and in person. The materials include welcome, itinerary and lecture notes.

Names of the standalone classes developed:

- Sacred Storytelling Half Day Lab
- Sacred Storytelling Series for Retreat
- Sacred Storytelling Daylong Lab
- Healing Through Sacred Storytelling

I used student evaluations as critical performance indicators to assess the success of my project. Following the method I observed that was used by Dr. Loren Kerns of George Fox University, students will be asked for their feedback on these three questions.

1. What went well?
2. What could have been done better?
3. What really mattered?

After graduation I plan on continuing to market storytelling courses and standalone classes. I will use the core material I have developed to build and customize more workshops, retreats and other courses to meet the needs of the community wanting to engage my services as a storyteller and teacher.

I will use participant evaluations as critical performance indicators to continue to improve as well as assess the success of my project.

Experience Evaluation

The one extremely stressful and massive shock surprise obstacle of this whole process was the pandemic. I had begun developing classes that I would have taught in a face-to-face in-person setting. While I had participated in Zoom classes I didn't have much stamina for the screen format of learning. The way MESOM designs their classes is a once a month daylong commitment. This format is helpful for their part-time student population as folks from all over the state would drive to the classroom setting in Augusta for one Saturday a month. I was originally horrified at the thought of a six hour Zoom class even if it was only once a month. Thankfully I had Sally Tinkham, a friend who is an amazing Zoom warrior having had to teach fourth graders online for months in 2020 when her school moved to remote learning. Sally taught me numerous ways to keep an online class interactive, fun, engaging and interesting. I am much more confident in my abilities to teach online and the capabilities of an online format to enable community building that fosters the supportive classroom environment I was seeking to build. The art of oral storytelling involves public speaking skills and requires courage. Classroom community and trust were critical so that students would feel better supported to take the risk to practice their storytelling skills.

I had originally begun work on a YouTube channel that would support this curriculum. When I began teaching I was not able to maintain a schedule of regular uploading that is needed to build an audience. I do not yet know if I will be able to get back to this project in the near future but I believe it will be worthwhile for marketing my storytelling programs and services.

One shortcoming of this project is the required readings. I am still on the search for books that best complement the course and the learners involved. Some of my students are seasoned pastors and are much more experienced than some of my other students who are new to the church and the use of storytelling in ministry. I have learned from the student evaluations that

some books are too theologically heavy or too theologically offensive. The theologically offensive books inspire good conversation because they have good storytelling content but for some students these books cause them too much angst. Some books are too intellectually challenging for my students who are new to the church. I have a high degree of confidence in five of the books I have assigned to be really good fits but I am needing about seven more. I am also considering writing a book based on the content of my classes, research, storytelling experiences and understanding of my student population.

One of the key discoveries that emerged from this research journey is that people are hungry for stories. Some folks just want a class to learn about storytelling and do not necessarily want to learn how to practice the art of oral storytelling themselves. This insight came about through my work with the Chaplaincy Institute of Maine (CHIME). The class I designed for their students was “Healing Through Sacred Storytelling.” While the telling of personal stories in small breakout groups (with one other) is an important part of this class there is not any use or discussion of the skills involved in telling a folk tale, myth, personal or Biblical story for a larger group. I have been doing storytelling for so long that I forgot what a strong fear public speaking can be for so many.

Looking Ahead

More investigating needs to be done around finding storytelling books appropriate for the class and students. I also need to do more exploration and study on retreat leading as churches and retreat centers have been requesting customized storytelling experiences. Researching face-to-face in-person storytelling teaching methods will also be helpful as I anticipate the need for developing more in-person classes.

After graduation I will continue to work on marketing my storytelling courses, retreat leading and coaching services. Construction will begin on the “Exploring Your Spiritual Journey” for the Maine School of Ministry course as the prototype for this class garnered an abundance of enthusiasm. Conversation with MESOM and CHIME for other future course possibilities will happen. Publicity for summer retreats and standalone classes will be posted on the coast of Maine sailing and retreat ministry website: BroadReachMinistries.com as well as on various social media platforms. Sunrise Boat Church which runs May through September will also be a platform where future storytelling class opportunities will be shared. I will continue to improve the curriculums based on anonymously collected feedback forms submitted by the students.

Final Reflection

One major disappointment were the disruptions due to the pandemic. I really would have loved to do more face-to-face in-person teaching and storytelling. However there were some amazing benefits to blazing ahead being restricted to online learning. I learned that it truly is possible to experience and build a virtual community of learning. Contrary to all the research I had done previously, storytelling can be taught online. There are advantages to having access to online materials such as videos, interactive games, polls and quickly accessed breakout rooms. People from distant geographical destinations were able to participate making for a more diverse classroom experience. Travel budgets were not used and there was no travel wear and tear on my vehicle and person. Without a doubt the virtual class was far healthier for the environment than an in-person class.

This experience as a whole was an outrageously joyous success. The discovery, design, and delivery process was a perfect fit for learning about, actualizing and implementing this

project. The support from my cohorts and Portland Seminary of George Fox University professors and staff were always amazing and truly top notch. This project has been the realization of a deep calling that's been with me for years. I am wildly elated by my students' successes, beyond grateful for all the opportunities this project opened and deeply humbled by the invitations extended to me to teach. I am hopeful for how this course can offer assistance to the lay and ordained pulpit warriors, religious educators, missionaries and chaplains in a territory where classic theological education has drastically changed.

My dreams for this project include continuing to lead storytelling retreats and classes. A long term dream involves integrating these storytelling courses into a multi-day sailing excursion through the sailing ministry and retreat business my husband and I run. Another dream I hold for this project is writing a book. I need to tell the story of teaching the ministry of storytelling in the "least religious state in the nation."

Project

Introduction

Oral storytelling is of immense value in ministry today for enriching preaching, liturgy, teaching, worship, pastoral care, mission, evangelism and discipleship. I serve as a part-time pastor in rural Maine and have a passion for using storytelling in all these aspects of ministry. I observed an opportunity and understood a calling for teaching storytelling in my local ministry schools and churches.

Traditional seminary education for my denomination has undergone radical changes in the Northeast in the past decade. There were two regional seminaries that were connected to my mainline protestant tribe. The one in Maine closed in 2013 and the other in Massachusetts relocated to Connecticut in 2017. Online affordable education is thankfully abundant but two grassroots ministry schools, the Maine School of Ministry and the Chaplaincy Institute in Maine have served to help meet the needs for geographically local theological education. I am grateful these two ministry schools welcomed my ideas and offer for teaching storytelling classes. I originally began by preparing to teach these classes in person however due to the pandemic the majority of my teaching has been online. Students who have taken my classes are active laity, people who are discerning a call to ordained ministry and ordained clergy.

My tribe, the United Church of Christ, has 153 churches in Maine and 110 of which are led by part-time clergy. When a part-time parish pulpit opens up it can take months to years to fill it with an ordained clergy person. While searching for their next pastor more and more laity are being called upon to preach in the interim. My classes have prepared lay students with storytelling skills they have used in sermons for both virtual and in person worship in some of these churches without ordained clergy. Some of my ordained colleagues want fresh inspiration

for their sermons and those who have taken my class have reported feeling encouraged and motivated to include new storytelling skills in their sermons. I know my students have used the materials and community encouragement from my class to develop their storytelling and story-listening pastoral care skills in their chaplaincy work. My students have also shared they have used storytelling in their Christian education ministries.

My storytelling curriculum project was forged in the fires of academic research and practical teaching experience. The investigative and academic research work I have done through Portland Seminary of George Fox University in their doctorate of ministry program in semiotics, church and culture. My storytelling teaching experience came from leading classes for the Maine School of Ministry and the Chaplaincy Institute of Maine. My students have provided the feedback and evaluation that continues to help me to improve the content and quality of the curriculums I am designing. I developed a curriculum for three courses each consisting of twenty four hours of in class instruction. I also developed four standalone storytelling classes. Two of the standalone classes are eight hours in length. One standalone class is three hours long. One series of retreat workshop classes is twelve hours of instruction that is broken up in one and half hour blocks over four days.

NPO

Create a curriculum for oral storytelling that includes teaching techniques for sharing personal experiences and the re-telling of myths, legends, wisdom, folklore and Biblical stories.

Project

My project is a storytelling educational program consisting of online and in person courses. Each course or class is an organized independent unit while being in synergetic connectedness with the others. There are no prerequisites and each course is open to both

beginner and experienced storytellers. These are practical courses and classes where students learn to utilize fundamental storytelling techniques. While some of the storytelling material will repeat, each course will focus on different themes, lessons and skills essential to practicing the art and ministry of storytelling.

Project Scope

Courses

These courses take place through Zoom. The curriculum will include a syllabus, bibliography, classroom webpage, feedback from participants and corresponding instructor's notes for each class. These courses will survey a number of different techniques for learning and telling Bible stories. Course participants will develop and share their own Biblical Storytelling art through pre-recording and live virtual presentations. Each course consists of twenty-four hours of in-class instruction.

- Biblical Storytelling for the Virtual Worship and World
- Biblical Storytelling for Lent and Easter
- Biblical Storytelling for Advent and Christmas

Standalone Classes

These standalone take place either in person or on Zoom but not a hybrid of both online and in person. The materials will include welcome and itinerary, webpage, feedback from participants and lecture notes.

- Sacred Storytelling Half Day Lab
- Sacred Storytelling Series for Retreat
- Sacred Storytelling Daylong Lab

- Healing Through Sacred Storytelling

BENCHMARKS

I used student evaluations as critical performance indicators to assess the success of my project. Following the method I observed that was used by Dr. Loren Kerns of George Fox University, students will be asked for their feedback on these three questions.

1. What went well?
2. What could have been done better?
3. What really mattered?

PRESENTATION OF PROJECT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual Worship & World	20
Syllabus.....	20
Bibliography	26
Classroom Webpage Screenshot and Contents.....	27
Lecture Notes with Slides	28
Session #1	28
Introduction to Biblical Storytelling	28
Invitation to Play & Sacred Storytelling.....	31
Doodling the Story and John Walsh	36
Session #2	41
Stories in print need to be heard out loud	42
Internalizing a Story and Thomas Boomershine.....	43
Storytelling is inherently evangelical.....	44
The Back Story and Leonard Sweet.....	47
The Memory Palace and Storied Objects.....	49
Session #3	53
Storytelling as a Concert of Participation Art and Ken Medema	53
EPIC, Narraphor and Leonard Sweet.....	53

	14
EPIC Narraphoric Storytelling Lab	55
“Yes and” Rule of Improv	62
Listening To and Telling Difficult Stories.....	62
Session #4	64
Sound Mystery, Ministry and Leonard Sweet	65
Culture Keeping Storytelling and Annette Simmons.....	66
Church Angel Stories and Walter Wink	68
Story Teller as Story Medic and Annette Simmons.....	70
Weaponized Storytelling.....	70
Hope and Compassion Stories	71
Using Imagination and Stephen Carnahan.....	73
Biblical Storytelling for Lent & Easter	74
Syllabus.....	74
Bibliography	80
Classroom webpage screenshot and contents	82
Lecture Notes and Slides	83
Session #1	83
Garden Stories and Introduction to Sacred Storytelling	83
Storytelling as Playing in the Garden	85
Doodling the Story and John Walsh	89

	15
TOV and Rev. Henry Graf.....	92
Session #2	95
Fire Stories	95
Verbs in Storytelling and Ray Gombach	95
Memory Palace and Object Story Learning.....	102
Story Gathering Work and Storied Objects	103
Imagination and Your Storytelling and Audience	103
Session #3	107
Table Stories and Leonard Sweet	107
Communion Stories	110
Sankofa Story as told by Valerie Tutson	116
Narraphoric Storytelling Lab	116
Listening & Telling Difficult Stories.....	118
Session #4	120
Storytelling and The Lowry Loop - Eugene Lowry.....	120
We know more than we can tell and Michael Polanyi.....	120
Mandorla and Leonard Sweet	121
Stories on The Lowry Loop	124
Kinesthetic Story Learning	126
Stories are how our brains code what is important	127

Storytelling and the Peace in Paradox Phenomenon.....	128
Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas	130
Syllabus.....	130
Bibliography	137
Required Readings List	137
Lecture Notes with Slides	139
Session #1	140
Catching up with Jesus and becoming like children.....	140
Doodling The Story and John Walsh.....	144
Hope and Peace and the Fig Tree	146
The Importance of Paradox and Conflict.....	147
Session #2	149
The Memory Palace and Storied Objects.....	150
Experiential Storytelling and Mark Miller.....	155
Play Kahoot Game	157
Worship as Collaboration rather Than Performance	157
Session #3	161
Auditory Inception & Christmas Carols	161
Imaginative Listening with Rev. Stephen Carnahan.....	163
The 70 Faces of Torah and Michael Novelli	164

	17
Exploring Love in our Advent Bible Stories	165
Christmas Cocoa Chat Pass	166
Session #4	169
Kinesthetic Story Learning	169
Interplay.org ~ Unlocking the Wisdom of your Body	169
Culture Keeping Storytelling and Annette Simmons.....	169
Church Angel Stories and Walter Wink	171
Sacred Storytelling Lab Half Day Online	177
Welcome and Itinerary.....	177
Lecture Notes with Slides	178
Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline.....	179
Learning a Story by Heart	182
Sharing Our Stories	186
Sacred Storytelling Lab Day Long In Person	188
Welcome and Itinerary.....	188
Lecture Notes	190
Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline.....	190
Learning a Story by Heart	191
Telling Your Story by Heart.....	192
Healing Through Sacred Storytelling	192

Sacred Storytelling Labs for Retreat.....	194
Welcome and Itinerary.....	194
Lecture Notes	195
Sacred Storytelling as a Spiritual Discipline	195
Practicing the Art of Sacred Storytelling Through Doodling.....	196
Healing Through Sacred Storytelling	197
Practicing the Art of Sacred Storytelling Through Hand Dancing and Prayer Walking.....	199
Healing Through Sacred Storytelling	201
Course Description.....	201
Bibliography	201
Lecture Notes	203
Storytelling As Spiritual Practice	203
Kenosis & Pleurosis.....	204
Deepening & Reaching	205
Sacred Originates in the Particular which is ultimately Universal	205
Story Gathering.....	206
Story Gathering Caution	206
Story Gathering Care	206
Weddings & Funerals	207
Narrative Therapy	207

	19
Encountering Conflict.....	208
Story Discernment	209
Cortisol.....	209
Adrenaline.....	209
Oxytocin.....	210
Dopamine.....	210
Endorphins	211
Story Technology	212
The Hero's Journey – Joseph Campbell	212
The Dramatic Arc – Gustav Freytag.....	213
Wonder & Awe - Angus Fletcher.....	214
The Stretch.....	215
Plot Twist.....	215
Seeing the Impossible	215
Children in ICU Storytelling Research.....	216
Culture Keeping.....	216
Fear & Blame Stories.....	218
Hope & Compassion Stories.....	218
Sunrise Boat Church Story.....	220
Assessment.....	222

Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual Worship & World

Syllabus

Maine School of Ministry, Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

Instructor: Rev. AbbyLynn Haskell M.Div

Contact Info: abby@broadreachministries.com

207-415-5858 (OK to text)

Course Description: Biblical Storytelling is a Fall semester 2020 practice-based course which will provide course participants with an introduction to the art of Biblical Storytelling for use in a virtual worship and world through an experiential learning approach. Biblical Storytelling is a spiritual discipline through which you are invited to deepen your devotional faith and grow in your missional outreach.

Everyone is a storyteller. Each person is a one-of-a-kind creation with distinctly original gifts, therefore, each story that a person tells will be uniquely expressed. There is no one perfect storytelling role model to follow. This course will survey a number of different techniques for learning and telling Bible stories. Course participants will develop and share their own Biblical Storytelling art through pre-recording and live virtual presentations.

The technology requirements of this class involve being able to access Zoom by computer or smartphone. Technical assistance will be available for the making of recordings if desired. The overall approach for critiquing storytelling efforts in this learning process will be one of affirming the strengths and positives of each attempt. As the strengths of your attempts are affirmed, the confidence and thrill to keep trying grows and gradually any doubts will

diminish. Delighting in developing your God-given gifts for storytelling opens the spiritual practice of storytelling to the realm of being a grand adventure as you feel God's pleasure in the preparation and in the telling.

Meeting 1 (Sept 19, 2020) We will explore the overall themes of the class and take time to introduce ourselves with care to one another, including our contexts, goals and intentions for seeking to practice the art of Biblical Storytelling. Prior to this class Learning Partners will be assigned for discussing the readings of the course. Instructions for the pre-recorded Biblical Storytelling presentation will be given, samples from the Instructor discussed in class, and a class calendar for student Biblical Storytelling presentations across the semester will be created.

Meetings 2, 3, 4 (Oct 10, Nov 14, Dec 12, 2020) will be devoted to morning sessions which will feature a two-part seminar at which (9-10:50am) assigned readings will be considered and (11-12:00) viewing a pre-corded Storyteller and follow up with discussion on the theme for the class for that session. Biblical Storytelling presentations by students will be made in the afternoon sessions according to the calendar developed at the first meeting of the class.

Course Expectations: At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Express their understanding of their own unique style and strengths as a Biblical Storyteller.
2. Understand and articulate the importance of encouraging and nurturing Storytelling art as a spiritual practice that incorporates both a devotional deepening aspect and an evangelism reaching dynamic.
4. Deepen their understanding of developing a supportive Storytelling network while being an encourager of others in each person's Storytelling endeavors.
5. Demonstrate increasing ability to engage online and social media tools for Biblical Storytelling in virtual ministry, worship and outreach.

Meeting Time, Place, Dates: Four Saturday meetings (9am-3:00pm) on September 19, October 10, November 14, December 12, 2020 on Zoom.

Course Requirements:

All pre-assigned reading and writing is expected to have been completed prior to each class. Please acquire assigned texts and to begin reading and writing assignments at least three weeks in advance for each class (thus by August 29 for the first class).

Two pre-recorded Biblical Storytelling presentations due for the Oct 10 and December 12 class is required; the format and instructions (and sample recordings) will be provided at the first meeting on Sept. 19.

In preparation for each class, each student will participate in small Zoom Learning Partner discussion groups (2-3people) the week preceding each Saturday class session. You will be given the name(s) & emails of your Learning Partner(s) so you can work together to agree upon a time to Zoom. A guiding set of questions will be given to which each student will respond in a discussion format that allows everyone to participate. The intention here is to prepare and deepen the learning from the readings that will be further discussed at the Saturday class meeting. These small group discussions assist students by allowing for more time for reflection on the overall material and themes.

Final Written or Video/Audio Project: A final written or video project will be due within 23 days of the last meeting (no later than Monday, January 4, 2020):

For the Written: Answer in approximately 2,000 words - What fundamentally have you learned from your readings and watching, your instructor, the Biblical Storytelling presentations (including your own), and your fellow students concerning the art of Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual World?

For the Video/Audio Project: Record a brief meditation moment/ worship service (More than 5 and less than 15 minutes) that is based on a Biblical Story that you tell in the recording. Share this recording on a social media platform.

Student Evaluation: Students' assigned written work and in-class presentations will be marked Completed with Distinction, Completed with Promise, Completed, and Did not Complete and given comment. Students will receive a final mark using the same rubric. Class participation will be assessed separately (this includes participation in online follow-up discussions) and factor into your overall assessment.

Zooming In: All classes and small group discussion will take place using Zoom

Class Meetings and pre-Meeting Assignments: Each Saturday there will a morning (9:00-12:00) and an afternoon (1:00-3:00) session, as described in the Course Description. There will be a 5-10 minute break each hour. Lunch will be from 12:00pm-12:30 paired in a breakout room with another student and 12:30-1:00pm will be on your own.

1. Saturday, September 19: Introduction to the Class and Class Participants

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

The Art of Story Telling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story by John Walsh

BibleTelling: Telling God's Word By John Walsh

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read both entire books (above). Procure all required books and begin to survey the rest of the books on the required reading list.
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class

- **Recommended Reading**

Day, Doris. "Storytelling Techniques" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020.
<http://www.biblestorytelling.org/devotions/W%20Storytelling%20Techniques%20PDF%207-24-13.pdf>.

Day, Jack. "Tips for Bible Storytellers" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020.
<http://www.biblestorytelling.org/adults/Tips%20for%20Telling%20a%20Bible%20Story.pdf>

2. Saturday, October 10: Thomas Boomershine & The Network of Biblical Storytellers

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling by Thomas Boomershine

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read entire book (above).
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.
- **Recommended Reading**

Network of Biblical Storytellers International. "Tips for Developing Your Story." Resources, last accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.nbsint.org/resources/>

3. Saturday, November 14: Leonard Sweet, Narraphors & Telling Difficult Stories

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

Giving Blood: A Fresh Paradigm for Preaching by Leonard Sweet

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read entire book (above).

- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.

4. Saturday, December 12: Annette Symonds & Culture Keeping Storytelling

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, & Persuasion Through The Art of Storytelling Third Edition by Annette Symonds

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read entire book (above).
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.
- **Recommended Reading & Watching**

Gallo, Carmine. "Stories literally put our brain waves in sync." Quartz at Work, Last accessed May 12, 2020. <https://qz.com/work/1298571/stories-literally-put-our-brain-waves-in-sync/>

"*The magical science of storytelling*" David JP Phillips; TEDxStockholm: Last accessed May 12, 2020. <https://youtu.be/Nj-hdQMa3uA>

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Required Readings List

Walsh, John. *The Art of Story Telling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Walsh, John. *BibleTelling: Telling God's Word*. Bloomington, IL: BibleTelling, December 2018.

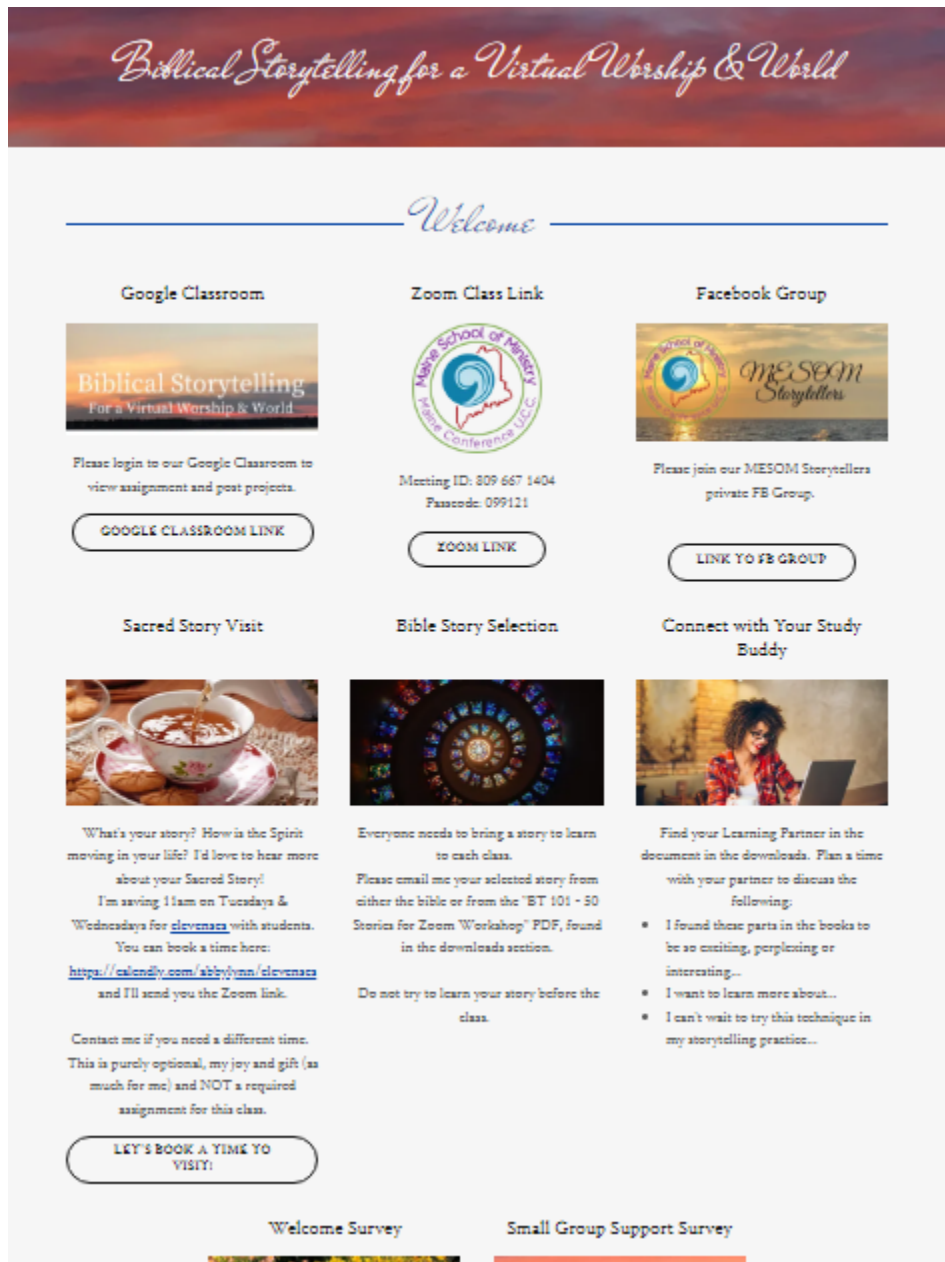
Boomershine, Thomas E. *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988.

Sweet, Leonard. *Giving Blood: A Fresh Paradigm for Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Simmons, Annette. *The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, & Persuasion Through the Art of Storytelling Third Edition*. New York: Basic Books, Hachette Book Group, 2019.

¹ See full project bibliography.

Classroom Webpage Screenshot and Contents



Webpage contents include links to: Google Classroom, Zoom meeting id and passcode, Facebook Group, online calendar for reserving one-on-one visit time with teacher, welcome survey and small group support survey. Webpage also included downloads for each class: story selection list, learning partners, auditor expectations, lab etiquette, class notes with slides.

Lecture Notes with Slides

Session #1

Introduction to Biblical Storytelling

Meeting 1 (Sept 19, 2020) We will explore the overall themes of the class and take time to introduce ourselves with care to one another, including our contexts, goals and intentions for seeking to practice the art of Biblical Storytelling. Prior to this class Learning Partners will be assigned for discussing the readings of the course. Instructions for the pre-recorded Biblical Storytelling presentation will be given, samples from the Instructor discussed in class, and a class calendar for student Biblical Storytelling presentations across the semester will be created.

Class Meetings and pre-Meeting Assignments: Each Saturday there will be a morning (9:00-12:00) and an afternoon (1:00-3:00) session, as described in the Course Description. There will be a 5-10 minute break each hour. Lunch will be from 12:00pm-12:30 paired in a breakout room with another student and 12:30-1:00pm will be on your own.

1. Saturday, September 19: Introduction to the Class and Class Participants

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

The Art of Story Telling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story by John Walsh
BibleTelling: Telling God's Word By John Walsh

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read both entire books (above). Procure all required books and begin to survey the rest of the books on the required reading list.
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- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class
- **Recommended Reading**

Day, Doris. "Storytelling Techniques" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020
<http://www.biblestorytelling.org/devotions/W%20Storytelling%20Techniques%20PDF%207-24-13.pdf>

Day, Jack. "Tips for Bible Storytellers" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020
<http://www.biblestorytelling.org/adults/Tips%20for%20Telling%20a%20Bible%20Story.pdf>

(1) Welcome & Opening Prayer



(2) Introduce myself & Sacred Storytelling as spiritual discipline and how I entered the world of virtual storytelling



(3) “What’s your story?” let’s play a game - Meet your fellow storytellers

² Jimena Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template,” SlidesCarnival, July 2020, <https://www.slidescarnival.com/miranda-free-presentation-template/147>.

³ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”



(4) Share the story of the minstrel & the villagers

—we are about cathedral building work, the work of artisans

Holding out the vision blesses us with a lightness and hope in what we are creating

<https://sacredstructures.org/mission/the-story-of-three-bricklayers-a-parable-about-the-power-of-purpose/>



(5) “What’s your story?” let’s play a game - Meet your fellow storytellers

⁴ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁵ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”



Invitation to Play & Sacred Storytelling

- (6) We are about the work of catching the vision of children, Jesus has this beautiful story of the children in Matthew 11:16-17. Storytelling is play, God calls us to play.

Matthew 11:16-17, 25-30 NRSV

‘But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,

“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;

we wailed, and you did not mourn.”

At that time Jesus said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’⁶

Storytelling invites people to emotionally and spiritually experience a new reality, God’s reality. Jesus told stories to open people’s hearts to deeper understandings.⁷ Jesus told stories to transform lives.⁸ “Jesus did not tell his stories in a vacuum; he was neither the first nor the

⁶ Matthew 11:16-17, 25-30 (NRSV).

⁷ Matthew 13:10-15, Mark 4:10-12, Luke 8:9-10 (NRSV).

⁸ Matthew 13:1-9, Mark 4:1-9, Luke 8:4-8 (NRSV).

only storyteller in his world. He emerged from a rich storytelling culture.”⁹ Parables came out of a milieu of Jewish storytelling. Rabbis told stories called mashals and many carry the form, motif and plots as those used by Jesus. People were as accustomed to understanding mashals as we are accustomed to understanding memes today. Parables were created with the intent that they be retold. The parables Jesus told revealed deep truths, were engaging, life changing and easy to remember using everyday objects. Even today, the parables of Jesus still speak to us providing us insight and wisdom into current spiritual, religious and ethical issues.



(7) “What’s your story?”



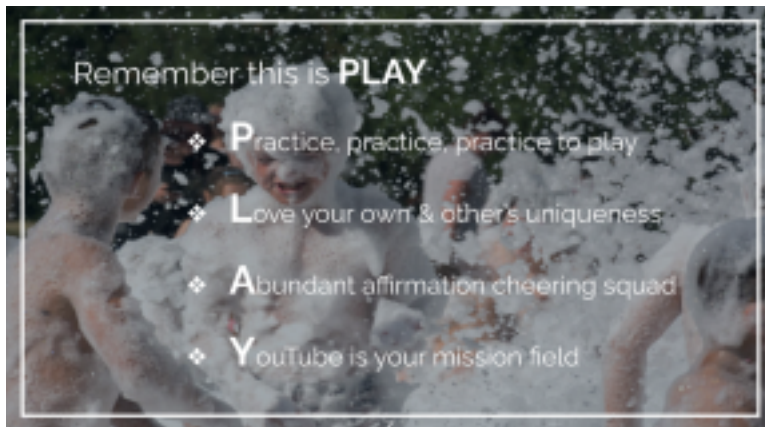
BREAK

(8) More about PLAY and our playing together

⁹ Dennis E Smith. and Michael E. Williams, eds., *The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible*, vol. 11, The Parables of Jesus (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 11.

¹⁰ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

1. Practice, practice, practice...Understand and articulate the importance of encouraging and nurturing Storytelling art as a spiritual practice that incorporates both a devotional deepening aspect and an evangelism reaching dynamic.
2. Love your own & other's uniqueness... Express their understanding of their own unique style and strengths as a Biblical Storyteller.
3. Abundant Affirmation...Deepen their understanding of developing a supportive Storytelling network while being an encourager of others in each person's Storytelling endeavors.
4. YouTube (Facebook Live, Vimeo...etc.) is your mission field... Demonstrate increasing ability to engage online and social media tools for Biblical Storytelling in virtual ministry, worship and outreach.



11

(9) “What’s your story?”



Turn off slide show for media mission field & calendar discussion

¹¹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Vimeo... All will begin learning to tell one story today. You may use one this one or chose a different one for your recording that needs to be posted on our Google Classroom or our private FB page group before October 10. Please send me an email telling me where you posted it.

Rules of engagement in posting and commenting on posts

Story of watching a child learn to walk – we are cheering them on – we are not telling them how they did not place their foot down properly...etc. We will cheer each other on in the same spirit.

MESOM Storytellers – Private Facebook Group Description & Google Classroom

posting rules

This is the Sacred Storytelling Lab for the Maine School of Ministry Biblical Storytellers. This is a place to play, experiment & practice the art of storytelling: a supportive lab of learning to give and receive encouragement from your fellow storytellers. A place to share storytelling treasures you discover with others.

All comments will be positive. No negative critiques or corrective opinions will be accepted here.

Members may share their own Biblical Storytelling art and comment on each other's contributions. If you do not wish for people to comment on your art please state this in the comments section.

If choosing to comment on your fellow storyteller's contribution, substantive comments and thoughtful feedback is helpful.

For example:

*Name what you enjoyed most about the story.

*Identify what was done that you found drew you deeper into the tale.

*List the strengths you noted in the storyteller's art.

*Share what you personally learn from this story.

This is not the place to offer your opinion on what the storyteller can do to improve. This may sound strange but this style of lab is based on the belief that as one grows more confident in their art the weaknesses will fade and the strengths will grow. AND to remember we are ones who know God's strength is made perfect in our weakness.

So please hand over to God your perceived weaknesses in yourself or in others.

*"We naturally will bless others with our strengths. God will supernaturally bless others through our weaknesses."*¹² - Leonard Sweet

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE IN THE POSTING CALENDAR

Week 1, 2 or 3 – The posting will be spaced out. – Take a poll

4 people will post between Sept 20-26

6 people will post between Sept 27 – Oct 3

6 people will post between Oct 4-9

Everyone please take the time to watch and comment on a couple of postings prior to our Oct 10 gathering

(10) The art of storytelling is not about memorizing. Memorizing limits the number of stories you'll be able to tell, limits flexibility, may distract from your ministry . The art of storytelling involves sharing the story from images ¹³

¹² Leonard Sweet, January 27, 2020 class notes taken by author, Biddeford, ME.

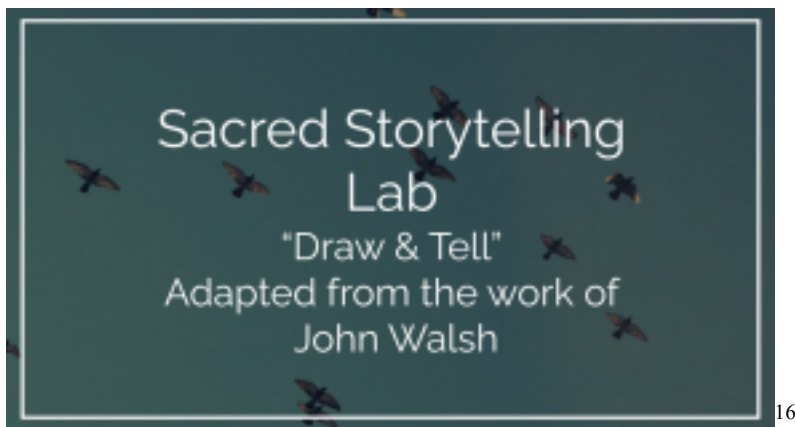
¹³ John Walsh, *The Art of Storytelling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 28-29.



Doodling the Story and John Walsh

(11) Sacred Storytelling Lab Doodling the Story based on John Walsh's "Draw & Tell"¹⁵

- a. I adore the work done by John Walsh. His approach is beautifully humble in that he highlights the power of storytelling from his professed weakness as one who struggles with stuttering. Learning to embrace your perceived storytelling strengths and weaknesses is important. Coming to trust that God will give you all you need to tell a story is also a part of the storyteller's faith journey.



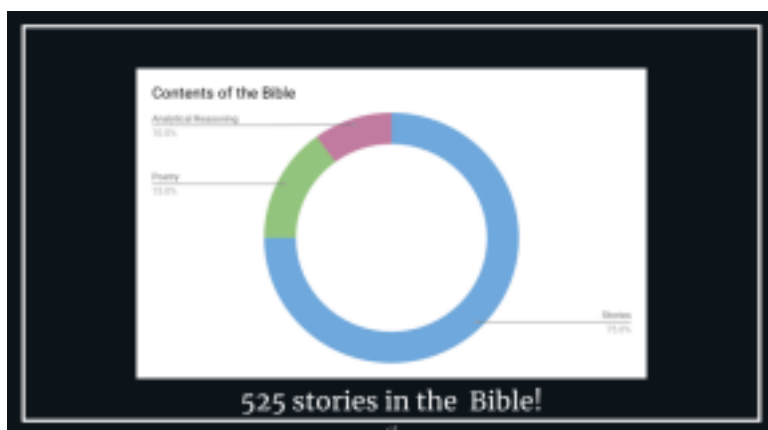
(12) 525 Stories in the Bible¹⁷! - "In the beginning God created" (Genesis 1:1a NIV) and people, reflecting God's creativity, have told stories. Long before the stories of the Bible

¹⁴ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

¹⁵ John Walsh, *BibleTelling: Telling God's Word* (Bloomington, IL: BibleTelling, 2018), 20.

¹⁶ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

were collected and organized into print they were shared through the practice and tradition of oral storytelling. Stories were told to deepen community, strengthen identity, create meaning, inspire courage, elevate worship, teach ethics, explain suffering, alleviate pain, instigate healing, provide entertainment and more. Oral storytelling is of immense value in ministry today for enriching preaching, liturgy, teaching, worship, pastoral care, mission, evangelism and discipleship.



Draw and Tell Workshop¹⁸

We are just going to jump right in and do this! Turn slide show off!

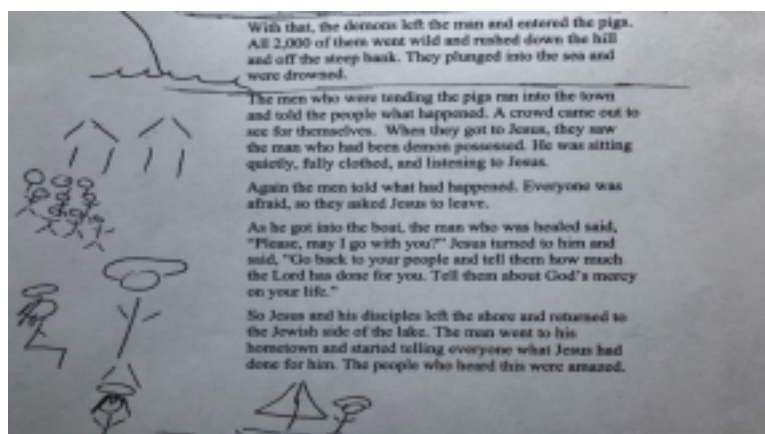
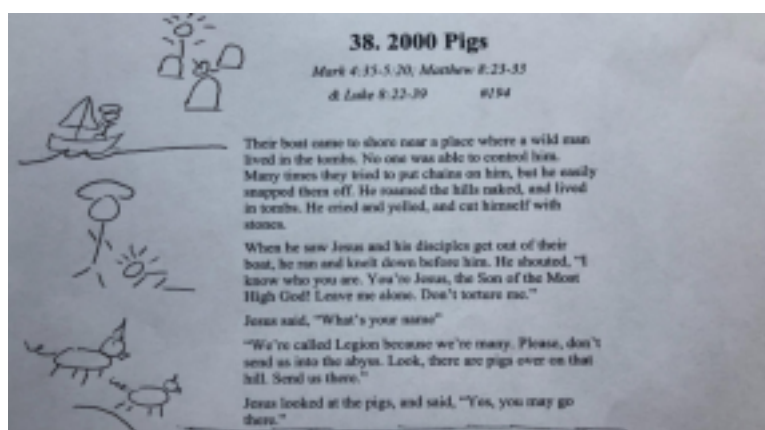
Read your story twice and divide it into sections. (8 minutes)

Turn slide show back on after folks have divided their stories

(13 & 14) Display of sample story

¹⁷ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 4.

¹⁸ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 20.



Give instructions for making drawings

Sketch/draw something for each section of your story. (15 minutes)

Breakout #1

Show your drawings to each other and explain how they fit the story. (5 minutes each)

Read your story one time (4 minutes)

BREAK OUT #2 – two new partners **Stumble through the story**

Read their story one more time. (3 minutes)

BREAK OUT #3 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without looking at your story or your drawings.

After each telling, the partner says “My favorite part of your story was...” (6 minutes each)

BREAK OUT #4 – four students in each group

Students: At least one person in each group is to tell of a time when

he/she experienced the power of a Bible story simply told. (4 minutes)

Make a list of people who might volunteer (on a weekly basis)

to listen to the stories you are learning. (3 minutes)

BREAK OUT #5 – four students in each group

Each of you tell who is on your list of five potential listeners. (3 minutes)

Quickly skim your story one more time. (2 minutes)

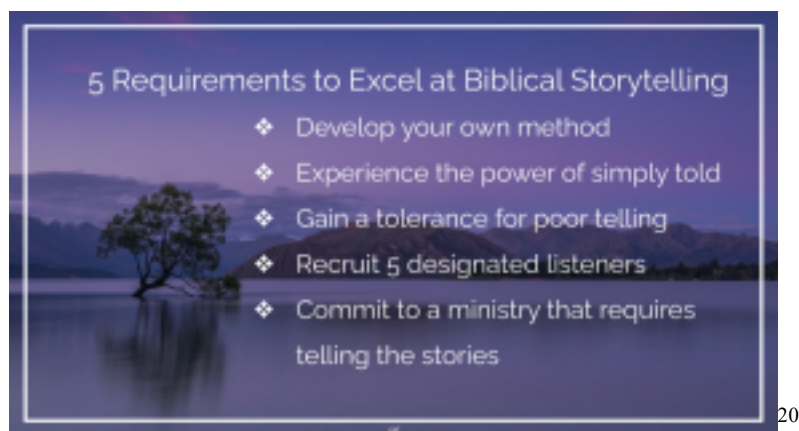
BREAK OUT #6 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without looking at your story or your drawings.

After each telling, discuss “My favorite part of your story was...” “What did you personally learn from this story?” (10 minutes each)

15) The 5 requirements to Excel at Biblical Storytelling¹⁹

¹⁹ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 29.



BREAK

2:45-3:00 Lighting Round – what is one lightning strike (ah-ha!) today you received you will take with you?

Additional Activity - Let's throw down some clay & play ~ I simply adore the creative way Walsh invites you into the work of imagining a story. Take on a character and tell the story from that character's point of view! You can be the narrator but I encourage you to try something different. Be an animal, an inanimate object, a family member, an angel, the devil...etc.

²⁰ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

Session #2

(1) Welcome & Opening Prayer & Joshua 5:13-15

Zoom etiquette reminder:

- Everyone is muted until they need to ask a question or are sent into a breakout room for workshop exercises.
- If unmuting to ask a question, please re-mute yourself when you are done asking.
- Please feel free to use chat to ask questions but be aware they may not be immediately answered. The instructor will review the chat questions during the breaks if the session did not allow time for them to be immediately answered.



(2) Biblical stories can be told in one's own words or retold word for word. Because biblical stories are so well known Boomershine recommends telling them word for word and aiming for 75% accuracy²² in the retelling. After this class we won't be so worried about it. Share Karate Kid illustration

- i. *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling* by Thomas Boomershine Network of Biblical Storytellers International. "Tips for Developing Your Story." Resources, last accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.nbsint.org/resources/>

²¹ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

²² Thomas E. Boomershine, *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 31.



(3) “What’s your story?”



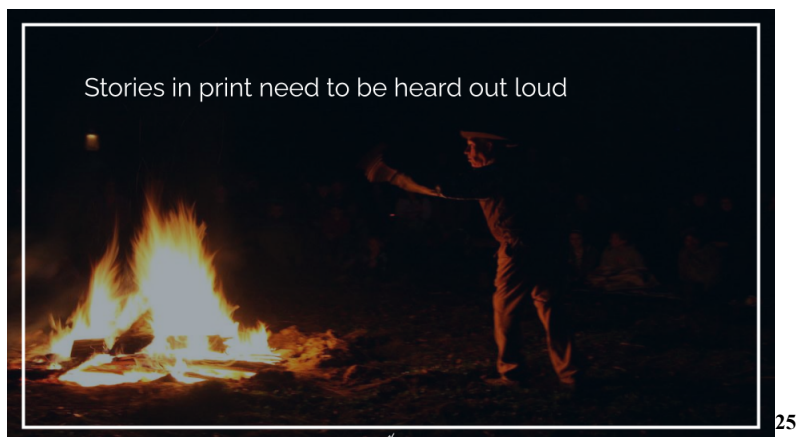
Stories in print need to be heard out loud

- (4) Stories in print need to be heard out loud. *The importance of sound – sounding creates vibrations that materialize-our culture is all about a sound track – the words don’t have the right meaning until they sound right – the importance of the public reading of scripture – the ability to hear God’s voice – the Korean – the Tong movement – you never read the bible silently – you read it out loud every year – the leader of this Dr. Zoh – his daughters were woken every day by the sound of their dad reading scripture to them – their retreats are reading the scripture out loud – secondary orality – the digital culture*²⁴

We are so familiar with relying on the printed word for learning stories but stories in ancient times were shared and learned orally. Printed letters and manuscripts were intended to be read out loud. Reading a story out loud or listening to a recording helps the teller to hear the sounds of a story as well as the key framework, words and images.

²³ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

²⁴ Leonard Sweet, January 27, 2020, DMin 719 class notes taken by author, Biddeford, ME.



Stop slides for Zoom Poll – How often do you read the Bible aloud? How often do you hear the Bible read aloud?

Each person will craft their own unique recipe for learning a biblical story word for word and there are some basic ingredients that are helpful to know.

Internalizing a Story and Thomas Boomersshine

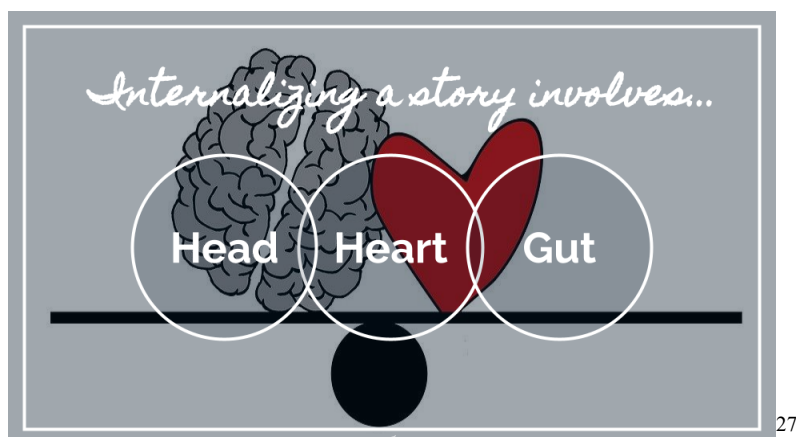
- (5) Repetition is the key to internalizing a story. Internalizing a story involves the head, heart and gut.

It is helpful to imagine internalizing a story in three parts of the self, the head, heart and gut.

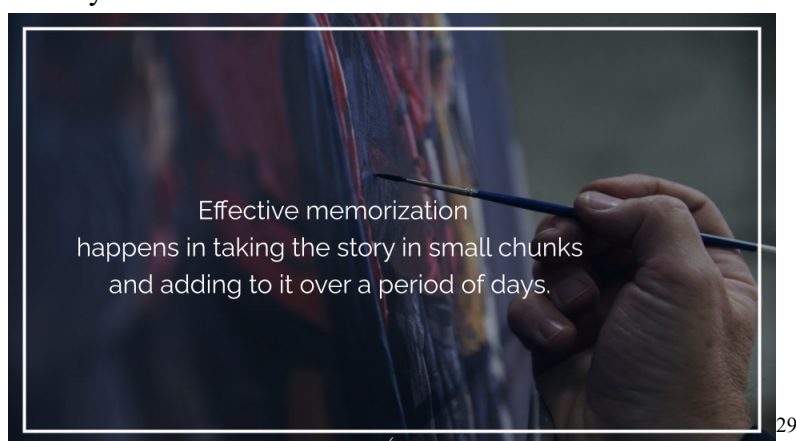
- i. Analyze the story for its inherent structure, research its historical setting and notice the repeating words and images to know a story in your head.
- ii. The heart holds the emotions of a story, what characters feel and how they make us laugh or cry.
- iii. In the gut we experience what the story does, the action of the story as it moves us with compassion, mercy and empathy.²⁶

²⁵ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

²⁶ Boomersshine, *Story Journey*, 44.



- (6) Effective memorization happens in taking the story in small chunks and adding to it over a period of days²⁸



Storytelling is inherently evangelical

- (7) The only way to truly keep a story is to give it away.³⁰ Sharing the story you've learned with one or more listeners is important. This is touching upon the spiritual practice, spiritual discipline of storytelling. It is inherently evangelical.

²⁷ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

²⁸ Boomersshine, *Story Journey*, 29.

²⁹ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

³⁰ Boomersshine, *Story Journey*, 29.

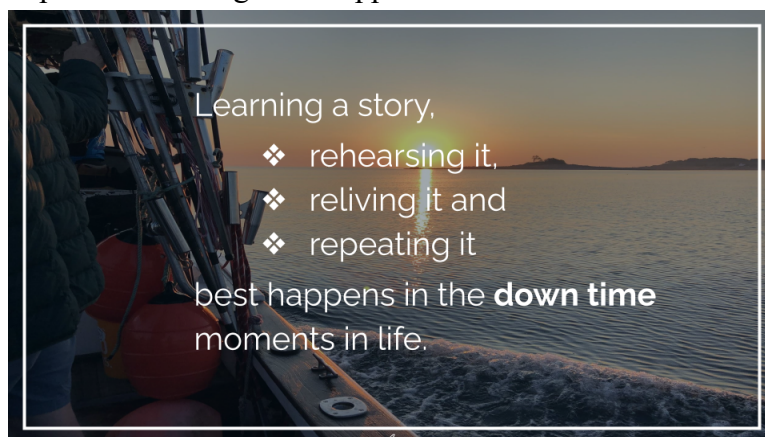


(8) “What’s your story?”



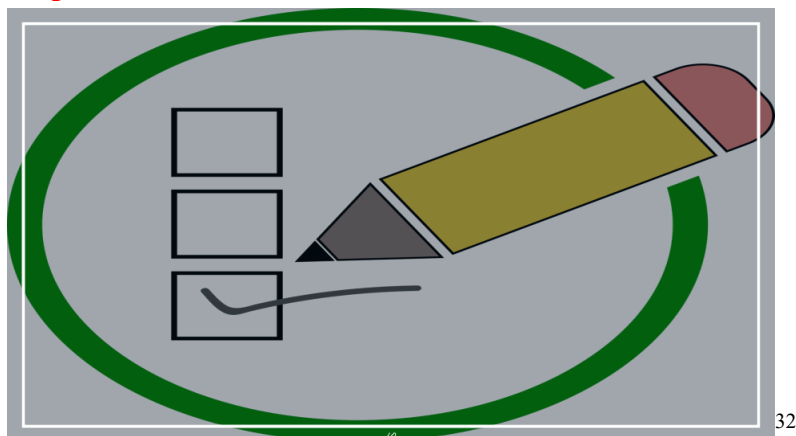
BREAK – if you haven’t decided on a story – use your break to select a Bible story. You will use this Bible story during the workshop portion of class

- (9) Learning a story, rehearsing it, reliving it and repeating it best happens in the down time moments in life. Down times are the times just before bed or just after waking, at the gym on the elliptical or waiting for an appointment.



³¹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

- (10) **Stop slides** for Zoom Poll



32

- (11) Instead of checking in with your phone, check in with your story. This helps so much with the spiritual discipline aspect of letting the story live with you.



33

- (12)

M – master the story
 U – understand the story
 L – live with the story
 L – link personally with the story ³⁴

³² Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

³³ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

³⁴ Tracy Radosevic, “Intro to Biblical Storytelling: A Biblical App-teaser,” Network of Biblical Storytellers, International, YouTube video, 45:02, July 16, 2020, https://youtu.be/SMQAaNh2F_Q

MULL over the story

M – master the story

U – understand the story

L – live with the story

L – link personally with the story



(13) “What’s your story?”

What's Your Story?

2 minutes to share

1. What's the story behind your name?
2. Why did you take this class?
3. What are your goals for this class?
4. What are some of your favorite Bible Stories & why?
5. How do you play?

