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Pastors’ Feedback on STS

Pastors who embrace STS sent reports on how this way of study and sharing Scripture is affecting them, their families, and their churches.

My Grandson, the Story Teller – Our two grandbabies were staying all night at our house and I was getting ready to do some laundry. I had started to fold a set of sheets when our two grandbabies ran into the room and started jumping on the bed. They were excited because they had attended a workshop and done quite a bit of additional training as well. He now uses STS at home with his family.

I was curious, and asked my grandson which story he wanted to tell. He was quick to let me know that he wanted to tell the story of Abraham sacrificing his son, Isaac. He told me that the Lord had said, “Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, out to the region of Moriah. Go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains the Lord will select.”

I don’t know about you, but this is quite a story. I tried to imagine the picture that was in his little head of this ram caught up by a giant cricket that the Lord had sent. It was all I could do to keep a straight face, but I was truly amazed that after only 4 or 5 nights of hearing that story, he had the story so committed to memory. He really tried to imagine the picture that was in his little head of this ram caught up by a giant cricket that the Lord had sent.
I was fighting laughter until he began to talk about God providing a sacrifice in place of Abraham’s son. Then, I was astounded that such a young child could glean such deep truth from one of the great stories of God’s Word.

KT

Young Big Brother – One of our young deacons has been mentoring a boy for several years. It has been really great to know the Lord, but our church member has been using STS as an opportunity to share God’s Word with them through stories.

When we were preparing our leader to assist in an STS workshop at our church, our young deacon began asking the family if they would like to participate in an STS workshop. They agreed and readily allowed us to tell stories with them and they had some really great discussions and there is some real interest in God’s Word.

Recently one of the family members entered into a relationship with someone who was exhibiting strong demonic influence. He learned the story and told it. There weren’t any dramatic results then, but now everyone involved know the Lord.

Sorority Bible Study – Right after we had finished our first workshop here in Kentucky I got a phone call from a lady who was visiting our church. She asked me if I had someone who might be willing to come and tell a story at a Bible study she did every week. We found someone who is an excellent story teller and who is even better at asking questions went a told a story at the Bible study.

No dramatic “the entire campus was changed” kind of stories came out of this event, but we have gotten reports of how the Gospel was shared. It is really exciting for our church as our goal is to use STS as a tool to plant a church on several campuses in our area.

KT

These Two Stories are for Me!

[Report from Kenyan STS instructor.] When a Maasai youth is coming of age, he becomes a “Moran” This means he joins a group of boys who are preparing for the coming of age ceremony. As part of this process, they face a number of challenges. The youth has to have a test to prove his manhood. He has to do something that he finds difficult to show that he is as fit as a man. He has to go to a place where there is a lot of wildlife and he has to catch a living thing to kill. He has to show his manhood in anything you find fit to prove your manhood. In those days they make a lot of mess and terrorize people in the village.

After coming out of this process, Pastor Wilson experienced the Gospel and gave his life to Jesus.

Immediately after that, persecution began because he now started opposing some of the ungodly practices in the culture.
The community accused him falsely and he was sentenced to 18 years in prison.

He went to jail. As soon as he arrived in prison he decided to reach people for Jesus. He showed such a godly example that he was made a prison minister by the authorities.

Within a few weeks the prison authorities were so happy with him that they started to transfer him to other jails. They started doing this because of his faith not so much as a threat to society. So instead of 18 years, he was home within a year.

God called him to his village to begin a church amongst the same people in Kenya who had falsely accused him and gotten him to go to jail.

In this his first STS workshop, the pastor said, “This training has come to give me tools to reach my people effectively but also to encourage me.”

The Jars of Oil story spoke to him strongly in this manner. The woman was asked by Elisha to do something that initially she was not sure of. But she did. This encouraged the pastor as it reminded him of his own journey with God in this Maasai village.

In the Zacchaeus story, pastor Wilson saw how the people labeled Zacchaeus a sinner and even hindered him from seeing Jesus. But he finally saw Him.

In the end the pastor said, “These two stories are for me and they have come with great revelation to encourage me. Please thank those who developed this and sent you here!”

I Told You So!

A pastor in a very conservative evangelical denomination incorporated Simply the Story into his pulpit talk, their children’s program and in the Bible school teaching he does.

