

Syllabus: Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual Worship & World (Fall semester 2020)
Maine School of Ministry, Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

MESOM Cross Listed Course #s: BibSt-Fdn 1or2 plus PrTh-Pb 4: Church Practice—Worship

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Course Description: Biblical Storytelling is a Fall semester 2020 practice-based course which will provide course participants with an introduction to the art of Biblical Storytelling for use in a virtual worship and world through an experiential learning approach. Biblical Storytelling is a spiritual discipline through which you are invited to deepen your devotional faith and grow in your missional outreach.

Everyone is a storyteller. Each person is a one-of-a-kind creation with distinctly original gifts, therefore, each story that a person tells will be uniquely expressed. There is no one perfect storytelling role model to follow. This course will survey a number of different techniques for learning and telling Bible stories. Course participants will develop and share their own Biblical Storytelling art through pre-recording and live virtual presentations.

The technology requirements of this class involve being able to access Zoom by computer or smartphone. Technical assistance will be available for the making of recordings if desired. The overall approach for critiquing storytelling efforts in this learning process will be one of affirming the strengths and positives of each attempt. As the strengths of your attempts are affirmed, the confidence and thrill to keep trying grows and gradually any doubts will diminish. Delighting in developing your God-given gifts for storytelling opens the spiritual practice of storytelling to the realm of being a grand adventure as you feel God's pleasure in the preparation and in the telling.

Meeting 1 (Sept 19, 2020) We will explore the overall themes of the class and take time to introduce ourselves with care to one another, including our contexts, goals and intentions for seeking to practice the art of Biblical Storytelling. Prior to this class Learning Partners will be assigned for discussing the readings of the course. Instructions for the pre-recorded Biblical Storytelling presentation will be given, samples from the Instructor discussed in class, and a class calendar for student Biblical Storytelling presentations across the semester will be created.

Meetings 2, 3, 4 (Oct10, Nov 14, Dec12, 2020) will be devoted to morning sessions which will feature a two-part seminar at which (9-10:50am) assigned readings will be considered and (11-12:00) viewing a pre-corded Storyteller and follow up with discussion on the theme for the class for that session. Biblical Storytelling presentations by students will be made in the afternoon sessions according to the calendar developed at the first meeting of the class.

Course Expectations:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Express their understanding of their own unique style and strengths as a Biblical Storyteller.

2. Understand and articulate the importance of encouraging and nurturing Storytelling art as a spiritual practice that incorporates both a devotional deepening aspect and an evangelism reaching dynamic.
3. Deepen their understanding of developing a supportive Storytelling network while being an encourager of others in each person's Storytelling endeavors.
4. Demonstrate increasing ability to engage online and social media tools for Biblical Storytelling in virtual ministry, worship and outreach.

Meeting Time, Place, Dates: Four Saturday meetings (9am-3:00pm) on September 19, October 10, November 14, December 12, 2020 on Zoom.

Course Requirements:

All pre-assigned reading and writing is expected to have been completed prior to each class. Please acquire assigned texts and to begin reading and writing assignments at least three weeks in advance for each class (thus by August 29 for the first class).

Two pre-recorded Biblical Storytelling presentations due for the Oct 10 and December 12 class is required; the format and instructions (and sample recordings) will be provided at the first meeting on Sept. 19.

In preparation for each class, each student will participate in small Zoom Learning Partner discussion groups (2-3people) the week preceding each Saturday class session. You will be given the name(s) & emails of your Learning Partner(s) so you can work together to agree upon a time to Zoom. A guiding set of questions will be given to which each student will respond in a discussion format that allows everyone to participate. The intention here is to prepare and deepen the learning from the readings that will be further discussed at the Saturday class meeting. These small group discussions assist students by allowing for more time for reflection on the overall material and themes.

A final written assignment of ~2000 words will be due within 23 days of the last meeting (no later than Monday, January 4, 2020): *What fundamentally have you learned from your readings and watching, your instructor, the Biblical Storytelling presentations (including your own), and your fellow students concerning the art of Biblical Storytelling for a Virtual World?*

Student Evaluation: Students' assigned written work and in-class presentations will be marked Completed with Distinction, Completed with Promise, Completed, and Did not Complete and given comment. Students will receive a final mark using the same rubric. Class participation will be assessed separately (this includes participation in online follow-up discussions) and factor into your overall assessment.

