



Experiencing the Story with a symbol

This reflective worksheet is designed to help you engage with God through a Scriptural story and associated symbol.

A symbol is something that represents something else. Often, a symbol is a physical object that represents an abstract concept. Common Christian symbols include the cross, the bread and cup, and the Triquetra representing the Trinity. Symbols also include physical movements such as raising hands in worship, folding hands or bowing in prayer.

The use of symbols in prayer is an ancient Christian tradition and can help us engage with God on an expanded level.

There are many ways to experience God through a story. Usually, an individual finds one or two practices most helpful. After you explore this method, reflect on the experience. If you've found it rich and deep, use the method again with another Scriptural narrative. If the method proved unhelpful, put it aside and try a different approach.

Engaging with God through a story is a prayer practice and we will treat it as such.

Preparing to pray

Take a few moments to settle down; breathe deeply, welcome the Holy Spirit, and invite God to guide you. Trust God to reveal what He desires you to see today.

Listen to the story

1. Slowly read the story aloud and listen as you do so. Then, do it again. Feel the shape and flow of the story. Circle the words, phrases or images that particularly attract your attention. Try not to analyze, interpret, or apply. The goal is to hear and notice what the Spirit desires to reveal to you today.

"A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." John 7-10 ESV

Experiencing the Story With a symbolic object

2. Choose an object that represents the story of the woman at the well. It may be a physical object or a picture such as a bucket or cup that represents the story. Or it could be an object that represents an abstract concept in the story. For example, you might choose a handful of sand to represent the woman's internal dryness. Describe the symbol you've chosen and why you chose it.

3. Place the symbol you've chosen in your line of sight. Recall the story. Consider the symbol you've chosen. What thoughts, ideas, emotions or physical reactions does the symbol evoke?

Respond

4. Respond to God in prayer.

Experience the Story with Physical Actions

5. Once again, recall the story. This time, choose a physical action or intentional body language to express the movements in the story. Notice how the addition of physical actions or expressions affects you. When you're finished, write down three words that describe what you felt as you recalled the story in this way.

6. What do you sense God is showing you?

Respond

7. Respond to God in prayer.

Close this time of prayer and reflection.

8. Reflect on the experience. Was this method of prayer helpful for you in deepening your relationship with God? If so, what aspects did you find helpful. Remember, there are many ways to prayer with Scripture.
