

TELLING THE STORIES

‘Cleave the wood, I am there;
Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.’

Two stories then—our own story and Jesus’ story, and in the end perhaps, they are the same story. . . . “Cleave the wood, I am there,” says Isaiah in the Gospel of Thomas—“Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.” . . . To cleave the truth of our own lives, to lift and look beneath our own stories, is to see glimmers at least of [Jesus’] life, of his struggling to come alive in our lives, his story whispering like a song through the babble and drone of ours.” -from A Room Called Remember by Frederick Buechner



At the heart of our identity as Christians are the biblical stories. Wherever we gather, stories are told: creeds, songs, sagas, dramas, Old Testament stories passed from generation to generation, New Testament stories proclaiming a crucified and risen Christ. Telling the stories of God is our highest calling. Cracking open new meanings and uncovering the many layers of meaning in the biblical stories is a life-long challenge. You will find here a selection of resources that speak of God’s presence in all of life. They help us know who we are and who God is. Most importantly, they reveal to us the God whose presence permeates all of life, the God to be found in the cleft of the wood, the turn of the stone. For more on storytelling including details about each resource listed here, go to our online catalogue at www.eandsynod.org and key in “storytelling.”

Julie K. Aageson,
Director of the Resource Center

VIDEOS

John Shea's extraordinary gift for telling the biblical stories can be experienced in the following video resources:



THE ANTIQUE WATCH AND OTHER TALES and **THE MAN ON THE OX AND OTHER TALES** include three to nine minute segments of classic biblical truths with discussion guides for bible study, adult education, youth discussions.

From the Gospel of John, **THE WOMAN AT THE WELL, THE MAN BORN BLIND,** and **THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.** Discussion guides are included for each of these 60-75 minute interpretations of the Johannine stories.

THE FATHER OF ICE CREAM, THE MOTHER OF SODA BREAD, AND OTHER TALES includes twelve modern adaptations of gospel parables. Discussion guide for each segment in this 90 minute video. (VT1667)

Thoughtful reflections on the significance of Holy Week can be found in **ROLLING BACK THE ROCK: The Religious Meaning of Holy Week.** Discussion guide.

OTHER VIDEO RESOURCES

Premising his work with the assertion that some of the biblical stories are meant to be told, not read, New Testament teacher and theologian, David Rhoads illustrates compelling storytelling from Mark, Galatians, Matthew, Luke, and John. **DRAMATIC PRESENTATIONS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT** and **THE DRAMATIC READING OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK.** (VT1829) (VT100)

THE ELECTRONIC CAMPFIRE: NEW STORYTELLING FROM SCRIPTURE retells the narratives of creation, the flood, the binding of Isaac, the Red Sea, and the valley of dry bones. For youth and adults, this video is intended not only to offer a new appreciation of familiar stories, but also to encourage congregations to explore their own creativity in the presentation of scripture. (VT1200)

Three master storytellers—Frederick Buechner, Maya Angelou, and James Carroll—share their personal stories and give insights into the use of story in revealing God’s presence in our lives in **SACRED STORIES**. These three novelists lead viewers to discover the power of memory to heal, the value of telling secrets, and the possibilities of changing the future by forgiving the past. (VT843)

A vivid storytelling experience from John 17-21 is told by professional storyteller, Dennis Dewey in **IT IS FINISHED—THE DEATH AND RISING OF JESUS**. Guide. (VT1868)



A favorite collection of mine is **BLOOD AND HONEY—ANCIENT TALES FROM A PROMISED LAND**. British actor and storyteller, Tony Robinson, dramatizes fourteen Old Testament stories in this compelling series. The stories of Joshua, Samson, Deborah, David and others are told with great energy and passion, appealing to all ages. (VT1106=)

Told with humor and emotion especially for children, **THE JESUS STORIES** include the stories of the Lost Coin, the Good Samaritan, Feeding the Five Thousand, Zacchaeus, and others. (VT1103=)



Another of my favorites is Elie Wiesel’s **GREAT FIGURES OF THE BIBLE**. Wiesel introduces universal themes of the Old Testament and then sets out on a visual journey of these great figures. Stories include Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Abraham and Isaac, Job, Moses, and David. Telling and showing how the ancient stories of the Old Testament are the family stories—our stories for today—is at the heart of this series. (VT1248=)

Walter Wangerin, storyteller extraordinaire, tackles the entire Bible in **THE BOOK OF GOD**. Before a lively audience, Wangerin dramatizes biblical events, making the women and men of the Bible come alive in vivid detail and dialogue. (VT1583)

A professional storyteller tells seventeen of the great biblical stories in **IN THE BEGINNING, TOWARDS THE MIDDLE, AND ALL THE WAY TO THE END**. Among the stories, Sarah's Laughter, Psalm 136, the Parable of the Generous Landowner, Pentecost, and more. (VT2003)

A hundred generations passed along the faith from hand to hand until it reached me.