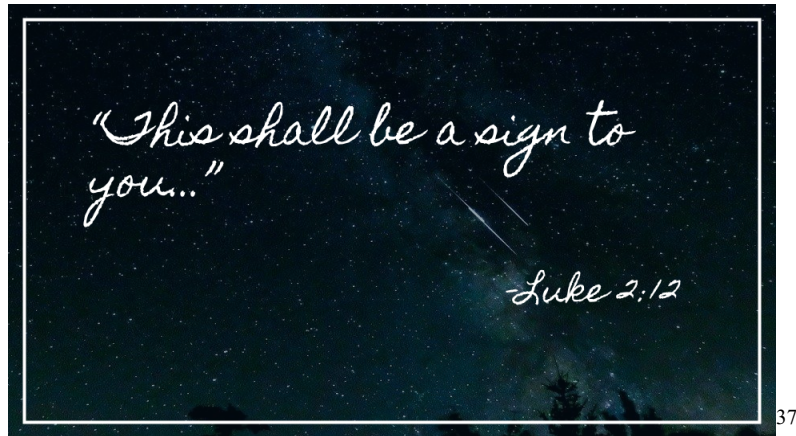
(14) Getting the text, the story...out of the head, out of the brain, the left brain...and to the whole person and embodying the story...AND LEARNING ABOUT THE EXEGETICAL BACKGROUND OF A STORY

The Back Story and Leonard Sweet
Storytelling Luke 2:8-20

- a. “This shall be a sign unto you...” The Special Shepherds of Bethlehem: Jesus and mirror image of first born sacrifice and Passover story
- b. The paradox of the opposites...born in the best of the cities...placed in the worse of the feeding troughs...coming together of the dark and the light.³⁶

³⁵ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

³⁶ Leonard Sweet, November 2016 notes taken by author from *Preach the Story* online lecture.

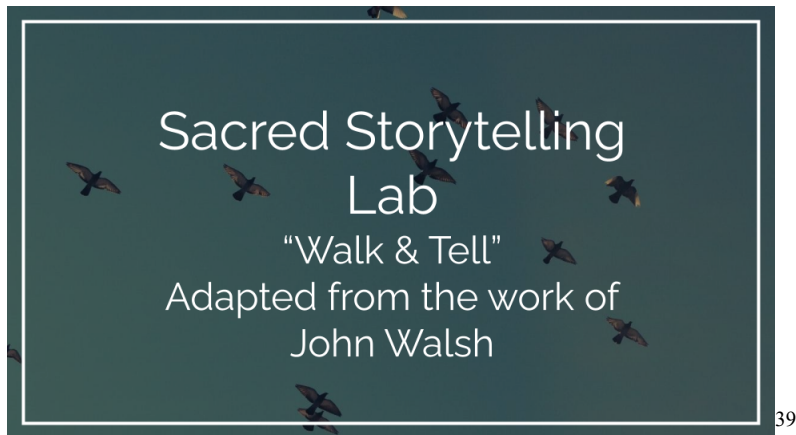


(15) “What’s your story?”



BREAK

(16) Walk & Tell – Adapted from John Walsh³⁸



³⁷ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

³⁸ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 20.

The Memory Palace and Storied Objects⁴⁰

Memory Palace Teaching <https://youtu.be/p9IOqd1LpkA>

Stop video at 2:45

Tell Luke 2:8-20 story talking through memory props

Read your story twice and divide it into sections. (10 minutes)

Select an object/place in the room for the story section to take place something for each section of your story. (20 min)

Instructions for Breakout #1 & lunch visit

Explain your room mapping/your memory palace to each other and explain how they fit the story.

12:00 - 12:30pm – discuss with partner during Lunch

BREAK

STORY GATHERING WORK & THE IMPORTANCE OF STORIED OBJECTS

The importance of curiosity and listening – think of yourself as a story-gatherer as well as a storyteller. Be curious about the story, be curious about the people, the community you are

³⁹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁴⁰ Sprouts, “The Memory Palace: Can You Do It?” YouTube video, 3:34, July 16, 2017. <https://youtu.be/p9IOqd1LpkA>.

sharing with. Debby you imagine your children as you tell and it makes you a better storyteller because as you are telling you are aware of the gift to the dear ones you are delivering it to. My faith conviction – storytelling is an act of discipleship and service. As disciples we are storytellers for others and the act of storytelling is all about the relationship.

Objects have stories. Story of my dining room table as connected to the genesis story...

Would 2 volunteers on the next break be willing to find an object that has a story and as a group we are going to prayerfully listen, ask questions where our curiosity leads us and then brainstorm as a group connections of where that object has a layered connection to the scriptures.

Ken Medema - for next class

Charity and Sarah and Jeremy for next class – to share stories about objects and our group pastoral work connecting them to biblical stories

The connection with story and pastoral care is best done as a work of improvisation

Improv's yes and rule

BACK TO YOUR STORY

Read your story one time (4 minutes)

BREAK OUT #2 – two new partners

Tell your stories to each other – walking through your room/house. Touch is important.

(10 minutes) **Stumble through the story**

Read their story one more time. (3 minutes)

BREAK OUT #3 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without physically walking around the room/house

After each telling, discuss “My favorite part of your story was...” “What did you personally learn from this story?” (12 minutes)

BREAK

Quickly skim your story one more time. (2 minutes)

BREAK OUT #4 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without looking at your story or your drawings.

After each telling, discuss “My favorite part of your story was...” “What did you personally learn from this story?” (10 minutes)

Start with Video from NBTI – the healing at the Pool of Bethesda, the telling then the how and why

[Biblical Storytelling \(Behind-the-Scenes\) • John 5 on Vimeo](https://vimeo.com/295232843)⁴¹

Group work on John 5:1-9

⁴¹ Network of Biblical Storytellers, “Biblical Storytelling (Behind-the-Scenes) • John 5,” Vimeo video, 5:07, December 15, 2018, <https://vimeo.com/295232843>.

Breakout into head, heart & gut groups

- i. Analyze the story for its inherent structure, research its historical setting and notice the repeating words and images to know a story in your head.
- ii. The heart holds the emotions of a story, what characters feel and how they make us laugh or cry.
- iii. In the gut we experience what the story does, the action of the story as it moves us with compassion, mercy and empathy.

Read John 5, you may need to go beyond verses 1-9 - analyze it as a group for your body part and in 10 min we will come back and each body part will report their findings. I'll be around for questions or signal me.

2:45pm Lighting Round – what is one lightning strike (ah-ha!) today you received you will take with you?

Session #3

Giving Blood: A Fresh Paradigm for Preaching by Leonard Sweet

- (1) Welcome Story & – cancer, chapel at Pilgrim Lodge, Isaiah 40:31 “Those who wait upon the Lord.”



- (2) Pilgrim Lodge Chapel itself is layered with story and images, asking for prayer requests who needs to soar? – Opening Prayer

Storytelling as a Concert of Participation Art and Ken Medema

- (3) Ken Medema – preaching, concert of participation art – Story Catcher, Story Builder, Storyteller Preacher begin with a song and story from your own life and link it to a biblical passage and image

Tell story of hearing him at West Newfield Church

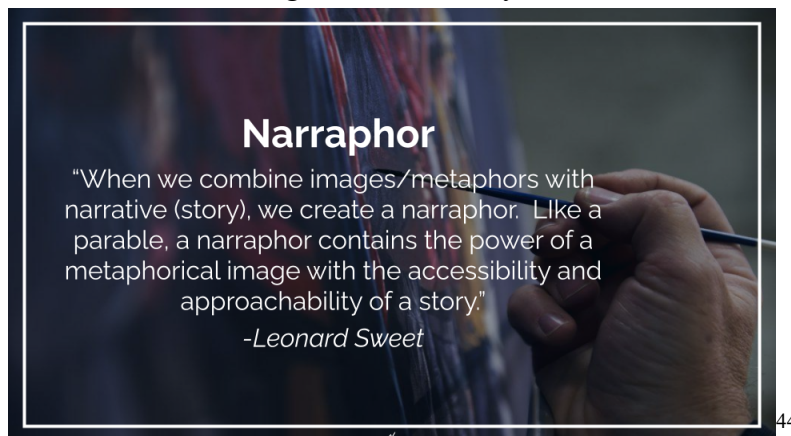
EPIC, Narraphor and Leonard Sweet

- (4) Narraphor - Narraphors (a word coined by Leonard Sweet) is the blending of the words narrative and metaphor. Narraphors are created with stories and images. “Because a narraphor is a story made from metaphor, it narrates with metaphorical meaning. The combining of story and image creates a reality into which the listener enters: a narrative that touches life contextually and layers of meaning that offer depth, breadth, and height.”⁴³ Jesus was an architect of narraphors. Narraphors can make or break a person, family, church, community & nation. Narraphors can make us sick, spiritually, emotionally, physically and at the same time Narraphors can heal & strengthen us. The

⁴² Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁴³ Leonard Sweet, *Giving Blood: A Fresh Paradigm for Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014),

art of oral biblical storytelling involves more than memorizing words it involves the work of seeking out the details and narraphors to visualize and embody. Images and metaphors bring a story to life in the imagination of the storyteller. A story is released with better energy and authenticity when the story's metaphors, images and narratives are imbued and imbedded within the imagination of a storyteller.



(5) This week with Lori – we talked about mental illness. The tough time of year with holidays and people really struggling and how to help someone discern when the depression, anxiety and worry needs more help. Wrestling with God – how this is a time of great wrestling and God is indeed touching us but the blessing can be painful. Wrench that hip out of its socket. How badly was it wrenched? Was it broken? You are not going to walk on a broken hip. You can't see mental illness, if you've broken a hip you are not going to walk without seeking medical help. Did you just sprain your hip? Dislocate your hip so you can still get around with a limp...then perhaps you can get away with just resting it...and being oh so gentle with yourself.

(6) Narraphoric Preaching - Story Gathering, Story Building & Storytelling

- a. Explain how we are working with Sarah, Charity & Jeremy's stories to develop an EPIC semiotic storytelling/preaching event

.

A few things to keep in mind for your story:

- Please select an object you can show us from your computer either something you can hold or something you can screen share a picture of.

⁴⁴ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

- Our work as a class will be in interviewing you about your story (we are practicing story gathering) and then brainstorming possible bible stories that connect with the object/brand you share. We will be further developing our relationship with you through the story of the object/brand you select.
- Your story doesn't have to be long but some depth in terms of your emotional connection to that object/brand will be helpful.



45

EPIC Narraphoric Storytelling Lab

(7) EPIC

- E – Experiential**
- P – Participatory**
- I – Image rich
- C – Connected

“Say the word story and people think of either something written (left brain) or oral (right brain). It’s time to think of story as something EPIC, or whole-brained.”⁴⁶

Narraphors used in preaching are greatly enriched by an EPIC telling. EPIC is Leonard Sweet’s acronym for Experiential, Participatory, Image Rich and Connective. Using the EPIC

⁴⁵ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁴⁶ Sweet, *Giving Blood*, 38.

principles in storytelling preaching involves listeners in embracing the heart of the Good News message in a richly active and vibrantly participatory dynamic.

EXPERIENCE Stories are meant to be experienced. The storytelling art is about giving people an experience of the story you are telling. People need to experientially see, hear, taste, touch, smell and feel the story in their imaginations. Using your body, facial expressions and voice to convey the sensory experiences of the story will communicate even more than words. The utilization of props is helpful too. For bodily conveying experience your imagination is your best tool. When you tell about Eve biting into that forbidden fruit, imagine you are tasting something so exquisitely delicious listeners will experience that scrumptious fruit from your facial expressions and body reacting to that luscious taste that you are imagining. Having the smell of grill food cooking outside the sanctuary doors while sharing the story of Jesus eating breakfast on the beach with the disciples⁴⁷ adds to the wonder of people connecting with God through this post resurrection story.



(8) Adding EPIC artwork to dramatically help people see Jesus with new eyes

<https://www.dazeddigital.com/art-photography/article/41202/1/harmonia-rosales-repaints-classic-artworks-god-is-a-black-woman-rjd-gallery>

⁴⁷ John 21:9-13.

Bring a story about something you can experience. Sarah a band – something we hear, we’ve all experienced music that moves us (roots or wings) grounds us deeper or lets us soar and fly. Jeremy & Charity have brought objects we can see and probably imagine touching. What else will your questions reveal about what they can share about experiencing more about the story they bring?

(9) Participation is vital in bringing a story to life. When listeners participate they are no longer passive objective observers but become active involved participants. Having listeners take part in the storytelling event can be having them join in singing a well-known hymn or song such as “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” while you tell the story of Elijah. Deliberate pause is effective if you expectantly wait for listeners to answer questions or complete obvious “fill in the blank” phrases. Participation in storytelling makes for one-time unique, never repeatable story experience. Participation makes the same “old” stories “new.”

Think about ways you can invite us to participate in the story, through prayer requests, singing or answering questions that engage a biblical, faith or spiritual concept.

Zoom Poll: What are some ways you’d like to explore inviting people to participate in your worship storytelling virtually?

Multi-screen millennials – tour guides are now developing tours that include people using their phones, they plant treasures and Easter Eggs for folks to discover and then share socially with others.

Using Chat section to share mini-stories – Hannah

Blended services with Zoom and live – Sarah – writing a praise for God , write something you are thankful for, Make it a statement about God, add in on one document, music that makes community!!! Participatory singing...communal, paperless singing...’

Call & response – Debby



BREAK

- (10) Narraphoric Storytelling Lab Breakout Rooms
- i. Listen to the story (Story gathering) & use your curiosity & ask questions to discover more of the story behind the story – use your curiosity (Story gathering)
 - ii. Tease out more experiential elements
 - iii. Brainstorm ways people can participate in sharing in the story prayer request, hymn sing or question image to come from the whole (Story building)

Breakout rooms for listening to the story & asking questions 20 minutes.

Report back to whole group with results

Then go on break.



48

BREAK

⁴⁸ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

- (11) EPIC
- a. E – Experiential
 - b. P – Participatory
 - c. **I – Image rich**
 - d. **C – Connected**

“**Images** are the thoughts of the heart. You grow a soul by the cultivation of an image garden.”⁴⁹ Storytelling preaching is inviting folks into a shared experience of an image garden. Healthy, good, true and beautiful image gardens of the Gospel are the joy of every storytelling preacher to share. Thoughts are first formed as images. Influencing, inspiring, moving, motivating people through images in stories is far more effective than using words, carefully constructed arguments of logic. “Images are the stuff of which the soul is sculpted.”⁵⁰ Storytelling aids in the work of metaphor and image making and re-making. Images allow the mind and heart to play and ponder paradoxical complexities of life and living.

Kahoot game link: <https://create.kahoot.it/share/biblical-images/a094f5fe-1d0a-4367-90ef-f8ceef9a62e9>

What are the images of the story brought? What are the images that are inspired biblical connections? What are the images of those bible stories that further speak into the story brought?

CONNECTED “Humans are relational species, and we live in a relational world.”⁵¹ Connecting with others is risky business. To form authentic relationships requires one to be vulnerable and open to both listening and sharing stories with others. Storytelling creates that bridge whereby one can vicariously leave one’s own self-absorbed reality and journey with the

⁴⁹ Sweet, *Giving Blood*, 53.

⁵⁰ Leonard Sweet, *Post-Modern Pilgrims* (Nashville: Broadman & Homan, 2000), 98.

⁵¹ Sweet, *Giving Blood*, 54.

character in a story. Community bonds are formed and strengthened as individuals not only share in the experience of journeying together through a story but as a result of feeling the safety of the story they will also risk sharing their own stories. This deepens the interrelatedness as people empathetically connect and learn from each other. A storytelling preacher tells stories to form community and through this community God's Grace is revealed. Be attentive to the dynamics of conflict, tension and dynamics of resolution or continued tension. Here is the foothold of community bonding.

Words themselves cannot change anything. When you want to change people's lives give them metaphors and narratives. Neurolinguistics have shown the last thing your brain comes up with is words. The first thing your brain comes up with is metaphors. The brain then takes the metaphor and builds a narrative and then finally comes the words. Behind every word is a back story and behind the story is a metaphor.⁵²



53

STORY GATHERING WORK

The importance of curiosity and listening – think of yourself as a story-gatherer as well as a storyteller. Be curious about the story, be curious about the people, the community you are sharing with. Debby you imagine your children as you tell and it makes you a better storyteller because as you are telling you are aware of the gift to the dear ones you are delivering it to. My

⁵² Leonard Sweet, September 4, 2019, DMin719 class notes taken by author, Portland, OR

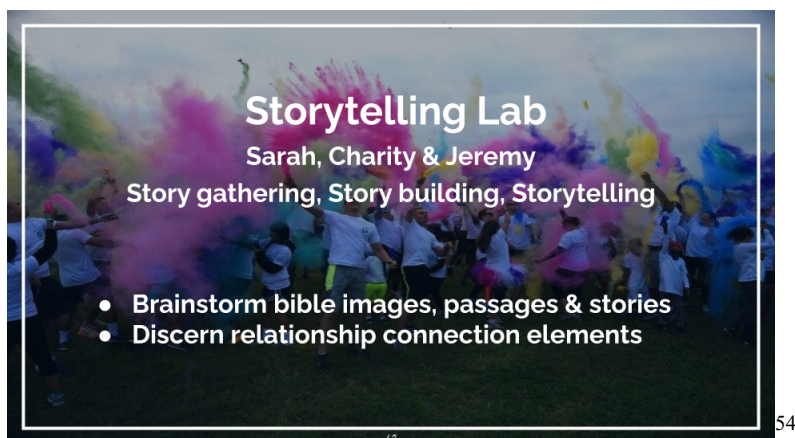
⁵³ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

faith conviction – storytelling is an act of discipleship and service. As disciples we are storytellers for others and the act of storytelling is all about the relationship.

BREAK

- (12) Narraphoric Storytelling Lab Breakout Rooms
- iv. Brainstorm over connecting stories & bible passages and images (Story building)
 - v. Discern relationship connection elements

Breakout rooms for brainstorming bible stories, passages and images
Return in 20minutes with Sarah, Charity & Jeremy ready to share their story with the group



“Razing Hell and Raising Roofs” Sermon by Leonard Sweet, Start at 7:47
<https://youtu.be/39zHzfx7qRA>⁵⁵

enjoy the sermon...when we reflect on it we will name what we found to fulfill the EPIC categories

discuss the sermon and what parts you found to be EPIC

BREAK

Students share their EPIC stories

⁵⁴ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁵⁵ Leonard Sweet, “Razing Hell and Raising Roofs,” First Presbyterian Church, *YouTube* video, 29:31, October 16, 2017, <https://youtu.be/39zHzfx7qRA>.

BREAK

“Yes and” Rule of Improv

- (13) Pastoral Care and Storytelling & using person centered stories in funerals, new member services and confirmation services

The connection with story and pastoral care is best done as a work of improvisation

Improv’s “yes and” rule – If you don’t affirm before you add the screen falls apart
therefore you always welcome and connect with the story before you add to something someone is bringing forward



56

Listening To and Telling Difficult Stories

- (14) **Telling Difficult Stories** – the 3-legged stool wrestling with the question of whether or not to share a particularly difficult story and the blessings and dangers involved “Stories are as personal as fingerprints and as mutable as mercury. They are also potentially as toxic as mercury if the story is not understood by the teller – or is told to the wrong audience in the wrong context or for the wrong reasons.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁵⁷ Sweet, *Giving Blood*, 292-3.

- a. **Trust** – you can be counted on to get your people safely home (you will not abandon them to find their own way back – movies with “bad” endings)
- b. **Permission** – you’ve set the stage and have the permission of the listeners AND changed the names of the characters to protect people’s identity or have their permission to share it
- c. **Ownership** – you’ve internalized the story and can share it with authenticity



2:45pm Lighting Round – what is one lightning strike (ah-ha!) today you received you will take with you?

⁵⁸ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

Session #4

Annette Simmons: Culture Keeping Storytelling

(1) Welcome Story **Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God
 to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,
 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph,
 of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.
 And he came to her and said,
 "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."
 But she was much perplexed by his words
 and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.
 The angel said to her,
 "Do not be afraid, Mary,
 for you have found favor with God.
 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
 and you will name him Jesus.
 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High,
 and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.
 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,
 and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

The angel said to her,
 "The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
 and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;
 therefore the child to be born will be holy;
 he will be called Son of God.
 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son;
 and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren.
 For nothing will be impossible with God."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
 let it be with me according to your word."
 Then the angel departed from her.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Luke 1:26-38.

- (2) Isenheim altar piece...excellent example of a story keeping a healing culture...commissioned by order of St. Anthony...painted 1515...monks took care people dying of a plague suffering painful skin conditions...musical therapy practiced in medieval hospitals...this picture was for healing, for the dying...the sick meditated on it and found relief...endearing portrayal of Mary's love for her infant Jesus.⁶⁰

- (3) For a helpful YouTube on this Art: <https://youtu.be/p-IvNWAQ08>⁶¹

Sound Mystery, Ministry and Leonard Sweet

In a Biblical sense...you don't see a vision...you hear a vision...sound comes before sight...Mary is impregnated through her ear...faith comes through hearing...the importance of a sound track...if you hear a vision it is from God...if you see a vision...perhaps most likely from your own imagination...⁶²

- (4) For Many Song is like a Prayer

Opening Prayer – The Beatles “Let it Be”

When people are most worried, in life's most difficult situations, they've often turned to music. For many, a song is like a prayer. Even Jesus in his dying moment, sang God's greatest Song of triumph, a song that echoed his Mother's Magnificat. What songs lift you up when you are down? What is it about that special song that helps you through?

Sarah's “Bridge Over Troubled Waters” Story Sharing

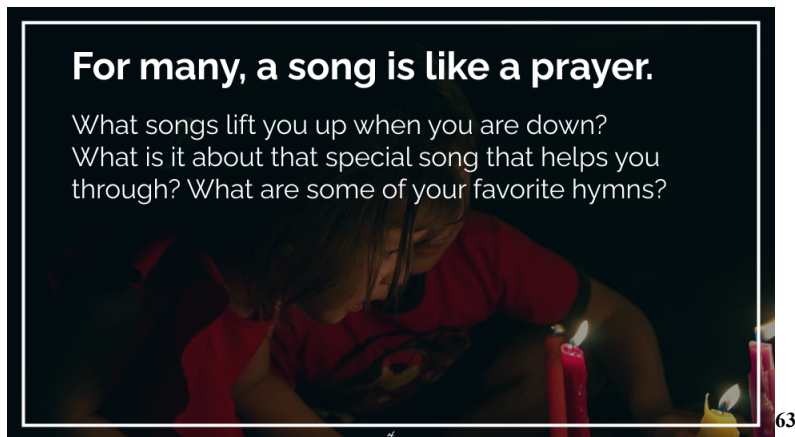
Song story Breakout Room Discussion

For those of you responding to the Song, the call from God...Play Spin Game for MID Journal <https://www.bonus.com/spin/>
<https://www.bonus.com/spin/?spaces=Hannah,Oscar,Kimberly,Charity,Christy,Jeremy,Lindy,Sarah,Debbv>

⁶⁰ Leonard Sweet, November 2016 notes taken by author from *Preach the Story* online lecture.

⁶¹ Melanie Ross, “matthias grunewald.Isham.mov,” YouTube video, 4:23, February 2, 2011, <https://youtu.be/p-IvNWAQ08>

⁶² Leonard Sweet, November 2016 notes taken by author from *Preach the Story* online lecture.



63

BREAK

Culture Keeping Storytelling and Annette Simmons

(5) Annette Simmons: Culture Keeping Storytelling

“We are defined by the stories we tell. As a storyteller, you are a reservoir of meaningful memories for your organization, community, and family group. The norms and habits of any group’s culture are passed down through the stories that are told and retold.”⁶⁴ Stories build a person as well as a culture. The stories you repeat become your reality. Victim stories perpetuate more victim stories. Gratitude stories invite more gratitude stories. It is important for storytellers to not only take inventory of her own repeating stories but to also take notice of a community’s repeating stories

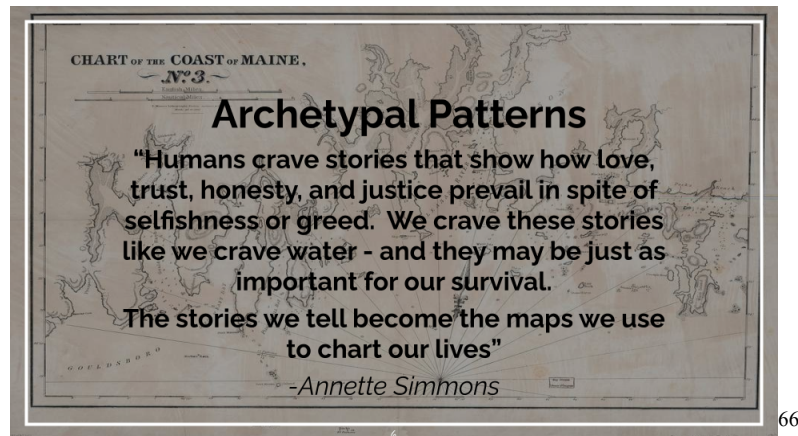


- (6) Identifying the archetypal pattern in the often told stories helps to clarify how the stories are acting toward the health or sickness of a body. “Humans crave stories that show how love, trust, honesty, and justice prevail in spite of selfishness or greed. We crave these

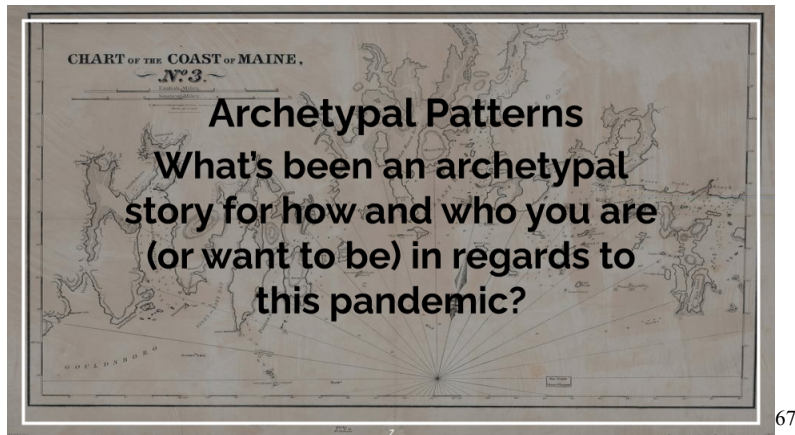
⁶³ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁶⁴ Annette Simmons, *The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, & Persuasion Through the Art of Storytelling, Third Edition* (New York: Basic Books, 2019), 247.

stories like we crave water - and they may be just as important for our survival. The stories we tell become the maps we use to chart our lives.”⁶⁵



- (7) ZOOM POLL – which storied archetype defines your present understanding of yourself? What’s been an archetypal story for how and who you are (or want to be) in regards to this pandemic? (Multiple Choice) Please understand I selected all positive archetypes but there are important negative ones I didn’t list. At the bottom there is the other category if nothing I selected here fits your understanding of who you are.



Class Discussion – share a story what you selected and a bit about why?

Play Spin Game [Spin The Wheel to Decide - Custom Online Spinning Wheel](https://www.bonus.com/spin/?spaces=Hannah,Oscar,Kimberly,Charity,Christy,Jeremy,Lindy,Sarah,Debby)
<https://www.bonus.com/spin/?spaces=Hannah,Oscar,Kimberly,Charity,Christy,Jeremy,Lindy,Sarah,Debby>

⁶⁵ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 307.

⁶⁶ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁶⁷ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

- (8) Storytelling as a spiritual discipline is about the work of being a “culture keeper” and editing, selecting or releasing the stories best suited for encouraging life to thrive.

Storytelling is a powerful tool for influencing others and Simmons notes that it is important to recognize it has a shadow side. Effective stories have an emotional component.



Church Angel Stories and Walter Wink

- (9) Your Church Angel?

the actual people of the congregation are addressed. The “angel” is then the core essence of an entity, its **collective spirit**.

“The angel is a kind of corporate personality created and formed by the members of the church and the surrounding culture but now operating in such a way that it in turns shapes, reinforces, and holds the collective life of that congregation in its grasp.”⁶⁹

Scott Daniels draws on Walter Wink’s influential trilogy on Powers, especially vol. 2: *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces That Determine Human Existence* (Fortress Press, 1986).

“How are these angels formed? What forces come together to create the angels of the churches? Wink suggests six.”⁷⁰

The first is the architecture and ambiance of a church. Buildings, Wink argues, are both an explicit statement about the values, prestige, and class of a community and a force that continues to shape those values into the future.

Economic and educational levels are a second force that determines the spirit of a church.

⁶⁸ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁶⁹ T. Scott Daniels, *Seven Deadly Spirits: The Message of Revelation's Letters for Today's Church* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 24.

⁷⁰ Walter Wink, vol. 2: *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces That Determine Human Existence* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1986), 73-77.

Power structures, leadership styles, theological orientations, and attitudes toward authority are a third formational force.

The fourth force Wink identifies is the way a congregation handles conflict.

Fifth, the nature of liturgy or corporate worship in the church and the way in which spiritual growth is developed and assessed contributes to the emergence of the church's angel.

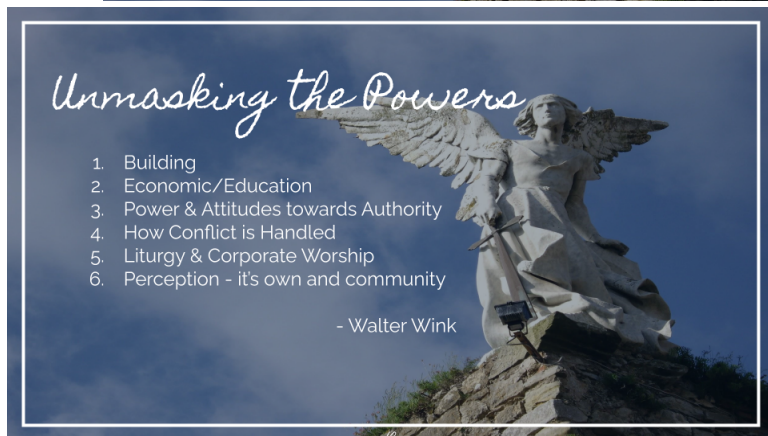
And finally, Wink argues that the church's perception of itself and its community profoundly shapes its collective identity. According to Wink, the following questions are vital to how the spirit or angel of a church is formed:

How does the congregation see itself? How do others see it? Does membership confer status, or does it indicate a high level of commitment to mission? Is the church inner- or outer-directed? Is it related to its neighborhood or the larger community? Is it self-engrossed, or engaged in struggles for social justice and global peace? Is it evangelistic or nurturing, or both? Is it on speaking terms with its angel and fired by a sense of its divine vocation, or is it a country club, or a haven against the chill of rapid social change? What is the place of spirituality, or prayer and meditation, of the inner journey? Is it easy to "get on board," to become drawn into the life of the group? What about its history, its traditions, its annual celebrations, its invariant money-raisers and teas? Who have been its heroes and its villains, and what are the skeletons in its closet?

Saco's angel "the church that burned down to the church that rose from the ashes"



71



72

Story Teller as Story Medic and Annette Simmons

Weaponized Storytelling

- (10) There are ways storytelling can be “weaponized” to unethically control and manipulate narratives using fear and blame. Fear and blame stories are easier to activate than hope and compassion stories. Fear stories trigger our survival fight or flight instincts. “Blame stories don’t describe the problem. As a storyteller you begin to see that blame stories are the problem.”⁷³ Fear and blame stories activate isolation and protective patterns that disrupt and prohibit tolerance, empathy and long-term growth patterns
- a. Many times I practice the pastoral work of the confessional, repentance and cleansing of a weaponized story for the health of my congregation.
 - b. Be very, very, very cautious any time you have even a thought of sharing a grievance, a blame story about another...

⁷¹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁷² Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁷³ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 253.



Hope and Compassion Stories

- (11) Hope and compassion stories are not always as fast moving or as adrenaline gripping as fear stories, but they are the stories that better nurture openness, kindness and community growth. A good story can form in people's minds and be recalled as fact as if it actually happened to them.



BREAKOUT ROOMS

Discuss Church Angel Stories – there will always be a mix HOWEVER healthy church sport a 4:1 ration of hope & compassion stories over fear & blame

Discuss in your groups of 3 discuss the church angel stories in terms of which stories predominate the culture.

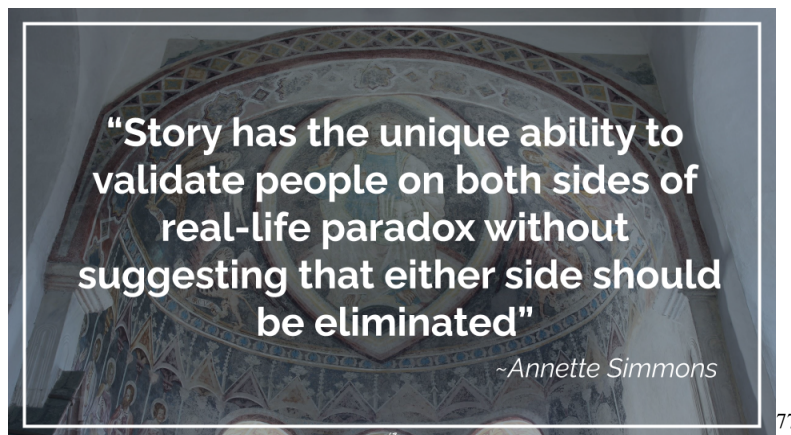
BREAK

- (12) “Story has the unique ability to validate people on both sides of real-life paradox without suggesting that either side should be eliminated.”⁷⁶ Simmons cautions against

⁷⁴ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁷⁵ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

using a single point story even if the story has a positive intent. Technology has provided the ability for narratives to be controlled and promoted with only a single story viewpoint. With analytics providing us repeated stories that we favor, echo chambers have evolved that silence other important viewpoints. It is important to be suspicious of stories with yes/no answers to questions that are too complicated for the yes/no response.



- (13) She illustrates her point with the example: "Imagine asking van Gogh if yellow is the most important color. Any "clear" answer distracts the aspiring painter from learning that yellow's importance (like all colors) changes depending on its proximity and relationship to other colors."⁷⁸

The spiritual practice of storytelling involves discerning and finding the good stories that allow people to experience the paradox, see more than one side and encourages them to creatively engage with their own responses to unresolvable conflicts. Share story of my encountering the Acton Angel ...you know how to love and for me this is enough...& Share story of our coming to let AA back in the building.

⁷⁶ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 45.

⁷⁷ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

⁷⁸ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 275.

BREAK

12:00 - 12:30pm – Watch Annette Simmons and discuss video

<https://youtu.be/-S1A5VKxQkU>⁷⁹

BREAK

1:00pm – Remember to record

Using Imagination and Stephen Carnahan

Rev. Stephen Carnahan

Now that you have this storytelling skill in your satchel, where will you journey with it? I've invited storytelling Sherpa Rev. Stephen Carnahan to offer some guidance and he is going to lead us in a storytelling game. SRC will you explain a bit about what to expect?

A CONVERSATION WITH ZECHARIAH⁸⁰

Storytelling Play Based on Luke 1:5-25 by Stephen Carnahan

BREAK

"The magical science of storytelling" David JP Phillips; TEDxStockholm: Last accessed May 12, 2020

<https://youtu.be/Nj-hdQMa3uA>⁸¹

Lighting Round – what is one lightning strike (ah-ha!) today you received that you will take with you?

⁷⁹ Annette Simmons, "How to Engage with Stories: The Mastery of Storytelling with Impact," Campaigning Summit, YouTube video, 20:03, March 5, 2015, <https://youtu.be/-S1A5VKxQkU>

⁸⁰ Stephen Carnahan, *A Conversation with Zechariah*, High Street Congregational Church Auburn, Maine, December 3, 2017.

⁸¹ David JP Phillips, "The magical science of storytelling," TEDxStockholm. YouTube video, 16:44, March 16, 2017, <https://youtu.be/Nj-hdQMa3uA>.

Biblical Storytelling for Lent & Easter

Syllabus

Maine School of Ministry, Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

Instructor: Rev. AbbyLynn Haskell M.Div

AbbyLynn is working on her Doctorate of Ministry in Semiotics, Church and Culture at Portland Seminary of George Fox University. Her project focus is creating experiential, participatory, image rich and relationally connected Biblical storytelling curriculum for Maine School of Ministry students.

Contact Info: abby@broadreachministries.com

207-415-5858 (OK to text)

Course Description: Open yourself to the wonder of letting the Easter story steep in your soul this season. Biblical Storytelling is a Spring semester 2021 practice-based course which will provide course participants with an introduction to the art of Biblical Storytelling for use in a virtual worship through an experiential learning approach. Stories from Lent, Holy Week and Easter morning will be the basis of our storytelling palette. This course is great for beginners as well as experienced preachers seeking some fresh inspiration.

Biblical Storytelling is a spiritual discipline through which you are invited to deepen your devotional faith and grow in your missional outreach. Everyone is a storyteller. Each person is a one-of-a-kind creation with distinctly original gifts, therefore, each story that a person tells will be uniquely expressed. There is no one perfect storytelling role model to follow. This course will survey a number of different techniques for learning and telling Bible stories. Course participants will develop and share their own Biblical Storytelling art through pre-recording and live virtual presentations.

The technology requirements of this class involve being able to access Zoom by computer or smartphone. Technical assistance will be available for the making of recordings if desired. The overall approach for critiquing storytelling efforts in this learning process will be one of affirming the strengths and positives of each attempt. As the strengths of your attempts are affirmed, the confidence and thrill to keep trying grows and gradually any doubts will

diminish. Delighting in developing your God-given gifts for storytelling opens the spiritual practice of storytelling to the realm of being a grand adventure as you feel God's pleasure in the preparation and in the telling.

Meeting 1 We will explore the overall themes of the class and take time to introduce ourselves with care to one another, including our contexts, goals and intentions for seeking to practice the art of Biblical Storytelling. Prior to this class Learning Partners will be assigned for discussing the readings of the course. Instructions for the pre-recorded Biblical Storytelling presentation will be given, samples from the Instructor discussed in class, and a class calendar for student Biblical Storytelling presentations across the semester will be created.

Meetings 2, 3, 4 will be devoted to morning sessions which will feature a two-part seminar at which (9-11:50am) assigned readings will be considered using interactive polls, games and breakout room discussions. Students will participate in Biblical Storytelling workshops in the afternoon portion of the class.

Course Expectations:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Express their understanding of their own unique style and strengths as a Biblical Storyteller.
2. Understand and articulate the importance of encouraging and nurturing Storytelling art as a spiritual practice that incorporates both a devotional deepening aspect and an evangelism reaching dynamic.
3. Deepen their understanding of developing a supportive Storytelling network while being an encourager of others in each person's Storytelling endeavors.
4. Demonstrate increasing ability to engage online and social media tools for Biblical Storytelling in virtual ministry, worship and outreach.

Meeting Time, Place, Dates: Four Saturday meetings (9am-3:00pm) January 30, February 27, March 27 & April 24 on Zoom.

Course Requirements:

All pre-assigned reading and writing is expected to have been completed prior to each class. Please acquire assigned texts and begin reading and writing assignments at least three weeks in advance for each class (thus by January 30 for the first class).

Two pre-recorded Biblical Storytelling presentations due for the February 27 and April 24 class are required; the format and instructions (and sample recordings) will be provided at the first meeting on January 30.

In preparation for each class, each student will participate in small Zoom Learning Partner discussion groups (2-3people) the week preceding each Saturday class session. You will be given the name(s) & emails of your Learning Partner(s) so you can work together to agree upon a time to Zoom. A guiding set of questions will be given to which each student will respond in a discussion format that allows everyone to participate. The intention here is to prepare and deepen the learning from the readings that will be further discussed at the Saturday class meeting. These small group discussions assist students by allowing for more time for reflection on the overall material and themes.

Final Written or Video/Audio Project: A final written or video project will be due within 23 days of the last meeting (no later than May 18, 2021):

For the Written: Answer in approximately 2,000 words - *What fundamentally have you learned from your readings and watching, your instructor, the Biblical Storytelling presentations (including your own), and your fellow students concerning the art of Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual World?*

For the Video/Audio Project:

1. Record a brief meditation moment/ worship service (More than 5 and less than 15 minutes) that is based on a Biblical Story that you tell in the recording. Share this recording on a social media platform.
2. Create a promotional video that inspires and encourages folks to take a Biblical Storytelling Class. Share this recording on a social media platform.

Student Evaluation: Students' assigned written work and in-class presentations will be marked Completed with Distinction, Completed with Promise, Completed, and Did not Complete and given comment. Students will receive a final mark using the same rubric. Class participation will be assessed separately (this includes participation in online follow-up discussions) and factor into your overall assessment.

Zooming in: All classes and small group discussion will take place using Zoom

Class Meetings and pre-Meeting Assignments: Each Saturday there will be a morning (9:00-12:00) and an afternoon (1:00-3:00) session, as described in the Course Description. There will be a 5-10 minute break each hour. Lunch will be from 12:00pm-12:30 paired in a breakout room with another student and 12:30-1:00pm will be on your own.

1. Saturday, January 30: Introduction to the Class and Class Participants, Broken & Garden Stories

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

BibleTelling: Telling God's Word By John Walsh

The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible. Vol. 10, *John* By editors Dennis E. Smith, Dennis E. and Michael E. Williams, **Read pages 113-193**

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read entire *BibleTelling* book and selected sections of *The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible*. Vol. 10, *John* (noted above). Procure all required books

and begin to survey the rest of the books on the required reading list.
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class
- **Recommended Reading**

Day, Doris. "Storytelling Techniques" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020
<http://www.biblestorytelling.org/devotions/W%20Storytelling%20Techniques%20PDF%207-24-13.pdf>

Day, Jack. "Tips for Bible Storytellers" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020
<http://www.biblestorytelling.org/adults/Tips%20for%20Telling%20a%20Bible%20Story.pdf>

2. Saturday, February 27: The FUN of Sacred Storytelling, Betrayal & Fire Stories

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

Sacred Storytelling...For the Fun of it! by Raymond Gombach

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read entire book (above).
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.
- **Recommended Reading**

Network of Biblical Storytellers International. “Tips for Developing Your Story.”

Resources, last

accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.nbsint.org/resources/>

3. Saturday, March 27: Leonard Sweet, Lost & Table Stories

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

From Tablet to Table by Leonard Sweet

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read the entire book (above).

- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.

4. Saturday, April 24: Eugene Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot, Division & Mandorla Stories*

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

The Homiletical Plot: Expanded Edition, The Sermon as Narrative Art Form by Eugene Lowry

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read the entire book (above).
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.

Bibliography⁸²

Required Readings List

⁸² See full project bibliography

Walsh, John. *BibleTelling: Telling God's Word*. Bloomington, IL: BibleTelling, December 2018.

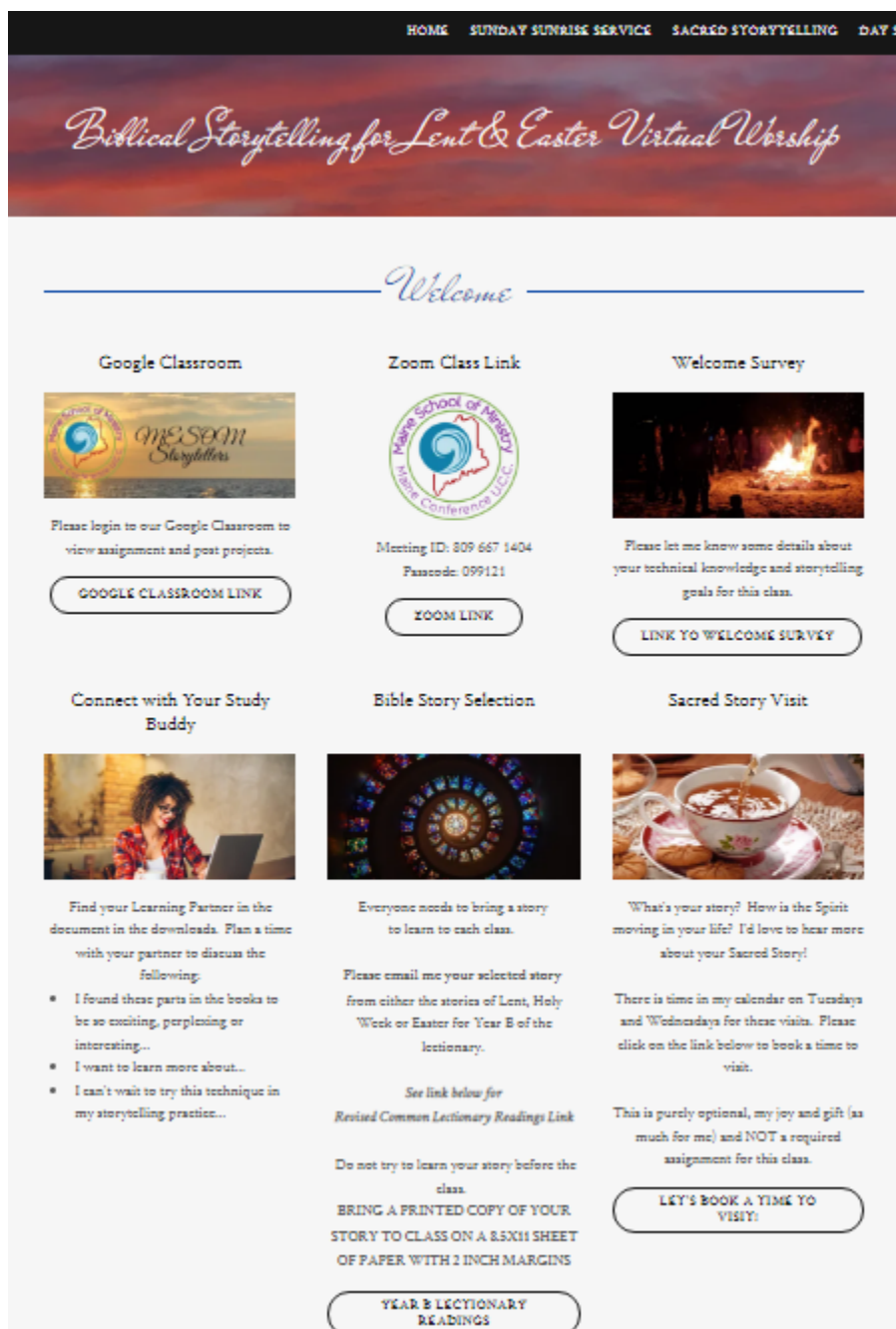
Smith, Dennis E. and Michael E. Williams eds. *The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible*. Vol. 10, *John*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996.

Gombach, Raymond. *Sacred Storytelling-- : For the Fun of It! Complete[l]y Rev. and Updated*. ed. Allendale, N.J.: Lightstar Foundation, 1998.

Sweet, Leonard. *From Tablet to Table*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014.

Lowry, Eugene L. *The Homiletical Plot: Expanded Edition, The Sermon as Narrative Art Form*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001

Classroom webpage screenshot and contents



Webpage contents include links to: Google Classroom, Zoom meeting id and passcode, Facebook Group, online calendar for reserving one-on-one visit time with teacher, welcome survey and small group support survey. Webpage also included downloads for each class: story selection list, learning partners, auditor expectations, lab etiquette, class notes with slides.

Lecture Notes and Slides

Session #1

Garden Stories and Introduction to Sacred Storytelling

(1) Welcome & Opening Story Intro & Prayer 9:05

Of Beginnings & Garden Stories – Genesis, John & paradise & to



Zoom etiquette:

- Everyone is muted until they need to ask a question or are sent into a breakout room for workshop exercises.
- If unmuting to ask a question, please re-mute yourself when you are done asking.
- Please feel free to use chat to ask questions but be aware they may not be immediately answered. The instructor will review the chat questions during the breaks if the session did not allow time for them to be immediately answered.

(2) Introduce myself & Sacred Storytelling as spiritual discipline and how I entered the world of storytelling especially virtual storytelling

⁸³ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”



Genesis 1:1-2:4a

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,
the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind
from God swept over the face of the waters.
Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.
And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.⁸⁵

“In the beginning God created” (Genesis 1:1a NIV) and people, reflecting God’s creativity, have told stories. Long before the stories of the Bible were collected and organized into print they were shared through the practice and tradition of oral storytelling. Stories were told to deepen community, strengthen identity, create meaning, inspire courage, elevate worship, teach ethics, explain suffering, alleviate pain, instigate healing, provide entertainment and more. Oral storytelling is of immense value in ministry today for enriching preaching, liturgy, teaching, worship, pastoral care, mission, evangelism and discipleship.

John is a master storyteller which is why of all The Storyteller’s Companion I had you select this one. His drama, words, the way the author pulls you into the story as if you were there. Listen to John’s beginning, the classic word being LOGOS but LOGOS means more than word. Heraclitus (Greek philosopher) explained LOGOS with the image of a stick with two ends being brought together by catgut to form a bow.⁸⁶ Remember that we will come back to this concept. Tension, springing forth to connect, this is what a story does. A story is dynamic and not static. Hear the prolog to the gospel of John with the word Story for Word instead of Word.

John 1:1-5

⁸⁴ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁸⁵ Genesis 1:1-2:4a (NRSV).

⁸⁶ Leonard Sweet, September 4, 2019. DMin719 class notes taken by author, Portland, OR.

In the beginning was the Story, and the Story was with God, and the Story was God.

The Story was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through the Story, and without the Story not one thing was made.

In the Story was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it

Storytelling as Playing in the Garden

(3) “What’s your story?”



- (4) We are about the work of catching the vision of children, Jesus has this beautiful story of the children in Matthew 11:16-17. Storytelling is play, God calls us to play.

Matthew 11:16-17, 25-30 & Luke 7:31-35

‘But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,
“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.”

At that time Jesus said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’



87

Storytelling invites people to emotionally and spiritually experience a new reality, God's reality. Jesus told stories to open people's hearts to deeper understandings.⁸⁸ Jesus told stories to transform lives.⁸⁹ "Jesus did not tell his stories in a vacuum; he was neither the first nor the only storyteller in his world. He emerged from a rich storytelling culture." Parables came out of a milieu of Jewish storytelling. Rabbis told stories called mashals and many carry the form, motif and plots as those used by Jesus. People were as accustomed to understanding mashals as we are accustomed to understanding memes today. Parables were created with the intent that they be retold. The parables Jesus told revealed deep truths, were engaging, life changing and easy to remember using everyday objects. Even today, the parables of Jesus still speak to us providing us insight and wisdom into current spiritual, religious and ethical issues.

(5) More about PLAY and our playing together

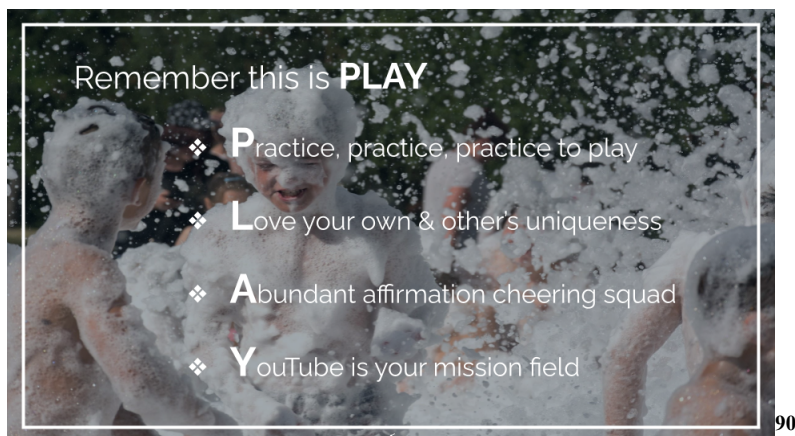
1. Practice, practice, practice...Understand and articulate the importance of encouraging and nurturing Storytelling art as a spiritual practice that incorporates both a devotional deepening aspect and an evangelism reaching dynamic.
2. Love your own & other's uniqueness... Express their understanding of their own unique style and strengths as a Biblical Storyteller.
3. Abundant Affirmation...Deepen their understanding of developing a supportive Storytelling network while being an encourager of others in each person's Storytelling endeavors.
4. YouTube (Facebook Live, Vimeo...etc.) is your mission field... Demonstrate increasing ability to engage online and social media tools for Biblical Storytelling in virtual ministry, worship and outreach.

⁸⁷ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

⁸⁸ Matthew 13:10-15, Mark 4:10-12, Luke 8:9-10 (NRSV).

⁸⁹ Matthew 13:1-9, Mark 4:1-9, Luke 8:4-8 (NRSV).

YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Vimeo... All will begin learning to tell one story today. You may use one this one or chose a different one for your recording that needs to be posted in our Google Classroom stream before **XX date**



Please send me an email as to when you've posted it.

Sacred Storytelling Lab Etiquette

Story of watching a child (Harrison) learn to walk – we are cheering them on – we are not telling children learning to walk how they did not place their foot down properly...etc. We will cheer each other on in the same spirit.

Please comment on at least 4 of your fellow storyteller's recordings.

MESOM Storytellers

Zoom & Google Classroom Etiquette

Our Zoom and Google Classroom are the Sacred Storytelling Labs for the Maine School of Ministry Biblical Storytellers. Prayerfully consider each to be a place to play, experiment & practice the art of storytelling: a supportive lab of learning to give and receive respect and encouragement from your fellow storytellers. A place to share storytelling treasures you discover with others.

