

HOM/PT522: Telling the Bible: Stories and Interpretation with Children

COURSE OUTLINE:

Much of the Bible originated as oral tradition, stories that were told and retold over the years. Jesus told stories as a key part of his instructional technique, and these stories were retold by his followers. Today, the Bible is a written text, but one way of bringing the stories alive is to remember their origins and to re-work them into a storytelling format. This can mean anything from simply learning the words of a story in a particular version of the Bible by rote and presenting that, through to creative re-writings of the text with sounds and actions with which audiences can join in. This course will focus on telling stories with children in mind, however, the techniques and the stories developed are applicable to a wide range of ages in appropriate settings. The course will also help the student to think about how a story is situated within the wider context of worship or a teaching environment, and how the story can work alongside interpretative techniques.

PREREQUISITES: None

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:

In completing this course, a student will:

- Grow their confidence in telling Bible stories.
- Develop their skills in engaging their audience.
- Grow their abilities to re-work Bible stories into a storytelling mode for themselves.
- Develop their understanding of how to aid children in their understanding of biblical stories through storytelling.
- Begin to consider the activities that may follow (or precede) a story in a Worship or teaching environment.

FORMAT: This 1.5 credit course meets once a day for one week during Summer School. It is available in-person only.

KEY TEXT:

The Bible – Bring your own preferred version to class.

OTHER TEXTS:

If you have one, and if it is light enough, bring a Bible that has been designed for storytelling.

A few other essays/articles will be uploaded to populi prior to the course.

ASSESSMENT:

500 level:

By the end of the course, students will have composed and presented one Bible story that they have re-worked for storytelling. A written version of this should be submitted by the end of July 2024.

600 level:

Students should complete the assessment for 500 level, above, **AND** the following reflection, which should be 1500-2000 words:

A reflection on storytelling and interpretation

For this reflection, make citations as appropriate, and reflect on both the story you have re-worked and told in class and on activities that might be put around it in a worship or teaching context.

The following questions are not definitive, but you might like to consider them:

Why have you re-worked your chosen Bible story in the way that you have? What were your considerations in doing this? Having told it, there any parts you would change, and why? How might your re-telling change in contexts other than the one that you had in mind when re-working the story? What has been your implicit theology in telling the story in the way you have told it?

What art/drama/music activities might be helpful in drawing out meaning from the story? What prayer activity would you want to do with children who had engaged with your story?

Submit this by July 15th.