



## L'Arche USA Learning/Reflection Session

Name of Engagement:

Story Word Suitcase

**Basic description:** Participants will share and reflect upon their understanding what stories are all about – what they can convey and why they are important. The facilitator sets the stage for this experience through modeling.

**Intended Learners / Reflectors** (and note any particular needs): All Members.

Be sure the activities will offer variety of engagements and clear, straightforward questions. As needed, invite core member and another member into learning pair – or build small groups by role with facilitators for core member groups ready to begin with, encourage and amplify core member voice.

**Length of Time for Engagement:** 1 hour

**Key learnings / understandings / skills practice from the engagement:**

- Experience a space that is encouraging of all voices
- Explore individually and collectively the meaning and importance of Story in L'Arche
- Reflect on and share stories

- What prep materials, reflection questions or activities are needed ahead for participants and facilitators?
- How will you set up the space?
- What resources of material and people are needed and who is responsible for them?
- What focal layout, visuals or props will invite and ground participants?
- How and when will you evaluate?



### Preparation

- Pre-session preparation:
  - Facilitator:
    - Consider how you will introduce this topic of when you need safe and brave space.
      - A quote or music; [quote from Henry Nouwen](#) or reading of a short illustrated story.
      - Consider what to share from your own story. Your honesty and openness will encourage others. If you share a story to the large group, model brevity and meaning.
    - Plan how you'll break into small groups. 4 per person is often good number. Will you break up by role to allow for a core member grouping, into groups that include one core member pairing? Count off for random grouping?
    - If you have a core member small group, decide on facilitators and prep them ahead about engaging and amplifying core member voices.
    - Consider readers for a quote and make sure you have print outs of anything to be read.
    - Since the theme is story, consider inviting people to bring scrap books or photo albums along.
  - Materials:
    - Focal table or space: Cloth, candle or other sacred object; possibly a stack of books
    - At least one set of inclusion tools and some markers, etc. for Word Suitcase activity
    - Easel pad for each group with a large suitcase drawn - and the word and an image for "Story" on it
    - Print out anything that you need others to read
    - Microphone: a good way of giving people the floor and amplifying all voices in the large group.
- Session Set-up:
  - Set up room: prep for both a large circle and small group spaces – either separate or easily moved.
  - Set up Focal Space, inclusion tools, art supplies. Make sure everyone has easy access to all spaces.

- Print/Tech: Print quotes, possibly reflection questions; cue up music and speaker; test out mic.

## Activities

- Encounter

- Framing / Grounding Activity

*Time: 15 min*

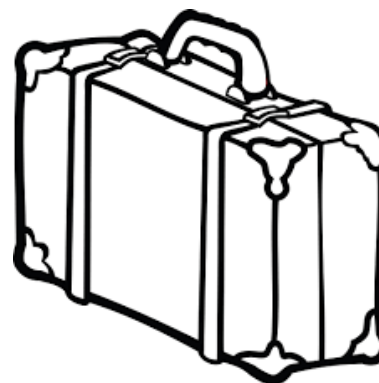
1. Introductions, if they are needed, then Facilitator opens with a quote, song, story and/or quiet reflection (5 min)
2. Facilitator shares that you'll be spending time thinking about why stories matter. (5 min)
  - a. Share a brief story and its importance
  - b. Invite people to think about an important story to them – might be own story, someone else's story, scripture or other sacred story. What do they like about that story? Why is it important to them.
3. Facilitator invites people to share with one or two other people nearby – your story and why it is important to you (5 min)

- Engagement

- Learning Activity: Word Suitcase by Small Group (Word: Story)

*Time: 35 min*

1. Invite each person to think a bit more about Story, silently or in conversation with a partner, then look at the materials before them: object, pictures, pictograms, or art supplies to pick or draw something that relates to Story for them. (10 min)
2. In small group, invite a round where each person shares without cross-comment about what they chose or drew to share what matters to them about story or to share about a particular story. Recognize that some may choose to use few or no words and others may choose to explain – all is invitational. Capture what is shared with words and images on the easel sheet (10 min)
3. For second round in small group, ask people to consider these questions: (5 min)
  - What kind of stories are important and why?
4. Large group plenary (10 min)
  - Invite each group to share highlights of what they capture on the sheet. If core members are willing, start with their voices, choices, words and images. Try to make sure you hear from each group and anyone who wants to speak.
  - What common themes came through on story – types, importance, value



- Call/Commitment

- Closure Activity

*Time: 10 min*

1. Around the Circle: Each person has the chance to share or pass. Either:
  - One new reason to share stories OR
  - A favorite Story OR
  - How you are feeling leaving the time together.

### Review of Plans

- Safe/Brave Space: Have you considered elements that create inviting, safe and brave space? See related resource sheet.
- Representational Curation: Have you planned for multiple means of receiving, engaging and expressing learning – visual, aural, physical, verbal, logical? Are diverse cultural voices represented?
- Expressing Learning: Do the activities allow participants to express what they've learned? Name how they will apply it?