In a video called **PARABLES**, Walt Wangerin and Joanna Dewey provide a new look at familiar stories. They offer unique insights and interpretations of the stories Jesus told, especially the parables. (VT2171)

WEB SITES

www.storyfest.com features the work of Robert Bela Wilhelm, founder and director of the School of Sacred Storytelling. They offer a journal, seminars, conferences, and printed resources.

www.sacredstorytelling.org includes more about the work of Robert Bela Wilhelm.

The Network of Biblical Storytellers can be found at www.dnaco.net/~nobsint/gift.phtml

Go to www.nobs.or/biblio.htm for a select bibliography for biblical storytellers. For notes on the process of biblical storytelling, go to www.dennisdewey.org/Dennis8.htm



The Guide to Lectionary Storybook describes a unique storytelling approach to scripture. Go to www.lectionarystorybook.com

For a way of teaching biblical stories, Jerome Berryman's work under the broad title of GODLY PLAY is an important resource for biblical storytelling. Go to www.godlyplay.com for resources and information. For workshops with an accredited Godly Play teacher, contact Kathy Meyer at faithlite@juno.com. For more information about Godly Play, contact the Center for the Theology of Childhood at theologychild2@earthlink.net.

PRINTED RESOURCES

Proposing a method of storytelling that actively involves youth in the life of the church and the life of the Bible, SPIRITED STORYTELLING features six biblical stories (print and audiocassette). (PR485)

THE ART OF STORYTELLING is a book of stories to heal, educate, inspire, motivate, and build relationships. (PR302)

TELL ME THE STORIES OF JESUS: THE PARABLES FOR CHILDREN includes 13 sessions for teaching the parables to elementary-aged children. (PR427)

USING STORYTELLING IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION focuses on choosing stories, basic storytelling skills, lesson plans, and ways to present and use stories. (PR252)

STORYTELLERS OF GOD: TEACHER'S TOOLBOX includes an explanation of the "God-story" approach to teaching religious language, how to use the story-starting process, and more. (PR527)

STORYTELLING, KIDS, AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION explores biblical storytelling in an imaginatively practical way. It's intended for church school leaders, teachers, and others interested in biblical storytelling. (PR716)



Gerhard Marcks, *Noah*, from Fine Arts Collection, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

BOOKS

The following books are a sampling of some of the best:

For a beautifully written description of the meaning of authentic story, read the chapter titled, "Two Stories" from **A ROOM CALLED REMEMBER** by Frederick Buechner. (B1191)

STORIES OF GOD by John Shea (B965) "To tell a story of God is to create a world, adopt an attitude, suggest a behavior. . . We are born into a community of stories and storytellers. In interpreting our traditional stories of God, we find out who we are and what we must do. In telling the stories of God, we ourselves are told."

THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER: THE STORY AS TRUTH by Madeleine L'Engle (B1312) "We are all strangers in a strange land, longing for home, but not quite knowing what or where home is. . . In literature the



Another favorite from Elie Wiesel's The Gates of the Forest:

When the great Rabbi Israel Baal Shem-Tov saw misfortune threatening the Jews it was his custom to go into a certain part of the forest to meditate. There he would light a fire, say a special prayer, and the miracle would be accomplished, the misfortune averted.

Later when his disciple, the celebrated Megid of Mezritch, had occasion for the same reason to intercede with heaven, he would go to the same place in the forest and say: iMaster of the Universe, listen! I do not know how to light the fire, but I am still able to say the prayer.î And again the miracle would be accomplished.

Still later, Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sasov, in order to save his people once more, would go into the forest and say: il do not know how to light the fire, I do not know the prayer, but I know the place and this must be sufficient.î It was sufficient and the miracle was accomplished.

