

Guidelines for Crafting Stories

This is not a full manual for crafting stories, it is only for the purpose of crafting stories in everyday situations (situational stories). If you want to craft a full chronological set, go to the following link. www.ST4T.org or to www.storyrunners.org. Often oral people craft very good stories without any help at all. So not for everybody such a list is helpful or needed.

1. *First be sure you understand the story yourself.* You need to read the full biblical passage at least three times from at least three different versions aloud (for a total of nine read-throughs). Ask the classical questions: Who, where, when, what, why and how? Study the characters.
2. *Visualize the story, its scenes and the characters in it.*
3. *Be aware of things in the story which may offend your listeners.* Before Muslims: Instead of the word Jews use descendants of Abraham. Instead of temple use place of worship.
4. *Write out the story.* Remember to write it as it was/will be *told*, not *read*. Stories should always be *told* stories. *Use high standard everyday language for crafting the story.*
5. *Keep the dialogue if possible.*
6. *You may need to simplify the names for God.* With Muslims you will probably just use the Almighty or Allah. In other cultures it will be necessary to be consistent but at the same time sure that the name used is not confused with local deities. Among Hindus it is not sufficient to say “the Lord” as listeners may put in their own “lord.” It must be the Lord Jehovah, the Lord Jesus, etc. Switching back and forth between “the Lord” and other names can be confusing to oral communicators listening to a story.
7. *Simplify technical terms like Pharisees into religious leaders.* The glossary of ST4T or the stories itself have a lot of ideas.
8. *Limit new proper names of people and places in the stories. Only key names.*
9. *Explain unusual or unknown things in the story in one sentence in the story.* For example the *Philippian Jailer wanted to kill himself, because by law he would be killed if the prisoners would escape.*
10. *Pay attention to where the story begins and ends. It might be very helpful to have short phrases like: “This was a true story from Holy Scripture.”*

There should be an order like a hamburger.

First level is link to the situation: For example you are talking with somebody about building a house and you prepare to tell the parable of Jesus about the Rich Fool. (Luke 12, 13-21): Once Jesus told a very interesting story about building.

Second level, this is the biblical story.

Third level is the personal confession. After the biblical story you add a personal confession with one or two sentences. Therefore I want to be rich for the Lord Almighty and I want to be obedient to him. Or another version would be: When I build a house I want to be thankful to God for what I own and to be rich for God. Or I do not only want to build a house for my family, but I also want to be rich for God.



Afterwards test the crafted story with three trusted people for any vocabulary, grammatical structure or content, which is unclear.

The most important question is: Can the informant retell the story to you? If he cannot retell the story, it is not a good story.

Other questions are: What did he leave out? Are there any places where the retelling stumbles or is uncertain? Revise as needed.

The testing process is very important and it helps you get a good crafted story.

If you work cross culturally ask: Are there certain storytelling protocols followed among listeners which if not followed may discredit a Bible story? There are some societies where the moral of the story is announced before the story is told. Other protocols may call for certain rhythms to be established in the story or allowance made for refrains or responses by the listeners. You should know this from the worldview study before beginning a Bible Storying strategy.

Revise as needed.

Once you've established your crafting style, use it consistently when telling stories to listeners with whom you have an ongoing relationship.