⁹⁰ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

Sharing & Responding:

Sharing Your Own Work:

Members may share their own virtual Biblical Storytelling art on either the Google Classroom or FB group platforms and comment each other's contributions. If you do not wish for people to comment on your art please state this in the comments section.

Responding to Others:

Strive to find the positive in each person's work.

This is not the time or place to offer your opinion on what the storyteller can do to improve. This may sound strange but this style lab is based on the belief that as one grows more confident in their art the weaknesses will fade and the strengths will grow. AND to remember we are ones who know God's strength is made perfect in our weakness.

If choosing to comment on your fellow storyteller's contribution, substantive comments and thoughtful feedback is helpful.

For example:

*Name what you enjoyed most about the story.

*Identify what drew you deeper into the tale.

*List the strengths you noted in the storyteller's art.

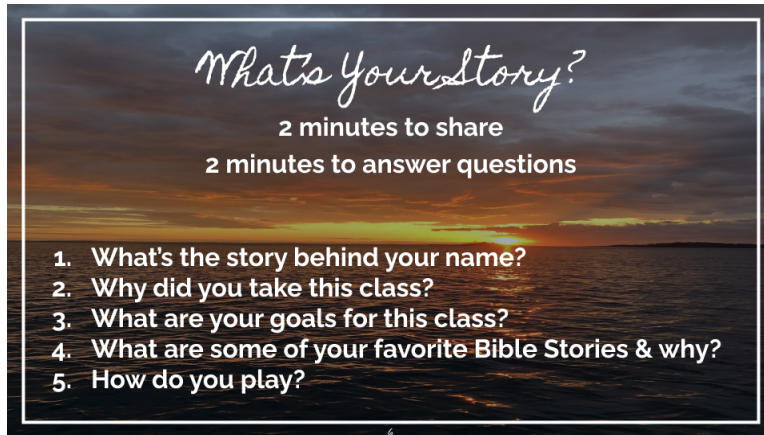
Very Important to Remember:

God will be working with you and through you! Please be ever so kind to yourself and others in this time of learning, preparing, reaching and growing.

So please hand over to God your perceived weaknesses in yourself or in others.

“We naturally will bless others with our strengths. God will supernaturally bless others through our weaknesses.” - Leonard Sweet

(6) “What’s your story?”



BREAK

- (7) The art of storytelling is not about memorizing. Memorizing limits the number of stories you'll be able to tell, limits flexibility, and may distract from your ministry . The art of storytelling involves sharing the story from images ⁹¹



Doodling the Story and John Walsh

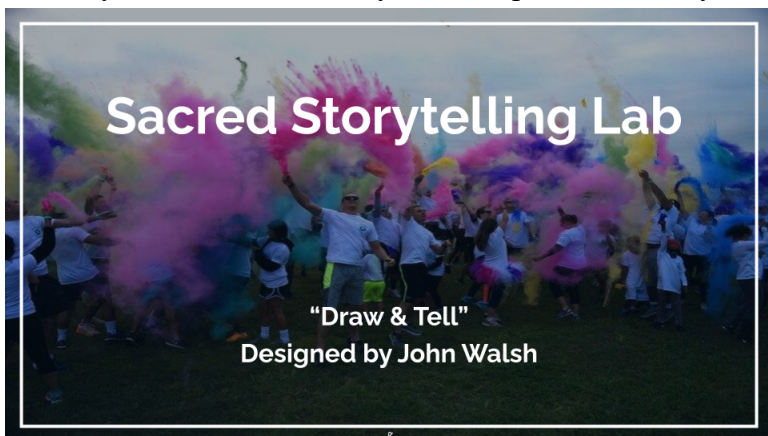
- (8) Sacred Storytelling Lab “Draw & Tell”⁹³

⁹¹ Walsh, *The Art of Storytelling*, 28-29.

⁹² Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

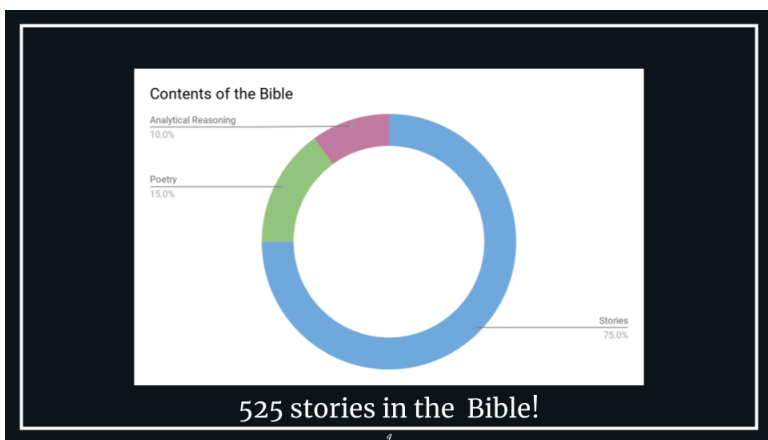
⁹³ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 20.

- a. I adore the work done by John Walsh. His approach is beautifully humble in that he highlights the power of storytelling from his professed weakness as one who struggles with stuttering. Learning to embrace your perceived storytelling strengths and weaknesses is important. Coming to trust that God will give you all you need to tell a story is also a part of the storyteller's faith journey.



94

- (9) 525 Stories in the Bible⁹⁵! - “In the beginning God created” (Genesis 1:1a NIV) and people, reflecting God’s creativity, have told stories. Long before the stories of the Bible were collected and organized into print they were shared through the practice and tradition of oral storytelling. Stories were told to deepen community, strengthen identity, create meaning, inspire courage, elevate worship, teach ethics, explain suffering, alleviate pain, instigate healing, provide entertainment and more. Oral storytelling is of immense value in ministry today for enriching preaching, liturgy, teaching, worship, pastoral care, mission, evangelism and discipleship.



We are just going to jump right in and do this! **Turn slide show off!**

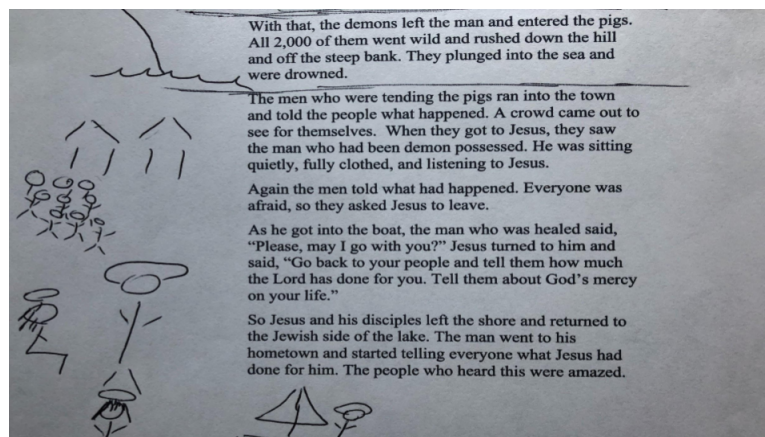
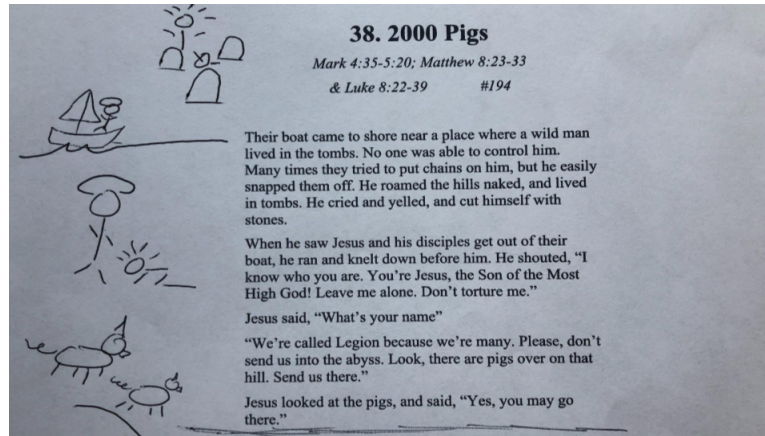
⁹⁴ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁹⁵ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 4.

Read your story twice and divide it into sections. (5 minutes)

Turn slide show back on after folks have divided their stories

(10 & 11) Display of sample story



Give instructions for making drawings for each section of the story.

Turn slide show off!

Sketch/draw something for each section of your story. (15 minutes)

BREAK

TOV and Rev. Henry Graf⁹⁶

“This word, TOV, got lost in translation. It has to do with goodness, beauty, and truth; a you-ness, only you can live. When we don’t live TOV, creation has hollow spots.”

Discuss with Henry’s presentation with your partner during Lunch

PLUS Instructions for Breakout #1

Show your drawings to each other and explain how they fit the story.

BREAK

Read your story one time (4 minutes) 1:05

BREAK OUT #2 – two new partners

Tell your stories to each other – only looking at your drawings. (4 minutes each)

Stumble through the story

Read their story one more time. (3 minutes)

BREAK OUT #3 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without looking at your story or your drawings.

After each telling, the partner says “My favorite part of your story was...” (6 minutes each)

BREAK OUT #4 – four students in each group

Students: At least one person in each group is to tell of a time when he/she experienced the power of a Bible story simply told. (8 minutes)

Make a list of people who might volunteer to be a designated listener (on a weekly basis)

⁹⁶ Henry Graf, “Brother Dog Helps People Find and Live TOV,” Brother Dog, accessed January 18, 2022, www.BrotherDog.online.

to listen to the stories you are learning. (3 minutes)

BREAK OUT #5 – 2 students in each group

Each of you tell who is on your list of five potential listeners. (3 minutes)

Quickly skim your story one more time. (2 minutes)

BREAK OUT #6 – two new partners

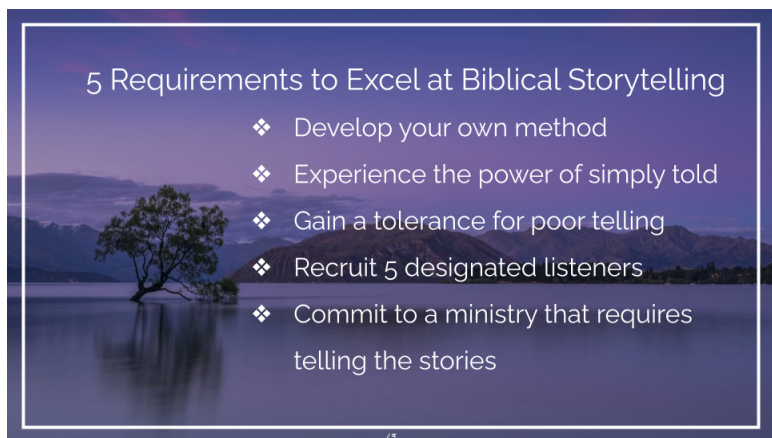
Tell your story to each other without looking at your story or your drawings.

After each telling, discuss “My favorite part of your story was...” “What did you personally learn from this story?” (5 minutes each)

SLIDES 12 & 13) Effective Memorization & The 5 requirements to Excel at Biblical Storytelling⁹⁷



98



99

⁹⁷ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 29.

⁹⁸ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

⁹⁹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

2:45-3:00 Lighting Round – what is one lightning strike (ah-ha!) today you received you will take with you?

Session #2

Fire Stories

(1) Biblical Storytelling for Lent & Easter

a. Welcome & Opening Prayer Luke 22:54-62

Gather round the fire, the dynamic fire that dances and entrances and burns

A story for you at the threshold of our time together...a fire story



100

Verbs in Storytelling and Ray Gombach

Luke 22:54-62

Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, 'This man also was with him.' But he denied it, saying, 'Woman, I do not know him.' A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, 'You also are one of them.' But Peter said, 'Man, I am not!' Then about an hour later yet another kept insisting, 'Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.' But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are talking about!' At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, 'Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

¹⁰¹ Luke 22:54-62 (NRSV).

- (2) God made people...because God loves stories¹⁰²! Baal Shem Tov “You already have everything you need to accomplish your storytelling miracle.”¹⁰³

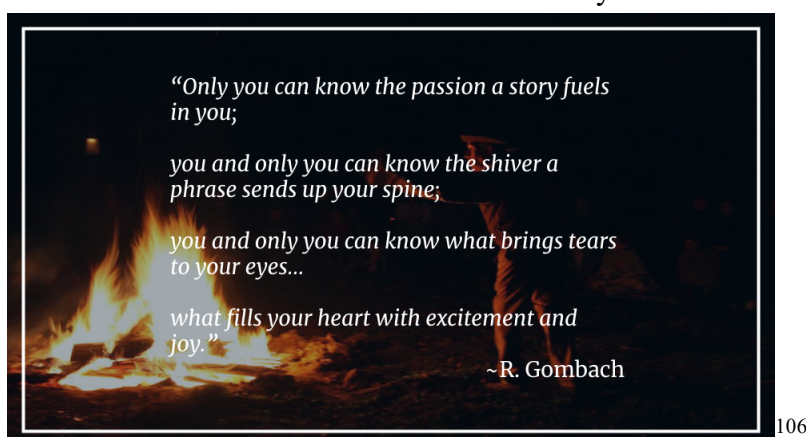
a. Discuss Strength Based Learning and tell the story of Harrison walking



104

- (3) “Only you can know the passion a story fuels in you...etc.”¹⁰⁵

Yada – Hebrew word “to know” a story – an intimate knowing



106

- (4) Coming to Trust...

Each person will craft their own unique recipe for learning a story

Your own storytelling intuition¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Elie Wiesel, *The Gates of the Forest* (New York: Avon, 1970).

¹⁰³ Ray Gombach, *Sacred Storytelling : For the Fun of It! Complete[l]y Rev. and Updated ed.* (Allendale, NJ: Lightstar Foundation, 1998), 15.

¹⁰⁴ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁰⁵ Gombach, *Sacred Storytelling*, 16.

¹⁰⁶ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁰⁷ Gombach, *Sacred Storytelling*, 27.



108

Introduce Zoom Pool for what you'd like to "learn more about"

(5) **"What's your story?"**

(6) Verbs are the golden key to storytelling



109

Underlining the verbs in the story

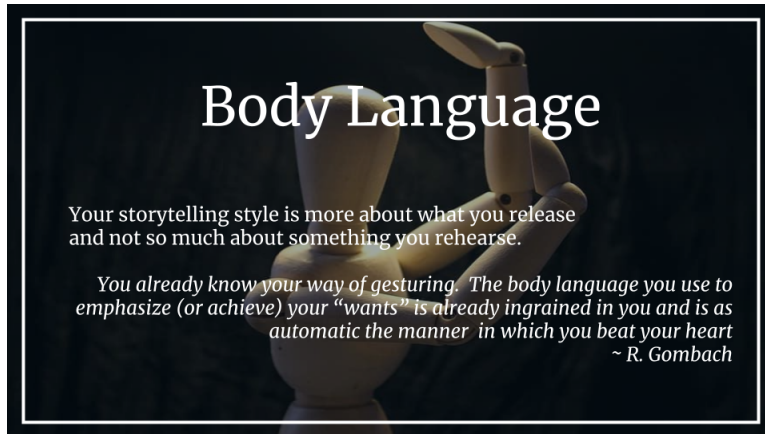
Learning the story, telling the story from the verbs – explore the power of movement in the verbs¹¹⁰

(7) Body Language – You MUST get comfortable in your own skin enough and use your body in telling a story. Your storytelling style is more about what you release and not so much about something you rehearse. HOWEVER I needed to take a belly dancing class to become comfortable in communicating through my body and Gombach recommends meditation...one of the ways you can allow your natural body language to emerge is in learning the story in a relaxed state

¹⁰⁸ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

¹⁰⁹ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

¹¹⁰ Gombach, *Sacred Storytelling*, 48.



111

(8) Rehearsing it, reliving it and repeating it



BREAK

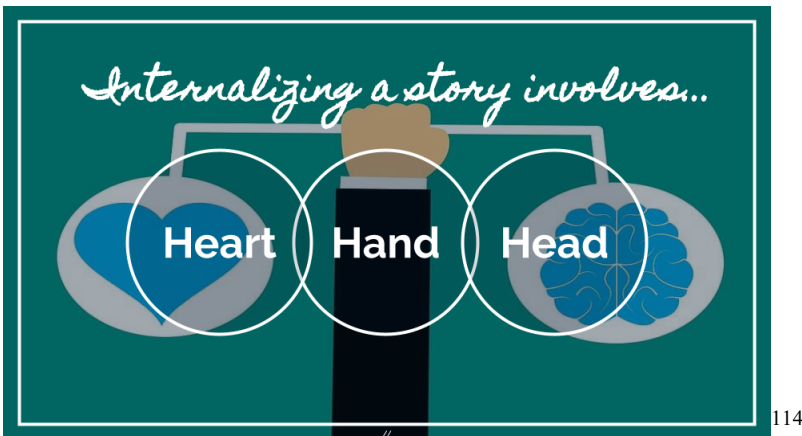
- (9) Learning a story, rehearsing it, reliving it and repeating it best happens in the down time moments in life. Down times are the times just before bed or just after waking, at the gym on the elliptical or waiting for an appointment. Instead of checking in with your phone, check in with your story. This helps so much with the spiritual discipline aspect of letting the story live with you. Effective memorization happens in taking the story in small chunks and adding to it over a period of days.

¹¹¹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”



112

- (10) Internalizing a story involves the hand, head & heart¹¹³



114

- (11) Hand - Come to physically know the story. Visualize yourself there and ask what do you see, taste, touch, feel and hear.

Head - Analyze the story for its inherent structure, research its historical setting and notice the repeating words and images to know a story in your head.

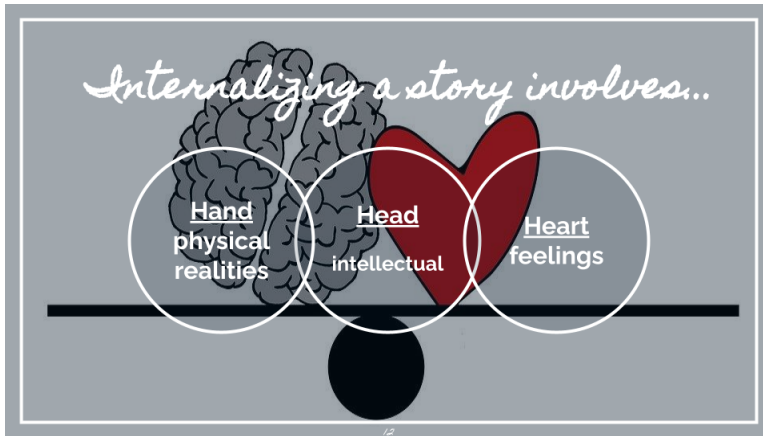
Heart - The heart holds the emotions of a story, what characters feel and how they make us laugh or cry & how we experience what the story does, the action of the story as it moves us with compassion, mercy and empathy.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

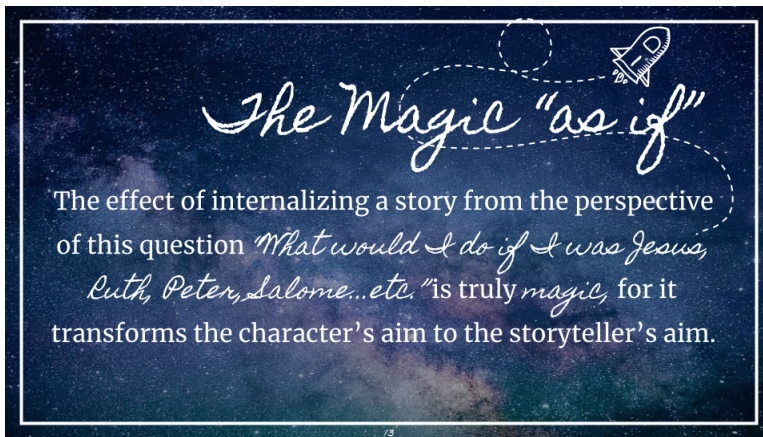
¹¹³ Gombach, *Sacred Storytelling*.

¹¹⁴ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

¹¹⁵ Gombach, *Sacred Storytelling*, 17.



(12) “AS IF” Magic¹¹⁶



117

(13) Rehearsing, Reliving, Repeating

(14) MULL over the Story (Boomershine)

M – master the story

U – understand the story

L – live with the story

L – link personally with the story¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Gombach, *Sacred Storytelling*, 65-67.

¹¹⁷ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹¹⁸ Network of Biblical Storytellers, “Intro to Biblical Storytelling: A Biblical Appe-teaser.”

MULL over the story

M – master the story

U – understand the story

L – live with the story

L – link personally with the story



(15) Debby's Question

Getting the text, the story...out of the head, out of the brain, the left brain...and to the whole person and embodying the story...AND LEARNING ABOUT THE EXEGETICAL BACKGROUND OF A STORY

Storytelling Luke 2:8-20 AND John 21:1-19



- a. Jesus's Post Easter Question at the charcoal fire
John 21:1-19 **HAVE CLASS READ**

¹¹⁹ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

¹²⁰ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

The Back Story and Leonard Sweet

When offering your Temple Sacrifice - You had to prove to the priest that your offering was from the heart – 3 chances to prove your love to his question: Do you love your lamb?

The paradox of the opposites...born in the best of the cities...placed in the worst of the feeding troughs...coming together of the dark and the light.¹²¹

BREAK

Memory Palace and Object Story Learning¹²²

<https://youtu.be/p9IOqd1LpkA>

Tell Luke 22:54-62 story talking through memory props

Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, 'This man also was with him.' But he denied it, saying, 'Woman, I do not know him.' A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, 'You also are one of them.' But Peter said, 'Man, I am not!' Then about an hour later yet another kept insisting, 'Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.' But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are talking about!' At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned

¹²¹ Leonard Sweet, November 2016 notes taken by author from *Preach the Story* online lecture.

¹²² Sprouts, "The Memory Palace: Can You Do It?"

and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, 'Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly.

Read your story twice and divide it into sections. (10 minutes)

Select an object/place in the room for the story section to take place something for each section of your story. (20 min)

Instructions for Breakout #1 & lunch visit

Explain your room mapping/your memory palace to each other and explain how they fit the story.

BREAK UNTIL 1PM

Story Gathering Work and Storied Objects

the importance of curiosity and listening – think of yourself as a story-gatherer as well as a storyteller. Be curious about the story, be curious about the people, the community you are sharing with.

Imagination and Your Storytelling and Audience

Debby you imagine your children as you tell and it makes you a better storyteller because as you are telling you are aware of the gift to the dear ones you are delivering it to. My faith conviction – storytelling is an act of discipleship and service. As disciples we are storytellers for others and the act of storytelling is all about the relationship.

Objects have stories. Story of Grandfather clock story and Galatians 6 story...

Would 2 volunteers on the next break be willing to find an object that has a story and as a group we are going to prayerfully listen, ask questions where our curiosity leads us and then brainstorm as a group connections of where that object has a layered connection to the scriptures.

Ken Medema - for next class

??? for next class – to share stories about objects and our group pastoral work connecting them to biblical stories

The connection with story and pastoral care is best done as a work of improvisation

Improv's yes and rule

BACK TO YOUR STORY

Read your story one time (4 minutes)

Instructions for Breakout #2

BREAK OUT #2 – two new partners

Tell your stories to each other – walking through your room/house. Touch is important.
(10 minutes)

Stumble through the story

Read their story one more time. (3 minutes)

Instructions for Breakout #3

BREAK OUT #3 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without physically walking around the room/house

After each telling, discuss “My favorite part of your story was...” “What did you personally learn from this story?” (12 minutes)

BREAK

Quickly skim your story one more time. (2 minutes)

Student volunteers will share their stories

After each telling, discuss

“What in the story caught your attention?”

“What did you personally learn from this story?”

“Is God calling me to do something as a result of this story?”

Start with Video from NBTI – the healing at the Pool of Bethesda, the telling then the how and why

<https://vimeo.com/295232843> ¹²³

If time Group work on John 5:1-9

Breakout into hand, head & heart groups

- i. Hand - Come to physically know the story. Visualize yourself there and ask what do you see, taste, touch, feel and hear.*
- ii. Head - Analyze the story for its inherent structure, research its historical setting and notice the repeating words and images to know a story in your head.*
- iii. Heart - The heart holds the emotions of a story, what characters feel and how they make us laugh or cry...we experience what the story does, the action of the story as it moves us with compassion, mercy and empathy.*

Read the John 5, you may need to go beyond verses 1-9 - analyze it as a group for your body part and in 10 min we will come back and each body part will report their findings. I'll be around for questions or signal me.

2:45pm Lighting Round – what is one lightning strike (ah-ha!) today you received you will take with you?

¹²³ Network of Biblical Storytellers, “Biblical Storytelling (Behind-the-Scenes) • John 5.”

Session #3

Table Stories and Leonard Sweet
From Tablet to Table by Leonard Sweet

Mark 14:12-26

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'

He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."

So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, he came with the twelve.

And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."

They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?" He said to them,

"It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me.

For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born."

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body."

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.¹²⁴



125

¹²⁴ Mark 14:12-26 (NRSV).

¹²⁵ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

#2

“They tried to kill us! We survived! Let’s eat! ~ OT¹²⁶

P110



This is the seder plate, and each food is symbolic for an aspect of Passover: A roasted shank bone represents the Pescah sacrifice, an egg represents spring and the circle of life, bitter herbs represent the bitterness of slavery, haroset (an applesauce-like mixture with wine, nuts, apples, etc.) represents the mortar used by the Jews in Egypt, karpas (or greens, often parsley) to represent spring.

Also placed on the table are three pieces of matzah — a cracker-like unleavened bread — that represent the bread the Israelites took with them when they fled Egypt, and salt water to represent the tears of the slaves. At your seat, you may see a specific wine glass (or kiddish cup). The Torah commands that [\(at least\) four symbolic cups of wine](#) be consumed during the Passover seder.

There may also be one or two extra kiddish cups at your table: One is a cup of wine for the prophet Elijah whose spirit visits on passover. In some families, a cup of water is set out

¹²⁶ Leonard Sweet, *From Tablet to Table* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014), 71.

¹²⁷ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

for [Moses's sister Miriam](#). This new feminist tradition symbolizes Miriam's Well, which provided water for the Israelites in the desert; it also symbolizes the importance of women during the Exodus.

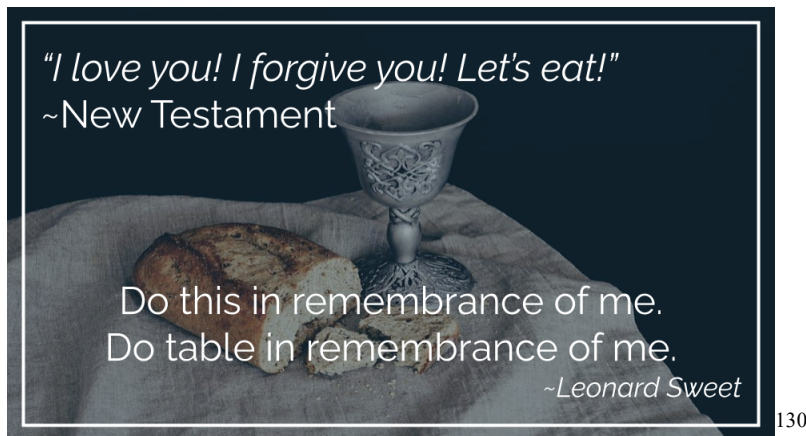
On the chairs, you may see pillows. This is because on Passover you are supposed to recline at the table as a symbol of being free.¹²⁸

#3

I love you! I forgive you! Let's eat! ~NT¹²⁹

P71 Takes, blesses, breaks & gives

P111



130

#4

Communion Stories

My Pilgrim Lodge Story

¹²⁸ Sweet, *From Tablet to Table*, 110.

¹²⁹ Sweet, *From Tablet to Table*., 71.

¹³⁰ Sweet, *From Tablet to Table*, 111.

Anna's Story

Singing at the table after a meal at Pilgrim Lodge

Mark 14:26

Open sharing of a communion story



BREAK

“Coffee Chat & Pass” Storytelling Lab

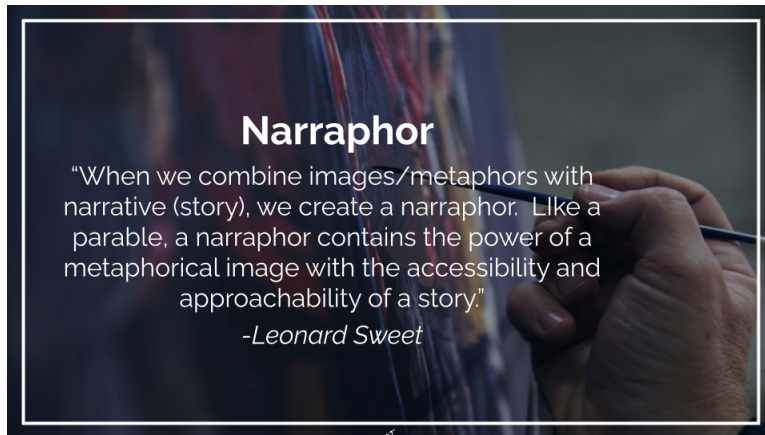
Mark 16:1-13

BREAK 10:50-11AM

#6

Narraphor definition “When we combine images/metaphors with narrative (story), we create a narraphor. Like a parable, a narraphor contains the power of a metaphorical image with the accessibility and approachability of a story.”¹³¹

Our brains do not think in words we think in images



132

Video

<https://youtu.be/389RR-DjB4g?t=1237> (Len Sweet ~ Bring Back the Table)¹³³ starting at

20:37

to end 14 minutes

Talking about the “Nation of Storytellers”

Listen for things that inspire you, or make you go hum... I’ll ask you what you heard after

¹³¹ Sweet, *From Tablet to Table*, 30.

¹³² Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹³³ Leonard Sweet, “Bring Back the Table - Leonard Sweet (Tabor e-Lab #6),” AGS Info, YouTube video, 34:35, November 6, 2014, <https://youtu.be/389RR-DjB4g>.

BREAK

Every person is a story wrapped in skin.

Being story gatherers

Communion Story – Cup and the Bride Price

Galilean wedding tradition in the fathers negotiating a bride price

Groom would take the cup and drink from it and offer it to his bride

I will give my life for you, will you give your life to me?

She was until her wedding referred to as the one “Bought with a price”

Groom would leave and go prepare a place for her

They couldn’t see each other until the place was ready – the groomsman could go back & forth as a messenger – the Holy Spirit

I love you, I give you my life...will you drink? Will you accept my love and give me your life in return?

From Crystal Guderian

I can’t find the one I posted either... it looks like they recently updated the site...

Here is the current version I found... [That the World May Know | Passover Cup](#)

[Definition](#)

During the Passover liturgy of Jesus' day, participants would drink from four cups of wine at different times. The third cup was called the cup of salvation. While celebrating the Passover with his disciples in the Upper Room, Jesus offered them the cup of salvation and said, "This cup is a new covenant in my blood." He was saying, in effect, "I love you. I give you my life. Will you give your life to me?"

So, every time we drink from the Communion cup when the minister says, "This cup is a new covenant in my blood," God is saying to us, "I love you. I invite you to be my spiritual bride." And every time we drink it, we are in effect saying to him, "I accept your gift, and I give you my life in return."

Ray Vander Lan changed "communion" for me, forever... When I was a senior pastor his website ["followtherabbi.com"](http://followtherabbi.com) was a treasure trove of ancient history attached to scripture. His site was swallowed by Focus on the Family, but it is still out there. I looked it up yesterday and found his article on engagement in 1st century Palestine. The use of wine to commit to the groom puts a new spin on receiving the cup Jesus presented at the last supper.

<https://www.thatttheworldmayknow.com/nogreaterlove>

Here are the most useful paragraphs, if you don't want to follow another link - I didn't use this often, but to make the familiar strange it made a fresh point about why we celebrate the eucharist. (not eloquent but useful info.) Perhaps you already know this about the ancient wedding custom. (It was news to me)

Wedding Plans: Jesus also used pictures from the wedding customs of his day to depict his deep

love for his followers. First-century Galileans had several wedding traditions that influenced Jesus' teaching as well. When it was time for a man and woman to marry, both fathers would negotiate the bride price, recognizing that the bride would be a precious loss to her family. Taking a cup of wine, the groom drank from it and offered it to the woman, symbolically saying that he wanted to make a covenant and would be willing to give his life for her. The woman sealed the engagement by drinking from the same glass. From that moment, she was referred to as one who was "bought with a price," distinguishing her as an engaged woman. (Then we went home to build a home for her)

Jesus made this comparison especially clear during the Last Supper. Taking a cup of wine in his hands, he told his disciples, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (Luke 22:20). No doubt his disciples immediately recognized the imagery of a marriage proposal. And they were able to picture the depths of Jesus' love, a love so deep that Jesus made a covenant with them and was willing to give his life for them. By using marriage imagery, Jesus said, in effect, "I love you as my bride, so I'll pay the bride price. I'll give up my life for you and to go to my Father's house to prepare a place for you. And one day I will return and take you to be with me forever." Writing to the Corinthians, Paul used the bridegroom picture as well: "You are not your own; you were bought at a price" (1 Cor. 6:19). His words reminded Jesus' believers that they were his brides-to-be, waiting for the day when he would return and take them home.

I once used this as a call to faith and someone I didn't expect responded to this invitation.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Crystal Guderian, email following forum discussion post, Wells, ME, March 2020.



Ken Medema

Sankofa Story as told by Valerie Tutson

<https://youtu.be/n0fOoV0KnA8> Original Sankofa Story¹³⁶

Narraphoric Storytelling Lab

Object story p104

¹³⁵ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

¹³⁶ Valerie Tutson, "Storyteller Valerie Tutson sharing her original Sankofa Story," Sacred Storytelling Lab, YouTube video, 3:55, February 14, 2021, <https://youtu.be/n0fOoV0KnA8>.



Narraphoric Storytelling Lab

Beth, Eric, Debby & Dan

Story gathering, Story building, Storytelling

- Listen to the story
- Ask questions
- Brainstorm connected bible images
- Discern a participation element

137

Improv Yes/& rule



“Yes and” Rule of Improv

- ❖ Pastoral Care
- ❖ Funerals
- ❖ New Member Services
- ❖ Confirmation & Baptism Services
- ❖ Weddings

138

¹³⁷ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹³⁸ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”



Listening & Telling Difficult Stories

(1) **Telling Difficult Stories** – the 3-legged stool wrestling with the question of whether or not to share a particularly difficult story and the blessings and dangers involved “Stories are as personal as fingerprints and as mutable as mercury. They are also potentially as toxic as mercury if the story is not understood by the teller – or is told to the wrong audience in the wrong context or for the wrong reasons.”¹⁴⁰

- a. **Trust** – you can be counted on to get your people safely home (you will not abandon them to find their own way back – movies with “bad” endings)
- b. **Permission** – you’ve set the stage and have the permission of the listeners AND changed the names of the characters to protect people’s identity or have their permission to share it
- c. **Ownership** – you’ve internalized the story and can share it with authenticity

¹³⁹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁴⁰ Sweet, *Giving Blood*, 292-3.

Daryl Davis Klan We Talk? YouTube¹⁴¹

Discussion

2:45pm Lighting Round – what is one lightning strike (ah-ha!) today you received you will take with you?

¹⁴¹ Daryl Davis, “Klan We Talk? | Daryl Davis | TEDxCapeMay,” TEDx Talks, YouTube video, 18:25, January 9, 2018, <https://youtu.be/fw0vS0qvYo0>.

Session #4

Storytelling and The Lowry Loop - Eugene Lowry

- (1) Welcome Story – Eric’s telling of the Pentecost Story
- (2) What makes a good story? **Class discussion**

Commercial for summer storytelling opportunities: Pilgrim Lodge, July 12 & 19 & Broad Reach Sailing June 21-28 both 11am-6pm can stay on and sail from 7-9 sunset sail or stay on at PL to watch the sunset.

- (3) “We know more than we can tell” – Michael Polanyi
(from the introduction of *The Homiletical Plot*)

We know more than we can tell and Michael Polanyi

~ Like swimming or riding a bike, we know when we’ve heard a good story but it’s hard to describe or picture

“Behaviorists teach that in observing an animal we must refrain above all from trying to imagine what we would do if placed in the animal’s position. I suggest, on the contrary, that nothing at all could be known about an animal that would be of the slightest interest to physiology and still less to psychology, except by following the opposite maxim of identifying ourselves with a center of action in the animal and criticizing its performance by standards set up for it by ourselves.”¹⁴²

The work of Jane Goodall and Buck Brannaman are inspiring for how they teach us about learning about the creature (chimpanzee or horse) by honoring it in the manner Polanyi refers to in the above quote.

I have never come under the tutelage of an animal as they have but it made me think of my learning from my son when he was a toddler. He would speak at great length and with great earnest to people looking them directly in the eye and even grabbing their hand for their attention except what he spoke make absolutely no sense to anyone...except to me. I loved this honor of being his translator for many months until he got the hang of the English language.

¹⁴² Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge; towards a Post-critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 364.

Class discussion: Do you have someone (person or animal) you know so thoroughly that you can understand them to a depth that the rest of the world cannot?

Or do you have a talent for knowing a topic or talent (machine, math, music or theology...etc) to a depth that others would find surprising?

The Lost Art of Sacred Scripture...Karen Armstrong...her argument...what if we read the Bible as a sacred of revelation...post-critical literary scholar...

It dictates the terms of how you understand it

The first thing out of your mouth & the first thing you do in studying scripture

Post-critical...Celebration proceeds cerebration...

Everyone you meet you celebrate...

I have no right to argue with anyone until I can state your case to your satisfaction...in our culture no one care what anyone is saying...first I enter the relationship with you...I understand you & I celebrate you...now let's argue...¹⁴³

Repeating theme in Year B lectionary with walk to Emmaus, Jesus appearing to the disciples in Luke just after and in Acts with Philip and the Eunuch...Scriptures are illuminated as pointed to Jesus ...scripture stories are illuminated, celebrated...and then resuscitated...

Watch and Discuss

The Rules of Deuteronomy | Deuteronomy 23:1 | Craig Hadley | Paradox Church¹⁴⁴ https://youtu.be/_1olOy96jUQ

Mandorla and Leonard Sweet¹⁴⁵

(4) Vesica Piscis (bladder of the fish in Latin) - the mandorla

~symbol popular in medieval Christian art to frame Jesus & Mary and more but much more ancient

Two circles coming together forming a 3rd almond shape
(*Mandorla is Italian for almond*)

¹⁴³ Leonard Sweet, lecture notes taken by author from Wells, ME, September 14, 2019.

¹⁴⁴ Craig Hadley, "The Rules of Deuteronomy | Deuteronomy 23:1 | Craig Hadley | Paradox Church," Paradox Church, YouTube video, 37:13, March 20, 2021, https://youtu.be/_1olOy96jUQ.

¹⁴⁵ Leonard Sweet, lecture notes taken by author from Wells, ME, September 14, 2019.

Sacred geometry recognizes it
 Introduce paradox and pulling together of opposites, the creative tension and the
 Mandorla¹⁴⁶

- (5) Begin by Looking for the Opposite Two circles coming together

<https://carljungdepthpsychologysite.blog/2020/09/04/the-mandorla/#.YHX4N-hKi00>

All good stories are mandorlas – as the story is told the two opposites
 come together and a new thing is formed

The beginning involves sensing either a problematic itch or a solutional scratch...and
 their intersection...whichever is sensed...you must then begin by looking for its opposite.”¹⁴⁷
 ~Eugene Lowry - the Mandorla moment of our Easter story – of the very wealthiest of nobility
 and of the lowest of the social cast

- (6) The bud – Numbers 17:1-11 <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=485672293>

The most important food items aside from bread & wine...

Almonds are in the ark of the covenant...manna...tablets of stone...an almond
 branch...

The major symbol of Judaism

Almonds – Aaron’s staff (buds, blossoms & fruit)¹⁴⁸

- (7) The Menorah - Exodus 25:31-40 <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=485672293>

In the ark of the covenant – Aaron’s staff, mana, 10 commandments tablet...then
 curtain...then the table Exodus 25 and on the table the lampstand...the lampstand is the
 almond tree...the fruit is the flame that looks like an almond

The lampstand is to be an almond tree – the only light in the whole tabernacle –
 lights the table & ark – one piece with 7 lamps on top – each one of the branches...buds,
 blossoms and fruit (light is the almond)...there are certain things in our life that we will

¹⁴⁶ Leonard Sweet, lecture notes taken by author from Wells, ME, September 14, 2019.

¹⁴⁷ Lowry, Eugene L. *The Homiletical Plot: Expanded Edition, The Sermon as Narrative Art Form*
 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

¹⁴⁸ Leonard Sweet, lecture notes taken by author from Wells, ME, September 14, 2019.

only bring to bud...some become blossoms...some come to fruit...God care about all and the fruit is built on the buds and blossoms...all three acknowledged and respected...God cares...a symbol of the Tree of Life...

Turban wrapped tight like a bud, crown shaped like a blossom...when the fruit...the sacrifice given...first fruit from the heart...the bud & blossom saw if the fruits given were from the heart

(8) The blossom – Jeremiah 1:1-12 <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=485672293>

Confirmation of Jeremiah's authority is seeing (the vision) the branch of the almond tree Jeremiah 1:11...it means an awakening and he sees Aaron's rod...it is a successor a passing on of the mantle...

Almond tree the first to blossom and the last to fruit the alpha and the omega tree

The almond tree is the first to bud and last to bear fruit – the awakening tree – big theological significance

Later Class Discussion - God's mission for each of us is bigger than our lifetime

Bud – Abraham

Blossom – Isaac

Fruit – Jacob

(9) The fruit

Mandorla...seen in history as an egg...heaven and earth the mandorla is the sacred space in the middle...The symbol of the last stage of mitosis right before the two cells split...for twins...the symbol for life...(scientifically) ...how you solve the reproduction crises...pass along identity...in the metaphor...

The irony is our identity is in the paradox...the bringing together of the tribal and the global...

Van Gogh – almond blossom painting for his God Son...two weeks before his death by suicide

In Christian Art the Mandorla : the overlap of two things coming together...the rod the masculine...the bending of the rod the feminine image...the vulva...in the center of which is the life of faith... THE ALMOND...surrounding a holy event in art...framing a holy moment...

The overlap of divine & human

The bringing together of opposites...bringing together for the interplay always interacting with one another...not to resolve their differences...the two things coming together creates a murky messy middle...that is space & place of creativity...an alive...provocative state...LOGOS

John Calvin...systematic theologian...developed divine sovereignty with corresponding human responsibility...but never mandorla'd the two together...he kept them separate...

The cross becomes the Mandorla symbol...transcendent & immanent

The essence of creativity is the juxtaposition of two things...collision...the complex of opposites brought together...

Jesus want to be first...have to be last

The beauty of holiness...Jesus wants dirty hands

Dawn & Dusk the Mandorla moments of the day...Jesus' favorite moments...nature comes alive in the Mandorla moments...God walked with us in the Garden in the dawn & dusk

Sound becomes sight...how do you move forward into the future...you bring the ears and eyes into the Mandorla...privilege goes to the ear and not the eyes...¹⁴⁹ *Len Sweet Class Notes Friday Sept 6, 2019*

Earliest Symbol...the Christian fish...has the almond with tails...the emergence of XTN out of Judaism...Ichthus....

While on break think of two opposites in your life that you seeing coming together

BREAK

Class discussion – name a few two opposite coming together examples

Stories on The Lowry Loop

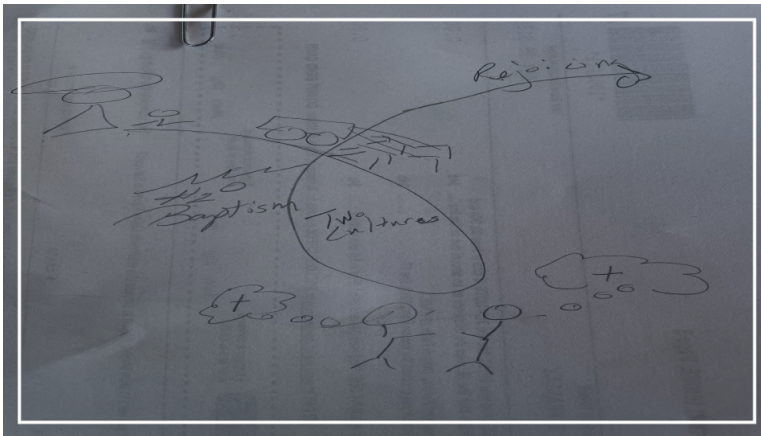
(10) The Lowry Loop¹⁵⁰

(11) Ooops!
Upsetting the Equilibrium
Produce imbalance for the sake of engagement
"Conflict is the very stuff of which stories are made."

¹⁴⁹ Leonard Sweet, lecture notes taken by author from Wells, ME, September 6, 2019.

¹⁵⁰ Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot*, 27-80.

- (12) Ugh!
Analyzing the Discrepancy
Building suspense
Inviting people into the agony of the ambiguity
- (13) Aha!
Disclosing the Resolution
Inviting the intuition of listener to catch the Aha!
Delighting in the paradox - the reversal of logical thought
- (14) Whee!
Experiencing the Good News!
Keep it consistent with the diagnosis
- (15) Yeah!
Anticipating the Consequences
Not to solve but to introduce possibility of solution
- (16) Acts 8:26-40, Deuteronomy 23:1, Isaiah 56:3-5
Who gets to deliver the Good News? Who does God/The Holy Spirit select to share the Jesus message? The lowest of the highest; tradition holds the eunuch persuaded the queen of Ethiopia to Christianity
- (17) Demo of Acts 8:26-40 on Lowry Loop



Activity: Take your story and put it on the Lowry Loop
Take 10 minutes and put your story on the Lowry Loop
Draw out the Lowry Loop

Put brief phrases or pictures indicating a story scene where it belongs on the loop (if you can't figure it out – no worries, we will work on each one as a group) Sometimes with Bible stories some of the loop happens “off script” and this is where you can add in contextual information for your listeners

You may have multiple loops depending on what character (including the listener as a character in the story) you spin

You may have more than one loop or loops that don't complete

In the middle of the loop, the mandala, put in the paradoxical elements being brought together

Take 10 minutes to draw out your story on the loop

BREAK

Class Discussion - Lowry Loop Story Sharing

Kinesthetic Story Learning

(18) Kinesthetic Story Learning

- a. The pulpit does not encourage body movement. I needed to learn how to use my body in storytelling so I took a belly dancing class.
- b. What I've discovered since then that my most preferred way of learning a story by heart is kinesthetically – walking does it for me.
- c. What is kinesthetic learning: <https://youtu.be/R9JEQ1CzoB0>

Now take your story that you have put in the Lowry Loop and create hand and body motions to go with it.

Demonstrate with Acts 8:26-40

15 minutes for creating hand gestures

Explain hand gestures to group

BREAK

Watch & Discuss How to Recognize Jesus---Leonard Sweet, Premiered 02 May 2021

Lectionary LenTalk #59.. <https://youtu.be/EBMKGbBZbTM> ¹⁵¹

Rev. Stephen Carnahan

Now that you have this storytelling skill in your satchel, where will you journey with it? I've invited storytelling Sherpa Rev. Stephen Carnahan to offer some guidance and he is going to lead us in a storytelling game. SRC will you explain a bit about what to expect?

BREAK

- (19) Storytelling as a spiritual discipline is about the work of being a “culture keeper” and editing, selecting or releasing the stories best suited for encouraging life to thrive.

Stories – looking for a significant emotional experience

Stories are how our brains code what is important

Storytelling is a powerful tool for influencing others and Simmons notes that it is important to recognize it has a shadow side. Effective stories have an emotional component.

- (20) There are ways storytelling can be “weaponized” to unethically control and manipulate narratives using fear and blame. Fear and blame stories are easier to activate than hope and compassion stories. Fear stories trigger our survival fight or flight instincts. “Blame stories don’t describe the problem. As a storyteller you begin to see that blame stories are the problem.”¹⁵² Fear and blame stories activate isolation and protective patterns that disrupt and prohibit tolerance, empathy and long-term growth patterns
- a. Many times I practice the pastoral work of the confessional, repentance and cleansing of a weaponized story for the health of my congregation.
 - b. Be very, very, very aware any time you have even a thought of sharing a grievance, a blame story about another...tell the Slater story

¹⁵¹ Leonard Sweet, “How to Recognize Jesus---Leonard Sweet, Premiered 02 May 2021 Lectionary LenTalk #59,” YouTube video, 24:25, April 25, 2021, <https://youtu.be/EBMKGbBZbTM>.

¹⁵² Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 253.

- (21) Hope and compassion stories are not always as fast moving or as adrenaline gripping as fear stories, but they are the stories that better nurture openness, kindness and community growth. A good story can form in people's minds and be recalled as fact as if it actually happened to them.

Storytelling and the Peace in Paradox Phenomenon

- (22) "Story has the unique ability to validate people on both sides of real-life paradox without suggesting that either side should be eliminated."¹⁵³ Simmons cautions against using a single point story even if the story has a positive intent. Technology has provided the ability for narratives to be controlled and promoted with only a single story viewpoint. With analytics providing us with repeated stories that we favor, echo chambers have evolved that silence other important viewpoints. It is important to be suspicious of stories with yes/no answers to questions that are too complicated for the yes/no response.

The spiritual practice of storytelling involves discernment and finding the good stories that allow people to experience the paradox, see more than one side and encourages them to creatively engage with their own responses to unresolvable conflicts. Share story of my encountering the Acton Angel ...you know how to love and for me this is enough...& Share story of our coming to let AA back in the building.

Play Spin Game for coffee gift card, MID Journal or mom's crafted purses...

<https://www.bonus.com/spin/>

Class Discussion - God's mission for each of us is bigger than our lifetime

Bud – Abraham

Blossom – Isaac

Fruit – Jacob

¹⁵³ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 45.

Class Discussion: What for you is a mission that is only in its bud? What missions have you been able to see blossom? What mission have you known to have borne fruit? YOU & Your discipleship is someone else's fruit. Who are the mentors to whom you give thanks to God for bringing you thus far?

2:45pm Lighting Round – what is one lightning strike (ah-ha!) today you received you will take with you?

Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas

Syllabus

Maine School of Ministry, Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

Instructor: Rev. AbbyLynn Haskell M.Div

AbbyLynn is working on her Doctorate of Ministry in Semiotics, Church and Culture at Portland Seminary of George Fox University. Her project focus is creating experiential, participatory, image rich and relationally connected Biblical storytelling curriculum for Maine School of Ministry students.

Contact Info: abby@broadreachministries.com

207-415-5858 (OK to text)

Course Description: Open yourself to the wonder of letting the Advent and Christmas stories steep in your soul this season. Biblical Storytelling is a Fall semester 2021 practice-based course which will provide course participants with an introduction to the art of Biblical Storytelling for use in a virtual worship through an experiential learning approach. Stories of Advent hope, peace, joy, love and Christmas will be the basis of our storytelling palette. This course is great for beginners as well as experienced preachers seeking some fresh inspiration.

Biblical Storytelling is a spiritual discipline through which you are invited to deepen your devotional faith and grow in your missional outreach. Everyone is a storyteller. Each person is a one-of-a-kind creation with distinctly original gifts, therefore, each story that a person tells will be uniquely expressed. There is no one perfect storytelling role model to follow. This course will survey a number of different techniques for learning and telling Bible stories. Course participants will develop and share their own Biblical Storytelling art through pre-recording and live virtual presentations.

The technology requirements of this class involve being able to access Zoom by computer or smartphone. Technical assistance will be available for the making of recordings if

desired. The overall approach for critiquing storytelling efforts in this learning process will be one of affirming the strengths and positives of each attempt. As the strengths of your attempts are affirmed, the confidence and thrill to keep trying grows and gradually any doubts will diminish. Delighting in developing your God-given gifts for storytelling opens the spiritual practice of storytelling to the realm of being a grand adventure as you feel God's pleasure in the preparation and in the telling.

Meeting 1 We will explore the overall themes of the class and take time to introduce ourselves with care to one another, including our contexts, goals and intentions for seeking to practice the art of Biblical Storytelling. Prior to this class Learning Partners will be assigned for discussing the readings of the course. Instructions for the pre-recorded Biblical Storytelling presentation will be given, samples from the Instructor discussed in class, and a class calendar for student Biblical Storytelling presentations across the semester will be created.

Meetings 2, 3, 4 will be devoted to morning sessions which will feature a two-part seminar at which (9-11:50am) assigned readings will be considered using interactive polls, games and breakout room discussions. Students will participate in Biblical Storytelling workshops in the afternoon portion of the class.

