

# *Pathways*

Session 2  
**Stories**



## **PREPARATION FOR THE PRESENTER**



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### Purposes of Session 2

For the participants to:

- reflect on their personal story
- consider the school story
- explore the LCA story
- begin to connect their story to that of the school and church

### Reflection stimulus

Story is the most natural way of enlarging and deepening our sense of reality, and then enlisting us as participants in it. Stories open doors to areas or aspects of life that we didn't know were there, or had quit noticing out of over familiarity or supposed were out-of-bounds to us. They then welcome us in. Stories are verbal acts of hospitality.

[Eugene Peterson, *Christ plays in ten thousand places*, p 13]

### Focus questions

- Who have been important people and what have been important events in my story?
- How has my story shaped my spirituality?
- What is the school's story?
- How has this shaped the way the school gives expression to its spirituality?

### Biblical focus

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)*

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)*

## Theological focus

The following description of spirituality by Jesuit writer David Tuohy emphasises the important relationship between individual spirituality and the spirituality of the Lutheran school and supporting community:

Spirituality ... is the lived dimension of faith. It is how faith looks in everyday relationships, attitudes, values and behaviours. It is the set of assumptions an individual lives out of, and where he or she chooses to locate meaning. For the Christian, this works on both a communal and personal level. The meaning of life is centred on a God who sent the Son and the Spirit to save his people and be with them. A personal spirituality emerges in the dialogue between this communal faith story and the concrete events of each individual's life experience. (*Leading life to the full*, p 20)

While one's spirituality is intensely personal, it also has a vital communal dimension. When we are baptised, we are not only incorporated into Christ and his death and resurrection, but we are also incorporated into the Christian community (the 'body of Christ'). Our personal spirituality becomes part of a larger and very varied tapestry of shared spiritual experiences.

Our Christian spirituality also draws us into the trinitarian relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through the work of the Spirit, we come to know Jesus Christ who reveals to us the love of the Father. We know God as the one who has created us, who has redeemed us, and who makes us holy. We experience Jesus Christ as our advocate with the Father, and the Spirit as the one who prays to the Father with our spirit when we do not know what or how to pray.

In the Lutheran school context, the community of faith provides a haven of hospitality in which the new staff member can explore his/her own spiritual experiences and relate them to the spirituality of the school which is expressed through the story of the school as shown in its history, purpose, logo, celebrations, personalities, etc. In this way, the dialogue between the communal and personal expressions of spirituality is fostered.

## Concepts in focus

This session involves the participants sharing their story so that others may get to know them. The following options suggest different ways participants may choose to share their story. Options are provided to assist with the telling of their stories. It will be important to establish a positive, caring and safe environment so participants will feel confident to share and will not be judged or criticised. To begin the section, it is recommended that the workshop leader briefly share his or her story using one of the options below.

### **My story**

- encourages me to explore and articulate my own spiritual journey and its various stages
- allows me to see my own spirituality as important but also as part of a larger and very varied tapestry of shared spiritual experiences

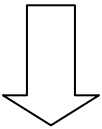
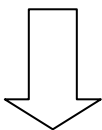
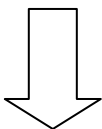
### **My school story**

- is expressed in its history, personalities, celebrations, logo, purpose, etc
- reflects the spirituality of my school

### **The local LCA story (congregation)**

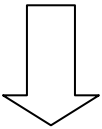
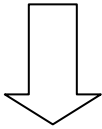
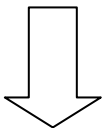
- some aspects of the story of the LCA and the congregation(s) relate to the school
- who are these 'Lutherans' anyway!

## WORKSHOP Option 1

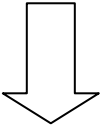
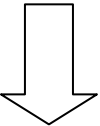
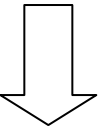
<p><b>Stimulus</b></p> 	<p>In preparation for the session, participants will be asked to bring items that will assist them to share their own story. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a brief story to share key events in their life story</li> <li>• a shoe box that contains an object or objects of significance that reveal who they are and what is important to them</li> <li>• a collection of no more than 10 photos that shares their story</li> <li>• a song or series of song titles that have particular significance in their life journey</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflection</b></p> 	<p>Provide participants with the Resource Handout <i>Bible readings that connect with my story</i>. Ask them to choose a favourite Bible reading, a reading that they find helpful or one that relates particularly to their story.</p>
<p><b>Sharing</b></p> 	<p>To provide an overview of the school's story and particularly any key event/s that may have shaped the way the school gives expression to its spirituality and conducts its ministry, use school promotional material such as the prospectus or website that contain the school's story. Highlight any important information and factors that have impacted on the way the school conducts its ministry.</p>
<p><b>Prayer</b></p>	<p>Provide time for participants to read the Bible verse they chose in the Reflection as the focus for a contemplative time of prayer. They may use the suggestions on the Resource Handout, <i>Meditating on a Bible passage</i>, to guide their contemplation.</p>

[Note: From the three workshop options provided, please choose the option that best suits your staff needs]

## WORKSHOP Option 2

<p><b>Stimulus</b></p> 	<p>Provide the participants with Resource Handout <i>Stories</i>. Invite them to read the statements and highlight any they find personally significant.</p>
<p><b>Reflection</b></p> 	<p>Participants are given time to reflect individually on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How have important events and people shaped your beliefs about life, God and your relationships with others?</li> <li>• Do you think a person's story and spirituality are interconnected?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sharing</b></p> 	<p>Conduct a school tour highlighting important places, foundation stones, names, sculptures, events that shape or are part of the school's story</p>
<p><b>Prayer</b></p>	<p>The workshop leader can pray for each new staff member giving thanks for their gifts and the varied experiences that have shaped them, brought them to the school and influence their work in the school</p>

**WORKSHOP  
Option 3**

<p><b>Stimulus</b></p> 	<p>Participants are given large sheets of paper and a variety of texts, coloured paper, stickers, and scissors and asked to prepare a story map to share their life journey and possibly key events in their spiritual journey.</p>
<p><b>Reflection</b></p> 	<p>Participants reflect quietly on stories that have shaped their lives, making notes in their journal if they choose about family stories, stories they have heard or read, stories they have lived. They may use the following questions to guide their reflection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What stories have been important to you?</li> <li>• How have they impacted on you? Have they shaped your thinking or the way you experience life?</li> <li>• What are some of your family stories that are told and retold?</li> <li>• Which spiritual stories have been important to you?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sharing</b></p> 	<p>Ask three or more staff members who have belonged to the school community for varying periods of time to share information about the school's story. Try to include a long-standing staff member, one who has served for a medium time and one who has been with the school community for a year or two. Ask each staff member to share a story that describes what the school was like when they first joined the staff and of something that happened at the school soon after they arrived. Encourage the staff members to share what the incident meant to them at the time and what it means to them now.</p>
<p><b>Prayer Ritual Close</b></p>	<p>Close with personal prayer. Participants use their comments and thoughts from the reflection section as the basis for their prayers.</p>

**The congregation's story**

This activity is particularly relevant for those schools that have direct contact with and/or support from a local congregation and could be included in the sharing section of any option. Invite the local pastor and or congregational members to share the story of the local congregation. They may share key events in the life of the congregation that have shaped its ministry. To conclude the sharing activity, ask the participants to develop a list of key events or emphases that have shaped the story of the congregation and the way it expresses its spirituality.