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PR 703 Storytelling and Preaching

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PR 703
STORYTELLING AND PREACHING
Course Syllabus
Intensive Course Format

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of this course are that you will:

• Grow in your ability to discover stories, write stories, and tell stories;
• Draw upon the nature and dynamics of autobiography (oral history, journal) as a means of enhancing self-confidence and oral expression;
• Appreciate and gain facility in using narrative imagination in the preaching process;
• Grow in your awareness that while the kerygma of authentic preaching is centered on the Jesus Story, the storyteller is a person whose very humanity is essential to telling The Story.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

From my standpoint, you can expect me to:

• Keep it interesting;
• Keep you informed; be available
• Be in prayer for all of us
• Be open, teachable, transparent, vulnerable, and willing to take risks.

From you I expect:

• Active participation in this learning community;
• Faithful and timely completion of all assignments;
• Written work to be presented on time;
• That you will be open, teachable, transparent, vulnerable and willing to take risks.
EVALUATION

Your course evaluation will be based upon the following:

- Diligent, active and timely participation in all activities of the course;
- Reading 1200 pages from suggested bibliography (available from professor) or other sources about narrative preaching, storytelling; this might include tapes, films, etc. equivalent to time required for reading; and the writing of a 2-3 page reflection on this reading (Having read this – so what?)
- Faithful keeping of a journal, with summary response;
- Fairy tale (a 3-page ‘once upon a time’ story);
- Oral presentations (favorite story; children’s story; other if time permits)
- Adaptation of movie for sermon
- Course reflection: 1-2 pages
- Theology of storytelling: 5-7 pages
COURSE SCHEDULE

DAY ONE
Course Orientation

Session #1

SESSION LEARNING GOAL: The nature of storytelling begins best within the definition of self. In the process of discovering your own inner story, the storyteller emerges.
TASK: Construct a Collage

Session #2

SESSION LEARNING GOAL: In the telling of your story, the images and the content will take on significance.
TASKS:
1. Dyad interaction/reflection. (Tell what you choose about your collage; be aware of what insights, emotions, etc. surface in the telling.)
2. Group interaction/reflection, with deciphering. (Be prepared to bring your picture tomorrow.)

DAY TWO

Session #3

SESSION LEARNING GOAL: “Everyone’s story is in part the story of us all.” Group work for observation and synthesis can be informative for the storyteller.

TASKS:
1. Drawing: “What is going on in my life right now?”
2. Dyad interaction/reflection
3. Journaling/reflection
Session #4
SESSION LEARNING GOAL: Visual images are stories; images have power; the unconscious is revelatory.
TASKS:
1. Deciphering (collage and drawing)
2. Professor’s story, collage

Session #5
SESSION LEARNING GOAL: Media (film, in this case) engages us; tells us stories; and invites us to interpret.
TASK:
1. Movie with reflection
   • Look for the illustration/story.
   • How will it show up in the sermon?
2. A one-page reflection, with dyad interaction

DAY THREE

Session #6
SESSION LEARNING GOAL: Telling a story that you know or have experienced reinforces the confidence of telling, and shares the delight of how the story has impacted you.
TASKS:
1. Tell a favorite story (7 minutes, max)
2. Tell a children’s story

Session #7
SESSION LEARNING GOAL: Telling a story in a non-traditional way enhances the teller’s capacity to engage the listener.
TASK: Select a favorite Bible story/parable/miracle.
1. Draw a picture of it.
2. Think through the telling from three perspectives:
   • as a reporter
   • as a participant in the story
   • as an inanimate object in the story
3. Put it in your best narrative form.
DAY FOUR

Session #8
SESSION LEARNING GOAL: Creating stories stretches the imagination, enlarges the capacity to utilize the memory and the senses, and releases the teller to discover the “once upon a time” within.
TASKS:
1. Write a “Once upon a time” story.
2. Read the story in class.
3. Prepare for class reflection/discussion by considering:
   • What dynamics were at work in the writing?
   • Where is the ‘hook’ in the story for you?

Session #9
SESSION LEARNING GOAL: Continued practice builds the teller’s written/oral delivery skills; reinforces the principles of effective communication; and builds the listener’s capacity to interact with the story and give insightful feedback to the teller.
TASK: Write and deliver an original children’s story.

DAY FIVE

Session #10
SESSION LEARNING GOAL: Giving visual expression to an idea or concept is a powerful tool for enhancing self-understanding and improving the ability to be an effective communicator.
TASK: A drawing: “What happened to me this week?”
   • To be shared with the class, with your personal commentary.
   • Dyads/group work.
FINAL ACTIVITY: Communion