Zooming in: All classes and small group discussion will take place using Zoom

Class Meetings and pre-Meeting Assignments: Each Saturday there will a morning (9:00-12:00) and an afternoon (1:00-3:00) session, as described in the Course Description. There will be a 5-10 minute break each hour. Lunch will be from 12:00pm-12:30 paired in a breakout room with another student and 12:30-1:00pm will be on your own.

1. **Saturday, September 19: Introduction to the Class and Class Participants**
Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

The Art of Story Telling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story by John Walsh

BibleTelling: Telling God's Word By John Walsh

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read both entire books (above). Procure all required books and begin to survey the rest of the books on the required reading list.
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class
- **Recommended Reading**

Day, Doris. "Storytelling Techniques" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020
<http://www.biblestorytelling.org/devotions/W%20Storytelling%20Techniques%20PDF%207-24-13.pdf>

Day, Jack. "Tips for Bible Storytellers" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020
<http://www.biblestorytelling.org/adults/Tips%20for%20Telling%20a%20Bible%20Story.pdf>

2. Saturday, October 10: Thomas Boomershine & The Network of Biblical Storytellers Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling by Thomas Boomershine

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read entire book (above).
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.
- **Recommended Reading**

Network of Biblical Storytellers International. "Tips for Developing Your Story." Resources, last accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.nbsint.org/resources/>

3. Saturday, November 14: Leonard Sweet, Narraphors & Telling Difficult Stories Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

Giving Blood: A Fresh Paradigm for Preaching by Leonard Sweet

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read entire book (above).
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.
- **Recommended Watching**

"*Razing Hell and Raising Roofs*" Sermon by Leonard Sweet, Last accessed May 12, 2020
<https://youtu.be/39zHzfx7qRA>

4. Saturday, December 12: Annette Symonds & Culture Keeping Storytelling Required Reading (see Readings List for full entries)

The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, & Persuasion Through The Art of Storytelling Third Edition by Annette Symonds

Pre-Meeting Assignments

- **Pre-Meeting Reading:** Read entire book (above).
- **Pre-Meeting Writing:** Make careful notes on each chapter and bring your notes to class.
- **Pre-Meeting Learning Partner Discussion:** By Zoom discuss your chapter notes and learning with your Learning Partner(s) at least one day before class.
- **Recommended Reading & Watching**

Gallo, Carmine. "Stories literally put our brain waves in sync." Quartz at Work, Last accessed May 12, 2020. <https://qz.com/work/1298571/stories-literally-put-our-brain-waves-in-sync/>

"*The magical science of storytelling*" David JP Phillips; TEDxStockholm: Last accessed May 12, 2020 <https://youtu.be/Nj-hdQMa3uA>

Required Readings List

Walsh, John. *The Art of Story Telling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Walsh, John. *BibleTelling: Telling God's Word*. Bloomington, IL: BibleTelling, December 2018.

Boomershine, Thomas E. *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1988.

Sweet, Leonard. *Giving Blood: A Fresh Paradigm for Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Symonds, Annette. *The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, & Persuasion Through The Art of Storytelling* Third Edition. New York: Basic Books, Hachette Book Group, 2019.

Recommended Readings List

Biblical and Theological Foundations

BibleTelling. "Everything BT" BibleTelling.org. Last accessed November 16, 2019, <https://www.bibletelling.org/everything-bt/>

BTStories. "Welcome" Last accessed May 12, 2020, <http://www.btstories.com/>

Day, Doris. "Storytelling Techniques" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020 <http://www.biblestorytelling.org/devotions/W%20Storytelling%20Techniques%20PDF%207-24-13.pdf>

