Frequently Asked Questions

This "People Ask" section (Frequently Asked Questions or FAQs) on this new site stays in process. We already have a wealth of important questions and answers to include, ones that we have collected since the inception of Simply The Story.

Below are some of the questions with answers and we will be adding more. After you spend time surfing this site, feel free to email us your questions. By God's grace we will be able to responsibly and clearly respond to your area of interest.

Questions

1. Aren’t stories just for children?
   - Answer: Jesus taught in stories to people of all ages mixed together. Children flocked to Him. On this site you will see testimonies of children AND academics all being spoken to deeply by the Spirit of God while they investigate stories of the Bible.

Questions & Answers

1. Aren’t stories just for children?
   - Answer: Jesus taught in stories to people of all ages mixed together. Children flocked to Him. On this site you will see testimonies of children AND academics all being spoken to deeply by the Spirit of God while they investigate stories of the Bible.
- **Wouldn’t it be safe to say that teaching Bible stories is more appropriate for uneducated or illiterate people than it is for educated people?**

  Answer: Literate and non-literate followed Jesus. While many of the highly educated and religiously educated people ... did get a message from the stories. And, thankfully some of those highly educated listeners did believe and follow Jesus.

- **What ages can learn STS stories and use questions to teach?**

  Answer: We continue to see children ages 5-10 and up repeating 10-verse stories accurately after hearing them told with expression and actions. Young children can learn to ask a few questions and talk about the stories they tell. Most of the young

- **Practically speaking, how can I use story?**

  Answer: We describe knowing a story the STS way as having the story “in your heart pocket.” People throughout this site are testifying of people using their STS storytelling skills to evangelize and disciple:

  - [Witnessing](#)
  - [Evangelizing](#)
  - [Prisons](#)
  - [Pick Your Spot](#)

- **Why does it take 5 days of training just to learn a story?**

  Answer: You’re right to notice that! It doesn’t take five days to learn a story. It is accurate that we offer five-day workshops to teach the stories in a way that people can get a message from them and how to teach others using discussion. In the five days we also provide the forum and assistance to train others.

  We also offer a two and a half day training to help people to become good storyteller-teachers. Oh, and by the way, with the workshop, attendees can take with them twenty stories they can repeat and talk about.) With review after the workshop, attendees can “own” those twenty stories.

- **Why do you set up 5-day long workshops? That is a hardship to have to leave my work and family that long.**

  Answer: If no one in a particular area is a certified STS instructor, we need to bring a team to that area to first plant the STS ministry. Throughout this site are testimonies of people using their STS storytelling skills to evangelize and disciple:

  - [Witnessing](#)
  - [Evangelizing](#)
  - [Prisons](#)
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  We offer as a gift on our site our *Simply The Story Handbook*. It is downloadable. The last chapter in that handbook gives more details on all of those workshop options. One other way to learn some of the vital STS skills is through [Practitioner Audio Training](#).

- **What is the difference between STS and other ministries that use story?**

  Answer: The foundation of all the story groups is much the same, learning and telling Bible stories.
We also teach how to lead and train others. Much that describes us is in Design of STS and the matrix linked from that page show some details about a few of excellent story training organizations. To hear ... who lead various story ministries or those who use a different method of story in ministry, check the podcast story4all.

-I use story. But my preference is to not impose my ideas on others, so I don’t manage discussion.

Answer: This is a good goal, to not impose your ideas on others. We would agree with that. But we do encourage the storytellers we train to consider themselves teachers.

In STS training, we promote the use of story to reach oral learners. But as passages such as Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, ... one of which is teaching. We see oral communicators carrying out that role when they tell Bible stories STS style.

Let me give you an example of what that means: After an STS workshop in Africa, one attendee told his story to our leader there and me.

By Foot, By Camel, By Airbus

I used to be a businessman in Nairobi. God called me to go to the mission field, but I kept making excuses.

Then one day I got a phone call that my shop had burned down. You know—I didn't even go look at it. I just left and went ... try to reach a Muslim people-group who has never heard the Gospel. I've been there two years and nothing has happened.

I've made friends, but that's it! They do not want to hear what I have to say. To get here for this workshop, I walked a day, rode a camel for a day and then rode one more day by Airbus. [This is riding on top of a bus!]