Course Expectations:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Express their understanding of their own unique style and strengths as a Biblical Storyteller.
2. Understand and articulate the importance of encouraging and nurturing Storytelling art as a spiritual practice that incorporates both a devotional deepening aspect and an evangelism reaching dynamic.
3. Deepen their understanding of developing a supportive Storytelling network while being an encourager of others in each person's Storytelling endeavors.

4. Demonstrate increasing ability to engage online and social media tools for Biblical Storytelling in virtual ministry, worship and outreach.

Meeting Time, Place, Dates: Four Saturday meetings (9am-3:00pm) September 11, October 9, November 13 and December 11 on Zoom.

Course Requirements:

All pre-assigned reading and writing is expected to have been completed prior to each class. Please acquire assigned texts and to begin reading and writing assignments at least three weeks in advance for each class (thus by September 11 for the first class).

Two pre-recorded Biblical Storytelling presentations due for the October 9 and December 11 class is required; the format and instructions (and sample recordings) will be provided at the first meeting on September 11.

In preparation for each class, each student will participate in small Zoom Learning Partner discussion groups (2-3people) the week preceding each Saturday class session. You will be given the name(s) & emails of your Learning Partner(s) so you can work together to agree upon a time to Zoom. A guiding set of questions will be given to which each student will respond in a discussion format that allows everyone to participate. The intention here is to prepare and deepen the learning from the readings that will be further discussed at the Saturday class meeting. These small group discussions assist students by allowing for more time for reflection on the overall material and themes.

Final Written or Video/Audio Project: A final written or video project will be due within 23 days of the last meeting (no later than January 3, 2022):

For the Written: Answer in approximately 2,000 words - *What fundamentally have you learned from your readings and watching, your instructor, the Biblical*

Storytelling presentations (including your own), and your fellow students concerning the art of Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual World?

For the Video/Audio Project:

1. Record a brief meditation moment/ worship service (More than 5 and less than 15 minutes) that is based on a Biblical Story that you tell in the recording. Share this recording on a social media platform.
2. Create a promotional video that inspires and encourages folks to take a Biblical Storytelling Class. Share this recording on a social media platform.

Student Evaluation: Students' assigned written work and in-class presentations will be marked Completed with Distinction, Completed with Promise, Completed, and Did not Complete and given comment. Students will receive a final mark using the same rubric. Class participation will be assessed separately (this includes participation in online follow-up discussions) and factor into your overall assessment.

Zooming in: All classes and small group discussion will take place using Zoom

Class Meetings and pre-Meeting Assignments: Each Saturday there will be a morning (9:00-12:00) and an afternoon (1:00-3:00) session, as described in the Course Description. There will be a 5-10 minute break each hour. Lunch will be from 12:00pm-12:30 paired in a breakout room with another student and 12:30-1:00pm will be on your own.

1. **Saturday, September 11:** Introduction to the Class and Class Participants, Exploring Hope & Peace Advent Stories of the Bible, Doodling Story learning

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

BibleTelling: Telling God's Word By John Walsh

The Art of Story Telling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story by John Walsh

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read both entire books (above). Procure all required books and begin to survey the rest of the books on the required reading list.
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class
- **Bring an Advent Bible Story to learn in class:** You may use any Advent lectionary selection from any year or any Bible story that you discern fits one of the themes of Advent. Here is one online lectionary resource: [Vanderbilt Lectionary Library](#)
- **Recommended Reading**

Day, Doris. "Storytelling Techniques" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020

<http://www.biblestorytelling.org/devotions/W%20Storytelling%20Techniques%20PDF%207-24-13.pdf>

Day, Jack. "Tips for Bible Storytellers" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12,

2020

[http://www.biblestorytelling.org/adults/Tips%20for%20Telling%20a%20Bible%20Story.](http://www.biblestorytelling.org/adults/Tips%20for%20Telling%20a%20Bible%20Story.pdf)

[pdf](#)

2. **Saturday, October 9:** Experiential Storytelling, Exploring Joy Stories in the Bible for Advent, Memory Palace Story learning

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

Experiential Storytelling (Re) Discovering Narrative to Communicate God's Message by

Mark Miller

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read the entire book (above) .
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.
- **Bring an Advent Bible Story to learn in class:** You may use any Advent lectionary selection from any year or any Bible story that you discern fits one of the themes of Advent. Here is one online lectionary resource: [Vanderbilt Lectionary Library](#)
- **Recommended Reading**

Network of Biblical Storytellers International. "Tips for Developing Your Story."

Resources, last accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.nbsint.org/resources/>

3. **Saturday, November 13:** Exploring Love in our Advent Bible Stories, Coffee Chat Pass
Story learning

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

Shaped By The Story: Helping Students Encounter God in a New Way by Michael

Novelli

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read entire book (above).
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.

4. **Saturday, December 12:** Annette Simmons & Culture Keeping Storytelling, Telling
Difficult Stories, Exploring Christmas & Epiphany Stories, Hand & Body Motion Story
learning

Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, & Persuasion Through The Art of Storytelling

Third Edition by Annette Simmons

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read entire book (above).

- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.
- **Bring a Christmas or Epiphany Bible Story to learn in class:** You may use any Christmas or Epiphany lectionary selection from any year or any Bible story that you discern fits one of the themes of Christmas & Epiphany. Here is one online lectionary resource: [Vanderbilt Lectionary Library](#)

Bibliography¹⁵⁴

Required Readings List

Walsh, John. *The Art of Story Telling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Walsh, John. *BibleTelling: Telling God's Word*. Bloomington, IL: BibleTelling, December 2018.

Miller, Mark. *Experiential Storytelling : (re)discovering Narrative to Communicate God's Message*. El Cajon, CA: Zondervan, 2003.

Novelli, Michael. *Shaped By The Story: Helping Students Encounter God in a New Way*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.

Simmons, Annette. *The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, & Persuasion Through The Art of Storytelling Third Edition*. New York: Basic Books, Hachette Book Group, 2019.

¹⁵⁴ See full project bibliography.


Class Webpage

HOME
SUNDAY SUNRISE SERVICE
SACRED STORYTELLING
DAY SAIL ESCAPES

Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas

Welcome


Google Classroom



Please login to our Google Classroom to view assignment and post projects.

[GOOGLE CLASSROOM LINK](#)


Zoom Class Link



Meeting ID: 809 667 1404

[ZOOM LINK](#)


Welcome Survey



Please let me know some details about your technical knowledge and storytelling goals for this class.

[LINK TO WELCOME SURVEY](#)


Connect with Your Study Buddy



Find your Learning Partner in the document in the downloads. Plan a time with your partner to discuss the following:

- I found these parts in the books to be so exciting, perplexing or interesting...
- I want to learn more about...
- I can't wait to try this technique in my storytelling practice...

Bible Story Selection




Everyone needs to bring a story to learn to each class. Please email me your selected story. You may use any Advent lectionary selection from any year or any Bible story that you discern fits one of the themes of Advent.

Online lectionary resources:
[Vanderbilt Lectionary Library](#)
[Narrative Lectionary 2021-2022](#)

Do not learn your story before the class. BRING A PRINTED COPY OF YOUR STORY TO CLASS ON A 8.5X11 SHEET OF PAPER WITH 2 INCH MARGINS

Sacred Story Visit



What's your story? How is the Spirit moving in your life? I'd love to hear more about your Sacred Story!

There is time in my calendar on Wednesdays for these visits. Please click on the link below to book a time to visit.

This is purely optional, my joy and gift (as much for me) and NOT a required assignment for this class.

[LET'S BOOK A TIME TO VISIT!](#)

Webpage contents include links to: Google Classroom, Zoom meeting id and passcode, Facebook Group, online calendar for reserving one-on-one visit time with teacher, welcome survey and small group support survey. Webpage also included downloads for each class: story selection list, learning partners, auditor expectations, lab etiquette, class notes with slides.

Lecture Notes with Slides

(1) Welcome & Opening Story Intro & Prayer 9:05

<https://youtu.be/nLqFZNfTmU4> (time lapse movie of 20 year rebuild after 9/11 attacks)

Zoom etiquette:

- Everyone is muted until they need to ask a question or are sent into a breakout room for workshop exercises.
- If unmuting to ask a question, please re-mute yourself when you are done asking.
- Please feel free to use chat to ask questions but be aware they may not be immediately answered. The instructor will review the chat questions during the breaks if the session did not allow time for them to be immediately answered.

(2) Learning a story through doodling

Hope & Peace Advent Stories

Introduce myself & Sacred Storytelling as spiritual discipline and how I entered the world of storytelling especially virtual storytelling



155

(3) “What’s your story?”

Session #1

Catching up with Jesus and becoming like children

(4) Christmas is all about living and catching the spirit of a child.

We are about the work of catching the vision of children, Jesus has this beautiful story of the children in Matthew 11:16-17. Storytelling is play, God calls us to play.

Matthew 11:16-17, 25-30 & Luke 7:31-35

‘But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,
“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.”

At that time Jesus said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’¹⁵⁶

Storytelling invites people to emotionally and spiritually experience a new reality, God’s reality. Jesus told stories to open people’s hearts to deeper understandings.¹⁵⁷ Jesus told stories to transform lives.¹⁵⁸ “Jesus did not tell his stories in a vacuum; he was neither the first nor the only storyteller in his world. He emerged from a rich storytelling culture.” Parables came out of a milieu of Jewish storytelling. Rabbis told stories called mashals and many carry the form, motif and plots as those used by Jesus. People were as accustomed to understanding mashals as we are accustomed to understanding memes today. Parables were created with the intent that they be retold. The parables Jesus told revealed deep truths, were engaging, life changing and easy to remember using everyday objects. Even today, the parables of Jesus still speak to us providing us insight and wisdom into current spiritual, religious and ethical issues.

(5) More about PLAY and our playing together

¹⁵⁶ Matthew 11:16-17, 25-30 & Luke 7:31-35 (NRSV).

¹⁵⁷ Matthew 13:10-15, Mark 4:10-12, Luke 8:9-10 (NRSV).

¹⁵⁸ Matthew 13:1-9, Mark 4:1-9, Luke 8:4-8 (NRSV).

1. Practice, practice, practice...Understand and articulate the importance of encouraging and nurturing Storytelling art as a spiritual practice that incorporates both a devotional deepening aspect and an evangelism reaching dynamic.
2. Love your own & other's uniqueness... Express their understanding of their own unique style and strengths as a Biblical Storyteller.
3. Abundant Affirmation...Deepen their understanding of developing a supportive Storytelling network while being an encourager of others in each person's Storytelling endeavors.
4. YouTube (Facebook Live, Vimeo...etc.) is your mission field... Demonstrate increasing ability to engage online and social media tools for Biblical Storytelling in virtual ministry, worship and outreach. YOU will develop your own style for learning and telling Bible Stories

YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Vimeo... All will begin learning to tell one story today. You may use one this one or chose a different one for your recording that needs to be posted in our Google Classroom stream before **October 9**

Please send me an email as to when you've posted it.

Sacred Storytelling Lab Etiquette

Story of watching a child (Harrison) learn to walk – we are cheering them on – we are not telling children learning to walk how they did not place their foot down properly...etc. We will cheer each other on in the same spirit.

Please comment on at least 4 of your fellow storyteller's recordings.

MESOM Storytellers

Zoom & Google Classroom Etiquette

Our Zoom and Google Classroom are the Sacred Storytelling Labs for the Maine School of Ministry Biblical Storytellers. Prayerfully consider each to be a place to play, experiment & practice the art of storytelling: a supportive lab of learning to give and receive respect and encouragement from your fellow storytellers. A place to share storytelling treasures you discover with others.

Sharing & Responding:

Sharing Your Own Work:

Members may share their own virtual Biblical Storytelling art on either the Google Classroom or FB group platforms and comment on each other's contributions. If you do not wish for people to comment on your art please state this in the comments section.

Responding to Others:

Strive to find the positive in each person's work.

This is not the time or place to offer your opinion on what the storyteller can do to improve. This may sound strange but this style of lab is based on the belief that as one grows more confident in their art the weaknesses will fade and the strengths will grow. AND to remember we are ones who know God's strength is made perfect in our weakness.

If choosing to comment on your fellow storyteller's contribution, substantive comments and thoughtful feedback is helpful.

For example:

*Name what you enjoyed most about the story.

*Identify what drew you deeper into the tale.

*List the strengths you noted in the storyteller's art.

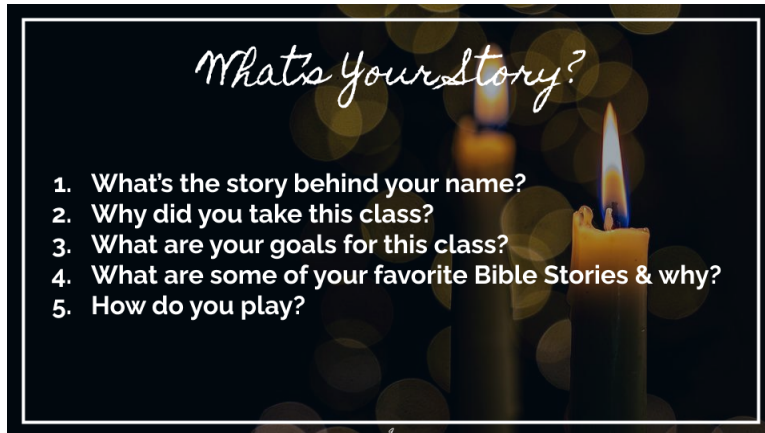
Very Important to Remember:

God will be working with you and through you! Please be ever so kind to yourself and others in this time of learning, preparing, reaching and growing.

So please hand over to God your perceived weaknesses in yourself or in others.

“We naturally will bless others with our strengths. God will supernaturally bless others through our weaknesses.” - Leonard Sweet

(6) “What’s your story?”



159

BREAK

(7) “What’s your story?”



160

- (8) The Art of storytelling is not about memorizing. Memorizing limits the number of stories you'll be able to tell, limits flexibility, and may distract from your ministry . The art of storytelling involves sharing the story from images ¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁶⁰ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁶¹ Walsh, *The Art of Storytelling*, 28-29.

Doodling The Story and John Walsh

(9) Sacred Storytelling Lab “Draw & Tell”¹⁶²

- a. I adore the work done by John Walsh. His approach is beautifully humble in that he highlights the power of storytelling from his professed weakness as one who struggles with stuttering. Learning to embrace your perceived storytelling strengths and weaknesses is important. Coming to trust that God will give you all you need to tell a story is also a part of the storyteller’s faith journey.

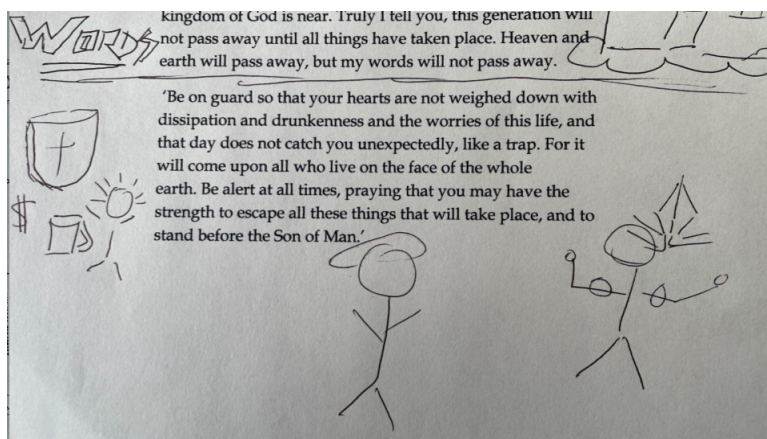
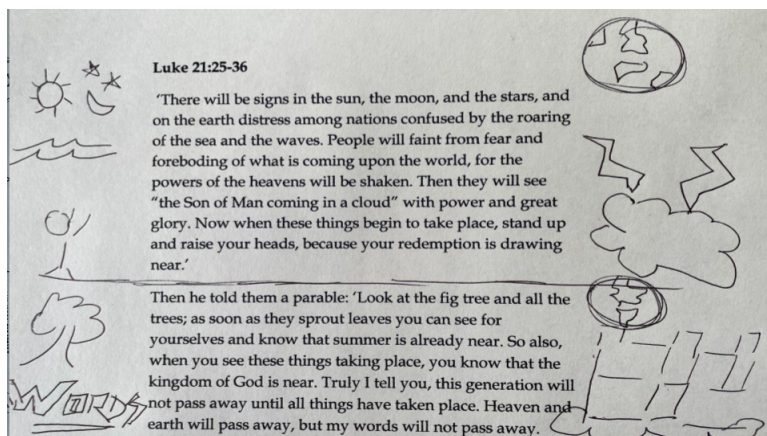
(10) 525 Stories in the Bible!¹⁶³

We are just going to jump right in and do this! **Turn slide show off!**

Read your story twice and divide it into sections. (5 minutes)

Turn slide show back on after folks have divided their stories

(11 & 12) Display of sample story



¹⁶² Walsh, *BibleTelling*.

¹⁶³ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 20.

Give instructions for making drawings for each section of the story.

Turn slide show off!

Sketch/draw something for each section of your story. (15 minutes)

BREAK

Breakout #1

Show your drawings to each other and explain how they fit the story. (8minutes)

Read your story one time (4 minutes)

BREAK OUT #2 – two new partners

Tell your stories to each other – only looking at your drawings. (4 minutes each)

Stumble through the story

Read their story one more time. (3 minutes)

BREAK OUT #3 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without looking at your story or your drawings.

After each telling, the partner says “My favorite part of your story was...” (6 minutes each)

LUNCH BREAK in Breakout #4

BREAK OUT #4 – four students in each group

Students: At least one person in each group is to tell of a time when he/she experienced the power of a Bible story simply told.

Make a list of people who might volunteer (on a weekly basis) to listen to the stories you are learning. (3 minutes)

BREAK OUT #5 – 2 students in each group

Each of you tell who is on your list of five potential listeners. (3 minutes)

Quickly skim your story one more time. (2 minutes)

BREAK OUT #6 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without looking at your story or your drawings.
After each telling, discuss “My favorite part of your story was...” “What did you personally learn from this story?” (5 minutes each)

SLIDES 12 & 13) Effective Memorization & The 5 requirements to Excel at Biblical Storytelling
Pg 29 of book

BREAK

Hope and Peace and the Fig Tree

14) Hope & Peace & the Fig Tree



Luke 21:29-33

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

Then he told them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.’¹⁶⁵

Luke 21 & fig trees – fig tree the symbol of the nation of Israel...The fig tree is the tree of knowledge according to Hasidic Lore as Adam & Eve covered themselves with a fig leave after the fall...the fig tree is also the heart of Torah studies...Jesus calling attention to the fact that we can read signs...when the trees start budding you know the fruit will follow...be prepared with hope

Every day how do you find hope...Nathaniel sitting under a fig tree...sitting under Israel’s symbol of hope, wealth, prosperity and STUDY of the Torah...

¹⁶⁴ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁶⁵ Luke 21:29-33 (NRSV).

Jesus cursing the fig tree that didn't bear fruit in the right season...¹⁶⁶
 at the core of our being is the need to study the tree of knowledge...that which caused us
 to fall is also our redemption/salvation...

What kind of tree was the tree of knowledge?

What did Adam & Eve cover themselves with after the fall?

How effective were the fig leaves?¹⁶⁷

It didn't help to cover ourselves with the fig leaf...but it is a marker of our
 identity...our need to be alert...be prepared...our life is looking at what caused us to
 fall...knowledge our quest to know more is to be found in Torah...in the discipline of the
 study of the Torah...Jesus was the living embodiment of the Torah...

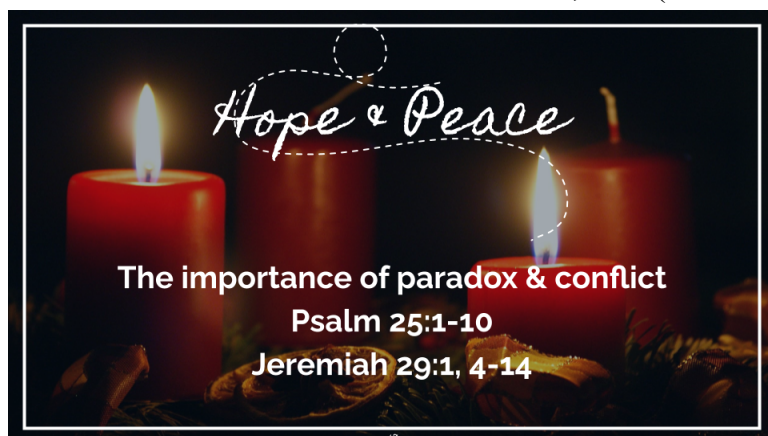
The Importance of Paradox and Conflict

15) Ray Buckley's story of hope

Psalm 25:1-10 (RCL Advent 1)

Ruth Graham's story of peace

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14 (Narrative Advent 1)



Psalm 25:1-10 - **Prayer for Guidance and for Deliverance - CLASS READ ALOUD**

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-14 - CLASS READ ALOUD

Share the story of the minstrel & the villagers, the elderly, the mid-life & young adult
 aged, the children

—we are about cathedral building work, the work of artisans

¹⁶⁶ Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneerson, trans. Eliyahu Touger, “Kabbalah, Chassidism and Jewish Mysticism Chassidic Texts the Tree of Life - Kuntres Eitz HaChayim,” Chabad.org, accessed January 9, 2022, https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/144541/jewish/Chapter-V.htm

¹⁶⁷ Naftali Silberberg, “What Sort of Fruit Tree Was The Tree of Knowledge?” Chabad.org, accessed January 9, 2022. https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/983693/jewish/What-Sort-of-Fruit-Tree-was-the-Tree-of-Knowledge.htm

Holding out the vision blesses us with a lightness and hope in what we are creating

Session #2

- (1) Welcome
- (2) Opening Story Luke 2:8-11
- (3) The Christmas Scale story



168

Christ's joy is lived in the right notes with the right pauses, living our ordinary lives in extraordinary ways, that is, with Jesus Grace, presence and wakefulness.

- (4) Zoom Poll: In what ways do you want to pause during Advent/Christmas this season to let Christ's joy bless you?



169

Multiple Choice

- Saying "no thank you" to requests to do more
- Select Designating Fasting Times from social media, news, emails or phone...etc. interruptions
- Take part in a Advent Christmas online or in person Bible Study
- Be deliberate in carving out time to be with friends & family

¹⁶⁸ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

¹⁶⁹ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

- Intentionally hand daily worries over to God
- Plan a retreat time
- Other?

(5) Class #2 – Joy Stories

- a. The Memory Palace
- b. Exploring Joy in our Advent Bible Stories
- c. Virtual & live EXPERIENTIAL Storytelling in worship, preaching, mission, weddings, baptisms, funerals and pastoral care study



170

“What’s your story?”

The Memory Palace and Storied Objects

Memory Palace Teaching¹⁷¹ <https://youtu.be/p9IOqd1LpkA>

Fallingwater ~ Frank Lloyd Wright

- d. Debby will explain how she walks through this palace

Sacred Storytelling Lab

¹⁷⁰ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁷¹ Sprouts, “The Memory Palace: Can You Do It?”

e. Objects for your Story Palace

Ask for volunteers to read aloud

BREAK

Zoom Poll – Reading/Hearing the Bible aloud

Zephaniah 3:14-20 • Isaiah 12:2-6 • Philippians 4:4-7 • Luke 3:7-18

Tell Luke 3:7-18 story talking through memory props AND IMAGE DISCUSSION

(6) John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

(7) Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

(8) Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?"

(9) In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise."

Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,

(10) John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

(11) His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

(12) So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Sacred Storytelling Lab

Objects for your Story Palace

Read your story twice and divide it into sections. (10 minutes)

Select an object/place in the room for the story section to take place something for each section of your story. (20 min)

- (13) **“What’s your story?”**

BREAK UNTIL

- (14) **“What’s your story?”**

- (15) Exploring Joy of Luke 3:7-18

- (16) Joy Questions

Zoom Poll

Have you known joy in the midst of suffering?

On the whole would you say the Advent/Christmas season is filled with more joy or more pain (for you or for loved ones)?

If you are a Jesus follower is joy a theological obligation?

Are there any passages you’d like us to explore as a group for discerning how to find joy?

- (17) Longest Night & Blue Christmas Services

Have you been to or led a Longest Night (Blue Christmas) service? What did you like/dislike about it? What do you remember about it?

BACK TO YOUR STORY

Read your story one time (4 minutes)

BREAK OUT #1 – two partners

Explain your objects room mapping/your memory palace to each other and explain how they fit the story.

Discussion groups of 3 &4 for lunch in Break Out #1

BREAK

Read your story (3 min)

BREAK OUT #2 – two new partners

Tell your stories to each other – using your objects & walking through your room/house.

Touch is important. (10 minutes)

After each telling, as the listener discuss “What in the story caught your attention?”

“I heard this joy in the story you told.”

Stumble through the story

Read their story one more time. (3 minutes)

BREAK OUT #3 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without physically walking around the room/house

After each telling, discuss “My favorite part of your story was...” “What did you personally learn from this story?” (12 minutes)

Quickly skim story one more time. (2 minutes)

Have each person tell their story without their objects

After each telling, discuss

“What in the story caught your attention?”

“I heard this joy in the story you told.”

“What did you personally learn from this story?”

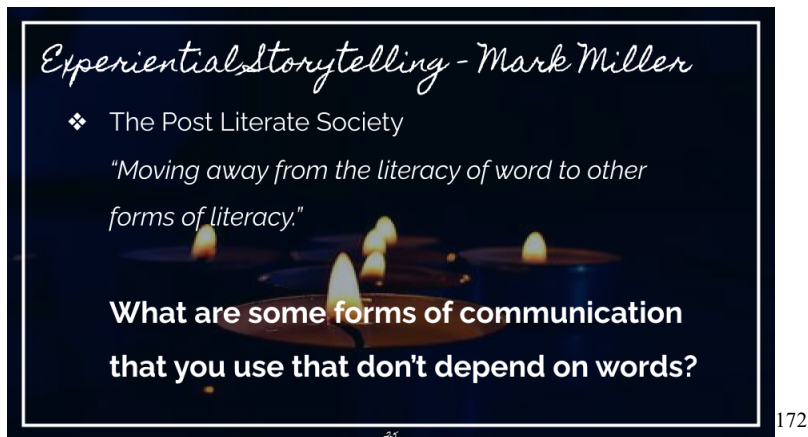
“Is God calling me to do something as a result of this story?”

Experiential Storytelling and Mark Miller

(18) Experiential Storytelling ~ Mark Miller

- a. The Post Literate Society: Moving away from the literacy of words to other forms of literacy.
- b. What are some forms of communication that you use that don't depend on words?

<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMRoy1uwf/>



“What if we attempted to move the preacher from a sermon-giver to a narrator telling a story? And what if the narrator is also a guide along the path of experience?”¹⁷³

BREAK

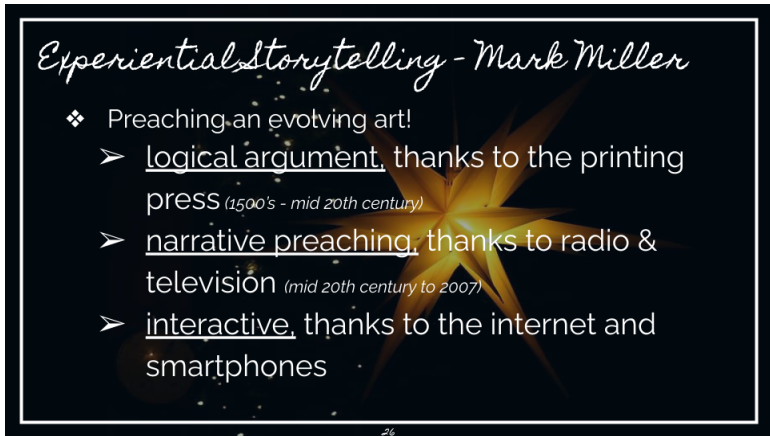
(19) Preaching as an evolving art

- c. Logical argument
- d. Narrative preaching
- e. Interactive event¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁷³ Mark Miller, *Experiential Storytelling : (re)discovering Narrative to Communicate God's Message* (El Cajon, CA: Zondervan, 2003), 86.

¹⁷⁴ Miller, *Experiential Storytelling*, 84-85.



Experiential Storytelling - Mark Miller

- ❖ Preaching an evolving art!
 - logical argument, thanks to the printing press (1500's - mid 20th century)
 - narrative preaching, thanks to radio & television (mid 20th century to 2007)
 - interactive, thanks to the internet and smartphones

(20) Preacher as guide along the path of experience using:

f. Symbols

g. Imagery¹⁷⁶

Play Kahoot Game

<https://create.kahoot.it/share/biblical-images/a094f5fe-1d0a-4367-90ef-f8ceef9a62e9>

h. Personal participation

Worship as Collaboration rather Than Performance

(21) Worship becomes collaboration

When have you experienced a participatory climate during worship?

What can you add to your storytelling to nurture participation?

¹⁷⁵ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

¹⁷⁶ Miller, *Experiential Storytelling*, 108-112.



Using Eric's story as an example for group brainstorming

STORY GATHERING WORK & THE IMPORTANCE OF STORIED OBJECTS

The importance of curiosity and listening – think of yourself as a story-gatherer as well as a storyteller. Be curious about the story, be curious about the people, the community you are sharing with.

IMPORTANCE OF IMAGINATION & VISIONING YOUR STORYTELLING AND AUDIENCE

Debby you imagine your children as you tell and it makes you a better storyteller because as you are telling you are aware of the gift to the dear ones you are delivering it to. My faith conviction – storytelling is an act of discipleship and service. As disciples we are storytellers for others and the act of storytelling is all about the relationship.

Objects have stories. Story of Grandfather clock story and Galatians 6 story...

¹⁷⁷ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

(22) Ken Medema

Story catcher, story builder, storytelling preacher conducting a concert of participation art

(23) “Yes and” Rule of Improv

- i. Pastoral Care
- j. Funerals
- k. New Member Services
- l. Confirmation & Baptism Services
- m. Weddings

The connection with story and pastoral care is best done as a work of improvisation

Improv’s yes and rule

Would 2 volunteers on the next break be willing to find an object that has a story and as a group we are going to prayerfully listen, ask questions where our curiosity leads us and then brainstorm as a group connections of where that object has a layered connection to the scriptures.

Theological Stretching & Story interpretation - watch video for discussion what interested you, irked you, offended you, excited you, perplexed you?

1 Timothy 2:8-15 | Silent Women and First Timothy | Craig Hadley, feat. Deidre Coutsoumpas | ¹⁷⁸Paradox. https://youtu.be/mW5_wax8Q0o

2:45-3:00 Lighting Round – what is one lightning strike (ah-ha!) today you received you will take with you?

¹⁷⁸ Craig Hadley, “1 Timothy 2:8-15 | Silent Women and First Timothy | Craig Hadley, feat. Deidre Coutsoumpas | Paradox,” Paradox Church, YouTube video, 36:30, October 11, 2021, https://youtu.be/mW5_wax8Q0o.

Session #3

Exploring Love in our Advent Bible Stories, Coffee Chat Pass Story learning

Required Reading *Shaped By The Story: Helping Students Encounter God in a New Way* by Michael Novelli

(1) Welcome

Class #3 – LOVE Stories

- a. Auditory Inception & hymns
- b. Imaginative Listening with Steve Carnahan
- c. Exploring LOVE in our Advent Bible Stories (using storying)
- d. Christmas Cocoa Chat Pass (auditory learning)
- e. Virtual & live EXPERIENTIAL Storytelling in worship, preaching, mission, weddings, baptisms, funerals and pastoral care study need storytellers for our final class so we can practice this – need stories about your favorite hymns or stories about special Christmas objects in your home or treasured Christmas memories...



179

Auditory Inception & Christmas Carols

(2) Opening Story Story **Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God
to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,
to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph,
of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.
And he came to her and said,
"Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."
But she was much perplexed by his words

¹⁷⁹ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her,

“Do not be afraid, Mary,

for you have found favor with God.

And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,

and you will name him Jesus.

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High,

and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.

He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,

and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”

The angel said to her,

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you,

and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;

therefore the child to be born will be holy;

he will be called Son of God.

And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son;

and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren.

For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord;

let it be with me according to your word.”

Then the angel departed from her.

- (3) Isenheim altar piece...excellent example of a story keeping a healing culture...commissioned by order of St. Anthony...painted 1515...monks took care people dying of a plague suffering painful skin conditions...musical therapy practiced in medieval hospitals...this picture was for healing, for the dying...the sick meditated on it and found relief...endearing portrayal of Mary’s love for her infant Jesus.¹⁸⁰

- (4) For a helpful YouTube on this Art: <https://youtu.be/p-IvNWAQ08>¹⁸¹

“In a Biblical sense...you don’t see a vision...you hear a vision...sound comes before sight...Mary is impregnated through her ear...faith comes through hearing...the

¹⁸⁰ Leonard Sweet, November 2016 notes taken by author from *Preach the Story* online lecture.

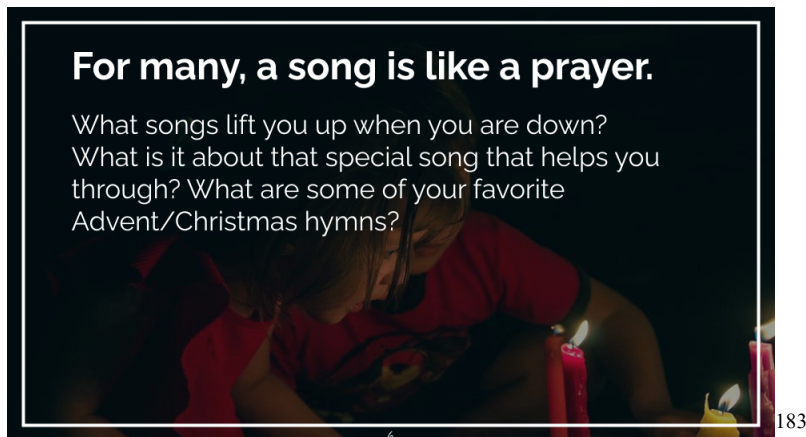
¹⁸¹ Roos, “matthias grunewald.Isham.mov.”

*importance of a sound track...if you hear a vision it is from God...if you see a vision...perhaps most likely from your own imagination...*¹⁸²

(5) For Many Song is like a Prayer

Opening Prayer – The Beatles “Let it Be”

When people are most worried, in life’s most difficult situations, they’ve often turned to music. For many, a song is like a prayer. What songs lift you up when you are down? What is it about that special song that helps you through?



183

BREAK

Imaginative Listening with Rev. Stephen Carnahan

“The sanctified imagination is the fertile creative space where the preacher-interpreter enters the text, particularly the spaces in the text, and fills them out with missing details: names, back stories, detailed descriptions of the scene and characters, and so on.”

— Wilda C. Gafney,¹⁸⁴

BREAK

¹⁸² Leonard Sweet, November 2016 notes taken by author from *Preach the Story* online lecture.

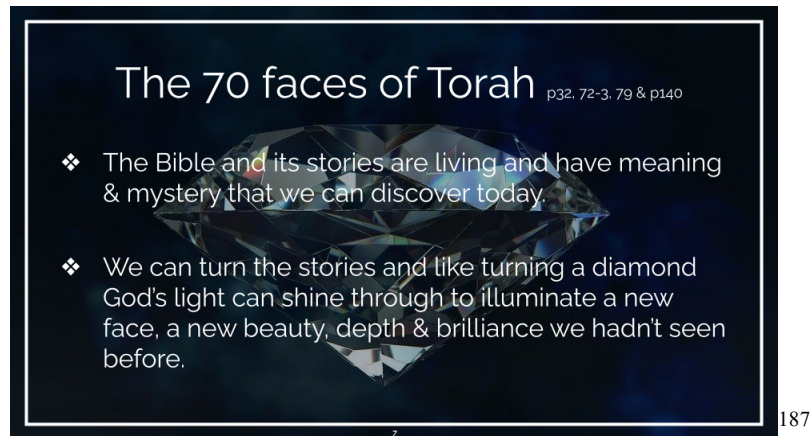
¹⁸³ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁸⁴ Wilda Gafny. *Womanist Midrash: A Reintroduction to the Women of the Torah and the Throne* First ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017).

The 70 Faces of Torah and Michael Novelli

(6) The 70 faces of Torah¹⁸⁵

- The Bible and its stories are living and have meaning & mystery that we can discover today.
- We can turn the stories and like turning a diamond God's light can shine through to illuminate a new face, a new beauty, depth & brilliance we hadn't seen before.¹⁸⁶



(7) The 70 Faces of Torah¹⁸⁸

The Jewish sages worked with 4 main categories, each with several layers of meaning coexisting simultaneously within a given verse.

P'shat – The plain (historical/grammatical) meaning of the text *Simple, Literal*

The 24 books of the written Torah

Remez – The allegorical meaning of the text *Hint, Suggestion*

The 6 Orders of the Mishnah, the Oral Torah

Drash – The moral or imperative sense of the text *Insight*

The Talmud and the source of the Jewish Law

Sod – The mystical or esoteric meaning of the text *Mystery*

¹⁸⁵ Michael Novelli, *Shaped By The Story: Helping Students Encounter God in a New Way* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 72-3, 79, 140.

¹⁸⁶ Novelli, *Shaped By The Story*, 32.

¹⁸⁷ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

¹⁸⁸ John J. Parsons, "Seventy Faces of Torah: A Brief Overview of Exegesis" Hebrew4Christians.com, accessed January 18, 2022, https://hebrew4christians.com/Articles/Seventy_Faces/70Faces.pdf.

The Zohar of the Kabbalah, the secret of mystical tradition

“The initials of these four general categories yield the acronym “PaRDeS” (meaning orchard or garden) said to be a reference to the ultimate restoration of humankind in the restored Garden of Eden or Paradise.”¹⁸⁹

(8) The art of Harmonia Rosales

It is super important to become aware of our own cultural biases in interpreting & imagining our sacred story

Harmonia Rosales “Finding empowerment through art that challenges ideological hegemony in contemporary society” from her website:

<https://www.harmoniarosales.com/collections>

Exploring Love in our Advent Bible Stories

(9) Storying and Exploring LOVE in our Advent Bible Stories

Imaginative Listening

Reviewing & retelling the story

Wondering, Remembering & Connecting Questions

Ask for volunteers to read each passage.



Jesus in his dying moment, sang God’s greatest Song of triumph, Psalm 22 a song that echoed his Mother’s Magnificat, the echoed Hannah’s prayer, that echoed Jesus’ “mission statement.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Parsons, “Seventy Faces of Torah.”

¹⁹⁰ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁹¹ Leonard Sweet, November 2016 notes taken by author from *Preach the Story* online lecture.

Have 3 volunteers read each passage and listen for the sacred storytelling echo.
Mary's Magnificat, Luke 1:46-56

Hannah's prayer 1 Samuel 2:1-10

as relates to

Jesus "mission statement" preaching in Nazareth Luke 4:14-30, Isaiah 61

Discussion groups of 3 & 4 for lunch

Objects with a story! Sharing the stories of the Christmas objects/decorations we brought to share.

BREAK

Christmas Cocoa Chat Pass

(10) Coffee Chat Pass (Christmas Cocoa Chat Pass)

Luke 1:39-55 Based on the work of John Walsh

Have each person read their version of the passage. After the first person reads, the person next to them tells the story as best as they can remember then that person reads their version. The next person tells the story...etc.¹⁹²

BREAK UNTIL 2PM

(11) "this shall be a sign unto you..." Luke 2:12 storytelling of the shepherds

The Special Shepherds of Bethlehem

Jesus and mirror image of first born sacrifice and Passover story

While Shepherd's watch their flock by night....in the midst of the common that the glory comes¹⁹³

(12) Storytelling Lab - Story gathering, Story building, Storytelling

¹⁹² Walsh, *BibleTelling*.

¹⁹³ Leonard Sweet, November 2016 notes taken by author from *Preach the Story* online lecture.

Listen to the object story of your partner and become a story detective, story gatherer, story bridge builder, story artist, storyteller

1. Ask questions
2. Tease out more experiential details



(13) Storytelling Lab – Story gathering, building & telling

3. Brainstorm bible images, passages & stories
4. Discern relationship connection elements



BREAK

STORY GATHERING WORK & THE IMPORTANCE OF STORIED OBJECTS

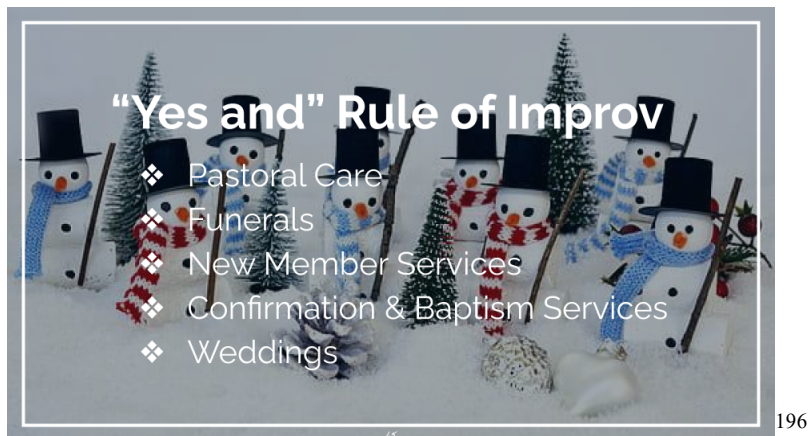
The importance of curiosity and listening – think of yourself as a story-gatherer as well as a storyteller. Be curious about the story, be curious about the people, the community you are sharing with.

¹⁹⁴ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

¹⁹⁵ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

5. “Yes and” Rule of Improv
 - a. Pastoral Care
 - b. Funerals
 - c. New Member Services
 - d. Confirmation & Baptism Services
 - e. Weddings

The connection with story and pastoral care is best done as a work of improvisation



Improv’s yes and rule

2 volunteers share the object that has a story

As a group we are going to prayerfully listen, ask questions where our curiosity leads us and then brainstorm as a group the different connections of where that object has a layered connection to the scriptures.

¹⁹⁶ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

Session #4

Class Schedule #4

Annette Simmons: Culture Keeping Storytelling

Kinesthetic Story Learning

Kinesthetic Story Learning

- a. The pulpit does not encourage body movement. I needed to learn how to use my body in storytelling so I took a belly dancing class.
- b. What I've discovered since then that my most preferred way of learning a story by heart is kinesthetically – walking does it for me.
- c. What is kinesthetic learning: <https://youtu.be/R9JEQ1CzoB0>

Interplay.org ~ Unlocking the Wisdom of your Body

<https://interplay.org/>

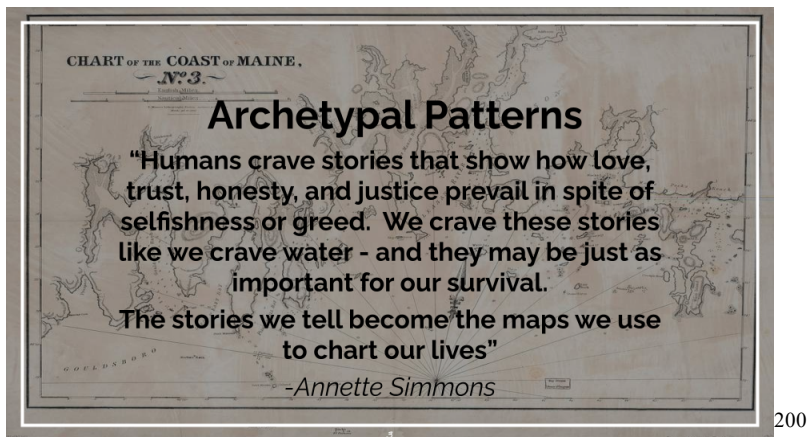
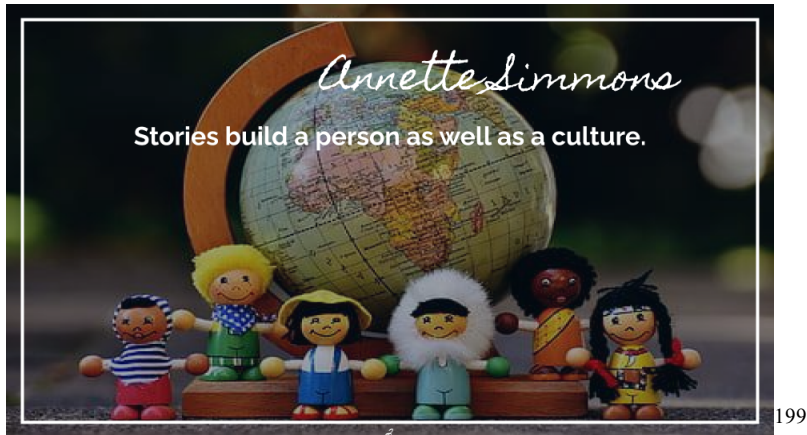
Culture Keeping Storytelling and Annette Simmons

“We are defined by the stories we tell. As a storyteller, you are a reservoir of meaningful memories for your organization, community, and family group. The norms and habits of any group’s culture are passed down through the stories that are told and retold.”¹⁹⁷ Stories build a person as well as a culture. The stories you repeat become your reality. Victim stories perpetuate more victim stories. Gratitude stories invite more gratitude stories. It is important for the storyteller to not only take inventory of her own repeating stories but to also take notice of a community’s repeating stories. Identifying the archetypal pattern in the often told stories helps to clarify how the stories are acting toward the health or sickness of a body.

“Humans crave stories that show how love, trust, honesty, and justice prevail in spite of selfishness or greed. We crave these stories like we crave water - and they may be just as important for our survival. The stories we tell become the maps we use to chart our

¹⁹⁷ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 247.

lives.”¹⁹⁸ Storytelling as a spiritual discipline is about the work of being a “culture keeper” and editing, selecting or releasing the stories best suited for encouraging life to thrive.

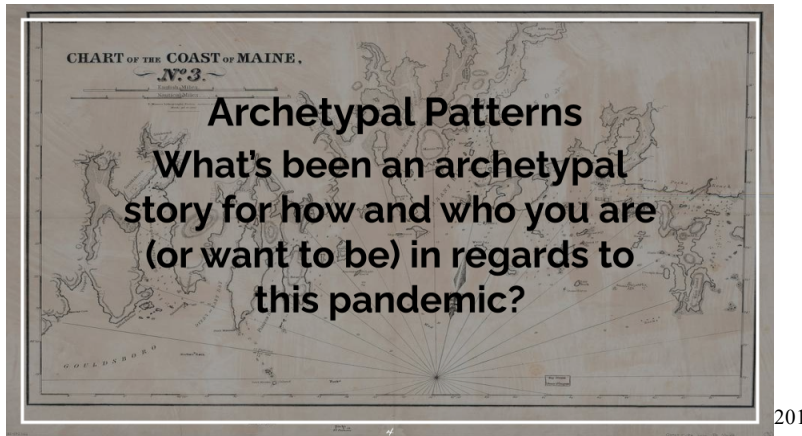


ZOOM POLL – which storied archetype defines your present understanding of yourself? What’s been an archetypal story for how and who you are (or want to be) in regards to this pandemic? (Multiple Choice) Please understand I selected all positive archetypes but there are important negative ones I didn’t list. At the bottom there is the other category if nothing I selected here fits your understanding of who you are.

¹⁹⁸ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 307.

¹⁹⁹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

²⁰⁰ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”



201

Class Discussion – share a story what you selected and a bit about why?

Storytelling as a spiritual discipline is about the work of being a “culture keeper” and editing, selecting or releasing the stories best suited for encouraging life to thrive.

Storytelling is a powerful tool for influencing others and Simmons notes that it is important to recognize it has a shadow side. Effective stories have an emotional component.



202

Church Angel Stories and Walter Wink

Your Church Angel?

the actual people of the congregation are addressed. The “angel” is then the core essence of an entity, its **collective spirit**.

²⁰¹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

²⁰² Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

“The angel is a kind of corporate personality created and formed by the members of the church and the surrounding culture but now operating in such a way that it in turns shapes, reinforces, and holds the collective life of that congregation in its grasp.”²⁰³

Scott Daniels draws on Walter Wink’s influential trilogy on Powers, especially vol. 2: *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces That Determine Human Existence* (Fortress Press, 1986).

“How are these angels formed? What forces come together to create the angels of the churches? Wink suggests six.”²⁰⁴

The first is the architecture and ambiance of a church. Buildings, Wink argues, are both an explicit statement about the values, prestige, and class of a community and a force that continues to shape those values into the future.

Economic and educational levels are a second force that determines the spirit of a church.

Power structures, leadership styles, theological orientations, and attitudes toward authority are a third formational force.

The fourth force Wink identifies is the way a congregation handles conflict.

Fifth, the nature of liturgy or corporate worship in the church and the way in which spiritual growth is developed and assessed contributes to the emergence of the church’s angel.

And finally, Wink argues that the church’s perception of itself and its community profoundly shapes its collective identity. According to Wink, the following questions are vital to how the spirit or angel of a church is formed:

How does the congregation see itself? How do others see it? Does membership confer status, or does it indicate a high level of commitment to mission? Is the church inner- or outer-directed? Is it related to its neighborhood or the larger community? Is it self-engrossed, or engaged in struggles for social justice and global peace? Is it evangelistic or nurturing, or both? Is it on speaking terms with its angel and fired by a sense of its divine vocation, or is it a country club, or a haven against the chill of rapid social change? What is the place of spirituality, or prayer and meditation, of the inner journey? Is it easy to “get on board,” to become drawn into the life of the group? What about its history, its traditions, its annual celebrations, its invariant money-raisers and teas? Who have been its heroes and its villains, and what are the skeletons in its closet?

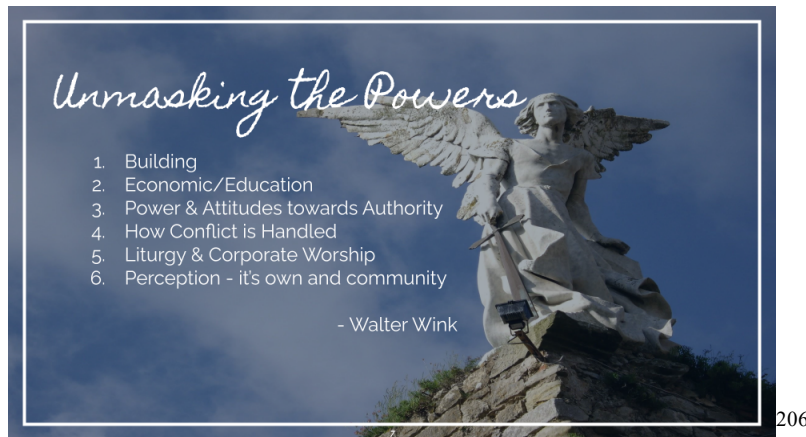
Saco’s angel “the church that burned down to the church that rose from the ashes”

²⁰³ Daniels, *Seven Deadly Spirits*, 24.

²⁰⁴ Wink, vol. 2: *Unmasking the Powers*, 73-77.



205



206

Saco's angel "the church that burned down to the church that rose from the ashes"

There are ways storytelling can be "weaponized" to unethically control and manipulate narratives using fear and blame. Fear and blame stories are easier to activate than hope and compassion stories. Fear stories trigger our survival fight or flight instincts. "Blame stories don't describe the problem. As a storyteller you begin to see that blame stories are the problem."²⁰⁷ Fear and blame stories activate isolation and protective patterns that disrupt and prohibit tolerance, empathy and long-term growth patterns

- a. Many times I practice the pastoral work of the confessional, repentance and cleansing of a weaponized story for the health of my congregation.
- b. Be very, very, very aware any time you have even a thought of sharing a grievance, a blame story about another...tell the David Slater story

²⁰⁵ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

²⁰⁶ Catalina, "Miranda PowerPoint Template."

²⁰⁷ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 307.



Hope and compassion stories are not always as fast moving or as adrenaline gripping as fear stories, but they are the stories that better nurture openness, kindness and community growth. A good story can form in people's minds and be recalled as fact as if it actually happened to them.²⁰⁸



209

BREAKOUT ROOMS

Discuss Church Angel Stories – there will always be a mix HOWEVER healthy church sport a 4:1 ration of hope & compassion stories over fear & blame

Discuss in your groups of 3 discuss the church angel stories in terms of which stories predominate the culture.

BREAK

“Story has the unique ability to validate people on both sides of real-life paradox without suggesting that either side should be eliminated.”²¹⁰ Simmons cautions against using a single

²⁰⁸ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 253.

²⁰⁹ Catalina, “Miranda PowerPoint Template.”

²¹⁰ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 45.

point story even if the story has a positive intent. Technology has provided the ability for narratives to be controlled and promoted with only a single story viewpoint. With analytics providing us repeated stories that we favor, echo chambers have evolved that silence other important viewpoints. It is important to be suspicious of stories with yes/no answers to questions that are too complicated for the yes/no response.

