

CATECHIST HANDOUT

Week 3 – 10/03/2021

Topic: The Power of Story



SET THE WORLD ABLAZE!

OBJECTIVES

1. Explore with teens the power of story as a universal human activity
2. Investigate the role story plays in divine revelation; **to make known the relationship between God and God's people** (from week 1).
3. To examine why God chose to self-disclose through stories (the Biblical narratives)
4. To help teens recognize the essential elements of a good story
5. Underscore the importance of perspective – how the point of view of the author and the reader impact one's understanding of a text.
6. To help teens discover the importance of shared language and imagery when sharing stories.
7. To introduce teens to the concept that in order to understand God's **Word** and apply it to our lives, we must follow established **principles of interpretation**.
8. To inform and reinforce for teens that Catholics interpret the scripture contextually.

TONIGHT'S SCHEDULE

5:15-6:30pm Small Group Meeting in Classroom
6:30-6:45pm Meet in Chapel for Presentation of Bibles / Dismissal

LESSON COMPONENTS

- A. **Community Building**
- B. **Shared experiences by adults and teens**
- C. **Scripture & Prayer**
- D. **Catholic Teaching** (in other parts of lesson)
- E. **Putting Faith Into Action**
- F. **Announcements**-Please remember to take Bibles to the Chapel & each week to class

You might want to start your class tonight with this short Guided Meditation **Free**

Your Mind - A Guided Meditation on Letting Go

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSrSemQeSI (3.37 min)

A. **Community Building** - (8-10 min)

Keep the ice breaker moving.

Significant stories

- Have teens choose a partner and stand facing each other (use peers to make sure everyone has a partner)
- Question # 1 – have partners share with each other what their favorite childhood story book was and why it was their favorite.
- Have one of the lines take one step to the right (person at the far right will have to come to the spot on the far left of the line) so everyone has a new partner.

CATECHIST NOTES

Robert McKee, widely known for his popular *"Story Seminar"* claims, "storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today".

Storytelling is an ancient and universal human activity. Stories are all around us. They instruct, delight, enchant, touch, teach, recall, motivate, challenge and inspire us. Stories help us make powerful emotional connections. Stories help us understand and make meaning out of life. They imprint a picture on our minds and move our hearts. Is it any wonder God employs storytelling as a major tool for communicating divine revelation?

Teens instinctively know the power of a good story. However they have also come to suspect the profound truth in stories (it's not real; it's only a story). This is why so many are suspect of biblical truth, seeing The Bible as a collection of primitive myths that take the place of hard data and scientific understanding. Facts are seen as true, fiction is not.

Background Material

[The Science of Storytelling: Why Telling a Story is the Most Powerful ...](#)

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING with Sir Ian

- Question # 2 – One of my all time favorite movies is _____ because _____
- Question # 3 – The best book I've read in the last 6 months is _____ because _____
- Question # 4 – One story a family member has shared with me that has stuck with me is _____ because _____
- Question # 5 One of my favorite Bible stories is _____ because _____

Keep the teens and the conversation moving. You and your peers can come up with your own questions. The focus is to have the teens reflect on stories they know or identify with. **The because (or why) part of the questions is key.**

B. Shared experiences by adults and teens (40-45 min)

This section is packed. Assign one of the peers to be a time keeper.

1. Review (5 min)

- **Return to week 1 – Revelation** – and have the teens refer back to the TH p.1 for that week (this is why teens need to have their folders with them during class)
 - What does revelation mean?
 - What does self-disclosure mean?
 - What did we say makes revealing ourselves to others risky?
 - What is God trying to reveal to us? **That we are loved and cherished**
 - Why? **So we will respond to God's invitation to be in relationship with Him and each other.**
- **Return to week 3 – Covenant**
 - What did we say has to happen to make our group a safe place? A place of revelation?
 - What did we say encourages sharing? What hinders sharing?
 - **Read the class covenant**

2. Brainstorming Activity (8-10 min)

- Direct teens to tonight's TH p1. I want you to think of what makes a good story. Think about stories you've read, movies you've seen, personal stories others have shared with you. Then jot down a few ideas in the box provided on your TH.

Give them a few minutes to make a few notes and then have them share their ideas. Create a list of things they say.

- Direct teens to TH p2. Go over the essential elements of a good story. Did the students name all five? Do have things they want to add to the list?

