(RE)membering FAITH through our STORIES

Beginnings

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1



The Bible contains the origin stories of who we are as people, as God's people. Often used in comic books and other popular storytelling methods, origin stories attempt to answer questions audiences have about the story's main characters. Wikipedia says this:

> *"In entertainment, an origin story is an account or backstory revealing how a character or group of people become a protagonist or antagonist, and it adds to the overall interest and complexity of a narrative, often giving reasons for their intentions."*

I like this definition because it points to the complexity of our human stories, humans being especially complex. And our origin story is rooted in God's overall story of salvation written throughout the Bible. When I teach children and youth about the Bible, I often say, it looks like a book, but really it is a library. The Bible is full of 66 different books, each with their own writing style and voice. Some books tell stories; some give laws or teachings. Other books use poetry; some talk about the end times, and even others are letters to specific people in specific places. Even though there are many different forms of literature, the story arch through this library of stories contains my story and your story too! You might gather from hearing sermons and reading devotions and just spending time with me, I am completely in awe of the Biblical story and how its stories narrate and weave through our lives. The story God is creating did not end when the Biblical canon stopped being collected; that might be our biggest misunderstanding. God's story continued and continues to be written in our lives. This is the impetus for our study: (RE)membering Faith through our stories. We will look at some biblical stories and then are invited to write our own. You can choose to share your stories with our group, with the church by submitting it to be one of our weekly devotions on our website, or you can choose to share what you have written with your family, stories that will be treasured for generations to come. This first session is about beginnings or origins. The whole Bible could be considered an origin text telling the backstory of the people of God, but there are origin stories within this larger whole.

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was

not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Discussion Questions

- The beginning of John's Gospel tells not of the cradle but of the cosmos. We are introduced to Jesus, the Word made flesh and lived among us. What do we learn about God from this passage?
- What does this passage tell us about Jesus?
- What does this passage reveal to us about ourselves?

Discovering your story

Not all origin stories look the same. Not only the stories we tell, but how we tell them is different. We could have chosen Genesis 1, or the more familiar Christmas story (Luke 2). We could have looked at Abraham's call (Genesis 12:1-3) or Moses' call (Exodus 3)? Or even the story of the first Christian church after Jesus' resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:37-47). These are all great examples of origin stories. Feel free to call upon these or others when you think about writing your own story.

Prompt

- Where are you from? Think about your origins. Who are you from? Parents? Heritage? What place? When? What generation? Why? How? You need not include any of these questions in your story; they are merely there to bring a story forth.