

Discipleship Talk – Storying

Telling The Story

Our Master Teacher was a Storyteller! People of the ancient Hebrew culture primarily passed down information via stories. It is interesting to note that our own cultures in 2017 seem to prefer a good story to the print version of the same.

As we seek to fulfill Jesus' command to make disciples of all peoples, telling God's stories is a powerful tool in finishing the task of discipling the world. Statistics show that 70% of the unreached people groups do not process information through the printed word.

As you prepare to tell God's stories, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and grant wisdom and discernment in selecting the right story to tell. Pray for Him to open the eyes and hearts of those who will hear (Luke 24:45) in order to grasp the Author's intent for the story so that their lives will be TRANSFORMED. Pray for your audience to be compelled to OBEY what God will teach them throughout the story. CHRISTLIKENESS IS THE GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP!

You will tell the story a total of FOUR times.

This will *not* always be possible due to time.

**There are times when you will tell a 60 second story and simply ask one question,
“What do you think about Jesus/God after hearing this story?”**

It is an opportunity to plant seeds!

1. TELL IT

**“May I tell you a story? It's a true story. It's true because it comes from the Bible (*or* a Holy Book).
The people are real and these events actually happened....”**

Memorizing the story will enable you to recall it exactly so that your audience will hear it the same each time you repeat. This also helps the hearer to actually begin memorizing the story for themselves. Hide the story in your heart and it cannot be taken from you! As you tell the story, intentionally make eye contact. “Own” the story. Invite the people to enter *into* the story. Help them to experience the story with all of their senses.

Tell it with life and passion, asking God to touch their hearts and to speak through you. Remember, this story really took place. It is TRUE! Use your entire body to tell the story. Use appropriate gestures to make the story come alive. This will help you and those who participate remember the story.

2. ASK, “What do you Remember in the Story?” - OBSERVATION PHASE

What captured your attention? What words or phrases stood out to you?

What did you See, Notice? What was important to You?

We must Listen Actively, praying that God will use your questions to help them discover key observations and also to help you remember the comments or responses of the hearers.

Take careful notice of what connects with them. Their insights are extremely important.

Their responses will reveal insights into their own culture and worldview.

This phase helps break the silence barrier and invites participation as a simple level.

3. STEPPING INTO THE STORY – INTERPRETATION PHASE

Slowly walk through the story **section by section** using the natural breaks in the story.

“Will you come with me? I invite you to step **into** the story. What do you hear, see, feel, and smell?”

(NOTE: If your audience is not accustomed to using their senses to describe experiences, you might give them a couple of examples. “What are some of the sights and sounds you are experiencing right in this very room ? For example: I hear the honking of car horns outside the window. I see the steady spin of the fan turning above my head.”)

As you continue through the sections of the story, ask questions about the characters:

“What does this tell you about _____?”

“What does this reveal about _____?”

“What are the character qualities you have observed about God/Jesus/other characters?”

Always use open-ended questions.

Listen closely to their responses. These reveal a person’s core beliefs and values.

Respond to their answers: “Now how would this...?” Let your questions follow the directions of THEIR questions. **AVOID TEACHING!** Allow the Spirit to work in and through your audience.

4. STEPPING BACK FROM THE STORY – APPLICATION PHASE – Repeat the story once again with the same breaks as before OR ask questions without repeating the story.

ASK, “Where do YOU SEE YOURSELF in the Story?”

Ask questions of concern for them that come out of the story, based upon *their* previous responses! (Not questions that will lead you to make a point of your own.)

“What has God shown you about yourself?”

“What do you know now, because of the story, that you didn’t know before?”

“What is God saying to you?” “How can you follow God’s heart in obedience?”

Move through the story. Pierce their heart. Go deep below the surface of their worldview.

If they don’t speak up, you can’t know what they are thinking, even if it is a “wrong answer.”

Do not try to correct “wrong theology.” Respond with “That is an interesting thought, what caused you to respond in that way?”

Allow future stories to be “self correcting.” (Example: Someone might conclude that Jesus ALWAYS heals by spitting in the mud. Next time you share a story, you share a different healing account and let THEM discover that He heals in many ways!)

Who will you share the story with in the week to come?

Since TRANSFORMATION INTO CHRISTLIKENESS is the goal, ask:

“As a result of what the Holy Spirit is speaking to me, I will _____.” Encourage them to be practical about the application

5. TELL THE STORY AGAIN – WITH PASSION!

Modeling for them once again, share the story from beginning to end.

Invite your audience to close their eyes and meditate on the entire story one more time.

The story is now complete again.

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If this is a story about Jesus, you might close with:

“How has this story drawn you closer to Jesus?”

This oral process of disciple-making through storytelling is:

Self-Discovering;

Self-Theologizing; and

Self-Correcting (Allowing God’s WORD to speak)

Keys to Effective Storying:

Only use SCRIPTURE – Memorize it!

Only ask QUESTIONS – Remember, the Holy Spirit is the Teacher, not you!

Only LISTEN & LEARN – This is Active Listening! 80% Listening – 20% Speaking

Sample story:

John 13:1-18 - Jesus sets an example for His disciples

1. TELL IT

Intro:

Passover was a festival/feast for the people of God to remember how God had spared them from the angel of death who passed over in the land of Egypt many years ago

Jesus and His disciples were gathered in a room, reclining at the table together to participate in this feast

- Memorize in the version that you regularly use.
- Share the story all the way through as one story, without asking questions

2. ASK, “What do you Remember in the Story?” - OBSERVATION PHASE (refer to notes above. You are just asking for a short answer in order to get them to interact and for you to learn what has spoken to their hearts)

3. STEPPING INTO THE STORY – INTERPRETATION PHASE

*The suggested format below would be for the second telling of the story. Remember, you do not ask EACH question in isolation. Follow the responses with another question in order to go deeper into

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what the Holy Spirit is speaking with each individual. These questions are just suggested in order to clarify the process. YOU ask the Spirit to bring appropriate questions to your mind. Avoid “yes/no” and “why” questions!

“I invite you to step into the story with me.”

"It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

- * How would you describe this scene?
- * What do you know about the nature/character of Jesus just from this part of the story?
- * What do you know about the nature character of Judas....satan?

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

- * How would you describe the atmosphere in the room?
- * As you imagine the posture of Jesus, what do you think is going on in the head of the disciples?
- * What does this reveal about Jesus? The Father?

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”

- * How do you picture Peter's posture/demeanor in the midst of this conversation?
- * What do you think prompted Peter's quick change in response?
- * How would you describe Jesus' face as he interacted with Peter?

Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

- * What do you think was going on in the head of the one who would betray Jesus?
- * What about the thoughts and body language of the other disciples?
- * How do you think Jesus felt about knowing the one who would betray Him?

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When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

* How do you think His disciples were responding to His words?

“Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”

* What do you think THEY think Jesus expects for them to do to demonstrate what He has just modeled?

4. STEPPING BACK FROM THE STORY – APPLICATION PHASE – Repeat the story once again with the same breaks as before OR ask questions without repeating the story.

ASK, “Where do YOU SEE YOURSELF in the Story?” (see the format above for more suggestions/questions about this phase)

5. TELL THE STORY AGAIN – WITH PASSION!

For more information, contact:

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“Telling the Story” adapted from a lecture by MDS

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