

# TTT 408. "Your Voice Matters" Tips for new and inexperienced speakers. Part 13 - Stories are your secret weapon. 01 April 2025

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## Teaching Tip 408 | "Your Voice Matters". Part 13 - Stories are your secret weapon. Tips for new and inexperienced speakers | Malcolm Cox

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### Today's Tip

Today, we explore a tip from my friend Stefan Wolmarans. I am paraphrasing a voice note he sent me, but in essence, his point was:

"Jesus was very good at telling stories - just look at his parables. Stories stick in the memory when information does not. "

Let's dive in and explore why stories matter and how to tell them.

### Why stories matter

Given the billions of pounds spent by moviegoers, on TV subscriptions and books, we probably don't need to justify the significance of stories and storytelling. Stories simply stick.

For example, I could tell you that paying attention is important. Or, I could tell you the story about when my son was hospitalised as an emergency. We weren't sure exactly what the problem was, but I paid attention as I sat next to his bed hour after hour. Suddenly I noticed some blotches on his legs. I summoned the nurse who called a doctor and they pumped him full of antibiotics to treat what was now clearly meningococcal septicaemia. It's quite possible that my attentiveness might have saved his life.

You might not remember my admonition to pay attention, but you will remember the story, and that stands a better chance of convincing you of the significance of paying attention.

### How to tell a story

#### Some "do not's"

- Try not read the story. If it is *your* story you won't need to. If it is a story about somebody else, practice until you don't need notes. Stories are meaningful when they connect on an emotional level, and a lack of eye contact works against that end.
- Don't share unnecessary detail. I heard someone tell a moving story about how God answered their prayers. Unfortunately, they included lots of irrelevant detail like the weather. The story was too long, and its effect was diluted. Tell me a story clearly. Otherwise it's a bit like mixing up three jigsaw puzzles into one box.

## Some “do’s”

- Make sure it has a beginning, a middle and an end. Usually a set-up (context or cause), a struggle (obstacles, problems, confusion) and a resolution (answer, victory, lesson learned).
- Tie the story to your Scriptural point. We tell entertaining stories, but not stories to entertain. Make sure your story connects with your point.
- Take the audience with you. Don't rush the story. Take your time. You know your story and the emotional connection for you is not so strong now. However, your audience need to process the story as you go along. They need time for their emotions to stay in step with the story.
- Practice. Read the story out loud to yourself. Where are pauses needed? What about volume?

## Further resources

- From 4 years ago - Tuesday Teaching Tip 230 - "How to use stories - "The Heart of Communication", Part 5. <https://youtu.be/W1ULxKQxjKI>
- From 6 years ago - "Why You Need Keynote Stories", [https://youtu.be/zr\\_tE4qirEMFrom](https://youtu.be/zr_tE4qirEMFrom)
- From 7 years ago - Tuesday Teaching Tips, Episode 96 - "How to re-enact a story"
- From 7 years ago - Tuesday Teaching Tips, Episode 90 - "What is the difference between an anecdote and a story?"
- 8 years ago - Tuesday Teaching Tip - Anecdotes vs Stories, <https://youtu.be/b-3RGi4tTGU>

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## Summary

Stories are your secret weapon. Stories open hearts and drive points home. Stories stay in the memory. Even many non-believers know the stories of Jesus. Don't make the mistake of thinking that only natural storytellers can tell stories. It is a learned skill, and one that you can develop.

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## Questions

How do you feel about telling stories? Why not incorporate a story into your next lesson? Let me know how it goes.

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Please add your comments on this week's topic. We learn best when we learn in community.

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Do you have a question about teaching the Bible? Is it theological, technical, or practical?

Please send me your questions or suggestions. Here's the email: [malcolm@malcolmcox.org](mailto:malcolm@malcolmcox.org).

If you'd like a copy of my free eBook on spiritual disciplines, "How God grows His people", sign up at my website: <http://www.malcolmcox.org>.

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Keep calm and carry on teaching.

God bless, Malcolm

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