



ONE YEAR
**ADVENTURE
NOVEL**

Summer Workshop

Session Topics
from Past Years



Session Topics from Past Years

We don't divulge our session topics beforehand (we're writers—we like suspense!), but we are happy to offer this PDF containing the session blurbs from 2014 to the present, so that you can get a better sense of what we cover.

Where blurbs are missing, they were not included in the original workshop program. Occasionally, sessions were repeated; they are listed each time they were presented, in the interest of an accurate picture of the Summer Workshop.

Special Note

The One Year Adventure Novel curriculum is nonsectarian, and is approved for purchase with public funding. It is a writing program, not religious instruction. However, the instructor himself is a Christian, and everything taught in the course is compatible with a biblical worldview. The workshop speakers come from a Christian perspective; and some of the teaching sessions may include Christian themes and/or references.

Being a Christian is not a requirement for attendance, and the focus of the event is on writing, but this workshop may not be the best fit if you are not comfortable with Christian themes or relevant expressions of personal faith being woven into some of the speakers' talks.

If you have any questions, please contact us; we are happy to talk with you. Our goal is to train and support teen writers. We want every young writer who attends our workshop to have a positive experience!



2020 | Mind Craft

Mr. S. | *Mind Craft*

Storytelling is, first and last, a discipline of the mind. We can learn a lot about Story by studying opening and closing strategies.

Stephanie Morrill | *Characters and Decision Making*

Characters and their decisions drive scenes, which drive stories. How do we write decisions that feel plausible? Or create characters whose decisions a reader will understand?

Allen Arnold | *The Genesis Secret to Creativity*

In the first pages of the first book of Scripture, God reveals the blueprint for brilliant, breathtaking, timeless creativity. In this fast-paced, mind-blowing session, discover how knowing God as Creator and Father holds the secret to us creating in confidence, overcoming chaos, avoiding formula, and savoring our creations.

Tracy Workman | *Map Making*

Learn to make gorgeous maps for your story worlds in a live, online version of last year's popular session.

John Otte | *Creating a Story World*

What questions should you ask yourself when you put together your storyworld? How can you create details that bring that world to life? And how do you go about sharing your hard work when you're done? In this talk, we'll look at how you can put together a story bible and how best you can share the world you've created.

Allen Arnold | *The Writer's Journey of Discovery*

We're all familiar with how the Hero's Journey applies to the beats of a story. But how does it apply to the beats of your life as a storyteller? Discover the power of inviting readers into stories that reflect the messy, unresolved issues, questions, dreams, and challenges you are currently navigating.

Mr. S. | *Raising a Writer (PARENT SESSION)*

In this session, Mr. S. will talk candidly to parents about writing as a career and a calling. What does it take to foster a professional writer, and is such encouragement a good idea or a foolish one? (Might it even be both?) Q&A will follow.

Paul McCusker | *Choices and Challenges*

Join storyteller Paul McCusker for an in-depth look at every story as a series of choices and challenges.

Paul McCusker Interview

A one-on-one live interview in which Mr. S. will go behind the curtain and ask Paul McCusker the questions you've been dying to ask.

Mr. S. | *Great Questions of Genre*

Genres live at the intersection of Primary Emotion, Great Questions, and Tropes. But the most important of these are the questions. As writers, we need to understand and explore what lies at the heart of our favorite genres. Are we asking great questions?

Paul McCusker | *Authentic Dialogue*

In this session Mr. McCusker will explore how our characters talk and what they say to one another as an extension of who they are as characters.

Allen Arnold | *Parenting Creative Kids (PARENT SESSION)*

How do you raise highly creative kids—especially if you don't see eye-to-eye on future opportunities for their gifting? As the father of three highly creative teenagers, Allen offers proven, practical insights (as well as shares his unintentional flubs) in how to pursue our sons' and daughters' hearts and art with wisdom, awe, humility, and love.

Jill Williamson | *Alternative Plot Structures*

Novelist Jill Williamson returns to the OYAN SW with unique insight into plot structures.

Allen Arnold | *Sub-Creating vs. Co-Creating*

As our Creator, God invites us to step into our gifting and talents with him. Yet the way we choose to do so matters. Discover the differences between sub-creating and co-creating—and how your choice affects your approach to art and identity as an artist.

Paul McCusker | *Historical Fiction*

Explore historical fiction with a story pioneer.

John Otte | *Q&A (PARENT SESSION)*

Ask the pastor. John Otte is an experienced novelist and Lutheran minister. That intersection of worlds makes him uniquely qualified (and entertaining) as a voice of creative experience.

Stephanie Morrill | *Developing a Fruitful Writing Life*

How do we flourish as writers? Wanting stories we care about, not stories that we think will make us look deep/important/trendy? Good writing habits, healthy writing friendships, a spirit of curiosity and exploration. In this session we will consider what success is for us.

Mr. S. | *Particularizing*

Good prose gives the reader's imagination specific details, but not too many of them. Creating beautiful imagery means particularizing.

Jill Williamson | *Creating Strong Ideas*

Great stories are built around strong ideas. Learn how to separate the weak ones from the strong ones with an experienced speculative fiction storyteller.