She illustrates her point with the example: “Imagine asking van Gogh if yellow is the most important color. Any “clear” answer distracts the aspiring painter from learning that yellow’s importance (like all colors) changes depending on its proximity and relationship to other colors.”²¹¹

The spiritual practice of storytelling involves discerning and finding the good stories that allow people to experience the paradox, see more than one side and encourages them to creatively engage with their own responses to unresolvable conflicts. Share story of my encountering the Acton Angel ...you know how to love and for me this is enough...& Share story of our coming to let AA back in the building

BREAK

Watch one of the storytelling videos below for class discussion

Annette Simmons:

<https://youtu.be/-S1A5VKxQkU>

Japanese Mosh Pit:

<https://youtu.be/SiCBB4BtrJU>

Silent Women & 1st Timothy

https://youtu.be/mW5_wax8Q0o

²¹¹ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 275.

Pull out the elements of the story that touch you and we will discuss

Stories – looking for a significant emotional experience. How our brains code what is important

Select from below choices and end with...

2:45pm Lighting Round – what is one lightning strike (ah-ha!) today you received you will take with you?

Sacred Storytelling Lab Half Day Online

Welcome and Itinerary



Sacred Storytelling Sampler

Zoom Lab

Dates, Costs & Log-in Info. Saturday September 25 from 9am-

12pm on Zoom \$35 (\$ will go towards the ministry of Pilgrim Lodge and towards MESOM ministries)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8096671404>

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592

Meeting ID: 809 667 1404

What to Bring

Story ~ Select a story to bring with you to learn. If you need a selection of stories to choose from please email Abby. abby@broadreachministries.com

Doodle materials ~ please bring your story printed out on a sheet of paper with 2 inch margins and pens or pencils for doodling

Itinerary

9:00am **Gathering & Welcome**

9:05am to 9:45am **Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline and Learning a Story by Heart**

10:00am to 10:45am **Your brain on stories and More Practice, practice, practice to play**

11am to 12pm **Sharing the Story you've Learned**

About The Art of Sacred Storytelling

Our Sacred Stories have the power to inspire, engage and transform. Using prayer, imagination and practice in a supportive community we will learn the art of Sacred Storytelling. It is easier than you think! **Why Storytelling?**

The Gospel message is released in new and fresh ways when followers of Jesus practice and develop the ancient art of oral storytelling. Jesus spoke in parables, teaching us through story. Storytelling is a powerful way in which we can share and connect to the reality of God's ever present and active love in our lives. **Join Storyteller & Pastor AbbyLynn**

Return with confidence ready to share your storytelling skills with your family, friends, in the Sunday school classroom, youth group event or Sunday morning worship.

Lecture Notes with Slides

9:00am

(1) Welcome



Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline

(2) Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline

Storytelling invites people to emotionally and spiritually experience a new reality, God's reality. Jesus told stories to open people's hearts to deeper understandings.²¹³ Jesus told stories to transform lives.²¹⁴ "Jesus did not tell his stories in a vacuum; he was neither the first nor the only storyteller in his world. He emerged from a rich storytelling culture."²¹⁵ Parables came out of a milieu of Jewish storytelling. Rabbis told stories called mashals and many carry the form, motif and plots as those used by Jesus. People were as accustomed to understanding mashals as we are accustomed to understanding memes today. Parables were created with the intent that they be retold. The parables Jesus told revealed deep truths, were engaging, life changing and easy to remember using everyday objects. Even today, the parables of Jesus still speak to us providing us insight and wisdom into current spiritual, religious and ethical issues.

Storytelling is inherently spiritually dynamic. There is both a spiritual deepening aspect as well as an evangelical outreach component.

The best way to keep a story is to give it away



(3) Enjoying the discipline of becoming intimate with a story

"Only you can know the passion a story fuels in you;

²¹³ Matthew 13:10-15, Mark 4:10-12, Luke 8:9-10.

²¹⁴ Matthew 13:1-9, Mark 4:1-9, Luke 8:4-8.

²¹⁵ Dennis E Smith. and Michael E. Williams, eds., *The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible*, vol. 11, The Parables of Jesus (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 11.

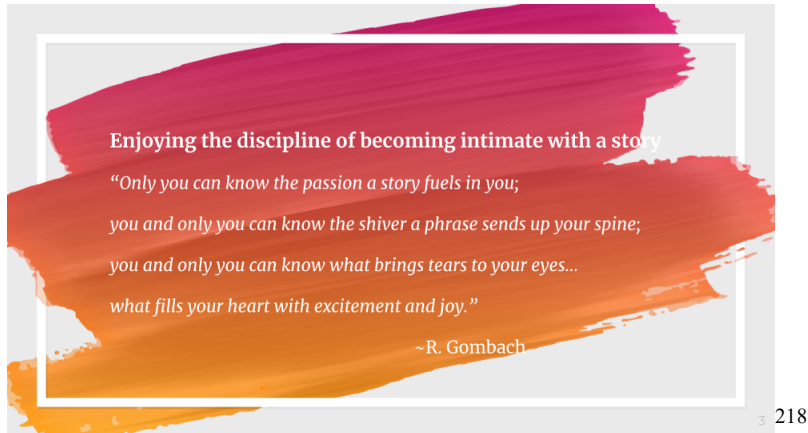
²¹⁶ Catalina, "Juliet PowerPoint Template."

you and only you can know the shiver a phrase sends up your spine;

you and only you can know what brings tears to your eyes...

what fills your heart with excitement and joy.”²¹⁷

~R. Gombach



(4) God made people...because God loves stories²¹⁹! Baal Shem Tov “You already have everything you need to accomplish your storytelling miracle.”²²⁰

a. Discuss Strength Based Learning and tell the story of Harrison walking



(5) Coming to trust...

²¹⁷ Gombach, *Sacred Storytelling*, 16.

²¹⁸ Catalina, “Juliet PowerPoint Template.”

²¹⁹ Wiesel, *The Gates of the Forest*.

²²⁰ Gombach, *Sacred Storytelling*, 15.

²²¹ Catalina, “Juliet PowerPoint Template.”

You'll develop your own unique recipe for learning a story

Yada – Hebrew word “to know” a story – an intimate knowing



Story Introductions!!



(6) The art of storytelling is not about memorizing

a. Limits the number of stories you'll be able to tell, limits flexibility, may distract from your ministry

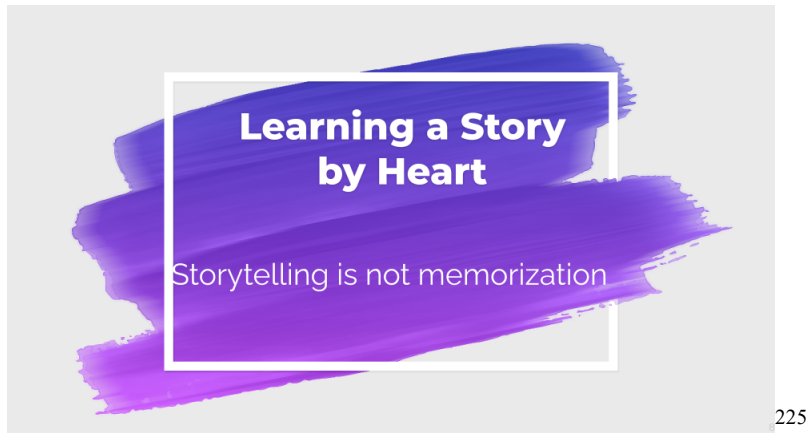
b. The art of storytelling involves sharing the story from images ²²⁴

²²² Catalina, “Juliet PowerPoint Template.”

²²³ Catalina, “Juliet PowerPoint Template.”

²²⁴ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 20.

Learning a Story by Heart

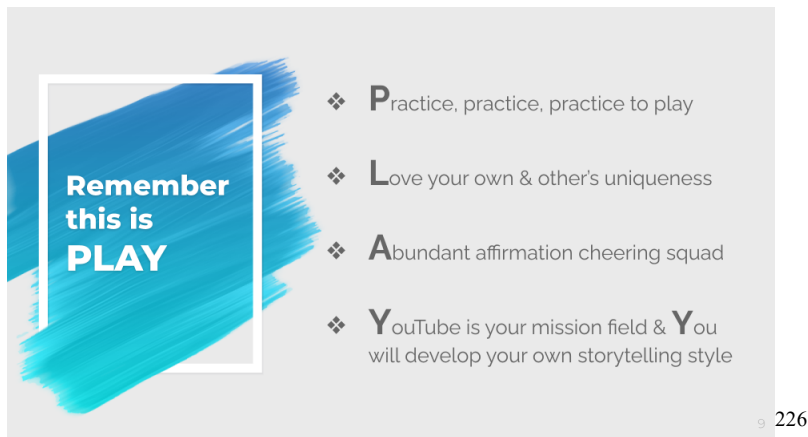


(7) Remember this is PLAY

More about PLAY and our playing together

1. Practice, practice, practice...Understand and articulate the importance of encouraging and nurturing Storytelling art as a spiritual practice that incorporates both a devotional deepening aspect and an evangelism reaching dynamic.
2. Love your own & other's uniqueness... Express their understanding of their own unique style and strengths as a Biblical Storyteller.
3. Abundant Affirmation...Deepen their understanding of developing a supportive Storytelling network while being an encourager of others in each person's Storytelling endeavors.
4. YouTube (Facebook Live, Vimeo...etc.) is your mission field... Demonstrate increasing ability to engage online and social media tools for Biblical Storytelling in virtual ministry, worship and outreach. YOU will develop your own style for learning and telling Bible Stories

YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Vimeo... All will begin learning to tell one story today.



Story of watching a child (Harrison) learn to walk – we are cheering them on – we are not telling children learning to walk how they did not place their foot down properly...etc. We will cheer each other on in the same spirit.

Very Important to Remember:

God will be working with you and through you! Please be ever so kind to yourself and others in this time of learning, preparing, reaching and growing.

So please hand over to God your perceived weaknesses in yourself or in others.

"We naturally will bless others with our strengths. God will supernaturally bless others through our weaknesses." - Leonard Sweet

Story Introductions!!



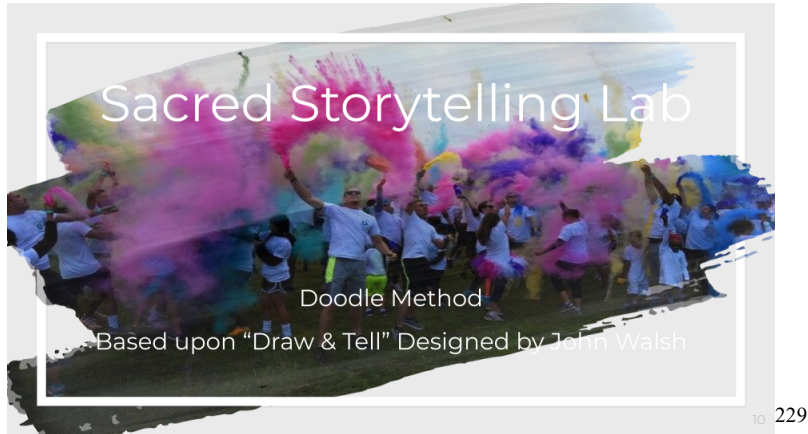
(8) Sacred Storytelling Lab Doodling the Story based on John Walsh's "Draw & Tell"²²⁸

²²⁶ Catalina, "Juliet PowerPoint Template."

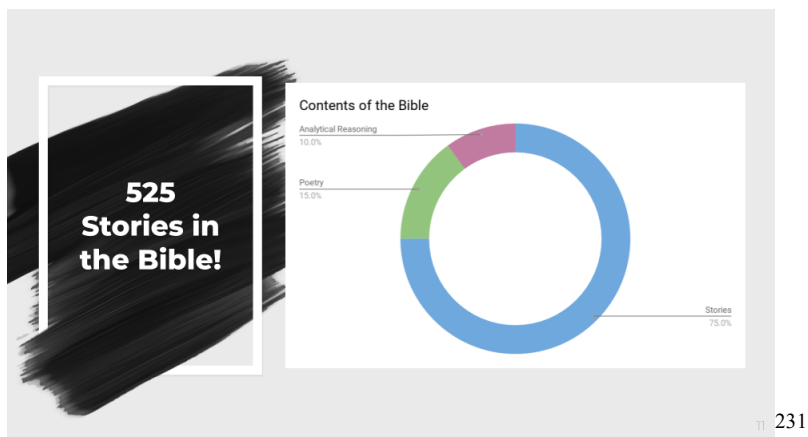
²²⁷ Catalina, "Juliet PowerPoint Template."

²²⁸ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 20.

- a. I adore the work done by John Walsh. His approach is beautifully humble in that he highlights the power of storytelling from his professed weakness as one who struggles with stuttering. Learning to embrace your perceived storytelling strengths and weaknesses is important. Coming to trust that God will give you all you need to tell a story is also a part of the storyteller's faith journey.



(9) 525 Stories in the Bible!²³⁰



Learning a story through doodling

We are just going to jump right in and do this! **Turn slide show off!**

Read your story twice and divide it into sections. (5 minutes) 9:35

Turn slide show back on after folks have divided their stories

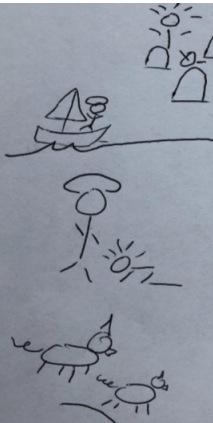
(10 & 11) Display of sample story

²²⁹ Catalina, "Juliet PowerPoint Template."

²³⁰ Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 4.

²³¹ Catalina, "Juliet PowerPoint Template."

Give instructions for making drawings for each section of the story.



38. 2000 Pigs

*Mark 4:35-5:20; Matthew 8:23-33
& Luke 8:22-39 #194*

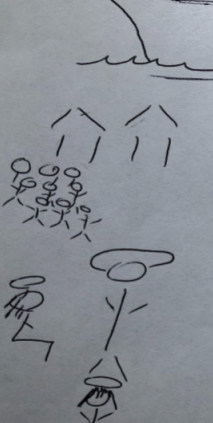
Their boat came to shore near a place where a wild man lived in the tombs. No one was able to control him. Many times they tried to put chains on him, but he easily snapped them off. He roamed the hills naked, and lived in tombs. He cried and yelled, and cut himself with stones.

When he saw Jesus and his disciples get out of their boat, he ran and knelt down before him. He shouted, "I know who you are. You're Jesus, the Son of the Most High God! Leave me alone. Don't torture me."

Jesus said, "What's your name"

"We're called Legion because we're many. Please, don't send us into the abyss. Look, there are pigs over on that hill. Send us there."

Jesus looked at the pigs, and said, "Yes, you may go there."



With that, the demons left the man and entered the pigs. All 2,000 of them went wild and rushed down the hill and off the steep bank. They plunged into the sea and were drowned.

The men who were tending the pigs ran into the town and told the people what happened. A crowd came out to see for themselves. When they got to Jesus, they saw the man who had been demon possessed. He was sitting quietly, fully clothed, and listening to Jesus.

Again the men told what had happened. Everyone was afraid, so they asked Jesus to leave.

As he got into the boat, the man who was healed said, "Please, may I go with you?" Jesus turned to him and said, "Go back to your people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you. Tell them about God's mercy on your life."

So Jesus and his disciples left the shore and returned to the Jewish side of the lake. The man went to his hometown and started telling everyone what Jesus had done for him. The people who heard this were amazed.

Turn slideshow off!

9:45-10:00am BREAK

10:00am – gather again on Zoom

Sketch/draw something for each section of your story. (15 minutes)

Instructions for Breakout #1

Show your drawings to each other and explain how they fit the story. (8minutes) 10:25am

Read your story one time (4 minutes) 10:30

Instructions for Breakout #2

BREAK OUT #2 – two new partners

Tell your stories to each other – only looking at your drawings. (4 minutes each)

Stumble through the story 10:40am

Read their story one more time. (3 minutes) 10:45

10:50pm- 11:00pm BREAK

Instructions for Breakout #3

BREAK OUT #3 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without looking at your story or your drawings.

After each telling, the partner says “My favorite part of your story was...” (6 minutes each) 11:15

Quickly skim your story one more time. (2 minutes)

Instructions for next Breakout #4

BREAK OUT #4 – two new partners

Tell your story to each other without looking at your story or your drawings.

After each telling, discuss “My favorite part of your story was...” “What did you personally learn from this story?” (5 minutes each) 11:30

Sharing Our Stories

SLIDE 12 Effective Memorization & The 5 requirements to Excel at Biblical Storytelling²³²

²³² Walsh, *BibleTelling*, 29.



5 Requirements to Excel at Biblical Storytelling

- ★ Develop your own method
- ★ Experience the power of simply told
- ★ Gain a tolerance for poor telling
- ★ Recruit 5 designated listeners
- ★ Commit to a ministry that requires telling the stories

14 233

Story Introductions!!



What's Your Story?

- ★ What's the story behind your name?
- ★ Why did you take this workshop?
- ★ What are some of your favorite Bible Stories & why?
- ★ How do you play?

15 234

Make a list of people who might volunteer (on a weekly basis) to listen to the stories you are learning. (3 minutes)

Instructions for Breakout #4

BREAK OUT #4 – 2 students in each group

Each of you tell who is on your list of five potential listeners. (3 minutes)

GROUP DISCUSSION: tell of a time when folks experienced the power of a Bible story simply told.

²³³ Catalina, “Juliet PowerPoint Template.”

²³⁴ Catalina, “Juliet PowerPoint Template.”

Sacred Storytelling Lab Day Long In Person

Welcome and Itinerary



Sacred Storytelling Lab

at Pilgrim Lodge

Join Us For This Exciting Maine School of Ministry Special Summer Offering! Adults

~ Open to All, 18 years old and above

COVID Vaccination or negative COVID test documentation required.

Dates, Costs & Directions

Mondays July 12 &/or July 19 from 11am-6pm *(or longer if you want to stay for the sunset)*

\$65 (\$15 will go towards the ministry of Pilgrim Lodge and \$50 will go towards MESOM ministries) [Directions to Pilgrim Lodge](#)

About The Art of Sacred Storytelling

Our Sacred Stories have the power to inspire, engage and transform. Using prayer, imagination and practice in a supportive community we will learn the art of Sacred Storytelling. It is easier than you think!

Why Storytelling?

The Gospel message is released in new and fresh ways when followers of Jesus practice and develop the ancient art of oral storytelling. Jesus spoke in parables, teaching us through

story. Storytelling is a powerful way in which we can share and connect to the reality of God's ever present and active love in our lives.

Join Storyteller & Pastor AbbyLynn

Return with confidence ready to share your storytelling skills with your family, friends, in the Sunday school classroom, youth group event or Sunday morning worship.

[Learn More About Your Instructor](#)

Special Invitation

You are invited to stay on after the seminar to watch the sunset!

Minimum Participants

You can sign up as an individual. There is a minimum of 4 people to conduct this Lab. If we don't reach the minimum number of people and you have already signed up, you will be refunded.

What to Bring

Food ~ Bring Your Own, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks and Drinks

Clothing ~ Bring sunscreen, bug repellent and sun protective clothing, clothes for hikes through wooded paths

Story ~ Select a story to bring with you to learn. If you need a selection of stories to choose from please email Abby. abby@broadreachmnministries.com

Itinerary 11:00am

Gathering & Welcome

BYO Lunch

11:00am to 2:30pm

Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline

Learning a Story by Heart

2:30pm to 4:00pm

Visiting, quiet contemplation, enjoying God's creation, hiking through wooded trails, enjoy the beautiful lakeshore

4:00pm to 6:00pm

Telling Your Story by Heart

Healing Through Sacred Storytelling

BYO Dinner

7:00pm to 9:30pm

Enjoy the Sunset over Cobbosseecontee (Optional)

Lecture Notes

11am Greetings & Introductions – using your storytelling tool kit (or storytelling satchel)

(PL sticker) Do you have a sacred storytelling place?

(Candle) Why did you take this class? What are you hoping to get from this day?

(Chocolate) What story did you select and why? (learning is sweet with Honey story)

(Red Pen) You are being invited to be creative with The Story today. What are some of the creative ways you unwind? How do you creatively play?

My goal in learning as an instructor. Select an interviewer to ask the questions at the end of the day: What went well? What could have been done better? What matters?

Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline

What is a spiritual discipline? Why is storytelling a spiritual discipline?

Following the discipline of your natural story learning rhythm

Story of indwelling renewal and mission gifting

Huldah of 2 Kings 22

Beginning the process early

The story becomes a part of my day, my night, my sleeping and non-sleeping

The story becomes my focus when worries start to creep in

The rules to PLAY at storytelling. Our Lab is a lab – a place where you get to experiment! See what you can dare to try. Story of Harrison learning to walk.

PLAY and our playing together

Practice, practice, practice...Understand and articulate the importance of encouraging and nurturing Storytelling art as a spiritual practice that incorporates both a devotional deepening aspect and an evangelism reaching dynamic.

Love your own & other's uniqueness... Express their understanding of their own unique style and strengths as a Biblical Storyteller.

Abundant Affirmation...Deepen their understanding of developing a supportive Storytelling network while being an encourager of others in each person's Storytelling endeavors.

YOLO (You Only Live Once) embrace the fear factor of this work. Let the butterflies, fly in formation so your excited feelings are there to enhance your storytelling.

12:00pm BYO Lunch

Lunch discussion seeking collective wisdom with the stories each has selected. Each person read their story to the group and each person share what image, thought or idea popped out for them.

Learning a Story by Heart

2 processes – draw & tell labyrinth or walk and tell labyrinth (depending on weather)

20 min - drawing on paper labyrinth or walking the labyrinth to place your story

read through your story twice and then divide it up into sections

either draw pictures or place your story within the objects of the labyrinth path

20 min - Breakout into groups of 2 and explain your drawings/walking story to your partner using your printed story

5 min - Read through/practice your story with your images

20 min - Breakout into groups of 2 and tell the story to your partner using your drawings without reading from the printed story

5 min - Read through/practice your story again with your printed story

20 - Breakout into groups of 2 and tell the story to your partner not looking at your story or your images

2-4pm Break Visiting, quiet contemplation, enjoying God's creation, hike through wooded trails, enjoy the beautiful lakeshore.

Telling Your Story by Heart

Sharing our stories with each other in a larger group – with Abby recording

Abundant Affirmation Cheering Squad

Body language

Healing Through Sacred Storytelling

Truth being dressed by parable story

The Gates of the Forrest Story – Ellie Wiesel

Stories are doors, scars are doors...thresholds to transformation...forgetting what you meant to get when you walk into a new room...stories are potent agents of change

Angus Fletcher – Fear to Courage stories

Sorrow to service stories

Annette Simmons – weaponized storytelling, sanitized storytelling is boring, the Bible is a messy, messy book of fabulous stories...

5:45 -6pm End of Retreat Check in and BYO Dinner

7-9pm Enjoy the Sunset over Cobbosseecontee (Optional)

Sacred Storytelling Labs for Retreat

Welcome and Itinerary

Everyone is a storyteller. Each person is a one-of-a-kind creation with distinctly original gifts, therefore, each story that a person tells will be uniquely expressed. There is no one perfect storytelling formula or role model to follow. The workshops will survey a number of different techniques for learning and telling sacred stories from the Bible and other faith traditions. Bring a favorite sacred story to practice or select from the ones available at the workshop. Come to explore storytelling as a spiritual discipline and healing art. The experiential workshops offered this week will include engaging storied lecture as well as interactive small group discovery. Participants will practice the art of oral storytelling and also gain insight into identifying, diagnosing and prescribing the healing stories necessary to help combat the harmful effects of the many weaponized storytelling practices of our current culture.

Monday – Storytelling as spiritual discipline

Tuesday – Practicing the art of sacred storytelling through doodling

Wednesday – Healing through sacred storytelling

Thursday – Practicing the art of sacred storytelling through prayer walking & hand dancing

Friday – Star Island Storytelling Café

At the Star Island Storytelling Café all will be invited to share their sacred story they've learned to tell during the week. Participation at the weekly workshops is NOT necessary in order to share a story at the café.

Bio: Rev. AbbyLynn Haskell, M.Div.

AbbyLynn has been delighting in the joy and ministry of sacred storytelling since graduating from Bangor Theological Seminary in 1999. She has served churches in New Hampshire and Maine in the roles of associate pastor, director of program development and pastor and firmly believes storytelling to be a vibrant way of shaping community, worship and pastoral care. AbbyLynn is working on her Doctorate of Ministry in Semiotics, Church and

Culture at Portland Seminary of George Fox University. Her project focus is creating experiential, participatory, image rich and relationally connected Biblical storytelling curriculum. She offers both online and in person [Biblical Storytelling classes](#) through the Maine School of Ministry. She also currently serves as part-time co-pastor at the Acton Congregational Church UCC in Maine. Since beginning work on her doctorate she has been diligent in learning the secrets to developing the craft of oral storytelling for the virtual world. The results of which can be seen on her YouTube channel, [Sacred Storytelling Lab](#). She is thrilled to pass along these secrets to others wanting to learn more about the art of oral storytelling. AbbyLynn also loves sailing, is a USCG Captain and runs [Broad Reach Ministries](#), a coastal sailing retreat business with her husband that operates out of Saco Bay.

Lecture Notes

Sacred Storytelling as a Spiritual Discipline

- Monday
- Hello! Rev. AbbyLynn Haskell (she/her)
 - Sacred Storytelling – a sacred story isn’t so much the nature of the story it is that it is told from a sacred place within the teller (Jack Shea)
 - Biblical stories, myths, fables, personal stories, you name it...
 - Bi-vocational Part-time co-pastor at Acton ME UCC
 - Broad Reach Ministries
 - Stories of Saco Bay & Wood Island Lighthouse
 - Clergy & Church designing their own sailing and spiritual discernment on the water events
 - Story of Dover Youth Group & Pilgrim Lodge youth ministry
 - D.Min Project Portfolio is designing experiential, imaged based participatory and community storytelling classes working with MESOM
 - Fresh inspiration for storytelling
 - Storytelling secrets & tools to take “home” and try
 - Desire for more!
- Sacred Storytelling on Sacred Ground

- Moses story
 - Where we are headed in today's workshop
 - An introduction to the Spiritual discipline of sacred storytelling
 - An overview of Learning a story by heart
- Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline
- Spiritual Deep Dive
- Mission Outreach
- Remember to listen
- Table chat

§ What are some of your favorite spiritual disciplines? What do you delight in doing that brings you into a place of centeredness or perhaps a closer relationship with God and others?

- tell Elie Wiesel's "The Gates of the Forest" Story
- God made people...because God loves stories
- **Learning a Story by Heart**
 - Not memorization
 - Getting comfortable with images
 - We do not think in words...we think in images
 - Learning a story is a game
- Coming to trust
- Becoming intimate with a story
- PLAY
- Sacred Storytelling Lab
- Doodling
- Toys and the Memory Palace <https://youtu.be/p9IOqd1LpkA>
- Prayer Walking
- Hand Dancing
- Coffee Chat
- Table chat - Sacred Storytelling Lab - which learning style do you think you'd enjoy the most – doodling(visual), toys & the memory palace(visual), prayer walking & hand dancing(kinesthetic), coffee chat (auditory)
- Spirit Gusts
- Thank you!!

Practicing the Art of Sacred Storytelling Through Doodling

- Tuesday – Remember this is PLAY
 - Radical Affirmative Learning
 - Story of watching Harrison learn to walk

- Storytelling is NOT about memorizing
 - Our first thoughts are not WORDS, our first thoughts are in images
 - Words are of the last result of expressing a thought
 - My own auditory processing learning disability
 - Visual
 - Kinesthetic
 - Gross Motor - Big Muscle Movement
 - Memory Palace
 - Learning a story is all about moving the story from the analytical brain to the creative brain
- Doodle the story from John Walsh
 - Share a bit of John Walsh's story
- Fun Fact Wheel - 525 Bible Stories
- 2000 Pigs
- Doodling is as elaborate as you want to make it
 - 5 min divide the story
 - 20 minutes doodle your pictures
 - 6 minutes (3 minutes each) tell your story to your partner using the printed word and explaining your doodles
- Big Concept
 - 5 minutes Read your story over again taking time to look at your pictures
 - 6 minutes tell your story to your partner with just the pictures without looking at the words
- 5 Requirements to excel at Biblical Storytelling
 - 5 minutes read your story over again
 - 6 minutes tell your story to your partner without looking at the words or the doodles
- “What’s Your Story?” Listening to each other’s stories

Healing Through Sacred Storytelling

- Wednesday – Healing Through Sacred Storytelling
 - Understanding our work as storytellers that tend a culture
 - Telling Difficult Stories
- Anna Karenina
 - Catharsis as a communal experience - storytelling as a tool combining creative practices and human relation methods to recover & explore aesthetic codes of trauma, community & identity.
 - Christina Spens’ story of her father

- The *Truth Tellers* project seeks to understand the ‘unspeakable’ aspects of descriptions, narratives and other representations, in both text and images. What is the meaning behind widely reproduced images of terrorists and victims? How do visual memorials and rituals function in political and social senses? What messages are communicated subliminally and subtly, beyond the headlines?
***Truth Tellers* seeks to recover and explore representations of political and politicised trauma, delving into their wider meanings, functions and associations in a forensic manner.**

· WHAT IS THE MEANING BEHIND WIDELY REPRODUCED IMAGES OF TERRORISTS AND VICTIMS? WHAT MESSAGES ARE COMMUNICATED SUBLIMINALLY AND SUBTLY, BEYOND THE HEADLINES?

- Annette Simmons
 - Stories build a person as well as a culture
- Archetypal Patterns
- Brand Archetypes
- Nike & Colin Kaepernick story.
- Church Angel Stories
- Unmasking the Powers
- Discuss Church Angel Stories – there will always be a mix HOWEVER healthy church sport a 4:1 ration of hope & compassion stories over fear & blame
 - Discuss in your groups of 3 discuss the church angel stories in terms of which stories predominate the culture.
- Culture Keeper
- Weaponized Storytelling
- Hope & Compassion Storytelling
- Story’s unique ability to deal with complexity
- The spiritual practice of storytelling involves discerning and finding the good stories that allow people to experience the paradox, see more than one side and encourages them to creatively engage with their own responses to unresolvable conflicts. Share story of my encountering the Acton Angel ...you know how to love and for me this is enough...& Share story of our coming to let AA back in the building.
- Annette’s video – start video 13:47

Practicing the Art of Sacred Storytelling Through Hand Dancing and Prayer

Walking

- Thursday – Stories in print need to be heard out loud
- Verbs are the golden key to storytelling - Gombach
 - Underlining the verbs in the story
 - Learning the story, telling the story from the verbs – explore the power of movement in the verbs
- Aim for 75% accuracy - Boomershine goal Biblical stories can be told in one's own words or retold word for word. Because biblical stories are so well known Boomershine recommends telling them word for word and aiming for 75% accuracy in the retelling. After this class we won't be so worried about it. Share Karate Kid illustration
- Learning a story, rehearsing it, reliving it and repeating it best happens in the down time moments in life. Down times are the times just before bed or just after waking, at the gym on the elliptical or waiting for an appointment. Instead of checking in with your phone, check in with your story. This helps so much with the spiritual discipline aspect of letting the story live with you. Effective memorization happens in taking the story in small chunks and adding to it over a period of days.
- Internalizing a story involves the hand, head & heart
- “AS IF” Magic
- Using your sanctified imagination to fill in the details of a story
- MULL over the Story (Boomershine)
- The only way to truly keep a story is to give it away. Sharing the story you've learned with one or more listeners is important.
- Sacred storytelling Lab three exercises available to you: prayer walking actual or by labyrinth, hand dancing & coffee chat
- Prayer walking - Take your story on a prayer walk Use an audio recording or printed paper. Use your camera to place the story in picture form in your walk
- Hand Dancing - Use hand motions consciously and unconsciously to learn and tell your story. You know more than you think you know. <https://www.interplay.com/>
- Body Language – You MUST get comfortable in your own skin enough and use your body in telling a story. Your storytelling style is more about what you release and not so much about something you rehearse. HOWEVER I needed to take a belly dancing class to become comfortable in communicating through my body and Gombach recommends

meditation...one of the ways you can allow your natural body language to emerge is in learning the story in a relaxed state

- Coffee Chat Pass

Healing Through Sacred Storytelling

Course Description

Stories - both storytelling and story listening - have the power to be transformative and healing experiences. Join Sacred Storyteller Rev. AbbyLynn Haskell to explore storytelling as a spiritual discipline and healing art. Drawing on neuroscience and sociology, this online workshop will examine the power of story on the individual as well as the culture as a whole.

Using folk tales, myths, and biblical stories, participants will learn the principles of healing storytelling and how to apply them to their own spiritual tradition or setting. The workshop will also focus on identifying, diagnosing and prescribing the healing stories necessary to help combat the harmful effects of the many weaponized storytelling practices of our current culture. The day will include engaging storied lecture, interactive small group discovery, and plenty of screen breaks throughout the day.

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Lecture Notes

Storytelling As Spiritual Practice

Once upon a time there was a Queen whose beloved was very sick....etc. ²³⁵

1. Introduce myself – ordained pastor in the United Church of Christ and have served in the pastoral ministry setting since 1999.

I am passionate about Storytelling. I am completing my doctorate of ministry in semiotics, church and culture through Portland Seminary of George Fox University and my project focus has been on creating curriculums for teaching about the ministry art of storytelling. Storytelling is of immense value in ministry. I use storytelling for enriching preaching, liturgy, teaching, worship, pastoral care and mission in my pastoral setting in Acton Maine. I lead storytelling retreats, workshops and coaching sessions through my business Broad Reach Ministries.

2. What is Sacred Storytelling? The below are the intermingled and braided lesson themes for our time together
 - a. Storytelling as Spiritual Practice
 - b. Story Gathering & the ministry of listening
 - c. Story Discernment & insight into the powerful influence of stories within our person & culture
 - d. Story Sharing & releasing it from the sacred place within

3. Storytelling as Spiritual Practice

The Overflowing Teacup story - East Asian Buddhist Zen Koan
 a Koan is a story designed to provoke “great doubt” and test a student’s progress in the Zen practice - university professor learning from a Zen master -

²³⁵ Adaptation of “Meat of the Tongue” retold by Elisa Davy Pearmain, ed., *Doorways to the Soul: 52 Wisdom Tales from Around the World* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2007), xi.

Zen master overfilled the teacup - the professor complained and the Zen master replied “Like the cup, you are too full of your own opinions and speculations. How am I to teach you unless you first empty your cup?”

<https://youtu.be/LcQCLuAMH2w>²³⁶

Kenosis & Pleurosis

Being able to reach out to others through storytelling incorporates using spiritual tools that assist storytellers in evaluating their own heart as well as the heart of their community of listeners. These heart evaluation tools consist of being fully present and understanding the rhythms of kenosis and pleurosis.²³⁷ Kenosis is about emptying oneself for the sake of the story, the Holy Spirit and the listening community. Pleurosis, the opposite of kenosis, is about filling up with the story, the Holy Spirit and the hearts of the community in the serving of God’s will.

Jesus was a master storyteller who honored this emptying and filling dynamic.²³⁸ “With many stories like these, he presented his message to them, fitting the stories to their experience and maturity. He was never without a story when he spoke. When he was alone with his disciples, he went over everything, sorting out the tangles, untying the knots.” (Mark 4:33-34 MSG). Serving Jesus as storytelling disciples means living from this rhythm in ministry too.

Understanding the spiritual rhythms of kenosis and pleurosis enables the storyteller to become more responsively aware of the hearts of those in the listening community. If the storyteller is too focused on himself or on the story he will miss the nonverbal and verbal cues the listeners will communicate prior to, during and after a storytelling event. Being fully present is the spiritual practice of emptying oneself of all external and internal distractions of the future and past and filling oneself with the reality of the present perceived by the senses. Being fully present is a spiritual practice that even has the added benefit of slowing down our brain’s perception of time.²³⁹ Through this practice the teller is aided in reading her own heart as well as the hearts of those listening for the purpose of prayerfully and creatively refining and fitting the story so as to offer it up to the service of God’s Word.

²³⁶ SpritualLiteracy, “Spiritual Literacy - Openness: The Overflowing Teacup,” Youtube video, 0:47, March 10, 2009, <https://youtu.be/LcQCLuAMH2w>.

²³⁷ Leonard Sweet, January 27, 2020. DMin 719 class notes taken by author, Biddeford, ME.

²³⁸ Philippians 2:7.

²³⁹ Diana Raab, “How to Slow Down Time,” *Psychology Today*, May 16, 2017, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-empowerment-diary/201705/how-slow-down-time>.

Deepening & Reaching

Sacred Originates in the Particular which is ultimately Universal

- i. Jack Shae – a story is sacred because of where it lives as sacred within the storyteller²⁴⁰
 - ii. The sacred paradox of the more personal a story is the more universal it becomes,
 1. the cost of the sacred is the work of being vulnerably human
4. **Spiritual Practice²⁴¹ Zoom Pool** – pick a favorite spiritual practice (multiple choice). If you select “Other” please share in the comments. If nothing catches your interest please look at this site listed in the comments. This site lists 260
<https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/features/view/27713/spiritual-practice-toolkit>
 5 minutes
- Meditation/Mindfulness
 - Activism/Social Justice
 - Dreams/Archetypes Study
 - Quilting/Carpentry
 - Nature/Labyrinth Walking
 - Vigils/Attending the dying
 - Music playing/Singing
 - Studying Sacred Texts/Lectio Divina
 - Other

FOR BREAKOUT ROOM STORY SHARING 1

Groups of 2

Share the Story of your spiritual practice

Share a spiritual practice you’ve done or want to do with your partner

What were the benefits to yourself or others?

BREAK

Return 10:30am

²⁴⁰ Gombach, *Sacred Storytelling*.

²⁴¹ Frederic Brussat and Mary Ann Brussat, “Spiritual Practice Toolkit,” Spiritualityandpractice.com, accessed January 9, 2022, <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/features/view/27713/spiritual-practice-toolkit>

Story Gathering

Sacred Story Gathering

Letting curiosity lead you

- i. Rex Garrett story
- ii. Hebrew culture story – ask questions! Jesus in the temple at age 12, Jewish children are taught from the belief to challenge and ask questions of their sacred story, why did the dove bring back an olive branch, why did the raven not return, the sacred story can handle any question you through at it
- iii. Ann Johnston – when you ask a question it leaves a space for an answer Play
- iv. Jesus said nope the God’s kin-dom won’t be open to the wise and knowledgeable. You can only enter God’s kin-dom as a little child²⁴²
- v. Delighting and discovering another – *“One of the most essential ways of saying, “I Love You,” is by careful listening – listening with “the ear of the heart.” – Mr. Fred Rodgers.* <https://youtu.be/USWXF1XW2zo>²⁴³

Story Gathering Caution

- b. Narrative tap out – from Brene Brown The Practice of Story Stewardship
 - i. expressing disinterest in someone’s story (this involves the complete spectrum from mild to outright shut down)
 - ii. this includes not having enough self-confidence to tell your own story
- c. Narrative take over
 - i. Hijacking someone’s story with telling your own before listening to theirs²⁴⁴

Story Gathering Care

- d. Narrative Discovery
 - i. “I heard you say...”
 - ii. “What did you mean when you said...”
- e. Narrative Lift
 - i. “It was so interesting when you shared...”
 - ii. Non-verbal use of arms, nodding, smiles

²⁴² Matthew 11:16-17, 25-30.

²⁴³ Movieclips, “Won’t You Be My Neighbor? (2018) - Mister Rogers & Jeff Erlanger Scene (8/10) | Movieclips,” YouTube video, 3:23, January 10, 2019, <https://youtu.be/USWXF1XW2zo>.

²⁴⁴ Brené Brown, “The Practice of Story Stewardship,” accessed January 9, 2022. <https://brenebrown.com/articles/2021/12/05/the-practice-of-story-stewardship/>.

5. What's Your Story

- a. What's the story behind your name?
- b. Why did you take this class?
- c. What are your goals for this class?
- d. What are some of your favorite stories? (movies, novels, news, commercials, faith, myth or personal)
- e. How do you play?

FOR BREAKOUT ROOM STORY SHARING 2

Groups of 2

Person A - 3 minutes of "What's Your Story?" storytelling

Person B - 3 minutes of curiosity questions, listening & story gathering

SWITCH

Person B - 3 min "What's Your Story?" storytelling

Person A - 3 min curiosity questions, listening & story gathering

Weddings & Funerals

- f. Listening for the golden key
 - i. Story gathering with a sense of discovery and narrative lift is helpful if you are ever called upon to do a wedding or a funeral. Sharing personal stories, framing and re-framing personal stories for these sacred events is a powerful and I believe essential form of sacred storytelling for healing and blessing. Go in with an ear, a heart for finding the golden key of the couple or the individual. Go in with questions looking for this key.
 - ii. **Golden key questions: Tell me about a special memory of your beloved spending quality time with you. Are there unique ways your beloved has shown their love by doing something for you or helping you with a project or daily chores? Tell me about how you first met.**

Narrative Therapy

– Lucy Brady thank you for pointing out to me the power of story in 12 step programs

- g. Narrative Therapy is at the heart of 12 Step Programs²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ Lauren S. Erdmann, Gerard Lawson, and Penny L. Burge, "The Intersection of Narrative Therapy and AA Through the Eyes of Older Women," *The International Journal of Reminiscence and Life Review* 4, no.1 (2017): 14-23. <https://journals.radford.edu/index.php/IJRLR/article/download/184/114>.

- i. Sharing vulnerabilities in a supportive setting assists folks in deconstructing harmful personal life narratives to reconstruct new personal life narratives with life meaning and purpose
- ii. Storytelling is of utmost importance in being able to share about one's journey from addiction to sobriety
 - 1. Deconstructing problematic dominant stories. Naming the problem. Tracing the history of the problem. Exploring the effects of the problem. Situating the problem in context. Discovering unique outcomes.
 - 2. Re-authoring problematic dominant stories. Help clients to continue to bring forward unique outcomes and previously unprivileged aspects of their experiences and identities. Trace history and meaning of unique outcomes and name alternative story. Thicken alternative story.
 - 3. Remembering conversations. Therapeutic documentation and letters. Rituals, celebrations, and ceremonies. Engage with support networks and communities of care.²⁴⁶

Encountering Conflict

- h. Challenges in life are not fun. Conflict changes a person. Listen for resistance parts of our story that act as change agents. Pain and conflict in life can be given meaning when it has a narrative context. Pausing to consider a redemptive perspective to a challenge helps remove the sting.²⁴⁷
 - i. If the onset of Alzheimers for the deceased is a conflict story for the family and the departed it may be important to dig a bit deeper to see if there are redemptive perspectives that unveil God's Grace amidst that trial.
 - ii. The conflict story of roots coming through granite in Maine...this is a spiritual picture story of our coming through, growing, connecting through the hardness of the pandemic

²⁴⁶ J. Scott Branson and Ashley Branson, "Narrative Therapy: Deconstructing & Re-Authoring Stories Steve Madigan: Narrative Therapy," Counseling.Education, accessed January 9, 2022, <https://counseling.education/counseling/theories/narrative.html>.

²⁴⁷ Donald Miller, *Storyline 2.0: Finding Your Subplot in God's Story* (Portland, OR: Donald Miller Words, 2012).

FOR BREAKOUT ROOM STORY SHARING 3

Groups of 2

Story questions for Breakout Rooms

Share your key feelings and thoughts from experiencing this commercial

Share your story around a connection you have with a spirit animal

Share a story starting with “My healing began when...”

When we return we will dig into STORY DISCERNMENT & the science behind storytelling

Return 12:30pm

Magical Elixirs

Your Brain on Stories

Story Technology

Culture Keeping

Magical Mood Elixirs

Let's look at the biology of storytelling. We feel a story in our body. Stories release neurochemicals that influence our behavior. Stories have the power to control us. Stories can be destructive to our person as well as our community and world AND stories can also be a healthy and healing force in our person, family, community and world.

We live in a story rich world!! The better we understand how stories work in our bodies the better we can be in both diagnosing when a story is taking advantage of us or our culture AND in turn how we can prescribe healing stories for mending souls, strengthening communities and building a better world. NOW stories can also be used for the tearing apart, weakening and destruction of our world and we acknowledge those stories and their power as well but this class will focus more on healing

Story Discernment

Your Brain On Stories

Cortisol

Adrenaline

There are stories that release adrenaline and cortisol.

Some adrenaline and cortisol we truly enjoy!
 We feel more alive! Focused! Energized!
 Adrenaline & Cortisol – charge us up but not always positively

The fight, flight or freeze response over time wears out the body, can be tipped into anger, extreme stress, fear, terror and even prevent us from making clear headed decisions as we can't fully process important data.

Cortisol – Over time how does stress affect our brains?

We are hardwired to seek out the bad. There is a great book called “The Power of Bad: How the Negativity Effect Rules Us and How We Can Rule it.”²⁴⁸ We are biologically attracted to the negative and assume the negative. When we focus our attention on the bad we are just doing what our ancestors who survived did. Those who saw the danger first were quicker to fight, flee or freeze.

When we focus upon a story of another who has been hurt or who is in danger we experience the story biologically (although to a lesser degree) as if it is happening to us.

Perhaps one of the shortest stories ever told
 Please be prepared. I'm about to release micro doses of cortisol & oxytocin into your bloodstream.

This short story by Ernest Hemingway: “Baby shoes for sale. Never worn.”
 Cortisol stress/pain/sadness & oxytocin - bonding

Oxytocin

Sharing a story with self-disclosure releases oxytocin and creates empathy

Dopamine

If you empathize with the main character and the character conquers the monster, climbs the mountains, or victoriously beats the enemy your body releases

²⁴⁸ John Tierney and Roy Baumeister, *The Power of Bad: How the Negativity Effect Rules Us and How We Can Rule It* (New York: Penguin Press, 2019).

dopamine. The YES accomplishment hormone, cliff hangers, suspense all build dopamine. James Patterson books

Endorphins

pain killer hormone

Sharing stories that make us laugh

Nasrudin story²⁴⁹

A philosopher, having made an appointment to dispute with Nasrudin, called at the appointed hour and found him away from home. Nasrudin had forgotten their plan and was in the teahouse playing table games and telling stories with his friends.

After waiting for some time the philosopher grew angry. Pick up a piece of chalk, he wrote “Stupid Oaf” on Nasrudin’s door and left in a huff.

As soon as he got home and saw this, Nasrudin rushed to the philosopher’s house.

“I had completely forgotten our appointment,” he said,, “I apologize for not having been home. Of course, I remembered the appointment as soon as I saw that you had left your name on my door.:

Story from the Middle East Nasrudin was a real person, Turkey 1208

Teacher/judge Persian Sufi folk character

Said to have died 1284 – his grave is a locked gate, no walls on either side

People are still making up stories about Nasrudin some true some not, but they are all a bit delicious in that once you tell one you want to tell another.

FROM 1:00-1:20PM

Richard Merrill of Brooksville Maine <http://www.nasruddin.org/index.html>

BREAK

Return 1:30pm

²⁴⁹ Adaptation of “Leave Your Name on the Door,” Pearmain, ed., *Doorways to the Soul*, 10.

Story Technology

The Hero's Journey

I'm going to review The Hero's Journey and as I review it I want you to make some notes for yourself about where you are on YOUR Hero's Journey. We can be on multiple journeys with family, work or education for this exercise please pick one to keep it simple. Keep your notes for a later Breakout Room Story share.

The Hero's Journey – Joseph Campbell²⁵⁰

1. Living in ordinary world, but then receives a calls to adventure and a higher purpose.
2. reluctant to go on the adventure.
3. encounter with someone wise who encourages the first step.
4. faces some kind of test.
5. encounters helpers.
6. has to undergo a harrowing ordeal.
7. is successful and brings back some kind of treasure.
8. is transformed and brings the treasure to the rest of the world.

Zoom Poll

Where are you on the Journey?

Multiple Choice:

- Ordinary World
- Receiving a call but reluctant
- Meeting with a mentor
- Facing a test
- Encountering helpers
- In the harrowing ordeal
- Discovering the treasure
- Transformed and back to the ordinary world but different

Chaplain's work takes on a mentoring role: Listening for the Hero's Journey in other's stories

²⁵⁰ Susan Weinschenk, "Great Stories Release Brain Chemicals," Psychology Today, May 13, 2016, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/brain-wise/201605/great-stories-release-brain-chemicals?eml>.

FOR BREAKOUT ROOM STORY SHARING 4

Groups of 2

Discuss: Where are you on your Hero's journey?

7 Story Archetypes – Joseph Campbell

Overcoming a monster

Rags to riches

The quest

Voyage and return

Comedy

Tragedy

Rebirth

These common plots resonate with people. When a story follows one of these plots, people can easily understand the story and are more likely to become involved.

KAHOOT! 10 volunteers with a smartphone needed to play a game

<https://create.kahoot.it/details/962a4541-9b15-4dea-883d-9933d5f6bce1>

The Dramatic Arc – Gustav Freytag²⁵¹

1. Exposition—The exposition is the introduction. It sets the time and place, the protagonist or hero, the antagonist or villain, other characters, and the basic conflict of the story.
2. Rising action—The rising action is where the conflict that was introduced during the exposition starts to grow. Tension increases. The initial conflict becomes more complicated.
3. Climax—The climax is the turning point. At the climax, the protagonist has a change of fate. If it's a comedy, then before the climax things were not going well for the

²⁵¹ Weinschenk, "Great Stories Release Brain Chemicals."

protagonist, but after the climax things look up. If it's a tragedy, then the opposite happens. Things get worse for the protagonist. The climax is the highest point in the arc.

4. Falling action—After the climax, it may seem that everything is done, but that's actually not true. This is the last point of suspense. Unexpected things may still happen, so the outcome that the audience thought was set during the climax may or not occur.
5. Denouement—People tend to call the last part of the arc the conclusion, but Freytag called it the denouement. This is a French word referring to an unraveling or untying of a knot. The protagonist either comes out on top (comedy) or the antagonist does (tragedy).
6. Paul Zak found that during the rising action people release cortisol, at the climax people release oxytocin if they feel empathy with the main character, and if there's a happy ending people release dopamine. Interest can be maintained by cycling through these story pieces and keeping the brain chemistry going²⁵²

Empathy, Neurochemistry and the Dramatic Arc <https://youtu.be/q1a7tiA1Qzo>
(approx 6min)

FOR BREAKOUT ROOM STORY SHARING 5

Groups of 2

Discuss: What were your reactions to this video?

Have you have any favorite charities?

What is the story about your connection to this charity?

BREAK

Return 2:30pm

Wonder & Awe - Angus Fletcher

Angus Fletcher – stories, literature was invented to help us cope with psychological challenges. Stories were invented to help us with life's doubt and pain. Stories use Narrative-Emotional-Technology²⁵³

does this fascinating job of breaking down the technology of story to lighten sorrow, banish loneliness, diminish anxiety, treat trauma, bring hope, heighten joy, stir love, welcome peace

²⁵² Weinschenk, "Great Stories Release Brain Chemicals."

²⁵³ Angus Fletcher, *Wonderworks: The 25 Most Powerful Inventions in the History of Literature* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2021).

The ingredients for making wonder – the plot twist, the stretch and seeing the impossible

The Stretch

P 17 the stretch...”taking the battle and making it greater...taking a bold girl and making her bolder”

Harry Potter being his own rescuer <https://youtu.be/SpziyfzfLA0?t=110> stop at 3:00

Plot Twist

- Fletcher p 16 the plot twist...we follow the story along a familiar path then there is a swerve we didn't see coming and it “overthrows all precedent delivering us to a destination unexpected.” (the stretch is at the root of the plot twist)

https://youtu.be/PBev_kFPQQk?t=664 stop at 12:24

Seeing the Impossible

Impossible fork

Angus Fletcher – seeing impossible things p145 – seeing the fork with 2 prongs, seeing the fork with 3 prongs. This fork can't exist in real 3D life and yet our eyes are telling our brain it exists. Our brain knows it doesn't exist and so the picture does this small dance of going from the possible 2 fork picture to the 3 fork picture. Our brain is looping because it is pausing, it wants to categorize and remember but it can't make sense on how to categorize it. Our brain is releasing wonder & awe chemicals to help us pause so we can take more time to collect more data.

