

## *Beyond Membership: Sunday Life Lived Seven Days*

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Erin James-Brown

Director of Discipleship

Urban Village Church, Chicago

erin@urbanvillagechurch.org

Our lives are shaped by and enveloped in stories. Stories create empathy among groups of people and between individuals with little in common. In order to participate in a good story, one must...

- Speak authentically
- Listen generously
- Honor dignity of others

***Stories unite strangers and move people to empathy and honesty.  
Stories can transform our world.***

Action Steps to tell stories in your community

- **Autobiography:** Create a group where people share their spiritual autobiographies. Spiritual autobiographies are build group intimacy and commitment to one another. Have group members commit to the week they share so members may prepare beforehand. Spiritual autobiographies should be 20-30 minutes in length. Create helpful tips and guidelines for sharing a spiritual autobiography.
- **Read:** Create a reading group exploring personal stories. Suggestion to read *Rescuing Jesus: How People of Color, Women, and Queer Christians are Reclaiming Evangelicalism* by Deborah Jian Lee. A narrative journalistic format, the book follows three stories of people finding, losing, and reclaiming their faith from different perspectives.
- **Bible:** Read the stories of Jesus (also known as parables) in a Sunday School. After discussing the parable end the practice with the question, "Who are you in the story?" or "With whom do you identify in this story?"
- **Movie:** Host a film viewing party. Watch a documentary or film and ask, "With whom did you identify in the film?" "How did you feel when [situation] happened?"
- **Preach:** Include stories of people from your community in your sermons. Ask for permission to share these stories before including them. Ask the person if they would be willing to receive a blessing from the congregation after you share their story in your sermon.
- **Testimony:** Introduce the practice of testimony in your service. Ask someone well spoken from your congregation to go first and answer the question "What God is doing in your life?" with a 5 minute story. Provide lots of support for someone sharing their testimony, including guidance on what makes a good story, offering prayer, and help with practice. Invite someone new once a month during a service.

Bibliography

Paul Zak. "How Stories Change the Brain." [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_stories\\_change\\_brain](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_stories_change_brain)