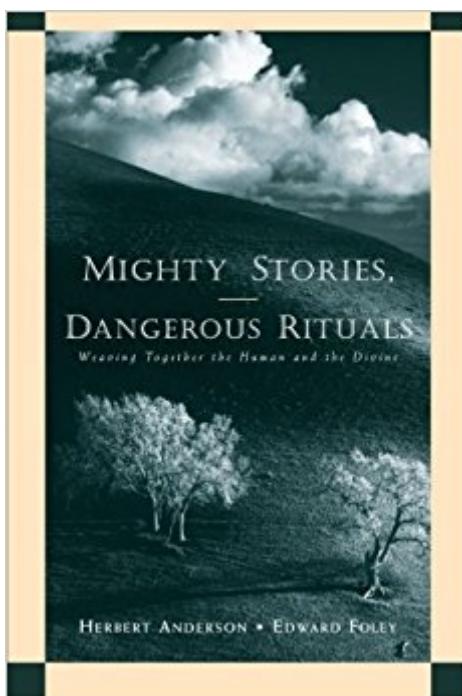


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# Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals: Weaving Together The Human And The Divine



## **Synopsis**

Bringing together two of our greatest sources of meaning and transformation This book marries two partners that are made for each other. The result, as in all good unions, is mutual enrichment and deeper life. --Jack Shea, author of Stories of God Now available in paperback, this moving and enlightening book presents us with a compelling vision of what can happen when we take the opportunity to connect stories and rituals--a vision of individuals and communities transformed through a deeper sense of connection to our loved ones, our communities, and God. Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley reveal how when stories and rituals work together, they have the potential to be both mighty and dangerous--mighty in their ability to lift us up and help us make these connections beyond ourselves and dangerous in challenging us to learn to live with complexity and contradiction. They show how much more meaningful a baptism, wedding, or funeral can be when liturgy is made to include and recognize the personal stories of those involved. Suddenly, these familiar life-cycle rituals are infused with new life as their participants become connected in a narrative web linking past and present, human and divine. Newly created rituals can also help us connect our stories to the divine story, giving meaning to what we experience and bringing us closer to God. Ministers, worship leaders, and pastoral caregivers can use this approach to storytelling and ritual to find ways to bring together worship and pastoral care, diminishing fragmentation and fostering coherence in their religious communities.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"If taken seriously, this book could mark a significant means for giving life and direction to an otherwise gray field. The book is not only rich in its use of a wide range of scholarly research, but also in its depth and maturity of thought. . . . This is a significant and groundbreaking work with enormous possible implications for the revitalization of our field. It deserves from us deep reflection, storytelling, and new ritual." (Religious Education) "This text explores a variety of creative and necessary tensions inherent in effective pastoral ministry. Those dialectics include myth and parable, story and ritual, individual and community, pastoral care and worship, life and death, divinity and humanity. . . . Break[s] open rich possibilities for individual and communal spirituality and for meaningful ministry." (Religious Studies Review) "A well-written book and offers great insight. . . . This book articulates the theoretical aspects of story and ritual and does not stop there. It also addresses contemporary concerns about life transitions that the church neglects to ritualize. . . . A valuable book." (The Clergy Journal)

How can we bring together two of our most powerful vehicles for communication and transformation? Storytelling and ritual making are not merely something that humans do-they are essential for becoming human. Together they enable us to create a world that is both habitable and hospitable. For believers, they are the fundamental means for shaping and sustaining our journey into the Divine. "If taken seriously, this book could mark a significant means for giving life and direction to an otherwise gray field. The book is not only rich in its use of a wide range of scholarly research, but also in its depth and maturity of thought. . . . This is a significant and groundbreaking work with enormous possible implications for the revitalization of our field. It deserves from us deep reflection, storytelling, and new ritual." •Religious Education "This text explores a variety of creative and necessary tensions inherent in effective pastoral ministry. Those dialectics include myth and parable, story and ritual, individual and community, pastoral care and worship, life and death, divinity and humanity. . . . Break[s] open rich possibilities for individual and communal spirituality and for meaningful ministry." •Religious Studies Review "A well-written book and offers great insight. . . . This book articulates the theoretical aspects of story and ritual and does not stop there. It also addresses contemporary concerns about life transitions that the church neglects to ritualize. . . . A valuable book." •The Clergy Journal The Authors Herbert Anderson lectures and consults widely on themes and issues in pastoral care. He is the author of numerous books including *All Our Losses, All Our Griefs*. Edward Foley is professor of liturgy and music at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. He is an ordained Roman Catholic priest and the author of numerous books and articles on worship and the arts.

Excellent book. Some of the 'expanded ideas' on typical rituals like baptism, marriage, and funerals were very interesting to read and broadened my ideas on what should be included in them. But they are also very adaptable to other significant life milestones. Our oldest son is graduating from high school and we created a ritual for his graduation party - something significant for him, each individual member of our family, as well as the guests who had a part to play in it too. This new ritual will help us all transition to the new chapter which is about to unfold with tears of celebration, tears of mourning the loss of how our life will now forever be different, but also with laughter and encouragement in the new growth and memories that will be made.

Lutheran pastor Herbert Anderson and Roman Catholic priest Edward Foley thoughtfully examine the importance of connecting stories with ritual in worship and in pastoral care. They believe that our storytelling and ritual enactment can be both mighty and dangerous: "mighty" because human stories and ritual-making are "potential windows to the story of God

This is a wonderful book about weaving ritual into the everyday and creating new ritual when situations call for it. A great addition to any pastors collection and good read for all those in ministry. Especially Part III. Plus the Kindle version is great for a highlighted bookmarked go to source when you need quick inspiration.

## EXCELLENT

Great book. Seriously great book. But the opening story of chapter three is "not available for the eBook edition." Chapter 3 is predicated upon this story, and I have no idea what the story includes. How in the world can one small piece of the book not be available?? Ridiculous. Add an extra star for the print copy but keep it at three for the kindle edition.

Great.

i needed this book for a graduate religion course. i think the authors have their hearts in the right place but the terminology and sentence structures they use left me scratching my head more than a few times. not for the uninitiated.

Review of Auxiliary Book In their book, Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals, Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley present a case for the power of connecting story with ritual. Storytelling, an interpretation of life's events, and ritual, the narrative's embodied expression, serve to create meaning, build community, and reconnect the human experience to the divine story. According to Anderson and Foley, when storytelling and ritual allow for both the mythic (that which speaks of comfort and hope) and parabolic (that which speaks of challenge and paradox), and have a place both within worship and pastoral care, they "have the power to transform persons and communities of faith into signs of the presence of God" (pg ix). Why should church leaders take time to facilitate storytelling and ritual in the contexts of communal worship and pastoral care? The authors provide several examples to support their thesis. The ritual of baptism locates "the beginning of each individual's life within a web of communal stories" (pg 57). Part of preparation for marriage is telling and ritualizing the family narrative, as the process of becoming married is indeed a wedding of stories. The "litany of lasts," a narrative remembering of last milestones in a persons life, helps family and friends walk through the grieving process that occurs after the ritual actions surrounding death (the wake, funeral, and committal) take place. In sum, Anderson and Foley offer church leadership practical ways to help people embrace the contradiction that is life, within both existing traditions and life's experiences where storytelling and ritual have typically not yet found expression. Storytelling allows people to communicate their interpretation of experience, and ritual, in the words of Lawrence A. Hoffman (The Art of Public Prayer), "arranges our life into relatively small packages of moments that matter."

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