Stephanie Morrill | *Q&A (PARENT SESSION)*

Stephanie Morrill brings a unique story and valuable insight to any parent wondering how to guide a young creative writer.

John Otte | *GOOOOAAAAAAL!*

What motivates your characters to do what they do? And how can you use (and misuse) your character's goals to build a more satisfying story? In this talk, we'll discuss how you can get out the VOTE, build on different kinds of yeses and noes, and how to avoid the dreaded metagoaling.

Jill Williamson | *Priorities & Burnout*

Writing is a discipline that requires stamina and perseverance. Knowing how to set your priorities and recognize burn-out can help you maintain realistic expectations of yourself.

Stephanie Morrill | *Things to Fix in Edits*

Micro-editing with an expert! In this class, Stephanie Morrill will walk you through all the things that need to be tweaked after your story is solid: POV, showing vs. telling, dialogue tags/action beats, character voice/author voice, etc.

Mr. S. | *Archetypes*

Don't be fooled. Just because Mr. S. has a title for his session does NOT mean he has an actual subject. Or even notes. But he WILL be speaking about writing... and life... and faith... and possibly even archetypes.

**2019 | *Theme Park*****Stephanie Morrill | *What Storytellers Can Learn from Disney***

Animated Disney movies are childhood staples. What is it that makes so many of Disney's movies stand the test of time? We'll look at what Disney does well with storytelling and examine how we can apply this to our own stories.

Robert Treskillard | *How to Write in the Shadows*

This will be an interactive session exploring how to set mood through subtle word choices.

Mrs. S. | *Design Principles for Artists & Writers*

Whether you're a student interested in graphic design as a career, or a writer who would like to know what makes a more appealing book cover, these principles of design will show you how to avoid common mistakes and improve almost any layout instantly.

Clare Vanderpool | *Writing in the Crossroads: A Midwestern Perspective*

Craft and Creativity. Doubt and Hope. Fits and Starts. Beginnings, Middles, and Ends. The writing life is full of crossroads, detours, and switchbacks. This talk is a reflection on the writing life from one midwesterner's perspective.

Allen Arnold | *The Wildness of Creating with God*

What does it look like to pursue your love of story actively and intimately with God? Discover a better way to create by learning how to co-create with God rather than simply writing for God.

Allen Arnold | *The Writer's Journey of Discovery*

We're all familiar with the Hero's Journey—but how does it apply to your path of creativity? Discover the power of inviting readers into your stories based on the issues, questions, and dreams you are currently navigating.

Stephanie Morrill | *Marketing Without Sacrificing Your Soul*

If the idea of marketing your books freaks you out, you're not alone! In this class, Stephanie will talk about what marketing is, offer some practical ideas for how to start or improve upon what you're already doing, and help you overcome some of your fears.

Robert Treskillard | *The THIRST Method*

In this session Robert will explain a novel creation methodology he developed called the THIRST™ Method, which is an acronym for Tension, Humor, Intrigue, Romance, Suspense, and Terror/Fear. Using the THIRST you can take a list of scenes, plug in numbers representing these categories, and actually get a graph of how a novel might affect a reader's emotions—and keep the pages turning!

Mr. S. | *Story Beats*

A closer look at how momentary conflict, or story beats, work in fiction.

Steve Laube | *The Elements of a Dynamic Fiction Book Proposal*

Let's dig into the absolutely most critical parts of a book proposal. Discover how to help yours stand out in the crowd.

Clare Vanderpool | *Take Up Your Walking Stick: Heading Down the Road of Craft*

The writing path can seem dark and scary. Where do we begin? Which way do we go? This workshop will offer some signs and guideposts to help navigate the world of writing through craft.

Mr. S. | *Raising a Writer (PARENT SESSION)*

In this session, Mr. S. will talk candidly to parents about writing as a career and a calling. What does it take to foster a professional writer, and is such encouragement a good idea or a foolish one? (Might it even be both?) Q&A will follow.

Stephanie Morrill | *How to Know If Your Book Works as a Whole*

Sometimes we can read a sentence, paragraph, or scene that we wrote and know that it's good. But what about a whole story? In this session, Stephanie will offer thoughts on what you can do before you start writing, while you're writing, and after your first draft to help you evaluate if your book "works."

Tracy Workman | *Map Making*

Learn to make gorgeous maps for your story worlds.

Clare Vanderpool | *Writer's Stew – Ingredients: Memory, Research, and Imagination*

Where do you get your ideas? Where do characters come from? What's fact and what's fiction? These are all questions every writer is asked. This workshop will give an up-close-and-personal look into the ingredients that go into writing a story and a look at the story behind the story of *Moon Over Manifest* and *Navigating Early*.

Mr. S. | *State of Mind*

One of the keys to writing engaging prose is creating a highly-compelling character state of mind—a character's thoughts, feelings, and desires. Successful commercial fiction sometimes does this and nothing else.

Allen Arnold | *The Secret of Open and Closed Doors*

Using open and closed doors to determine next steps can be dangerous—if you allow doors to determine your future rather than God. Discover a better, far more powerful practice for navigating your future decisions.

