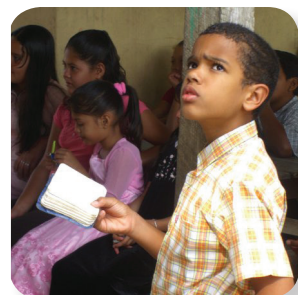


"Open your ears to what I am saying, for I will speak to you in a parable. I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—stories we have heard and known, stories our ancestors handed down to us" (Psalm 78:1-3).

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT...



"When I was invited to attend a *Tell THE Story* (TTS) training, I wasn't really sure what to expect. What got me interested about TTS at first was the orality aspect; I was thinking about Guatemala and its rural areas where the rate of illiteracy is high. Little did I know that TTS is for every person, regardless of age, social status, or level of education. As I found myself learning the stories, I experienced the living Word of God going deep into my heart; this caused a revival in my spiritual life. TTS has changed my life and the way I see the Scriptures. TTS also is a tool that empowers every person to share the Word. With TTS, I believe we can change the world one Bible story at a time." **Angel**



"Guys, with *Tell THE Story*, the possibilities are endless! I was asked to do it at a home daycare, around 24 school-age kids at once. I am so pumped up! You should have been there when they started correcting me, the "NO-NO-NO" part. It was absolutely crazy awesome!! I told the story of 'Feeding the 5,000.' Praise the Lord!! I am so crazy about this! I can do it!!" **Laura**

"We practice *Tell THE Story* every week with our youth! Tonight, though, we shared with our multi-generational prayer group! I love to see how everyone, including the children, is involved in the truth of God's Word!" **Cynthia**



"As I drove home from the GMC training last week, the Lord gave me a great idea. I'm going to start every board meeting this year by telling a story. I've tried a number of methods at team building and spiritual edification at our board meetings over the past years, not often meeting with great success. Now, however, I am ready to lead in spiritual strengthening and relationally bonding by telling God's story, and hopefully, some of our board members will tell a story for us as the year progresses." **Pastor Tom**



United States Literacy Statistics

44 million adults are unable to read a simple story to their children.

50% of adults cannot read a book written at an 8th-grade level.

45 million are functionally illiterate and read below a 5th-grade level.

Only 14% of Americans read extensively.

44% of American adults do not read a book in a year.

6 out of 10 households do not buy a single book in a year.

The average reader only makes it to page 18 of a book.

Approximately 50% of Americans read so poorly that they are unable to perform simple tasks such as reading prescription drug labels.

In a study of literacy among 20 'high income' countries, the US ranked 12th.

(from Literacy Project Foundation and National Endowment for Arts Survey)

WHAT IS *TELL THE STORY*?

More than two-thirds of the world's population can't, won't, or don't read. Some estimate that as many as 75% of all people learn, gather information, and live their daily lives without reading. They do so by listening and watching rather than by reading.

The Church of the Nazarene is responding to the challenge of making disciples of oral learners by introducing a relational small group discipleship tool called *Tell THE Story*. It is a simple, easy-to-learn method in which a facilitator, not an instructor, tells a Bible story accurately, then immediately asks the group members to retell the story to one another. Then the facilitator tells the story again, making intentional errors, and the group corrects the errors.



By this time, everyone has heard the story at least three times and is able to engage in these five open-ended questions:

- *What do you like about the story?
- *What do you not like about the story?
- *Who would you want to be or not want to be in this story, and why?
- *What truth from this story could you share with someone else?
- *What truth from this story will you apply in your own life?

This narrative methodology is a tool Jesus used for teaching. Mark 4:33-34 points out that Jesus did not speak to the people without using a parable or story. Woodie Stevens, global SDMI director for the Church of the Nazarene, says, “We have proclaimed Jesus’ message. Should we not also employ his methodology?”

THOUGHT PROCESSES DIFFER FOR THOSE WHO READ REGULARLY AND THOSE WHO DO NOT

Those who depend mostly on verbal communication to learn (often called oral learners) retain information differently than those who depend on reading and writing to communicate. Oral learners often do not understand logical, analytical and abstract ways of thinking. They learn better by thinking and talking about events, by watching and imitating. They are good listeners and memorize easily. Those who learn by reading (also known as literate learners) think and talk about words, concepts and principles. They classify, compare, analyze, and rely on looking things up in books rather than on memorizing. They often are not good listeners.

It is estimated that 70% of the people in the world are oral learners; consequently, when information is presented to them through the use of story, they learn and retain much more than when knowledge is shared through systematic outlines of information or lecture.

People always “see” themselves in the story; *Tell THE Story* methods bring the story into their lives. *Tell THE Story* helps people take the next step in moving from their own discoveries into real life transformation.



