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Bruno, Galileo, Einstein: The Value of Myths in Physics

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Usually, historical myths are portrayed as something to be avoided in a physics classroom. Instead, I will discuss the positive function of myths and how they can be used to improve physics education. First, on the basis of historical research from primary sources and significant new findings about the Catholic Inquisition, I will discuss how to use the inspirational story of Giordano Bruno when discussing cosmology. Next, I will discuss the recurring story about Galileo and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Finally, I will discuss how neglected stories about the young Albert Einstein can help to inspire students.