



WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Your Chapter In God's Never-ending Story

Week 10

Today's Theme: Great stories seem unfinished but even those are part of THE greatest story ever told.

Scripture Verses: John 8:1-8

Supplies:

- Picture Cards
- Paper, pens

Opening Everyone Answers Question: (10min)

You want to get everyone talking here. This will set the tone for the meeting and introduce the theme.

- Think about a cliffhanger in a book, movie, or TV show. What made that cliffhanger powerful, even though the story was unfinished?

Scripture Exploration: (25 minutes)

This is the part of the study that you'll dig into Scripture so as to draw out the day's theme.

Some helpful background on the story:

The famous story about Jesus and the woman caught in adultery appears in John 7:53--8:11. In the surrounding context in the gospel, the Jewish leaders have been disturbed by the way Jesus taught and acted in ways that seemed contrary to their understanding of the law.

Jesus is confronted with a situation in which the verdict seems to be self-evident. The woman was caught in the act of committing adultery, and the law clearly says that the punishment for adultery is death (Leviticus 20:10). So, the Jewish leaders want to see whether Jesus will uphold the law in this case.

Yet the literary context also warns that people are not to judge by appearances, and in this episode there is more going on than what initially meets the eye. The evidence actually works against the woman's accusers. Note that the woman was caught in the act, which means that

the man also must have been present, and the law is quite clear that in a case of adultery both people are to be put to death--the man as well as the woman (Leviticus 20:10).

The accusers are guilty of ignoring the clear statutes in the law. When Jesus asks who is without sin to cast the first stone, no one responds. The accusers are guilty of a travesty of justice. They have violated the law by condemning the woman's sin while letting the other guilty party go free

1. Read John 8:1-11. What do you imagine Jesus writes in the sand? Why?
2. Do you think the Pharisees are guilty of anything or are they “just doing their job?” Why?
3. Today’s theme is “Great stories seem unfinished but even those are part of THE greatest story ever told.” How is the story of the adulterous woman an example of an unfinished story?
 - a. How is the story of the Pharisees an example of an unfinished story?
 - b. How is YOUR story an example of an unfinished story?
4. Which character do you identify most with in this story: The accusers, the woman, a bystander? Why do you think this is?
5. Tell the ending of this woman’s story. What becomes of her after this traumatic day? How does her encounter with Jesus transform her?
 - a. Think about an encounter with Jesus you’ve had. How did it transform you?
6. This story is titled, “The Adulterous Woman.” After Jesus forgives her, what do you imagine people call her? Why?
 - a. Think about the encounter with Jesus you described earlier. What nickname might such an encounter earn you? Why?
7. How is the adulterous woman’s story part of the greatest story ever told? What does her story reveal to us about God?

Storytelling Practices (20 minutes):

Each week, we’ll provide you with different storytelling practices designed to help those in your small group practice sharing their stories.

Storytelling Practice #1: Your Unfinished Story

Using picture cards, have everyone select a picture that represents an unfinished story in their life. Using the picture, tell us about that unfinished story. Then answer these questions using the cards as a prompt:

1. What is one hope that you have with this story?
2. What is one thing you're praying regarding this story?

Storytelling Practice #2: Your Life as a Comic Strip

Think about your life. What parts of your story feel unfinished?

Write or draw out your unfinished story as a three-segment comic strip. Do NOT worry about ending your story in this part of the comic strip. Simply write / draw your story up until this point. Don't worry about your skills as cartoonist.

Once you've finished creating the first three panels of your comic strip, write / draw two different fourth panels to your comic strip that represent different endings to your story.

The first ending should reflect how you fear your unfinished story will end.

The second ending should reflect how you hope your unfinished story will end.

As you create your comic strip, reflect on these two questions:

1. How is your story part of God's never-ending story?
2. Despite it's unfinishedness, how has this part of your story revealed God to you?

Storytelling (20 Minutes):

Your small group leader will direct you in sharing the stories you reflected on during the practices. Consider sharing all or part of your faith story at our ***What's Your Story?*** storytelling event on November 17.

After giving your small group a few minutes to do their storytelling practices, invite people to share their story using whatever storytelling practice they experimented with. Make sure people know they can share as much or as little of what they came up with as they'd like.

As people share, encourage them to think about sharing all or part of their faith story at our Storytelling Event on November 17.

Processing / Wrap-Up (20 minutes):

1. How easy or difficult was it for you to participate in tonight's storytelling practices?
2. What did you learn about yourself from tonight's storytelling practices? About others in our small group?
3. As you thought about your own story, where did you see God at work?
4. Where did you encounter God during tonight's small group?

Overall Reflection Questions on the Small Group Series (these are in addition to the questions we've been asking each week:

5. How has participating in this series helped you to articulate your story?
6. How has reflecting on your stories over the past 10 weeks helped you see your place in God's never-ending story?
7. Going forward, how can you integrate your stories into conversations with your family? Friends? Co-workers? How might doing so impact your faith and theirs?
8. What is one thing you've appreciated about our small group these last ten weeks?
9. Going forward, what's one prayer you have for the future of our small group?

Closing Prayer: