

Developing Faith Identity Using Digital Narrative Theology

Andrea Slaven

College of St. Rose

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In his book, Bausch (1986) writes, “To be a person is to have a story. Without my story, I have no identity” (p. 171). This statement can be taken to another level by adding the element of faith. Throughout history, stories of faith have been experienced, told and retold, transforming individuals and communities in the process.

Stories of faith began to be shared early in human history through oral tradition. Stories of personal journeys and great feats were told and treasured, inviting the listener to be part of the story, too. Oral tradition later became the written word. With new inventions, more and more stories were written and shared. Today, the digital explosion has changed the way stories can be told and shared.

Today’s students can be identified as the i-Generation (Roberto, 2010). For most or all of their lives, they have been immersed in a digital world. Teachers have transformed their classrooms to use new digital technologies and multi-media empowering students to become researchers, storytellers, historians and cultural theorists (Weis, Benmayor, O’Leary, & Eynon, 2002).

The digital revolution has been seen through the explosion of social media on the internet. Young people post images and other representations of themselves in the moment, not necessarily reflecting on the story being built.

Digital storytelling gives students a chance to identify and reflect on their own story. What is digital storytelling? According to Mantei and Kervin (2010), “digital stories are short, personal, multimedia presentations created through image (from still and/or video cameras), which are then edited to include spoken word, text and/or music” (p. 1).

When used as a teaching tool, digital storytelling allows the students to “synthesize, interpret, theorize and create new cultural and historical knowledge” (Weis, Benmayor, O’Leary, & Eynon, 2002, p. 153). New personal meaning emerges. These digital stories are particularly powerful productions with the youth. Digital stories can harness a sense of belonging and a sense of identity (Pahl, 2011).

Narrative stories can be told today using the technologies that are available, becoming powerful tools of influence and personal transformation of values can take place through the use of digital storytelling (Skouge & Rao, 2009). Personal faith narratives can be digitalized in a multimodal production. Digitalized faith narratives develop one’s personal story, allowing the author to find themes of faith and reflecting on these. This joining of faith narratives and digital modalities creates what can be referred to as digital narrative theology.

Today’s i-Generation is connected with the world like no other generation has ever experienced. But, as many churches can attest to, young people are experiencing a feeling of disconnect from faith and faith communities (Roberto, 2012). Therefore, adapting the statement previously mentioned, it could be said that, “To be a person [of faith] is to have a [faith] story. Without my [faith] story, I have no [faith] identity” (Bausch, 1986, p. 171)

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research proposal would be to determine the effects of using digital storytelling as a tool to help develop a personal faith identity and belonging to the faith community of their choice. Digital narrative theology may help connect personal

everyday stories to scripture, sacrament, morality and prayer. This study would explore the outcomes of using digital storytelling as a means to promote critical reflection of values and beliefs that relate to the faith community to create a sense of belonging to that community that holds these core values and beliefs. Can digital storytelling be a means to transform or convert values and beliefs through critical reflection? How can the religious education teacher be the conduit of bringing the faith message together with personal stories by engaging students in digital storytelling? Using surveys constructed before and after, and through observation and discussions, teachers may determine the extent of influence digital storytelling may have on individual's faith identity. A long-term trend study should follow to see if early intervention with digital storytelling being a part of religious education pedagogical practices makes a difference.

Review of Literature

Storytelling has long been a part of the human experience. It has been the means of communicating from one person to another, one generation to another as well as preserving one's own memories to later review and reflect. Storytelling has also been a means to influence values, beliefs and identity. This review of literature will explore how one's personal story becomes one's faith story as determined by cognitive, faith and spiritual development theories and will show that digital storytelling pedagogy can be implemented as a classroom tool for learning.

Storytelling has long been a teaching tool for humankind. It has part of teaching faith, too. Every culture has its origin based in story, including the Judeo-Christian story found

in the Bible. Though its story began in oral tradition, it too has evolved into written tradition and works of artistic and theatrical interpretations.

The way individuals connect their personal story to their faith is relational to finding their experience in a faith community. However, many people may not be experiencing their identity as belonging to a faith community. Many of today's churches are experiencing less membership, and even less participation. The increase in individualism in today's culture has been a driving force against the community life encouraged by Christian faith, as well as other religions (Roberto, 2012). Within the Catholic Church, Roberto (2012) found that there has been steady erosion in Mass attendance over the last 20 years. Weems (2010) pinpoints the year 2001 as a pivotal year as attendance in all mainline denominations has sharply been decreasing. Weems (2010) identifies this decline due to "the failure of churches to reach younger persons" (p.11). Additionally, there are a large and growing number of young adults, ages 25-34, of who identify themselves as having no religion (Weems, 2010). Yet, studies find this group may be spiritual (Roberto, 2012). Somewhere along the line, the community story and the individual's connection to that story has been disrupted or not engaged. Wuthnow (1998) describes a phenomenon that he calls "loose connections" as the weakening or even severing of relationships between individuals with institutions. Compared to early 19th century which produced a "nation of joiners" as people saw a benefit of being connected and felt a sense of self-interest in taking on identity with the group, today's transient and technological society have led to shifts creating loose ties among many institutions, formal and informal (Frykholm, 2011).

Petts (2009) used a group-based method of trajectory analysis to determine some factors that influence one's religious participation from early adolescence to young adulthood. First, the trajectories of participation for youth are positively dependent on the amount of religious participation that occurred early in family life (Petts, 2009). Second, Petts (2009) notes that two-parent families are more likely to participate in religious life. Finally, parents who establish very close relationships with their children also tend to have higher rates of religious participation (Petts, 2009).

Children born between 1980 and 1994 are part of a generation that has been immersed in technology and influenced by it. They have been termed digital natives (Bennett, Maton & Kervin, 2008). This group however, shows only 21% using the technology for creating their own content and multimedia (Bennett, et al., 2008). This research does not demonstrate the activity among students born after 1994 who are even more engaged with multi-media web-tools for creating and sharing. In fact, Ohler (2005) describes a digital story activity completed by students in 6th grade that could not have been told with such imagery and emotion 10 years ago in a classroom without the tools of today and teacher guidance trained for media work.

Cognitive development occurs as one moves from experience to learning from that experience. The learner experiences personal growth and transformation when individuals make meaning from their experiences (Mulqueen & Elias, 2000). Mezirow (1991) stresses the importance of reflection in that not all experiences induce learning. Learning or the act of transforming needs to be in the context of interpretation of the meaning of one's experience. Intentional reflection of the experience to gain meaning and transformation would indicate learning has taken place.

Genereux and Thompson (2008) also support the importance of reflection as part of learning that takes place through digital storytelling. In the conclusion of a study based on implementing digital storytelling as an assessment activity, the observers felt the activity gave them a better way of knowing the student's understanding of concepts learned (Genereux & Thompson, 2008). Weis, Benmayer, O'Leary and Eynon (2002), show that using digital storytelling students became more conscious of the experience and reflective, leading to transformative interpretation (p.153).

From reflection, students move to transform their thinking. Nixon (2009) shows digital storytelling can promote identity development and transform understanding of social issues. Part of a larger study, adolescent students in a summer institute were encouraged to imagine the possibilities of social change (Nixon, 2009). Students came to a new sense of identity in the community and individual role in that community unfolded through the transformed pedagogy of digital storytelling (Nixon, 2009). Skouge and Rao, (2009) also described various ways in which digital storytelling was used as a means of a transformative media as transformational learning was observed in both the producer of the digital narrative and the audience in reviewing and observing digital stories documenting island living in the Pacific islands of Hawaii.

Cognitive developmental theory can be applied to spiritual development. Cartwright (2001) developed in her literature research the recent advances in cognitive development theory and applied these to spiritual development. Through a qualitative study involving focus groups and individual interviews, Hamilton and Jackson (1998) show that a sequence of changes that occur in spiritual understanding along with the events one experiences. The first step in the process of spiritual development was identified in the

study as self-awareness. As individuals reflected on their experiences, spiritual meanings emerged. One of the questions posed at the end of their study was, “What tools or activities are used to develop spirituality?” (Hamilton & Jackson, 1998, Conclusion section, para. 5)

Personal identity in relation to social identity can be constructed through digital storytelling. In terms of religious education, personal identity in relation to the faith community needs to be established. Vinogradova’s (2007) study portrays the family as the social institution where individuals begin to negotiate their social identities. The research shows that authors of digital narratives tend to create positive images, positive social identities, and position themselves in narratives with a positive social identity and sense of belonging. Matei and Kervin (2010) show that digital storytelling among kindergartners empower students with positive self-images by noting language choices students used in their digital creations of themselves. Most important to understanding a sense of self was the sense of ownership of their images and that the story was unique. In the study, students were also able to make connections to school and home life creating, and once again emphasizing, the need to belong (Matei & Kervin, 2010, Sense of self section, para. 1). Another way of creating self-identity as well as making connections with community through digital storytelling was seen in collaborative digital projects (Vinogradova, Linville & Bickel, 2011).

Through a larger study by UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute, Benson and Roehlkepartain (2008) studied the correlation between religious participation and spirituality. The study shows that spirituality is evident early in life and continues to transform throughout life. Benson and Roehlkepartain determine in youth development

professionals need to be intentional in addressing spiritual development. Youth ministers or youth practitioners need to articulate specific contexts, practices, and experiences such as mindfulness, meditation, prayer services, service to others or reflection on “spirituality in action to help youth deepen spiritual and religious relationships (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008).

Basic to the premise of identity is to know that everyday stories can become the “myths we live by” (Samuel & Thompson, as cited by Pahl, 2011) and are often bound with family values and ways of being. This can be related to religious values and ways of being within a religious faith community. Pahl (2011) noticed that the process of creating the digital story in and of itself leads to personal identity development as modal choice is understood in relation to lived experience. Pahl (2011) determined that digital storytelling has educational implications to identity development by providing the meaning-makers with agency and by allowing modal choice enhance the personal story using music, sound and visual images giving a sense of ownership.