- Day, Jack. "Tips for Bible Storytellers" Biblestorytelling.org. Last accessed May 12, 2020 <http://www.biblestorytelling.org/adults/Tips%20for%20Telling%20a%20Bible%20Story.pdf>
- Dillon, Christine. "How to Prepare Your First Bible Story" Storyingthescriptures.com. Last accessed January 16, 2020 <http://storyingthescriptures.com/how-to-prepare-your-first-bible-story/>
- Labovitz, Annette. "The Effectiveness of Storytelling in Jewish Education" The Lookstein Center for Jewish Education Last accessed January 20, 2020. <https://www.lookstein.org/professional-dev/effectiveness-storytelling-jewish-education/>
- Leveen, Adriane. "Storytelling in the Bible." Society of Biblical Literature Last accessed January 14, 2020, https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/TB4_Storytelling_AL.pdf
- Lovejoy, Grant. "Chronological Bible Storying: Description, Rationale and Implications." <https://reachingandteaching.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2014/06/CBS.pdf>
- Network of Biblical Storytellers International. "Tips for Developing Your Story." Resources, last accessed May 12, 2020, <https://www.nbsint.org/resources/>
- "oral tradition." In *A Dictionary of the Bible.*, edited by W. R. F. Browning. *Oxford Biblical Studies Online*, <http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/article/opr/t94/e1382> (accessed Jan 20, 2020)
- Patrick, Mimi. "7 Can't Forget Biblical Storytelling Tips" Ministry-to-Children.com. Last accessed January 16, 2020, <https://ministry-to-children.com/7-cant-forget-biblical-storytelling-tips/>

Biblical Storytelling History and Key Voices

- Cumbers, Shonaleigh "World Storytelling Café" Last accessed May 12, 2020, <https://worldstorytellingcafe.com/shonaleigh-burchill/>
- Gombach, Raymond. *Sacred Storytelling-- : For the Fun of It! Complete[l]y Rev. and Updated . ed.* Allendale, N.J.: Lightstar Foundation, 1998.
- Gallo, Carmine. "Stories literally put our brain waves in sync." Quartz at Work, May 12, 2020. <https://qz.com/work/1298571/stories-literally-put-our-brain-waves-in-sync/>
- Heywood, Simon. "Searching for a Great Storyteller" *YouTube*, TEDxUniversityofReading June 15, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ts9JpM0gHMU>
- Leveen, Adriane. "Storytelling in the Bible." Society of Biblical Literature Last accessed January 14, 2020, https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/TB4_Storytelling_AL.pdf
- Malone, Kelly. "The Power of Biblical Storytelling" Mission Nexus Last accessed January 20, 2020. <https://missionexus.org/the-power-of-biblical-storytelling/>
- Monastery of Christ in the Desert. "Desert Father Sayings & Stories" <https://christdesert.org/prayer/desert-fathers-stories/> Last accessed May 12, 2020.

Niemi, Loren and Elizabeth Ellis. *Inviting the Wolf In: Thinking About the Difficult Story*. Little Rock, AK: August House, 2001.

Network of Biblical Storytellers International. "Tips for Developing Your Story." Resources, last accessed November 16, 2019, <https://www.nbsint.org/resources/>

Sacks, Rabbi Lord Jonathan. "A Nation of Storytellers." JewishPress.com September 19, 2019. <https://www.jewishpress.com/judaism/jewish-columns/rabbi-lord-jonathan-sacks/a-nation-of-storytellers-2/2019/09/19/> Last accessed February 21, 2020.

Telling Lives Your Story. "A Storytelling Tradition" April 6, 2019. <https://www.tellinglives.co.nz/a-storytelling-tradition>

World Storytelling Café. "World Storytelling Café: About." Last accessed May 12, 2020. <https://worldstorytellingcafe.com/about-us/>

Supplemental Readings List by Category **Biblical and Theological Foundations**

Dillon, Christine. *Telling the Gospel through Story: Evangelism That Keeps Hearers Wanting More*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books, 2012.

Ha, Tung-Chiew. "Familiar-Strange: Teaching the Scripture as John Would Teach." *Religious Education* 109, no. 2 (2014): 162-72.

Smith, Dennis E. and Michael E. Williams eds. *The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible*. Vol. 10, *John*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996.

Smith, Dennis E. and Michael E. Williams eds. *The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible*. Vol. 11, *The Parables of Jesus*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006.

Song, Choan-Seng. *In the Beginning Were Stories, Not Texts Story Theology*. Cambridge, U.K.: James Clarke, 2012.