Robert Treskillard | *Your Book Idea Is Not Special*

... so how can you turn it into a publishable novel? An overview of both craft and marketing.

Clare Vanderpool | *The Road Less Traveled: Letting Creativity Take the Lead*

Of course, craft and creativity work in tandem, but in this talk we'll discuss the importance of venturing off the trail and wandering in the world of creativity, mystery, and story.

Rachel Garner | *"They've got it in for me": Jurassic Park and Great Scenes*

There are many things that Jurassic Park does right to create one of the best blockbuster experiences in film. One of them is making scenes work on multiple levels: layering plot, character work, foreshadowing, and theme, so not a moment is wasted. Rachel explores how this works and how to apply it to your own novel.

Allen Arnold | *The Art of Parenting Creative Kids (PARENT SESSION)*

How do you raise highly creative kids—especially if you don't see eye-to-eye on future opportunities for their gifting? As the father of a creative 18-year old, Allen offers practical insights on pursuing their hearts and their art with wisdom, revelation, and love.

Steve Laube | *10Ks of a Good Book ... or How You Can Earn \$10k on Your Next One*

What are the essential elements that makes a book a bestseller? Who will buy your book and why?

Steve Laube | *Finding God's Will the Write Way*

Does God have a plan for your life? What is it? How will you know if you're in it? Unravel a fresh understanding of what it means to be in God's will.

Allen Arnold | *Chaos and the Creative Soul*

Our world has never been so chaotic. Yet as creatives, we have the unique ability to transform the chaos around us into beauty, life, and order. Discover how God does this—and trains us to do the same through our gifting and our presence.

Brynn Fitzsimmons | *Story As Service: Rewriting Community*

While many writers embrace the solitary, "lone wolf" stereotype of the writing life, Story offers a powerful set of tools to shape, heal, and serve the communities you interact with every day. This session focuses on both big-picture principles (and pitfalls) for using Story as service as well as more immediately actionable ways you can use storytelling to help and heal the communities around you.

Mr. S. | *The Unexpected*

How to use unexpected elements to pull readers through your prose.

Robert Treskillard | *The History of Swords and Smithing in Western Europe*

This session may be of particular interest to fantasy novelists!

Addison Lucchi | *Stories Change the World: 3 Powers of Story*

Drawing from pedagogy, leadership theory, and psychology, this session provides interdisciplinary strategies to help you view your writing from new perspectives—leveraging "3 powers of story" to positively impact you, your novel, and your readers. This will be an interactive session, involving reflective writing exercises and discussion-based activities.

Steve Laube | *Parent Q&A (PARENT SESSION)*

Ask a multi-decade publishing professional any question you might have on the business of publishing. Should you self-publish? Why or why not? What is normal in the publishing industry with regard to revenue? This is your time, parents, to ask whatever you want to know.

Mr. S. | *A Very Grimm Theme*

Title notwithstanding, the content of this talk is currently under review by Mr. S.'s subconscious mind.



2018 | *From the Ashes*

Stephanie Morrill | *How To Create High Impact Scenes*

In this session, Stephanie will dig into the structure of scenes and the questions writers should ask if they want their scenes, and therefore their books, to have maximum impact. If you struggle with writing books that feel more like lists of things that happen than comprehensive stories, or if you're great at coming up with big ideas but then get stuck trying to get them on the page, this will be a session you don't want to miss!

Nadine Brandes | *The Story Behind the Story*

This session is about looking at your life story and how that affects each story you're writing. It's about understanding the journey behind writing the journey. In college? Working jobs and finding it hard to carve out time for writing? Writing a book and living life don't have to be two separate things.

Mrs. S. | *Design Principles for Artists & Writers*

Whether you're a student interested in graphic design as a career, or a writer who would like to know what makes a more appealing book cover, these principles of design will show you how to avoid common mistakes and improve almost any layout instantly.

Andrew Peterson | *The Integrated Imagination: Fantasy in the Real World*

Andrew will explore the way God used stories and music in his own life to wake him up to the truth of the Gospel.

Andrew Peterson | *Adorning the Dark: Creativity, Community, and the Mystery of Making*

We were made in the image of a creative God. Andrew will talk about his journey as an author and songwriter and ways we can emulate our maker in the creative process.

Torry Martin | *The Shark Ate My Ichthus*

Learn how to swim with sharks in the publishing/entertainment industry without becoming one yourself. Learning from someone else's mistakes is always a preferred

method for gaining knowledge and now it's your turn to learn from mine. I'll be sharing stories about my own bad experiences and compromises in the entertainment industry as an actor, writer, and networker. Topics will include bad contracts, bad performances, bad business relationships, bad accountability, bad language, bad negotiations, bad decisions, bad behavior, and a bad witness—then we're going to pull a U-turn and get back on the path to redemption and focus on the Narrow Gate.

John Otte | *The Snowflake Method*

Are you familiar with Randy Ingermanson's Snowflake Method? It's the outlining process John Otte uses for plotting out his stories. If you're an outliner, it's a great method for you to know, and several of the steps are important enough that every author—whether you're an outliner or a "pantser"—should know how to use them.