Fletcher p147 psychedelics – experiencing the impossible as possible

When we experience the psychedelics of the impossible in stories the side effects are: alleviate depression, reduce anxiety, sharpen intelligence, increase mental energy, kindle creativity, inspire confidence and more

Children in ICU Storytelling Research

Storytelling science – NPR article & children in ICU storytelling research

Storytelling increases oxytocin and positive emotions and decreases cortisol and pain in hospitalized children²⁵⁴

Study done June 1, 2021

For children in the ICU with breathing difficulties (most common) - 25 minutes of reading stories (selected by child/preselected by storytellers to be light hearted or amusing) saw greater decreased cortisol and increased oxytocin (as well as other markers) than 25 minutes of riddle games

Collected saliva samples pre and post storytelling

*narrative transportation

*human connection

*meaning making

FOR BREAKOUT ROOM STORY SHARING 6

Groups of 2

Topics for Discussion: Who do you have for friends in books? Winnie-The-Pooh, Ramona Quimby, Lindsey Boxer, Harry Potter...share about some of your parasocial relationships you've had or have in books

BREAK

Return 3:30pm

Culture Keeping

7. Annette Simmons: Culture Keeping Storytelling

“We are defined by the stories we tell. As a storyteller, you are a reservoir of meaningful memories for your organization, community, and family group. The norms and habits of any group’s culture are passed down through the stories that are told and retold.”²⁵⁵ Stories build a person as well as a culture. The stories you repeat become your reality. Victim stories perpetuate more victim stories. Gratitude stories invite more gratitude stories. It is important for the

²⁵⁴ Guilherme Brockington, Ana Paula Gomes Moreira, Maria Stephani Buso, Sérgio Gomes da Silva, Edgar Altszyler, Ronald Fischer, and Jorge Moll, “Storytelling Increases Oxytocin and Positive Emotions and Decreases Cortisol and Pain in Hospitalized Children,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, June 2021, <https://www.pnas.org/content/118/22/e2018409118>.

²⁵⁵ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 247.

storyteller to not only take inventory of her own repeating stories but to also take notice of a community's repeating stories.

8. Identifying the archetypal pattern in the often told stories helps to clarify how the stories are acting toward the health or sickness of a body. "Humans crave stories that show how love, trust, honesty, and justice prevail in spite of selfishness or greed. We crave these stories like we crave water - and they may be just as important for our survival. The stories we tell become the maps we use to chart our lives."²⁵⁶ Storytelling as a spiritual discipline is about the work of being a "culture keeper" and editing, selecting or releasing the stories best suited for encouraging life to thrive.

9. Nike has employed corporate storytellers since the 1990s. Their decision to illustrate the "Just Do It" attitude with ads that support NFL star Colin Kaepernick's decision to call attention to police brutality and racial injustice by kneeling during the National Anthem is an excellent example of supporting a moral story to correlate meaningful goals with commercial goals. While there was a temporary dip in Nike stock price, the stock price soared to new highs within a week. Sales showed an immediate increase in 2018 post Labor Day sales (31 percent) compared with the same time period in 2017 (17 percent). Those who might discredit Nike's moral stories by pointing out that the company's record is not pristine ignore the reality that no one, no institution, and no company is morally pristine. Nike made \$6Billion off the Colin Kaepernick story.²⁵⁷

10. Storytelling as a spiritual discipline is about the work of being a "culture keeper" and editing, selecting or releasing the stories best suited for encouraging life to thrive.

²⁵⁶ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 307.

²⁵⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/TheStoryFactor/>.

Storytelling is a powerful tool for influencing others and Simmons notes that it is important to recognize it has a shadow side. Effective stories have an emotional component.

Fear & Blame Stories

There are ways storytelling can be “weaponized” to unethically control and manipulate narratives using fear and blame. Fear and blame stories are easier to activate than hope and compassion stories. Fear stories trigger our survival fight or flight instincts. “Blame stories don’t describe the problem. As a storyteller you begin to see that blame stories are the problem.”²⁵⁸ Fear and blame stories activate isolation and protective patterns that disrupt and prohibit tolerance, empathy and long-term growth patterns

- a. Many times I practice the pastoral work of the confessional, repentance and cleansing of a weaponized story for the health of my congregation.
- b. Be very, very, very aware any time you have even a thought of sharing a grievance, a blame story about another...tell the David Slater story

Hope & Compassion Stories

Hope and compassion stories are not always as fast moving or as adrenaline gripping as fear stories, but they are the stories that better nurture openness, kindness and community growth. A good story can form in people’s minds and be recalled as fact as if it actually happened to them.

²⁵⁸ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 253.

11. “Story has the unique ability to validate people on both sides of real-life paradox without suggesting that either side should be eliminated.”²⁵⁹ Simmons cautions against using a single point story even if the story has a positive intent. Technology has provided the ability for narratives to be controlled and promoted with only a single story viewpoint. With analytics providing us with repeated stories that we favor, echo chambers have evolved that silence other important viewpoints. The spiritual practice of storytelling involves discerning and finding the good stories that allow people to experience the paradox, see more than one side and encourages them to creatively engage with their own responses to unresolvable conflicts.

12. It is important to be suspicious of stories with yes/no answers to questions that are too complicated for the yes/no response. She illustrates her point with the example: “Imagine asking van Gogh if yellow is the most important color. Any “clear” answer distracts the aspiring painter from learning that yellow’s importance (like all colors) changes depending on its proximity and relationship to other colors.”²⁶⁰ The spiritual practice of storytelling involves discerning and finding the good stories that allow people to experience the paradox, see more than one side and encourages them to creatively engage with their own responses to unresolvable conflicts.

²⁵⁹ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 45.

²⁶⁰ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 275.

The spiritual practice of storytelling involves discerning and finding the good stories that allow people to experience the paradox, see more than one side and encourages them to creatively engage with their own responses to unresolvable conflicts.

Share story of my encountering the Acton Angel ...you know how to love and for me this is enough...& Share story of our coming to let AA back in the building

Telling Difficult Stories

Telling Difficult Stories – the 3-legged stool wrestling with the question of whether or not to share a particularly difficult story and the blessings and dangers involved “Stories are as personal as fingerprints and as mutable as mercury. They are also potentially as toxic as mercury if the story is not understood by the teller – or is told to the wrong audience in the wrong context or for the wrong reasons.”²⁶¹

- c. Trust – you can be counted on to get your people safely home (you will not abandon them to find their own way back – movies with “bad” endings)
- d. Permission – you’ve set the stage and have the permission of the listeners AND changed the names of the characters to protect people’s identity or have their permission to share it
- e. Ownership – you’ve internalized the story and can share it with authenticity

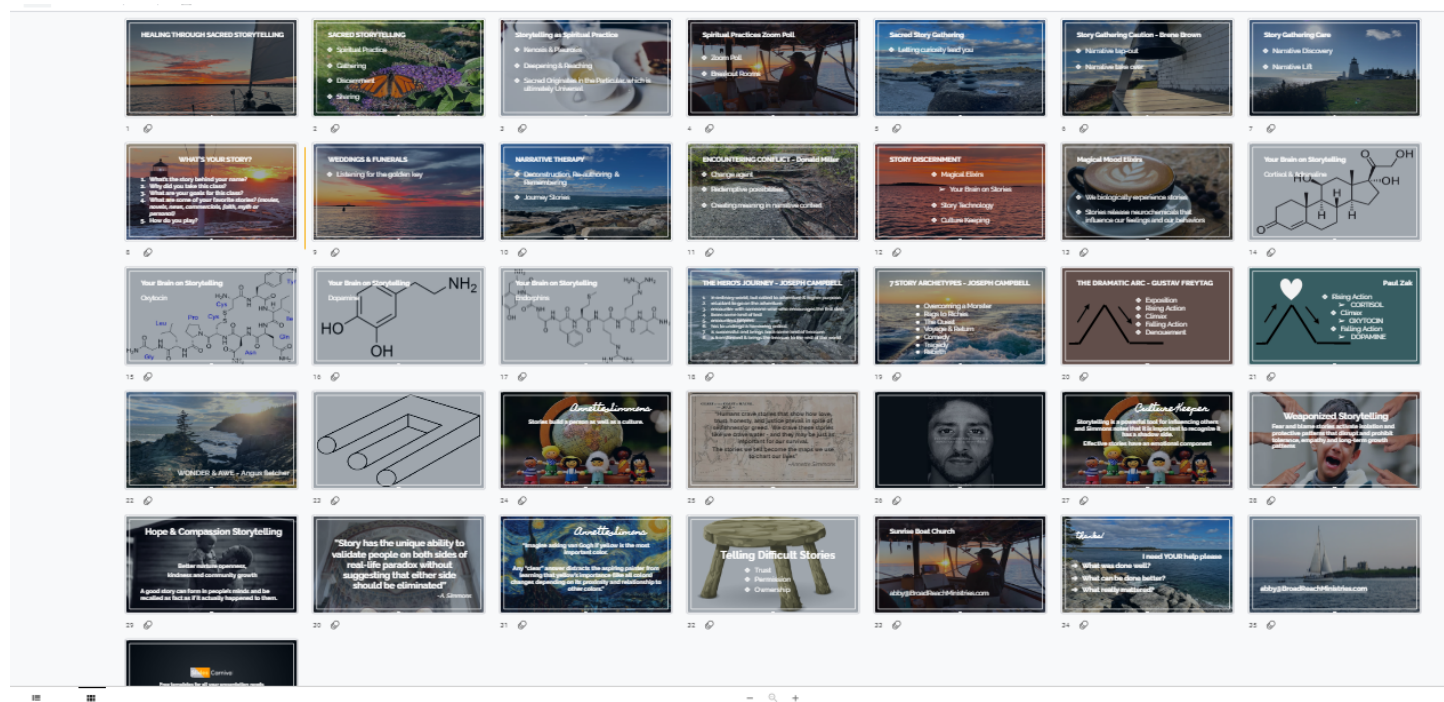
Sunrise Boat Church Story

Broad Reach Ministries, developing retreats that nurture the soul by growing and deepening in the life of faith. Since COVID spiritual direction retreat for individuals and small group (no more than 6) COVID pods,

Sunrise Boat Church on Facebook FREE and open to all

²⁶¹ Sweet, *Giving Blood*, 292-3.

Slides used with notes:²⁶²



²⁶² Catalina, "Juliet PowerPoint Template."

Assessment

I gathered feedback using Google Forms following the completion of each course or standalone class. Responses remained anonymous as neither names nor emails were required in order to submit feedback. I used the three directed feedback questions and included an option for other comments or thoughts that folks may have wanted to include. The feedback questions were: What worked well? What could have been done better? What really mattered? The feedback has been immensely helpful. All students were invited to give their feedback but not all chose to complete the feedback form. In all 76 students participated in my classes, workshops and seminars and 50 evaluations were returned.

What worked well?

When I began this process the storytellers I interviewed were unanimously insistent that oral storytelling needed to be an in person experience. The pandemic ensured that any storytelling teaching would be online. It turned out that holding online classes was an excellent way to teach the art of storytelling. When I was pulling together the materials for my first class I was fortunate to have the help of a fourth grade teacher who excelled at online teaching. Under her guidance I was able to make the use of some fantastic online teaching tools. These tools, Google slides, Google Classroom, Calendly, YouTube, Kahoot!, Zoom and more were well received and utilized in creating a solid basis of communication for each learning community.

The in-person daylong seminars and Zoom classes nurtured a fellowship connection that has been powerful in building a supportive community. I was clear from the outset about using an affirmative learning style of teaching and relating in all my classes where students were taking the risk to perform a story. People were requested to reply with strength centered comments when reacting to the storytelling efforts of their peers. This helped to create an

atmosphere that encouraged risk. Students reported feeling that they could trust their classmates in their work risking and improving their storytelling skills. Another strength of online learning was the diversity of students. We had people from states outside of Maine participating.

The half day Zoom workshop worked well and participants reported feeling successful in their learning. The half day online workshop proved to be sufficient for offering a taste of Sacred Storytelling. I plan advertising future ones as an introductory taste and feeder for my longer seminars and classes.

During the summer I was able to offer some in-person classes. The responses were supportive of the retreat center location (for in-person seminar), class size, educational material, use of technology and teaching style.

What could be improved?

I've made a number of smaller tweaks along the way based on student feedback. For the semester-long online class for the Maine School of Ministry I began teaching in the fall of 2020 with a general "Biblical Storytelling for the Virtual Worship and World." I've since narrowed the storytelling class focus to a particular church season (Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter). The focus on a particular church season has been really well received. While participants reported feeling successful in their learning for the half day online workshop there was not enough time for building a sense of community nor did it allow for all individuals to share their rehearsed stories with all the participants. For the in person daylong workshops I'm using unscented candles rather than scented ones as part of their "storytelling satchel." I've learned that sometimes it is helpful for the teacher to lead by example but when people are new to storytelling observing the teacher tell a polished rendition of a story is intimidating for some. I've learned that if I share that I present my story either well before or well after students tell their stories. As many of my students are new to ministry and preaching I've switched to easier

required reading and kept the more difficult reading as part of the syllabus and class teaching. I'm also prayerfully pondering writing a book as the classes and labs have been based on a collection of various resources along with some of my own uniquely crafted pedagogy.

What really mattered?

Students of my MESOM classes reported greater confidence in giving a sermon, increased congregational attention, and surprised joy in being able to accomplish what they thought would be truly too difficult to achieve. Students from my CHIME class reported a new awareness to the power of stories, story gathering and storytelling to be an important spiritual practice and tool in their chaplaincy work. Students also shared the sense of a supportive learning environment and community was truly meaningful to experience. The personal growth and victories of the students were of the ultimate joys and great honor for me to witness. For my MESOM students it was astounding to watch their storytelling efforts undergo beautiful transformations as each found ways to settle in and trust their natural storytelling abilities.

One MESOM student shared that they had taken the class because they had become painfully bored and burdened with having to preach every Sunday. They were hopeful that storytelling would help. They were encouraged to voice their questions and objections and the class used it as an opportunity to engage in discussion. Their first story recording was well done but they reported detesting the experience and final product because of how they looked and sounded. For their second recording assignment turned in near the end of the semester they chose to engage a new form of creative expression that was different from the first recording. Their body language was more at ease and they were more expressive with their emotions, using poetic rhythm and a tambourine in telling the story of the Dry Bones. This student told this version of the Dry Bones story in this format for their congregation and reported that the reaction was overwhelmingly positive with requests for repeated creative efforts to be pursued.

I've found it deeply meaningful that prior students have reached out to me since taking the class and it has been a wonderful gift to hear the delight and wonder and joy in their experiences of continuing to risk and grow with practicing the art of oral storytelling in their ministry settings and discipleship work in the world.

Project Launch Plan

Project Description

Customize workshops, retreats and courses using the curriculum I created for oral storytelling that includes teaching techniques for sharing personal experiences and the re-telling of myths, legends, wisdom, folklore and Biblical stories.

Audience

Students of the Maine School of Ministry (MESOM) and the Chaplaincy Institute of Maine (CHIME) will make up the majority of my future audiences. Courses will be designed based upon the guidance of the deans of each school. I will be in conversation with both deans to further refine each future course based upon the feedback forms I have received from students in prior courses. MESOM is primarily interested in my storytelling curriculum including both Biblical studies and preaching material. CHIME is primarily interested in my teaching story gathering and storytelling skills for their students becoming ordained interfaith chaplains.

My husband and I run a sailing retreat ministry business off the coast of Maine. Through our business social media and website BroadReachMinistries.com I will be offering my storytelling services to lead customized workshops and retreats for churches as well as personalized storytelling coaching services for individuals. Churches can contact me year round to design storytelling retreats based upon the needs of their community. I will be offering seasonal “Sacred Storytelling Lab” retreat opportunities throughout the summer months for preachers on how to use storytelling in worship and sermons.

Development Timeline

By spring 2022 I will be involved with discussions with both MESOM and CHIME as to the courses needed beginning fall of 2022 and spring 2023. It may be decided that previous courses can be run again. If courses are repeated I would use the information gathered from the feedback forms to improve the original material. One storytelling course prototype that received enthusiastic support from our “Discovery” sessions was “Exploring Your Spiritual Journey.” This course would be a study of call stories in the Bible and would assist students with sharing their own call story with others. Being able to share your call story is required by the ordination process of my tribe.

By early spring of 2022 I will also begin the process of defining when and where I will be offering my summer “Sacred Storytelling Lab” retreat opportunities for preachers. I will be investigating different retreat facilities in the area and setting the dates and times for these daylong classes. Some storytelling retreat offerings will also include a sailing experience through our BroadReachMinistries.com business. I will be scheduling those storytelling and sailing retreats by early March as our booking calendar for the 2022 summer sailing season goes live by mid-March. Publicity work for both land and sea retreats will begin late spring.

Our BroadReachMinistries.com website will be updated by April 2022 with my storytelling services to lead customized workshops and retreats for churches as well as personalized storytelling coaching services for individuals. Churches can contact me year round to design storytelling retreats based upon the needs of their community. Social media posts advertising these opportunities will continue throughout the summer.

Our retreat ministry business has a regular following on Facebook Live from May to September when we stream “Sunrise Boat Church” worship every Sunday at sunrise in a boat on the Atlantic Ocean. Most times we stream from Wood Island Harbor in Saco Bay. Scheduling as

well as all other business requirements (i.e. hiring staff, securing insurance, dock fees, loading booking software, boat preparation, maintenance and launch...etc.) for this ministry is always ongoing. I will be using this media platform to advertise upcoming storytelling retreats and courses too.

Development Process

I will use participant evaluations as critical performance indicators to continue to assess the success of my project. Following the method I observed that was used by Dr. Loren Kerns of George Fox University students will be asked for their feedback on the below four questions.

1. What went well?
2. What could have been done better?
3. What really mattered?
4. Any other comments?

I will continue to collect participant feedback anonymously using Google Forms. I will continue to make improvements based upon the feedback I receive. The deans of MESOM and CHIME are both interested in reviewing and evaluating the feedback I have received from the students to date.

Overall I am very happy with the “Discovery, Design and Delivery” tools I gained in developing my project. The dean of MESOM participated in the “Discovery” and “Design” process we engaged in this doctoral program. He found the process helpful and I believe we will be implementing this process for future discernment work for the school. The dean of CHIME did not use these tools as their curriculum was already set but in our future conversations I will be sharing how helpful this process is in gathering information and feedback and perhaps she too will find it helpful.

The majority of my curriculum is designed for a Zoom audience since the pandemic necessitated for the most part that my storytelling course offerings be virtually taught. When the demand for in-person learning comes back into popularity I would want to go through another “Discovery, Design and Delivery” study in my work to further develop this project. The input, feedback and data collected with these tools is invaluable.

Appendices

Appendix A: Milestone 1 The NPO Charter

Personal Research Manifesto:

I will prayerfully seek to create a research environment that encourages open sharing, while striving to find delight in new ideas and information that may either confirm or upend my conclusions.

NPO Statement:

Create a curriculum for oral storytelling that includes the techniques for sharing personal experiences and the re-telling of myths, legends, wisdom, folklore or Biblical stories.

NPO Scope:

This curriculum will include topics relevant to the work of learning the techniques and nurturing the skill and confidence of using oral storytelling. I will be researching the art of oral storytelling as it pertains to the sharing of personal experiences. I will be researching different techniques, memory aids and learning styles that will aid in the work of learning to re-tell myths, legends, wisdom, folklore or Biblical stories. Finally I will show how to combine both storytelling modalities for the edification of public speaking and preaching. Costs involve significant time and energy but low economic expense.

NPO Context:

The Maine School of Ministry (MESOM) and the Chaplaincy Institute of Maine (CHIME) have both expressed an interest in my teaching oral storytelling to their students. MESOM is associated with the United Church of Christ, a mainline protestant tradition. CHIME is an interfaith school. Both schools are small and draw from a population that has been identified as the “least religious state in the nation.” Ministry students and pastors in Maine are

generally in mid-life range with a large part of the population in or close to retirement. As part of the curriculum I will be building a YouTube channel with oral storytelling teaching resources. This YouTube channel will be constructed so as to spark larger public interest and invite people from a larger online audience to learn more through personally connecting in their oral storytelling training through workshops, retreats and class education offered in Maine.

Root Causes:

The concern was raised that pastors and teachers may not attempt the art of oral storytelling fearing it being too demanding to accomplish. Another concern raised was the amount of time needed to adequately learn the techniques and stories, thus fearing failure. Education around storytelling needs to take place to help congregations and pastors realize the value of oral storytelling as preaching, and how it enriches worship and pastoral care. Acknowledging the amount of time it takes to develop and use this craft is critical. Oral storytelling when seen as a spiritual practice and core to the preaching event can offer a structure for helping pastors with a framework for developing their time management skills as well as improving their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. With support and encouragement the fear for attempting this practice diminishes.

Discover Session Stakeholders:

Participants included pastors, teachers, and storytellers as well as dean of a ministry school and an author.

One-on-One Interviews:

Participants included a storyteller, a pastor and a dean of a ministry school.

Academic Resources:

Oral storytelling techniques, coaching and teaching will include public speaking tips (Walsh, Lipman, Sawyer and others), story-gathering practices (Baldwin, Leitman, Cabral and others), as well as the shaping and crafting of one's personal experiences of faith (Leitman, Walsh and Niemi). Biblical re-telling will include Network of Biblical Storytellers International and BibleTelling related resources (Boomershine, Walsh, White and Smith). Preaching as storytelling will include sermons as narrative, Biblical narrative preaching, the use of metaphors, narraphors and EPIC preaching styles (Lowry, Sweet and Novelli).

Appendix:

Discovery Session Description

I met for three hours with seven individuals in Maine who have a vested interest in my research. Participants were pastors, teachers and storytellers who have used oral storytelling in the church, educational and community settings. We began with the 'Need, Problem or Opportunity' (NPO) of *providing educational opportunities, resources, encouragement and support for individuals seeking to enhance their oral storytelling skills*. After discussion and voting, it was determined that the primary audience of focus to serve that would provide the greatest impact and the highest level of significance for the amount of effort invested would be pastors. Pastors are also known as teachers in my tribe so the designation of the primary audience decided upon was pastors/teachers.

Considering the topic of storytelling education next we came up with three new NPO's. The new NPO's identified were insufficient *time*, lack of easily accessible oral storytelling teaching *resources* and well-tried successful *techniques*. We then discussed symptoms or 'pain points' around the three NPO's that were identified. Then we considered the root causes for each of the NPO's.

Time emerged as the key NPO. Root causes as to the problem of insufficient time were noted as pastors being too overextended and under valuing the use of oral storytelling in their ministry as well as having the ‘bar set too high’ for perfection and believing oral storytelling was too difficult. It was also discussed that congregations needed to believe in the value of oral storytelling in order to support their pastor and the time commitment involved. We then discussed that if the *time* problem was solved pastors would feel relaxed and excited, as well as having increased confidence and creativity in regards to their oral storytelling use and education.

Discovery Statement

Considering pastors/teachers as the primary audience, **we’ve discovered** insufficient time and inadequate resources to be the major prohibitive factors regarding pastors not developing oral storytelling skills. **This is caused by** both pastors and congregations under valuing storytelling as well as pastors being overextended and not having the oral storytelling teaching resources available to them. **If solved, it would mean** pastors would be confident, creative storytellers with renewed hope and satisfaction and wonderful engaged support from their congregation.

Key Insights from Discovery Session

The fact that *time* as an NPO to furthering oral storytelling education generated the most discussion was surprising. It is common for pastors to live with the personal and community expectation to be ‘all things to all people.’ We live in a hyper connected, immediate response expected culture and the time needed for oral storytelling work is easily lowered on the pastoral triage list. There are also preconceived notions about the time it takes to learn and develop oral storytelling skills.

Education around storytelling needs to also take place so that congregations will value oral storytelling and how it enriches worship and pastoral care as well as the time it takes to

develop and use this craft. Oral storytelling when seen as a spiritual practice can offer a structure for helping pastors with a framework for developing their time management skills as well as improving their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

One-on-One Interview Discoveries

Storytelling is about relationship, it is a dialogue and not a solo monologue performance. A virtual online teaching component, such as YouTube, may be useful to engage folks in the beginning but the goal should be to seek to gather people in person to teach them about storytelling. Face-to-face settings are important so that students experience firsthand the deep listening dynamic. In the deep listening dynamic a co-creation of the storytelling event happens between the teller and the listeners.

Fear is also a component of folks being reluctant to engage in storytelling. The oral storytelling teaching goal should be less performance focused and more focused on having people engage and trust their imaginations to lead them as they gain confidence in telling the story that they have to share. The oral storytelling learning process is best facilitated when there is supportive coaching, ample space for experimentation and when there is an anticipated date of being able to share with an audience.

Synthesis

Time is an issue when it comes to why pastors are reluctant to engage in the practice of oral storytelling. Storytelling needs to be valued as a means of sharing the Gospel and as a spiritual practice both for the congregation as well as for the pastor. Fear, unrealistic understandings of the time it takes to learn storytelling and perfectionism also play a role in the reluctance to engage in storytelling.

Oral storytelling as a cultural art in the United States has undergone a shift towards focusing on telling one's personal story. The loss in only focusing on the personal story is that

the traditional and ancient stories contain allegory, symbolism and wisdom. Both personal storytelling and Biblical storytelling should be valued, utilized and shared.

Storytelling is a conversation in the oral tradition and is done live and in person. A YouTube storytelling channel would be helpful as an introduction to the art of oral storytelling. As a result of both the Discovery Session and the 1x1 Interviews I'll be seeking to weave into my project the goal of collaborating with the Maine School of Ministry in teaching the art of oral storytelling in face to face retreats, workshops and classroom educational settings.

Next Steps

As a result of the Discovery Session and personal interviews two different modalities of using oral storytelling emerged as warranting further academic research. One type of oral storytelling is the crafting and sharing of personal stories (also known as witnessing or testimonials). Another type of oral storytelling is retelling the Biblical stories. The teaching and learning processes for these two types of oral storytelling are different. For the art of retelling Biblical and wisdom stories I will be researching mnemonics, in particular the method of loci as well as different learning styles that will aid in the work of learning stories. For the art of sharing personal stories I will be researching crafting storytelling and testimony in worship. I will be researching more on teaching these storytelling forms as well and how to create curriculums for workshops, retreats and classes for each.

Appendices

Discovery Session Notes

From PN:

Friend's name is Dan Ponsetto and he is Director of Community Service at Boston College. He is a wonderful guy and I have seen some of the stories he has shared both in

Sermons and during retreats we worked on together. He's really one of my favorite people. We were chaplains together many years ago...

ponsetto@bc.edu and here is a sample of him speaking on love at BC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27LgghqCLTA>

From KD:

Storycatcher by Christina Baldwin [https://www.amazon.com/dp/B001H0PDMM/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B001H0PDMM/ref=dp_kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1)

Echo the Story <https://www.wearesparkhouse.org/store/category/286828/Echo-the-Story>

I also thought this was interesting although I'm not familiar with Mark Yaconelli
<https://htlcmpls.org/storytelling-workshop/>

Shaped by the Story <https://www.amazon.com/Shaped-Story-Helping-Students-Encounter/dp/0310273668>

What's Your Story? <https://theresaecho.com/2019/10/30/what-is-your-story/> (crazy brilliant)

From PS

"Doorways to the soul" by Elisa Davy Pearmain

"Wisdom Tales from Around the World" by Heather Fast

I believe it was Paula who shared "Godly Play" from the Episcopalian Tradition.

From RG

Follow-up discussion regarding YouTube channel...Renee's podcast & hospital visitation idea...and need for storytelling to be an in person, personal experience is transformative...

From RB

Further discussion needed regarding Maine School of Ministry involvement and training for Members in Discernment. Ron agreed to as a 1x1

<https://www.anecdote.com/2014/09/story-framework-infographic/>

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/oral.html>

<https://themoth.org/share-your-story/storytelling-tips-tricks>

1x1 Interviews

RA from Gilead Church Chicago

September 23, 2019 prior to Discovery Session

Rebecca is Disciples of Christ ordained, co-pastor a new church start with Vince UCC ordained

Theater backgrounds, play writing backgrounds...have the "look for the new" gene...stand-up comedy, went to hear the MOTH...when the Moth started in Chicago...you couldn't get tickets in advance...so to get in people would start lining up 5-6 for 8pm show...standing from 5-10pm and Moth would sell out every month...people would be greatly inconvenienced just to hear people tell their true stories... feel the weight of the church and belief ...

Live storytelling events have a liturgical feel

Food/worship /storytelling...this is a storytelling church...

Have storytelling at every event from the beginning...the core practice...what it looks like in practice...in every church service 2 storytellers, tell right from the beginning and tell on a theme...

Theme – safe words – ground words for where we touch...consent & boundaries...saying no, saying yes...the preacher each week is responsible for narrowing down the focus...construction and deconstruction...the preacher then refines the sermon to the storyteller...5 min stories...and then the preacher affirms the story...Vince said I wish we could say “the word of God for the people of God...”...response “thanks be to God” and occasionally remind people... God is still at work in the world...make the claim every story is a God story...

How do you discern? All stories are God stories...they don't do a lot of editing...Rebecca recruits stories

Monthly story circle...helps people develop the craft and help develop the theme...can come whether or not you attend church...Lizzy Brady Bortoto...met at the Moth...Lizzy told a story on her 23rd birthday...excellent facilitator...community organizer...command a group and equip them...

Rebecca gets story tellers from beyond Gilead...tend to be people who write and talk a lot...

Tries to have one person recognizably Gilead...

Church plant consulting

She teaches storytelling in other church settings...

Autodidact...working suburban congregation with visual artists...3 day intense with no advance prep...we have a public evening...experiential way (very fast) objections people raise include...I wouldn't know what to tell...I wouldn't know how to tell them...

A set of skills you can learn...Moth style first person narrative...help generate ideas for stories they might tell...practicing certain skills...

Story theology work...storytelling as spiritual practice...devotional time around a story...

How might people use storytelling in their settings...more narrative...

Rabbi said she was storytelling for development work...

Storytelling as a way of doing church...

Galileo (we are not the center of the universe)

Church – lead evangelist – Katie Hays

Next church – quirky church for spiritual refugees...

“We were spiritual refugees a story to make you believe in church again”

Earshotstories.com

Beautifully brewery and tap room...storytelling...

Make a place for other people to tell their own

Resource for clergy & churches...storytelling event every month in Portland, ME

Notes with VT October 31, 10:00am

- With what do you agree? Why? What do you disagree with? Why? What is missing?

Loves – retreat, workshop & conference

The main thing in doing a workshop with people is honor time (chronos) and time (Kiros)

Time suspends itself – alter state of time in practice and experience of storytelling

Has been teaching storytelling last 20 years. Started as a kid at UCC Silver Lake

When she was 10 saw the middle schoolers had written their own drama of Moses and
has been running THIS camp for middle schoolers for the past 30 years

Take the old stories and make them real

Storytelling as a communication art – stories and storytelling are the most ancient way of
teaching...stories are an object...storytelling is the interactive and engagement piece

It makes the bond between the storyteller and the listeners.

Designed her own major at Brown

Marjorie Zoet Bankson ...embodies the characters and uses this as a Bible Study
technique...worked with her and presented them in worship

Truly lifts these stories off the page...

That has become part of the teaching that she has been doing over 20 years.

The process she takes people through...start with stories of our own experience...unpack
what happens in the oral storytelling tradition verses written

She asks people to then enter into the bible story as fully as they enter in their own story...

Knowledge not as helpful as imagination

Network of Biblical storytellers (perhaps not as strict) Val not quite comfortable with performance

1983 college – storytelling as it works in culture...shift in personal story happening as it is yours but unfortunately by only lifting up personal story there is loss...allegory important, symbolism, WISDOM important...

The oral aspect of storytelling in preaching is not uncommon in other traditions...black church, latino church the value of the story is already honored...as a result the interaction...hospitality & relationship

This is a dialogue not a solo preaching moment.

The story meets people where they are...it is natural for Val to preach, tell sermon story
...deep listening is the key for the storyteller...

How to teach online?

The shortest amount of time is 3 hours...it takes time to get out of your head...feel again in your body what it is like to tell a story in your body without paper...

It is a conversation in the oral tradition...LIVE & in person...

Missing:

FEAR – storytelling makes us vulnerable

Training & resources: Val's training is it is not our job to spill our guts and let the trauma rule...have to bring yourself back to the Gospel...can't leave folks raw & vulnerable...

Moth model – Val does not like people getting coached to tell their stories...that puts the focus on the performative aspect of the story...if we just make space around table for folks to tell stories...we give a framework for a container (limiting time)...instead of working with a coach Val would recommend

Where is a place where you felt the presence of God? Don't speak about it yet...create the images, sounds, people in your mind...mine your own memories...share with a partner...2 minutes you might not be done...switch...

Story prompts at the table...use talking stick...facilitator's job is to gently keep track of time...working in pairs is very helpful...people have the time to remember, share and be heard...what did it feel like to receive the story...people are engaged in listening...people have to find their own voice...

Phone conversation with RB November 4, 2019 1:00pm

- With what do you agree? Why? What do you disagree with? Why? What is missing?

Yes agree with the project proposal and discover session description...time emerging as the key thing for the identified group of pastors & teacher

As well as having a perfectionistic mindset, oral storytelling just too difficult to attempt

Missing: what might opportunities in the community in Maine look like...in the approach to teaching storytelling...engage and grow...

Shape an opportunity for face-to-face teaching storytelling.

As a result of our conversations I'll be seeking to weave into my project the goal of collaborating with the Maine School of Ministry in teaching the art of oral storytelling in face to face retreats, workshops and/or classroom educational settings.

Phone conversation with SRC November 4, 2019 2:30pm

- With what do you agree? Why? What do you disagree with? Why? What is missing?

It never occurred to SRC that people would need to be taught how to tell stories. Storytelling comes so naturally to him. It might be important to state that some people need to learn how to tell stories.

SRC frequently tells other people's stories, he will make up stories

He reworks biblical stories...no one ever taught him...he uses his imagination...he will go back and tell people go back and read it for yourself

SRC...never thought that other people wouldn't do that,

Often he thinks...Why is it boring? What can't you make this more interesting?

Positive response helped him figure out it was powerful.

9 Sundays left until retirement...now looking forward to laying down the load and relaxing...first time in his life he has more time than he needs

The best way to learn storytelling is to listen to storytellers...has a number of stories in print...intrigued by idea of putting them on YouTube

L. Sweet notes - Story catching - If this is your church tell me your stories. - Native American book

Tell me your stories of Truth, beauty & love...to get your church out from the stats & into the stories...Numbers to Acts

If you wanted to learn about developing storytelling in your church in worship and preaching skills for worship what kinds of resources would be helpful for you?

What kinds of resources would be helpful for you in developing your preaching & storytelling skills? Audible Original idea

How I became a storyteller | Alex Glod | TEDxUniversityofPiraeus

<https://youtu.be/foolhkrW4Ag>

https://medium.com/@danny_forest/an-introverts-top-tips-on-how-to-be-a-great-storyteller-c6c85ee51364

<https://youtu.be/Nj-hdQMa3uA>

<https://www.eldrbarry.net/roos/eest.htm>

GOALS

CONSIDERING ^{PASTORS} TEACHERS (AUDIENCE)

WE'VE DISCOVERED ^{→ TIME} RESOURCES (NPO) TEQUINE

WHICH IS CAUSED BY ^{→ NOT VALUING STORYTELLING} GENERALISTS LACK OF ACCESS IGNORANCE (ROOT CAUSE)

IF SOLVED, IT WOULD MEAN

CONFIDENT creative storytellers w/ (OUTCOME)

renewed hope + satisfaction

+ WONDERFUL ENGAGED

FOR CONGREGATION

Appendix B: Milestone 2 NPO Topic Expertise Essay

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	249
The Spiritual Practice of Oral Storytelling in the Biblical World	249
Textual Discussions	250
Creating: Genesis 1:27; 2:7	250
Deepening: Deuteronomy 26:1-11	251
Reaching: Mark 4:33-34.....	254
Synthesis of Themes, Values, and Commitments.....	255
Section 2: Topic History and Key Voices.....	257
Topic History	257
Storytelling in the Jewish tradition.....	257
Storytelling in the Christian tradition	261
Key Voices.....	263
Thomas Boomershine: Storytelling Scripture	263
Leonard Sweet: Narraphors and EPIC Storytelling Preaching.....	264
Donald Miller: Storytelling for Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals	267
Annette Simmons: Culture Keeping Storytelling.....	268
Shonaleigh Cumbers, Renee Garrett: Storytelling in Pastoral Care	270
Section 3: Synthesis and Conclusion	272

SECTION 1: BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Spiritual Practice of Oral Storytelling in the Biblical World

“In the beginning God created” (Genesis 1:1a NIV) and people, reflecting God’s creativity, have told stories. Long before the stories of the Bible were collected and organized into print they were shared through the practice and tradition of oral storytelling. Stories were told to deepen community, strengthen identity, create meaning, inspire courage, elevate worship, teach ethics, explain suffering, alleviate pain, instigate healing, provide entertainment and more. Oral storytelling is of immense value in ministry today for enriching preaching, liturgy, teaching, worship, pastoral care, mission, evangelism and discipleship.

With our present day schedules, brains and bodies are beyond busy and the time and effort to learn and practice the art of oral storytelling can at first seem too overwhelmingly stressful to attempt.²⁶³ However, when understood and engaged in as a spiritual practice, it has the paradoxical effect of reducing the pressures of a busy life. Integrating the practice of storytelling into the life of faith releases energy, peace and joy as God’s Grace invites and

²⁶³ “Discovery Statement,” *Haskell_DMIN750_discoverysessionreport* by author, Biddeford, ME, October 29, 2019.

provides opportunities to deepen and grow in faith. Storytelling as a spiritual practice incorporates both a devotional deepening aspect and an evangelism reaching dynamic.

Storytelling is a spiritual practice that serves to deepen us in our faith through the stories learned and shared. God's actions, our identity, faith memories, sacred traditions and wisdom teachings are passed along in the stories of the scriptures. Deuteronomy 26:1-11 points to the importance of sacred stories rooting us in faith. Remembering, retelling and reliving our stories in worship with ritual imbeds the story in our minds, hearts and souls. If we forget our stories of faith we are vulnerable to absorbing and living the foreign-to-faith stories of our culture and risk a life separated from God.

Storytelling is a spiritual practice that inherently creates evangelism opportunities when we reach out to others and share the Good News stories in community. Jesus was a captivating storyteller, telling stories that uniquely fit the understandings of those listening. Jesus told stories to reach, teach, encourage and prepare people's hearts to receive God's Kingdom. As disciples of Jesus we are invited to engage storytelling for the purpose of preparing hearts, our own as well others, for carrying out Christ's mission in the world for the ever present and future Kin-dom of God.

Textual Discussions

Creating: Genesis 1:27; 2:7

There are over 525 stories in the Bible. Nearly 75% of the Bible is written in story form.²⁶⁴ Genesis begins with a historical narrative, our creation story.²⁶⁵ Our first creation story

²⁶⁴ John Walsh, *BibleTelling: Telling God's Word* (Bloomington, IL: BibleTelling, 2018).

makes clear that we are created in the image of God. “God created humanity in God’s own image, in the divine image God created them, male and female God created them.” (Gen 1:27 CEV) Having been made in the image of our Creator it follows that we are fundamentally creative beings.²⁶⁶ Our second creation story adds images of God’s touch and breath: “The Lord God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and blew life’s breath into his nostrils. The human came to life.” (Gen 2:7 CEV) God scooped up the dirt of the earth and breathed into our clay forms and gave us our very life’s breath. Bearing the thumbprint and breath of God with our life’s being we can share in the wonder, joy and gift of our creativity through the telling of stories. Storytelling is a spiritual practice that is inherently creative. Our Creator delights in our creations that glorify and enjoy God.²⁶⁷ For “God made [hu]man[s] because God loves stories.”²⁶⁸

Deepening: Deuteronomy 26:1-11

Storytelling the scriptures incorporates a process of grounding oneself in God’s Story through the work of deep listening and visualization. Deep listening is the work of repeatedly reading or listening to the story, praying over it, committing it to memory, listening for the Holy Spirit as well as researching background information. The listening community also engages

²⁶⁵ John Sailhamer, “Exegetical Notes Genesis 1:1-2:4a,” *Trinity Journal* 5NS (1984).

²⁶⁶ Terence E. Fretheim, “Commentary on Genesis 1:1-2:4a” *Working Preacher*, May 18, 2008, http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=78.

²⁶⁷ “Westminster Catechism,” *Britannica Online Academic Edition*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 2019.

²⁶⁸ Elie Wiesel, *The Gates of the Forest*. (Bard Books. New York: Avon, 1970).

deep listening during the telling of a story.²⁶⁹ Oftentimes listeners are so in sync with the story that there is within the group as a whole a matching of brain and breathing patterns.²⁷⁰

When learning a story, visualization is important for how it helps the teller to connect and convey emotions. Visualization occurs when one sees the story taking place like a movie in one's mind and through imagination is able to see oneself within it. Storytelling isn't so much about repeating the words of a story but rather conveying it's images, actions and emotions so that listeners can enter into visualizing it along with the teller's narration.

Deuteronomy 26:1-11 is a seminal faith story that was and still is enacted in worship through liturgy and ritual.²⁷¹ It is a story rich in details which aids in the spiritual practice of deep listening and visualization. After the people of Israel had settled long enough to grow food in the land God had given them, they were to mark their coming into the land by making an offering before the altar of the Lord with a basket of their first fruits. Upon presenting their basket to the priest they were to proclaim that they had “come to the land” (Deut 26:3 NIV) the Lord had promised them. As the priest set the basket in front of the altar, the landowner, in gratitude for all God had done for him, was to bow and share the story Moses gave them to tell.

The story they were to recite begins “My Father was a wandering Aramean” (Deut 26:5b NIV) The “wandering Aramean ” referred more to Jacob but implied Abraham as well.²⁷² Both Jacob and Abraham were without land and to be without land meant you didn't exist. The

²⁶⁹ Valerie Tutson, 2019, Phone interview by author. Acton, ME. October 31, 2019.

²⁷⁰ Carmine Gallo, “Stories literally put our brain waves in sync,” *Quartz at Work*, June 6, 2018, <https://qz.com/work/1298571/stories-literally-put-our-brain-waves-in-sync/>.

²⁷¹ Rachel Adelman, ““My Father Was a Wandering Aramean...”: The Ethical Legacy of Our Origins in Exile (Parashat Ki Tavo, Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8)” *Huffpost*, Updated December 7, 2016, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/my-father-was-a-wandering-aramean-the-ethical_b_57e1e98de4b05d3737be5099.

²⁷² Adelman, ““My Father Was a Wandering Aramean...”: The Ethical Legacy of Our Origins in Exile (Parashat Ki Tavo, Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8)”.

Hebrew word used for wandering includes allusions to perishing because to wander like a lost sheep was dangerous to one's life²⁷³. The wandering ancestors entered Egypt as only few but increased in number to become a mighty and powerful nation. Then enslaved by the Egyptians they suffered and cried out to God. The Lord heard and saw them in their suffering and delivered them from Egypt and gave them a land flowing with milk and honey.

After the offering is made and the story is told before the altar, a feast is to be enjoyed with the harvest. The feast is to be shared with those who are the priestly tribe of Levi, the foreigners and immigrants, all of whom are without a claim to the land. As the landowners of Israel, descendants of a destitute vagabond,²⁷⁴ fulfill their obligation to share with the landless of Israel the story comes full circle and their bond to their neighbor is strengthened and sacramentalized through worship, story and shared meal.

Grounding oneself in this story means claiming the identity of having ancestors with precarious and humble roots, connecting to God's gracious act in the Exodus and celebrating God's blessing with neighbors by sharing the abundance of land and its fruits. In this story one hears and speaks the affirmation of faith that God hears prayers and sees suffering and delivers people from suffering. The repetition of this story in worship and ritual further establishes the trust that the Lord is the God of our salvation.

Utilizing the tools of deep listening and visualization enables a storyteller to see the pictures of an unfolding drama within her imagination and a story is better remembered for the telling. This story is rich with images of land, crops, baskets and offerings at altars which then

²⁷³ John Holbert, "A Sacred Thanksgiving: Reflections on Deuteronomy 26:1-11," *Patheos*, November 16, 2010, <https://www.patheos.com/resources/additional-resources/2010/11/sacred-thanksgiving>.

²⁷⁴ Brian C. Jones, "Commentary on Deuteronomy 26:1-11" *Working Preacher*, March 10, 2019, http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3989.

combine with the images held in the memories of actions such as desert wandering, enslavement labor and freedom journeying and concludes with the emotions of joy and gratitude in celebrating a feast with neighbors. When shared in community, a story comes to life far more readily when listeners are able to follow what the teller “sees” for images, actions and emotions in her mind.

Reaching: Mark 4:33-34

Storytelling when used in Christian ministry is an act of discipleship, evangelism and service. Storytelling is about connecting and reaching out to share the Good News with others. Being able to reach out to others through storytelling incorporates using spiritual tools that assist storytellers in evaluating their own heart as well as the heart of their community of listeners. These heart evaluation tools consist of being fully present and understanding the rhythms of kenosis and pleurosis.²⁷⁵ Kenosis is about emptying oneself for the sake of the story, the Holy Spirit and the listening community. Pleurosis, the opposite of kenosis, is about filling up with the story, the Holy Spirit and the hearts of the community in the serving of God’s will.

Jesus was a master storyteller who honored this emptying and filling dynamic.²⁷⁶ “With many stories like these, he presented his message to them, fitting the stories to their experience and maturity. He was never without a story when he spoke. When he was alone with his disciples, he went over everything, sorting out the tangles, untying the knots.” (Mark 4:33-34 MSG). Serving Jesus as storytelling disciples means living from this rhythm in ministry too.

²⁷⁵ Leonard Sweet, 2020. DMin 719 class notes taken by author, Biddeford, ME. January 27, 2020.

²⁷⁶ Philippians 2:7

Understanding the spiritual rhythms of kenosis and pleurosis enables the storyteller to become more responsively aware of the hearts of those in the listening community. If the storyteller is too focused on himself or on the story he will miss the nonverbal and verbal cues the listeners will communicate prior to, during and after a storytelling event. Being fully present is the spiritual practice of emptying oneself of all external and internal distractions of the future and past and filling oneself with the reality of the present perceived by the senses. Being fully present is a spiritual practice that even has the added benefit of slowing down our brain's perception of time.²⁷⁷ Through this practice the teller is aided in reading her own heart as well as the hearts of those listening for the purpose of prayerfully and creatively refining and fitting the story so as to offer it up to the service of God's Word.

Synthesis of Themes, Values, and Commitments

Engaging in the creative art of learning to tell stories to the point where you can share them with one or more individuals in a storytelling setting takes effort, time and practice. Today's busy pastors, teachers and disciples oftentimes feel far too stressed to add one more thing to their schedules. Storytelling however when engaged in as a spiritual practice has the paradoxical effect of opening up windows of time to allow the breezes of the Holy Spirit to refresh over-scheduled, hyper-connected, always on, exhausted-living life rhythms. Using the spiritual practice tools of deep listening, visualization and being fully present aids the storyteller in learning the art of storytelling while bringing about better life balance.

Deep listening and visualization are tools that both assist the teller in learning and sharing the story as well as being a meditative practice that creates beneficial quantifiable physiological

²⁷⁷ Diana Raab, "How to Slow Down Time" *Psychology Today*, May 16, 2017, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-empowerment-diary/201705/how-slow-down-time>.

changes within the teller's body and mind.²⁷⁸ Using the practices of deep listening and visualization to commit a story to heart also aid in creating space within a busy schedule to make time with God. A teller who has done the spiritual work of deep listening and visualization for a story is better able to assist the listening community to engage in deep listening during the storytelling event through conveying the images, actions and emotions of a story.

After a story is deeply rooted within the teller, the next part of developing this faith art is learning how to effectively reach out to others and being able to shape a story while responding to the real-time input from the listeners and the Holy Spirit. Being fully present and emptying oneself for the purpose of being filled for God's purposes are helpful spiritual tools for engaging storytelling as transformative art rather than a performative art.

Storytelling invites people to emotionally and spiritually experience a new reality, God's reality. Jesus told stories to open people's hearts to deeper understandings.²⁷⁹ Jesus told stories to transform lives.²⁸⁰ Understanding storytelling as a spiritual practice keeps the disciple's mind inspired, heart engaged and soul enabled to do the work of connecting people's hearts through story to the transformative love of Christ.

²⁷⁸ Abha Singh, and Ritu Modi, "Meditation and Positive Mental Health." *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology* 3, no. 3 (2012): 273-75.

²⁷⁹ Matthew 13:10-15, Mark 4:10-12, Luke 8:9-10

²⁸⁰ Matthew 13:1-9, Mark 4:1-9, Luke 8:4-8

SECTION 2: TOPIC HISTORY AND KEY VOICES

Topic History

Storytelling in the Jewish tradition

The Hebrew Scriptures first existed as oral stories before they were committed to written form. Jewish rabbis and scribes used the medium of oral tradition to teach the stories, strengthen community identity and pass along the important lessons of the faith.²⁸¹ “The books of Moses, for instance, were written no sooner than 700 years after God called Abram to leave Ur and go to the place God would show him. Presumably Abraham’s descendants preserved those stories and their chronology by oral means until they were finally written down.”²⁸²

It is helpful to think of storytelling in the Hebrew thought world as if one is in a rowboat, not facing forward while making progress but with one’s back to the future and looking at the past. After the destruction of the Second Temple, rabbis used midrash storytelling to re-interpret the Torah to make it come alive for their generation. Legendary midrash stories were collected from oral tradition and gathered into the Haggadah. Haggadah literally means “telling” or story.

By the 11th century traditional midrashic explanations appeared to have dwindled as mystical and philosophical interpretation traditions gained strength. Storytelling within the Jewish faith experienced a revival in the 18th century with the Eastern Europe Orthodox spiritual

²⁸¹ "oral tradition." In *A Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by W. R. F. Browning. *Oxford Biblical Studies Online*, <http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/article/opr/t94/e1382> (accessed Feb 17, 2020).

²⁸² Dr. Grant Lovejoy. “Chronological Bible Storying: Description, Rationale and Implications.” <https://reachingandteaching.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2014/06/CBS.pdf>

revivalist movement known as Hasidim or Hasidic Judaism. While Jews are known as a nation of storytellers,²⁸³ storytelling became a uniquely spiritual and mystical experience through the Hasidic expression.

Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, better known as the Baal Shem Tov (literally “master of the good name”) was the founder of Hasidism. The prominent rabbis of the early 1700s were renowned for their Talmudic scholarship but the Baal Shem Tov worked as a laborer and a schoolteacher who loved to meditate and wander in the woods for long stretches of time. The Baal Shem Tov taught that every Jew, not just the devout scholars, could connect with God through learning Torah and doing good deeds with love, joy and simple, earnest humility. Through the Jewish practices of prayer and embracing a culture of folk tales, often with elements of magic and miracles, the Baal Shem Tov made the wonder of Jewish mysticism accessible to more people than just the scholarly elite. He traveled widely to encourage people to not only develop a personal relationship with God but to also seek a mystical connection with God. He developed a devoted following and the stories of his charismatic leadership and miracle workings are well documented in Hasidic lore.

Hasidism reopened the realm of Haggadic story imagination providing meaning in the midst of the uncertainties of an ever constantly changing world. Storytelling, with its roots in the midrash traditions became a religious expression in the Hasidic communities. Storytelling even

²⁸³ Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks. “A Nation of Storytellers.” *JewishPress.com* September 19, 2019. <https://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/jewish-columns/rabbi-lord-jonathan-sacks/a-nation-of-storytellers-2/2019/09/19/> Last accessed February 21, 2020

came to be viewed as a mystical experience and telling a story about a rebbe (the Yiddish pronunciation for rabbi) was a religious act in itself.²⁸⁴

Hasidism flourished in small towns and villages but the Holocaust decimated the Hasidic population and now it is estimated that 400,000²⁸⁵ remain in the world today. Their storytelling legacy made an impact in the storytelling of Elie Wiesel. Following the Holocaust Elie Wiesel turned to storytelling as a way of finding and making meaning in the modern world. Wiesel emphasized storytelling as the critical religious act defining Hasidism and sought to re-establish storytelling as a meaningful act in the Jewish faith.²⁸⁶ Wiesel prefaced his novel *The Gates of the Forest*, a story about a Jew finding his identity after having survived the Holocaust, with this Hasidic story:

”When the great Rabbi Israel Baal Shem–Tov saw misfortune threatening the Jews it was his custom to go into a certain part of the forest to meditate. There he would light a fire, say a special prayer, and the miracle would be accomplished, and the misfortune averted.”

“Later, when his disciple, the celebrated Magid of Mezritch, had occasion, for the same reason, to intercede with heaven, he would go to the same place in the forest and

²⁸⁴ David Booth. "The Role of the Storyteller - Sholem Aleichem and Elie Wiesel." *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought* 42, no. 3 (1993): 298.