TTS GIVES BIRTH TO 2 NEW CHURCHES IN COSTA RICA

Excerpted from *Engage* magazine article by Gina Grate Pottenger

When the woman's husband came home drunk one day, he became too rough with their son. The situation was getting out of hand. The woman suddenly blurted, "Hey, do you guys want me to tell you a story?" The woman's husband was startled, but in that pause she began telling the story of Jesus calming the storm, found in the New Testament books of Matthew and Mark. Her husband and son listened. As she spoke, her husband became calm, sat down, and fell asleep. Later the woman said, "I know God was there because I was bold."



Laura Mata-Bolandi said the woman was putting into practice a method of Bible storytelling called *Tell THE Story* that she is learning through a new church plant in San Jose, Costa Rica. Like many Nazarenes around the world who are making Bible storytelling part of their discipleship, the woman saw the power of God's Word infusing her daily life.

Based in Illinois, Laura is a certified trainer with *Tell THE Story*. She first used the method when she started a ministry for Hispanic mothers and kids in her city and integrated *Tell THE Story* into the meetings. After seeing storytelling work so well in Laura's group of moms, Laura's mother, Zoraida, in Costa Rica, wanted to start a group there. She gathered friends and neighbors and met with Laura over Skype for training. Now Zoraida's group has evolved into a new church with around 25 people attending that main gathering each week, and as many as 40 people are a part of the group. That's where the woman heard the story of Jesus calming the storm and recalled it later when she faced a storm in her own home.

The new congregation in San Jose is calling itself Pura Vida-Los Guido Iglesia del Nazareno (Pure Life Church of the Nazarene). Besides meeting weekly for storytelling on Sunday, the group has added ESL training for preteens and teens, children's Sunday School classes, and Bible study groups for adults. Zoraida has been approved by the Northwestern Illinois District to serve as a lay minister with the fledgling congregation, with Laura Skyping in on Sundays.

"Our vision, or what we're encouraging the group to do, is to keep growing. We're going to try to train everybody ...so they can keep reproducing. We're teaching them a healthy church grows and reproduces," Mata-Bolandi said.

Mata-Bolandi's sister also started a storytelling group in the east of Costa Rica, in Liberia. Zoraida and another woman from their church regularly visit to support the new church there, which calls itself Pura Vida-San Roque Iglesia del Nazareno. At the present, the two churches in Costa Rica are affiliated with the Northwestern Illinois District; eventually the churches will join the Costa Rica District Church of the Nazarene, according to Mata-Bolandi.

TTS - NEW COMPONENT OF SPARK EVENTS



Tell THE Story (TTS) trainer Candice Brooks and her husband, Trey, grew up in small churches in Arkansas. Feeling the call to ministry, they went to Southern Nazarene University, married after graduating, and then headed to Nazarene Theological Seminary.

and encouragement. Out of that grew an event called SPARK.

Through the years, Candice and Trey have held events in Indiana, Arkansas and Kansas. Since being introduced to TTS, Candice has started modeling this method of Bible storytelling at SPARK events and is equipped as a trainer in the TTS model.



They expected to minister in small churches, like those in which they had grown up, but they ended up leading children's ministries in larger churches in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Lenexa, Kansas. Their burden for the smaller church never went away. The Lord gave them a vision to start a retreat for local children's leaders to offer training, support,

God has now led Candice and Trey to resign their local church ministry and go on the road full-time (with their three children) to help equip and encourage children's workers around the country. Those interested in a SPARK event or children's evangelists may contact Candice and Trey at candicebrooks1@gmail.com.

DISCOVERING STORY-CENTRIC TEACHING by Ray Neu

Prior to joining the SDMI team as a global missionary commissioned to train people around the world to *Tell THE Story*, I was training Nazarene pastors in Belize. I knew the need to use simple English and to break down difficult concepts into more attainable portions, and I thought I was doing pretty well until...

At the end of one class, I had given a take-home test as homework. When I returned to that center two weeks later, I asked for the test to be turned in to me. No one responded. Then one lady spoke up, “Brother Ray, there were some words we did not understand.”

“No problem,” I told them. “Tell me what words you did not understand, and we will correct this matter.” In the first question, they did not know the word “important.” In the second question, it was the word “significant.” Sure enough, in each sentence, there was a word they did not understand. I had failed them!

As we discussed this assignment and the problem I had caused, it occurred to me that perhaps they would benefit from an English class. So when we met again the following Saturday, my wife, Becki, was present to help assess the appropriate level of English. After about an hour of speaking with and listening to them, Becki determined that a third-grade reader would be appropriate to help bring up the level of English in the class.

