



CENTRE FOR MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP

A work of the Missionaries of God's Love

Stories of Grace Guide

This methodology is drawn from DeLorenzo, Leonard, *Witness: Learning to tell the Stories of Grace that Illumine our Lives*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2016.

1. Tell it as a story

- Find a story worth telling
- Don't write a homily, or a lesson, make an argument or merely recount the bald facts.
- Remember you are going to be telling the story orally.
- Start with the story, then work out what your point is, or your theme.
- Be specific, and focus on the concrete aspects of the story.
- Pay close attention before jumping to what the story means or its significance to your life.

2. Begin with what happened

- The initial emphasis should be upon what happened
- Start there and the right kind of questions will arise - leading to the deeper significance of the story.

3. Express it in Style

- The story needs a form,
- It needs to be intentionally shaped,
- Attention should be given to modes of expression
- Grace has a style because it is God's action and our graced response to that action too.
- It requires looking in wonder, seeking to understand - so that light of faith illumines understanding.

4. Modify it for your audience

- Be aware of the listener(s) in the act of telling your story.
- May need to translate it for your audience - e.g. summer school different to youth group, or classroom etc.
- Use appropriate humour
- Tell it with passion
- Metaphors can convey a great deal, more than straight prose. Especially when trying to name grace.

5. Ensure there is sufficient closure

- Closure protects one from causing oneself undue harm - emotional, psychological, social and spiritual in the course of telling a story
- Often need time and distance to be able to tell the story
- Are you in control of the story or is it in control of you?
- Some helpful clarifying questions:
 - Do I tell this story for what it will do for me, or what it will do for others
 - Is there personal information about others – need either their permission or to hide their identities
 - Am I doing this for my own reassurance or healing - have I got that help elsewhere first?
 - Is there a wound - how raw is it?
 - Have I told this story to people who would expect to hear it directly and privately?
 - Have I already found the grace in this story?
 - Is there closure?
 - Why is this a story worth telling?

6. Embrace Natural Emotions

- We can be tempted to neglect the human realities of the experience. Especially to over-emphasise the divine action to the detriment of our own experiences.
- Can also underplay or overplay the emotional pull of the story
- Avoiding emotionalism

7. Pray and Practice

- Prayer - throughout the process
 - I do believe help my unbelief
 - In your light we see light
 - Lord, open my lips; my mouth will proclaim your praise
- Embrace all the practices of good writing
- Brainstorm, write an outline, compose drafts, revise and edit, get feedback
- Practice