

Telling the Big Story (Trek & Journey) **...in Five Minutes or Five Months**

Glee, Twilight, and The Type of Story You *Think* You Live In

Your students know that Rachel and Kurt are made-up characters. They know that glittery vampires aren't real. But do they think they live in the sort of world... Where embracing your teenaged sexuality (however confused) is a good idea? Where falling in love with a violent man who alternates between tenderness and wanting to kill you leads to true love, forever?

The Story of the World...and You

We all think the movie is about us, starts when we're born, or maybe with our first memories, and it's over when we die. This is a lie. *That* story is real, but it's just a tiny part.

The real story, the Big Story, starts with the Creation of the world and continues through the present day, through the Last Judgment, into the Re-Creation and eternity. Our lives don't make sense except when we see them that way.

Keys to Chronological Bible Teaching

1. **Tell the Big Story, all the time**
2. **Identify organizing themes to select material**
3. **Connect the stories**

Storytelling Strategies

1. **Focus on one small story (but tell the Big Story in it)**
2. **Tell the Big Story (but situate the present moment in it)**
3. **Tell a small story (that maps well onto the present moment)**

Becoming a Teller of the Big Story

1. **Read the Chronological Thread books. In order and repeatedly.**
Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Luke, Acts, Revelation
2. **Understand where the parallel stories fit in (e.g., Ruth, 1 & 2 Chronicles)**
3. **Grasp Proverbs as a digest of the patterns in the Story**
4. **Use the Psalms as celebrations, laments and prayers that fit into the Story**

Applying the Story Topically

1. **Assurance of Salvation**
"What if I believe in Jesus now, but then a year from now I go and murder somebody?"

Short answer: What happened when David did that?

Long answer: God names before He evaluates. He does this in creation, with Abraham, with constituting Israel. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the sons of God, even to those that believed on His name.” First He calls us His children. The testing only comes later.

2. Friendship

Situate friendship within the overall purpose of humanity: to image God by ruling the world, tending and keeping it. God is Trinity, not absolute unity. Friends are meant to be united in fellowship, but not absolutely identical. Therefore we don’t pick on someone just because he’s different. Friends are meant to be together and to work together, and the Three Persons do, operating together in creation, in Jesus’ life, in our salvation, and so on. Good friends help you image God; bad friends move you away from imaging God. The more your students understand the overall story of humanity, the better they will understand what good and bad friendship look like.

3. Sexuality

First of all, the topic is not sexuality, it’s marriage. So you start with Adam and Eve, and you take your time drawing the picture well. Then you throw everything against that. What’s wrong with premarital sex? *God hasn’t joined you together.* What’s wrong with homosexuality? *It wasn’t Adam and Steve...* Adultery? *It wasn’t Adam, Eve, and Charlotte, either.* Pornography? *God made sex to be personal; porn is impersonal.* Masturbation? *God made sex to be shared; where’s the other person?* And so on.

You can do all the ethical teaching about how premarital sex is stealing from your future spouse, etc. But the Story tells you *why* it’s stealing—you are meant to be a gift, just like God gave Eve to Adam, and Adam to Eve. A gift to *one* person, please notice, not a party favor to be passed around.

Although Adam and Eve should be your major touchpoint, don’t stop the story there. There’s much, much more. Marriage is a picture of Christ and the Church. Any of the sexual pollutions impair marriage, and by impairing marriage present a lie about Christ and the Church.

Resources

- 1. Bible Framework Ministries (broadest)**
- 2. Stranger on the Road to Emmaus (easiest, narrowest)**
- 3. New Tribes Missions-Firm Foundations (equally narrow, but more detailed)**
- 4. Michael Bull (<http://www.bullartistry.com.au/wp/>) (weird but helpful nuggets)**