Next, Becki conducted an exercise that proved to be both insightful and painful. She wrote the number 0 to 10 across the blackboard and asked each person to indicate how many of her words they had understood during the morning discussion. The responses were consistently in the 7 to 8 range. Then she asked the class, “Now, not today, but when Pastor Ray is teaching, how many of his words do you understand?” Becki marked each person’s response on the board. They were consistently 2 and 3. I wanted to cry. Instantly, one thing was clear in my mind: The students did

not fail; the teacher failed. I did not know what the solution was, but I knew I needed to find one.

I began to experiment with the use of story as a teaching tool. I first introduced story during devotions, which we did each day of class. This was well received. I was encouraged then to try inserting stories into appropriate places in the curriculum. These were

more than well received. I noticed that no matter how a class was responding before a story, they always engaged more during the interactive story. The interest level, the enthusiasm, the retention, the ability to accurately retell what they had learned – all of it was greater during these story sessions, and it dropped back down afterwards. I was onto something! There was something about this model that really connected with every class.

I began converting some of the “Course of Study” modules into story format. Those classes became very popular, and some are still today being taught in story format by Belizean teachers. But one final proof of the power of story came when one of my brightest students, Fernando, came to me with a serious problem. He had been trying to teach the same things in his village that I taught him in class, but it was not working. The people just did not understand the concepts as they were being delivered.

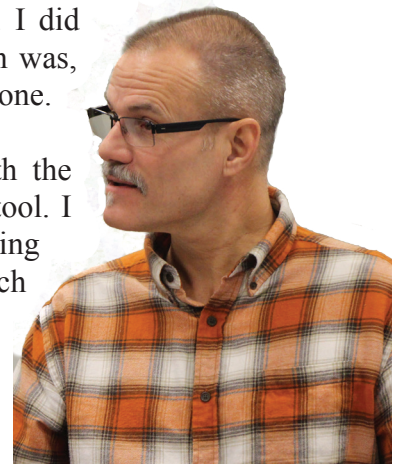
I asked Fernando if he had tried using Bible stories. He admitted he had not, but he was willing to try. Two or three weeks later, I saw him again. This time his infectious smile was beaming brightly! I asked, “Did you try story?”

Fernando exclaimed, “Yes! And the people love it! There are teen girls who are great at the retelling, everyone participates, and the older women are telling their neighbors. It’s great!”

Fernando is just one of the growing numbers of pastors who are discovering that by simply changing the way they present the Bible, it can dramatically impact the way their people respond to the life-changing truths found in the timeless stories in the Bible.

Ray Neu is a global missionary, Church of the Nazarene.

(Pictured at left, a group of Ray’s students from Belize.)



STORYTELLING TRAINING IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA TURNS INTO REVIVAL



What started out as training around a new discipleship method turned into a revival. More than 100 national leaders and lay people from across Papua New Guinea met to train on how to tell Bible stories orally. They were so convicted by the lessons they were gleaned from

the stories that they began to confess their sins, repenting one after another. Some apologized to others, who in turn offered forgiveness for the offenses. Soon, everyone had fallen to their knees, crying and praying together.

What simple training method could bring about such a profound response? *Tell THE Story!*

“During these training sessions we literally were in the midst of a revival-type of Spirit, as God was bringing Scripture

and the truth of Scripture and the reality of Scripture alive in the hearts of our leaders,” said Harmon Schmelenbach, the field strategy coordinator for the South Pacific Field on the Asia-Pacific Region.

Since the *Tell THE Story* (TTS) training, Schmelenbach reports that many districts have been sending accounts of how they are using TTS for both discipling believers and winning new converts. One participant emailed him to say that he had been telling Bible stories as part of his evangelistic work. He sent pictures of two brand new church plants where they were using TTS to proclaim and explain the Gospel.



Once again, we see evidence of the power of story and how TTS is changing lives.



MAINE PASTORS SPREAD TTS



Dave Smith (pictured at left) and James DuVall (pictured below) are passionate about *Tell THE Story*. After being introduced to Bible storytelling, they drove from Maine to Kansas City to be trained as storytellers. Later they returned to be trained as trainers. Since that time, they have been busy sharing Bible

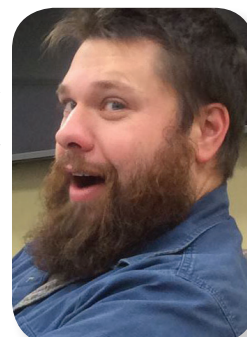
stories in their local churches, at retreats, and in training events on the Maine district.

