



Instructions on providing a story for Sit-Reps:

The need for storytelling in the Church is real. The Bible is mostly comprised of stories, in which God details his-story with man. Stories are the primary way humanity learns and remembers. Stories make almost anyone happy, enticed to listen, and relaxed to receive the truth. Probably why Christ told so many parables.

A story is not just reporting information but should include story elements that shape reporting.

In a story, you can answer “who” with a name and basic details about age or occupation. However, if you are developing a story, we consider **more about that person**: a war survivor, grandfather, former seamstress, etc.

For example, see Luke 19:2-4:

"A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him since Jesus was coming that way."

We talk about “when” and “where” in a story. But it is incredibly useful and needs to be including the Setting. The setting is a place and time where you transport the reader to the experience that you had. Setting demands that we use description and relationship. Description uses the concepts of our senses: touch, taste, and smell. It also demands that we give the relationship (through our use of **time and place**) of the **surrounding places and to the events** that came before and/or after.

Consider Luke 1:5-12:

"In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old. Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers

were praying outside. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear."

Stories worthy of reporting to Mercy Partners may include conflict, but should always have a resolution to those conflicts. Stories are different than reporting on a subject or difficulty because stories are meant to inspire and give account to our partners on how mercy is being successfully given to people.

A resolution was the key difference in classical music made by such Christian composers as Bach. The song would begin chaotically and then end with ordered, melodic prose.

Matthew 26:26-30 can be an example of resolution. Even though the narrative is simple, such as people eating together, the story goes from daily activity to tension and ends with people glorifying God...

Look at Matthew 26:26-30:

"Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

A rather tragic announcement of the upcoming departure and death of Jesus, the story ends with Christ promising His presence and then the detail that they all sang a song together. We have conflict or tension, and then resolution. The 12 with Jesus would not move to the mountain until they have participated in resolve.

Stories may include **dialogues**, not just quotes. Quotes are information and are used only when a person is speaking. Including too many quotes in a story is a common mistake. Paraphrase when you are giving information or when you can say something better than the person you are quoting. If possible, and with the person's agreement, video and audio can be effective tools for capturing dialogue and bringing a person's actual voice to your stories. The impact is accomplished in the lives of our readers when we write for transformation, not just as information.

As you are gathering your report/story during the event, you do not know whether the setting will be the key element or an important secondary element. So gather information as though it will be important.

You may not have the time or space to develop all the elements of the Sit-Rep. After you have gathered all this information, identify the most important elements, the most compelling people, the key moments, and the most telling details.

Reports given via the sit-rep form are not expected to be long but are expected to be meaningful so our partners will be engaged and encouraged by your story.

Look at the results of Barnabas' and Paul's reports:

"So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers." (Acts 15:3, ESV)

Examples of good stories in the Bible: Abraham and Isaac – Genesis 22 // Potter – Jeremiah 18:1-6 // Saul of Tarsus – Acts 9:1-22 //