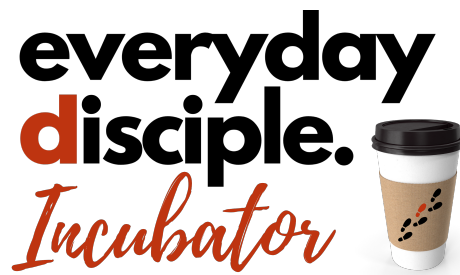


# Module 10

## Storytelling and Discipleship





## Module 10 | Storytelling and Discipleship

We live in stories. Stories are the language of our world. Think about your favorite movies, they draw you in... you begin to feel what the characters feel... their pain becomes your pain... their victory becomes your victory. We enter stories and make them part of our own experience.

### Q: What is your favorite story? Why?

Everyone has a story (or many) and ALL people are storytellers!

“Storytelling is powerful because it has the ability to touch human beings at the most personal level. While facts are viewed from the lens of a microscope, stories are viewed from the lens of the soul. Stories address us on every level. They speak to the mind, the body, the emotions, the spirit, and the will. In a story a person can identify with situations he or she has never been in. **The individual’s imagination is unlocked to dream what was previously unimaginable.**“ - Mark Miller

### 👁️ Stories have the power to...

- Attract our attention, draw us in and carry us along.
- Spark our imagination.
- Stories touch our minds and emotions.
- Build true community.
- Indirectly challenge worldview.
- Provide context helping us remember structure, setting, vocabulary and categories.

## We are all born ORAL learners.

How many of you were born literate? Have you ever thought about the fact that everything you know about your family heritage, nationality, how your parents met, your family's past... you learned from stories?



🔑 People in our culture are dying for a purpose. They are desperately looking for a story to find themselves in.

We need to help others find themselves in the greatest story there is—the **Story of God**, and how he has pursued and redeemed humanity (including you and me) through the work of his son Jesus.

*Your thoughts...* \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Shift in Communication

### Did you know that in the USA...

- Over 50% of people over age 16 are functionally illiterate.
- 58% of the U.S. adult population never reads another book after high school.
- 42% of college graduates never read another book.
- 80% of U.S. families did not buy or read a book last year.
- It is estimated that people spend as much as 80% of their non-working, non-sleeping time in front of a screen – TV or computer.
- Researchers believe that 70% or more of the people in North America prefer non-literate means of communication. (Preferred oral learners)

## A Revolution Has Begun!

phonetic alphabet > libraries > philosophy > post offices > printing press > telephones > radios > televisions > computers

Oral Communication	Print Communication	Digital Communication
Pre-literates Events / Stories	Literates Words / Ideas	Post-literates Images / Stories
<i>Learn through observing, imitating, retelling and dialogue - apprenticeships</i>	<i>Learn through reading, individual studying and analyzing</i>	<i>Learn by hearing, seeing and interacting; experiences move them to belief</i>
<i>Shared experiences determine truth</i>	<i>Facts determine truth focused on individual application</i>	<i>Personal experiences determine truth</i>
<i>Get information from stories; use stories to package information</i>	<i>Get information from print and lecture</i>	<i>Get information through media and dialogue</i>
<i>Driven by events and relationships - a search for connection</i>	<i>Driven by concepts and principles - a search for knowledge</i>	<i>Driven by interaction, participation and imagery - a search for significance</i>
<i>Think in metaphors</i>	<i>Thinks linear, analytical, logical</i>	<i>Thinking is non-linear, - makes random connections</i>

**1. Which of these methods of communication and learning is most common for you personally? Be honest—how do you learn about the world and where do you get new information from...?**

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**2. Which ways do you think are most common for the people you could most likely make disciples among?**

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**3. Currently, which ways are you and/or your church primarily using to teach, equip and make disciples?**

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## **Adapting to Culture**

As our culture has changed so have the ways we communicate our faith. Christianity has shifted from passing on truth through stories to using propositional sermons.

The Apostle Paul adapted his approach to sharing truth through reason rather than stories in order to reach a Greco-Roman culture that was steeped in philosophy. This approach has been adapted and updated to continue reaching literate cultures of the West.

The problem with this approach is that it is not effective in reaching people who learn best through images, stories , relationship and experiences rather than words and ideas.

## **This shift in communication causes us to consider...**

- Is our method of communicating really helping people to take hold of God's truth - or is what we teach lost in just a few days or hours?
- Does the listener easily pass on our current method of communication? Is it reproducible? Is it helping us make disciples who make disciples? Does our teaching/preaching stop with the hearer?
- God's truth as found in the Word is transformational - do our methods complicate things rather than give people context, "handles" and insight?

*Your thoughts...* \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

## **Developing Your Skills as a Storyteller**

### **Get to know the narrative**

Read the narrative over and over. Really get to know the story. Work hard to be as accurate as possible in your retelling. The narratives are already super-condensed. Skipping parts of them can leave out important parts that will connect with future narratives.