Byrd (2011) completed a narrative study of emerging adult faith development connecting life experiences and faith autobiographies. Byrd’s study focused on using biographical narratives with adults, also known as narrative identity theory. From his observations, Byrd concluded that narrating one’s story helps connect the dots on one’s faith journey. As a result, this *re-storying* of events leads to a deeper understanding of their beliefs and practices that can be a significant step in transformation and religious conversion (Byrd, 2011). Byrd’s study with adults did not use technology, but does show the impact of using narratives.

Garcia and Rossiter (2010) in their study of narrative pedagogy outline three essential areas of consideration in applying digital storytelling to teaching and learning. First is that stories can illustrate the content of a lesson; second, storytelling can have a powerful impact on the learner's attitudes and worldviews; an third, storytelling can develop identity through autobiographical narratives. Students are able to see themselves unfolding and developing through their own story (Garcia & Rossiter, 2010). Garcia & Rossiter (2010) concluded that digital storytelling facilitates learning in various settings. Therefore, the transition from an educational to religious setting should be easy.

In conclusion, spiritual development and religious participation is necessary for religious identity to a faith community to be established. Educational and faith development theory both contend that identifying experiences and reflecting on their meanings can impact transformation and develop a positive self-identity, spiritual growth and individual role within a community. Kaare (2008) discusses the benefit this had on both the religious collective and the individual as stated in the following:

Younger points of view on faith and life, as expressed in the mini-films, are integrated by the older generations into their teaching and into how they deal with young people into her daily work, even into their conception of what might constitute faith and what meaning religion might have (p. 202).

This following research then asks:

1. Does the use of digital storytelling as a catechetical methodology increase the development of faith identity within the faith community?

2. What role does the religious education teacher have in promoting religious identity to develop the individual's story to the faith community?
3. What practical methods and considerations need to be taken into account when using digital storytelling as a pedagogical means to promote self-awareness, spirituality and religious identity at various stages of cognitive and faith development?

Method

Participants

This study will take place in a religious education program within an urban parish. The study will take place in grade levels four, seven and eleven so as to reach different cognitive and faith development stages. Students will be randomly selected up among volunteers in each grade level to be a part of a six- week mini course using digital storytelling as the focal project. No more than twelve students in each grade level mini course will be accepted in the study in order to use time effectively and to allow for individual guidance during the process. Students for this study should be working academically at grade level or above, to define age appropriate cognitive skills and should have been enrolled in the parish religious program for at least two years prior, to show that some faith formation or catechesis has been received by the student. Students should have some background in using the computer and Web 2.0 tools, though tutorials will be available by the instructor.

Catechists, or religious education teachers, of the chosen classes will need to be certified catechist with training in catechetical methodology, theology as well as

familiarity with media technology and 2.0 web tools. If the parish director does not have a catechist meeting these criteria, one will be provided from the diocesan region.

The study will be a two-fold of information gathered. Both catechists and students will share their experiences through surveys and final project as well as the researcher's observation of class time. The objective of this study is to gain insight to the effectiveness of using digital storytelling to share faith as a means to increase the student's faith identity within the community, and to assess teaching methodologies that aid in developing this.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher for this study will be the Eastern Region Director of Faith Formation in the Eastern Region of Syracuse. The researcher has a Masters of Education, Masters Certificate in Religious Education, and 20 years of experience as catechist and parish director. In response to a growing concern voiced by many parish leaders that students are unable to make church connections to everyday live, a study to implement digital storytelling is proposed as a possible methodology in religious education.

The role of the researcher in this study will be to propose this study with all ethical questions and concerns deliberated by following IRB guidelines and completing required IRB recommended forms (Appendix A), including permission slips. In using background expertise in both religious studies and education, the researcher will create the necessary surveys to obtain a clear assessment of opinions and program perceptions from the adult team members and the students, as well as implement surveys after the study. The researcher may be included for consultation as catechists develop lesson plans to include

a digital narrative project. The researcher will also be the observer of lessons and projects.

The researcher will be responsible to collate all reflections, observations and results of surveys to review with the team of pastor, parish director, and catechists creating a triangulation team that will maintain objectivity during the study.

Methods of Data Collection

Data will be gathered at various stages of the study. The question focused in this study requires a pre and post assessment of student participation in the parish community hinging on the student's self-evaluation of their faith identity. Table 1 shows that the first question will require a pre and post assessment as assessed by the student, catechist, parish leader and pastor based on personal testimony in opinion surveys and general observations. Comparing the surveys from before the implementation of the project to after its completion will determine the impact and relevancy of the study. The impact of the lesson does have several extraneous factors on student receptivity of Scripture, motivation for production of digital story and delivery of technical assistance and tutorial. One factor is the delivery of the lesson. The observation of the catechist will need to be addressed in order to acknowledge approach and methodology as well as the interactions that take place with and among the students. From these observations, patterns may emerge which support or add to earlier studies. Catechists will also keep a journal of lesson reflections. The students' skill levels of computer technology will also need to be assessed and taken into consideration.

