



# Tex Mix

## Stories of Earthy Mysticism

Featuring Tex Sample

### How to Use “Tex Mix”

*“Tex Mix” is designed for maximum flexibility in personal, group devotional, and worship settings. The DVD includes Tex’s Introduction to Storytelling and 20 stories for use in a variety of situations. The DVD data disc includes all of the stories in mpeg format. These can easily be inserted into PowerPoint or Keynote slides for use in sermons or other presentations. (Note: The data DVD is for use in a computer with a DVD drive and is not intended for stand alone DVD video players.)*

*The Discussion Guide includes a theme verse, several of the main points being illustrated in the story, and questions to guide discussion in groups or personal devotions. If using the stories as a devotional or discussion starter in a group setting, introduce the video segment by reading the theme verse. After viewing the video segment, ask participants to discuss the questions provided as a group or in pairs/small groups.*

*The Discussion Guide can also provide preachers and other speakers with information to tie one of Tex’s stories into a sermon or other presentation. To include Tex’s storytelling in your slide show, insert the DVD data disc of mpeg files into your computer. This will allow you to insert the movie file directly into your presentation software (PowerPoint or Keynote). Then, at the appropriate moment, Tex’s mix of Earthy Mysticism is just a click away.*

### The Stories

#### **Getting the Story Right**

Roy Rogers and Jesus  
Sand Creek  
Miss Hattie Buie  
Everybody’s Doin’ It  
On the Way  
No Flies on Jesus

#### **The God Who Finds Us**

Everlasting Arms AND Legs  
“Tell Me about the Arms”  
Brother Joe and the Blood  
“I Have the Authority”

#### **The Craft Tradition of Knowing**

Plastering  
Maeyken Wens  
“My Name is Jane”  
That Hussy!  
Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht

#### **Witness**

Duke’s Dining Room Table  
On Hating White People  
PB&Js and Kool-Aid  
Big Mart  
Bull Dog

## Introduction & Discussion Starters

### Introduction to Storytelling (DVD Chapter 1)

*Guidelines for storytelling developed by Eugene Lowry and Tex Sample.*



## Getting the Story Right

### Roy Rogers and Jesus (DVD Chapter 2)

*Read Matthew 5.1-14.*

*Themes to consider:*

- *The danger of placing God's story in another story.*
- *The danger of idolatry.*

*Discussion starters:*

- 1. Describe a story that is operating through you.*
- 2. Describe any stories you see operating in the larger culture of your country.*
- 3. Where do you tend to confuse God's story with other stories at work in your life?*

### Sand Creek (DVD Chapter 3)

*Read Psalm 12*

*Themes to consider:*

- *Before his military career Colonel John Chivington had been a presiding elder (equivalent to today's District Superintendent) in the Methodist Church.*
- *The violent capacities of stories that dehumanize other people.*

*Discussion starters:*

- 1. What stories do you hear operating in the Sand Creek Massacre?*
- 2. In considering the example of Colonel Chivington, how do such shifts in stories occur?*
- 3. Share where such a shift has occurred in your life.*
- 4. Share where such a shift has occurred in the life of your local church.*

### Miss Hattie Buie (DVD Chapter 4)

*Read Acts 17.16-31*

*Themes to consider:*

- *Miss Hattie Buie had been a missionary in The Methodist Church in Korea for thirty years.*
- *The conflict between Miss Hattie Buie and Mr. Archon is a struggle between stories.*

*Discussion starters:*

- 1. Discuss the ways in which Miss Hattie Buie introduced a radically different story into an extremely difficult situation.*
- 2. What can we learn from Miss Hattie Buie in terms of intercepting unfaithful stories and introducing God's story?*
- 3. How can we address unfaithful stories in our own situation and dismantle them the way that Miss Hattie Buie did?*

### **Everybody's Doin' It (DVD Chapter 5)**

*Read Romans 12.1-2, 9-18*

*Themes to consider:*

- *In giving in to the temptation to conform to the world, we fail to live faithfully in God's story.*
- *The witness of Tex's father deflates Tex's justification for going to New Orleans with his friends.*

*Discussion starters:*

- 1. What story is operating with the three men who came to see Tex's father?*
- 2. Mr. Sample says if he did what the three men proposed, he'd have difficulty with the person with whom he slept — meaning himself. How do you see story operating in a comment like that?*
- 3. Share a situation you are aware of — or where you personally have been called upon to conform — where you feel procedures or practices were unfaithful.*

### **On the Way (DVD Chapter 5)**

*Read Psalm 119.105-112 and Acts 19.1-10*

*Themes to consider:*

- *The young preacher reads the Bible in a way that seems to keep him from what he wants to do. There is a story operating in his reading of Scripture.*

*Discussion starters:*

- 1. What is the story by which this young preacher reads the biblical text?*
- 2. In the gospels, Jesus invites us to join him in what the early church called "the way," how shall we read the Bible to be on "the way"?*
- 3. We interpret the Bible through stories operating through us. What story informs your reading of the biblical text? How would you criticize your own reading of the biblical text?*

