

A photograph of a man with grey hair, wearing a grey t-shirt and green rubber boots, bending over a raised garden bed. He is holding a small plant and appears to be planting it. The garden bed is made of wooden planks and contains various green plants and some red flowers. In the background, there is a wooden shed with a gabled roof and a window. The scene is set outdoors with trees and foliage visible.

6. HONE STORYTELLING SKILLS



CULTIVATE
GENEROSITY
Growing a Culture of Joyful Giving

6. HONE STORYTELLING SKILLS



Jesus taught spiritual truths through parables and stories with a deeper meaning.

We, as followers of Jesus, have the power to do the same. There are many ways to tell a story; some of us are better than others. However, no matter our talents, we all can tell stories. Like with all learning, the more we do it, the better we become.

6.1

JESUS AS OUR TEACHER

Jesus used parables to convey rich spiritual truths through simple, relatable stories.

These parables often involved everyday experiences and familiar elements from the listeners' lives, making complex theological and moral lessons accessible and memorable. Jesus, our creator knew:

- Parables simplify profound spiritual truths by expressing them in relatable, everyday scenarios.
- Parables engage listeners by drawing them into the story. This encourages active listening, personal reflection, deeper insight, and transformation.
- Parables had a dual function: concealing and revealing the truth. They revealed deep spiritual insights to the open-minded but prevented the hard-hearted from misinterpreting the message.
- Parables made Jesus' teachings culturally relevant by using familiar settings, characters, and activities, helping His audience connect personally.

6.2

PARABLES

Jesus' use of parables was a masterful teaching method that made complex spiritual truths accessible and memorable.

The timeless nature of these stories continues to resonate with people, offering insights and guidance for a life aligned with divine principles. Here are a few of His stories:

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37): A man is beaten and left for dead. A priest and a Levite pass by without helping, but a Samaritan, who is considered an outsider, shows compassion and cares for him. This parable teaches the importance of loving one's neighbor and showing mercy, regardless of social boundaries or prejudices.

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32): A young man demands his inheritance, squanders it in reckless living, and returns home in disgrace, only to be welcomed back with open arms by his father. The story's moral illustrates God's unconditional love and forgiveness, the joy of repentance, and the value of every individual.

The Sower (Matthew 13:1-23): A farmer scatters seeds on different types of ground, with varying results depending on the soil's condition. This example highlights the different responses to God's word and the importance of a receptive heart.

The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7): A shepherd leaves his ninety-nine sheep to find the one that was lost, rejoicing when he sees it. This parable emphasizes God's concern for the lost and the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.

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6.3
REFLECTION



Go back and read each parable in your Bible. As you read, notice the rich detail of place, time and actions.

What do you notice about the story in the Bible? Do you notice how Jesus used visual imagery to create mental images that were easy to remember? He often used surprise or a twist to capture attention and engage the mind. By adding details, the parables could be understood on a basic level, making them accessible to everyone, regardless of their level of theological knowledge.

We can do the same when telling a story to support the reason for a member or stakeholder to support our ministry, local budget, or new building.

Now that you have read the four parables in more detail, compare to the summaries provided in the section above. What do you notice? Write your observation here. How does Jesus use the stories to connect and transmit spiritual values?

Write the elements here.

Samaritan	_____
Prodigal	_____
Sower	_____
Sheep	_____



6.4
STEP 1: PLANNING
YOUR STORY

The most challenging part of storytelling is connecting a problem to a solution in a way that truly resonates with your audience.

In this exercise, your audience is made up of people sitting in your church or school gym. They're present because they already have some connection to your community. Your goal is to find a way to engage them—to help them see themselves in the story you're about to tell.

Let's walk through the process of preparing for that moment by answering four key questions. Now that you've seen how Jesus used stories to reach hearts and minds, it's time to practice doing the same.

- 1. *What problem will your story address?*
- 2. *What solution will your story reveal or suggest?*
- 3. *What is the purpose or message of your story?*
- 4. *Who exactly is your audience?*

Write your answers on the next page before you begin drafting your story.

QUIZ

6.5

QUIZ

What is the problem?

Write your response here

What is the solution?

Write your response here

Who helped resolve the problem?

Write your response here

What did they do?

Write your response here

Where are you going to share your story?

Write your response here

Who will be listening?