²⁸⁵ Tzvi Freeman and Menachem Posner. "17 Facts Everyone Should Know About Hasidic Jews." *Chabad.org*. https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4079238/jewish/17-Facts-Everyone-Should-Know-About-Hasidic-Jews.htm (Last accessed February 21, 2020).

²⁸⁶ David Booth. "The Role of the Storyteller - Sholem Aleichem and Elie Wiesel." *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought* 42, no. 3 (1993): 298.

say: 'Master of the Universe, listen! I do not know how to light the fire, but I am still able to say the prayer.' And again the miracle would be accomplished."

"Still later, Rabbi Moshe-Leib of Sasov, in order to save his people once more, would go into the forest and say: 'I do not know how to light the fire, I do not know the prayer, but I know the place, and this must be sufficient.' It was sufficient, and the miracle was accomplished."

"Then it fell to Rabbi Israel of Rizhyn to overcome misfortune. Sitting in his armchair, his head in his hands, he spoke to God: "I am unable to light the fire, and I do not know the prayer; I cannot even find the place in the forest. All I can do is to tell the story, and this must be sufficient.' And it was sufficient."

Wiesel proclaims storytelling is a spiritual act with the addition of his unique teleological coda at the end of this Hasidic tale: "God made [hu]man[s] because [God] loves stories."²⁸⁷ Our being and our stories are desired and enjoyed by God. Stories serve to forge connections between people and to provide meaning in a seemingly meaningless world. Storytelling becomes a spiritual act capable of motivating and maintaining faith because it is creative and can respond to new issues, and because it can open up the faith tradition through presenting new ways of thinking.

²⁸⁷ Elie Wiesel. *The Gates of the Forest*. (Bard Books. New York: Avon, 1970).

Storytelling in the Christian tradition

“Listeners of the Torah were required to retell it the way they’d been taught. The early church also followed this practice, with families passing down stories of faith to each generation.”²⁸⁸ There are stories from the early Christian oral culture in Paul’s letters. Jesus used a form of storytelling that was prevalent in the Jewish culture at that time. The Gospel stories were composed with a primarily aural culture in mind.

Evidence of oral tradition in the Greek world exists in the formulaic statement: “I handed on to you what I in turn had received...”, and in the use of the phrases: “that” and “next.”²⁸⁹ Paul’s retelling of the last supper²⁹⁰ uses these oral formulaic indicators. Another common component of oral tradition is the use of repetition in groups of threes (ie: “died”, “was buried”, “was raised”).²⁹¹ Paul uses this repetition of groups in his recounting of the resurrection appearances.²⁹² Singing a story is one of the first ways to tell a story. Paul quotes a hymn in Philippians²⁹³ that is believed to have been an anchor in the worship life of the community ten to twenty years before Paul writes his letter to the Philippians.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁸ Michael Novelli “The Oral Tradition” *Shaped by the Story: Helping Students Encounter God in a New Way*. 66.

²⁸⁹ L. Michael White. *Scripting Jesus : The Gospels in Rewrite* First ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 108.

²⁹⁰ 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

²⁹¹ White, *Scripting Jesus*, 112.

²⁹² 1 Corinthians 15:3-7

²⁹³ Philippians 2:6-11

²⁹⁴ Helmut Koester. “Importance of the Oral Tradition” *Frontline: From Jesus to Christ*. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/oral.html>. April 1998.

“Jesus did not tell his stories in a vacuum; he was neither the first nor the only storyteller in his world. He emerged from a rich storytelling culture.”²⁹⁵ Parables came out of a milieu of Jewish storytelling. Rabbis told stories called mashals and many carry the form, motif and plots as those used by Jesus. People were as accustomed to understanding mashals as we are accustomed to understanding memes today. Parables were created with the intent that they be retold. The parables Jesus told revealed deep truths, were engaging, life changing and easy to remember using everyday objects. Even today, the parables of Jesus still speak to us providing us insight and wisdom into current spiritual, religious and ethical issues.

The Gospels were written with an audience that would first and foremost hear them aurally. The normal practice in the ancient world was to memorize the texts to be read. The sounds of the words used in a story were an important element of learning a story for the purpose of retelling it. Words were repeated and refitted to create assonant sounds so as to make it easier to internalize and memorize a story. Stories were told using poetic language to evoke strong emotions and images of well known experiences were used to connect the people to shared events and to each other.²⁹⁶

During the third and fourth centuries storytelling was important to the ascetic communities of the Desert Mothers and Fathers in Egypt, Syria and Israel. Their stories have been recorded in *The Apophthegmata Patrum*. These Desert Christians were brilliant storytellers using sparse brief

²⁹⁵ Dennis E Smith. and Michael E. Williams eds. *The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible. Vol. 11, The Parables of Jesus*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 11.

²⁹⁶ Thomas E. Boomershine. *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 41-43.

language usually in the form of a dialogue between an elder and a novice but not always. The stories frequently cite stories of scripture and aptly include silence. They were influential in giving shape to the monastic communities and Benedictine spirituality in particular. The stories touch upon a vast array of spiritual topics and their wisdom has been compared to a “flash of a signaling lamp...brief, arresting and intense.”²⁹⁷ An example of one such story speaking to humility: “The devil appeared to a brother in the disguise of an angel of light, saying to him, “I am the archangel Gabriel, and I was sent to you.” “Make sure you were not sent to somebody else,” said the brother to him, “for I am not worthy to see an angel,” and the demon immediately disappeared.”²⁹⁸

Key Voices

Thomas Boomersshine: Storytelling Scripture

Biblical stories can be told in one’s own words or retold word for word. Because biblical stories are so well known Boomersshine recommends telling them word for word and aiming for 75% accuracy²⁹⁹ in the retelling. Each person will craft their own unique recipe for learning a biblical story word for word and there are some basic ingredients that are helpful to know. Stories in print need to be heard out loud. Internalizing a story involves the head, heart and gut.

We are so familiar with relying on the printed word for learning stories but stories in ancient times were shared and learned orally. Printed letters and manuscripts were intended to be

²⁹⁷William Harmless and Oxford University Press. *Desert Christians : An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004),172.

²⁹⁸ “Desert Father Sayings & Stories: On Humility,” Monastery of Christ in the Desert, Last accessed February 25, 2002, <https://christdesert.org/prayer/desert-fathers-stories/on-humility/>.

²⁹⁹ Boomersshine, *Story Journey*, 31.

read out loud. Reading a story out loud or listening to a recording helps the teller to hear the sounds of a story as well as the key framework, words and images. Repetition is the key to internalizing a story.

It is helpful to imagine internalizing a story in three parts of the self, the head, heart and gut. Analyze the story for its inherent structure, research its historical setting and notice the repeating words and images to know a story in your head. The heart holds the emotions of a story, what characters feel and how they make us laugh or cry. In the gut we experience what the story does, the action of the story as it moves us with compassion, mercy and empathy.

Learning a story, rehearsing it, reliving it and repeating it best happens in the down time moments in life. Down times are the times just before bed or just after waking, at the gym on the elliptical or waiting for an appointment. Effective memorization happens in taking the story in small chunks and adding to it over a period of days. The only way to truly keep a story is to give it away. Sharing the story you've learned with one or more listeners is important.

Leonard Sweet: Narraphors and EPIC Storytelling Preaching

Narraphors (a word coined by Leonard Sweet) is the blending of the words narrative and metaphor. Narraphors are created with stories and images. "Because a narraphor is a story made from metaphor, it narrates with metaphorical meaning. The combining of story and image creates a reality into which the listener enters: a narrative that touches life contextually and layers of meaning that offer depth, breadth, and height."³⁰⁰ Narraphors used in preaching are greatly enriched by an EPIC telling. EPIC is Leonard Sweet's acronym for Experiential, Participatory,

³⁰⁰ Leonard Sweet. *Giving Blood: A Fresh Paradigm for Preaching*. (Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan 2014), 38.

Image Rich and Connective. Using the EPIC principles in storytelling preaching involves listeners in embracing the heart of the Good News message in a richly active and vibrantly participatory dynamic.

Stories are meant to be experienced. The storytelling art is about giving people an experience of the story you are telling. People need to experientially see, hear, taste, touch, smell and feel the story in their imaginations. Using your body, facial expressions and voice to convey the sensory experiences of the story will communicate even more than words. The utilization of props is helpful too. For bodily conveying experience your imagination is your best tool. When you tell about Eve biting into that forbidden fruit, imagine you are tasting something so exquisitely delicious listeners will experience that scrumptious fruit from your facial expressions and body reacting to that luscious taste that you are imagining. Having the smell of grill food cooking outside the sanctuary doors while sharing the story of Jesus eating breakfast on the beach with the disciples³⁰¹ adds to the wonder of people connecting with God through this post resurrection story.

Participation is vital in bringing a story to life. When listeners participate they are no longer passive objective observers but become active involved participants. Having listeners take part in the storytelling event can be having them join in singing a well-known hymn or song such as “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” while you tell the story of Elijah. Deliberate pause is effective if you expectantly wait for listeners to answer questions or complete obvious “fill in the blank” phrases. Participation in storytelling makes for one-time unique, never repeatable story experience. Participation makes the same “old” stories “new.”

³⁰¹ John 21:9-13

“Images are the thoughts of the heart. You grow a soul by the cultivation of an image garden.”³⁰² Storytelling preaching is inviting folks into a shared experience of an image garden. Healthy, good, true and beautiful image gardens of the Gospel are the joy of every storytelling preacher to share. Thoughts are first formed as images. Influencing, inspiring, moving, motivating people through images in stories is far more effective than using words, carefully constructed arguments of logic. “Images are the stuff of which the soul is sculpted.”³⁰³ Storytelling aids in the work of metaphor and image making and re-making. Images allow the mind and heart to play and ponder paradoxical complexities of life and living.

“Humans are relational species, and we live in a relational world.”³⁰⁴ Connecting with others is risky business. To form authentic relationships requires one to be vulnerable and open to both listening and sharing stories with others. Storytelling creates that bridge whereby one can vicariously leave one’s own self-absorbed reality and journey with the character in a story. Community bonds are formed and strengthened as individuals not only share in the experience of journeying together through a story but as a result of feeling the safety of the story they will also risk sharing their own stories. This deepens the interrelatedness as people empathetically connect and learn from each other. A storytelling preacher tells stories to form community and through this community God’s Grace is revealed.

³⁰² Sweet, *Giving Blood*, 53.

³⁰³ Leonard Sweet. *Post-Modern Pilgrims*, (Broadman & Homan, Nashville, 2000), 98.

³⁰⁴ Sweet, *Giving Blood*, 54.

Donald Miller: Storytelling for Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals

“A character that wants something and overcomes conflict to get it.”³⁰⁵ Using this formula from Donald Miller helps people find their subplot within God’s Epic Story. Story-gathering for the purpose of storytelling at weddings, baptisms and funerals is a profoundly moving experience of servant storytelling discipleship. Miller’s formula adapted for each event can help collect those stories for the telling. Miller dissects the formula into four sections: A Character/That Wants Something/And Overcomes Conflict/To Get It. Within each section there are questions that assist with unearthing those important life events, goals and values that make for great storytelling. Story-gathering for the purpose of storytelling requires intense listening for the whispers or shouts from the Holy Spirit in the search for the key story or stories of their lives. Sharing these key stories within a wedding, baptism or funeral is a beautiful way to enable Grace connections.

In developing the “A Character” part of the formula Miller seeks to have people name turns in life that have either been negative or positive in nature as well as identify where God has been within a timeline of life themes and roles. A turn is an event after which nothing is the same. For a couple getting married a positive turn is the story of how they met. A negative turn can be their recounting of how one lost their job and feelings of self-worth as a result. It is important to sit with the negative turns and dig deeper to see if there is a redemptive narrative. A redemptive narrative in this case would be that while the job loss caused the person to question their self-worth their mate helped them see how truly loved they are.

³⁰⁵ Donald Miller. *Storyline 2.0: Finding Your Subplot in God’s Story*. (Portland: Donald Miller Words, 2012), 17

From the role that was pinpointed in the first section the next step is to ascertain the goals or ambitions in the “That Wants Something” section. For a child baptism this storied question involves asking the parents the desires they have for their child. What do they want the child to learn from them in order for the child to thrive in life and faith? If they want the child to have an appreciation for nature there is a story behind why this is important to them.

Challenges in life are not fun but they are good. Overcoming complications add value to the goals and ambitions we realize. Conflict changes a person and some conflict is intended by God. Miller uses the third part of the formula: “And Overcomes Conflict” to focus on the resistance parts of our story that act as change agents. Pain and conflict in life have meaning when it has a narrative context. Pausing to consider a redemptive perspective to a challenge helps remove the sting. If the onset of Alzheimers for the deceased is a conflict story for the family and the departed it may be important to dig a bit deeper to see if there are redemptive perspectives that unveil God’s Grace amidst that trial.

Imagining a climactic scene to your goals and ambitions fills out the “To Get It” last part of the formula. In planning a funeral the ultimate existential conflict of death may well be the overarching story. This conflict is the basis for telling the ultimate climactic scene of The Good News Story. Having parents speak vows to their child at their baptism fills out the climactic hope of their dreams of raising this child with God’s help. Affirming the love of a couple in relating the story of how their reliance on God’s love made their love stronger is a climatic finish to the ceremony and grand beginning to their new life together.

Annette Simmons: Culture Keeping Storytelling

“We are defined by the stories we tell. As a storyteller, you are a reservoir of meaningful memories for your organization, community, and family group. The norms and habits of any

group's culture are passed down through the stories that are told and retold."³⁰⁶ Stories build a person as well as a culture. The stories you repeat become your reality. Victim stories perpetuate more victim stories. Gratitude stories invite more gratitude stories. It is important for the storyteller to not only take inventory of her own repeating stories but to also take notice of a community's repeating stories. Identifying the archetypal pattern in the often told stories helps to clarify how the stories are acting toward the health or sickness of a body. "Humans crave stories that show how love, trust, honesty, and justice prevail in spite of selfishness or greed. We crave these stories like we crave water - and they may be just as important for our survival. The stories we tell become the maps we use to chart our lives."³⁰⁷ Storytelling as a spiritual discipline is about the work of being a "culture keeper" and editing, selecting or releasing the stories best suited for encouraging life to thrive.

Storytelling is a powerful tool for influencing others and Simmons notes that it is important to recognize it has a shadow side. Effective stories have an emotional component. There are ways storytelling can be "weaponized" to unethically control and manipulate narratives using fear and blame. Fear and blame stories are easier to activate than hope and compassion stories. Fear stories trigger our survival fight or flight instincts. "Blame stories don't describe the problem. As a storyteller you begin to see that blame stories are the problem."³⁰⁸ Fear and blame stories activate isolation and protective patterns that disrupt and prohibit tolerance, empathy and long-term growth patterns. Hope and compassion stories are not always as fast moving or as adrenaline gripping as fear stories, but they are the stories that better nurture

³⁰⁶ Annette Symonds. *The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, & Persuasion Through The Art of Storytelling, Third Edition*. (New York: Basic Books, Hachette Book Group, 2019), 247.

³⁰⁷ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 307

³⁰⁸ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 253

openness, kindness and community growth. A good story can form in people's minds and be recalled as fact as if it actually happened to them.

“Story has the unique ability to validate people on both sides of real-life paradox without suggesting that either side should be eliminated.”³⁰⁹ Simmons cautions against using a single point story even if the story has a positive intent. Technology has provided the ability for narratives to be controlled and promoted with only a single story viewpoint. With analytics providing us repeated stories that we favor, echo chambers have evolved that silence other important viewpoints. It is important to be suspicious of stories with yes/no answers to questions that are too complicated for the yes/no response. She illustrates her point with the example: “Imagine asking van Gogh if yellow is the most important color. Any “clear” answer distracts the aspiring painter from learning that yellow's importance (like all colors) changes depending on its proximity and relationship to other colors.”³¹⁰ The spiritual practice of storytelling involves being discerning and finding the good stories that allow people to experience the paradox, see more than one side and encourages them to creatively engage with their own responses to unresolvable conflicts.

Shonaleigh Cumbers, Renee Garrett: Storytelling in Pastoral Care

Jewish women storytellers of Eastern Europe were living tradition bearers and known as Drut'sylas. They had a repertoire of three to four thousand stories that were all learned orally. Drut'sylas were known to travel and share from their vast collection for spiritual benefit and

³⁰⁹ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 45

³¹⁰ Simmons, *The Story Factor*, 275

pastoral comfort. Drut'sylas were far more prevalent prior to the holocaust.³¹¹ Shonaleigh Cumbers, a present day Drut'sylas, knows over four thousand stories that live within twelve interwoven cycles of stories. The stories are alive and interactive in that they are adaptable to the needs of the community or individual. From the time she was a little girl she learned approximately one new story from her grandmother every day without any kind of reading or writing. She kinesthetically experienced the stories as they were told and associated them with objects that held storied meaning. She learned stories through oral memory, visualization and practiced midrashic interpretation.³¹²

Cumbers has used storytelling to nurture individuals and whole communities through traumatic events. She worked with the community of Christchurch following an earthquake and flooding disaster using the power of storytelling to reshape their narrative. She told stories in the schools and held workshops where she started stories and then invited the children to finish them and have them explain their endings. She mobilized a team of listeners who knew how to help people process their pain and suffering through listening to their stories. She worked to create community through story by bringing together the children and elderly, two communities so in need of sharing their pain through storytelling. Cafes were set up in the elder care facilities for parents as a welcoming story spot. Resilience and strength was found in the act of connecting through story sharing and telling.³¹³

³¹¹ Simon Heywood, "Searching for a Great Storyteller" *YouTube*, TEDxUniversityofReading June 15, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ts9JpM0gHMU>.

³¹² Shonaleigh Cumbers, "About" Facebook, March 14, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/ShonaleighQ>.

³¹³ "A Storytelling Tradition," Telling Lives Your Story, April 6, 2019, <https://www.tellinglives.co.nz/a-storytelling-tradition>.

Renee Garrett, is a storyteller who has trained with Shonaleigh Cumbers and uses Drut'sylas learning and sharing techniques in her pastoral ministry. Renee has used storytelling as part of her pastoring while serving as a minister for Christian nurture, telling wisdom and biblical stories as well as stories of her own faithful creation.³¹⁴ She has also used storytelling in her chaplaincy work with children and youth in hospitals. She tells healing stories that are connected to objects, bracelets, rings, rocks, feathers and other treasures. These objects given to the child as a gift have become sacramentalized with a story through which they are connected to God and the healing and peace God longs for them to know.³¹⁵

SECTION 3: SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

My NPO is to create a curriculum for oral storytelling that includes the techniques for sharing personal experiences and the retelling of myths, legends, wisdom, folklore or Biblical stories. For the scope of this paper I narrowed the topic to focus on the spiritual practice of oral storytelling in ministry. There are many aspects to teaching the art of oral storytelling that are not addressed within this essay but there is ample research recorded here to adequately serve the work of building a curriculum for the use of storytelling in ministry settings.

Teaching about storytelling as a mystical and spiritual experience in the Jewish and Christian traditions provides historical grounding, motivation and inspiration for one who endeavors to undertake this art. The ancient sacred stories from these traditions hold timeless truths and provide meaning in our uncertain and ever changing world. This curriculum will aim

³¹⁴ Renee Garrett, *One Man's Roses: Tales from Uncle Sol's Neighborhood*, (Springfield, MO: Quiet Waters Publications, 2010).

³¹⁵ Renee Garrett, conversation with the author, Biddeford, ME, October 29, 2019.

to help people find their storytelling voice. There is not one right way to tell a story. A story is better released by the storyteller when a story is authentically owned. To authentically own a story the storyteller must believe in the value of telling it. This curriculum will have the storytelling student read from a selection of Hasidic stories and stories from *The Apophthegmata Patrum* and then choose one they value. This enables the student to authentically own the story for learning and retelling to another.

Thomas Boomershine is one of the pioneers of storytelling the scriptures. His Network of Biblical Storytellers International website³¹⁶ contains a massive wealth of information. Each person needs to craft their own unique recipe for learning a story. More research is needed to compile a list of different learning styles to teach aspiring storytellers about approaching the work of memorizing and practicing a story in ways that fit one's strengths. Shonaleigh Cumbers and Renee Garrett's kinesthetic method of learning a story will be highlighted in this part of the curriculum. Also appropriate to this section on learning scripture is the work done by John Walsh³¹⁷. His approach is beautifully humble in that he highlights the power of storytelling from his professed weakness as one who struggles with stuttering. Learning to embrace your perceived storytelling strengths and weaknesses is important. Coming to trust that God will give you all you need to tell a story, is also a part of the storyteller's faith journey.

Leonard Sweet's preaching wisdom applies to the art of oral storytelling. To further illustrate how to provide a storytelling experience, it would be beneficial to the curriculum to add

³¹⁶ <https://www.nbsint.org/>

³¹⁷ Walsh, John. BibleTelling: Telling God's Word. Bloomington, IL: BibleTelling, December 2018. and Walsh, John. The Art of Story Telling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

material regarding understanding body language and different tips for using one's whole body³¹⁸. Storytellers need to also understand the power of connecting emotionally, mentally and spiritually with their listeners. Sweet's material on storytelling is so helpful in communicating the ethical responsibilities of the storyteller. Providing Sweet's understanding of what is necessary in order to tell difficult and dangerous stories is important to include as well as using the wisdom of Loren Niemi and Elizabeth Ellis in their book, *Inviting the Wolf In: Thinking About the Difficult Story*³¹⁹.

Donald Miller's work incorporated a brief sketch at developing a format for crafting stories for the sharing of personal experiences. The brevity of this formulaic approach is helpful for an introduction to the art of story gathering but can also be limiting when seeking to elicit meaningful stories from others. The important key to finding stories to include in weddings, baptisms and funerals is curiosity. A search led by curiosity and love will release more stories than following a perfect formula.

Annette Simmons material will be used in the curriculum for the inventory work of identifying the repeating and foundational stories that are creating one's personal reality as well as the foundational stories impacting larger community's worldviews. Naming the fear and blame stories and bringing attention to how they breakdown, diminish and destroy is important for grasping the ethical implications regarding the work of the storyteller. Identifying the stories

³¹⁸ One book I've found helpful for this is by author Sharon Sayler. *What Your Body Says: and how to master the message: Inspire, Influence, Build Trust, and Create Lasting Business Relationships*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010.

³¹⁹ Niemi, Loren and Elizabeth Ellis. *Inviting the Wolf In: Thinking About the Difficult Story*. Little Rock, AK: August House, 2001.

of hope and compassion that serve to heal, build and strengthen the health of an individual or larger community will serve to emphasize the importance of the power and influence a story can have.

Shonaleigh Cumbers and Renee Garrett set out models for different approaches for using storytelling in pastoral care. Sharing their stories of the healing power of storytelling will be part of the framework of inviting each storyteller to investigate other communities and settings where stories can be used to provide pastoral care. After storytellers have identified a potential setting where they feel called to tell stories they will then begin the work of selecting one or two stories they believe would be of pastoral care benefit to others. Examples of different storytelling settings in ministry may be a nursing home, Sunday school class, church worship service, summer church camp, hospital or hospice bedside.

Essential to the heart of this curriculum is the belief that storytelling is a spiritual discipline through which one is invited to deepen their devotional faith and grow in their missional outreach. Each person is a one-of-a-kind creation and with distinctly original gifts therefore each story that a person tells will be uniquely expressed. There is no one perfect storytelling role model to follow. The overall approach for critiquing storytelling efforts in the learning process will be one of affirming the strengths and positives of each attempt. As the strengths of one's attempts are affirmed the confidence and thrill to keep trying grows and gradually any weaknesses will diminish. Delighting in developing one's God given gifts for storytelling opens the spiritual practice of storytelling to the realm of being a grand adventure as one feels God's pleasure in the preparation and in the telling.

Appendix C: Milestone 3 Design Workshop Report

NPO Statement

Create virtually experienced educational programs that teach and support students learning the art of oral biblical storytelling.

NPO Scope and Constraints

The virtually experienced biblical storytelling educational programs will be designed to develop skill and confidence in oral storytelling. I will be researching different faith exploration themes that use a particular collection of biblical stories and would be appealing to potential students. I will be researching how to lead small group storytelling for the purpose of nurturing those wanting to learn the art of storytelling. I will be researching the art of oral storytelling as it pertains to the sharing of personal experiences and how one's personal story is connected to both uniquely specific stories as well as the greater universal Story of the bible. Costs involve significant time and energy but low economic expense.

NPO Context

The Maine School of Ministry (MESOM) has expressed an interest in my continuing to teach the art of biblical oral storytelling to their students. MESOM is associated with the United Church of Christ, a mainline protestant tradition. MESOM is a small school and draws from a population that has been identified as the "least religious state in the nation." Ministry students and pastors in Maine are generally in mid-life range with a large part of the population in or close to retirement. There is a core group of students who will have completed the introduction

class “Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual Worship and World” who would like to continue their learning and practicing the art of oral storytelling. The curriculum and small storytelling group would be designed for the virtual learning environment and to appeal to the seasoned storyteller as well as welcoming those new to the art of oral storytelling.

Root Causes

The Maine School of Ministry (MESOM) is seeking to increase enrollment and there are people who want to learn the art of biblical storytelling. There is an opportunity to develop additional virtual programs and classes for more ways to engage students in learning the skills of oral storytelling. There is the need for new programs to contain content that would be substantially intriguing to encourage both new and seasoned students and encourage them to enroll. There is an opportunity to engage the interest of a greater number of potential students by offering both a class and a small storytelling support group. The class would be designed with a particular theme for those wanting a more rigorous academic exploration of the theme as well as the topic of storytelling. The small group storytelling will involve a shorter time commitment with fewer expectations than would be required of those taking the class perhaps appealing to those with concerns about time demands and academic qualifications.

Three Big Ideas

Storytelling Supportive Small Group: regularly share and receive feedback on storytelling work.

Themed Biblical Storytelling Class: crafted around a subject that would topically engage people’s interest.

Personalizing the Sacred Story Class: come to know and be able to share your story as connected to a bible story

Definition of ‘Done’

The syllabus and lessons plans for the class and the itinerary for the small group are completed.

3 Napkin Pitches

Biblical Storytelling Supportive Small Group

Big Idea: regularly share and receive feedback on storytelling work in small storytelling groups.

Audience: For participants who want to gain confidence and refine their biblical storytelling skills.

NPO: To grow confidence and support students wanting to learn the art of biblical storytelling.

Benefit: Students gain confidence and get supportive feedback to hone their skills to help quell the fear.

Approach: Meet with small group to tell stories and hear their stories and receive storytelling support and tips to continue to encourage and develop their art

Risks: People too busy to sign up or wanting to be anonymous and not ready to risk sharing their storytelling efforts

Assumptions: This tests people’s desire and ability to learn and grow in their storytelling confidence

Benchmarks of success: A video recording of a participant's storytelling is taken at the beginning of the session and then again at the ending. The recordings will be evidence of growth attained in storytelling confidence and skill

Other Approaches: The smaller group is more intimate and easier for students to gain confidence compared to the dynamics of a larger group. Practicing the art of storytelling involves stages of stumbling through the story when it is not perfect. A smaller group allows for a place of trust and intimacy to develop so participants may become more comfortable in engaging in the learning process.

Themed Biblical Storytelling Class

Big Idea: Themed Biblical Storytelling Class crafted around a subject that would topically engage people's interest.

Audience: Anyone interested in learning more about the theme and in storytelling

NPO: The opportunity to focus biblical storytelling learning to a relevant topic of faith and ministry

Benefit: Learn more about the topic of faith and ministry in the relatable context of storytelling and how to use the art of storytelling in exploring a particular topic

Approach: Instructor selects a theme that would be relevant, tests and sells the theme to see if there would be a popular connection, instructor finds handful of stories related to theme, the group should be small

Risks: Potential for there to be a bad fit between theme and listeners, theme isn't engaging

Assumptions: Relevance of theme, whether people have a personal connection and desire to connect to the topic

Benchmarks of success: Feedback from participants, enthusiasm, are participants able to delve more deeply into a topic and be able to share from that topic through the stories that were explored

Other Approaches: Feels more personal, more casual than a sermon or lecture, focused theme is easier to engage in because talking about all the stories in the whole Bible feels daunting

Personalizing the Sacred Story Class

Big Idea: Personalizing the Sacred Story Class enables the class to come to know and be able to share their own story when it's connected to a bible story

Audience: Anyone interested in learning about how their personal story is a part of the larger story of the Gospel.

NPO: The opportunity to focus biblical storytelling learning to the personal topic of faith, call, witness, evangelism and ministry

Benefit: Establishing a sense of worth in participant in knowing their connection to the sacred story, Role modeling for community, Deeper knowing by all involved

Approach: Thematically centered; Start out with Biblical storytelling, especially point of view material and learning how to identify, as well as connect emotionally, spiritually and faithfully to a biblical story

Risks: How do see your life as Biblical without the "I'm just like Jesus" moment

Too personal, too self-serving

Assumptions: People want to connect with the sacred Story of the bible as a whole

Benchmarks of success: Individuals deepening their relationship with the story and the Healer - letting and letting the story live inside your bones.

Other Approaches: Taking biblical story and personal story work and bringing it back to the community for everyone's betterment. It doesn't end with just the individual's self-improvement

Design Workshop Stakeholders

Four of the participants are MESOM students enrolled in "Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual Worship and World." Two of the participants are professional clergy.

One-On-One Interviews

I interviewed three people, the Dean of the Maine School of Ministry, a professional storyteller and storytelling coach and a high school teacher who excels at using Zoom and Google Classroom to keep students active and engaged.

3–5 Key Biblical Texts

Ezekiel 3:1-15; Mark 4:33-34; Matthew 13; Isaiah 6:1-11

Annotated Bibliography

Culp, A. J. "Joining the Journey: Using Memory Research to Help Students Identify with Biblical Events." *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry* 13, no. 2 (2016): 266-82.

This is a journal article about teaching people to experience Bible stories as if they were actually there. Experiencing a Bible story is essential to the art of Biblical storytelling. Dr. A.J. Culp is an author and lecturer in Old Testament and Biblical Languages at Malyon Theological College in Brisbane Australia. He has his PhD in Religion and Theology from the University of

Bristol, UK. The audience is for those involved in Christian education and he offers insight into the psychology behind identifying with Biblical events. He focuses on bringing Biblical stories to life in describing how to bring a story to life by imagining the sights, sounds, tastes and smells of the place and time in which they happened.

Lipman, Doug. *The Storytelling Coach: How to Listen, Praise, and Bring Out People's Best*. Little Rock, AK: August House, 1995.

This is a book for storytelling teachers and offers basic principles, insight and practical advice on coaching people on their storytelling art. Doug Lipman is a key figure in storytelling on the national and international level. He has been a storyteller since 1976 and has taught and coached storytelling since 1979. He understands stories of faith and Jewish stories are an important part of his storytelling repertoire. I appreciate his humble perspective on being a master teacher of the craft. Seek to learn the student's goals then assist and encourage them with patience, honesty and good will. His work is foundational in both my research in how to lead small storytelling support groups as well as the classes I'm developing.

Novelli, Michael. *Shaped By The Story: Helping Students Encounter God in a New Way*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.

Michael Novelli is an author, a senior curriculum developer for Sparkhouse and leader in the work of spiritual formation through experiential learning. He has his M.Ed. in Integrated Learning from Endicott College. This book focuses on assisting youth with encountering Biblical stories and how a good storytelling experience draws people in and engages hearts and minds while crafting space for wanting more. He uses a process he calls Storying which is a dialogue-centered approach to teaching the Bible. The questions, tools and exercises he provides are

excellent for assisting learners of all ages (not just youth) in interacting, connecting and personalizing Biblical stories.

Appendix A:

Design Workshop Description

The Design Workshop took place in a Zoom meeting space on September 26, 2020 from 9:00am to 12:00pm. Four of the stakeholders are Maine School of Ministry (MESOM) students enrolled in “Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual Worship and World.” Two of the stakeholders are professional clergy. Prior to the actual workshop all the participants were directed to my Design Exploration Workshop webpage³²⁰ and invited to complete certain tasks. Stakeholders filled out a “Pains & Gains” survey and were introduced to the “Mission Impossible” question. I compiled the responses from the “Pains & Gains” survey into one Google document.

From 9:00am to 9:50am there was a welcome with an introductory Google Slideshow³²¹ about the history of my NPO that had led us to this point which was followed up a review and mapping of the “Pains & Gains” game. Participants read through the compiled listing and then highlighted the repeated themes from the lists of composite persons along with their “Pains & Gains.” During the break I placed the highlighted themes into a Zoom Poll.

Stakeholders returned at 10:00am to select the primary composite person as well as the most important Pains & Gains. Participants used the winning theme to base their perspective in answering the exploration “Mission Impossible” game question: How do we develop a virtual/hybrid Biblical Storytelling Class that is exciting to attend that inspires others to want to join? The group was divided into pairs into three breakout rooms to play this exploration game. Each group developed three to four different ideas and came back to report on each of the ideas

³²⁰ <https://broadreachministries.com/design-workshop>.

³²¹ https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1_8RcBUT8dTbkhdls2EOlwmCjPso4xR9P8Cl_bnr_lIU/edit?usp=sharing

to the group as a whole. After the reporting session everyone went on break. I took each of the ideas and put them into a Zoom poll.

Upon return from the break at 11:00am participants voted on their top three favorite ideas. For our closing game the group was divided again into pairs and each group developed a “Napkin Pitch” for the idea that was assigned to them. Each group shared their “Napkin Pitch” with the whole group as before our final debriefing activity.

I was extremely satisfied with how the workshop went and the results that were developed. I would give it a 5 on the Likert Scale. There was a high degree of energy and fun throughout and participants reported they enjoyed the gaming and interactive dynamic of the workshop. I also received even more fantastic ideas from participants in response to my follow-up email. I understood the abundance of helpful ideas to be another indicator that the workshop went well.

Design Workshop Documentation

Links to all artifacts and materials produced in the Workshop activities are below.

Virtual Pains & Gains Mapping Activity:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rcNoEIKs06zUGU9hgZRbFYENHSbb9Qpr/view?usp=sharing>

Supportive Small Group Napkin Pitch Worksheet:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T0Fu__1mgB9YVIsjyakR5FIJhiN7gz53/view?usp=sharing

Themed Biblical Storytelling Napkin Pitch Worksheet:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bT-JuV-4ucqIPGg84SrKga2ub9gp2_D6/view?usp=sharing

Personalizing the Sacred Story Napkin Pitch Worksheet:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bT-JuV-4ucqIPGg84SrKga2ub9gp2_D6/view?usp=sharing

1-Page Post-Workshop Message to Stakeholders

Thank you again for taking the time to help me explore design possibilities for creating a virtual Biblical storytelling curriculum. The ideas that you developed are ones that have set the stage for crafting exciting and inspiring educational opportunities.

Three big ideas emerged from our workshop:

- Supportive Small Group – This small group would meet more frequently than a class.

Participants would regularly share their storytelling work in a Zoom or in-person format.

The members would support each other with encouraging and constructing feedback.

Videos from their beginning and then again at the ending of their time would demonstrate each storyteller's growth in skill and confidence.

- Themed Biblical Storytelling Class – This class would be crafted around a theme that would topically engage people's interest. Further research is needed regarding theme selection. Biblical storytelling skills would be taught while delving into the theme through select Biblical stories.

- Personalizing the Sacred Story – This class is about helping people come to know and be able to share their story as a part of The Story. Students would prayerfully discern a particular Bible story as one that particularly identifies with their own life journey. Using prayer, exegetical investigations and Biblical Storytelling skills students would invite the story to live in their bones, deepening in their relationship with the story and their faith.

Please let me know if you have any additional feedback or corrections. I'd love to hear all the bits of wonderful you might have to share.

One-On-One Interviews Documentation

First 1x1 Raw Notes

Small Group Storyteller

How to set up a Small Storytelling Support Group

Western Maine, community support with space

Select their own pieces of the story is important – what takes place in people's mind

2015 Maine Art Commission Grant for senior storytelling class met for 8 weeks 2-3 hours on Fridays

Lessons – story mapping, story drawing

People took a story (folktale, biblical, traditional)

Polished personal stories

Each person found a form that worked for them

The end was a celebration of storytelling and Jo recorded it

They didn't want to quit – they wanted to keep on meeting and telling stories

The Liar's Club then changed to The Hobbs Story Swap – Meet once a month now meeting on Zoom

New people came when a new person – it is not required to tell a story when you come to the gathering initially 5 minutes or under

She used to take names and draw them out of a hat

There is a break in the middle when meeting in person – with chance to talk informally

She brings in a video of a storyteller telling stories and they discuss techniques

Milbre Burch – kindcrone.com

Audio albums of Biblical stories

The Mary Stories

Saints and Other Sinners

Capped at 16 – she moved flexibly from small to larger...had people work in pairs...worked in different small sizes

She would give a principle and give people instructions on how to listen for it

As people are telling stories they evolve with each other...Have people do the “ramble”...rambling to someone else...then the next...tell the first three sentence of your story and stop and think about that and then move on to the next partner...people always moving to different listeners and having different experiences...People have an innate sense of growing their own story. Where do you get your inspiration? Occasions to tell stories that people have been developing independently...sometimes a theme is announced and people can work with that theme...September’s theme uncanny experiences...can twist them anyway you want... Have each person bring an object and tell the story that object evokes Taught graduate storytelling...incremental skill development The hardest teaching experience she ever had was when she was asked to teach a workshop at a seminary for a national gathering of revolutionary

urban pastors who were engaged in radical social action...they were toughest nuts to crack for storytelling...they didn't want to leave a story alone...homiletics put the stories in chains...Many biblical stories are not clear...Jo is Jewish...AME pastor (the New Ruth Church)...drawing on the story of Jonah...built on the story for different possibilities...why he was so angry when God forgave the Ninevites ...compassion rather than rage...**Give permission for your own heart to apply all the possibilities**

Confidence growing the connection between the head-heart-gut when telling your story
 So you can reach other people and help other people with engaging spirit and
 intellect

Engage wholly and holy with stories

Storytelling when it is good engages the heart – the most powerful education tool we
 have

Confidence growing the connection between the head-heart-gut when telling your story
 So you can reach other people and help other people with engaging spirit and
 intellect

Engage wholly and holy with stories

Storytelling when it is good engages the heart. It is one of the most powerful
 communications, education and healing tools we have.

A kind of free spirited engagement with stories not a rehearsal

Playing with these very powerful meaning making things

Structure some kinds of play with stories to explore their possibilities

Ask people to tell it from the point of view of different characters in it

Pairs, small group, larger group – give people permission to be colloquial and current

English

If people want to come in a tell a story

Or give people prompts

Bring examples of stories along certain kinds of themes

Compassion, disaster, rage, punishment, mercy, lying/cheat & stealing,

Take a line and interpret...when God comes into the garden of Eden after the episode with the snake...and God asks “where are you?” it is not as if God doesn’t know...what is going through their minds...

Explore the reaches and depths of those astonishing stories

Second 1x1 Raw Notes

- **Supportive Small Group** – This small group would meet more frequently than a class. Participants would regularly share their storytelling work in a Zoom or in-person format. The members would support each other with encouraging and constructing feedback.

Videos from their beginning and then again at the ending of their time would demonstrate each storyteller's growth in skill and confidence. (See [Napkin Pitch Worksheet](#) for Details)

- **Parallels with this and helping Clergy Communities of Practice** – not everyone clergy in this group, anyone interested, an association made – could construct a clergy support group around sharing storytelling,
 - **Three half day workshops** – rolling this out...pilot 12 weeks? ...people make a commitment for 12 weeks,...meet every other week...start small...MESOM would advertise...charge a fee...\$120 for series scholarships available...I'm getting back with calendar...advent & Christmas & epiphany stories

Survey core group...hour of power...

Nov 29 first Sunday of Advent...run into Epiphany...charity gift to Telling Room...ask in the survey

- **Themed Biblical Storytelling** – This class would be crafted around a theme that would topically engage people's interest. Further research is needed regarding theme selection. Biblical storytelling skills would be taught while delving into the theme through select Biblical stories. (See [Napkin Pitch Worksheet](#) for Details)

- **Wonderful** – could they (themed & personalizing) be crafted together for a second semester full class?? Main foci...Ron join in for parts of the course with Pastoral Counseling help...

- **Using Big Character call stories** – this story would takes guts and courage...has cohesion with first semester class...4 Saturdays...sub-grouping within the class...how to lead these first semester students forward...what kind of tools are needed...draft a syllabus...Bibliography comes as you are working it through...designing second syllabus ...
 - **Spring** – would be entry level as well as help students' progress...working with layered level of students...inclusive of first learners...
 - **Marketing on Spring classes start in December**
- **Personalizing the Sacred Story** – This class is about helping people come to know and be able to share their story as a part of The Story. Students would prayerfully discern a particular Bible story as one that particularly identifies with their own life journey. Using prayer, exegetical investigations and Biblical Storytelling skills students would invite the story to live in their bones, deepening in their relationship with the story and their faith.
(See [Napkin Pitch Worksheet](#) for Details)

Third 1x1 Raw Notes

Make the most of interactive games on Zoom

<https://youtu.be/9ujZXv5ISic>

<https://www.fearlesspresentations.com/7-fun-ways-to-make-zoom-meetings-more-interesting-and-interactive/>

IPEVO - document camera

Tablet - pen tablet WACOM - can annotate over PDF's artists use it for drawing been useful

Screen castomatic - also have video recording at the same time...can see face while they watch the video

Flip Grid (app) like TikTok but education

Drag Queen Math TikTok

60 sec max on TikTok

Google Classroom can assign on bottom (view edit or make a copy for everyone)

Jamboard (google) blank screens to type or draw on (yellow J) In waffle grid - best for collaboration.

Kahoot - quiz games good on Zoom

Quizzeze - 15 minutes per question

Use google forms for attendance

Teacher TikTok

Preacher TikTok

Weird Maine names TikTok

MacBook Air 13

Appendix D: Milestone 4 Design Research Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROTOTYPE #1 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS	297
Biblical Storytelling for Advent and Christmas.....	297
PROTOTYPE #2 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS	298
Exploring Your Spiritual Journey	298
PROTOTYPE #3 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS	300
Preaching as Sacred Storytelling	300
MOST VIABLE PROTOTYPE.....	302
APPENDICES	303
STORYBOARDS	303
RECRUITING SCREENER.....	303
INTERVIEW SCRIPT	304
Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas.....	306
Exploring Your Spiritual Journey.....	310
Preaching as Sacred Storytelling	316
DOCUMENTATION OF PROTOTYPE	321
Biblical Storytelling for Advent and Christmas	321
Exploring Your Spiritual Journey.....	321
Preaching as Sacred Storytelling	321

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION NOTES.....	321
Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas Prototype Notes	322
Exploring Your Spiritual Journey Prototype Notes.....	330
Preaching as Sacred Storytelling Seminar Prototype Notes.....	336

PROTOTYPE #1 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Biblical Storytelling for Advent and Christmas

- Prototype description.

An online class that explores Biblical Storytelling with an Advent and Christmas theme

- Goldilocks quality strategy

Using a Google Slide presentation participants will experience an online demonstration of how and what the class would accomplish on Zoom.

- Research question.

Is “Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas” class marketable for the Maine School of Ministry?

- Assessment Benchmark(s).
 - Meet with the Dean of the Maine School of Ministry to review prototype
 - Dean will lead and record the prototype interviews on Zoom
 - Recordings will be reviewed for data gathering
 - Findings will be used to determine the most viable project
- Prototype participant demographic description:

Those interviewed were all adult students and prospective students of mixed gender and ages. They each are involved in a local Maine United Church of Christ church either as a lay or clergy person. Six people were interviewed in total.

- Summarize what you learned: What worked? What could be improved? What matters to the participants?

There is support and interest for this type of class. The seasonal topic is appropriate for a fall class. Some participants will need more encouragement as speaking without a manuscript is intimidating. Planning some introductory workshops will be helping for folks to learn about the strength based teaching approach that is utilized. This is both a practical preaching class and a biblical studies class.

- What was your important discovery?

This class would benefit from an informational session ahead of the registration. Including Blue Christmas storytelling resources is essential.

PROTOTYPE #2 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Exploring Your Spiritual Journey

- Prototype description.

An online class that explores spiritual call stories in the Bible and develops skills for sharing personal spiritual journeys with others.

- Goldilocks quality strategy

Using a Google Slide presentation participants will experience an online demonstration of how and what the class would accomplish on Zoom.

- Research question.

Is “Exploring Your Spiritual Journey” class marketable for the Maine School of Ministry?

- Assessment Benchmark(s).
 - Meet with the Dean of the Maine School of Ministry to review prototype
 - Dean will lead and record the prototype interviews on Zoom
 - Recordings will be reviewed for data gathering
 - Findings will be used to determine the most viable project
- Prototype participant demographic description:

Those interviewed were all adult students and prospective students of mixed gender and ages. They each are involved in a local Maine United Church of Christ church either as a lay or clergy person. Six people were interviewed in total.

- Summarize what you learned: What worked? What could be improved? What matters to the participants?

There is support and interest for this type of class. This class would be helpful for clergy and people considering a call to ministry but would be confusing for laity. Final projects need to include a written component as well as a public speaking component. It will be helpful to introduce this class to the Committee on Ministry chairs of the Maine Conference.

- What was your important discovery?

Including components of spiritual direction through contemplative prayer and other spiritual guidance resources will be helpful. Having students list their spiritual support systems prior to the class.

PROTOTYPE #3 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Preaching as Sacred Storytelling

- Prototype description.

“Preaching as Sacred Storytelling” one day and weeklong seminar at Pilgrim Lodge

- Goldilocks quality strategy

Using a Google Slide presentation participants will experience an online demonstration of how and what the seminar would accomplish on Zoom.

- Research question.

Is “Preaching as Sacred Storytelling” one day and weeklong seminar marketable for the Maine School of Ministry?

- Assessment Benchmark(s).
 - Meet with the Dean of the Maine School of Ministry to review prototype
 - Dean will lead and record the prototype interviews on Zoom
 - Recordings will be reviewed for data gathering
 - Findings will be used to determine the most viable project
- Prototype participant demographic description:

Those interviewed were all adult students and prospective students of mixed gender and ages. They each are involved in the Maine or the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ either as a lay or clergy person.

- Summarize what you learned: What worked? What could be improved? What matters to the participants?

There is support and interest for this type of seminar both as a one day and a weeklong retreat. It is anticipated that both these experiences will be in person and take place at the United Church of Christ Maine Conference retreat center Pilgrim Lodge. The one day seminar will also take place through Broad Reach Ministries a coast of Maine sailing retreat ministry.

- What was your important discovery?

The weeklong seminar will require more planning work with the Pilgrim Lodge Outdoor Ministries Team after all COVID restrictions have been lifted. The daylong seminar will pilot this summer.

MOST VIABLE PROTOTYPE

My Most Viable Prototype is a storytelling educational program for the Maine School of Ministry that consists of a synthesis of four individual storytelling courses. There is a high degree of energy and support for these classes to be included as part of the Biblical studies and practical preaching courses offered in the Maine School of Ministry curriculum. Establishing the interconnected elements and demonstrating how each class builds upon the other will assist with expanding storytelling interest as well as deepening student expertise when more than one course is taken.

Three of the four courses are classes that are taught online. One course is an in-person educational experience. Each course is an organized independent unit while being in synergetic connectedness with the others. There are no pre-requisites and each course is open to both beginner and experienced storytellers. These are practical courses where students learn to utilize fundamental storytelling techniques. While the tools to learning a story by heart will be consistently repeated in all the courses, each course will focus on different themes, lessons and skills essential to practicing the art of storytelling.

One completed online course that I will be including in the cohesive unit and not listed in this report is “Biblical Storytelling for Lent and Easter.” The two online courses I will develop as part of my project for my third year coursework are “Biblical Storytelling for Advent and Christmas” and “Exploring Your Spiritual Journey.” The in-person course I will also develop as part of my project will be “Preaching as Sacred Storytelling.” This course will be designed as a both a daylong as well as a weeklong seminar.

APPENDICES

STORYBOARDS


The below link to the Storyboard for “Exploring Your Spiritual Journey” class is the template that was utilized for the Storyboard of the process used for each class. The first two slides in the below link explain the procedure I used for each interview. The slides following the first two are the actual prototype. So as to minimize the duplication of information I chose to list only one Storyboard example here and the actual prototypes used for each class are listed in the “Documentation of Prototype” section.

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Nv7x0qApv_5qgc2XxndbpoCPQ8FBe7tC2Ot3jAYoXgw/edit?usp=sharing

RECRUITING SCREENER

Who do you want to talk to?	What <i>exact criteria</i> will identify the people you want to talk to?	What screening questions will you ask? (Questions shouldn't reveal “right” answers.)
Active Laity in Maine UCC churches	Laity who have taken or are interested in taking a Maine School of Ministry class or workshop	How have you served in the church you are currently attending?
Members in Discernment	Has a church and association affiliation that acknowledged their desire to explore a call to ministry	What Association holds you as a Member in Discernment?

Committee on Ministry Volunteer	Either the chair or the volunteer involved with connecting with their Members in Discernment	How are you helping your MIDs with their discernment process?
Authorized UCC Ministers	Interested in supporting and attending continuing education courses at the Maine School of Ministry	What do you know about the Maine School of Ministry?

Who do you want to exclude? 	What <i>exact criteria</i> will identify the people you want to exclude?	What screening questions will you ask? (Questions shouldn't reveal "right" answers.)
People not connected to a UCC church	Do not attend a UCC church	What church are you currently attending?
Members in Discernment who don't have an immediate future need for the Maine School of Ministry	Members in Discernment who have completed their education	Have you completed your seminary education?
Committee on Ministry volunteers without any immediate need for the Maine School of Ministry	Committee on Ministry volunteers without Members in Discernment	Do you have any current or potential Members in Discernment?
Authorized UCC Ministers who are not connected to the Maine School of Ministry	Authorized UCC Ministers who are not supportive of the Maine School of Ministry	Are you familiar with the mission of the Maine School of Ministry?

INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Script for "Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas" class

- **Welcome.** Explain that you are looking for candid feedback. Remind the participant that you are making a video recording of the interaction to review later, but that it will remain confidential. Make sure they have signed the Consent Form.
- **Open-ended interview questions** Prepare a series of general, opened-ended questions about the interviewee. Start with easy small talk, then transition to questions about the topic about which you are trying to learn. Ask who/what/where/when/why/how questions. Avoid yes/no or multiple-choice questions.

How have you been? / How has your flock been?

What have you been doing to take care of yourself – emotionally, spiritually, physically, etc.?

What has been helpful for your preaching work in these times?

- **Introduction to the prototype.** Remind the participant that some things might not work and that you're not testing him or her. Ask the interviewee to think aloud.
- **Tasks.** Determine what tasks you will ask the participant to perform in relation to the prototype to capture their reactions to the prototype. Watch the participant figure out the prototype on his or her own. Start with a nudge and ask follow up questions to get the participant to think aloud. Maintain a curious mindset.

- **Debrief.** Prepare some questions that prompt the participant to summarize their overarching thoughts and impressions. (These questions are in the slides)

Be sure to thank them.

Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas

2

This class is designed for adult students who are exploring

Their own spiritual formation

A call to ministry

...as well as

Ordained clergy seeking quality continuing education and

All persons seeking spiritual and educational enrichment

3

This class would

Be designed for beginner and seasoned storytellers

Dovetail with other Biblical Storytelling classes:

Biblical Storytelling for Lent & Easter,

Exploring Your Spiritual Journey

Week Long Live Storytelling Intensive

4

Students would find each storytelling class would build upon previous course material.

One can enter the journey at any point.

Each class offer studies unique to the theme as well as repeated classic storytelling technique studies & practice.

5

Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas

Class Overview

6

Class #1 - HOPE & PEACE STORIES

Learning & practicing the art of Biblical Storytelling

Exploring Hope & Peace Advent Stories of the Bible

7

Class #2 - JOY STORIES

Virtual and LIVE Storytelling in worship, preaching, mission, weddings, baptism, funerals and pastoral care study

Exploring Joy in our Advent Bible Stories

8

Class #3 - LOVE STORIES

History of storytelling in the Jewish & Christian traditions

Exploring Love in our Advent Bible Stories

9

Class #4 - CHRIST LIGHT STORIES

Culture Keeping Storytelling & Telling Difficult Stories

Exploring the Christmas & Epiphany Biblical Stories

10

thanks!

What did you like or dislike about this class?

How would you describe this class to others?

11

How would you make this class better?

12

What classes or workshops could MESOM offer that would assist you in your ministry setting?

