

Pathways

Session 2
Stories



Resources for participants



Bible readings that connect with my story

Choose a favourite Bible reading or select one of the following readings that may particularly relate to your story that you find helpful in reflecting on your story.

In you, O Lord I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.

Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me.

Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me.

Free me from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge.

Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth. I hate those who cling to worthless idols; I trust in the Lord.

I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul.

You have not handed me over to the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place.

Psalm 31:1-8 (NIV)

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Psalm 23:1-6 (NRSV)

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 10:10b (NIV)

Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.'

John 11:25, 26 (NIV)

The Lord is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 27:1 (NIV)

'Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,' says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

Isaiah 54:10 (NIV)

Israel, the Lord who created you says, 'Do not be afraid – I will save you. I have called you by name – you are mine. When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you. When you pass through fire, you will not be burned; the hard trials that come will not hurt you. For I am the Lord your God, the holy God of Israel, who saves you ... I will give up whole nations to save your life, because you are precious to me and because I love you and give you honour.'

Isaiah 43:1-3a, 4 (GNB)

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)

For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below – there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38, 39 (GNB)

Stories

- Each of us has been shaped by the stories we have lived and heard
- Stories give our lives meaning
- Stories appeal to all and embrace emotions and the intellect
- Stories connect us to others
- Christians are people who have been caught up in God's story
- All of the stories that make up our life journey have brought us to here and now



- Our stories have feelings attached to them
- Our spiritual stories reveal God's presence in our lives
- Our spiritual stories provide the opportunity for gratitude, even when we consider the more painful ones
- Our stories are about a journey, a journey that continues as we allow God to transform our lives each day

Reflect on the following questions:

- How have your experiences and relationships shaped what you believe about life, God and your relationships with others?
- Do you think a person's story and spirituality are interconnected?

Meditating on a Bible passage

- Read an entire passage slowly, out loud if possible
- Take some deep breaths and sit quietly for a few minutes
- Read the passage again. What part do you respond to most strongly? Be comfortable with silent spaces between thoughts
- Read the passage once more. Be quiet. Be open to its effect on you. Where is God leading?
- Trust that whatever you experience during this time, God's grace is at work in you
- Read the passage slowly
- Choose one word or a short phrase that attracts your attention
- Why is this phrase meaningful? How does it relate to your life?
- Silently repeat the phrase in rhythm with your breathing – in and out
- As you breathe, become aware of what God is saying to you. This does not always involve words. It can be an image, a feeling, an insight, a sense of God's presence, a desire to do something
- Be silent, resting in God's presence, focusing only on your breath as it flows in and out
- Close with the Lord's prayer or any other prayer you know by heart



**The beginning of prayer is silence ... God speaking
in the silence of the heart.**

[Mother Teresa]