



STORY

Acronym Tool

What's your story?

Have you ever wanted to get to know someone's story, but didn't know where to start? The STORY Acronym Tool helps you think of questions to learn the stories of others.

Ask a good question: Each letter stands for a category. Think of questions you might ask in that category. Use open ended questions that invite someone to share a story about themselves: *What – Who – Where – When – How – Why?* When the conversation becomes stalled in one category, move onto another letter to help you think of a question. You don't need to go in order (in fact, it's often best to start with the random "Yada Yada Yada" type questions!), and you don't need to do all letters.

Listen: Set aside your mental to do list and conversations you had earlier in the day, don't worry about what to say next - just listen. Come to a complete stop and know that you are on holy ground as you listen to the stories of others.

Follow-up: As you listen, think of follow up questions to dig deeper into the story you are hearing. *What did that mean to you? Why was that event important? How did that help you in your faith?*

Remember – the STORY acronym and questions you use are just tools. There is no right or wrong way to get to learn the stories of others. The point is to get to know someone's life and faith stories...to get to know the person!

Why get to know someone else's story?

Stories connect us – and we were created to be connected, to God and to each other. You may have heard it said that "You can't hate the person whose story you know." Stories bring understanding, healing, wholeness and hope. When we know each other's stories we work better together, we worship better together, we serve better together, we share God's love better together.

What do sharing and listening to stories have to do with following Jesus?

We are living in the middle of God's story – for us, and for our neighbor. When we share our stories, we are sharing God's story for us. When we listen to the stories of others, we are listening to God's story at work in the world. Stories help us grow deeper in faith, and help us live out the faith practices.

When we share stories, we **encourage** each other.

When we share stories, we know how to **pray** for each other.

When we share stories, we **invite** each other into our lives.

When we share stories, we **give** the gifts of our time and experiences.

When we share stories, we learn about each other and how God is at work (**study**).

When we share stories, we identify ways to **serve** our neighbor.

When we share stories, we **worship** the God in whose story we live.

Story Acronym Tool

Each letter stands for a category. Think of questions you might ask in each category to get to know someone's life and faith stories.

S = Status Update

Just like Facebook prompts members to share what's on their mind, ask questions relating to what is happening in someone's life.

What happened today/this week/this month?

What is something that went well today?

What is something that didn't go well today?

T = Traditions and Rituals

Get to know someone's history, what is important to them, what they like to do.

What is your most memorable childhood memory?

What is a nightly/daily ritual for your family?

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

O = Optimism

Despite what the news might show us on a daily basis, there is hope in this world because of our faith in Jesus. And God has given us gifts to share for the good of others. Ask questions that get at stories of calling, purpose and hope!

Describe a time you have felt hope for the world/your church/your family.

What is something you are proud of?

What makes you excited as you look at the coming month/year?

How does your faith give you hope?

R = Relationships

Ask questions to learn about the people who have shaped our life stories.

What relationships do you most value right now?

Who was the most influential teacher in your life?

How is your relationship with God?

Y = Yada Yada Yada

While this phrase has a cultural definition of someone going on and on about the obvious things people should know, the Hebrew definition is "to know" and translates into several deeper meanings of knowing. So often we think we know each other (yada, yada, yada) – but do we really, deeply know the people we encounter each week in church, in our communities, in our lives? Ask playful, random, obscure, trivial, deep, silly, wondering questions to get to know someone.

What was your favorite toy as a child?

What is your favorite movie?

What would your ideal vacation include?

What super-hero power would you like to have?

More Resources

For Story Starter questions using the STORY acronym tool and more resources, visit www.nemnsynod.org/Discipleship.