

The Hero's Journey

Pathways of Transformative Experience

Thanks for registering for the series on the Hero's Journey. Here's what you need for preparation and departure. See series description below.

Preparation: It is possible to participate in the discussion series without preparation or reading. However, reading the Vogler book is strongly recommended.

Recommended Reading

Vogler, Christopher. *The Writer's Journey*.

There are four editions of the book. Any of them are fine.

The 25th anniversary edition (the 4th edition) was published in August 2020.

The 2nd edition can be found on Internet archive (www.archive.org)

The book should be easy to find as a library copy or on various websites.

Recommended Videos

There are numerous YouTube videos on the Hero's Journey.

Recommended Websites

See Wikipedia: [Hero's journey - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero's_Journey)

Watch (Optional)

The original Star Wars film. Other films mentioned in *The Writer's Journey*.

Further Reading

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

I would recommend Campbell as further reading *after* the series. Focus on Vogler for the time being.

SESSION 1: FROM THE ORDINARY WORLD TO THE APPROACH OF THE INNERMOST CAVE

Following a short introduction to the series, the session will discuss the framework of the Hero's Journey from the ordinary world up to the approach of the innermost cave. Themes and discussion include the ordinary world, calling and refusal, mentors, threshold, and initiation into the special world.

Recommended Readings: Introductions and prefaces of Vogler (depending upon your editions.

Book One: Mapping the Journey, "A Practical Guide." Book Two: Stages of the Journey, "Ordinary World," "Call to Adventure," "Refusal of the Call," "Meeting with the Mentor," "Crossing the First Threshold," "Tests, Allies, and Enemies.")

SESSION 2: ORDEALS, REWARDS AND RETURN

Beginning with the approach to the innermost cave, the session will discuss the ordeals, rewards and return of the hero.

Recommended Readings: Vogler, Book Two, “Approach to the Inmost Cave,” “The Ordeal,” “Reward,” “The Road Back,” “The Resurrection,” “Return with the Elixir.”

SESSION 3: MENTORS, SHADOWS AND ALLIES: THE ARCHETYPES OF THE HERO’S JOURNEY

We will discuss the archetypes (the characters or masks) of the Hero’s Journey: hero, mentor, threshold guardian, herald, shapeshifter, shadow, ally and trickster.

Recommended Readings: Vogler, rest of Book One (i.e., the archetypes). Epilogue and appendices depending on your edition.

Session 4: Betwixt and Between: Applications of Liminoid Experience

The session will discuss how the Hero’s Journey expresses the theory of liminality and rites of passage, which will include a review Victor Turner’s work on liminality as it applies to pilgrimage, including his distinction between liminal and liminoid experience. How does the Hero’s Journey and Turner’s language of the betwixt and between (the neither here nor there) apply to our contemporary faith experience? Recognizing that the church is currently using liminal language and concept, an objective of the session is to focus the frame. The session will also serve as a wrap-up to the series, including the applications of the Hero’s Journey to ministry.

Recommended Reading: None (finish the Vogler book). Citations will be given to the work of Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner.

Series Description

Describing pathways of transformative experience, the Hero’s Journey is a set of principles for living, a handbook for life and a manual in the art of being human. Set forth by Joseph Campbell as a way of reading myths, past and present, the Hero’s Journey has been adapted and revised, mostly notably by Christopher Vogler, whose *Writer’s Journey* has become the sacred text of Hollywood screenwriters. Heroes, which include common people, are summoned on a journey, face trials and challenges, sacrifice and suffer, and emerge as wiser, more virtuous figures.

In this four-part series, “The Hero’s Journeys: Pathways of Transformative Experience,” we will journey with the hero from the ordinary world to the special world and home again, exploring life experiences, such as callings, thresholds, ordeals, rewards and return. On the way, we’ll meet mentors, allies, and threshold guardians, heralds, shadows, and tricksters. The Hero’s Journey offers language, patterns and archetypes for interpreting individual and communal narratives. From film buffs and travelers to pastors, chaplains and spiritual directors, the series offers a sojourn of personal renewal and professional development. Following Vogler’s easy-to-read book, the series will rely heavily on small group discussions.