

Anna, A Prophet (Luke 2:36-38)

Getting Started

Introductions

Set up circle and pocket chart.

Welcome and introductions of Circlekeepers and Circle of the Word.

Opening: The Story

Light candle, sing “Listen to the Word,” tell story, pray.

Explain the Talking Piece

We’ll do different activities to learn this story; sometimes we’ll use a talking piece. The talking piece creates a space in which everyone can speak and listen in peace. Each person in the circle gets a chance to speak without being interrupted, and to listen without needing to respond with a comment or question.

When we are using a talking piece, here is how it works:

- 1. The talking piece is passed around the circle from person to person.**
- 2. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak.**
- 3. It’s okay to pass the talking piece on without saying anything.**

Check-In Round

Today our talking piece is: _____

We will use it for a check-in round; when the talking piece comes to you please...

- 1. Say your name**
- 2. Tell how familiar you are with this story (new, heard before, could tell)**
- 3. Tell how you are feeling today**

I’ll go first...

Guidelines

These are the four guidelines for our time together:

- 1. Honor the talking piece—when it is being used, speak only when you are holding it**
- 2. Speak from the heart—tell your truth as you are comfortable to share**
- 3. Listen from the heart—be attentive, with a positive spirit**
- 4. Protect personal privacy—when you leave tell about God, Jesus, Circle, and the story we engaged, but don’t tell personal information that is shared here**

Are those guidelines acceptable?... Any others you think we need?...

**When the talking piece comes to you, indicate your acceptance by saying,
“I accept these guidelines.”**

Start a round for everyone to accept the four guidelines.

Engaging the Story

Word I Heard

Listen again to the story of *Anna, a Prophet*

This time close your eyes or focus on the candle.

As you listen, notice what word or phrase gets your attention... *Tell story*

Before you open your eyes, think of a word or phrase from the story that got your attention, or something else that came to mind...

Ring chime... Now open your eyes.

For this round, name a word or phrase that you heard in the story, or that came to mind in response to hearing the story...

Second round: For this round, you can tell why you chose your word or phrase...

Repeat-After-Me

The most ancient form of education was to repeat the words of whatever was being learned.

I'll say a line and then you repeat after me.

You can repeat my gestures, too; it will help you learn the story. Here we go...

Tell the story in breath units—a phase at a time—using gestures that connect with the action of the story. Exaggerate words and gestures.

About the Story

Using a talking piece, do a round for reading through the About the Story handout, one paragraph per person.

Anyone not wanting to read can pass the talking piece on to the next person.

Storyboard

It's easier to learn a story if you break it down into episodes or parts.

Just like pre-production work in movie-making, we are going to create storyboards for this story to help us learn it.

This story has 3 parts, so divide your paper into 3 sections...

I'm going to tell the first part of the story. Close your eyes or focus on the candle and see what is happening in your mind's eye as I tell it... *Tell first part of story, slowly.*

Now open your eyes, and in the first section of your paper draw a picture of what you saw as you listened to the first part of the story, something that will help you remember it. A word or two is okay, but don't just write it out. You'll have about two minutes.

Repeat for other parts.

Tell to a Partner

Now, pair up with a partner, and take turns telling the story to each other using your storyboards to help remember.

No peeking at the written story on the other side until both you and your partner have told it using just your storyboard for prompting.

When you have both told the story, then look at the printed copy and note what you remembered, what you left out, and what you added that wasn't there.

Follow-up Option A: Partners pair up in groups of four; each person tell the story to your small group; be sure to clap for each telling, no matter how it went.

Option B: Would anyone like to tell the story to the whole group?

Option C: Was anyone especially impressed with your partner's storyboard or telling and like to tell us about it?

Favorite Part

This is a round activity using the talking piece. You could have a chart with the parts of the story listed with a phrase and a line to tally responses.

What is your favorite part of this story today? Or the part that got your attention the most?

I Wonder

Biblical stories invite us to wonder about things.

Because they are such old stories about people who lived in a very different culture, we don't understand some things in the stories.

Some of us haven't heard many biblical stories and have lots of questions about them.

Even if we have heard lots of biblical stories, they still inspire wondering.

So... What questions do you have of this story?

What does it make you wonder about?

Print responses on lined 4x6 index cards.

Pass each card around to the person who had the wondering to place in the circle.

Do a second round for people to address the question or wondering of their choice.

Connections

This story is about a woman who was very old, and also very pious, and who recognized Jesus as a redeemer. So the story invites us to tell about a women in our lives are in their golden years and who are faithful believers in Jesus.

Winding Up

Check-Out and Comments

Invite participants to give a word or phrase that describes how they are feeling now, and to share any comments they want to make on the Circle session.

Prayer Cards

Closing

Standing in the Circle, conclude with "Go Now in Peace."