

Storyteller

WHO'S INVITED TO THE PARTY

Matt VanCleave
October 4, 2020

GROUP ICE BREAKER

What was the best celebration or party that you have been a part of? What made it memorable?

BECOMING A STORYTELLER

Give time for someone in the group to share their story using the Becoming A Storyteller Guide.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will not allow a performance culture to define my life.
- I will resist transactional relationships.
- I will embrace the gift of God's grace in my life.
- I will not hold God to promises He didn't make.
- I will not assume God owes me anything.
- I will not complain of God's grace towards others.

THIS WEEK'S SERMON RECAP

In Luke 14, Jesus tells a story about God's banquet. God has a place for you and me at his table, and he's very concerned that every place gets filled. A banquet was often used as a metaphor for the coming of God's kingdom, therefore to eat at this banquet is to receive salvation and life to the fullest. In the time of this story, when someone had a party, generally he would invite people who were from the same social status. They would be people who could return the favor. However, Jesus says, "Go into the streets and bring the beggars, the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame." These people get invited to a party knowing there's no way they can ever pay the host back. This tells us the host is all about grace. The principle behind this for you and me is to find out what's keeping someone from receiving grace or from taking the next step spiritually. Find out what that barrier is and help them remove it. The most important thing we can do to help those people come to the feast is pray. Prayer changes what's possible. Jesus says there is room for everyone. Don't be discouraged by any excuses, and don't take no for an answer, and don't stop praying. Compel them to come in for I have lots of places in my house, and I want every chair to be filled because nothing is going to stop my party.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Isaiah 25:6-9. What is this passage about? What does this tell us God will do for those who trust Him?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (CONT)

2. Read Luke 14:15-24. In Jesus' story, excuses are given to not attend the banquet. What are some excuse used to decline an invitation to church today? Are they valid? How have you responded?
3. What does the invitation to "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" reveal about the heart of God? What does it teach us about a heart for others?
4. In what ways does this story represent grace? Describe the invitation that led to your first experience with grace.
5. A consistent message throughout scripture is to persevere in prayer. What does it mean to persevere? What hinders you from persevering in prayer?
6. What's is your greatest challenge or hesitation in extending an invitation for someone to join you at God's table? How can you overcome this?
7. Think about the people in your life. What's keeping them from taking the next step? How can you help them take that next step?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

- I will help someone take their next step spiritually.
- I will ask God to open doors for people to respond to an invitation.
- I will ask God to spread the Gospel through Blue Oaks in powerful ways.
- I will ask God who he wants me to invite.
- I will persist in prayer for someone who doesn't know Christ.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Luke 14:15-24
- Isaiah 25:6-9
- Luke 18:1
- Colossians 4:3

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BECOMING A STORYTELLER

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“Stories are the creative conversation of life into a more powerful, clearer, more meaningful experience. They are the currency of human contact.” Robert McKee

Stories move us. They inspire us. Stories are a way to touch the heart and inspire greater understanding about life. Life with God. Life with each other. There’s power in our story. Stories create connection, and that’s why we want everyone to have an opportunity to tell their story.

Being in community with others is really getting to know them, which usually entails knowing their story and them knowing yours. The idea of telling your personal story to others may make you a little uncomfortable, but it doesn’t have to be a big production nor comprehensive. It’s simply to give the others in your group a sense of what makes you uniquely you and what God has done in your spiritual journey.

WHAT PARTS OF YOUR STORY TO TELL

When you think of your story, it’s probably centered around people, places and events. Those three categories capture how we interact with the world around us.

One way to organize your thoughts is to use the space provided on the reverse side to identify people who have played significant roles in your life, places that are special to you, and events that have affected you. It’s really as simple as that.

You probably can’t talk about all the people, places and events you write down as your story should only be five to ten minutes max, but this will give you a place to start. From here, you can think through the parts of your story that are the most important to emphasize. It’s your story and you are free to share what you want to share.

Above all, remember this. You may think the other members of your group aren’t interested in your story, but that’s not true. Most of us are curious about the people around us, and we’re predisposed to empathize and connect with others. Your story will help draw the other members of your group closer. You’ll also be amazed at how many people will relate to parts of your story.

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KEY PEOPLE

KEY PLACES

KEY EVENTS

(Events can be turning points, something that took you from one chapter to the next, or plot twists, something that moved your story in a completely unexpected direction.)

You can keep this paper with you when sharing your story. The point isn't to be a perfect public speaker. The point is for your group to get to know each other and create or deepen authentic community. Our stories give background and context to our conversations each week and will enhance our time together. So as difficult as sharing your story may be, it's worth it! It'll give us a deeper understanding of each other as we all journey through this part of our stories together. And that's a good thing.