Then it fell to Rabbi Israel of Rizhyn to overcome misfortune. Sitting in his armchair, his head in his hands, he spoke to God: il am unable to light the fire and I do not know the prayer; I cannot even find the place in the forest. All I can do is to tell the story, and this must be sufficient. And it was sufficient.

-Elie Wiesel, Gates of the Forest

longing for home is found in the many stories of paradise, of the forgotten place where we once belonged."

STORY JOURNEY: INVITATION TO THE GOSPEL AS STORYTELLING by Thomas Boomershine (B1325) "The best way to tell you about this book is to ask you to think of it as a large, clear woodland pool fed by deep, subterranean springs . . . the stream of biblical scholarship is the deep spring that provides the clear, cool water in this pool."

STORIES OF FAITH by John Shea (B2116) “How do we get to God . . . how do we get back? How do we contact the vitality of Jesus that generated the Christian movement . . . what happens to us once contact is made?”

A WORLD OF STORIES FOR PREACHERS AND TEACHERS by William Bausch (B1929) This is a collection of stories “that begin when the telling stops.” The best from Bausch!

ELIJAH AT THE WEDDING FEAST AND OTHER TALES by John Shea (B2328) gathers stories from different religious traditions, legends, and everyday experiences.

STORIES FOR THE GATHERING by William White (B1992) This collection includes fables and stories for Christmas and Other Festivals, Lent and Easter, and more.

THE LEGEND OF THE BELLS AND OTHER TALES by John Shea (B2373) highlights 25 of Shea’s favorite stories, “stories that touch the core of the human spirit.”

AUDIOCASSETTES

Our very fine collection of audiocassettes includes storytellers like John Shea, Megan McKenna, William Bausch, Edward Hays, and others. See the online catalogue for complete descriptions. Titles include:

- ✦ Celebrate the power of stories to capture and pass on the wisdom, imagination, and faith of a people in **STORYTELLING: IMAGINATION AND FAITH** (C136)
- ✦ **EAT THIS BREAD: STORIES TO FEED YOUR SOUL** (C157) “weaves symbols of food and money into ethnic stories relating the Lord’s Supper and the poor”
- ✦ For an illuminating look at the spiritual impact of the teachings of Jesus, listen to **GOSPEL LIGHT: JESUS STORIES FOR SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS** (C271)
- ✦ Listen to **SEASON OF DREAMS: ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS PARABLES** (C173) for a collection of original parables echoing Jesus’ Advent call to “stay awake.”



- + **JESUS, GOD'S STORYTELLER** (C181) "Spell-binding stories about the gospel parables."
- + **CREATION STORIES** (C188) "Creation stories from all the religious traditions."
- + **STORIES FROM STARLIGHT** (C270) "Stories about Adam and Eve, the magi, Santa Claus, the annunciations, and more."
- + **BECOMING THE WORD OF GOD** (C193) "Fascinating stories about how, during the liturgy, WE become the story."
- + For biblical and contemporary stories that reflect on the person of Jesus, listen to **JESUS: TEACHER EXTRAORDINAIRE** (C288).
- + **DO YOU REALLY WANT TO SEE GOD?** (C183) "Powerful 'scripture sandwiches' involving the reactions and interpretations of listeners."
- + For challenging explanations of the infancy narratives, listen to **CHRISTMAS STORIES**.
- + Stories and images of forgiveness, baptism, commitment, and the eucharist can be found in **CALLED TO BE CHRISTIAN**.
- + **THE ART OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION** (C269) "Presents the techniques and procedures essential to understanding and being empowered by the theological implications of one's life experiences."
- + **DYNAMICS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE** provides "an in-depth look at deepening one's spiritual life."
- + "Suddenly the meaning of the kingdom of God strikes the listener with revelatory clarity" in **THE KINGDOM OF GOD** (C191).
- + **THE END OF TIME, THE START OF TIME** (C184) is a retelling of the apocalyptic stories.
- + Stories about the essentials of liberation theology can be found in **ONE WORLD, MANY STORIES** (C187).
- + **ONCE UPON A TIME** (C189) "Illustrates the power, pitfalls, and procedures of using stories in preaching."
- + **NOT COUNTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN** (C190) "Offers fresh insights into the story of the feeding of the 5,000."
- + Stories about our position in the universe as the womb of God are found in **THE SEAMLESS GARMENT OF LIFE** (C192).