We find this African evangelist's observation to perfectly describe what we see as central to the effectiveness of STS. ... and teach it to others using questions that help people discover for themselves the truths the storytellers had found.

Wonderfully, most of the time, listeners discover even more truths, truths new to the storyteller. That's when we know the Holy Spirit is present, and He is teaching through the teachers and to everyone.

By the way, our East Africa leader told us that after the workshop the messages began coming back from this young evangelist who reported, “The training made a major difference in my life and ministry. The people in the village are coming to Jesus.”

As well, this evangelist now serves as one of the STS team instructors. He travels that hard way to come serve in ... how much he believes in it. He has scheduled a workshop in his location which a Kenyan team is due to come help him lead.

One of the key parts of what we teach in

STS is listening and responding.

Storytellers are teaching what they have learned. But the storytellers also listen to what the people themselves say and ... are prepared spiritually with personal understanding of the story to help lead a productive inquiry into the story.

- If Simply The Story is so simple, why does it take multiple workshops to be certified to teach this to others?

- Answer: “Simply” The Story means that “only” the Bible story is used. It does not mean that this new skill is simple to learn.

Attendees who have grown up among oral communicators find it easier to absorb the concepts of STS than attendees whose ... their unique areas in which we are able hand off skills which they have never before have had an opportunity to acquire.

In STS, all attendees gain the ability to study and discuss, yet while doing these things, they discover deep spiritual ... STS training includes handing off the skills of training others. That training of trainers is a giant step in itself.

To gain all of the skills of STS for oneself and to learn how to train others in these multiple skills requires time and ... An instructor needs to have answers to the questions that arise on issues of oral learners and the apologetics for STS.

Multiple skills are used in STS. People must first learn how to carefully listen or read Scripture and to recognize their ... to discover what those in the passage experienced and learned (or did not learn) and what is seen of God in the story.
Lastly, people need to learn how to take those various observations from within the story and make personal applications with them. Even the skill of how to lead a wide variety of people in discussion involves both new information and practice with旧 ways. After all this is learned, the multiple, added skills needed to impart STS to others need to be learned. See what is involved in certification and a testimony of one, "Discovering Story."

- If I can’t go to a workshop, how can I learn how to tell stories the STS way?
  - Answer: A sample of the Practitioner Audio Training (PAT) is available on our site. More stories of PAT can be purchased. This audio how-to of STS, some stories and sample interactive studies of the stories are excellent tools for learning STS. The written Simply The Story Handbook is available free as a download on this site. Combined, these two resources can help you to learn STS.

- I am not able to memorize, so wouldn’t telling stories by memory be too hard for me?
  - Answer: The wonderful part of STS is that the learning of stories becomes easy. We actually show people how to learn a story over and over, until they can remember it. People who attend a workshop tell us, "I have never been able to memorize, but I can remember the story this way!"

- I am a shut-in. How can I use STS beyond personal devotions?
  - Answer: When you have been touched in your devotions by something special in a story, you can ask the Lord to show you who it would help to talk with. For example, you could write some of a story down, put it on a piece of paper, just a few sentences, and then ask a few questions. Or maybe while on a phone call you could share short a piece of a story and then ask a few questions?

Sample Conversational Use of STS: Woman Healed
Whether writing or speaking, to be most effective we recommend using conversational style. For example, you might want to talk about Matthew 9:20-22.

For that story you might write or say some, or even all of this:

I was reading the story in the Bible about the woman who had hemorrhaged for twelve years.

So in this story I was reading about, Jesus was surrounded by a crowd of people when He was returning to attend to a meeting in the synagogue. "The woman came behind Jesus and touched the hem of His clothes, because she was saying to herself, 'If I could just touch His clothes, I would be made whole.'"

"But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her, He said, 'daughter, be very comforted; your faith has made you whole.'"

And that's the end of this little part of the story that impressed me.

So I was thinking about where a woman who had constant bleeding, who had spent all of her money on doctors, would be in the social scale? What do you think?

And what about what this ill lady thought to herself, "If could just touch His clothes, I would be made whole."

