

Your Moth Story
An Assignment for the First Month's Classes
Iona School for Ministry

The Focus: Stories of Transformation

Tell a true story about a time when you were involved in ministry or mission that you considered transformative for yourself or others.

The Moth Radio Hour is a weekly series that runs on PRX and as a podcast. Live events are held monthly in many cities, including Houston. Each episode features true stories told live onstage without scripts, notes, prompts, or accompaniment. Each story is a vignette that gives a glimpse of meaning or truth. It is called Moth Storytelling to invoke that era in which people sat around on the porch in the evening, telling stories to their family or friends and watching moths flutter around the porch light.

For Iona's purposes, the story we will each tell is intended to introduce us to one another. It may give a window into our reasons for being here, the kind of ministry we are envisioning or hoping for, and/or the ways we have been formed for this school.

A few pointers offered by the host of the Houston events:

- *Stories have beginning, middles, and ends.*
- *This is your story, not someone else's. You are the main character.*
- *Unlike a sermon, a story leaves the discernment of morals and application to the listeners, rather than the speaker.*

Each of us will have five minutes (with a timer!) to tell our story, though it doesn't have to last that long. Our moth story won't cover our whole lives, but one episode that gives insight into our lives. It doesn't have to be "the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to me," but it should be vulnerable. It feels like a risk to tell something real about ourselves, but that is how we form community—and Iona, and especially these classmates, will be our community for the duration of our time here.

You may use some talking points or an outline if you'd like, but this really is a story event. After each person shares a story, we will have one full minute of silence, in which we simply honor the story and the storyteller. We will experience the ministry of presence in which we don't ask questions, don't offer advice, don't compare experiences. We will simply be with each other. At the end of the session, after all have had a chance to tell their stories, we will spend some reflection time, sharing what we have noticed about the experience of introducing ourselves through story and what we wonder about. On the next page, you will find some storytelling tips from the Moth Radio Hour. Use them if they are helpful, but remember, we don't expect you to be a trained storyteller. We invite you, rather, to enter into this introductory experience with honesty, vulnerability, and trust—trust that will grow as we encounter each other in this holy way.