Write your response here

6. HONE STORYTELLING SKILLS



6.6

STEP 2: STORY CONSTRUCTION

Learning how to tell a story takes practice and focused effort. Each person has their way of telling stories; you will learn yours through practice.

In Step 1, you completed the first stage by identifying the problem, the solution, the people involved, the purpose of the story, and who needs to hear it.

Now, using Jesus' example of telling a story, we need to add the details to make our story memorable and engaging. We do this by adding the following details.

Setting

Time and Place: Establish where and when the story is taking place.

Characters

Protagonist: The main character or characters around whom the story revolves.

Supporting Characters: These characters develop the story and support the protagonist's journey.

Conflict

Internal Conflict: The struggles within the protagonist, such as fears, desires, or dilemmas.

External Conflict: Challenges the protagonist faces from external sources, such as other characters, societal norms, nature, or technology.

Rising Action

The rising action is a series of events that build tension and lead to a turning point. This is where the conflict becomes more complicated, and the stakes increase.

Tipping Point

The conflict reaches its peak at the turning point or the story's most intense moment.

Resolution

Falling Action: Events that follow the tipping point and begin to resolve the conflict.

Resolution is the story's conclusion, where the conflict is resolved, and the story comes to a satisfying end.

Continue Your Learning

The following pages contain three stories that incorporate steps 1 and 2. The stories weave in elements of *"The Formula"*.

Read each simple story carefully because after, you will have an opportunity to practice what you have learned.

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EXAMPLE 1 – AVOCADOS

Setting: Introduce time, place, and person

At 12, my family and I relocated to a ranch-style home on one acre of land in Escondido, CA. The property was surrounded by fields and a small number of homes. In front of our house, there were three unusual trees.

Conflict: Introduce the issue, concern, or problem

After the first year, the leaves on the trees turned green. My dad wanted to cut them down, but I prevented him from doing so. The second year came and went, and while the trees remained beautiful, nothing of note grew on their branches. Eventually, we forgot about them.

Rising Action: Introduce a change to come

During the third year, I noticed the trees were dry, so I watered them. At some point that same year, I noticed a green, fruit-like object growing on the trees. Over time, the fruit grew and eventually fell to the ground.

Turning Point: Introduce the tipping point

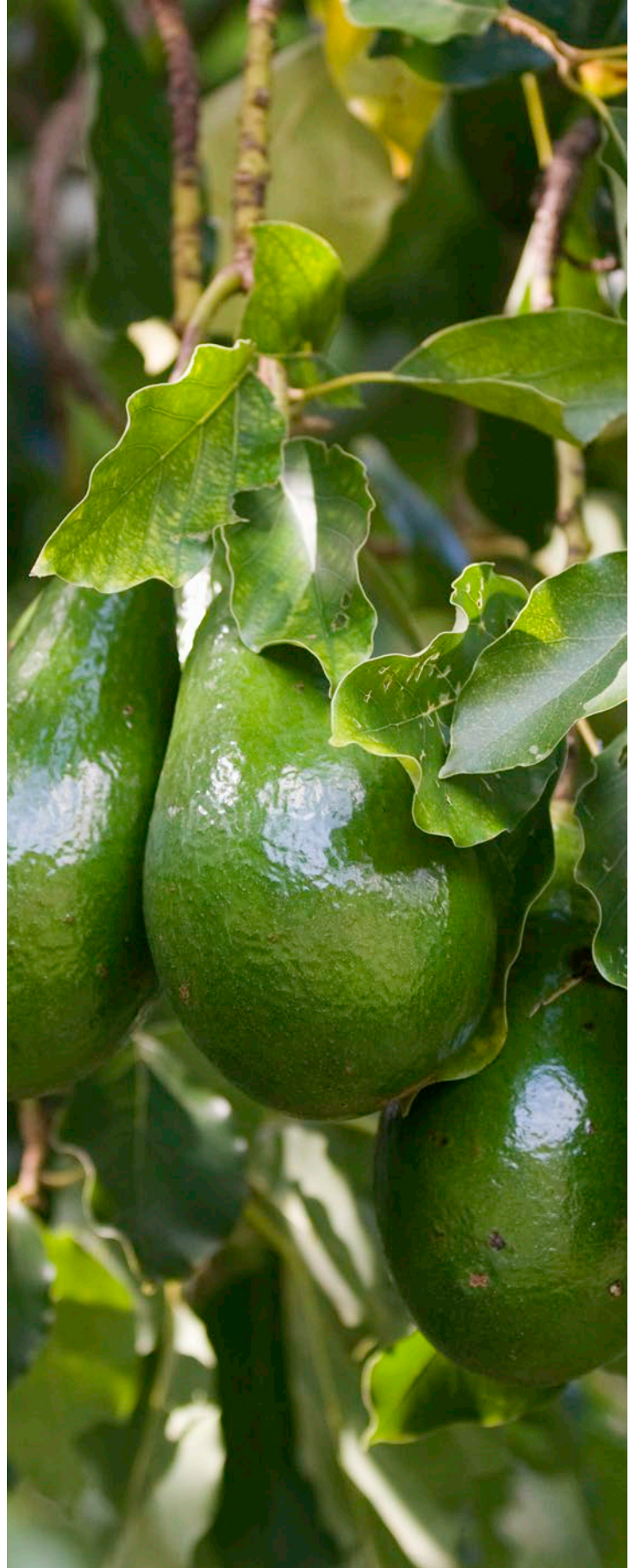
One day, I noticed my dogs eating the dropped fruit, and I sprinted out, fearful it might poison them. I picked up what they were eating and was surprised by what I saw.

