

Speak It: the power of story; testimony

The ability to speak your story clearly and concisely to others in a winsome, relevant way

Scripture-based exploration

The Story is the Bible written in story form, somewhat condensed. Pick that up if you can and re-read the Bible as a story. There are versions for children, teens, and adults.

Create your own Psalm 78: tell God's story and how your story intertwines with His.

Have you told the next generation about God's story? Have you told them YOURS?

In what ways have your forefathers been "a stubborn and rebellious generation whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to Him" (Psalm 78:8)? Make a map (**genogram**) of this as modeled in Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, pages 103-110. Come against those patterns of sin in your family! Examine how they are a part of your story. This is very important and takes time, thought, and prayer.

What miracles have you seen in your story (Psalm 78:11-16; 42-55)? Start a list and add to it until the day you "graduate" into Heaven. Pass the care of this list on to a believer in your family, and have this be part of your family's story.

In what ways do you "willfully put God to the test" (Psalm 78:17-25; 40,41; 56-59)? How has He used your sin to show His goodness?

Note the pattern in Psalm 78:34,35. Do you see this in your own life? Give a few examples.

In your story, how have you seen God's mercy directly and personally (Psalm 78:38,39)?

Non-Scripture readings

I Am Second (Suz has the book if you want to borrow it, or feel free to get online and explore all the stories, testimonies done in a simple and dramatic way.)

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, the section on creating a **genogram** of your family. Trace positive and negative traits (i.e., dysfunctions as well as strengths).

Artwork for the creatives

Cardboard testimonies!

Using your favorite art form, depict the importance of relationship and telling your story.

Movies

"Amazing Grace" - Watch how the main character uses story to change hearts

"Australia" (listen for the spoken theme of **story**)

"Country Strong" - Which person's story line can you relate to?

Questions to ponder

Have you told your story this month? To whom? What was God up to? How did you feel when you spoke?

Did your story have an impact on the other person?

Whose stories have profoundly impacted your life?

Why is it that if we read a novel that is historical fiction, we can tell you all the events of history because it was put in the context of a story, as opposed to learning dates and facts by rote?

Why is the phrase "Once upon a time..." so powerful? Why does it grab the attention of listeners?

What is the most powerful part of Jesus' story to you?

When you read the Bible, have you ever read it as a story, an account, rather than a teaching book?

Have you told the next generation about God's story? Have you told them YOURS? Will you live honestly, telling them the lessons you learned from your failures and fractures?

On the web

****Cardboard Testimonies**** (feel free to do this as a group), but just so you'll have the web address, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvDDc5RB6FQ>, current as of 2014.

www.iamsecond.com Click on FILMS. Explore, but please watch Brian Welch (wow).

Choose 2-3 other testimonies and write/journal about them after you listen. What about the person's story impacted you? Why? What category were you drawn to?

Music and worship: a focus on stories

"Next Thing You Know" by Matthew West

"Love Story" by Taylor Swift

"Jesus, Take the Wheel" "Something in the Water" by Carrie Underwood

"The Storm" by Elenowen

"She's the Best For Me" (Ed Cash, great guitar; it's an oldie): Telling the story of being good for each other while you're in relationship.

"Outcast" by Kerry Roberts. Do you relate to her story?

"I Am Redeemed" - How does this move you?

"Raise it Up" on the soundtrack of "August Rush"

Research the story behind the hymn "It is Well With My Soul."