And another thing. When she touched His clothes, Jesus turned around and when He saw her, He called her "daughter." Wow. You see that too? She just touched His clothes! Jesus was walking in a crowd, she touches Him, and then He turns around and talks to her.

Now that made me think of something else. Did the story say the woman grabbed or pulled on Jesus' clothes? You see that too? She just touched His clothes! Jesus was walking in a crowd, she touches Him, and then He turns around and talks to her.
So what happens at that moment to the direction Jesus was going? Well, based on that fact, that Jesus stopped and looked...

Yes. He really could have not noticed her touch ... or noticed it and just ignored it and kept going ... maybe noticed her touch and criticized her, or even something else.

So I was thinking about how Jesus did stop and as the story says, “when Jesus sees her.” And we wonder...

How about this question? When Jesus tells the lady to “be very comforted,” might that give us some indication of how she was feeling before He said those words? What do you think that could show us, about the lady and maybe about Jesus?

Then Jesus says, “Your faith has made you whole” and the woman was made whole from that moment...

Well, that is what I might write in a letter. Maybe to some people I would only write the introduction and small part of the story, like a conversation, I could then write back acknowledging their responses, and then send on a few more of the questions.

And if I had a chance to talk on the phone to say some of this, I would wait for the person to whom I was speaking to respond. Maybe a conversation would develop and then I would be able to respond back to what the other person would say.

I put it in my mind that I am just discussing Scripture as I would speak in a conversation. I have certain things in mind that I would like to share, but I sincerely listen to what others say and respond to them.

Notice that after I spoke the introduction and told the small part of the story, that all the way through what I wrote ... sure that the person has heard that part of the information from the story. They have to hear the information two times.

Even those familiar with the story may not ever have noticed some of the small details in the story; so they also need to hear it twice to make sure they can think about that part of the story.

We call what the person who answered your questions found, “spiritual observations.”

Ok. Now you have written some or all of those questions (or have talked with someone about the questions) and those questions will probably have uncovered some really interesting observations in the story.

It is now the time that you can use some of the STS style questions to help uncover spiritual applications. These will help people use what they discovered in the story and apply the findings to themselves.

Briefly, you go back to something significant covered in your letter’s questions, or something in the story that took on special significance in your conversation. To discover applications, only ask questions that are based on those discoveries, one finding at a time.

You can ask or write general questions after your first mention a finding:

It seems obvious in this story that this woman is not high in society or rich! I think we would have to say that the woman was not one who had been treated as equal, that she had a disease that made her an outcast (and well, just being a woman), all that puts her pretty low on the social scale.

Do any people today fit in that kind of category? What must that be like? Are people pushed down today? I am wondering if today in your life, or in the life of anyone you know, there might be really hard situations that are pushing them down?

Remember how it was written years before that the promised Savior would come and bring healing in His skirts? And remember, he said to that woman, “Your faith has made you whole”... that she would be healed? Was that information reliable? Where might we look in order to find that kind of information?

Also I am wondering about today? How could anyone touch Jesus’ clothes?

Remember how Jesus stopped for the woman and spoke to her fondly? Could Jesus’ response show us anything about His character? How might that help us today, to know things about Jesus’ character?

So, you go through each observation you saw in the story, such as:

- How the lady had to make her way through a crowd that did not welcome her.
- That she did so little to actually get her healing.
- That according to Jesus’ statement, her faith is what made her whole.
- That her faith was not a blind faith, it was faith in the information she had read or heard and...

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Also you could remind people how Jesus stopped and focused just on her and made her whole.

Maybe ask, does this story show us anything about Jesus and His ability and who He cares for and who He might be?

The topics in the story you first bring to discussion should be what was truly meaningful to you as you meditated on the story. Use a short piece of a story, ask a lot of questions about it, make observations, to help people discover how those observations can be applied to them, to discover spiritual applications.

As much as possible, word your questions as if you also want to know this information as opposed to asking questions that insinuate that you know everything and that those to whom you write or speak must find YOUR Answer.

It's not that you don't know the answers to many of the questions you ask, but you are allowing people to process and think about the answers for themselves. Jesus gave people time to think and discover the truth. This is a way you can minister from where you are planted.