Resolution: A funny or feel-good ending

I found out we had a small stand of Avocado Trees. The fruit they produced was so tasty that, to this day, I remember the flavor. We shared our fortune with others; my dogs had the shiniest coats ever.

Conclusion: Connect back to the purpose

The avocado trees turned out to be a gift from God, and we shared our abundance joyfully. Proverbs 3:9 teaches us to honor God with our possessions and the first fruits of our labor, showing gratitude for all He has provided. Verse 10 promises overflowing blessings for our generosity, bringing hope and joy.



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6.8

EXAMPLE 2 – BLANKET

Setting: *Introduce the time, place, and person*

A California man was seriously injured in an automotive accident that ended his career in carpentry. He lived on disability checks for years.

Conflict: *Introduce the issue, concern, or problem*

When his disability checks ran out, his family's financial situation worsened, so he couldn't afford to support his children. As a result, they had to go live with their grandparents in Louisiana.

Rising Action: *Introduce changes to come*

The situation worsened until he saw a Navajo Blanket on Antiques Roadshow that looked very similar to the one he had inherited from his late great-grandmother.

Turning Point: *Introduce the tipping point*

After the show, he searched his home until he discovered the blanket in a dusty old box. He later auctioned it for \$1.5 million.

Resolution: *A funny or feel-good ending*

Through all the struggles and solutions to make ends meet, he possessed a blanket worth a fortune. However, he needed to recognize its true value and utilize it to his advantage.

Conclusion: *Connect back to the purpose*

In Malachi 3:10, it says to bring all the tithes into the storehouse and test the Lord to open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings. By trusting God and taking action, we open ourselves to His abundance. We must cherish and appreciate these blessings and continue to receive them with faith and gratitude.



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EXAMPLE 3 – PLANTING

Setting: *Introduce the time, place, and person*

A man pursued his dream of becoming a farmer by purchasing 100 acres of land, all the necessary tools, and a new tractor. He also got himself a hat and a fresh pair of overalls.

Conflict: *Introduce the issue, concern, or problem*

He said, “All right, I’m ready to go!” The next day he got up, had a nice breakfast, put his hat on, went outside, sat on the porch, and stared at his land all day.

Rising Action: *Introduce a change to come*

The man repeated the same action the following day, the next day, and even the day after. This routine went on for weeks, leaving him perplexed and constantly searching the ground for any indication of progress, but there was none.

Turning Point: *Introduce the tipping point*

According to natural laws, a seed must be planted for something to grow.

Resolution: *A funny or feel-good ending*

Despite having all the necessary tools, looking like a farmer, and even claiming to be one, there can be no yield without planting the seed.

Conclusion: *Connect back to the purpose*

In Mark, we see what Jesus says about the matter.

The kingdom of God is like a man scattering seed, then sleeping and rising each day to find that the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. The earth produces crops by itself, and when the grain ripens, he harvests it. Just as in this parable, by sowing the seed of faith through returning our tithes and offerings, we can anticipate a bountiful harvest in the future.”





6.10

QUIZ

Write your story using the problem and solution you identified in Step one. Try to keep it simple.

If you wish to have it reviewed, submit your story by visiting www.nccsda.com/development and dropping it into the text box.

Write your response here