Table 1

Data Collection Strategies

Research Question	Data Collection Methods
Does the use of digital storytelling as a catechetical methodology increase the development of faith identity within the faith community?	Pastor, D.R.E., catechist survey pre & post Team interviews (pastor, D.R.E., Catechists) Student survey pre & post Observations noted from completed digital productions Student interviews during class discussions.
What role does the religious education teacher have in promoting religious identity to develop the individual's story to the faith community?	Observation of class Teacher reflection journal
What practical methods and considerations need to be taken into account when using digital storytelling as a pedagogical means to promote self-awareness, spirituality and religious identity at various stages of cognitive and faith development?	Computer Literacy and Computer Science Tests and/or Evaluating Communicative Competence, Revised Edition Observations Triangulation review with team members

Procedures

Once the IRB has been submitted and approved, the process of contacting the parish will take place. Contact with the parish Director of Religious Education (D.R.E.) and the pastor of the parish will be established by letter and with a follow-up conversation. Both the pastor and D.R.E. will be consulted about the objective of the study, its ethical implications in working with children, and the roles of all those involved in the study, including the students and their parents. Upon agreement of terms and determining roles according to the stated criterion, the process of obtaining pre- assessments and permissions will begin among the team. Pre-assessment surveys will be given to the team, including the pastor, the D.R.E. and the catechists (Appendix B). Students will be given information in class about the study and asked to volunteer for the course in lieu of a regular religious education class, though the schedule of class will be the same. A contact letter will be sent to parents (Appendix C) that will include a permission slip to be

signed by the parent/guardian. Catechists will determine a lesson that incorporates the following: Scripture and its meaning in relevance of today; student interpretation from their own experience developed on a storyboard; a review of tools that can be used in digital productions; and independent work on the digital formatting of their story. The catechist will keep a journal of lessons and reflections (Appendix D). The researcher will observe the entire process as the lesson begins and develops (Appendix E). Students will begin with a pre-assessment descriptive survey (Appendix F). Students will also be given a Computer skills inventory assessment to determine how much time will be necessary for introducing digital tools and skills (Appendix G). The class will share their productions and share their experience in terms of faith through a post-assessment survey and student interview (Appendices H and I). The team will also be given post descriptive survey (Appendix J) and a follow-up interview (Appendix K). The team will discuss observations and thoughts of the lesson using the notes from journals and field note observations with the researcher. A follow up in 6 months repeating the surveys will be administered to determine any long-term effectiveness or impact on parish participation.

Benefits and Limitations

This study is intended to give catechetical programs a new tool for helping students to identify life experiences as faith experiences through the use of digital storytelling. The pedagogy follows that once an experience is identified and reflected upon, a deeper understanding may be achieved. This new understanding, or transformation, may have a positive effect on how one perceives themselves and their role in the faith community. In

terms of faith, this can translate to deeper commitments to scriptural morality, self-confidence, and service to the betterment of the community.

There are several limitations to the study would include family history and family involvement in the parish as mentioned from previous research. There may be a positive eagerness to be part of the study by those of who are already actively participating in their faith communities, whereas those who are not active participants might not volunteer for this study. If this occurs, there may be a bias that will be uncontrolled. In a future study, that variable may need to be included when selecting participants. Other limitations include the accessibility of technology, especially if some of this will be completed outside of the classroom. Consideration must be taken as students share personal stories. Due to the personal sharing of stories, there will need to be a witness of compassion and respect witnessed by catechists and other team members.

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Appendix A

Human Subjects Research Expedited/Full Review Protocol Form

EXPEDITED/FULL REVIEW RESEARCH PROTOCOL FOR THE COLLEGE OF SAINT ROSE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

College policies and federal laws require that each research project involving studies on humans be reviewed with respect to: 1) the rights and welfare of the participants, 2) the appropriateness of the methods used to secure informed consent, and 3) risk and potential benefit of the investigation. Federal guidelines define research as a formal investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge and a human participant as an individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains a) data through intervention or interaction with the person, or b) identifiable information.

Indicate below the type of review you are requesting (check one):

EXPEDITED REVIEW (Submit original form/attachments plus 3 copies)

Research requiring an expedited review presents moderate psychological or physical risk to participants beyond that normally encountered in people's daily lives (see FAQ page on IRB website for more information on what is considered a risk). Asking participants to recall traumatic events or report sensitive personal information such as drug use or sexual behavior are examples of studies presenting a moderate risk to participants. Because of the potential for psychological or physical harm, researchers must develop procedures for mitigating the impact of these risks on participants, and ensure that participants provide informed consent. Therefore, the expedited review protocol form requires researchers to explain their procedures for obtaining informed consent, mitigating risk to participants, and maintaining confidentiality of the data, so that the IRB is able to determine if the rights and welfare of research participants will be adequately protected. Expedited protocols are reviewed by a subgroup of the IRB consisting of faculty representing the Schools of Education, Math and Sciences, and at least one other School.

Any research with minors or dependent adult populations will require an expedited review, unless it involves normal classroom procedures in a classroom setting (see the Exempt Protocol form for more details on this exception). With minors or dependent adults, generally both informed consent by a legally responsible party and assent by the participant are required.