He wrote about a friend who called him ... "He was all excited because he said that studying his Bible STS style had improved his speaking skills. This friend is a retired CMA Pastor who pastored for nearly 50 years! I said to my friend, ‘I TOLD YOU SO!!!’ “
“Simple Church” is Home Church
Last night did the Mary & Martha story at a new simple church in Belfast with 8 young kids (all in small plastic chairs in a row) in a room full of adults! Quite daunting.

I thought it was average, but I noticed that things got a little lively and animated, and then afterwards heard story after story of how people had been touched.

At one point people were retreating in and out of the kitchen looking after toddlers and telling the hostess how ... etc. The hostess later told me that EVERYONE had told them how important and good for them this experience had been.

Bryan, Ireland

Board of Elders
The Woodlands, Texas workshop outside Houston was held in a very large church led by highly trained seminarians. One ... Lost Axe Head story of 2 Kings 6, and then led an in-depth discussion that lasted a whole hour — and everyone loved it!

Coming to Class on Time!
I had the joy of doing the Saul/David in the Cave story on Sunday in the class I teach. It was powerful... Another positive sign is that more and more people are coming to class on time because they want to have ... Jon, Pastor in IL, USA

I Had Missed
I have been to several of these trainings and taught several to pastors/teachers on the mission field and in churches in the USA for Sunday school teachers. I feel it is one of the most effective ways to find treasures from God's Word.

As I learned and practiced and taught STS, I found that in my 40 years of Bible study I had missed many... STS is very effective for ages 7 to 97, and from illiterate to PHD education levels and amazingly all that mixture of age ... world and especially for the generation who are more impacted by interactive stories than lectures in our USA churches.

I recently taught Bible stories using STS to my young grandchildren and I was moved by their ability to find spiritual treasures for their lives.

Dallas, TX USA Pastor

Giving Their Testimony With Tears
Before the seminar finish most of our attendees are giving their testimony with tears that when they go home they are so excited to see their family and friends for the reason they wanted to share the stories that they learned from the seminar.

This facts shows us that when they learned this system STS will motivate the people to have they natural life to share the word of God.

Filipino Pastor

Pastor Shows Diversity
[Following report is from ... Pastor. Please contact subject for Contact pastor of STS for speed and efficiency.

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I am using STS in pulpit preaching, averaging about once every 6 weeks or so. Being a more traditional church, some still consider it for those who “need something simple.” (Not them of course!). Others love it and tell me so every time I use it.

I have used STS in both adult and teen Sunday school classes with a good reception and have received lots of interest each time.

On three occasions I have done these stories in the AWANA council times, in a men's Bible study a couple of times, and in a woman's Bible study all this fall.

I even did a 5-minute STS on the plane with Peter's confession of Christ (Matthew 16:13-17) on a recent trip to Wisconsin.

I am aiming to use STS in the Bible college in which I occasionally teach.

It is under consideration to teach my Monday morning men's Bible study group how to do it, and then have them learn a new story every couple of weeks. Just waiting for hunting season to get over and all my guys get back on a consistent basis!

I'm looking forward to the new web site and also to hearing more about the Oral Bible Colleges. If you have need for instructors, just let me know and I'll see if my schedule will allow it.

Pastor Tim MT, USA

Used By Multiple Pastors in This Church

Thank you for all the work and expense TGSP and STS have gone to in order to send trainers and materials our way to train us and people in this region.

These are some of the stories I have heard so far in less than a week since the most recent training occurred.

The Student Ministries department is starting to use it both in their weekly small group ministry and in their graded student education.

The freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes (more than 30 average in each class) all had trained STS practitioners and were very engaged.

One of our custodians, a lady whose husband assists in leading a student ministry small group (he had not been to the training) had just learned STS Monday and Tuesday did small group STS style. She heard about it from both her husband and her son.

Her husband told her, "We have the 'juvenile delinquents' of the youth group and those that have attention problems -- and he uses Lincoln Logs. Those building toys were in the family room at the back of room where our group was meeting.

"A Student Ministries Director who was trained at the workshop was telling the Bible story. The boy in the back seemed..." he engaged with the rest of the group in looking for spiritual observations and applications for the next hour!"

The custodian's son was in another small group whose leader went through the STS practitioner training. This son does not usually say much about the small group when he comes home from the meetings. But this time he was... that remark to his mom. She was impressed and grateful for the sake of "her men" that we held the workshop at our church.

