



# Preparing and Presenting a Bible Story

## Objectives

### After this lesson participants will:

- To understand the process of preparing a meaningful Bible story to share with children
- To value the importance of storytelling to communicate God's truth to children
- To practice preparing a Bible story and generate ideas for illustrating it

## Lesson Overview

Welcome and Warm-Up	10 min
What Makes a Story Great	5 min
Preparing a Bible Story	20 min
Story Preparation Practicum	30 min
Illustrating the Story	20 min
Wrap Up & Prayer	5 min

**Approximate Total Time: 90 min**

## Materials

### Illustration option:

- Erasable board and writing supplies
- Two of the same object (large cloth, basket, box, etc.)
- Variety of objects and samples for Bible story illustrations

### Media option:

PowerPoint slides for this lesson

### Scripture passages:

- Hebrews 4:12
- Luke 17:11-19
- Mark 10:46-52
- Mark 10:13-16
- Luke 19:1-10
- 2 Kings 5:1-16
- Acts 3:1-10
- Luke 9:28-36
- 1 Samuel 3:1-2
- Mark 2:1-1
- Acts 8:26-39
- Nehemiah 8:8



## Welcome and Warm-Up

10 min



### Activity: Bible Story Charades

(Instruct participants to form groups of four. Have each person think of their favorite Bible story but to not tell the rest of the group what it is. They must pantomime/act out the story until the group members guess the story. After all four members perform, have each group member share why that story is their favorite Bible story and how it has helped them grow in their faith.)



(After a few minutes, debrief with the whole group.)

- **Did we all choose the same story?**
- **What did you notice about the stories that people shared?**

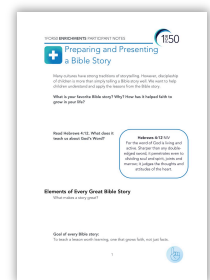


**Why do we like stories?** (Get several responses) We love stories. It is very interesting to notice that God chose to write much of His Word in story form. He knew the power of communicating His truth through the true stories we read and learn about in the Bible.

(Have a volunteer read **Hebrews 4:12**.) This verse says the word of God is living and active, and that it has the power to change our lives. That includes the stories of the Bible.

We know the stories of the Bible are powerful and a good tool to communicate God's truth to children. But we need to be prepared to effectively share these stories with children. **THE 1for50 HAND: This lesson helps us consider important skills to help us "Make Disciples."**

As we think about preparing a Bible story, we will begin by looking at the characteristics of great stories.



## What Makes a Story Great

5 min

### Tell a Story

(Tell a very short personal story of a time when you had a wonderful surprise, were frightened, had an accident, etc. The first time you tell it, just state the facts.)



**What could I do to make my story better?** (Get responses)

(Tell the story a second time. Be sure to include the emotions as well as the drama of the event.) Which version of the story did you like better? The first version was good, but the second story was great.



**What makes a story great?** (Discuss as a group and write responses on the board. Responses may include:)

- Passion (emotions, feelings)
- A compelling problem or issue (a conflict, a resolution)
- Interesting characters (good, bad, in-between)
- A beginning, middle and end
- Involves the listener

Think about Bible stories. Do they include all of the above? Yes. And Bible stories have an added characteristic that makes them great: a purpose. (Add to list on board.) We can learn important lessons and discover who God is from Bible stories.

Of course, we want our children to know these great stories from the Bible. But how do we prepare them? We will learn this skill by preparing a Bible story together.

## Preparing a Bible Story

20 min

(Note: In advance, select a short Bible story to work through with participants such as Jesus and Ten Lepers, **Luke 17:11-19**; Bartimaeus, **Mark 10:46-52**; or Jesus and the children, **Mark 10:13-16**. Be prepared to tell the Bible story at the end of this activity.)

How many of you have ever taken a trip by bus/train/plane? Did you just go to the station and get on any bus/train/plane regardless of where it might go? No. You had a plan in mind and you prepared. In the same way, we, too, need to plan and prepare before we tell a Bible story to children.