## **No Flies on Jesus** (DVD Chapter 6)

*Read Matthew 5.21-26*

*Themes to consider:*

- *Jimmy Hope's father is interrupted by the very different story of Jesus.*
- *The collision of two stories brings an about-face in Jimmy Hope's father's response.*

*Discussion starters:*

- 1. Have you ever been called up short in the way Jimmy Hope confronts his father? Describe your response and why/if it changed you.*
- 2. Jimmy Hope places his father's comments in an entirely different context. What do we learn as witnesses to Jimmy Hope's action?*





## The God Who Finds Us

### **See 2 Corinthians 5.16-21 and John 3.16-21**

*The Christian faith is centered in the grace of a God that we do not find but who seeks us out.*

### **Everlasting Arms AND Legs (DVD Chapter 7)**

*Read Deuteronomy 33.27*

*Themes to consider:*

- *This story is a metaphor for God's action in saving and caring for us.*
- *The language of God's everlasting arms is used in Scripture to convey God's eternal compassion and care.*

*Discussion starters:*

- 1. Does the addition of the language "and legs" add anything to the significance of your own sense of God's love and care?*
- 2. Do you have a story of your own in which you knew God's care in graphic and saving ways?*
- 3. Has your own experience of God's care come more through others?*

### **"Tell Me about the Arms" (DVD Chapter 8)**

*Read Matthew 23.37*

*Themes to consider:*

- *Feminine images for God can be found throughout Scripture.*
- *In this story we see the suffering love of a mother for her daughter.*

*Discussion starters:*

- 1. How does your understanding of God change when you think of God being like the mother of the story?*
- 2. How does your understanding of hardship, sickness, death, and tragedy change if, with this mother, you see God suffering for us and with us?*
- 3. How does your story of the faith change when God is seen as being like the mother of this story?*

### **Brother Joe and the Blood (DVD Chapter 9)**

*Read Romans 8.31-39*

*Themes to consider:*

- *In his story, Tex suggests that the idea of Christ's substitutionary atonement is not the most compelling view of the church or the one most faithful to the New Testament. In fact, the most significant statement of this view did not come into existence until the Eleventh Century C.E.*

- *Tex holds to the classic view of the atonement in which although the principalities and powers subject Christ to mockery, torture, and death, in resurrection Christ overcomes these powers and reveals God's ultimate triumph over them. See Gustav Aulen, Christus Victor.*

*Discussion starters:*

1. *There is more than one way to see the cross in the tradition of the church. Share the interpretation most familiar to you and any other interpretations of which you are aware.*
2. *Many Christians reject the notion of God's justice and honor requiring satisfaction through the suffering and death of Christ on the cross. How is this similar or different from your understanding of the cross?*
3. *Read Romans 8.31-39. How would the classic view change your reading of this well-known text?*

### **"I Have the Authority" (DVD Chapter 10)**

*Read John 20.19-23.*

*Themes to consider:*

- *Jimmy Hope declares that as a minister of the gospel he has the authority to pronounce forgiveness.*
- *His declaration of forgiveness seems to have changed the man's life to that of a forgiven person.*

*Discussion starters:*

1. *Have you ever been declared forgiven for an act you committed?*
2. *Jimmy Hope implies that guilt can be both real and unreal, that is, that one can feel guilty without actually being guilty. Discuss this distinction.*
3. *What role do we have as people of the church in declaring people forgiven? (Remember that we often do this in church when the liturgist declares the congregation forgiven and the congregation responds by declaring the liturgist forgiven.) When is this appropriate? How can it be abused?*





## The Craft Tradition of Knowing

### **The Plasterers** (DVD Chapter 11)

Read 2 Timothy 2.15

Themes to consider:

- *We are formed and shaped by our practices.*
- *There are things we cannot know, feel, think or be committed to if we do not practice them.*
- *In the craft tradition of learning and knowing we must be shaped by the object to be known.*

Discussion starters:

1. *Stanley Hauerwas says that Christian faithfulness involves a range of skills that need to be learned. Where have you practiced faith in a way that has both formed you and taught skills of faithfulness?*
2. *What does it mean to be formed by Christ in order to know Christ?*
3. *What skills do you especially associate with Christian discipleship?*

### **Maeyken Wens** (DVD Chapter 12)

Read Acts 1.1-5 and Acts 7.54-60

Themes to consider:

- *The English word “martyr” comes from a Greek word meaning witness.*
- *In Maeyken Wens’ determination to respond to the call to preach and her willingness to die for that call she embodies the meaning of martyr in both the Greek and English meaning of the word.*

Discussion starters:

1. *It’s been said that we only have something to live for when we have something we are prepared to die for. Discuss this claim.*
2. *How do you understand the idea that an instrument of torture and death can become a symbol of salvation and life?*
3. *How is someone like Maeyken Wens formed so as to be able to be such a witness? What practices shape such a life?*

