

Chapter 20 Owing and Sharing the Story

“Data lists what happened; story expresses how and why it happened.”⁴

People love to tell and hear stories because they help us reflect on our place in the world, to identify with the characters, and ask questions of where we find meaning in what unfolds. And at the heart of the Christian faith is the story of God’s love and redemption that invites all people to respond. That story is told in the Bible and in the living people whose faith we encounter.

Telling the story of an NPNP brings life and character to the important work of reflecting, learning and evaluating. Good storytelling builds bridges with others, raises awareness, encourages others to join in or offer support, affirms those who have worked for the NPN, and is a wide-reaching and powerful way of sharing good news.

Here are some helpful pointers on how to tell a good story...

Start with God and with people The story of God’s interaction with humankind is discovered in the Bible in the form of poems, history, codes of law, and parables. The gospels provide many perspectives on the stories of Jesus’ life, which reveals the good news of God’s love for all.

Tell stories of transformed relationships Each NPNP has a unique story that adds depth and colour to the emerging picture of NPNPs in the Methodist Church. These stories will be diverse and varied, reflecting the different communities and the people they serve. We celebrate the way each community will look wonderfully different, while the same desire for new people to be transformed by an encounter with the love of God is central in all.

Tell stories of key moments and turning points Captivating stories are full of ups and down, jeopardy and triumphs, challenges faced and overcome, and characters facing adversity. We invite you to highlight key moments which signified a breakthrough, an affirmation of a tough choice, or the point at which the vision began to be realised.

Tell stories with integrity It is important to tell the story of how things have gone well, but often the things that did not quite work will encourage others more. A fruitful community has as many stories of trying and learning and, of complicated relationships and events that missed the mark, as it does of things running to plan. Also, make sure you have permission to share any stories.

Further resources

Image consent forms: methodist.org.uk/ConsentForms

Social media guidance: methodist.org.uk/digital

⁴ Robert McKee, *Storynomics: Story-Driven Marketing in the Post-Advertising World* (Hachette, USA, 2018), p. xix