Ken Carpenter | *Screen Writing*

It's a foundational Hollywood adage: "if it ain't on the page it ain't on the stage." Great movies are born out of great screenplays. This session explores the challenges, rewards, and the basic mechanics of telling a strong story in screenplay format.

Mr. S. | *Raising a Writer (PARENT SESSION)*

In this session, Mr. S. will talk candidly to parents about writing as a career and a calling. What does it take to foster a professional writer, and is such encouragement a good idea or a foolish one? (Might it even be both?) Q&A will follow.

Nadine Brandes | *Tips & Tricks for Writing Characters*

Think this is a bit of a simple topic? Unless you're a character-first novelist, creating emotionally resonant and consistent characters can seem far from simple! Nadine will share tips and tricks to simplify the writing process even for those of you who are character-first writers. This session will be hands-on; hopefully you will leave the session having deepened your characters.

Mr. S. | *Turning Points*

A turning point is that moment in a scene when the conflict is decided by some clear reversal of values—either through a revelation or an action. Building scenes around these moments is a great way to make your story flow smoothly, but many writers struggle to clearly define the changing values to pull off these pivots.

John Otte | *The Emojis of a Writer*

This session explores the different emotional reactions that a writer experiences and how to deal with them. Reactions like joy on finishing the manuscript or getting praised for the story, but also frustration when the ideas just aren't flowing, anger when someone bashes the story, jealousy when someone has a better idea or success you don't think they deserve.

Mr. S. | *Sketching*

Mr. S. bridges the gap between "plotters" and "pantsers" through a study of character and voice. Just as painters often begin with pencil sketches of their subjects, you can give definition to your rough drafts by concentrating on emotional beats rather than narration.

Addison Lucchi | *Know What You Write: Research for Creative Writing*

This session will reframe research as a creative endeavor, providing strategies to enhance your research skills and enliven your stories through curiosity-inspired discovery. This will be an interactive session—and, by the end, you will have created a research plan for your work in progress.

Torry Martin | *Discovering Your Calling, Finding Your Gift*

Part in-depth Bible study, part personal testimony, and all fun. This humorous teaching is geared towards encouraging others to step out and start using their gifts.

Jenn Bailey | *Middle Grade vs. Young Adult Fiction*

It's more than puberty! Come learn about the surprising differences and the even more surprising similarities between Middle Grade and Young Adult works. From The Basics to The Brain, we'll discuss what makes your work that kind of story and how to make it memorable for that kind of reader.

Ken Carpenter | *From Script to Screen*

It's a long way from writing a script on a laptop to seeing it on the big screen. Travel the road of a writer's journey from story conception to production, learning about choices that move a script closer to (or further away from) becoming a produced movie.

Nadine Brandes | *Q&A (PARENT SESSION)*

As the parent of a writer, you probably have questions about what being a writer as an adult involves. Nadine would be happy to take your questions and share from her own experiences and those of her connections.

Stephanie Morrill | *Choose Your Own Writing Adventure*

Did you know it's estimated that the average adult makes 35,000 decisions every day? While much is out of our control as writers and artists, there are many decisions that we can make to influence what kind of writer we ultimately become. In this session, Stephanie will talk about various decisions writers get to make, and we'll explore the different ripple effects those decisions can have.

Mr. S. | *Dialogue*

Great dialogue requires more than just an ear for natural conversation. Often it means stripping away superfluous language to find the essence of story through speech. It means conveying personality not through perfect clarity, but through "almosts," familiarity, and personal scripts.

Torry Martin | *What's the Big Idea?*

Two areas where writers tend to stumble when putting together a story are "the big idea" and pacing. For "the big idea," this means, "Does this story need to be told as a book or a movie and will it keep audiences engaged for 300 pages or 90–120 minutes?" Engaging the audience, however, starts on the page. You need a reader to keep turning pages of your book or screenplay in rapid succession because the story propels them forward with energy and purpose. Readers

need to see the movie as they turn pages, and if the script drags, the movie certainly will. How do you determine if your idea is “big” enough to carry a movie? And how do you make sure your script has strong pacing? In this class we will be delving into detail about the importance of the big idea and solid pacing. I’ll be using some of my own stories as examples.

Jenn Bailey | *Not All Those Who Wander Are Lost*

This session is about the importance of play in your creative process. You will look at side-writing, poetry, drawing, music, physical exercise, etc., and how those processes spark creativity, keep the imagination limber, and actually help you focus on writing the BOOK!

Jenn Bailey | *A Light from the Shadows Shall Spring*

Redeeming the villain. Without the antagonist, there is no story. But how do you make sure your Big Bad isn’t so big and so bad that he becomes unbelievable? Crafting memorable villains means gifting them with just the right amount of horror and just the right amount of humanity.

Stephanie Morrill | *Writing Beyond the Novel*

You probably already know that professional writers, whether they’re novelists, playwrights, or something else, write way more than just their chosen art form. In this session, Stephanie will cover the craft of writing pitch sentences, back cover copy, blog posts, social media posts, professional emails, and her personal favorite, synopses.