I had a chance to integrate a 10-15 minute story on Cain and Abel into a class on anger. I co-teach with two other men...remember any of the points on dealing with anger that we've been presenting in the more common lecture/discussion style.

Another of our pastors spoke at a singles' retreat over the weekend and did a story. He had just taken the practitioner training. He told me he led the group and they hung around in the story of Gethsemane for over an hour, the time allotted for that retreat session.

He said, "As they moved through the story some observations took me in different directions than I had prepared, but I...for the longest time from the story are the treasures they discovered together by staying in the story for an hour."
"Those treasures," he added, "were a better long-term take home for them than all the other stuff I had worked on to share with them through lecture and discussion style at the retreat.

So thanks again for all your efforts. The Lord used STS training to help our team move forward in helping the people God has sent our way at BHBC.

Those who attended Wednesday through Friday are also all planning to use STS soon in Missions Ministry or in Student Ministry.

In His Grace, Tim
Pastoral Staff of Blythefield Hills Baptist Church

Keeping Ones Ministry, Yet Utilizing STS Principles

[This pastor/teacher/leader in international student ministry utilizes principles of STS in his teaching. He...

In Trinidad I spoke three evenings to about 45 seminary students from the only evangelical seminary in the country.

Along the way, I threw in some STS type questions to make the parable stories richer/deeper/more colorful.

The 4th session was our last one together, and the feedback for the whole week was over the top. The feedback was fantastic. I was gratified and thankful that God used me that week. The students and church/seminary leaders all want me to return...

Thanks again.
Bill

[Bill offers a fascinating journey of USA Pastor-Teacher Into STS]

Ways Churches Can Utilize Simply The Story (STS)

Compiled here are just a few of the innovative ways churches are using STS or its principles in their programs.

1. Styles of Usage:

   - To fit members’ expectations and traditional protocol, you may want to read story passage in standard “church voice” first before telling it STS style?
   - Each time story is told in service, have different groups from within the church take turns miming while it is told (different age groups, families or Sunday School classes).
   - Sing a story.
   - Do pure STS interactively with congregation responding to questions out loud or ask rhetorical questions but make them...

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- Use American Sign Language (ASL) to visually tell a story while storyteller is telling the story with expression.
- Read the story, but with great expression.
- Always challenge listeners to share the stories with others inside their circles of influence and experiences.

2. Church Services (places STS can be used):
- One Sunday per month in regular service.
- Sunday evening.
- Teach on passage Sunday morning, then use same story as STS interactive on Sunday evening or Wednesday evening.
- Alternative service (Sunday morning or afternoon or on Saturday evening).
- Once monthly include children in service. Place children up front and tell story, focusing mostly on them, but do occasionally include the whole congregation.

3. Sunday School (Sunday Small Groups):
- Challenge members to learn stories and tell them with actions and expressions with a long term goal of moving members into role of taking turns telling stories in the class.
- Sunday school, use as weekly or once a month curriculum.
- Sunday “Interactive Bible study: “All Ages Welcome class, including children.”
- Sunday school, adult class.

4. Special Classes:
- Men Weekly men participate in a story. Men are then empowered and encouraged to take that story to other men. Those who can serve as spiritual leaders in their homes by telling the stories and leading their families to treasures.
- Youth, ages 5 and up, enjoy, thrive and grow on the interaction and the story.
- New Believers Classes: Introduce deep spiritual truths to those even with no church background.
- Evangelism Classes: Empower people to naturally and comfortably share their faith.
- Introduction to Oral Strategies for church leaders, which is needed to alert and equip leaders to reach all.

5. Special Projects:
- Outreaches in evangelism, street witnessing, homeless, nursing homes and retirement centers.
- Neighborhood “Story At My House.” Weekly, or bi-monthly, invite ladies to a host home to participate in a story. Hostess serves coffee or tea, and attendees take turns bringing snacks.
- Youth Outreaches: Insert stories when appropriate.
- VBS: With any VBS program, tell a story a day for kids to take home.

6. Home Fellowships:
- House groups.
- Weekly Home Workshops. Duration 6 weeks of 2 hours weekly equals a 3-day workshop. Only one certified STS instructor is needed to be an “official” STS workshop.

7. Counseling:
- STS stories are being used in counseling for grief, false doctrine, finances, pro-life, seekers, family counseling, pre-marriage to name a few!

Much more from churches and pastors see What A Concept, Pick Your Spot