

Living into God's Story

A Simple Way for Congregation's to discuss the Relationship Between Congregational Life and God's Story in Scripture

Purpose: For the congregation to take time, at its own pace, to discuss how God's activity through the years can shape how we think about our congregational mission. The purpose of this exercise is not to "plan" the next step of our mission together. It is to discern how congregations may live into God's story!

1. Welcome everyone and have someone pray for our time together
2. Affirm that many of us want to make a difference for good. Out of our good desires we are often driven to pursue ideas and agendas for mission that we have created. As noble as our agendas may be, they are still "our" agendas, driven by "our" need to do something. One way for us to be freed from our own agendas in order to better perceive God's call and purpose for us, is to put our agendas on hold for a bit and allow ourselves to be captured by God's unfolding story as heard in scripture.
3. In two parts show and facilitate the video: "Scripture: Their Story, Our Story, God's Story:" Follow these steps:
 - i. Show "part one" (about 5 ½ minutes into the video the roundtable discussion in the video will pause and the screen will fade). At this point, 'pause' the video.
 - ii. Ask this question: "What is God up to in the world?" In the video, the moderator asked the group this same question. This is an important question for us, because knowing what God has been up to over time is essential if we're going to discern what God is doing in our neighborhoods.
 - iii. Ask everyone to look at the handout - *Listening to Our Story*, which is a sampling of God's concern and activity through the years.
 - iv. Explain that we will not have time to read this resource in detail; but take 10 - 20 minutes and peruse this overview of God's great activity. Request silence during this period.
 - v. After 10 - 20 minutes, call everyone out of the silence.
 - vi. Read together this quote: *God has been pursuing God's vision for creation: reconciliation, salvation, wholeness, justice and peace.*
 - vii. Ask: So, how does this understanding of what God has been up to shape our congregational mission?
 - viii. Show the second and final part of the video.
4. After the video,
 - Invite people to discuss how our approach to mission might be shaped if we first suspended our agendas and allowed ourselves to be captured by God's story.
 - Distribute "Listening to Our Story" and have people spend personal time with it (at least 20 minutes)
 - Invite people to discuss what God seems to have been concerned about through the years, and how the congregation's life aligns (or not) with what God seems to be up to in the scriptures by asking this question: "How does the broad overarching story of our scriptures reveal the nature of the "next faithful step" in our mission together?"
5. Close with:
 - Affirming the importance of what we've just done. That is, getting in touch with what God's mission seems to have been through the ages, so that we can better align ourselves with it.
 - Prayers for the congregation and the neighborhood.