

Stories for use in Spiritual Direction and at Other Important Times.

This class will explore the question of when and how to use stories. When is it appropriate to use a personal story? Is it OK to tell a Hassidic story, and is it necessary to explain the point of the story? When is it appropriate to change a story? Can you make up one yourself?

We will look at the margins of our groups, and discuss working with people who are gay or lesbian, those who have mental illnesses, have experienced racism, bigotry and abuse, and those who consider themselves spiritual but not religious.

Each student is required to bring with them 6 stories to share. One of them should be a personal story, and several should address the subjects above. If you would consider singing in a spiritual direction session, please bring a song or two as well, and poems can be stories also. You will be asked to share these stories with all of us, including when and how you would use the story.

Reading is to be done before we meet at Smicha week, and are listed below.

This class will fulfill the Haspa'ah story requirement, and will be equally helpful in the areas of chaplaincy and rabbinic support.

Reading requirements:

Inviting the Wolf In; Thinking About Difficult Stories

Loren Niemi and Elizabeth Ellis

August House Publishers Inc

This book is extremely valuable in helping us to see why we tell (or don't tell) the stories in our lives that appear hard to tell. It also helps us to see why others don't tell those stories in our roles as spiritual director or chaplain.

I have been able to find this book new and used on line

The Healing Heart – Families

The Healing Heart – Communities

Both by Allison M Cox and David H Alpert

New Society Publishers

These books, written from the perspective of public story telling, have much to tell us about one on one story telling as well. They contain a wealth of excellent stories and ideas for adaptation. I recommend that you read both books, but you must read at least one.

I have been able to find these books new and used on line

Additional Readings

Just a few suggestions for story sources. There are many more.

Souls on Fire; Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters

Elie Wiesel

Gates to the New City; A Treasury of Modern Jewish Tales

Howard Schwartz

Or any others from his large collection of wonderful stories

Chosen Tales; Stories Told by Jewish Storytellers

Edited by Peninnah Schram

Another great Jewish story teller with multiple books and multiple stories

A Consoling Thought; Stories for Times of Mourning

Rabbi Zeev Greenwald

There are many more volumes of books compiling stories. Please start a bibliography of your favorite ones to bring with you.