3. The Power of Stories (make these points in your own words - 5-7 min)

- Direct teens to the bottom of TH p1 for a quick review of the points the Ian McKellan video made
- Stories are all around us. They instruct, delight, enchant, touch, teach, recall, inspire, motivate, challenge and inspire us.
- Stories help us understand and make meaning out of life. They imprint a picture on our minds and move our hearts. Give an example of stories that have done this for you.
- **Call attention to the Tim O'Brien quote on TH p1.**

4. Biblical Stories: **Religious Truth or Religious Fiction** (10-12 min)

- **Introduction:** Say the following or put into your own words.

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-McKellen – short video

<https://vimeo.com/125383660>

WHY STORYTELLING IS SO POWERFUL IN THE DIGITAL ERA

THE POWER OF STORY:
SUSAN CONLEY AT
TEDXDIRIGO

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkqb6uDRNQs>

[The Genesis Problem : The Integrated Catholic Life™](#)

Key Biblical Terms and concepts for this week –

the definitions for these terms can be found in the CYB glossary AND on the TH. Teens don't need to memorize these but it is good to be familiar with them.

Contextualist p. 1845

Genre – p. 1848

Literary criticism – p. 1850

Historical context – TH 3

Cultural context – TH 3

Contemporary context – TH 3

Story & Mystery

Mystery lies at the heart of the spiritual world, not as a puzzle to be solved but a reality to be embraced. Post-modern consciousness has little respect for the unseen and the unknown. This makes creating an appreciation for the place of mystery and the role of stories difficult, but also necessary.

Not only did the ancients use myth **we** continue to create

Many people think that the Bible is not a very reliable source of information. Some see the Bible as a collection of primitive understandings and beliefs, others argue that the Bible deliberately spreads misinformation in order to manipulate believers, and still others don't know what to think about the Bible as a source of religious authority (and everything in between).

In fact the Bible is a collection of stories (myths, chronicles, epic poems, songs, parables, histories, personal recollections, prayers, letters...) written over time by several different people guided by the Holy Spirit to answer two basic questions

1. Who is God?
2. What is the relationship between God and humankind?

- **Presentation** - Like all stories the Biblical stories need to be interpreted.
 - Ask the teens turn to p1844 in the CYB and find the entry for **biblical interpretation**. Ask for a volunteer to read it.
 - According to this entry what are we looking for in the Bible?
what God reveals to humans
 - What was the first criteria for interpretation cited in this entry
consider the kind of writing used in a given passage/story
 - How does knowing what kind of writing or literary form the passage uses help us better understand what God is trying to say?
The literary form instructs the reader how to read the text and what to look for - this is what is meant by literary criticism.
(See the **Did You Know** article CYB p. 22)

- Ask some teens to share a time when they knew what they believed to be true but did not know how to explain fully – **i.e.** I know there is a heaven but I can't tell you exactly what heaven is like, only what I think it will be like
- Share about something you believe to be true but do not fully understand **i.e.** We know there is a God; we know some things about God, but we will never know everything about God?

3. It's all about perspective (15 min)

- Divide your group into pairs and direct the teens to the **What do you see** section on TH2 and have the pairs discern what is in the images

OR

Project one of these images or another optical illusion on the white board or wall and have the entire group work on discerning what is in the image (these and other images are readily available on line)

- Each of the images in the TH contains two images –
 - Old woman AND young woman
 - Face AND the word liar
 - Face AND Eskimo

Let the teens see if they can see both images in 1 or 2 of the optical illusions. Have them help each other see the various images.

- Define perspective –
 - a particular attitude toward or way of seeing something;
 - a point of view.

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new mythic stories to address both the most profound human questions and experiences and the most global spiritual questions. All faith traditions cultivate an appreciation and reverence for the mysterious, the unseen and the unknown. In our tradition the Bible is a rich source and wise teacher in how one embraces mystery.

NOTE: For your own personal reflection on mystery you may find this short reflection by Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat entitled "**Embracing Mystery**" from the **Spirituality and Practice** website, helpful <http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/features/view/17863>

The discussion on the fact that there are various genres used throughout the Bible and that there were many authors and editors (scholars call them redactors) for all of the Biblical stories are the important ideas to get across to the teens.

The discussion also gives you an opportunity to talk with your teens about.

1. How having a viewpoint is one of the gifts each individual in the group offers. When teens do not show up the group does not get the benefit of this gift.
2. Respecting and learning from viewpoints that are different from ours is an

- What helps create/define a person's point of view?
Thoughts, feelings, experiences, the points of view of other's we trust access to information, beliefs, values...
- How does one's point of view impact what one sees, hears, experiences, thinks, or feels?
- What can we learn from viewpoints that are different from ours?
- How do we as a group handle differing points of view?
- Scholars know that different authors contributed to the writing of the Books of the Bible because they have identified multiple 'perspectives' or points of view they believe came from different authors.
 - Why would God use multiple authors with different points of view in the writing of the Bible?
 - What does the presence of multiple points of view tell us about who God is?
 - How does having multiple points of view within the same book or story help us better understand God's revelation?
 - How do multiple points of view make understanding God's message more difficult?