OR

FULL REVIEW (Submit original form/attachments plus 6 copies)

A full review is necessary for research in which the risk to participants is high and/or the risks may be difficult to mitigate. Research involving testing of a new medical or psychological therapy is an example of a study that would require a full review. The same issues are addressed as in an expedited review, but the entire IRB will meet to review the application. A full review will require two weeks for completion of the review process.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

For either type of review, applications must be typed or clearly printed in black ink. Completed applications (protocols including attachments, plus copies) should be submitted by 4PM Wednesday to Ginny Von Behr in room 255 Science Center. Applications received after 4 PM Wednesday will be included in the review cycle beginning the following Wednesday. Incomplete protocol packets (or too few copies) will be returned, without review, to the researcher for completion. The expedited review process requires one week and a full review requires approximately two weeks. Researchers will be notified of denial or acceptance of their protocol following the committee's review. Researchers will be notified on Thursdays of IRB decisions.

Under some circumstances protocols may be approved contingent upon the provision of additional information ("approval pending" status). Under these circumstances, the additional information must be provided before approval will be given and data are collected.

Approved protocols remain active for one year from their approval date unless the researcher specifically indicates a shorter duration. Procedures extending beyond one year must be resubmitted to the IRB for an extension at the end of the first year. Any substantive changes in an approved protocol must first be subjected to review by the IRB before the changes are implemented.

All research involving human participants conducted under the auspices of The College of Saint Rose must receive IRB approval before the initiation of data collection. Investigators who have questions about the forms or the review procedures are invited to contact the Committee chairperson or any member of the IRB (members are listed on the IRB home page).

Human Subjects Research Expedited/Full Review Protocol Form

Attachment Checklist (Check only those items included):

- Project Description (Project Description Section II)
- Interview and/or survey questions (Project Description Section II)
- Descriptive statement (cover letter) or verbal script introducing interview and/or survey questions (Research Operations Section III)
- Copy of form used to obtain permission to acquire participants from different 'non-public' settings (Participant Population Section IV.B)
- Approval letter for access to records (Participant Population Section IV.D)
- Verbal script or letter for contacting participants (Participant Population Section IV.E)
- Informed consent form for independent adult participants (Informed Consent Section V.A)
- Verbal script for oral consent for independent adult participants (Informed Consent Section V.A)
- Parental and/or legal guardian consent form (Informed Consent Section V.B.1.a)
- Signed attending physician consent form (Informed Consent Section V.B.1.b)
- Other consent form permitting the inclusion of special participant groups (Informed Consent Section V.B.1.c)
- Informed assent form(s) or verbal script for oral assent or documentation indicating why informed assent/consent will not be obtained from special participant groups (Section V.B.2)
- Debriefing procedure (Section V.C.4)

Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope or regularly accessed email address to expedite your notification. Applications can be delivered to Ginny von Behr in room 255 Science Center or mailed to:

Human Subjects Research Review Committee
 Attn: Ginny von Behr
 School of Mathematics and Sciences
 The College of Saint Rose
 Albany NY 12203

The materials included in this packet, other forms, and FAQ's are available at www.strose.edu on the internet, click on Current Students & Faculty, then Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Certification: (to be completed by the primary investigator and/or faculty advisor)

I certify that the information concerning the procedures to be taken for protection of human participants is correct. I will seek and obtain prior approval for a substantive modification in the protocol and will report promptly any unexpected or otherwise significant adverse effects encountered in the course of study.

Andrea Slaven

Signature of Primary Investigator(s)

April 25, 2012

Date

In the case of student research, the application should be reviewed and signed by the faculty supervisor. It is the responsibility of the faculty supervisor to ensure that students have properly completed this form.

Signature of Faculty Supervisor

Date

Approval: (to be completed by the IRB)

This research project has been reviewed according to college policy and has been approved.

Human Subjects Research Committee Chair

Date

Human Subjects Research Expedited/Full Review Protocol Form

I. General Information:

- A. Name: Andrea Slaven
- B. Email Address: slavena878@strose.edu
- C. Phone #: 315-797-4030
- D. Mailing Address: 1 Sherman St Site #1 New Hartford, NY 13412
(Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope if you wish to receive a hardcopy of the committee's decision)
- E. Date of Application: April 25, 2012
- F. Dates of Project: From Date of Approval to April 1, 2013 (not greater than 1 year)
- G. Project Title: Developing Faith Identity Using Digital Narrative Theology
- H. Type of Project: Faculty / Staff / Administrator Research
 Student Research
- I. Department or College Unit: Education Technology
- J. School:
 Art & Humanities Math & Sciences Business Education N/A

II. Project Description including the following (clearly typed on a separate sheet and attached to this form):

- A. A clear statement of the purpose of the research project.
- B. A description of exactly what will be done to or for the participants.
- C. A clear description of the methodology, including identification of variables, operational definitions, and experimental design when appropriate. If study involves interview or survey procedures, please attach actual scales and/or questions that participants will be asked.

