



CORNERSTONE 2021 RESOURCE

YOU'VE GOT A STORY?! SHARE IT!

Elective

AUTHOR(S):	Josh Lake
TOPIC (S)	Storytelling, Relationship Building, Identity
SUMMARY	We are all incredibly interesting people who, sometimes, try to fit in, and in the process, we risk misplacing our own identity. We will explore who we are so we can craft our stories and share them with our camp communities in our safe spaces at camp.
GOALS:	If the session is successful participants will be empowered to develop and tell their stories at camp and invite campers along on their tales of growth, exploration and learning.
AUDIENCE:	Age 13-20, 15-25 participants
TIMING:	75 minutes
APPENDICES:	Finding your stories Cornerstone 2021
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Cross cut of a branch/stump/piece of wood with growth rings visible. Pen/pencils and paper for all participants.
SET-UP DETAILS:	Ideally this activity takes place outside, under a tree or in a beautiful space. But this can easily be set up indoors.

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – Story of canoe trip
- 00:05-00:15 – Introduction
- 00:15-00:25 – Max’s Story
- 00:25-00:30 – Discussion: Tree ring stories and metaphors
- 00:30-00:45 - Watch Ted Talk YouTube video
- 00:45-00:55 – Finding and creating your story worksheets
- 00:45-00:55 – Discussion-breakout rooms
- 00:55-00:65 – Sharing our stories
- 00:65-00:75 – Bringing it back to camp

SESSION OUTLINE:

00:00-00:05 – “Once upon a time.” Many campfire stories have been started this way! Session leader tells a personal story that they have a connection to. Make this personal and fun! This story is about a Canoe trip. “Once upon a river...”

00:05-00:15 - Session leader introduces session topic and leads group in a round of introductions

- Name?
- Pronouns?
- Camp?
- Have you ever heard a story around the campfire?
 - Do you remember it?
 - Give us a one-word description of the story

00:15-00:25 – Session leader shares another story. Here the story should be more involved and share a different perspective from the story shared at the intro. This can be very personal. “I’d like to share a story of a camper of mine named Max...”

00:25-00:30 – Discussion: Use the tree rings to start a discussion about stories. What affects people’s stories? How can the environment affect your story? How do you control your own story?

Tree rings denote if the year was wet, dry, stormy, etc. Is there a nail that was put in the tree, a heart that was carved in the tree... The tree tells its story, then grows a thick protective layer to help protect and hide its story. We are the same way. Camp is that place that allows us to tell our story in a safe environment. To remove the bark, so to speak.

00:30-00:42 - Watch Ted Talk YouTube video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqCsc31xg24>

This is an amazing video. I tried to take excerpts, but I kept coming back to the whole thing as important! Because of this we get to watch the whole thing! Here are some of the points (with a time stamp) I will call out.

- “Once upon a time.” :01
- “Stories bind us together.”
- Encourage you to embrace your own story: 1:42
- “I stopped telling my story. It was a really flawed strategy.” 5:13
- In denying my previous experience I was creating a story and turning it from something interesting and unique into something bland and vanilla. The drama had disappeared and the narrative became dull. In an attempt to fit in, I had lost my sense of identity.” 6:00
- “Sharing things about yourself that help you connect with your audience.” 7:02
- “Sharing your story is an act of vulnerability.” 7:25
- “With vulnerability comes power.” 7:40
- “I want to proscribe sharing some part of your story at every opportunity. Why? Because it will make the world a more connected place. 8:35“
- “We are imaginative beings. When we give our stories voice, we allow them to resonate in the hearts and the minds of the people we interact with.” 8:46
- “Your story is out there. It should be you who tells it.” 8:48

Pull out a few specific quotes:

- Our stories have momentum.
- “The traces of our past shape the narrative of our future.”
- The beginning, middle and end.
- “Emotional investment” is powerful.

Stories cause the release of chemicals in our bodies!

Oxytocin, endorphins, neurotransmitters, serotonin, dopamine. Among other things, these chemicals increase focus, motivation, memory.

All this from a simple story!

How much are you/we a thermometer or a thermostat for y/our stories?

Let’s take a 5-minute bio/focusing break. Do something to take care of yourselves. Likely this does not include screen time. Go outside!

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00:47-00:55 – Finding and creating your story: Worksheets. Here is a worksheet for you to learn what stories you have to tell and to share. Let's take 7 minutes to fill these sheets in. No one but you will ever see this, be as honest and straightforward as possible. No bark! Where are/were your growth rings?

00:55-00:65 – Sharing our stories. We break into breakout rooms of 3-4 people. Share your stories. If you feel strongly about a story, please come back into the main room ready to share! We will take 2-3 stories from the group to share.

BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

00:65-00:75

- In order to best adapt this program for in camp use I would suggest:
- Doing this around the campfire. The campfire is a place of ancient storytelling and sharing. Use the power of innate memory to flex your storytelling power!
- However, this does not have to be done around the campfire! This session can be done anywhere, anytime, even in the middle of some one's personal story. Our stories never end, they keep going and going!
- If we have time, let's move into breakout rooms and think about the following questions:
 - With whom would this program have the biggest impact/
 - With whom could/would you run this program?
 - Where in camp can you see this happening?
 - When could this happen?