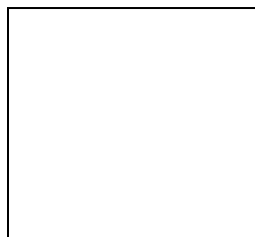
God reveals His Name to Moses Exodus 3:1-15

- Ask the teens to locate Exodus 3:1-14 in the Bibles (begins on CYB p. 95)
- Make sure the teens have a pencil, pen, or highlighter so as they follow along they are '**actively reading**'.
- Introduction (use your own words or those words below).
The passage we are about to read tells the story of the call and commissioning of Moses. As you are listening to the passage I want you to follow along in your Bible and underline, circle or highlight the words or phrases that are important to you.
- After the passage is read ask the teens if they want to go back and underline, circle or highlight any other words or phrases.
- Then discuss the passage – see discussion questions on TH4.

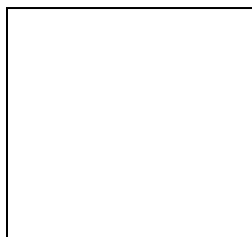
Storyboard Template



Caption



Caption



Caption

...

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important life skill.

3. We are always creating, forming, adapting, and revising our viewpoints.

This week's scripture passage is longer than usual. Think about having more than one reader. This gets more teens involved and using different voices helps keep the listeners/readers focused.

To explore the story you can use the **Discussion questions** on TH p. 4 or have the teens **create a storyboard**.

DISCUSSION

As always there are more questions than you need, so you can pick and choose.

SMALL GROUP TIP

Asking good questions is one of the most important things a teacher can do to

- Increase participation
- Encourage and guide discussion
- Assess what students are learning
- Engage students in higher level thinking (critical thinking) skills
- Prompt students to explore attitudes, values, or feelings

Take a look at this article from the Chicago Center for Teaching at the University of Chicago for some quick tips. [Asking Effective Questions - Chicago Center for Teaching](#)

You can ask questions and have individuals answer or ask a question of the whole

C. Praying with Scripture (20 min)

Praying with the Names of God

Introduction – (use these or your own words).

The Names we use for God reveal as much about us as they do about God. The Names we use for God reveal where our ideas about God come from (or who they come from) and what we believe about God. Moses wanted to know God's Name and God told him, in part because they were beginning a new chapter in their relationship. Tonight we are all going to share the Names we have for God as our prayer.

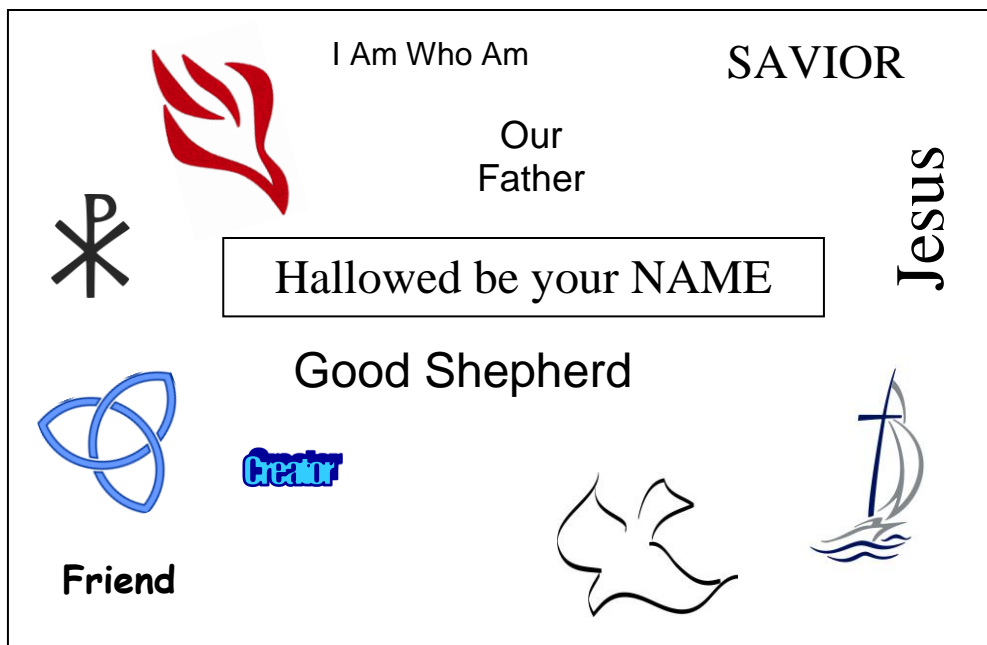
Earlier tonight we talked about having a perspective or point of view. One of the ways scholars identify different Biblical authors is by the name they used for God.

