



How to Learn a Story ...by Yourself

When you're accustomed to learning a story in a group from a live storyteller, learning a story from an audio recording might seem boring or even impossible. However, with adaptations, you can learn a story by yourself, using the same learning methods that you experience in a story group.

Let's **review the story learning process** in a story group ...

1. Tell the story two times.
2. Review the story: the group works together to recall the story.
3. Tell the story again using a learning method (see list and descriptions below).
4. Pairs: the participants tell the story to each other in pairs.
5. A volunteer tells the story.
6. Discuss the story using the following questions:
 - What did you like in the story?
 - What did you not like in the story? What is difficult or confusing about the story?
 - What does the story show about people?
 - What does the story show about God/Jesus?
 - What does the story show you about yourself? After hearing this story, what do you think needs to change in your life?
 - To whom will you tell the story?

Now let's **adapt the process** for learning a story in a group to learning a story by yourself.

1. Listen to the previous story for context.
2. Listen to the story to familiarize yourself with the characters, places, events, and dialogue. Listen to the story again to identify and to visualize each scene.
3. Review: Retell verbally as much of the story as you can.
4. Learning Method: Tell the story again using one of the learning methods. Instead of an entire group participating in the method, you'll do everything yourself.
5. Pairs: Tell the story to someone else
6. Volunteer: Tell the story one more time.
7. Discuss: Process the story devotionally by yourself or with the person who listened to the story in step 5.

Helpful Hints

1. Don't just *memorize* the audio version. Knowing the story means that you know what happens at each point in the story so that you can tell it in your own words, while remaining faithful to the Bible.
2. Use the learning methods to help you learn the story, but don't focus on mastering the method. The learning method is simply a means to the goal of mastering the story.
3. Always tell your story out loud. Don't tell it just in your head.
4. Practice telling it to others to bring energy and naturalness to your storytelling and to prepare yourself for a live telling.
5. Answer the discussion questions for yourself so that you engage with the story, with its Biblical truth, and with God. Know how God has used this story in your life because that will bring authenticity to your telling.

Learning methods (alphabetically):

1. **Chunks:** Retell the story chunk by chunk. Often this method is used to build the story progressively by listening to a portion of the story. Tell that portion (chunk). Listen to the next section. Retell the first chunk and add the next chunk. Continue the process until you've built the entire story. You can also omit listening to the story again, and simply build the story, chunk-by-chunk.
2. **Drama:** Act it out, being sure to represent all the characters and places.
3. **Duck, Duck, Goose:** All the players, except the first person who is the first storyteller, sit in a circle. The storyteller walks around the circle, tapping each player on the head or shoulder, saying "duck" each time until he decides to tap someone and say "goose." The "goose" tells part of the story, and then becomes the new storyteller who will select the next person by walking around the circle. Repeat the process until the entire story is retold.
4. **Hand Motions:** This is not the same as sign language in which every word or phrase is represented. Instead each hand motion represents a thought or an idea that will prompt you to remember a portion of the story.
5. **Living Statues:** Strike a pose to represent an idea from the story. A sequence of poses will help you remember the entire story.
6. **Popcorn:** In a group, a person tells a small bit of the story. Another person tells the next part & the process continues until the story is completely retold. The storyteller doesn't call on anyone, but just lets people volunteer. If the person skips part of the story, the storyteller makes sure that someone else tells the skipped part of the story the person continues.
7. **Things in my pocket/Things in the room/Props/Objects:** Use everyday items to represent the people and places in the story. As you retell the story, move the objects to represent the actions of the people in the locations of the story.
8. **Storyboarding:** Divide a piece of paper into a grid, like a tic-tac-toe board. In each square, draw a picture of a scene of the story. Continue drawing pictures until you've represented the entire story pictorially. No words allowed! You want to focus on the action of the story, not the particular words. Tell your story from the storyboard and then without the storyboard.