Ken Carpenter | *Building a Career as a Storyteller in Film*

It’s a dynamic time for visual storytellers. Explore strategies for breaking into the film business—and for building and sustaining a career telling stories on film for a living.

John Otte | Q&A (PARENT SESSION)

What should your child be aware of when it comes to writing? What pitfalls can he or she avoid? How can you best offer support in his or her dream of writing? Come and ask someone who has traveled that road before. Bring your questions!

Mr. S. | *Crownless*

Title notwithstanding, no one ever really knows what Mr. S. is going to talk about on the last night—including Mr. S.



2017 | *Writers of the Lost Art*

Mr. S. | *Writers of the Lost Art*

Novel writing should be more than a trendy path to self-actualization. We need a far-reaching return to the lost art of selflessness. Stories should be imparted with no strings attached, no expectation of base-building or reciprocation. Great books are gifts from the writer to his or her audience.

Stephanie Morrill | *Editing Scene by Scene*

Editing isn’t just about making your sentences prettier (though that’s cool too). Editing is about reaching your reader. When you wrote your first draft, you wrote it just for you. Now that you want others to read your story, you have to make sure that all that great stuff that happened in your head translates. In this session, we’ll take about some practical how-tos for editing your scenes.

Nadine Brandes | *Everything You Need to Know About YA*

No matter what genre you write or age group you write for, Young Adult (YA) literature is defining our present and future world of reading. In this session we’ll explore everything you need to know about the books, the readers, the industry, and the marketing behind YA, and discuss how best to reach that audience through the art of storytelling.

John Otte | *Villains & Antagonists*

Every story needs a good antagonist or villain to square off against the hero. But what makes for a good antagonist? How can we avoid making cliché villains and antagonists who are easily forgettable? And how do we make an antagonist who really leaps off the page?

Steve Laube | *Lose Wait the Write Way*

In an age of instantaneous gratification, what does it mean to have to wait? This presentation takes a hard look at the process of life and what waiting on God means for the writer.

Mr. S. | *The Edge of the Map: How Boundaries Shape a Story*

Creativity is fueled primarily by limitation, not freedom. Stories work best when edged by hard lines—places the writer cannot go. In this session we will look at some of the edges writers use to make their stories compelling and believable.

Jenn Bailey | *Making the Reader Your Accomplice*

Elmore Leonard is famous for advising would-be writers to, “leave out the parts readers tend to skip.” But what about the parts a reader can supply? Probably best to leave those out too. Luring readers to take part in storytelling actually deepens their personal connection with our work and gives them a more memorable experience. Together we’ll learn how to grab readers by the Primary Process, flex our Crowding and Leaping muscles, and open up the ever alluring Space-in-Between. If that isn’t enough to plant readers on the page, we’ll even decide what makes a giraffe a giraffe. So grab your senses, memories, and imaginations and learn how to Aid and Abet your way to a more captivating story.

Jeff Gerke | *The Power of Description in Fiction*

There's an old adage in theater: if it ain't on the page, it ain't on the stage. If the writer doesn't describe it, the reader doesn't see it. Not enough work has been done to transfer mental images to the reader. Without description, your story will seem to take place in a nebulous grey fog peopled with faceless people under dark cowls. I am not of the school that says you should just let the reader imagine what she wants, nor am I in favor of parceling out bits of description so that by the end of the scene I finally know what the place or person looks like. I'm a believer in a more cinematic and theatrical approach. Learn how, when, and why to describe your settings and story people so readers see the movie in their heads.

Steve Laube | *The Complete Book Process: From Idea to Print*

What route does a book take while in-house? Understanding the complete book process can take some of the intimidation out of the publishing world and give you insight into how you as the writer can help or hinder that process.

Mr. S. | *Parenting a Modern-Day Court Fool (PARENT SESSION)*

In this session, Mr. S. will talk candidly to parents about writing as a career and a calling. What does it take to foster a professional writer, and is such encouragement a good idea or a foolish one? (Might it even be both?) Q&A will follow.

Mark Wilson | *The Art of Seeing To, Not Just Through*

Writers have always been keen observers who invite readers to see through the phoniness and falseness of society. The best writers, however, not only see through what is false, but see to what is true.

Nadine Brandes | *The Lost Art of Writing*

Believe it or not, Tolkien didn't write *The Hobbit* on a computer. In our modern-day of technology and Microsoft Word, it can be easy to forget the many different ways we can write—by hand, by typewriter, by dictation, etc.—and the different forms of inspiration that come from each. This session will explore those art forms and why dabbling in them might just open a new world of creativity for you.

Mark Wilson | *Holy and Unholy Contagion: Viral Literature*

The Sorrows of Young Werther, by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, published in 1774, was the first work of fiction to go viral. Young people imitated the emotional excesses of the hero, his fashion, and even his tragic suicide. What causes a work to go viral and what are the possibilities of infecting our culture with something ennobling and holy?