### Step 1: Pray

The first step in preparation is prayer. Ask the Author (God) to open up your understanding, to open hearts to receive His lesson, and to use His Word to change you as well as the children who will hear the story. (Take a moment and pray with the group regarding the story you will be looking at together.)

### Step 2: Read

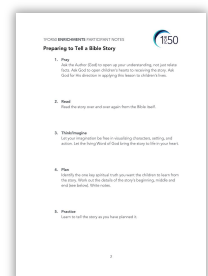
If you have curriculum or a lectionary, you already have a story chosen for you that you share with the children, but other times you must select your own story. Once you have chosen our story, read the story from your Bible over and over.



**Why will repeated readings help?** (Get responses: to learn it so you can tell it and not read it, to let it speak its truth to you.)



(Have participants turn to the Bible story you have selected for this activity and read it in small groups or have one person read aloud and then read individually.)



### Step 3: Imagine/Think



When you prepare to go on a trip, you think about it—what it looks like, the people you will meet, and what you will do. In the same way, as you read the Bible story, begin to imagine the people/characters/action in the story. What do they look like? How do they act? What does the setting look like? Can you imagine the events taking place in the story? (Give some thoughts from your selected story and then have people share more thoughts in small groups.)

### Step 4: Plan

Before we go on a trip, we choose our destination. We also must have a destination or goal for our Bible story, one main truth that we want our children to remember at the end of our story. As we have been prayerfully looking at our story, **what is one key truth God wants us to know about Himself or from the example of people in the story?** There may be many truths, but choose only one. (Give an example from your selected story.)



**What may be other spiritual truths our children can learn from the story?** (Get responses from group; then choose one truth on which you will focus for this activity... probably the example you gave.)

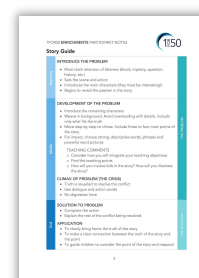
Now that we have chosen that spiritual truth, the destination, we plan how to tell the story. When we take a trip, there is a route to get us to our destination. Regardless of the route, we know that every trip has a beginning (take off, starting out), a middle (going along the way) and an end (arriving at the destination). Our stories can be planned the same way: a beginning, a middle and an end, all with the goal in mind of children understanding the one spiritual truth.

**Beginning** – The introduction – a way to catch the attention of the children and get them interested to listen more. (Examples: ask a question, say something surprising, relate it to the child's life)

**Middle** – The main part of the story. This is where we get into the details of the people and the action of the story. You don't have to memorize the story, but select the key points you want to remember. Remember that the story must move toward your destination or the key truth you want children to learn. Be accurate to scripture. We don't want to teach any untruths to children.

**End** – The conclusion and application. The conclusion brings a solution to the problem or issue in the story. But we also want our children to think of what God is saying to them in the story, so we include an application to help them relate the truth of the story to their own life.

(Talk through your selected Bible story, deciding upon an introduction, the key points to remember, and the conclusion/application. Allow participants to give ideas for each section.)



When you plan, you may want to write the key points down so you remember, and think of ways you can illustrate the story or involve children in the story. We will talk more about that later.

### Step 5: Practice

Why is this step important? You want to be able to tell the story naturally. You might even want to tell it in front of a mirror to see your face, gestures, etc.

So now that we have prepared the story and practiced it, what does it look like? (Tell the story briefly to the group using good storytelling techniques.)

Let's review the five steps of preparing a Bible story. (You may want to create hand motions for each step) Pray, Read, Think/Imagine, Plan, Practice. Are you ready to do it yourselves?

