



# A Story Worth Sharing (Well)

Teammates Sally Pim and Ben Good reflect on their storytelling experiences in Mozambique and pluck out the key questions we should all ask ourselves before sharing the story that changes the world.

Story

Ben starts us off, “I meet with a group of guys on a weekly basis to pray, do life together and read Scripture. After one of our gatherings my friend Adam, a young Mozambican, began telling me that he had invited some neighbours to join us. However, when he asked them, they just laughed at him. You see Adam was unemployed and most days he didn’t have much to eat. His friends couldn’t understand why he would go to a group to hear stories when he should’ve been out finding a job, or food for his family. He continued, ‘They just don’t get it. When I come to this group and we sit down together to read these stories I am no longer hungry, I am satisfied!’”

For Adam the stories of Jesus, shared in community, were a big deal. Whether we’re living in a village on the outskirts of Lichinga, Mozambique, in a bustling Thai street or in the heart of Sydney, stories move us.

**As followers of Jesus, we believe one story has the power to transform us more than any other: the story of Jesus. For this reason, storying the Gospel is at the centre of what we do here in Mozambique. But it’s not as simple as rocking up, Bible in hand and telling our favourite Bible story. The story we tell is critical, of course, but so is the way we communicate it.**

So, how can we share this life-changing story in a way that might be understood?

**Great question!** To answer it, we have three more questions! Here are three things to ask yourself before you share the Gospel story in your context.

## 1. Who are you sharing the story with?

What is the worldview of the person you are connecting with? Do they sit within a predominant culture of honour / shame, power / fear, or guilt / innocence? Do they believe in the existence of a higher power? What do they value? Justice, logic, self-reliance, family, tradition?

Local stories give a good indication as to what is valued in a culture. In the Australian context stories of the outlaw Ned Kelly are still popular to this day as he appeals to our values of independence, justice and mateship. Understanding the cultural values that underpin these cultural stories help us to then share the Gospel story in ways that will make sense in that context.

## 2. How will you share the story?

Considering the different ways people communicate in your context is also important. How do people communicate in this context? Is it different to the culture you carry?

Sally shares, “Over the last couple of years, together with some of the other women on our team, I have had the privilege of being invited into the sacred space of Yawo girls’ initiations to share stories from God’s word. We seek to tell stories that reflect specific values, sharing in a way that reflects how others teach in that environment. This often includes dance and song because in this space, these are important elements in storytelling.

However, when Ben meets up with his friends they each take turns to read, they discuss and ask questions which help them grapple with God’s word together. They do not dance. They do not sing. How they communicate and share stories is appropriate for their setting, showing respect to gender and age, cultural and religious roles.”

## 3. Will you listen to what they share?

Another consideration is who is responsible for giving meaning to the story being shared. Does meaning come from the sharer or the hearer? Or both?

It’s fair to assume that we are not always going to draw the same conclusions as others and therefore we need to pay attention to our own biases, background and worldview. If we don’t, we could unintentionally place our own cultural understanding over that of the person we are sharing with and subvert our efforts. We are always better for encountering Jesus’ story together rather than in isolation. When we do, we quickly discover that Jesus is bigger than our individual understanding of Him.

# A Story with vine



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Ben again, "Telling stories is a crucial part of life. For Adam, when we met together as a group, we weren't just reading stories. We were entering into a space where we were encountering God, a place where Adam was being filled and satisfied on a level that went beyond simply food in his belly."

**Stories have the power to transform but they must first be heard. What are some simple things you can do in order to give the Gospel story its best hearing where you are? Get out there, tell stories because the world is hungry for a good one.**