III. Research Operations:

Check as many of the following as are applicable to your research:

- Obtaining information from archives or files.
- Observing, filming, video/audio-taping participant.
- Testing, questioning, surveying, interviewing, psychometric measurement. (Attach any descriptive statement/cover letter or verbal script that will be used to introduce the procedure to participants. Attach interview questions, survey questions, etc.)
- Changing participants through education, training, therapy, behavior modification:
 with the intent to produce change. with no intent to produce lasting change.

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IV. Participant Population:

A. Type and Number (mark all that apply):

- 1. Adults: _____
- 2. Minors (up to 18 years of age): 36 (Specify Age Range: Grades 4, 7 & 11)
- 3. Disabled: _____
- 4. Special Minority Groups: _____ (Please Define: _____)

B. Institutional Affiliation of Participants (mark all that apply):

- 1. No Affiliation*: _____ (Please specify where participants will be acquired: St. John the Evangelist Church)
- 2. College of Saint Rose: _____
- 3. Other School* (please specify): _____
- 4. Prison* (please specify): _____
- 5. Hospital* (please specify): _____
- 6. Other* (please specify): Catholic religious education program

*Please attach the **signed** form granting permission from the appropriate source when acquiring participants from places other than common public spaces (e.g. principal, teacher, mall owner, prison warden, hospital chief).

C. Total Number of Participants: 36 (Note: the use of additional participants must first be approved by the IRB)

D. Describe how are participants chosen (records, classes, referrals, canvassing, etc; be specific). If participants are chosen from records, indicate who gave approval for use of records and attach approval letter.

Students will volunteer and acquire permission. Director of Religious Education may make recommendations.

E. Describe how participants are to be initially contacted (ads, telephone, letter, sign-up sheet, classroom contact, etc.). Be specific. Attach appropriate documentation (e.g. copy of verbal script or letter).

Students will be given information during class time and may sign up as volunteers.

F. Will participants receive inducement before or rewards after the study? The issues to be addressed here are the extent to which: (a) compliance is voluntary, (b) the inducements are not excessive, and (c) participants can receive the inducement in other ways if they do not want to complete the research (in the case of extra credit or course credit)

No X Yes _____ Please explain if yes: _____

G. Will the identity of individuals who participate in the study be made a part of any permanent record available to a supervisor, teacher, or employer?

No X Yes _____ If yes, please explain and address the extent to which there is risk of an individual's participation (or lack thereof) changing the way a supervisor, teacher, or employer thinks of him/her and/or otherwise adversely affecting the participant, and how that risk is to be mitigated.

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V. Informed Consent:

Documentation of procedures for obtaining informed consent is required for approval of your research by the IRB (unless the project is approved as having exempt status, see Exempt IRB Protocol Form). You must employ one of the following formats for obtaining consent:

1. A **written consent document** embodying all of the basic elements of informed consent as outlined below. This may be read to the participant or to his/her legally authorized representative (e.g. parents in the case of minors), but in any event, s/he or his/her legally authorized representative must be given adequate opportunity to read it. This document is to be signed and dated by the participant or authorized representative. **A sample copy of the consent form must be attached.** The researcher should retain all signed consent forms and store them apart from any data that is collected.
2. **Oral consent**, in which the participant is told about the basic elements of consent described below prior to the start of data collection. No signed document is necessary on the part of the participant. However, **a verbal script of the oral consent presentation must be attached.** (This method of obtaining consent is usually approved for low-risk research procedures.)

Informed consent, whether written or oral, should NOT include any language implying that the participant is made to waive, or appear to waive, any legal rights, or release the institution/agents from liability or negligence. Sample informed consent forms can be found on the Saint Rose IRB website. Basic elements that must be included in informed consent are:

1. A fair explanation of the purpose of the study.
2. Description of the procedures to be followed, including an identification of any procedures which are experimental.
3. Description of potential risks and/or discomforts reasonably to be expected.
4. Description of any potential benefits to participants and/or society reasonably to be expected.
5. A statement that participants should be over the age of 18 (if applicable to the study).
6. An offer to answer any inquiries concerning the procedure(s).
7. An instruction that the participant is free to withdraw his/her consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice to the participant.
8. A statement of confidentiality.

A. General Informed Consent Procedure for Independent Adult Participants (if independent adult participants are not involved, skip to Section B):

Describe procedures used to obtain informed consent from the participant or justify why informed consent will not be obtained (e.g., in an unobtrusive observational study of naturally occurring, public behavior). If only partially informed consent will be obtained (e.g., in a deception study), justify this procedure and explain how risks to participants will be avoided. Attach a copy of the informed consent form or verbal script for oral consent.

N A

B. Consent for Special Participant Groups:

Use of 1) clinical patients or 2) participants not able to give personal consent, for reasons of age (participants <18 years old), mental state, legal or other such status, requires both **informed consent by a legally responsible party and assent by the participant.**

1. Who will be providing consent/permission for participation of these participants? This is required in addition to assent of the participants. Please check all that apply, and attach a copy of the informed consent form.

a. Parent and/or Legal Guardian: X

b. Attending Physician: _____

c. Other (please specify): _____

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- 2. Please attach a copy of the informed assent form(s) or verbal script(s) for oral assent. If you are not using assent procedures, please attach documentation indicating why. See the IRB web site for sample assent forms.