Robert Treskillard | *Beyond the Beauty, Beyond the Ugly*

Christian artists talk of looking beyond the "painting" to the "painter," which, in the case of the created world, is God. But this also applies to the novelist. How does God—or, The Great Novelist—intersect with our own concepts of artistry? How can we embrace selflessness in our writing craft to point to God instead of to ourselves?

Mr. S. | *Weaklings: The Power of Vulnerability*

Many novelists put so much effort into empowering characters that they lose sight of the most relatable quality any character can have: vulnerability. In this session Mr. S. will discuss how characters are humanized by the traits we dislike most.

Steve Laube | *Ask Me Anything about Publishing (PARENT SESSION)*

As the parent of a writer, you probably have questions about how you can best guide and encourage your student toward their publishing goals. This session is just what it purports to be: an opportunity to ask Steve Laube, an industry authority, any questions you have—all in the privacy of a parent-only session.

Jeff Gerke | *The Hero's Journey*

There is one story, one general plotline, that occurs in every human culture across the globe and throughout recorded history. Mythologist Joseph Campbell referred to it as the monomyth, and we know it as the hero's journey. Both *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings* are hero's journey stories, as are *The Wizard of Oz*, *Matrix*, *The Lion King*, *Avatar*, *Kung-Fu Panda*, *The Hobbit*, *Gladiator*, *Shrek*, and *Wreck-It Ralph*, just for starters. Harness the power of the one story that resides in the mind of every reader on the planet.

John Otte | *Immersing Your Reader in a Storyworld*

Readers love to get lost in a rich, vibrant storyworld. So how do you create a setting so real, your readers will want to go there? We will discuss questions you can ask yourself to create an unforgettable storyworld, but we will also address how to organize storyworld information and the best ways to then share that creation with your readers.

Robert Treskillard | *The THIRST Method*

In this session Robert will explain a novel creation methodology he developed called the THIRST™ Method, which is an acronym for Tension, Humor, Intrigue, Romance, Suspense, and Terror/Fear. Using the THIRST you can take a list of scenes, plug in numbers representing these categories and actually get a graph of how a novel might affect a reader's emotions—and keep the pages turning!

Stephanie Morrill | *Writing & Publishing Mistakes I Made So You Don't Have To*

I have made loads of mistakes in my 12 years of being a full-time writer. In this session, I'll tell you about my biggest ones, plus a few smart things I did in my teenage years that led to me being published young.

Mark Wilson | *Seven Ideas that Destroy Art*

The last century of art has been an age of experiment, but not all the experiments have worked. Some bad ideas have proven to be dead ends; others, however, have destroyed the accessibility and impact of art on our culture and must be resisted.

John Otte | *Q&A (PARENT SESSION)*

What should your child be aware of when it comes to

writing? What pitfalls can he or she avoid? How can you best offer support in his or her dream of writing? Come and ask someone who has traveled that road before. Bring your questions!

Mr. S. | *The Song of the Nightstick*

His life was saved by a stray dog. So he decided to change the world...through stories.



2016 | *Fair Winds & Following Seas*

Mr. S. | *Writing Your Self*

Young writers are often told to “Write what you know.” But what if everything you know is boring? What if you are more fascinated by sea serpents than sedans, by pirates than pilates? In this session Mr. S. will try to encourage you to write your self into any project, even if your dragons are small.

Stephanie Morrill | *Writers Who Grow*

Many writers are so obsessed with getting published that they view it as the ultimate goal, when it isn't. Or it shouldn't be. Growing as a writer is much more important. What does it look like to be a growing artist/writer? What should your next step be?

John Otte | *What I Learned on the Path to Publication*

John will tell the story of how he went from a wannabe to a published author and he'll share some of the valuable lessons he learned along the way. Come with your questions!

Jill Williamson | *Premise*

Where do great ideas come from? We'll discuss high concepts, loglines, intriguing questions, and how to search your own life for ideas. Then we'll look at different ways to hone those ideas, grow them, and ultimately test them to see if they're enough to carry a full novel.

Steve Laube | *Science Fiction Theology and Philosophy*

Mr. S. | *Real Characters*

We call it “opening up”—that moment when someone drops their outward mask and reveals who they are at a deeper level. This moment can be mirrored in fiction to bring characters to life. But it must be done honestly or the technique will backfire.

Susanne Lakin | *Establishing Your Freelance Editing Business (part 1)*

Unsure how to support that writing habit? Become a freelance copyeditor! Learn what it takes to become a successful editor, and see if it's the right vocation for you.

John Otte | *Conflict in Story: Keeping the Tank Full*

What drives a story forward is its conflict. John will discuss the kinds of conflict that fuel a good story and how to keep enough gas in the tank.

Steve Laube | *Redeeming Rejection: Turning Pain into Pleasure*

Crucial discussion of the realities of rejection—the whys, hows, and what nows of rejection.

Mr. S. | *Raising a Writing Nerd (PARENT SESSION)*

Writing can be a lonely, frustrating endeavor. Teen writers are especially prone to feel misunderstood in a world that often doesn't appreciate their passion or abilities.

