

## **Syllabus: Biblical Storytelling for Advent & Christmas (Fall Semester 2021)**

Maine School of Ministry, Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

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AbbyLynn is working on her Doctorate of Ministry in Semiotics, Church and Culture at Portland Seminary of George Fox University. Her project focus is creating experiential, participatory, image rich and relationally connected Biblical storytelling curriculum for Maine School of Ministry students.

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**Course Description:** Open yourself to the wonder of letting the Advent and Christmas stories steep in your soul this season. Biblical Storytelling is a Fall semester 2021 practice-based course which will provide course participants with an introduction to the art of Biblical Storytelling for use in a virtual worship through an experiential learning approach. Stories of Advent hope, peace, joy, love and Christmas will be the basis of our storytelling palette. This course is great for beginners as well as experienced preachers seeking some fresh inspiration.

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 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 will be devoted to morning sessions which will feature a two-part seminar at which (9-11:50am) assigned readings will be considered using interactive polls, games and breakout room discussions. Students will participate in Biblical Storytelling workshops in the afternoon portion 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) September 11, October 9, November 13 and December 11 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 September 11 for the first class).

Two pre-recorded Biblical Storytelling presentations due for the October 9 and December 11 class is required; the format and instructions (and sample recordings) will be provided at the first meeting on September 11.

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.

**Final Written or Video/Audio Project:** A final written or video project will be due within 23 days of the last meeting (no later than January 3, 2022):

For the Written: Answer in approximately 2,000 words - *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?*

For the Video/Audio Project:

1. Record a brief meditation moment/ worship service (More than 5 and less than 15 minutes) that is based on a Biblical Story that you tell in the recording. Share this recording on a social media platform.
2. Create a promotional video that inspires and encourages folks to take a Biblical Storytelling Class. Share this recording on a social media platform.

**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 be 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 11:** Introduction to the Class and Class Participants, Exploring Hope & Peace Advent Stories of the Bible, Doodling Story learning  
**Required Reading** (see Readings List for full entries)

*BibleTelling: Telling God's Word* By John Walsh

*The Art of Story Telling: Easy Steps to Presenting an Unforgettable Story* 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
- **Bring an Advent Bible Story to learn in class:** You may use any Advent lectionary selection from any year or any Bible story that you discern fits one of the themes of Advent. Here is one online lectionary resource: [Vanderbilt Lectionary Library](#)
- **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 9:** Experiential Storytelling, Exploring Joy Stories in the Bible for Advent, Memory Palace Story learning  
**Required Reading** (see Readings List for full entries)

*Experiential Storytelling (Re) Discovering Narrative to Communicate God's Message* by Mark Miller

#### **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.
- **Bring an Advent Bible Story to learn in class:** You may use any Advent lectionary selection from any year or any Bible story that you discern fits one of the themes of Advent. Here is one online lectionary resource: [Vanderbilt Lectionary Library](#)
- **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 13:** Exploring Love in our Advent Bible Stories, Coffee Chat Pass Story learning  
**Required Reading** (see Readings List for full entries)

*Shaped By The Story: Helping Students Encounter God in a New Way* by Michael Novelli

#### **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.

- 4. Saturday, December 12:** Annette Symonds & Culture Keeping Storytelling, Telling Difficult Stories, Exploring Christmas & Epiphany Stories, Hand & Body Motion Story learning  
**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.
- **Bring a Christmas or Epiphany Bible Story to learn in class:** You may use any Christmas or Epiphany lectionary selection from any year or any Bible story that you discern fits one of the themes of Christmas & Epiphany. Here is one online lectionary resource: [Vanderbilt Lectionary Library](#)
- **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.

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.

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](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.oxfordbiblicalestudies.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[lly] 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](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*. 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

Jagerson, 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/>