## Story Preparation Practicum

30 min



(Divide participants into pairs or small groups to prepare their own Bible story. They may choose their own short Bible story, or the trainer can assign them a story. It is all right for multiple groups to work on the same story. Suggested stories could include the following:)

- **Luke 19:1-10** – Zacchaeus
- **2 Kings 5:1-16** – Naaman
- **Acts 3:1-10** – Peter and John Heal a Lame Man
- **Luke 9:28-36** – Transfiguration
- **1 Samuel 3:1-21** – God calls Samuel
- **Mark 2:1-11** – Paralytic and Four friends
- **Acts 8:26-39** – Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

(Have participants follow the lesson steps on how to prepare a Bible story. When the story is ready, they must find one or two people from other groups, preferably with a different story, and tell their story to those persons, who then will give feedback and evaluate the story.)

(OPTION: If preparation time is limited, participants can be given the homework assignment of preparing a story for the following day.)

Some teachers think that unless they have nice visual aids, they cannot be good storytellers. But think again. We have learned how to tell good stories, based on being well prepared. But let's also look at what we have around us, because there are many simple ways to help illustrate our great Bible stories.

## Story Preparation Practicum

30 min

### Illustration Game:

(Divide participants into two teams and have four to six volunteers from each team come forward. Explain that you are going to have a competition. Each team will get the same object—box, basket, cloth, etc. They must take turns as teams using that object to illustrate some Bible story and demonstrate it to the whole group. Show an example, such as turning a basket on its side and proclaiming it is the empty tomb. Jesus has risen! Then make it rock as if on the waves...it is Noah's ark)

### Guidelines:

1. You cannot use the same idea twice, even if it is in a different Bible story (i.e. a cloak)
2. You have only 15 seconds after the other team has finished to start with your example. (This keeps the game moving quickly.)
3. The first team to run out of ideas loses

(Cheer and celebrate each great idea that is demonstrated. Stop the game when one team is stuck or after each team has shared about 10-12 ideas. Congratulate the good work done.)



### Describe what you saw happened in this activity.

Even though we had only a simple box/cloth/basket, we were able to use it to illustrate at least 20 different Bible stories.

We can learn an important lesson from this game. We all have simple things around us that we can use as illustrations in our storytelling. Illustrations or "visuals" can enhance the story and make it more interesting and engaging for children. As a Chinese proverb states:

*I hear, and I forget*

*I see, and I remember*

*I do, and I understand*

### Other Ways to Illustrate

People often think the only way to illustrate a story is through pictures, but there are many other ways to illustrate a story. **What ways can you think of?** (Brainstorm a short list and then go through the list on the handout. Wherever possible, demonstrate or show an example of the type of illustration you are talking about.)

1. Use your hands (i.e. counting, pointing, motions)
2. Use your body and face (action, emotions)
3. Use shadows (objects, shapes on an overhead projector)
4. Make your own drawings, draw on the whiteboard as you tell the story, or draw a picture together



5. Use ordinary objects and items you can easily find (Preschoolers especially need to touch and feel) Let children:
  - Tear cloth
  - Count coins
  - Peek inside an empty box to find Jesus is risen
6. Use a child's imagination (as we did in the game)
7. Use drama (act it out)
8. Use puppets (stick puppets, finger puppets, hand puppets, etc.)
9. Use flannel/felt or paper pieces
10. Other ideas:

### Illustrate the Bible Story



Go back to the story you prepared as a group of four earlier in the lesson. In your group, decide on two or three ways that you might illustrate that story.

What type of illustrations are the best for our Bible stories? Any type! Just use them, and trust that God will use the imagination of your children.

## Wrap Up & Prayer

5 min

We will close with the reminder of a Bible story from the Old Testament. Nehemiah lived at a time when the people of Israel were returning to Jerusalem after being in exile. The people rebuilt the wall and began to rebuild their lives. When the wall was completed, Nehemiah gathered them together to celebrate and to read them the Book of the Law. Ezra, the priest, began to read to the people, but he had help from some of the Levites. Look at what they did.

Read **Nehemiah 8:8**. They read and made it clear to the people, explaining it and helping them to understand it. And how do we know the people understood? If we continue reading we see they were weeping. God had touched their hearts and they wanted to change.

**Does your presentation of stories from God's word have this kind of impact on a child?** Pray and ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit, to help you share God's Word so that children are transformed.

(Close in prayer.)