### **Stick to the narrative**

Don't mix other stuff from your knowledge of future stories into the narratives. This will only confuse your listeners. Remember, don't add your "personal favorite" insights into the narratives. Let the Bible speak for itself via this narrative and don't skip parts.

### **Tell the narrative from beginning to end**

If you stop to answer questions, preach or add extra parts you will only confuse people. They could also end up thinking your "helpful additions" are actually part of (and found in) the Bible!

### **Be real and natural**

Set up your story time and setting in the most natural way possible. Don't set up a mini-church service in your living room or café. Try and make this as "normative" as possible so it will feel like an extension of the rest of the time you are having together. Be very careful about joking and sarcasm—they can reinterpret the story to be very different from the biblical meaning you think you are giving them.

### **Use your voice to create the atmosphere**

Pacing incorporates both the volume and rate at which you tell the story. Dialogue slows a story's pace down, while narrating action usually speeds it up. Repetition is a common part of storytelling—don't fear it.

**Be especially careful on how you voice God and Jesus!** What is God feeling in a particular situation? Is he angry or broken-hearted and disappointed? How you voice God and Jesus will leave a HUGE impression on the listener as to the character and heart of God!

### **Relax and be yourself**

Have fun with this process—it really is amazing! Don't let your own hang-ups or "performance idols" ruin your (or everyone's) experience. Be patient. At first some people may think this process is too simple or "childlike". Don't worry, stick to it—after you are a few sessions into it they will realize how much there really is to be learned from each narrative and they'll start to get into this different way of learning.

### **Practice makes a BIG difference**

Practice the story and have others listen to you and give you feedback. Like anything, you will get better the more you tell stories and lead dialogue.

### **Read through the entire Story of God BEFORE you begin**

It's imperative you not only practice the stories, but you should read completely through all of the narratives and dialogue in your story set before beginning. This will help you connect key insights and parts of the Story found in the early narratives with parts found later on.

## Leading the Dialogue

### **Direct learners back to the Story for answers, insight and truth**

This is not your chance to preach or look smart. We want to connect people to the Bible, and the narratives found there, for their answers. Everything can be answered from within the narrative we just heard or the Story so far. Insisting that we find our answers from within the story causes us to live in and experience the story in a more powerful way. After answers are given, ask questions like, *"Where did we see that in the story?"* or, *"Where have we seen something like this before in the story so far?"*

### **Redirect questions back to the group**

Don't feel like you need to be the "Bible answer man" or woman. Let the group know that God gives them insights into the Story that help us learn as a community. Try to affirm that everyone has valuable input.

### **Only discuss information that has emerged from narratives that have already been told**

Remember: "Always backward—never forward." This is important with people that have some (or a lot of) biblical knowledge. People have a tendency to want to bring in their own insights that are not in the stories or are from stories not yet told. Don't let this happen, it will ultimately bring about confusion—not clarity.

### **Don't turn the dialogue into 'Question & Answer' time**

For most of us, our experiences of learning in school growing up, in university or church, have included a lot of Q&A times and testing designed to see if we had read and memorized the "right information". We can naturally tend to default to this method of teaching ourselves. Fight this! This is not a "curriculum". We are not trying to quiz our listeners to see what they remember from the Story. We are trying to get them to listen to God and each other to gain insights into who God is and what we can learn and apply AS A COMMUNITY from experiencing the Story together.

### **Learn to live with tension and mystery**

Tension is a powerful tool in teaching and helping people to learn. Jesus was a master at this and often used mystery or tension to engage his disciples.

## *Leading a dialogue requires us to...*

**Let Go...** of the role of expert teacher and embrace the role of co-learner, encourager, guide.

**Listen...** in expectation that God is revealing himself to and through each person present. Pay close attention to your participants answers and the patterns that emerge in how they respond to the Story. This will reveal a lot about where their heart is.

**Trust...** that God will work through the process, valuing the experience as much as the knowledge and content. Have faith that God will speak and help bring to light the truth and implications he wants to reveal.

**Be Patient...** allowing time to process, leaving room for different opinions, tension, questions, and wondering.

## Key Takeaways From This Lesson

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## Action Steps

☐ Download the **Storyformed Way Learder's Guide** now: [Click Here](#)

☐ Download the **Story of God For Kids** story set: [Click Here](#)

☐ Who will you invite to do the Story of God with you in the near future? When?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_

**Remember:** Pray "What Next, Lord?" for the People of Peace in your life, and then in faith invite them to experience the Story with you and others in community.

You don't need a huge group to get started. 8-12 people is ideal, especially when starting. Don't do this as a "holy huddle" with only your Christian friends!

☐ What would keep you, a few close friends and People of Peace, from going through the Story together the next few months? (If nothing, great!) **Set a date to start, now.**

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 **Your goal is to help others understand, experience and intersect with God's story.**