

STARTER WEEK

The Story: Read the story. Experience the Bible

CHAPTER SUMMARY: (Have someone in your group read the summary section.)

The Bible contains an “Upper Story” and a “Lower Story.” The “Upper Story” tells the big picture, the grand narrative of God seeking relationship with mankind as it unfolds throughout history. The “Lower Story” contains the details of particular people, the episodes we’ve become familiar with: Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the flood, etc.

The “Upper Story” is really a framework around which we approach and apply any one part of the Bible. It unifies God’s whole message to us and helps guide us through the hard times in life by doing two things:

1. reminding us of God’s eternal, long-range plan and,
2. putting our experiences into a divine context formed by a perfect Creator.

For example, without the “Upper Story”, a lost job could be seen as an event without hope. But put into the context of the larger journey of our lives, and God’s perfect design, that lost job can be seen in a very different light. Perhaps it is an opportunity for God to reveal something better.

So, by putting all we read into the larger picture, we can make timeless applications from the Bible that takes into account the grand, mysterious ways of God, and guards us from misapplications. This helps us to look at Scripture as a whole and avoid the isolated “what this verse says to me” approach. In other words, the “Upper Story” creates the context for the “Lower Story.”

At TrueNorth we want to use ***The Story*** to help everyone gain a better understanding of the big picture of the Bible and to better understand God’s love and redemptive plan for each of us today. As we journey together through ***The Story*** we will look at both the temporal events and characters (Lower Story), as well as the eternal purpose of God: to restore and build a relationship with His creation that He loves.

DISCUSSION STARTER:

Who in your life has been the most influential in your spiritual journey? Why?

GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Has your experience with studying and learning the Bible been fulfilling or frustrating? Why?
2. Do you have a favorite Bible story or Bible character? What is it about the story or character that most fascinates or resonates with you?
3. The Bible has been attacked by skeptics for centuries. Other religious groups declare that the Bible is full of inconsistencies and is therefore untrustworthy. What experiences have you had (good or bad) that have impacted your personal trust in the Bible?
4. List a benefit (or two) that you expect to personally experience from going through ***The Story*** this year. How do you think our church as a whole will benefit?

Make sure to close in prayer and hand out the “Personal Devotion Questions” for Chapter 1. Encourage group members to use this in their personal devotions in the coming week as they read the first chapter in ***The Story***. A great suggestion to group members would be to record their answers to these questions in a journal. Remind them they will be given an opportunity to share their insights at the close of the group discussion next week.