



WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Your Chapter In God's Never-ending Story

Week 2

Today's Theme:

- Great stories don't have to be lengthy.

Scripture Verses:

- John 9:1-15, 24-25

Supplies:

- Paper and 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.

- A favorite quote is usually short and to the point. It has an impact with few words. What is one of your favorite quotes, slogans or sayings and why does it have such an impact on you?

Scripture Exploration: (25 minutes)

1. Read John 9:1-15 and 24-25. In your own words, describe what happens in the passage.
2. Describe the different reactions to the healing by those involved in the story – the neighbors, Pharisees, parents, and the blind man. What story do you think they told others about what they had seen? Why?

*There will always be differing reactions to our story depending on the relationship we are in with others....but it is still **our** story.*

3. If you were telling the story, what would you highlight? Why?
4. In verse 25, how does the blind man describe what happened to him?

"I was blind but now I see". He gives no deep theology, just his experience.

5. Why do you think the blind man doesn't try to explain why or how he was healed?

We don't have to know the why. Just tell the what.

6. Is the blind man's story satisfying to you or do you want more information? Why do you think that is?

*The temptation is to think there has to be more to the story. But the blind man's version is simple and straight forward. That can be the case with us. The blind man can't explain how he was healed. We don't have to be able to explain the **how** either.*

7. The blind man doesn't seek out Jesus; Jesus finds him. How, if at all, has Jesus found you when you weren't looking for Him?
8. Jesus healed the blind man in an unexpected way. Tell us about a time when you were healed or changed in an unexpected way.
9. When, if ever, have you been "blind"? Who or what helped you see more clearly or in a different way?

Storytelling Practices (20 minutes):

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

Think about these lines from various books:

- "I can't go back to yesterday, because I was a different person then." Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*
- "Not all who wander are lost." JRR Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings*
- "We are all fools in love". Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
- "To be or not to be. That is the question." William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Each of these short quotes convey emotion, a sense of shared experience, and a truth about its speaker to the reader. They say a lot in their brevity. **The blind man shared his entire encounter with Jesus in just a few words and yet we're still talking about his story 2000 years later.**

In this session, we're going to spend time individually creating short but powerful stories about our faith. They don't have to tell the whole story. They can leave some room for questions. As

with the blind man's story they may tell just the "what" and not the "why". You will have a chance to share your story with the group at the end of the session.

Storytelling Practice #1: Write a 6-word faith story

This exercise is inspired by the book *Not Quite What I Was Planning: 6 Word Memoirs from Writers Famous and Obscure* edited by Larry Penn and Rachel Fershleiser. Some examples from the book include:

"It's simpler than they tell you"
"Found a new mountain to scale"
"I am not so easily summarized"
"Asked to quiet down, spoke louder"

Your faith story does not need to be a complete a sentence. It can simply be words that, when put together, paint the picture of your faith. With that in mind, write out your faith story in 6 words – either as a complete sentence or in 6 words that, when taken together, tell the story of your faith.

Storytelling Practice #2: Draw a simple symbol

For some people, a symbol is the most concise way to get a point across. The peace sign, the recycling symbol, and the early church's *Jesus fish* all tell stories. They conjure up history, a belief system, and emotions.

Draw a symbol that represents your faith. Alternatively, find an everyday object that symbolizes your faith story in the same way that Jesus often used ordinary objects to describe deeper concepts – faith as a mustard seed, relationship as a tree and its branches, the Word of God as bread. For example, you might say your faith is like a Roomba because sometimes you see its value and other times you feel it's overrated and useless.

Whichever method you choose to tell your story, be creative and have fun. There are no right or wrong answers. You're simply telling us your story.

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 one or both of the 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 storytelling practices at our Storytelling Event on November 17.

Processing / Wrap-Up (10 minutes):

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

Closing Prayer: