Some reports coming to us from instructors and users of Simply The Story touch us so deeply that we do not want anyone coming to our site to miss them. These are what we offer here as, “Must See.”

How Old Must One Be to Hear From God, or to Speak to Him?

Turkey - They were stunned!

Before You Came

[Report below was sent to us from an African STS Instructor.]

This is a testimony from Pastor D.A. We had an STS workshop last February in the South of Ethiopia in my church. Before you came to us, I had a real struggle on how I could make people in the villages understand the Word of God. As you know, I minister in villages - but nothing seemed to work. Actually I was getting a bit frustrated.

After you trained us on STS, we started using the method almost immediately and within a space of ten months, we have planted three churches in three different villages using STS method. Your coming was so timely. Before this, we were discipling just a few people- those who could read- in hope that they would be able to pass on the message. Now the whole congregation is being discipled. People teach each other. Even those I thought they knew nothing, God is teaching them. The difference STS has made in my ministry is very visible.

I’m requesting that you come to train more people in all the seven villages where we have our churches. Thanks to God, to you and the God’s Story team for making this tool available to us.

My Best Day Ever!

A missionary in Uganda who uses STS, traveled to Kenya to investigate the Oral Bible Schools. He, and
With only these three sitting and talking to some of the Oral Bible School students, the students felt the freedom to share some amazing personal stories. Our leader reported, “Of all I have seen so far in Simply The Story, I call this ‘my best day ever!’”

Five of the many stories told to the visitors by the students:

A lady said, “My sister died this morning. The family is there, but I had to make a decision. My sister is with Jesus. I have to make decisions daily. What if another family member is sick? Would it be possible to wait a day so no school is missed? In my culture, this choice, to wait a day to join the grieving family so that no school would be missed, is highly unusual.”

Another female student shared, “None of the other students knew about me when we all started the school. I didn’t let anyone know about my divorce. I separated from my husband for two years. We split very angry. We tore apart everything we owned as we left each other. ‘But the stories. Oh, the stories. So many stories we learned and discussed showed us about love and forgiveness. That story convicted me. I was like that. I was trying to take by force what I thought was mine. God was not in that plan!’

Yet another student told this. “I am a single mother. To take care of my children, I do any jobs I can find, field work, housework─whatever is available. ‘Well, I was invited to come learn some Bible stories. Taking off a day of work would be hard for me, but I decided to come anyway. ‘Then again I was shocked. I came to find out that these five days were the beginning of a two weeks on and two weeks off. ‘Let me tell you what is happening. I now go to school for two weeks and keep learning more and more stories. And when I go home, plenty of good work is waiting for me and I am making enough to easily pay my bills and take care of my children.’

Our leader told us, “While we talked with the various ladies in this school, the husband of one of the women students commented, ‘I just wanted to come see what was happening here that is having such a wonderful effect on my wife!’”

One of the students in the men’s school told a story to the visitors that meant a great deal to them. “No one knew when my grandfather died. I went to claim my inheritance. But my relatives said, ‘You don’t get anything. You’re not a son.’ ‘Well, I got mad and I fought them and that’s when I got hit on the head with the machete. ‘So, even though I was at this school learning Bible stories, inside I was angry and just waiting for the chance to go back and fight them for my inheritance.’ The student spoke with intensity. ‘Now one of the stories we did was about the children of Israel after they had victory. ‘So I went back again to my village, but people didn’t trust me─well not at first. They said, ‘You’re coming back to my village again to try to cheat us? That’s too bad!’ ‘You know what I am doing now? I’ve been going back and using my grandfather’s house to tell Bible stories to everyone!’

To see this article and others on Oral Bible Schools see OralBibleSchools
The front door of the meeting room was being monitored by a man who looked as if life had run him over—several times! He... than his years. As I came back from the parking lot to re-enter the church, I felt led to stop and speak to this man.

“Hi. My name is Dorothy.”
“I’m Junior,” he responded.
“So do you go to this church?” I asked.
“Yes. I watch over things here and keep the place clean.”
“Say, Junior, I wonder if you could help me with something?”
He responded, “What?”
“Well, here’s the deal,” I confided. “I am testing a new recorded teaching. It’s a Bible story and some questions and I really need some people to listen to it and then give me their opinion.”
He narrowed his eyes. “Do I hafta read?”
“Oh no,” I assured him. “It’s all recorded and then you talk about it.”
“Well, okay. Let me finish my cigarette first, then I’ll come in.”

In my side vision, I had seen a few people standing nearby on the sidewalk. Turning to them, I asked, “You part of this church?”

The man in the group responded, “We’re here to clean the church.”