A participant in one of their recent trainings commented, “I have been shown that discipling doesn’t need to be complicated. It is as simple as telling THE story.”

Another said, “I like that I was inserted into the story and saw things from a different view. The material is kept so simple that even a child could understand it. I saw a lot of things in familiar stories that I had not seen before. I see the Holy Spirit at work.”

Finally, another participant sums up what TTS is doing across the globe: “This has brought a mini-revival in my life, a renewed passion for the Word and telling others.”

“And he said to them, ‘Go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature’” (Mark 16:15, NKJV).



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BEGINS IN TANZANIA AFTER TTS TRAINING

(adapted from "Out of Africa," Don Gardner and Ray Neu)

When the power of story was discovered in South Africa, the people were amazed, thrilled, and inspired. The *Tell THE Story* model in Africa is known as "Let's Talk," reflecting the shared relationships that occur during the discussion as well as the aspect of listening to the story.

Several people who had been trained in South Africa took the model to the Tanzania North District in Mwanza, Tanzania, where over fifty people - pastors, teachers and laity - gathered. Friday and Mary Ganda, along with three Tanzanian trainees did the workshop. They then sent trainers to the Tanzania Central District.

People were amazed. The district superintendent from the TZ Central District was very impressed. Near the end of the training, some of the pastors began to question whether or not the model would be effective with children. This area of Africa tends to just chase children away, if they are under 12 years old. They don't see the need to teach them spiri-

tual things, although they believe education, reading and writing are important. They commonly believe that children don't have the capacity to learn spiritual things. Some even believe children don't have a soul until about 12 years of age.

"I believe we have witnessed a breakthrough in children's ministry for that area."

Don Gardner, Africa East Field Strategy Coordinator

So Friday went out into the neighborhood and rounded up about a dozen kids of varying ages and brought them in the church. Some were kids of local members, some from the community. One of the trainees told a story, did

the repeats and asked the questions, while all 50 adults looked on. The adults were astounded at how the kids corrected her mistold story, and then were amazed at the wisdom the kids exhibited when answering the questions. After the training, most of the participants stayed several hours, discussing how to use the model in their churches, especially with children.



TTS COMES TO VANUATU

(excerpt from blog by David & Sylvia Potter)



of the people. It helped everyone to relax and get comfortable and also gave us another opportunity to hear the story. The simple, open-ended discussion questions that followed gave us a chance to think about the story and helped us to learn together as the Holy Spirit directed our hearts.

Approximately 50 people from our Nazarene churches and several people from other denominations were introduced to and received their initial training in *Tell THE Story* from Ray and Becki Neu during the weekend training held at the Eratap Nazarene Church. Ray's gentle approach to teaching captured our attention and got us hooked!

Everyone loves to hear a story. After telling us a Bible story, Ray asked us to share what we remembered with someone seated near us. After that he told the story again, but changed a few things in the story and invited us to say, "No, no, no," if we heard something that wasn't right. That was perhaps the favorite part of the process for many



During the three days of training, it was interesting to see the responses to this "new" way of learning from the Bible. It has been over a month since our training, and the people in our churches are still learning new stories and sharing them in various ways.

Pastor John seems particularly gifted. On Sunday mornings after telling the Bible story, he leads the children and adults together in discussing and discovering God's truth in the story. Various church members have taken turns telling the story and leading the discussion on Wednesday evenings. Attendance has increased, and people come with a sense of expectancy. One of the young mothers is not able to read, but she has such a hunger for the stories and is beaming with interest as she listens and shares her thoughts. It is a method that helps children, youth, and adults to stay alert, engaged, and participating with the Holy Spirit to discover God's truth in His Word.

(Top photo of David leading a men's storytelling group; bottom photo of Sylvia leading a women's storytelling group.)

RETIRED PASTOR DISCIPLES WITH STORY

When Marvin Gerbig was in his mid-forties, he gave his life to Jesus; almost immediately the Lord showed him the importance of disciple making. In his 50s, Marvin resigned from General Motors, prepared for full-time ministry, was ordained at age 57, and pastored for 10 years.



After retirement Marvin was introduced to *Tell THE Story* (TTS). Through TTS, Marvin found a discipleship plan that he felt was flexible and easy to use and reproduce. Since being certified as a story teller and trainer, Marvin has started actively using TTS for small groups, devotionals in

large groups, one-on-one encounters, sermons, and on mission trips. He is part of a regular Google Hangout discipleship group centered around Bible stories. In March 2015, Marvin spent ten days in Haiti training 64 pastors, who received the TTS model with great enthusiasm.

