

Acts 3:1-10 “Silver & Gold” (NRSV)

Facilitator Notes:

Background to why I’m teaching this way:

Question: “do you think Tom & Amelia could teach me this story?”
Yes, but...

Being self-sufficient:

- workshops are great for everyone, and particularly if you’re a beginner. But you’re at **the mercy of the facilitator** and the workshop techniques. You have to learn the particular story the facilitator has chosen, and the learning exercises are most likely designed for interaction between people also learning the story.
- if you’re going to be a storyteller, you need **some independent story LEARNING TECHNIQUES**, that you can use on whatever story you pick to learn, whenever you need to learn it.
- Besides, **workshops get you started**. If you want to keep the story, you need to take it home with you, and work with it.

So tonight, I’m going to teach you a story from the Book of Acts, and I’m going to teach you some story learning techniques that should help you learn other stories on your own.

Tell Acts 3:1-10

If this were a typical workshop, I would probably start you off with an exercise to get the words of the story in your head, without giving you the text written out.

But if you’re working alone, you’re probably going to start with text on a page. So that’s where we’re going to start.

Open your bibles to Act 3:1-10. The first thing I want you to do is ignore the chapter divisions, headings and paragraph breaks. Those were inserted by the translator, editor and printer to help people who are READING the text. What you’ll want to do is get a copy of the text that you can reformat, mark up and scribble on. (Handout story text.)

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This version is double spaced, with a wide left margin, and I’ve put a break in between each verse or sentence or thought. We’ll get to the reason for this formatting in a minute.

Technique 1: (15 mins.) Babel walk - out loud, on your feet, moving with gestures. At this point, we’re using a Babel Walk to get the story started in your head. Later in your learning process, you could use a Babel walk to meditate on the story, to refine your image of the setting, or to practice phrasing and emotion.

- 1st time through: Walk around while you read the story out loud.
- 2nd time through: Walk around while you read the story out loud with gestures.
- 3rd time through: Walk around while you read the story out loud making gestures, but speak with expression (any expression or emotion).
- 4th time through: Stand still. Glance at a line of text (1-2 seconds), close your eyes, say that line out loud with gestures & expression. Repeat for each line of the story.
- 5th & more: Tell the story out loud, walking, gesturing & with expression, looking at the page as little as possible.

Now that you’re a little familiar with the story, you’ll want to break it into Episodes. This is why you need a copy of the text that you can mark up. And why I double-spaced the lines: so you would not be influenced by paragraph breaks or punctuation.

Technique 2: (10 mins) Episodes

- Looking at the printed text, identify 3-5 episodes in the story and give them titles. Draw lines between the episodes and write each episode’s title in the left margin. Your episodes maybe different than someone else’s; that’s fine. There’s no right or wrong way to divide up the story; you’re just looking for something that makes sense to you.

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- Each episode should contain 1-5 statements or actions or thoughts. (if you have more than that in an episode, you may need to redefine your episodes.)
- Fold the page on the vertical line so that you can see EITHER the text OR the Episode title.
- Using just the Episode Title, tell each episode out loud to yourself as best you can. When you're finished telling the whole story, look at the text. How did you do? Mark and review any parts you had problems with and try it again.

Dividing a story into episodes is not a gimmick. It's science. It takes advantage of the way your brain organizes and retrieves memories. It's easier to remember these few “chunks” of the story we're calling Episodes, than to remember the 217 individual words in this story in the right sequence.

Technique 3: Storyteller's Analysis (10 minutes)

Look for the ‘foot prints’ of the early storytellers. Remember, these stories were TOLD before they were ever written down. So Generations of Storytellers imbedded their memory tools in the stories so they could tell and teach them. We've lost some of these tools through the generations, because of changes in language and culture, but the simplest ones are still there, and Biblical scholars and storytellers are starting to look for other clues, and finding them. The original storytellers WANT you to tell these stories.

Take the story marked with your Episodes and look for:

- Sequences, series & repetition (Gen 1)
- rhymes and alliteration
- ‘sound’ words
- words of direction, tone, emotion, pace

Mark what you find: highlight, colors, circle, underline, etc.

What did you find?

Technique 4: Biblical analysis (2nd handout)

Next we want to look at how this story fits into the bigger Biblical story. We know some simple things immediate:

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- this story is in the New Testament.

Now take your Bible and the Timeline:

- what happened just before this story; and before that, and before that, and before that?
- what happens immediately after your story? And after that, and after that?
- How does your story fit in? How does where it fit affect your story?

Use other resources:

- Simple Word study: various translations, Concordance
- Dictionaries, Handbooks & Commentaries: Culture, customs, politics & social setting; what do other people think this story is about?
- Bible studies & discussion groups
- research terms, things, places, people you're not familiar with
 - o what are they?
 - o are they found other places in the Bible?

Technique 5: Personal analysis

We've talked about Episodes and Storyteller's tools as ways to remember the story. Another key memory tool is connections.

If you can connect this story to your own memories, you'll be more likely to remember the story.

So in Personal analysis, put yourself in the position of one of the characters, and think of times in your life when you have been in a similar situation.

- What is happening to John and Peter? Think of a time when you had to put into practice something that you had been taught for the first time. Did you have doubts you could do it? Were you nervous?
- When have you felt tested?
- And the lame man: Have you been passive and dependent, then been empowered?
- When have you felt powerless?
- Have you been in a similar situation?
- Do you identify with one of the characters?

As you're practicing the story, pay attention to where your mind wanders. It may take you to memories you can relate to the story.

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These are some techniques. Experienced speakers and tellers have their own favorites. (Share some if there is time.)

These steps are not mandatory, they are not sequential. You can do them in any order that makes sense, feels right and helps you learn the story. And you can use them repetitively and concurrently. Skip back and forward between methods. Because what you come to understand about the story by using one technique may change the way you understand another aspect of the story.

And practice, practice, practice the story, while you are using whatever techniques you choose.