### **“My Name is Jane”** (DVD Chapter 13)

Read Matthew 5.38-48

Themes to consider:

- *Jane had been practicing non-violence for many years.*
- *She was formed to be non-violent in her actions.*

Discussion starters:

1. *How do you see non-violence at work in Jane’s response to the attacker?*

2. *Where do you practice non-violence in your own life? Where are you formed to follow Jesus' teaching to "turn the other cheek?"*
3. *Should Jane have reported the attacker to the police? If so, why? If not, why not?*

### **That Hussy! (DVD Chapter 14)**

*Read Matthew 22:37-40*

*Themes to consider:*

- *Tex's mother saw her best friend's brother not as an abstraction, but as family or at least as family of a friend.*
- *This relationship led her beyond labels such as "pervert" or "fag" and others and moved her to defend this gay man.*

*Discussion starters:*

1. *How do we move beyond relationships of family and friends so that we can take a compassionate approach to those we may not know or with whom we have this kind of relationship?*
2. *Note the sensitivity of Tex's mother to the hurt that this gay man had endured. What practices form us in this kind of sensitivity?*
3. *In what sense was Tex's mother justified in her anger toward the celebrity? What more is needed in terms of the teachings of Jesus in the formation of Mrs. Sample's attitude toward the celebrity?*

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### **Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht (DVD Chapter 15)**

*Read John 13.12-17*

*Themes to consider:*

- *A friend is someone who learns your song, and when you forget it or cannot sing it for yourself, your friend begins to sing it to you until you can once again sing it for yourself.*
- *It is said that many people with Alzheimer's remember songs—and especially songs of faith—long after other memories are gone.*

*Discussion starters:*

1. *How are you formed by the hymns and songs of the church? Of the secular world?*
2. *What hymns or songs of faith are your favorites and shape your life?*
3. *Jesus describes us as friends in the Gospel of John. How do we practice this by singing peoples' songs back to them, as they need it? In what sense is the church a singer of such songs?*







## Witness

### **See Acts 1.8:**

*“You shall be my witnesses”*

### **Duke’s Dining Room Table (DVD Chapter 16)**

*Read John 13.31-34*

*Themes to consider:*

- *Duke gives the boys of his football team one of the very finest possessions he has.*
- *Initially, Johnny does not appreciate his gift.*

*Discussion starters:*

1. *What possessed Duke to make this kind of gift?*
2. *Have you ever made a sacrifice only to have it go unappreciated, at least in the short run?*
3. *When have you known gifts of this magnitude in your own life?*

### **On Hating White People (DVD Chapter 17)**

*Read John 8.1-11*

*Themes to consider:*

- *The building of trust is the result of long-term practices of care and commitment.*
- *As the church we are called to such practices.*

*Discussion starters:*

1. *How do we put such practices into play, especially with people who are marginalized (the poor, the excluded)?*
2. *Language that may seem blasphemous can be an expression of redemption. Discuss this observation in terms of Chalmer’s story.*
3. *Share a story from your own life of having been cursed in a way that expressed profound appreciation and gratitude for you.*

### **PBJs and Kool-Aid (DVD Chapter 18)**

*Read 1 Corinthians 11.23-26*

*Themes to consider:*

- *The Reign of God is wider than the church and Eucharistic moments occur outside the liturgies of our congregations.*
- *In the New Testament we live between the times of Christ having come and his coming again. We live in the urgency of Dr. King’s “How long? Not long!”*

*Discussion starters:*

1. Describe a memorable Eucharistic moment in your life.
2. How do you connect the Eucharist of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and Kool Aid with Dr. King's call and response of "How long? Not long!"
3. Where do you see yourself called to live out the Eucharist with this kind of urgency?

### **Big Mart** (DVD Chapter 19)

*Read Matthew 28. 16-20*

*Themes to consider:*

- *Many churches find that their neighborhoods have changed.*
- *They are often surrounded by Big Marts, those who are "not our people."*

*Discussion starters:*

1. *Who are the Big Marts around your church?*
2. *Have you heard their stories in such depth to come to Ella's level of change and commitment?*
3. *How might you begin to hear their stories?*

### **Bull Dog** (DVD Chapter 20)

*Read Acts 2. 1-13*

*Themes to consider:*

- *Emile Durkheim: When you get people in close physical proximity, focus their attention on a common object, and engage them in exercises that arouse emotion, bonding occurs.*
- *Note how the day of Pentecost (Acts 2. 1-13) matches Durkheim's characterization.*
- *Those with whom we gather determine what we will be bonded to.*

*Discussion starters:*

1. *What are the major groups with whom you gather? To what do they bond you?*
2. *Discuss the role of the church in forming us through the power of gathering.*
3. *How are we formed in terms of:*
  - *God's story?*
  - *our hearing the good news?*
  - *our practices?*
  - *our own witness by the power of gathering?*