

## Worship development

### 2. Story

**Starter:** *[In pairs]* What is your favourite story?

#### Reading: Mark 4:30-34

*Read aloud, then allow time for everyone to re-read it for themselves along with the comment and the personal focus questions – and reflect alone.*

**Comment:** When we come to reading the parables of Jesus, there is so much that remains unanswered. The parables stand, in whatever context the evangelist puts them, as insights into Jesus' use of fiction as a favoured way of teaching.

Jesus invests so much of himself, his sense of values, his elliptical way of looking at life, his coded critique of the world he inhabits, in his fiction; his parables. It is as if he believes that fiction, rather than forthright description, is a more delicate medium for carrying the strangeness of his insights and the pattern of his contrary wisdom. While fiction manufactures a world of play and pretence, of once upon a time, within the controlled safety of that never-world it can deliver observations about the real world that ache with accuracy, that leave you somewhere between belief and dread, where you end up astonished at the story's sober insight. Fiction, yes, but life in live performance. Such are the parables.

The Parables of Jesus by Denis McBride Redemptorist Publications.

#### Personal Focus Questions:

1. What thoughts come to mind as you read this Bible passage and comment? What might God be saying to you?

2. In what ways are stories helpful to you?
3. How do you use stories in your services?

*Share together in threes the results of your individual reflection.*

*When you have finished your discussions, return together as a group and share any insights.*

*Now share together in these applications.*

#### Applications:

1. How could you use story in worship other than as illustration in a sermon?
2. What skills are needed to be a good storyteller?
3. Read a short story and consider different ways it could be used in worship. (*Leader could read a story of their choice.*)

#### Review *(Individual thought)*

As an individual how will you use the ideas you have heard in this session?

**Follow up.** If you would like to develop these ideas further then you could organize a workshop with Una McLean-Manning. [01472 851287] Useful storybooks are: - *Imagining God* by Trevor Dennis and *Taking Flight* by Anthony de Mello.

#### Worship

End with a time of worship that uses story in an imaginative way.