Throckmorton, Burton H. *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*. 5th ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1992.

Viljoen, Francois. "Why Jesus Spoke in Parables." In *Die Skriflig* 53, no. 1 (2019): E1-e7.

White, William R. *Speaking in Stories: Resources for Christian Storytellers*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982.

Woodward, Thomas. "The Parables of Jesus from the Inside." *Sewanee Theological Review* 47, no. 1 (2003): 53-90.

Biblical Storytelling History and Key Voices

Booth, David. "The Role of the Storyteller - Sholem Aleichem and Elie Wiesel." *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thought* 42, no. 3 (1993): 298.

- Dewey, Dennis Hart. "Off the Page, into the Heart, and out of the Mouth: Tools for Telling the Stories of Scripture by Heart." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 38, no. 6 (2011): 448.
- Dillon, Christine. *Telling the Gospel through Story: Evangelism That Keeps Hearers Wanting More*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books, 2012.
- Harmless, William, and Oxford University Press. *Desert Christians : An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Iverson, Kelly R. *From Text to Performance : Narrative and Performance Criticisms in Dialogue and Debate*. Cambridge, England: Lutterworth Press, 2015.
- Jageron, Jennifer. "Harnessing the Power of Narrative: Literacy and Orality in Christian Education" *Christian Education Journal* 11, no. 2 (2014): 259-75.
- Jensen, Richard. "I Love to Tell the Story: Preaching as Storytelling." *The Clergy Journal* 83, no. 5 (2007): 9-11.
- Lowry, Eugene L. *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1980
- Lowry, Eugene L. *The Sermon: Dancing the Edge of Mystery*. Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.
- McClure, John S. "Narrative and Preaching?: Sorting It All out." *Narrative and Preaching?: Sorting It All out*, 1991.
- Miller, Donald. *Storyline 2.0: Finding Your Subplot in God's Story*. Portland: Donald Miller Words, 2012.
- Miller, Mark. *Experiential Storytelling : (re)discovering Narrative to Communicate God's Message*. El Cajon, CA: Zondervan, 2003.
- Novelli, Michael. *Shaped By The Story: Helping Students Encounter God in a New Way*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.
- Sunwolf. "5. Story-preaching /story-teaching: Happily-ever-aftering in New Directions.(Once upon a Time for the Soul: A Review of the Effects of Storytelling in Spiritual Traditions)(Critical Essay)." *Communication Research Trends* 23, no. 3 (2004): 11.
- Sweet, Leonard. *Post-Modern Pilgrims*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman: 2000.
- Oral Storytelling Techniques, Teaching & Coaching**
- Baldwin, Christina. *Storycatcher: Making Sense of Our Lives through the Power and Practice of Story*. Novato, CA: New World Library, 2005.
- Cabral, Len and Mia Manduca. *Len Cabral's Storytelling Book*. New York, NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1997.

- Culp, A. J. "Joining the Journey: Using Memory Research to Help Students Identify with Biblical Events." *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry* 13, no. 2 (2016): 266-82.
- DeBlasio, Donna M., Charles F. Ganzert, David H. Mould, Stephen H. Paschen, Howard L. Sacks. *Catching Stories: A Practical Guide to Oral History*. Athens, OH: Swallow Press, 2009.
- Leitman, Margot. *Long Story Short: The Only Storytelling Guide You'll Ever Need*. Sasquatch Books: Seattle WA, 2015.
- Lipman, Doug. *The Storytelling Coach: How to Listen, Praise, and Bring Out People's Best*. Little Rock, AK: August House, 1995.
- Sawyer, Ruth. *The Way of the Storyteller: A Great Storyteller Shares Her Rich Experience and Joy in Her Art and Tells Eleven of Her Best-Loved Stories*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Sayler, Sharon. *What Your Body Says: and how to master the message: Inspire, Influence, Build Trust, and Create Lasting Business Relationships*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010.
- Wells, Chris. "The Aetherlight: Telling Bible Stories in the Language of Gamers" *Homecoming Magazine*, January 24, 2017. Last accessed January 14, 2020.
<http://www.homecomingmagazine.com/article/the-aetherlight-telling-bible-stories-in-the-language-of-gamers/>