Mark Wilson | *The King of Story*

The hope for the return of a good king has captured the human imagination from Homer to J. R. R. Tolkien. Why does this archetype appeal to readers long after monarchy has faded? Why do we long for a good king even in the midst of a culture that celebrates rebellion and dislikes authority?

Jill Williamson | *Weaving in Theme*

Do you need to know your theme in advance? What if you don't have one? Simply put, theme is what your story says about life and the human condition. In this class, we'll consider all the different ways theme can be used in a novel. It can be obvious or subtle, leave readers with a question or some kind of feeling, reveal a universal truth, or inspire readers to a higher level of humanity.

Susanne Lakin | *Establishing Your Freelance Editing Business (part 2)*

Unsure how to support that writing habit? Become a freelance copyeditor! Learn what it takes to become a successful editor, and see if it's the right vocation for you.

Nadine Brandes | *How to Continue Writing Whether it's Your Career Choice or Not*

Most of us write because it's our passion, but is it a good career choice? Can you continue writing if you choose a different career choice? This session will address these questions and talk about the ins and outs of writing as a profession.

Mr. S. | *Particularizing*

Good prose gives the reader's imagination specific details, but not too many of them. Creating beautiful imagery means particularizing.

Mark Wilson | *Dispatches from the Front (PARENT SESSION)*

Professor Mark Wilson has taught for over twenty years at public and private colleges. His observations about the struggles of schools (to keep students engaged) and of students (who arrive with more fears than ever before) are both sobering and encouraging. Times of bewildering change mean opportunities for Christians to extend a message of hope and courage. Young people today need to hear redemptive stories.

Steve Laube | *Writing Quality Fiction*

Necessary elements of great fiction—includes discussion of what makes fiction Christian.

Jill Williamson | *Creating a Historical Timeline for Your Novel*

Whether you're writing contemporary, historical, fantasy, or any other genre of fiction, a timeline is an essential tool to keep track of what's going on and when in your story. In this session we'll learn how to start a timeline, what to add, what to leave out, and how a timeline can help you find plot holes in your story and places to add plot twists.

Nadine Brandes | *Marketing: What Is It? When and How Should You Start?*

Contrary to popular belief, marketing doesn't have to be synonymous with Mount Doom. It is just as essential to the author's toolbox as writing skill. This session will explain what marketing is, when you should start thinking about marketing (answer: NOW!), and how to start.

Susanne Lakin | *Show, Don't Tell, Characters' Emotions*

Learning how to convey believable character reactions is essential for novelists. But there's a whole lot more to this than describing body language. In this workshop we'll explore ways to effectively show, not tell, characters' emotions.

Mark Wilson | *What Good Is Fiction?*

For centuries extravagant claims have been made for both the harm and good reading fiction can do. Does reading fiction broaden our sympathies and deepen our understanding of others? Or is reading fiction a trivial pastime that creates empathy for characters but no genuine good for society? Do the humanities make us more humane?

John Otte | *Supporting Your Author (PARENT SESSION)*

John will talk about how parents can best support a fledgling author. Come with your questions!



2015 | *Through the Wardrobe*

Torry Martin | *Great Workshopping*

Mr. S. | *Through the Wardrobe*

Stephanie Morrill | *What Storytellers Can Learn from Disney*

Torry Martin | *The Big Idea*

Torry Martin | *Antagonist/Protagonist*

Jill Williamson | *Creating Fantasy Creatures*

Tosca Lee | *Unforgettable Characters*

Mr. S. | *Bookends: Great Beginnings and Endings*

Jill & Stephanie | *Clichés, Telling, and Other Writing to Hunt Down and Kill*

Mr. S. | *Raising a Writing Nerd (PARENT SESSION)*

Jeff Gerke | *Reader Engagement*

Susanne Lakin | *Scene Structure*

Mr. S. | *The Third Element*

Jill Williamson | *Descriptions*

Tineke Bryson | *Creating Healthy Expectations for Your Writer's Future (PARENT SESSION)*

Jill Williamson | *Great Villains*

Jeff Gerke | *Conflicting Rules of Fiction*

Tineke Bryson | *Preparing Yourself to Edit and Be Edited*

Jill & Stephanie | *Brainstorming with Friends*

Susanne Lakin | *World Building*

Mr. S. | *The Perilous Realm*



2014 | Wonderology

Mr. S. | *Wonderology*

Wonder is essential to good storytelling. As writers, how do we nurture our own sense of fascination and curiosity?

Jeff Gerke | *Description, Dialogue and Dirty Words*

Description refers to how you depict the settings in your novel and the people who inhabit them. Dialogue is the art of the conversation. How we handle dirty words is a thorny issue in Christian fiction. Doing these three poorly or well may mean the difference between publication and rejection.

Mark Wilson | *The Importance of Hobbits*

Hobbits are counter-cultural heroes whose importance is evident today if we look at them carefully—and are especially careful not to chip their plates.

Mr. S. | *State of Mind*

Best-selling authors usually master this technique even when they do nothing else well. What is State of Mind in fiction, and how do you manipulate it? Mr. S. will explain.