Marvin writes about using the TTS model with small groups. “I can’t begin to describe how lives are being changed. As a pastor I tried many ways to get people into the Bible. As a story teller, my goal has changed; now I try

to get the Bible into people. Even the saints of the church who have studied the Bible all their lives hear new truths when the TTS method is used. And as for the new believer or even yet-to-be believer, the results are truly amazing. The Holy Spirit is very involved and active in the hearts of those who hear TTS.”

Marvin shared the story of a young woman named Amy. “I met Amy for the first time on a Sunday at Fowlerville Nazarene in the summer of 2014. She attended our *Tell THE Story* Sunday School class in which we shared the story of Martha and Mary. After I told the story, I had everyone pair up and repeat the story to their partner. Amy repeated the story very, very well. This was somewhat surprising because Amy has a fear of crowds, is vision impaired, and cannot read well. In the adult class that day, Amy connected to the story, participated in the discussion, and thrived in the class despite her natural shyness. She was so excited that she shared with anyone who would listen how much she enjoyed the class.”

Marvin encourages everyone to be involved in intentional discipleship. He believes the Word of God provides the curriculum and *Tell THE Story* provides a perfect model for sharing the Word and for helping others engage in and learn from the Word.

WE LOVE TO TELL THE STORY by Pam Worthington

Our journey with *Tell THE Story* (TTS) began in October 2013 when my husband attended a training at the GMC and came home sold on the process. He then talked me into being trained the following May. Since then we have both become certified trainers.

After the training, I immediately began to use the TTS process with my pre-teen Sunday School class. I was absolutely amazed at how engaged the kids were with the Bible story and the questions and discussion that followed. I started with stories of Christ from Luke’s gospel and then began using story to teach the Nazarene Articles of Faith. It is exciting to see the Bible come alive for my students. I am encouraged by how they retain the story. Instead of “maybe” learning one memory verse on a given Sunday, each week they learn a complete Bible story that becomes theirs to share with others and to hide in their own hearts.



We now have several storytellers in our congregation, including two young boys. We use the TTS process in many different ministries in our church: adult and children’s SS classes, small groups, Wednesday night kids and youth programs, and discipleship training. My husband has also used the story model on a limited basis in the Sunday morning service. He has started a ministry on the campus of our local community college, teaching students an effective way to share the message of the gospel with their peers

Tell THE Story is a simple, effective, and reproducible process that brings the stories of the Bible to life and helps the truths of God’s Word stick in the hearts of people of every age. Although this method has just recently been endorsed by the Church of the Nazarene, it was the method used by our Master, the Lord Jesus.

MAKING DISCIPLES IN A DIGITORIAL WORLD



“If you want to be a disciple of Jesus read this book.” Say those words to someone born in the last 30 years, and they tend to tilt their heads, raise an eyebrow, and ask, “Don’t you have it on video?”

Today, the basic skills of reading and writing are overshadowed by a preference for texting and clicking. One click of the little arrow on the screen gets you music and a story with pictures. People are targeted by powerful media urging us to think, act, and buy expensive products promising happiness and contentment. Can we teach Bible truths in such a way that people want to learn them, remember the stories, and tell them to others?

Historically people learned about God by listening and retelling. Only since the printing press have large masses read the Bible. Yet 600 years after the first printing, only a third of the world reads, and even fewer read or study the Bible regularly. Biblical illiteracy is normal. Two-thirds of our world learn best without reading. However, most of our discipleship efforts focus on those who read. How do we make disciples of those who can’t, won’t, or don’t read? *Tell THE Story* offers a solution.

In the early 1980’s, Walter Ong’s book on orality and literacy (*Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 1982) reflected a global movement focused on teaching illiterate people groups. It began with mission organizations struggling to communicate with cultures that didn’t read. They experimented with oral

methods used when people first learn to speak - by listening and repeating. In recent years, hundreds of mission organizations in story-centered (oral) cultures have adopted orality methodologies to teach the Bible and make disciples.

In 2001, the International Orality Network began with 15 collaborating organizations. Today hundreds of organizations use orality methodologies, including Story Runners, Faith Comes By Hearing, The God’s Story Project, The Seed Company, Youth With a Mission, Every Home For Christ, Wycliffe Translators, and the Church of the Nazarene.

In June of 2013, the Church of the Nazarene introduced *Tell THE Story* (TTS) as a part of the church’s global efforts. Through the Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries International (SDMI) office, *Tell THE Story* trainings have been conducted and continue to multiply in each world region.

The SDMI vision is for every Sunday School teacher and small group leader to be equipped with this valuable TTS tool to make Christlike disciples in the nations. *Tell THE Story* is changing lives one Bible story at a time.

Woodie J. Stevens is the global director of Sunday School & Discipleship Ministries International.



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