“Okay,” I said. “We’re gonna be here awhile for our training, so you can’t clean now. If you can come in and help me with this test, then, when we’re done, we can help you clean.”

The man conferred with the other adult there, a lady who, I was soon to discover, was his wife. As they talked, I glanced over and saw a teen young man with some piercings and cell phone in hand. The man turned back to me and said, “Okay, we can do that.”

So Junior, and what I was to learn was a family of five, joined the four instructors and the Kenyan and the test began. Occasionally our group of advanced instructors would stop the planning we were doing and look across the room to watch and listen to the conversations. Except Junior. I never saw him say anything, but he did stay engaged in listening to what everyone else was saying.

The discussion stayed active with even the teens adding some thoughts. In wise STS style, the instructors did not respond immediately, but gave others opportunity to first voice their observations about a particular part of the story.

Time was approaching for the dinner to arrive, so I stood up to walk over to the group to ask for their feedback. The group agreed this was great training and eventually said, “But seriously, we have been so hungry!”

Surely it was amazing to hear him reveal his situation and to hear his application of the story to himself. This little guy who was just released from twenty years in prison, is known by local police as having mental problems and now has dialysis three times a week.

I walked on over to the group. “Sorry to interrupt, but dinner will be arriving soon. How far into the recorded questions were you?”

This diverse group proceeded to tell me what they learned and how they felt about this style of studying the Bible. Interestingly, one of the teen daughters shared a specific lesson she gained from how Sarai just went along with Abram’s lie. The teen son announced, “I could do this with some of my friends from school.”

To a person the feedback was very positive, which, of course, encouraged all of us who had been observing. “So how long do you think you were discussing this story?”

“Oh maybe an hour,” they agreed.
“Actually, you were talking about it for two hours and 40 minutes!”

The pastor of this church reaches out to local neighbors and in return, many of the drug-controlled homeless in the area are drawn by the love offered to them by this church. The pastor drove Junior to the motel where he currently lived.

Now here is what impacted us so strongly. The next morning, after the pastor dropped off Junior, he took...
Our team had felt led to invite the family and Junior to the workshop and to sponsor their meals for that time.

Junior was in the small study group that dug into their story of Peter and John nearing the Temple gate when they were asked, "Who would have believed the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth stand up and walk." The lame man stood and then walked and leaped and praised God.

During the week of the workshop the pastor said he saw Junior sharing Bible stories with people outside the Laundromat. Junior was standing and praising God.

Beyond Expectations: Five months later the unexpected report came to us. Junior’s pastor told me on the phone, “I just ministered to him and told him, ‘Come back tomorrow sober, and we will give you lunch.’ He came every day last week. ‘So today at lunch I asked, ‘How did you happen to come here to the church?’ L.R. explained, ‘Junior had been coming to see me. He doesn’t bring a Bible and read it to me. He tells stories. I liked what I heard, so I wanted to know more.’”

The pastor shared, “We are realizing that Junior has been going out to the homeless all around here and telling them stories!” [Junior may not have been leaping, but I sure was!]

It appears that the Lord had not used a literacy test to determine whether Junior was qualified to serve in the Christian army!

P.S. The pastor told us that the father of the homeless family now had a good job and the family had a place to live!

Dorothy Miller –TGSP/STS

See how STS started for pastor D.A.:

“Where You Have Been That You Did Not Come To Us Before” | Effect of STS in a Marriage and Ministry
They Remembered, But It Was Unexpected!

What A Concept!

I know the value of feedback and thought you might want to hear some, especially from a guy who struggled through the whole week of the workshop you just led.

My position as pastor at my church often leads to opportunities to counsel people. This morning, when I least needed it, I heard of a woman who was struggling with a problem.

I decided to try the STS method. I told her the story about Jesus walking on water.

She, through the process, discovered that sometimes when we decide to be obedient we find ourselves in a rocky boat, maybe even doubting the choice to be obedient.

She also discovered, and this was the good part, that if the disciples had not been obedient, they would have missed out on a miracle by Jesus — not an observation from any of us in our “tribe” during the workshop.
We talked about what that meant for her for a few minutes. She stood up and said she had to go, that she now knew what "it" was and I was too amazed to go any further. I didn't do any counseling, the Bible did. What a concept!

It felt like the divinely appointed meeting between the king, Gehazi, and the woman whose son Elisha had restored to life (one of the other stories we learned in my tribe study group.)

Needless to say, that meeting this morning has given me new focus and desire to commit to STS. [In further report, this pastor told us that together he and his wife were aiming at learning and studying a story a week.]

JC Workshop attendee in Joplin, MO

To see this article and on counseling see