

# WHY STORYTELLING MATTERS FOR YOUR CHURCH'S FINANCIAL HEALTH

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# Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
  - Why storytelling is important
  - Constructing the narrative
  - When and how to tell your story
  - Practice in breakout groups
  - Q&A and close
-



# WHAT IS STORYTELLING?

- Common thread that brings us together.
  - Involves a storyteller and a listener, making it interactive.
  - Jesus's choice of communication style.
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# WHY DO WE TELL STORIES?

A group of people are sitting around a campfire in a cornfield at night. The scene is illuminated by the warm glow of the fire, which is contained in a metal fire pit. The people are silhouetted against the dark background of the cornfield and the starry night sky. The sky is filled with numerous stars, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative. The text 'WHY DO WE TELL STORIES?' is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

# Let's get scientific

- Stories are remembered 22x more easily than data, facts, and stats
  - Our neural activity increases 5X when listening to a story
  - Storytelling engages our sensory cortex in the brain, allowing the listener to feel, hear, taste, and even smell the story
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# Why storytelling in the church is so important:

- Enhances transparency and increases loyalty
  - Empowers your members and advocates
  - Creates stronger relationships and builds bonds
  - Touches people's hearts and makes your ministry more memorable
  - Strengthens your church's mission
-

A woman is seen from the chest up, holding a book titled 'THE WIFE' by ALAFAIR BIRKE. She is standing in a library aisle, surrounded by tall stacks of books on shelves. The lighting is warm and focused on the woman and the book she is holding. The background shows more bookshelves and a red exit sign. The overall atmosphere is quiet and intellectual.

# HOW DO WE TELL OUR STORY?

# HOW TO Tell a Story FOR NONPROFITS



## It all starts with a character.

To tell your story, you must have a character to follow. This gives your audience someone to identify with and care about. This is who they hope for, fear for, and cheer for. So who is your character? Someone affected by your cause.



**GIVE THE AUDIENCE DETAILS**  
A character and story are more relatable when you include the little details. Give the audience something concrete to remember. Does the character have children or a pet? Do they have a favorite hobby or hangout?

**ESTABLISH THEIR GOALS**  
Your character has some kind of goal or desire; perhaps it is to provide for their family or become a doctor. Their efforts to get what they want are what moves the story forward.

## But any good story has conflict.

Now that you have a well-rounded character and know what they want, you have to show what is standing in their way. It may be poverty, a natural disaster, or a deadly disease.

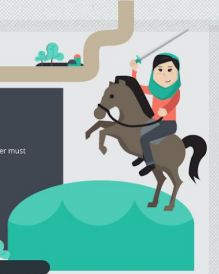
**THE VILLAIN**  
A compelling way to present the obstacle in your character's way is to portray it as a villain. The villain doesn't have to be a person; it just needs to be an opponent your donors can rally to defeat.



## Take action!

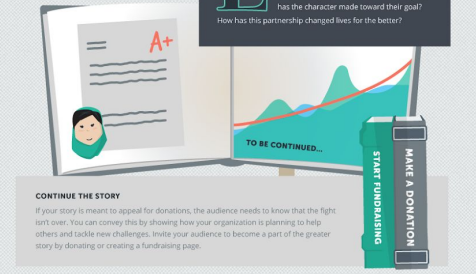
Now, with help from your organization, your character must face the challenges in front of them.

**EMPOWER DONORS TO BECOME PART OF THE STORY**  
Show how your organization helps the character reach a happy ending. This is the time to highlight how donors and your nonprofit work together to support the protagonist.



## End with impact.

As the story comes to a close, show what you have accomplished together. What progress has the character made toward their goal? How has this partnership changed lives for the better?



**CONTINUE THE STORY**  
If your story is meant to appeal for donations, the audience needs to know that the fight isn't over. You can convey this by showing how your organization is planning to help others and tackle new challenges. Invite your audience to become a part of the greater story by donating or creating a fundraising page.



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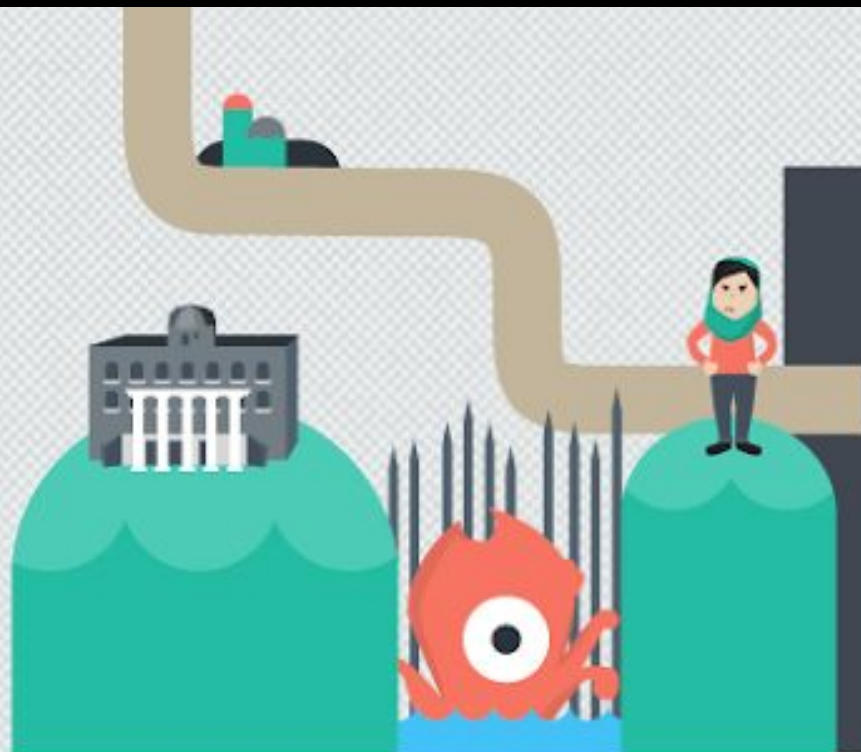
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POOR  
NUTRITION



SOCIAL  
DISAPPROVAL



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# When and how to tell your story

- **Preaching**
- **Minute for Mission**
- **During/before an offering**
- **Newsletter**
- **Social media**
- **Vision/Mission Sunday and six-month check in**
- **Dessert and Dialogue**
- **Sunday school**
- **Testimonials (including video testimonials)**
- **Narrative budget**





# Small Groups

- Your Breakout Room number will correspond with your group number in the [Google doc](#)
  - If you'd rather forgo the example and use one of your faith communities instead, that is totally fine/encouraged!
  - You'll have ~15 minutes to think through either methods of telling your story or crafting a story based on your situation
  - Assign one person to report back to the larger group
  - Use your imagination!
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# Parting Tips



- Tell stories about real people
- Use emotion (carefully)
- Focus on the details
- Connect it back to your mission
- Embrace visual storytelling

"AN OWNER'S MANUAL FOR THE SOUL."  
—ANNE LAMOTT

**BETWEEN**  
the  
**LISTENING**  
and the  
**TELLING**

HOW STORIES CAN SAVE US

MARK YACONELLI

**DONALD  
MILLER**

*New York Times* Bestselling Author

OVER  
1 MILLION  
COPIES  
SOLD

**BUILDING A  
STORY  
BRAND  
2.0**



FULLY REVISED & UPDATED

Clarify Your Message  
So Customers Will Listen

# THANK YOU!

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