



How to Tell a Captivating Story Part 1: Understand the Structure | Show Notes

Sure, stories are fun. But if we're strapped for teaching time, wouldn't it be better to skip the story in favor of our content? The answer may surprise you.

In this video, you're going to discover why stories are so powerful, learn several useful story categories, and learn how to guarantee that the stories you tell are engaging and strong every time.



Stories can go
where lectures
cannot.

-Sam Oliverio

Sometimes kids will resist getting "preached" to, but they'll willingly be drawn to the same truth when it's presented in an engaging story.

Stories are the ideal teaching tool for a few good reasons:

Stories are the easiest way to glean information -

Because stories are full of imagery and parallels, new concepts and ideas can be easily understood and transferred, by linking the unknown to the known.



Stories resonate with people - Everyone loves a good story. We're all part of the stories of our own lives, so everyone can relate on some level to any story that's presented.

Stories are engaging - Good stories are fun! And when students are having fun, learning becomes a breeze. Teaching becomes easier with a story.

Stories are memorable - Stories are naturally structured with built-in attributes that keep them memorable. This increases the likelihood of the core message being retained and acted on.

Stories are disarming - You can pack a powerful punch without singling anyone out when you use stories.

Stories are good to use. But *how*?

01 Know Your Message

Begin with the end in mind. Don't just search for inspiring, emotional, or funny stories, and then attempt to shoehorn them into your lesson. Know the point you're trying to get across, and find (or create) a story to match.

Here are a few plots to check out.

The Challenge Plot – Typical underdog, rags-to-riches story (e.g., David and Goliath). This plot appeals to our determination and courage and inspires us to action.

The Connection Plot – This plot focuses on building bridges and bridging gaps, whether racial, social, economical, etc. It encourages friendship, love, compassion, and brotherhood (e.g., The Good Samaritan). This plot inspires us to help, love, work with, and appreciate others more.

The Creativity Plot – This plot focuses on solving a problem or mystery, breakthroughs, and eureka moments (e.g., Newton's Apple). This plot makes us want to do something different, try new things, and be creative. (This plot is often in combination with one of the other plots.)

“ Never have a point without a story, and never have a story without a point. ”

02 Have a Strong/Good Story Structure

It's not enough to find a boring story that matches your point. You want it to reinforce your point *and* be a good story—one that will stick with people.

How do we know if this story has what it takes?

A simple way to know if your story has what it takes is to put it through a story plot as a filter. If the structure is right in theory, it should be right in practice.

One example is the Three-Point Story Plot.

(Continued)

02 Have a Strong/Good Story Structure (cont.)

Act 1: Exposition, Inciting Incident, Plot Point One

Exposition - Explains what ordinary life is like before the story really begins.

Inciting Incident - This is the event that gets the story started.

Plot Point One - This is where the adventure begins, with no going back. For better or for worse, our hero is committed.

Act 2: Rising Action, Midpoint, Plot Point Two

Rising Action - This includes roadblocks, friends, and enemies. Our hero is making progress toward the objective.

Midpoint - This presents a clear before and after. Something happens that changes everything, usually for the worse. (This can be considered as a second inciting event.)

Plot Point Two - Evaluation and gathering of thought. This results in a renewed commitment to succeed.

Act 3: Pre-Climax, Climax, Denouement

Pre-Climax - (Also known as the false climax.) This is where the foe is engaged, and our hero's happy ending is uncertain.

Climax - This is the height of the story, the foe is defeated and the objective has been reached.

Denouement - Things are resolved, and the world goes back to a "new" normal.

By understanding this basic structure, it becomes much easier to guarantee that you're including the important parts of the story.

When you highlight certain story facts over others, you can create a strong story structure that naturally builds on what people like most about stories.

>>> Want more on this topic? | Suggested Resources

- Video (How to Tell a Captivating Story Part 2: Learn the Elements):
<https://youtu.be/PymZCc5O7vw>
- Video (How to Tell a Captivating Story Part 3: Master the Tools):
<https://youtu.be/uhqiYWTFnwA>
- Video (How to Tell a Captivating Story Part 4: Put it all together):
<https://youtu.be/IXPrWk8oAn0>



On a scale of 1-10, how often do you include at least one story in your teaching lesson? What's the biggest reason for the number you chose?



What's a story (true or fiction) that has made a significant impact on your life?



How can you incorporate a story into your lesson next time?



What is one simple action you can take to improve the next story you tell?

My Action Step

➤➤➤ Want more? | Additional Resources

Congratulations on taking one more step in your journey of learning and personal growth!

THANK YOU for taking the time to invest in yourself today so that you can be a better children's ministry leader tomorrow.

THANK YOU for investing in the next generation and living in light of eternity.

We want to encourage and equip you for greater ministry impact, so please utilize the following resources!

— “ —

If we stop learning today, we stop teaching tomorrow.

- Howard G. Hendricks

— ” —

More training resources!

- Children's ministry training: www.youtube.com/@TrainingontheGoVideos/videos
- Devotionals: www.inthegap.org/edify/
- Courses: www.inthegap.org/resources/

Volunteer at an after-school Bible Club!

- What is a Bible Club: <https://youtu.be/WwcDxYMNleY>
- His life was changed at Bible Club: <https://youtu.be/Cx2EfuBlecM>
- Join the mission: www.mission414.net/

Fun & educational resources for kids!

- Christian puppet videos for kids: www.youtube.com/@InTheGapKids/videos
- Character lessons, videos, and downloads: www.inthegapkids.org/
- Character curriculum for kids' ministry: www.inspirecurriculum.com/

See what God is doing and get involved!

- Summer missions for youth: www.inthegap.org/operationimpactoverview/
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/inthegap.ok/
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/inthegapokc/
- Newsletter updates straight to your inbox: www.inthegap.org/subscribe/