We teach this way of asking questions in workshops and you can experience some of these kinds of questions on the Practitioner Audio Training Outreaches. On Outreaches you can see some true life samples of stories being used conversationally. Also some more good examples are found on the home page Pick Your Spot.

- How can I use STS to teach the 6 days of Creation in a half hour (first) day of a Bible club.

  ANSWER: One way to cover a long passage using STS is to tell the first part of the story in a short introduction. Perhaps for the Creation story you could tell just Genesis 1:24-28 passage? Using the STS presentation, as suggested in the book, you spend most of the time developing the main ideas of the passage that are remembered. As much as possible, we format recorded stories onto solar-powered players to take to those who need to hear the Word.

- I like STS, but my pastor says it is not for him because he is commanded to preach the Word not to lead people in “interactive discussion” of the Word. What can I say to him?

  ANSWER: It is always good to hear of pastors who are commitment to the Word of God. Surely, we wouldn't want to have pastors who do not want to allow their church staff to use any method that might help them preach the Word more effectively. It is not about whether it is an interactive discussion of the Word, but whether it is helping you as a minister of the Word to more effectively present the Word. Other pastors have arranged for some of their people to learn STS for short term mission’s trips. We are glad to help you in any way possible.

- Without the written Word, how can the integrity of the Scripture be maintained?

  ANSWER: We too are very concerned about keeping true to the Word. As quickly as possible we are recording Bible stories in sets of up to 70 stories, with introductions, in order to give an anchor to the Bible stories that are being learned. As much as we are able, we format recorded stories, God’s Story and New Testament, if available, onto solar-powered players to take to those who need to hear the Word.

- What about the Epistles?

  ANSWER: We encourage the use of STS for investigating all passages of Scripture, including the Epistles, Poetry and Prophecy. Notably stories and passages with visual images are easier to remember than are the lecture and non-picture passages. The center of STS is to stay in one passage at time, to cover just as much information as can be remembered by you as the presenter and by the people you teach. Then questions are asked that take a learner though the passage chronologically which helps them discover spiritual applications. If a passage is very hard to remember, sometimes a teacher will read it all the way through out loud and then ask questions about the part of the story that was read just previously.

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For more on use of Epistles in STS see the downloadable gift

Whether the Scripture being taught is story, poetry or a teaching passage and it is told or read by individuals...

- **In a workshop, how much time will be spent on a general overview of orality proper (i.e. convincing us of the need for oral methods)?**

  - ANSWER: The STS workshops are chiefly practical. We teach hands-on using oral methods! Throughout the STS workshops, we give OT and NT examples of the biblical precedent for oral teaching. Those orality presentations take about 20 minutes.

  - We then present an example Bible story and discussion STS style to show how this method can be used.

  - After this, we begin to unpack how an STS presentation is formed … including another sample story.

  - Next all the attendees gather in small groups. There, with the guidance of an instructor, participants will practice how to tell a story for ministry then everyone contributes to the interactive learning and exploration of a story in a large group.

  - Mixed in with these various hands-on opportunities, the whole group is taught and shown how to minister to groups and the unique design and overlooked advantages of oral communication.

  - We also show how to use oral methods to present non-story passages such as those found in the Epistles. So, as you can see, this is a very hands-on, practical workshop. You will walk out with a basic understanding of the process.

  - Attendees receive resources. With practice they can become highly effective storytellers. We also equip them with tools to train others.

- **How specific would this training be to my country which is semi-literate? The last story training I attended was led by a person from a much more oral culture than ours. I am interested in how to practice oral strategies in my country within our cultural norms.**

  - ANSWER: STS training will fit the need of your country. This STS style of learning and teaching others resonates with any cultural context. STS has been tested and adapted to become an excellent tool that truly crosses cultural boundaries worldwide.

  - STS started in the Fall of 2006 using the foundation of storying. From there its unique design development was to teach literate and non-literate people to “go deep” in the Word, yet use oral methods.

  - Testimonies of those trained in STS describe everything from personal Bible study transformation to now running large scale mission churches.

  - However, the universality of STS is mostly due to its adherence to the communication style of the culture it is being taught in. It is truly cross-cultural training at its best.