C. Assessment of Risk to Participants:

If you check YES to any of the statements below you should specifically justify the risk in your attached research description and complete section D below. Will your research involve:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
1. possible invasion of privacy of participant or family, including use of personal information or record?	_____	<u>X</u>
2. the administration of physical stimuli other than auditory and visual stimuli associated with normal classroom situations?	_____	<u>X</u>
3. deprivation of physiological requirements such as nutrition or sleep; manipulation of psychological and/or social variables? (e.g., sensory deprivation, social isolation, psychological stress)	_____	<u>X</u>
4. deception as part of the experimental procedure? (if study involves the use of deception, the protocol must include a description of this fact and an attachment of the "debriefing procedure" which will be used upon completion of the study)	_____	<u>X</u>
5. requesting information which an individual might consider to be personal or sensitive? (e.g., asking questions about sexuality, body image, criminal behavior, etc.)	_____	<u>X</u>
6. the presentation to the participant of any materials which they might find offensive, threatening, or degrading? (e.g., failure feedback, offensive/disturbing pictures, etc.)	_____	<u>X</u>
7. the requirement of physical exertion beyond normal classroom situations?	_____	<u>X</u>
8. other (please specify): _____	_____	_____

D. Minimization/Mitigation of Risk to Participants:

If any of the items in section C have been checked "yes," describe what precautions have been or will be taken to minimize and/or mitigate those risks. If you checked "no" for all items in section C, PLEASE INDICATE WHY THIS IS THE CASE.

E. Confidentiality of Data: YES NO

- 1. Will any data be made part of any permanent record that can be identified with the participant? _____ X
- 2. Will any demographic information be collected for this experiment (e.g. age, sex, ethnicity, race, employment, height, weight, family, marital status, etc.) that will not be kept separate from other research data OR that may be linked to a participant's research results? _____ X

- 3. Describe the steps that will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the data. Additionally, if "yes" was checked to question #2 above, please indicate if there is a risk of individual participants being identified due to small numbers of people in certain demographic categories, and if so, how the researcher will protect participants from being identified or linked to their data through their demographic profile.

All records will be kept confidential. No last names will be used, and no

pictures will be associated with name identification.

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YES

NO

4. Will confidentiality be maintained indefinitely?

X

If yes, fully explain all of the following: the use of codes or pseudonyms; how and where data will be securely stored; and how and when data will be destroyed.

Files will be archived in a secure area.

Appendix B

Name _____ Role _____

Preliminary Team Survey

This survey is part of a study using digital storytelling as a means of developing faith identity in catechetical programs. This survey is to give a general idea of what the parish catechetical program is like as well as what you feel your expectations and role is in the faith formation of participating students. Please answer the following questions honestly. This is strictly being used to gather initial data necessary for the understanding of the study.

Directions: Read the questions following and respond by filling in the corresponding circle that best describes your feelings and your general observations using the scale below:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = agree

4 = disagree

Preliminary Team Survey	1	2	3	4
1. I feel students have a strong sense of faith.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Most students attend services/Mass regularly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. It is easy to engage students in parish events and activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Students find relevance in what is taught in religion class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The parish community actively supports the religious education program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Students learn faith best from the textbooks used in the religious education program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. The parish program provides many faith-building experiences for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Students easily connect everyday living to Scripture and Church teachings using traditional catechetical methods.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Students feel that they are valued members of the congregation/parish.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Most families participate in parish events and activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix C

Parental Permission Notice

My name is Andrea Slaven, and I am conducting a research study on the effects of using digital storytelling in catechetical programs as a means of developing faith identity. The study will follow the student as he/she produces a digital narrative connecting one of their own personal experiences to their faith based on Scripture or Church Teachings. Your child may want to use family pictures and/or video clips or other archives of their experiences as part of their digital story. The final stories will be shared among classmates and the researcher, however, will not be publicly shared. The study will involve surveys before and after the activity, observation of lessons by the researcher and teacher and interviews with the participants. All information will be kept confidential and participation is voluntary. Please indicate if your child has permission to participate in this study and all of its components.

Please sign and submit the attached permission slip to the teacher or researcher.

Permission for Participation in Research Study

I give permission for my child _____
to participate in this study that will include answering survey questions, being
observed in classroom lessons, producing and sharing a digital story of faith, and
being interviewed by the researcher. I understand that the interviews may be
recorded, but will be kept confidential. Your child's name will not appear anywhere
within the published report, nor will be available to anyone except the teacher and
the researcher.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Appendix D

Reflective Journal Template for Teachers

Lesson Plan

Date_____

Goal:

Objectives:

Did I meet the objectives for today's lesson? Yes No

Were the students engaged in the lesson? Yes No

What were the positive events in today's lesson?

What were the challenges?

