



LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Session IX: Sharing Stories

Why Christians Share Stories

To reveal who God is and what He is like.

To instruct people: we learn more about ourselves from telling our stories and we learn more about our brothers and sisters when we listen to their stories.

Stories should always get to the person and work of Jesus. All ministry begins with making disciples. Making disciples points people to Jesus and what He has taught us through His life and Word.

“Every person you meet, every community you enter into and every culture you engage has a dominant Story with many sub-stories. The Dominant Story is the most prominent, compelling, and controlling informant for how people perceive God, others, and the world. Some call this a worldview because it is the lens through which they view the world. One’s worldview shapes how they receive and process information, engage in relationships, make decisions and shape their philosophy and beliefs.” - Jeff Vanderstelt,

Important Reminders Surrounding Stories:

I. This type of thinking is foreign to anyone who hasn’t been taught how the gospel informs how they think, talk and act.

II. We all forget the gospel and react instead of respond. None of us are perfectly differentiated because none of us are Jesus. All of us are on this journey of becoming more like Him; becoming more fit for Heaven and less fit for this world. Part of this process of sanctification occurs as we live in community and on mission. It’s in community that these gospel issues show themselves. Being able to look to Christ, beholding His glory is what changes us from one degree of glory to the next. So we can think of that as a strategy for getting to where we want to get. Stories are a tactic within this strategy.

The Flow of Sharing Stories

The sharing stories season traditionally has been preceded by going through the Story Formed Way curriculum that transitions into the Engaging in Stories curriculum and ends with members of the Missional Community sharing their own stories. This season is set up in this way because knowing the true story of God can help us to correct false aspects of our own stories.

The Framework of a Story

I. Creation: Who or What do they credit for who they are?

II. Fall: Why are things and people not the way they are supposed to be and who is to blame for it?

III. Redemption: Who or what will rescue me and redeem what is broken?

IV. Restoration: What will the world or your world look like when all is as it should be AND Who or what will be the focus of this world?

How do we Engage the Stories of Others?

Intently listening to a person tell their story to see where it lines up with the truths of God's story and where it doesn't. We should all be open to the Spirit using us that night to bring the gospel to bear on this person's story. How has God been pursuing them that they seem blind to? How is the gospel good news for this person?

Intentionally digging into their story by asking questions for the purpose of getting to their unbelief. We want to uproot the lies this person is believing so that truths of the gospel can be applied to those lies. The hope by the end of the night, is to unveil how this person's story has informed what they currently believe and how they currently function then to be able to apply God's story to theirs. To be able to speak truth in love to them, to teach them, or remind them what is true and what they should be believing.

Best Practices for Stories:

I. Walking our MC's through *why* we share stories regularly and intentionally.

II. Reviewing the Gospeling Guidelines prior to stories

III. Set Reasonable Expectations Each Night: The group should know that although we want and expect God to do something awesome with the night, sometimes what God thinks is awesome is different from what we think is awesome. We want to be in tune with what the Spirit is doing and trust that He knows best even when that is not something spectacular with the person's story.

IV. See Stories as a Regular Rhythm of Discipleship

Questions for the Group

I. In your experience, what are some of the more important things that you've seen that are necessary for stories to go well?

II. What are some of the more difficult things to navigate during stories for a leader?