Human life is so bound up in stories that we are thoroughly desensitized to their amazing power to lure us in.

Storytelling is about addressing the mind and the heart.

Storytelling is about conveying a meaning. It is always moralistic and intentional.

It is always said that Jesus was a great teacher because of the way he told stories.

Primarily he was a great teacher because he knew his audience—how they lived—how they thought.

He adapted his teaching to his audience and

PREPARATION
Choose a story from your life, someone else’s life or the Bible
Consider your theme. Keep it in your consciousness.
Put yourself in the story.
Imagine the surroundings and details surrounding the story.
Think about how this story can relate to other people.
Put yourself in the story.
What do you see? Describe the people in your story.

THE STORYTELLER MUST STUDY THE THEME
Use your imagination to make the story come alive as you prepare. Give your characters personalities—even if you are the character.

LIVE THE STORY.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD STORY
A single theme, clearly defined.
A well-developed plot.
Style: vivid word pictures, pleasing sounds and rhythm.
Well-crafted characters.
Faithful to source.
Dramatic appeal.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD STORYTELLER
Salesmanship
Sincerity
Authenticity
Wholeheartedness.

Enthusiasm
Animation
Finer points include: emphasis, repetition, transition, and pause.
State the truth/theme of your story out loud.

FIND A MEMORY HOOK
A phrase, concept, or attitude repeated in the story that helps make the story memorable.

PLAN YOUR FIRST WORDS
Craft a great beginning. Be descriptive.

PLAN YOUR LAST WORDS:
Consider the ending.
Make it punctuate your theme.
Be more creative. Let the ending highlight your theme without saying, “the point of this story is...”

RESEARCH
Research the facts surrounding your story: your point, your theme, the Bible story exegesis.
Anything that will provide, color, interest and insight and that will enhance the final story.
Use sparingly. Cultural customs, historical facts, family history are like seasoning—too much is way too much and spoils the food.

TIGHTEN UP YOUR STORY
Cut everything not crucial.

BE PICKY WITH DETAILS

REPEAT PHRASES

BODY MOVEMENTS AND GESTURES
Choose them carefully and sparingly. Let them tell the story.

PACE YOUR DELIVERY
Slow down.
Use effective pauses.

NERVOUSNESS
It is a gift.
Keeps us on our toes.
Humbles us.
Compels us to prepare.
Kees the adrenaline flowing. Adrenaline sharpens the mind and senses.
Give us extra energy.
Thank God for it. It is his work after all!

BIBLE STORIES
Use these same principles to tell a Bible story.
Scripture in liturgy is formal, necessary proclamation.
Scripture shared in story-form and free style in catechetical settings captivates the listener to hear it in a new way.

WAYS TO TELL STORIES
Verbal
Non-verbal and Visual

Gestures

STORIES FROM MY LIFE
The day I met my true love.
The day I was married.
The day my child was born.
The day my spouse left me.
The day my child disappointed me.
The day I was betrayed.
The day God helped me with my addictions.
The day I experienced joy in the midst of suffering.
The day the doctor said, “It’s probably nothing, but we should run some tests.”
The day I was hired.
The day I was fired.
The day my car spun out of control on the icy interstate.
The first time I apologized to my child.
The most recent time I apologized to my spouse.
The day I called my brother whom I hadn’t spoken to in ten years.
The day I realized I was in denial.
The day I accepted the challenges in my life.
MOVIES
Les Miserables
Cry Freedom
Brother Sun Sister Moon
The Shack
Freedom Writers
Ghandi
Unbroken
Narnia: Voyages of the Dawn Treader
The Blind Side
Jesus of Nazareth
Soul Surfer
It’s a Wonderful Life
Ten Commandments
Ben Hur
Lord of the Rings
The Mission
Letters to God
Brother Sun, Sister Moon
Clare and Francis mini series
Passion of Christ
King od Kings
The Robe
Barabbas
Greatest Story Ever Told
Amazing Grace
Shadowlands
The Nativity Story

RESOURCES
• Formed in Faith (Sessions for Inquiry, Catechumenate, and Ongoing Faith Formation), Mary Birmingham. World Library Publications (wlpmusic.com)
• Confirming Adult Catholics: Five Sessions for Preparation and Reflection, Mary Birmingham. World Library Publications (wlpmusic.com)
• Purified and Enlightened - RCIA Sessions for Lent, Mary Birmingham. World Library Publications (wlpmusic.com)
• Year Round Catechumenate Mary Birmingham, Liturgical Training Publications
• Faith, Life and Creed (A Complete Catechesis for Christian Life) (User friendly sessions for breaking open the Word for every Sunday of each cycle plus 41 doctrinal sessions). Available through (TEAMRCIA.COM).
• Word and Worship Workbook, Year A, B and C, Mary Birmingham, Paulist Press
• FACEBOOK Mary Birmingham RCIA
• mary.birmingham@icloud.com