Appendix E

Field Notes Log

DATE _____

Grade Level _____

TIME	Observation of Teacher	Observation of Student

Appendix F

Name _____

Preliminary Student Survey

This survey is part of a study using digital storytelling as a means of developing faith identity in catechetical programs. Please answer the following questions honestly. There is no consequence with any answer response. This is strictly being used to gather initial data necessary for the understanding of the study. Neither your name nor your answers will be shared with anyone. Please complete all questions and then return the survey to the either the researcher or the teacher

Directions: Read the questions following and respond by filling in the corresponding circle that best describes your feelings and your general observations using the scale below:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = agree

4 = disagree

Preliminary Student Survey	1	2	3	4
1. I feel I have a strong faith.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I attend religious service/mass regularly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I enjoy attending parish activities and events.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I rely on the beliefs of my faith when making decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I model my actions by those in my faith community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Members of my congregation make me feel welcome.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Religious education has nothing to do with everyday life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Scripture stories have nothing to do with my everyday life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I feel that I am a valued member of my congregation/parish.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. My parent (s)/guardian(s) encourage attendance to weekly services/Mass.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix G

Suggested Options for Computer Literacy Tests

1. Elementary computer literacy (SIGCAS)
2. Computer Skills Assessment (CSA)

The CSA test provides teachers with an opportunity to assess students' knowledge, skills and understanding in:

- Using computer-based technologies to locate, access, evaluate, manipulate, create, store and retrieve information
- Communicating with others using computer-based technologies
- Discriminating in the choice and use of computer-based technologies for a given purpose.

Appendix H

Name _____

Post Activity Student Survey

This survey is part of a study using digital storytelling as a means of developing faith identity in catechetical programs. Please answer the following questions honestly. There is no consequence with any answer response. This is strictly being used to gather initial data necessary for the understanding of the study. Neither your name nor your answers will be shared with anyone. Please complete all questions then return the survey to the either the researcher or the teacher

Directions: Read the questions following and respond by filling in the corresponding circle that best describes your feelings and your general observations using the scale below:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = agree

4 = disagree

Post Activity Student Survey	1	2	3	4
1. I feel stronger in my faith after creating my digital story.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I liked sharing my faith story with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I learned valuable lessons of faith from seeing others' stories.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I was able to connect Scripture or Church teachings to my own life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I enjoyed the digital storytelling activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. I feel this activity helped me connect my faith to my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Religious education has nothing do with everyday life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Scripture stories have nothing to do with my everyday life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. After completing this activity, I realize more that I am a valued member of my congregation/parish.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. My parent (s)/guardian(s) encourage attendance in weekly services/Mass.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix I

Post Activity Student Interview

The following is an example of questions that may be used during student interviews. Questions may vary, depending on the student responses and information regarding the student's individual project. The questions can be re-phrased so as to be understood at various ages. As the interview begins, the researcher will explain that the purpose of the interview is part of the study designed to understand how digital storytelling might be used in religious education. It will also be explained that students may end the interview at any time or decline to answer any question.

- Tell me about your experience as you created your digital story. How did you decide the story you shared?
- Did you find any challenges in using the digital technologies?
- Did you learn anything new about your faith as you reflected on your own experiences?
- How did you feel about sharing your personal experience, thoughts, reflections, etc.?
- Did you learn anything new about your faith?
- Did you feel you gained a closer feeling to your faith or your parish community?

Appendix J

Name_____ Role_____

Post-Descriptive Team Survey

This survey is part of a study using digital storytelling as a means of developing faith identity in catechetical programs. This survey is to give a general idea of how the pastor, Director of Religious Education and catechist felt the use of digital storytelling effected faith development and identity. Please answer the following questions honestly. This is strictly being used to gather initial data necessary for the understanding of the study.

Directions: Read the questions following and respond by filling in the corresponding circle that best describes your feelings and your general observations using the scale below:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = agree

4 = disagree

Post Descriptive Team Survey	1	2	3	4
1. I feel students have gained a stronger sense of faith after this activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Students enjoyed the experience of this activity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Students were able to easily connect their experiences to faith when engaged in producing digital stories.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Students found more relevance in what has been taught in religion class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Students were positively influenced through the sharing of digital faith stories.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Students learn faith best from the textbooks used in the religious education program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. The objective of connecting everyday faith to Scripture and/or Church teaching could have been done using traditional methods.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. The objective was positively achieved using digital storytelling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Students gained a greater sense of their role as members of the congregation/ parish.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Families became positive actively involved in the project.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix K

Post Activity Team Interview

The following is an example of questions that may be used during team interviews with pastor, teachers and Director of Religious Education. Questions may vary, depending on the team responses and information regarding the process and outcomes of the project. As the interview begins, the researcher will explain that the purpose of the interview is part of the study designed to understand how digital storytelling might be used in religious education.

- Tell me about your experience as you implemented the lessons for using digital story. What aspect did you find was most useful?
- Did you find any challenges in using the digital technologies?
- What were the strengths of using this method for faith development and faith identity? Weaknesses?
- What steps were necessary to help students chose and develop their personal experiences into a faith experience?
- How do you feel this method lend itself to building community?