Lisa Pennington | *Helping Your Students Navigate Online Forums (PARENT SESSION)*

Taking away some of the fears about allowing your kids to use forums, social media, email, etc., this OYAN mom of 9 will share tips and encouragement for making the online world as safe as possible.

Jeff Gerke | *How Do You Want to Write?*

Jill Williamson | *High Concept Ideas*

Mr. S. | *Great Characters*

How do writers create story characters who feel real, move an audience, and propel the plot forward through memorable action and dialogue?

Tineke Bryson | *Handling the Fiction in Non-Fiction*

Creative non-fiction can help you gain an author platform and deliver truth with a different kind of impact. But dealing with facts can get pretty messy. How do you handle facts that make you—or someone you care about—vulnerable? How "creative" can you get? Tineke would love to explore the intricacies of her favorite genre with you.

Jeff Gerke | *Description*

There's an old adage in theater: if it ain't on the page, it ain't on the stage. If the writer doesn't describe it, the reader doesn't see it. Come learn how, when, and why to describe your settings and story people so your readers see the movie in their heads.

Jill Williamson | *Creating Compelling Characters*

Backstory, motivation, and six things that need fixing.

Mr. S. | *Living With a Writer (PARENT SESSION)*

Writing can be a lonely, frustrating endeavor. Teen writers are especially prone to feel misunderstood in a world that often doesn't appreciate their passion or abilities.

Mark Wilson | *Monsters*

A theology and literary interpretation of monsters! Some writers claim that horror is a dark reassertion of a moral universe: we reap what we have sown. The continuing popularity of horror films may be the crushed conscience of our culture demanding that we recognize all sins must be punished. We invent monsters to punish us.

Gabriel Valles | *Story, Media and the Artist Entrepreneur*

Story can take many forms, each with their own characteristics. Understanding the different forms can give storytellers opportunities in many different media fields. Between the skills of an Artist-Entrepreneur and the changing online distribution methods, there has never been a better time to create a personal brand and fan base to form the foundation of your storytelling career.

Mr. S. | *Sketching*

Some writers gush their stories onto the page in a torrent of self-expression. Others struggle to communicate a single sentence. Both types of writers can benefit from learning how to “sketch” a rough draft in the earliest stages of story creation.

Mark Wilson | *The Job of Job*

Many Christians prefer the Bible’s doctrinal statements to its stories. The job of the Book of Job is partly to give us permission to argue with God and explore how our clichés about God measure up to life as lived. Christian writers are called upon to do the work the Book of Job does: challenge assumptions, express the reality of human experience, and through all this to cling to the message of hope: I know my redeemer lives.

Jill Williamson | *Queries, Covers and Book Proposals*

The non-fiction writing of fiction writing.

Jeff Gerke | *Proposals that Prevail*

After 15 years as an acquisitions editor, Jeff Gerke has learned a few things about what constitutes a winning fiction proposal. He’ll tell you what you must include, what will help the agent or editor in her task as champion, and what not to put in—including a few things other experts say you must always put in your fiction proposals. This is a nuts and bolts class about page margins, font sizes, and hooks, blurbs, and bios. Learn how to make your proposal look like the most professional ones on the agent or editor’s desk— and how to stand out from them (in a good way).

Amanda Luedeke | *Publishing (PARENT SESSION)*

An agent with MacGregor Literary, Amanda will give parents a realistic appraisal of the publishing industry and the potential for young writers to find their place in it.

Jill Williamson | *Writing Action, Fights and Epic Battles***Tineke Bryson | *The Undercover Mission of a Good Editor***

Uncover an editor’s secret obsession: Truth. Whether you’re interested in editing as a career or wrestling with the threat of surrendering your writing to an editor, this session may challenge some of your preconceptions about editing and widen your horizons as a person who loves words—and truth.

Jill Williamson, Jeff Gerke, & Amanda Luedeke | *Behind the Scenes in a Pub Board Meeting*

Want to know what really goes on in the dark, smoke-filled back rooms of a Christian publishing company? Wonder how the life-altering decisions to publish or not publish are actually made? Don’t miss this session!

Jeff Gerke | *Breaking the Rules of Fiction*

Learn how to free yourself from the paralysis of needing to keep a bunch of conflicting “rules” of fiction.

Amanda Luedeke | *The Path to Publishing*

What steps do you need to take to either get published or work in the industry? Literary agent Amanda Luedeke will talk about building your platform, the usefulness of an education, and finding writing opportunities.

Mark Wilson | *Teaching Joy (PARENT SESSION)*

As parents, it is easy to unintentionally communicate a sour and fearful view of the world. Yet so much about the artistic heart is celebratory. Some of the most vibrant Christian students stand out at college because of their joy more than their different standards. Artists can celebrate small things—a discipline Christian parents should teach their kids.

Mr. S. | *The Road to Excellence*

Did you know that the Cloud video subscription of *The One Year Adventure Novel* includes **exclusive access to video recordings** of past Summer Workshop sessions?

- This bonus content is automatically included in the Cloud video subscription. [More info >](#)
- If your subscription has expired, you can [renew it any time for \\$29](#).
- If you have a DVD set, you can [switch to Cloud](#).