What are some of the names you use for God? **Lord, Father, Creator, Jesus, Friend, Holy Spirit, Almighty God...** [NOTE: This question and the next one will help prime the pump if you choose to do the art piece as part of tonight's prayer.]

What do the names we use for God say about our point of view or understanding of God? **They might reflect our experience of God, they might reflect what we have learned from others about God, they might reflect certain characteristics of God we think are important...**

Option 1: Art Piece on the Names of God

Here is our almost blank canvas. In the center we read the words Hallowed (which means holy) be Your NAME, a line we say every time we pray the Our Father. I want you to think about the names you use for God and put them on our poster. You can use words or symbols. Let them know their work is going to be displayed for the whole parish.



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group, (remember not all people are comfortable speaking in groups and teens may need to be drawn into the conversation).

Asking questions in the course of discussion keeps participants focused and engaged (like having participants highlight, underline or circle words or phrases in a text).

How To Make a Storyboard

Step 1: Create a Template. Draw a series of rectangles on a piece of paper, as if you were creating a comic strip. ...

Step 2: Add the Script. Under each rectangle, write the line of script or dialogue that corresponds to that scene.

Step 3: Sketch out the story. ...

Step 4: Add Notes.

If you use storyboarding use the Option 2 Prayer experience. If you want to do a storyboard let Grant know you will need poster board and markers. Your storyboard could isolate one theme or one point of view. The script does not have to be a literal word for word recounting of the story to be effective. BE CREATIVE. Teens could work in small groups to create more than one storyboard.

For an example of how to do this watch

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYUQumlbrbRM

Think about playing music while the teens work on their poster. YouTube has a great selection. Your peers may have some ideas. We have several CD players available – just let Teen Faith know if you need one. If you are using a phone or tablet remember to have speakers.

In Jesus' Name by Darlene Zschech

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zgKry5VYs74

God is Here by Darlene Zschech

www.youtube.com/watch?v=sftf-vHGgk

Looking for instrumental music to use in class? Here is collection of contemporary hymns on piano (including many we use at Holy Family).

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4o04D280MkE

Option 2: Candle Prayer:

- **Music – choose one** (you can use one of the Chromebooks or your own phone/tablet and just use the audio – make sure you have speakers)

'Expanse' by FOXWINT (4 min)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IErWxGU7Svg

"Night sky" by Tracey Chattaway (5.19 min)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DSeZji2x-Y

- Dim the lights in the room. Light a battery operated pillar and put it in the center of the room/table (if you want to use a few pillars let Grant know ahead of time so he can make sure you have them).
- **Introduction** (done by catechist or peer) **Introduction** (done by catechist or peer)

Please get in a comfortable sitting position

If you are using chairs say – feet on the floor, rest your hands on your lap with palms upturned.

If teens are sitting on the floor say – sit cross legged, rest your hands on your lap with palms upturned.

In a minute I'm going to put on some instrumental music. While it is playing I want you to let names you've heard for God come to your mind. You can close your eyes if that helps or stare into the candle light.

- When the music stops gently bring the teens back. Take one of the pillar candles. Explain you will pass the candle around the group and when it gets to each person they can sit quietly for a few seconds holding the candle or say aloud the name of God that came to them. When they are finished they are to pass the candle to the next person.
- If you want you can close with **What A Beautiful Name** - Hillsong Worship www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQWFzMvCfLE

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PRAYING is one of the things the teens identified as one of their needs.

Option 1: Poster of the Names of God

Tonight we are going to use art as part of the prayer. Teen Faith will supply you with all the necessary materials.

You will receive a piece of White Poster Board. The phrase Hallowed (Holy) be your NAME will already be on the poster in the center.

Everyone in your group – this includes you – will put a name or names each uses for God on the poster using words or symbols. You and your peers might like to come up with some more unusual names or scriptural names.

If for some reason you get off schedule, the poster can be carried over to your next session.

LESSON PREPARATION NOTES:

Is there something I want to pick up or go over from last week's class?

My community building activity this week will be

What parts of the lesson will the Peer Ministers lead/facilitate?

Do I need anything from the Faith Office prior to class?

Other

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Things I will need for class this week:

The Key Ideas/Objectives for this week are

Things I need to consult Teen Faith about

Other