Script for “Exploring Your Spiritual Journey” Class

- **Welcome.** Explain that you are looking for candid feedback. THIS IS A TEST RUN AND I’M LOOKING FOR YOUR HELP WITH IDENTIFYING CONFUSING SPOTS, AMBIGUITY, AND CORRECTIONS. Remind the participant that you are making a video recording of the interaction to review later, but that it will remain confidential. Make sure they have signed the Consent Form.
- **Open-ended interview questions** Prepare a series of general, opened-ended questions about the interviewee. Start with easy small talk, then transition to questions about the topic about which you are trying to learn. Ask who/what/where/when/why/how questions. Avoid yes/no or multiple-choice questions.

How have you been? / How has your flock been?

What have you been doing to take care of yourself – emotionally, spiritually, physically, etc.?

What has been helpful for your preaching work in these times?

- **Introduction to the prototype.** Remind the participant that some things might not work and that you're not testing him or her. Ask the interviewee to think aloud.
- **Tasks.** Determine what tasks you will ask the participant to perform in relation to the prototype to capture their reactions to the prototype. Watch the participant figure out the prototype on his or her own. Start with a nudge and ask follow up questions to get the participant to think aloud. Maintain a curious mindset.
- **Debrief.** Prepare some questions that prompt the participant to summarize their overarching thoughts and impressions. (These questions are in the slides)
Be sure to thank them.

Exploring Your Spiritual Journey

2

This course seeks to support

local churches,

Members in Discernment (MIDs)

authorized ministers and

Committees on Ministry (COMs)

in unpacking and utilizing

“The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ”

Introduce “Journaling the Journey”

3

Participants will explore spiritual call stories in the Bible and develops skills for sharing personal spiritual journeys with others.

Journaling the Journey -

Engaging The Marks of Faithful

and Effective Authorized Ministers

of the United Church of Christ for

Personal Discernment and

Profession Growth

4

Exploring 5 of the 8 Marks

Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice

Nurturing UCC Identity

Participating in Theological Praxis

Working together for Justice & Mercy

Strengthening Inter & Intra Personal Assets

5

This course would:

- Encourage, nurture and develop skills for speaking without a manuscript
- Be designed for beginner and seasoned storytellers
- Dovetail with other Biblical Storytelling classes:
 - Biblical Storytelling for Lent & Easter,
 - Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas
 - Week Long Live Storytelling Intensive

6

Students would find each storytelling course would build upon previous course material.

One can enter the journey at any point.

Each course offer studies unique to the theme as well as repeated classic storytelling technique studies & practice.

Class #1 - CALL STORIES

Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation

Discussing questions on pages 6, 10, 11 & 12 of Journaling the Journey

Exploring Call Stories of the Bible

Questions from “Journaling the Journey”

Pg 6 Loving God, following Jesus Christ, and being guided by the Holy Spirit living a life of discipleship. *Write three brief stories: one story that demonstrates an occasion when you embodied the love of God, another story that describes your trust in Jesus, and one that testifies to your openness to the Spirit.*

Pg 10 & 11 Being called to ordained ministry by God and the Church *What song best describes your sense of call at this time? What is your favorite “call story” in Christian scripture?*

Pg 12 Continuing discernment of one’s call in community *Share a story of an occasion when a community testified to your call by God.*

7

Class #2 - WORSHIP & WELCOME STORIES

Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation & Nurturing UCC Identity

Discussing questions on pages 14, 19, 22

Exploring Extravagant Welcome Stories of the Bible

Pg 14 Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith. *Where do you experience the beauty of God? How do you assess worship's spiritual and multisensory impact?*

Pg 19 Holding active membership in a Local Church of the United Church of Christ
Share a story of appreciation for the impact your local church has on your faith journey.

Pg 22 Exhibiting a commitment to the core values of the United Church of Christ: continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives. *What stories of scripture and faith inform your understanding of continuing testament, extravagant welcome, and changing lives?*

8

Class #3 - MINISTRY STORIES

Participating in Theological Praxis & Working Together for Justice & Mercy

Discussing questions on pages 48 & 52

Exploring Biblical Characters that inform our understanding of authorized ministry

Pg 48 Articulating a theology and practice of ministry consistent with the UCC Manual on Ministry *What biblical character(s) informs your understanding of authorized ministry?*

Pg 52 Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression. *What does the cross mean to you?*

9

Class #4 - GROWTH & GRACE STORIES

Strengthening Inter & Intra Personal Relationships

Discussing questions on pages 61 & 64

Exploring Biblical metaphors and transformational Grace Stories

Pg 61 Living in the relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the Church.
What metaphor would you use to describe the relationship between an authorized minister and their ministry setting (e.g. congregation or organization)?

What metaphor describes the relationship of an authorized ministry with the wider church body (denomination and global Christian body)?

10

thanks!

What did you like or dislike about this class?

How would you describe this class to others?

11

How would you make this class better?

12

What classes or workshops could MESOM offer that would assist you in your ministry setting?

Preaching as Sacred Storytelling

1. **Welcome.** Explain that you are looking for candid feedback. Remind the participant that you are making a video recording of the interaction to review later, but that it will remain confidential. Make sure they have signed the Consent Form.

2. **Open-ended interview questions** Prepare a series of general, opened-ended questions about the interviewee. Start with easy small talk, then transition to questions about the topic about which you are trying to learn. Ask who/what/where/when/why/how questions. Avoid yes/no or multiple-choice questions.

How have you been? / How has your flock been?

What have you been doing to take care of yourself – emotionally, spiritually, physically, etc.?

What has been helpful for your preaching work in these times?

3. **Introduction to the prototype.** Remind the participant that some things might not work and that you're not testing him or her. Ask the interviewee to think aloud.
4. **Tasks.** Determine what tasks you will ask the participant to perform in relation to the prototype to capture their reactions to the prototype. Watch the participant figure out the prototype on his or her own. Start with a nudge and ask follow up questions to get the participant to think aloud. Maintain a curious mindset.
5. **Debrief.** Prepare some questions that prompt the participant to summarize their overarching thoughts and impressions. (These questions are in the slides)

Be sure to thank them.

Biblical Storytelling One Day Seminar

2

This class is designed for adult students who are exploring

Their own spiritual formation

A call to ministry

...as well as

Ordained clergy seeking quality continuing education and
All persons seeking spiritual and educational enrichment

3

This class would

Encourage, nurture and develop skills for speaking without a manuscript

Be designed for beginner and seasoned storytellers

Dovetail with other Biblical Storytelling classes:

Biblical Storytelling for Lent & Easter,

Exploring Your Spiritual Journey

Week Long Live Storytelling Intensive

4

Biblical Storytelling One Day Seminar Overview

5

This one day seminar takes place

In person from 9am-4pm with Broad Reach Ministries can either be

- Land based day with a 2 hour beach walk utilizing Hills Beach and the paths on the UNE campus

- Land and sea day with a 2 hour sailing excursion sailing aboard the 42' sloop Mistress

Breakfast Nosh, Later Lunch and Snacks Included

6

This One Day Seminar Addresses

- Preaching as Sacred Storytelling
- Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline
- Learning a Story by Heart
- Healing Through Sacred Storytelling

7

Preaching as Storytelling

- Exploring the different uses for Virtual and LIVE Storytelling in preaching & teaching for worship, mission, weddings, baptism, funerals and pastoral care

8

Storytelling as Spiritual Discipline

Storytelling is inherently spiritually dynamic. There is both a spiritual deepening aspect as well as an evangelical outreach component

The best way to keep a story is to give it away

9

Learning a Story by Heart

Storytelling is not memorization

Overview of the different story learning methods

Participants will leave the seminar having learned a Bible Story by heart

10

Healing Through Sacred Storytelling

Understanding Culture Keeping Storytelling and Telling Difficult Stories

11

thanks!

What did you like or dislike about this seminar?

How would you describe this seminar to others?

12

How would you make this seminar better?

13

What classes or workshops could MESOM offer that would assist you in your ministry setting?

DOCUMENTATION OF PROTOTYPE

Biblical Storytelling for Advent and Christmas

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1JOXOnXmITcJB1AtsFmle78kRhA87J4xmy6mcwXpNo9I/edit?usp=sharing>

Exploring Your Spiritual Journey

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1jY5U3kWhpkrzkFKBH4UpxEpl1tb1bLTqBHgQ2yMXwSg/edit?usp=sharing>

Preaching as Sacred Storytelling

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1WJq01uwD60P2DAZR4hwIPWTaQDnk_9SUIH4ndNU0lOs/edit?usp=sharing

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION NOTES

One-on-one interview and observation notes are combined. Notes have been compiled from both real time interview and from watching the recordings of the interviews done by Dean

of the Maine School of Ministry. These notes also include the notes taken by the Dean of the school.

Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas Prototype Notes

Comments

Are the resources for the class based around the theme? Are there new approaches to storytelling?

Other reading relating to the theme – relating the Jewish tradition of storytelling readings

Blue Christmas instruction – dealing with difficult memories in storytelling – childhood or adult difficult memories at Christmas

Culture Keeping Story - Keeping Stories Alive within a Culture

Make sure the history portion of class 3 is different than ‘culture keeping’ storytelling

Like the idea of building it around the different Advent theme – how to tell stories based on those themes – want to make sure the resources for class would fit with that week’s theme would be – tie in clearly

Even if not a whole book about “peace” stories – at least a reading or something to have to do with Peace

If they wanted to learn about how to bring the stories of Advent to life through storytelling as well as learn the basics...emphasis on it is not necessary to have taken the other classes

The familiarity with the Christmas/Advent stories is good

Make sure themes are carried through in the readings

How to make class better

Frustrating to read an entire book every month and not talk about it in the entire class
 Wants to be able to talk about this in class – wants to have a big discussion about it in class

Learning by doing was important

Ideas for MESOM

Workshop about “Running of the church” with copyright rules
 Pastoral HR class from UCC perspective
 Enjoy an opportunity to reflect with folks Sarah’s own age – young adults in ministry discussion (age 21-40)
 Building in support for MESOM students post-graduation – community of practice

Comments

Loved the allegory for this class of the candles around the Advent Wreath
 The 2nd day of the class felt too full - perhaps too many topics for 6 hours of class?
 He would describe the class as an opportunity to stretch and learn new techniques and to expand one’s view of worship.
 Would love to see the course include Blue Christmas ideas and helping folks with tragic memories- tell difficult stories

MESOM Afternoon Workshop Ideas

1) A workshop on

“No matter who you are, or where you are from, etc You are welcome here”

The tensions of UCC inclusivity - helping the folks who feel stigmatized by being “from away”

2) Grief and grieving ministry workshop - esp. for clergy and lay who have less experience ministering in this area.

How do you minister to grieving middle age extended family members you have never met — when they come to Maine because of the death of Mom or Dad or another older family member — and need help with grief, funerals, etc. etc.

3) Workshop on guiding churches who are moving from a full time pastor to a part time pastor / also how do we help churches who decide to close?

Comments

Telling difficult stories for those with painful Christmas/Advent experiences

Likes the idea of learning to speak better without a manuscript – has a lot of value

Good class to invite those who are unchurched to

In person face to face would be better for this class than Zoom

Could this class introduce new more contemporary forms of church music in this class - music reaches a lot of people

Possible future MESOM workshops might include:

1) Handling conflict in the congregation - esp. how to handle conflict between pastor and congregation

Comments

What's the relationship with the lectionary in theme courses?

Would there be a preaching course as a pre-requisite? This sequence values non-manuscript preaching. If they can't organize their thoughts in writing it's not enough for a lifetime of preaching. Interviewee used to mentor and teach preaching classes. Concern people will develop only one style.

Learning to write for speaking is something people need

- this course counts as a Biblical Studies course

off the chart introvert and doesn't like to even listen to storytellers and likes choosing her words carefully and enjoys manuscript preaching

This prototype is not clear that this class is using electronics

- at the outset name the bigger picture of where it fits in the curriculum
- at the outset name the methodology of use of electronic medium
- clarifying Biblical Stories not so much personal stories

MESOM ideas

What a person who is new to ministry should be looking at and doing when they first begin in ministry

Finding possibility for your ministry in the history of your church

Looking at the churches in your neighborhood & understanding theological differences & how to be in community

How to develop a referral network

Lutherans – “first call” program

Church music for non-musicians – how to get the most out of your hymnal, reading the metrical symbols, how to evaluate hymnals, how to manage with or without small choir/organist, hospice singing as an outreach ministry...a hospice singing group

Linda is Archivist of the Historical Society – interested in doing a workshop for church historians

MBTI type of class to understand yourself as a pastor...so as to develop and grow toward your other side...2 workshop sequence...use “Please Understand Me”

Church History teacher needed for filling out the curriculum

Might be helpful to say up front for mentored practice that *“this is a discerning time & the mentor practice is crucial and it may be that ministry is not the path for you”*

Maine School of Ministry is in the Life Cycle that is energizing 😊

Comments

Family ministry

– the stress of pandemic has been intense – self-care is first priority

Weekly long intensive class were a really positive experience for her at ANTS

Has participated in a storytelling workshop with Valerie Tutson but not a storytelling class

Liked – there is a pattern for each class so you can get into the mode of learning

Do not like the idea of going to class and having to tell a story and had a nervous reaction for being prepared to tell a story

Liked the LAST class theme – has a strong LGBTQ and ecumenical heart and could see using storytelling

Will describe this class as Experiential and applicable to all kinds of ministry settings

To be able to tell stories better is really appealing

wants to be more demonstrative in storytelling

Nervousness about coming in to tell stories...

Opportunity to have a brief one-on-one Zoom would be helpful

What to do to make the entry safer? Excellent question – to be able to see other storytellers – share some techniques to practice on her own before the class

Being creative is a vulnerable thing

biggest struggle is organizational – keeping things in order – what other people expect

Communication is tough

Administrative communication skills

Comments

Machias, Ran Deacons meeting

Pastor Suzie supports Lay preachers

On Machias church website – stewardship moments are all about storytelling – personal experience stories are so powerful – speaking from the heart... has written plays!!!! Role playing

Wonderful class – learning to feel more comfortable with your faith story and spiritual stories is so important – telling difficult stories – abuse stories – the more that we can share our stories with others is really important – someone will always see a piece of themselves in the stories you tell – public speaking class – talking off the cuff is NOT her thing

Church members are taking part in a Zoom book class “Falling Upward” the second half of our lives we actually define what we like and discard what is not important

An exciting class – to learn how to feel more comfortable in sharing your story

Add humor to make this class better!!!! How to tell a funny story??

Telling stories in different ways

For MESOM

Storytelling is important

LOVES history of the church!!! Around the state

Gardening!! Biblical garden planting...pruning....

Acting and being creative in ministry

Fifth Sunday worship planning

Reader's theater for worship

Sings

Comments

Cautious about overcommit –

Wants to take one continuing education course each year

Like – taking the Advent themes and linking personal & current event stories, telling it from the heart – moving away from the manuscript – the important things get said – sometimes the Spirit redirects

Dislike - So tired of Zoom and yet it Needs to be Zoom

How describe: “Freeing your spirit” – freeing yourself to try new things, experiment, take a new direction, and to trust the Spirit in your preaching & speaking

Make better: fewer commitment days are better than more...

MESOM - Old Testament courses

Exploring Your Spiritual Journey Prototype Notes

Comments

Like the premises of the class, like the lighter course load, overall being aware for some to condense reading and NO huge projects

Shorter run classes on specific area of ministry – go deeper & time

Somewhere down the road to have an opportunity to get together to check in with “How is it going with this thing you’ve learned?”

Spiritual Journey piece really needed right now, mid-coast interfaith alliance group

The course invites us back into exploring why we are doing what we are doing...is this call still meaningful for us or are we called to something differently

Can they enter in at any part of their journey – be aware of the first timers and vocabulary usage words will need to be defined

During pandemic time how might these classes be available to 20th century souls

Is there a way to invite them in??? possibly a co-facilitator, co-teacher...

Take the recorded part of the class and watch it together...for those who just can’t do this Zoom thing...

Allowing the distance...finding ways to continue online and include in-person

How would you describe this class to others?

A chance to look inward and think deeper about something you already know of yourself and learning that your story like everyone else’s story has value and worth to bring about a closer relationship with all persons which is bringing about the Kingdome of God on earth.

We live in such a dis-trustful time...TRUST

MeSOM suggestions:

A whole course on call again

Nurturing

How to encourage difficult conversations?

A multiple workshop and multiple seminary event: emotional connections with worship

Techniques to use, conversations to have, extended mentorship,

...how do you have the difficult conversation around mission...

Mentorship/Praxis

Chaplaincy training – through MESOM

Comments

“Exploring Your Spiritual Journey”

LOVES the idea of it already

Debby – familiar with the Mark of Ministry and is appreciative of a class that will look at them as they are overwhelming when looking at them as a whole

The course fits with the timing

Call stories of Moses, Jeremiah, Samuel, Jesus...etc...

Extravagant welcome stories – the hospitality of Abraham, the prodigal son,

People would learn about where they are on their journey.

The method we have to learn about HOW to learn about where we are on the journey.

Would like to share it with friend right away!

How to make it better?

The people we are missing are the youth. There are stories in the bible that are perfect in the Bible for ages 13 and older. Youth group in Farmington did a series of raps for MLK celebration she found great!

Is there a way to bring in young folks to balance the age range?

Ideas for MESOM

Of the original syllabus – ethical reflection would work well as a workshop –how do we actually work toward social justice – what kind of things are involved in social justice – more emphasis on racial justice question

Reflection takes processing & writing & sharing & listening to others

Class on Prayer and specifically Extemporaneous Prayer

Comments:

The thought of speaking without a manuscript brings a tightness in my chest.

It is intriguing and a little bit intimidating.

On class #3 — every biblical character has flaws - maybe this would help de-construct the views out there that a minister must be perfect.

Covid has put us into a virtual way of being - this help move us more fully into the audio visual age

Like or dislike

Like:

Like that Abby models storytelling in her own voice in each class

Likes the learning partner construct for digesting readings between classes

Dislike -

4 long days - would prefer another delivery system time wise - Zoom fatigue etc etc
Maybe 8 3-hour sessions.

Journaling is not best way to process for me. Are there other tools besides this? Like small group discussion- oral processes?

Describe class:

It is a way of expanding our understanding as to how we speak / preach and how we tell stories.

Make better?

Use other modalities besides journaling for going deeper to process the selected Marks of Ministry

Safety providing — try to schedule a one time (perhaps half way through the semester) 1/2 day face to face **retreat** for the class to change up from Zoom gatherings and tell stories f2f

Other MESOM classes/ workshops to consider offering in the future:

- 1) A Grant Writing Class
- 2) Churches and Mental Health Concerns
- 3) A semester class on Church Administration that would include a unit on how to help churches move from full time ordained minister to a part time minister model

Comments

Like or dislike about the prototype:

Liked the spiritual practice aspect that this class involves - storytelling is an ancient spiritual practice!

How would you describe class to others?

Both a preaching class and an “inner foundations” class - confirming of one’s own inner spiritual identity and how to share that with others

Improves preaching through inner exploring and a proven method for sharing without notes

How to make class better?

Each and every class should include a teacher led contemplative session or exercise that puts participants in deeper contemplation of biblical story(s) used that class.

Ignatian visual approaches to scripture stories or guided meditation or lectio divina are ways to do this.

Other ideas for MESOM programs / workshops:

1) A class on Appreciative Inquiry:

2) A Workshop on forms of prayer, including some instructions on how to learn to do extemporaneous prayer.

Comments

Like or dislike about the prototype:

It is so important to do the work of Exploring your Spiritual Journey in conversation with others.

Journaling the Journey is an excellent tool.

Used this tool with my close colleagues a couple years ago meeting once a week to work on the Marks of Ministry

Working on the Marks of Ministry in community brings Light to everyone involved!

How would you describe class to others?

Two big words come to mind -

Reflection and Exploration

So important to explore together the questions in Journaling the Journey and then reflect together on what you are hearing in that exploring.

How to make class better?

Nothing comes to mind off the top of my head.

Excited about the course as described.

Other ideas for MESOM programs / workshops:

1) A course on Pastoral Counseling that would focus on the local church pastor doing work with persons with mental health concerns, addiction concerns, youth mental health concerns, etc etc NAMI Western Maine as a resource. Other local western Maine resources. Rural Maine community focus.

Comments

Coaches people ahead of the class to be prepared to tell their story question – yes answered

The class size 6-12

Like or dislike: like the class and how it link to the marks and storytelling; liking how positive but not drawn into it – focus more on testimonial – wondered...seemed like it is a spiritual growth class – delve into your own call story class...and this depends on who your audience is...MID's would be delighted but if the audience is lay folk who are trying to make sense of where God is in your life – this outline doesn't cut it...depends on who the audience is...

This may be a course of just MIDs & clergy but not lay folks

Really appreciate the opportunity to focus on the marks and on the journey, students and current pastors are struggling to move into the marks

How to describe it: A course that is taught by a Biblical Storyteller and you'd get a sense of the power of storytelling based on the Marks of Ministry and how people are called to authorized ministries – this would be a fun series of Saturdays to devote to it.

Clarity for who the audience is would make it better. What would this course count for in dealing with your COM

Pastoral Leadership Certificate Program – counts as both a Bible and practical class

Final authorization comes from COM – how does MESOM intersect with MIDs and COM work

Merging “old” & “new” credentials has been tough & Major stumbling block to the authorized ministry process is the local church

For MESOM suggestions: will get back with ideas

Comments

For DMin “Sharing Your Spiritual Biography” how to tell your story and looking at call

Which Biblical Characters would you choose to inform your understanding of authorized ministry?

Like/dislike: a really good process, really liked it accentuates community building as sharing stories with each other and inner transformation comes from sharing who you are...get back to that process of self-reflection and telling stories about who you are...any time students can come sit around a campfire is a good thing...it happens through telling stories

Working virtually to create community - Part of this storytelling happens “naturally” in campfire, lunch table settings

Describing: an opportunity for growth and discovery in looking at your own sense of call and how to share that story with others

Better: TIME people who are engaged in storytelling...form/participate in a storytelling circle/group...a way to have someone tell stories...interfaith story circle that was youth...met occasionally and would teach kids storytelling skills and share their life experiences...storytelling within this milieu is important and good to ask church members to participate

MESOM ideas: Workshops on hybrid worship and hybrid technology, getting more purposeful COVID has taught us we are not going back to normal and how do we live into the new way of being church to carry on the stories of faith ...using technology to create community in new ways...how do you create a sense of belonging and sense of community...we are learning on the fly on everything right now...how do we create adaptable and transformational leaders?

Firm proponent of pastor’s group – been a part of an affinity group for the past 15 years

It grew organically – this group is all about their rhythm of checking in, getting together, holding people accountable...important to think beyond yourself – don’t give in to the isolation

Preaching as Sacred Storytelling Seminar Prototype Notes

Comments

There may be a way to ease things in – maybe we can pair it down – early June –

Include Labyrinth

We need to get people out to camp this summer – and garner income – are meeting tomorrow for plans and possibility – closer to the end of the tunnel with COVID

As much as you can do outside

September & October

Change hours to include sunset

If you are a fan of picture books you be the picture of the words of your story you are ready to tell

June, July & August possible – More repeat business

Comments

On J's radar to read out and tell stories of the past stories of Pilgrim Lodge - Naming of the Prams story

Pastors are exhausted and if we are not getting our cup filled up physically - how can we do this?

Publish stories from campers all over about this past year and missing camp

Love the seminar – the day is an easy sell – more than one day is doable day in July, August & September

Can separate people in tables – looking at somebodies for staffing – small crew to take care of hospitality piece for income streaming...

Won't know more until after March 6...

Write up blurb for P about MESOM's interest in holding this class

Comments

Slide 6

Spiritual discipline up top

Learning

Healing

Preaching

Good for lay people, good for healthcare, good for clergy...developing potentially dormant skills, (mostly jokes as storytelling...or their own personal stories)...approachable and transformational...how to see storytelling opportunities...the possibilities for transformational intimate attention that can be used for one on one, small group or large group...

Want to learn about application for everyday lives – when we see the mediation between 2 to 3 people...opening people to peace making and mediation through storytelling

The focus on one way of memorizing will be good with overview of many ...give people a taste and practice in a small group...to encourage you to try with larger audiences

It's relational and it's about people...not the weather...not jokes...what do you use for an ice breaker that gets a group going...

Good idea to have the fresh air break so that folks can explore their understanding of the storytelling experience break

How would you make this seminar better?

“Wonderful opportunity to explore storytelling and the options it has in a very relaxed setting.”

MESOM – teach people seminars on ART & SPIRITUALITY – Fuji Moro (Art & Theology) we are co-creators with God and opening up the Right Brain to connect with God...and how ART can influence and help churches and theology...

Comments

Ran a 1.5 hour workshop for SNEUCC with 25 participants promoting one day seminar using Broad Reach Ministries site for 2 dates in late June.

Slide presentation here:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1rQahskcwS2MSYN41hHswmoimjLjgRqSQm9nkLBZPqaA/edit?usp=sharing>

Appendix E: Milestone 5 Project Appendix Document

Total Feedback from All Classes

In all 76 students participated in my classes, workshops and seminars and 50 evaluations were returned.

Biblical Storytelling for the Virtual Worship & World

Taught Fall 2020 for Maine School of Ministry

What went well? - 6 responses

Doing the class by Zoom went much better than I expected. We were able to interact as a whole group, but also by use of breakout rooms, in small groups. The climate of the class quickly felt safe enough to trust in our first attempts at telling stories to each other.

Any chance to work with my fellow classmates on our stories in class

The format of the class and outline kept it moving and captivating. The mixture of hands-on and learning and discussion was perfect.

Learning the possibility of different styles of presenting stories: hearing the other students who all had different ways to approach the material.

Rev. Abby created a safe environment for expression as we learned the tools of storytelling. There was great camaraderie amongst all the class members.

The way Abby taught, the resources she had for us, and the positive feedback she gave and encouraged the other students to give.

What could have been done better? - 6 responses

I really can't think of anything that could have been done better.

The readings were hard to connect with sometimes, particularly the first book we read. I also would have liked to have had a chance to discuss the readings in class.

I really can't think of anything that could have been better

We could have had more practice on our chosen stories; maybe we could have just limited it to two stories, and perhaps one from the O.T. and a story from the N.T. that was related.

Perhaps requiring a couple of additional stories to be prepared with one being assigned by Rev. Abby. Assign one of those tough stories and help us bring it to life.

Nothing.

What really mattered? - 6 responses

Learning to have the confidence to tell stories. I would never have taken a chance to tell the story of Esther one Sunday if not for the class. The overwhelming positive response I got from people was enough to help me look for more opportunities to tell stories. My listeners were as caught up in the story as the children I used to read to when I was teaching school.

The various exercises we used to think about structuring our stories have been a big help for me, in particular, how to hone in on key details when telling a biblical story.

This class gave me my preaching voice along with a professional presence in the pulpit that keeps the congregation's attention.

I think everyone found out that telling a story from the Bible is a lot easier than they may have thought, and one of the reasons for that is that everyone supported all the learning that everyone did.

What really mattered was learning the tools for effective storytelling to capture the audience's attention without depending on notes. Amazing job by Rev. Abby teaching us these skills.

The relationship building and positivity.

Any other comments and/or questions? - 5 responses

I am grateful to have taken this class as it has opened much in my ministry each week. I have been told that it isn't the words I use as much as the imagery I create. I couldn't ask for much more than that out of a class.

Great class- I look forward to future classes and workshops to fine tune what I have already learned.

I am especially interested in taking the Bible stories and incorporating them into a personal narrative. This is perhaps worth looking at for a new class.

Fabulous class and an amazing instructor with Rev. Abby.

Abby is amazing!

Biblical Storytelling for Lent & Easter

Taught Spring 2021 for Maine School of Ministry

What went well? - 2 responses

Learning from Leonard Sweet and other remarkable presenters, including Rev. Haskell herself.

Please do not take this lightly when I say almost everything went well!! From ease of enrollment on the University website prior to class...information and resources or all planned and readily available. Each class was highly organized, packed with information and challenging in their own ways. As a lay person I was challenged in different ways than the clergy members that I studied alongside with. However, it was quite obvious we all grew and learned via the storytelling experience and lessons. Every week a new technique was introduced along with methods of sharing and delivery. All the while developing inside the liturgy of the season :-)

What could have been done better? - 2 responses

More feedback from other class members after we performed our stories.

I'm at a loss here.. truthfully. What little hiccups we had were technical issues with zoom calls, presentation etc. And zoom was in its infantile stages at that time :-)

What really mattered? - 2 responses

I now have a great devotion to telling specifically sacred stories -- it is now part of my practice as a Christian and a central part of my calling.

One word "growth"! I personally overcame fear in a safe environment. However, I learned that sharing the word of God has a way of edifying and educating the person sharing as well as those who receive.... I witnessed my classmates revitalize their sermons right before my very eyes and got to experience that personally. It was awesome.

Any other comments and/or questions? - 2 responses

Once the technology issues are resolved for me, which may take another year or so, I will work on getting my stories out on YouTube. I will still need encouragement and support and will hope to get that from the people in these classes as well as others.

I would highly recommend this course of study for lay people as well as ministry students. The material is presented in a structured and challenging format and the overall results for myself we're very rewarding. And observing my fellow students we were all challenged in different ways and every one of us walked away positively impacted.

One Day in-Person Seminar

Taught July 12 & 19, 2021 at Pilgrim Lodge

What worked well?

I liked that it was a small group giving us a chance to participate. Of course the setting at PL was phenomenal. Abby started the day off with a icebreaker which was an excellent idea and

helped the group bond very fast. Abby made us feel so welcome and guided us beautifully through the day.

What would make it better?

I would have liked more tools of how to tell a Bible story. Abby had shared with us that she had a few ideas but we ran out of time.

I think it would have helped that we each had a copy of everyone's Bible story.

What really mattered?

I was so grateful to be able to practice telling my Bible story twice. It mattered to me a lot since I would love to eventually preach a sermon without notes. I felt empowered and proud for telling the story and having a supportive audience.

1) What worked well?

Abbylynn was flexible and encouraged us to delve into our stories and to present them in a way we felt comfortable with. She also challenged us to follow our hearts and minds e.g. one person was encouraged if she wanted to present without looking at notes during presentation. Her way of teaching gave me courage to present my story in a dramatic way, which I felt good about. She is a great listener and gentle, firm optimistic teacher. She really has the gift of helping people enter into their souls and feel safe to share their perspectives. At the beginning she set the stage for honoring ourselves and having confidence in who we are. One nice thing was that at the beginning she gave each of us a sweet cloth zipped bag (which her mom had made) holding objects including a tea bag to represent steeping ourselves in our story, a red pen symbolizing

creativity, and a small candle to represent light . The candle reminded me to honor the light, the joy, and the possibilities within me...there was also a dark chocolate mmm ☺ and a Pilgrim Lodge sticker - for me a souvenir of the beauty and peace of Pilgrim Lodge and souvenir of a very wonderful experience - (these descriptions of these items are partly what she suggested and partly my interpretation).

It was also especially meaningful to me that Abby didn't concentrate on so much presenting so many techniques of doing Bib. storytelling, but opened up discussions between us, giving each opportunities to speak and share from the heart - this drew us together and helped us encourage each other and lift each other up. It was an antithesis to the isolation that sometimes has characterized the past two years during Covid. As I don't usually get to connect with women friends about my faith and personal reflections, I found it very special. We ministered to each other. and Abby facilitated this. Coincidentally (unless you believe that there are no coincidences!) another participant shared her health journey as did I. We both share a diagnosis and I have very rarely spoken intimately with another person who travels on a somewhat similar journey. This was another way in which I was freed from grief and isolation. This really was a huge positive for me. Isn't God amazing? Well we know that, yet God

always comes up with new and liberating surprises, right?

2) What would make it better?

Even though I was happy not to get into all the technical details of Bib Storytelling, I would have liked to have a list of resources or more details to refer to afterwards - I am kind of an academic - but Abby said she would email this to me.

All the same I am convinced that the way we spent our time was definitely much more valuable than a more formal presentation of "how to"s.

3) What really mattered?

I partly answered this in response to number 1, also feel that just "doing it" - focusing on and taking the risk to present our stories, without having too much time in preparation to belabor the details, was great.

We weren't forced to do it, but everyone did the final presentation - watching everyone's presentation helped me see how

we all have our own styles of telling our stories and even having fun with it!!! It was a great new experience I enjoyed -

also Abby invited us to have someone video ourselves with our cameras which I did - and I found it valuable and interesting to view it afterwards.

“the storytelling workshop Monday was one of my best life experiences ever. It introduced me to a fascinating new way to access and share the Bible. As you know AbbyLynn is outstanding and she really promoted meaningful dialogue between all the participants.”

1) What worked well?

The whole day was delightful. PL perfect place to reflect and think. Abby's class schedule had just the right amount of time for each exercise. Great to be with a group of serious Bible learners.

2) What would make it better?

Scentless candles in the little get to know you bag. When we tried our own storytelling....Abby should have gone last not first. (I think she realized that after she did it)

3) What really mattered?

What mattered the MOST was that I got to try a sermonette with no manuscript or notes in a supportive group!!! Something I have been aiming to do !!!!! I learned some techniques from “the Master” that I can incorporate!

I think what worked especially well is that the group was encouraged to focus on just listening to the formative thoughts we each had as we began to form our stories. It was during this time of formation that the stories began to jell. Out of that energy, my story is continuing to jell.

In the context of the one-day event, I find it very remarkable and a continuing source of joy that we achieved so much. I think to try to put more into the day might take away from the pure magic of hearing and seeing the stories gradually emerge.

I think what mattered most was to experience the power, the wonder, the awe of creativity within each one of us. This is why storytelling is a spiritual practice.

“It was great overall. Abby Lynn has an easygoing nature that puts everyone at ease. She is full of affirming words Tjy helps each person to feel like they are in the right place and making progress.

The bags and things were great. The symbols were nice bout being “steeped” and the light etc. I think that people could have used a cheat sheet for why they were going to talk about

in their intros. We kept needing to explain it so I see the need for a helper prompt there of some kind.

I enjoyed the visualization and the picture drawing technique. It was helpful.

I liked the progression of the storytelling. Once reading. Then with pictures. Then without any prompts.

The size was good. While a larger group could still have worked by breaking out into smaller groups, six people was intimate and comfortable, allowing for deeper conversation.

Thanks for the offering.”

1. What worked well?

a. The format of the day was very helpful for encouraging creativity. Time for introduction, time for creativity, time for reflection and time to bring the program all together.

b. The small group of participants was very inviting and responsive. It gave us a sense of intimacy in the group.

c. The location was second to none. Having this as a mini-retreat at Pilgrim Lodge was soothing and sparked creativity.

2. What would make it better?

a. The fact that it was raining was the only real downer of the day, but it was a warm summer rain and refreshed the soul.

b. Perhaps more “marks of a good storyteller”. What makes a good story stick? Or finding your courage to tell a story?

3. What really mattered?

- a. There was a feeling of kindred spirits within our group.
- b. Participants were all engaged and engaging, as was the workshop leader (AbbyLynn)
- c. Leading questions like, “What are you proudest of?” instead of being critical of your story.
- d. The positive nature throughout the whole day.

1. Open and positive support of all participants. 2. I feel a longer session to allow for opportunity to interpret 2-3 stories would be great. 3. The atmosphere of positive support by all was key to the comfort level and active participation of all participants.

1) What worked well?

This is the easy question, because so many things worked well:

--the site: perfect!

--Abby's wonderful welcoming, generous, and evocative style of leading and teaching

--the overall format Abby provided for the workshop/retreat event

--the opportunity for deeply connecting with the other participants

--the mutual encouragement we provided to one another

--the special grace of a creative and spiritual experience in a beautiful setting

--the small size of our group that allowed for deep and extensive sharing at an unhurried pace

2) What would make it better?

I am really struggling with this question. I want to be helpful by providing constructive criticism. But even the light rain we had for part of the afternoon did not detract from the experience for me. Indeed, the only thing I can think of that one might want to amend is to name the precise location of the gathering place--in our case the lodge building. There was some minor confusion about where we were to meet.

3) What really mattered?

What mattered was actually doing storytelling as we deepened our skills; learning from others as they engaged in storytelling; making deep personal connections; and being in that special "place set apart."

1. What worked well?

I felt that the PL was an ideal setting to allow the flow of creativity when crafting "storytelling". The ability to move about as we focused on our passage was very helpful, providing freedom and informality. The physical setting of PL with parking, updated bathroom facilities and experiencing seeing/hearing the lake was outstanding!

Our facilitator Abby has such a warm and welcoming way about her. Allowing us ample time to get to know one another and I never felt rushed as we moved through the material, she was sharing with us

2. What would make it better?

We were gifted by Abby a beautiful handmade bag. One of the items in the bag was a candle. We shared our stories inside the lodge by the fireplace. It would've been nice to have been able to light our candles before we began to share our

story and place them on the stone hearth. But I do recognize the concern of having an open flame, hot matches, and wax that all must be appropriately extinguished.

3. What really mattered?

That we were given the basics on how to dissect and discern the passage we chose prior to orally sharing our story with one another. All of us shared our passage through the “storytelling” model, but I also sensed if someone did not feel comfortable in orally sharing it would've been all right not to do so. Ultimately, I felt supported and unjudged.

Thank you for this wonderful learning experience.

Half Day Virtual Seminar

Taught online September 25, 2021 for Maine School of Ministry

What went well? 5 responses

The approach of having us doodle the story was helpful. Breakout rooms to discuss with others was good. Abby was clear with directions and encouraging of people's comments.

I thought the introduction and the 5 types of storytelling were helpful. It made me want to take the longer course. I felt very comfortable with everyone. I thought the breakout rooms and exercises were very helpful and non-threatening.

You gave us practical activities to do in order to sharpen our skills.

Organized time, smooth zoom transition to breakout rooms, ample time with other class members.

Meeting and practicing the story with the other group members

What could have been done better? 5 responses

?

If we had had longer, some examples would have been helpful. I came away wanting more. I had never thought of storytelling a psalm and would like to try it.

Breaks could have been shorter. Since we were so small, we should have worked up to sharing our story to the whole group at the end

would have been good to hear everyone's story that was worked on during the session.

More time for practice

What really mattered? 5 responses

I gained a new approach to working with the scriptures. Felt more capable of being a "story teller."

The openness and acceptance by everyone was very affirming.

Getting over any fears of telling stories about the scriptures

practice and colleague support

individual interpretation of Biblical material is not as important as listening to others

Any other comments and/or questions? 5 responses

Enjoyed the morning workshop. Very doable. Very accessible.

When will we be able to take the longer course?

More discussion over the philosophy about using scriptures as the basis for telling stories.

always pleasure to work with Abby

Diversity of the group was very helpful

4 days 1.5 Hour Workshop Series

Taught the week of August 9-12, 2021 on Star Island for Star Island Conference

What went well? - 8 responses

Presentation of each day's topic or goal

AbbyLynn did a great job of making all participants feel at ease and included without putting anyone uncomfortable on the spot, and with inspiring us to tell a story.

Telling the back stories from the Bible

I loved the back stories of the scripture stories you told, I loved having the opportunity to memorize a story and the tips to help remember it,

The Presentation, the questions and conversation with Abby and others attending. The workshop attendees who at the end of workshop were brave enough to tell their own stories. This was made possible by the gentle encouragement of the leader, Rev Abby Haskell. Went very smoothly. All the technology was working (powerpoint slides and video, and microphone)

I'm a very visual soul...doodling and drawing my depiction of the story really made a significant difference in recalling and remembering...also fun

You demonstrated beautiful story telling in this workshop and in your worship leadership. You inspired and empowered those in the workshop to tell their own stories.

You can immediately trust AbbyLynne her warmth and authenticity and encouragement of others come through immediately.

What could have been done better? - 7 responses

NA

Telling even more back stories

Maybe another day to work with my partner to tell our story

Scheduling more time to really practice the skills shown by leader as a group

Something you need to view...I enjoyed it 🍷

I don't know.

The only negative I have is the mustiness of the space itself where the class was offered, but that was beyond her control.

What really mattered? - 8 responses

How you answered folks' questions and listened carefully to doubts and concerns

Getting to know the other participants in an unusual way - through the stories they told, and their feelings about telling a story in front of people. Gaining the confidence to stand up myself in front of everyone!

Including all participants

Again I loved the back stories you told ,,

What really mattered was understanding how storytellers prepare themselves to be able to use the "story" as a powerful tool to bring the gospel alive. Christ used the Parable, why not let preachers use the story in the same way.

Sharing with others...some of whom were clergy.

I only attended the last day of the workshop, but could tell how meaningful it was from comments throughout the week by those who participated each day. Also, the depth and breadth of story-telling by participants that last day was amazing.

Her trust in the process and belief that all have stories to tell abs AbbyLynne helped nurture others to find their voices.

Any other comments and/or questions? - 8 responses

I enjoyed your total respect of each participant's thoughts and ideas

I'm glad I took part.

Well done

You personal story was powerful and relatable how circumstances call us in different ways ,,

Very enjoyable workshop. The Minister (Abby) was very friendly, helpful, patient, and supportive. This may help me in the future as a lay person active in my church.

What matters to the presenter...influences the listener. I recall one of Ruth Moran's characters she referred to as "Archie"!

Thank you.

Thank you. It was really lovely.

Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas

Taught Fall 2021 for Maine School of Ministry

What went well? - 3 responses

I appreciated the offering of several different storytelling methods and the offering to make your own style by using your own preferred combination of them. I particularly enjoyed the method of assembling objects that had symbolic meaning to your story elements as a way of learning to present your story. I also enjoyed the texts that were used in our course. All of them were very helpful and will remain on my bookshelf for years.

The online class. Seeing everyone face to face online. Seeing is much better then just hearing. Without driving somewhere or not being able to make class due to bad weather.

I absolutely loved the opportunity to watch and respond to our cohorts stories and find the positive in each offering. We are so often programmed to criticize ourselves and other's work but the emphasis to build each other up and encourage each others efforts was a welcomed benefit.

The encouragement from the Teacher . To "just do it" it will be OK. "To be willing to stumbler though it."

You do a great job of pacing the class. Appreciated the combination of videos, small groups, breaks, art, etc. Loved your backgrounds and the joy! You reached out to a diverse class and it worked.

What could have been done better? – 3 responses

I can't think of anything that could have been better. AbbyLynn presented a very well thought-out course that took into consideration varying levels of proficiency with technology and offered options for those who were less comfortable with technology.

Trying to meet up with our learning partners did not always work. And this is more on us (the students) than the Teacher.

Theological Warning Labels should have come with the texts. They held good material but the theology was cringeworthy at best. I think that more effort could have been placed on the why, to whom, we tell the stories of Jesus. What is the message that we seek to convey? Grapple more with the questions of the context for Biblical Story Telling. Worship, Church Meetings, Evangelism, etc. If something is put on YouTube, who is the audience? How do you ensure that what gets put online is helpful or just shows churches as places which produce mediocre video.

What Really Matters? 3 responses

I genuinely appreciate AbbyLynn's efforts in this course. She is an outstanding instructor and I look forward to more courses with her through my work with MESoM.

Now that the class is over, it would be great if we could find out how we did. What our final grade was. And I will be sending in my final video sometime next week (week of 12-20-2021).

I gained confidence to simply focus on the story and trust the power of the story. And that really matters.

Healing Through Sacred Storytelling

Taught on Zoom January 8, 2022 for the Chaplaincy Institute of Maine

What went well? - 18 responses

Abby you are a very good teacher. You opened doors for me in an amazing way.

everything

Presenters style, personality, enthusiasm was infectious and engaging. Videos were excellent. Prompts were perfect for conversation starter.

The whole day went sooooo fast. So many wonderful things.

Amazing workshop - learned and felt so much. This will change how I tell and listen to stories

The content was interesting and presented with an eye to neurodiversity which increased my engagement and absorption of the material.

Combination of whimsy, fun, and introduction to storytelling, with the science/chemistry of story telling. Fascinating material and very interesting.

all the components in the workshop were fun, engaging, informative and transformative!

Almost everything. Abby's skills as a presenter are exceptional. She encourages and invites in the most pleasurable way all with a personality that just draws you in. She is a gift and a blessing.

Thank you for a wonderful day. The morning was very engaging and I loved the break out rooms peppered through the whole day. Those felt very important. I found your leadership captivating and your slide deck really great.

Extremely interesting and informative. Excellent illustrative stories and videos. Well organized and articulately presented. Powerful.

the content was fantastic and engaging. It was beautifully facilitated and thoroughly enjoyable. I liked the use of google polls and the breakout sessions were well facilitated with clear prompts.

polling, photos, video & the number & length of sharing sessions were all a good complement to your excellent presentation materials. I loved the puppetry and appreciated your own contagious enthusiasm about storytelling. The neuroscience research findings are quite interesting. You offered a good mix for all learning styles with science & art and thinking & feeling, participant listening and processing with others.

I especially appreciated the neurochemistry angle!

The pacing was excellent! Small chunks of information interspersed with breakout discussions was very effective to break up a long day. Your passion and enthusiasm was contagious.

The actual sharing of stories was so fun to listen to! I like the number of breaks, the mixed media of videos, slides, puppets, etc., learning how stories apply to chaplaincy, and the number of breakout rooms with a chance to share stories and get to know my classmates better.

I loved the mix of left-brain and right-brain activities and information. I'm fascinated with how our brains operate, and I also love being read to or hearing puppets tell stories!

What could have been done better? - 18 responses

MORE TIME!!! Kurt Vonnegut has a great Youtube for story arc - it's funny and poignant. You might consider adding it.

maybe dividing the breakout rooms and the breaks

Can't think of anything.

I am not sure if Zoom fatigue set in for the pm or if there were fewer break outs but the afternoon felt long... I think more specificity with the breakouts would have been helpful. Such as "Tell a story about the prompt/topic (Don't just discuss it)" I found it fascinating to watch my own and others' lack of practice/staying power with the task "tell a story about..." It was so easy to lapse into talking about it, discussing, different part of the brain, etc. Also, I think it could have been clearer in each breakout how you would like us to break down the minutes (Person A tell, Person A +B reflect, Person B tell, Person A+B reflect...) It got a little loosey goosey toward the end of that day without the explicit specificity. More clarity around how this subject matter WILL help us become better chaplains. That is always the question I sit with through ChIME classes and workshops--"How is this going to apply to my chaplaincy?" I think whenever a presenter can make that really explicit or ask us to reflect on how the content will/might improve or challenge our chaplaincy, that is always always welcome .

NOthing that I experienced could have been better. You are a star in my life! Not crazy about the puppet but that is just personal.....other people enjoyed that presentation.

Maybe at least a bit more female? I think all the video, at least in the afternoon, were narrated by men

I would have appreciated an overview/arc of how the day would unfold - including the scheduled time for lunch. The student sheet was great but some sense of timing would have been helpful.

More of the same. There's so much we could have done multiple days.

The only think that would make this workshop better is to have it in person.

For me I was turned off by one of her videos which featured a very fast and to me mostly monotonastic presentation.

My only suggestion might be to reduce the sheer amount of research/number of theories etc that are included. All of them are relevant and interesting but it began to seem like overload late in the day. So, perhaps more in depth on fewer aspects?

I resonated less with the puppet portion, but I know it was popular. I appreciated that the break time was included in the initial breakout sessions, but I frequently got caught up talking and didn't get to use it as often as it was allotted for.

As an activator for our learning, possibly inviting people early in the day to share how they are using stories in their chaplaincies and community outreach and what stories have offered special inspiration during Covid.

In offering your material in a workshop for chaplains and would-be chaplains, you might devote more time and resources to "good rules," the use of stories and their power to heal in a wide range of creative, untraditional chaplaincies and for self-care. For example, an article in NYTimes recently discussed how reading aloud and audio books are becoming more popular to help soothe people to sleep in our anxious times. Norman Cousins and his daily doses of stories that helped him laugh during recovery from an illness also comes to mind. Maybe offering suggestions for spiritually uplifting stories, movies to help bring on the dopamine that can be shared. Maybe less focus on how stories are used to manipulate and sell products.

It was well done.

I think presenting the Heroine's Journey and generally featuring more females in your quotes, videos, books, etc. would be beneficial and more balanced.

Having more of an arc for the day of the skills we would learn and how it could apply to our chaplaincy. Some of the bits in the afternoon seemed more disjointed - lots of different videos. This was done at various points, like with weddings and funerals, and at the very end - very helpful to make the connection!

It's a LONG day, I'm not certain how to make that better on Zoom.

What really mattered? - 18 responses

The neuroscience was awesome.

all of it, a great balance of lecture and the sharing

The importance of story telling came through loud and clear!!!

As I am writing more stories mostly memoir, I learned a lot about Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, falling Action and ending conclusion. I have recently written a life story about the VietNam war. When shared with a mentor, the comment was that it was heard like a news story.....lacking emotion. Today's class will help me re write that story with emotion..(I hope)

Learning, and thinking about I can use what I learned in ministry and to heal the world.

The chance to tell stories to others. The chance to reflect on/review some modern storytelling examples (commercials) was very good literacy however I want to raise up Amos'

comment in the afternoon that modern storytelling might not just be about \$\$ but about social activism (I think they used the example of incarcerated peoples) I really appreciated this viewpoint.

The breakout/dyads helped me to internalize and make meaning from the data.

The usefulness of storytelling and sacredness of storytelling.

How a story can be healing, transformative, empathic and relational in ourselves and in the truth of our humanity.

The affirmation I received that I am healing and/or setting a tone or mood with my audience in the way I tell a story with the vocal inflections I use. Scripture, prayer or a sermon may affect more of my congregation when spoken with feeling and emotion. Also, affirming that we must truly listen.

The wolves blew me away to a place beyond articulation. It was very moving, just kind of sad that the product they "advertised" was a luxury hotel. A jarring juxtaposition of nature/connection/the spiritual with corporate greed. But I know this is somewhat beside the point. Also the neuroscience. Also lots of other thing

The conversation around the hero's journey and the specific examples (i.e. Ben's story, the story of the woman who was able to heal the childhood trauma of being told that God only takes the beautiful, Nike, etc).

You model a wonderful pastoral authority, as a minister with a depth of experiences and commitment to reflection, intellectual curiosity, learning and wonder about our world. I appreciated your enthusiasm and the care that went into your presentation.

Transformative power of story!

The Hero's/Heroine's Journey is especially applicable to chaplains or anyone answering a calling.

Inspiring me to connect more with stories and have the "outflow" like the Sea of Galilee to share my stories out, and share my treasures - that was amazing!

The breakouts were great, as it gave us time to share and discuss at a more personal level. I really enjoyed the class!

Any other comments and/or questions? - 15 responses

You've given me a whole host of books to read. I am entering my 4th unit of CPE and pursuing board certification. I need to be able to describe my theory of practice. I have been drawn naturally to narrative theory because I love to read. I feel reading the human document is sacred! Thank you for this sharing, I've learned and grown and I'm eager to learn more.

this is a wonderful workshop. Thank you!

Every parish pastor should take your classes. The Biblical Narrative is ALIVE with stories that are pertinent to the culture we are living. Holy jumpin Jesus! More money could be brought in by biblical stories that ellicit money!!! What a concept. Abby you do a

WONDERFUL job of presenting/teaching stories. I will always be a FAN!! The Hero/Heroine journey was very helpful.

Fantastic, thank you.

Thank you! Best of luck with your dissertation!

More than expected. Just so fascinating and well presented. Thank you.

Thank you for illustrating how important our stories are, how they connect us to each other and how to use them in our lives and in our chaplaining!

Could you PLEASE send links for the the hotel ad and the 7 min longer video about making it.

Thank you!!!

Again, thank you so much! I am curious to wonder f there had been a person of Indian decent in our midst if Richard's accent from a (presumably) white man would have felt respectful/safe. Just a wondering. It is tricky to honor his lineage of story collecting and experience (I do!) AND be culturally humble and not extractive/demeaning. it is tricky and I am working hard to bring these more delicate matters to light kindly and respectfully in our ChIME spaces, so thank you for hearing that.

I wish this was delivered in conjunction with the pending class on prophetic voice (I know this doesn't relate to your content, but I do hope they continue to bring you back). Thank you so much for today- it was one of my favorite workshops I have had with ChIME so far, and gained some personal moments of value from my conversations with my partners.

Thank you again and my thanks also for staying on a little longer to discuss my questions about my writing group. All the best with completing and presenting your dissertation.

Keep breaks separate from breakout groups. I didn't get enough break time during the day.

This was one of my favorite ChIME workshops. Thank you so much for your presence and generous facilitation style with a blend of teaching, receiving feedback, and inviting conversation!

Rock on, Abby! All the best with your dissertation and future efforts!

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