



Ways to Tell the Story

Overview

Adding a visual element to your storytelling helps children process the information they receive. Visual aids also help children focus on the story, as well as make sense of abstract concepts. Without visual aids, it can be challenging for children to understand abstract concepts because of their age and developmental differences. A good visual aid accentuates the meaning of Scripture without adding to it or causing the children's minds to veer off into a different direction.

Before using any visual aids, first read what the Bible has to say. If you read the Scripture and then outline the Bible story, you will be more likely to use visual aids in ways that best convey the Bible's original meaning.

[How to Tell a Story](#)

And remember...try something new!

Suggested Activities:

1. Telling a Story with Pictures

MATERIALS:

Printed pictures

DIRECTIONS:

One of the most common ways to tell a story is to use illustrations so the children can see them as you speak. New teachers often like this method because words can be written on the reverse side of the pictures to help the nervous teacher remember what to say.

Unfortunately, this is also one of the most overused methods, and the temptation for the teacher is to under-prepare and then be forced to read the words with little emotion or eye contact. Refer to the article [Telling a Story With Pictures](#) for instructions and links to free illustrations. Here are some common ways to use illustrations:



- Print the pictures onto paper and make a “flip chart” or album.
- Show the pictures on your phone, tablet, computer or projection screen. I would highly suggest that you download the pictures beforehand and have full battery power. Showing them straight from the internet can result in problems such as lagged download time or loss of connection.
- Use PowerPoint or a similar program to create any number of visual aid presentations. [Check here for instructions and examples of PowerPoint slideshows.](#)

2. Costumed Story Teller

MATERIALS:

Costumes

DIRECTIONS:

Dress up as one of the story characters and tell the story from that character’s point of view. Your costume might be as simple as a head covering made from a towel or pillowcase that you place on your head with a man’s tie for a headband. You could also let the children take turns being the characters during a time of review. [Click here for instructions for making simple costumes.](#)



3. Hand Puppets

MATERIALS:

Hand puppet

DIRECTIONS:

Use a hand puppet to tell or review the story from a different point of view. For example, tell the story of the fiery furnace from Daniel's point of view or from the guard's point of view.

4. Finger Puppets (actual fingertips)

MATERIALS:

Fingers, pen, small cloth or rubber band (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

Use a pen to draw a simple face on your finger(s). Use this as a puppet to tell the story or ask the children review questions. You could also "dress up" the character with a small cloth for a head covering or a man's headdress. You could use a rubber band as a headband to keep the fabric secure.

5. Finger Puppets (made from a glove)

MATERIALS:

Old gloves, scissors, markers or supplies to decorate

DIRECTIONS:

Cut off the fingers of an old pair of gloves and decorate. [There are some easy directions online in places such as wikihow.com](#)

6. Spoon Puppets

MATERIALS:

Spoon, marker, tape (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

Draw a simple face on the underside of a plastic spoon and use it to tell the story. Use one spoon for each character in the story. [Simple puppet instructions here.](#)

Alternatively, attach paper puppets to the back of a spoon and use them to tell the story.

7. Use Natural Objects as Visual Aids

MATERIALS:

Natural materials such as rocks, grass, leaves, shells, etc.

DIRECTIONS:

Use natural objects as you tell the story when possible. If you only tell stories using pictures on laptops or printed flip charts, the children may or may not ever see those pictures again. On the other hand, if you talk about removing the stone from the empty tomb while showing a rock you found on the church grounds, chances are greater that the children will see those same kinds of rocks throughout their lives and remember the story of the empty tomb.

The same can be said of the many natural objects around us, like a weed to remember the parable of the soils or wood and nails to remember the cross. When children see these natural objects in real life, they are more likely to recall the story and what they learned about God, allowing them to connect with Him and His story throughout their lives.

8. Draw as You Tell the Story

MATERIALS:

Paper/whiteboard/sand, pencil/pen/marker/stick

DIRECTIONS:

Children usually love it when a teacher attempts to draw the story. Either they are impressed with your artistic abilities or will feel empathy for your efforts. Even if they laugh, you can be satisfied that you at least have their attention! Don't be afraid to make yourself vulnerable to your students in this way.

The beauty of this method is that you can draw anywhere: on a chalkboard, paper, or even with a stick in the sand.

Before you teach the lesson, plan out the picture(s) you want to draw. Keep your plan simple and be minimalistic. Don't add to the truth of the Bible to be "cute." If you get carried away by the details of a picture, then you are probably losing focus on what the lesson is actually about.

Simple and quick line drawings or stick figures can convey a lesson well. Children enjoy trying to draw figures themselves. Stick figures are highly underrated. [Some patterns and examples for stick figures can be found here.](#)

9. Draw and Tell (the children draw their own visual aids)

MATERIALS:

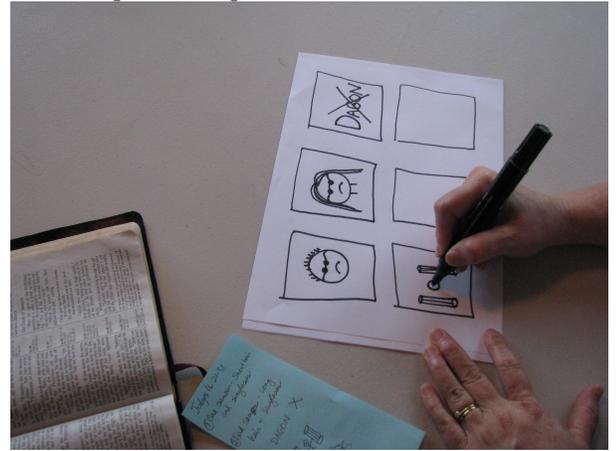
Paper, marker/pen

Alternatives: whiteboard, sand, sidewalk/footpath and chalk, newspaper, etc.

DESCRIPTION:

Before the lesson, plan how you will divide the story into "scenes." Mark off that many numbered squares (or any shapes) on paper so that children will be able to draw the appropriate number of scenes. As you tell the story, ask the children to draw something in each box. For example, Scene 1-Joseph lived in Egypt, so draw a picture of something you

might see in Egypt (like pyramids or mummies). Scene 2-Joseph was Pharaoh's special helper, and he wore Pharaoh's ring (draw a hand with a ring on it), etc.



You will need to do a trial run before teaching so that you will be prepared. For fun, you can do this same exercise on a chalkboard, on big sheets of newsprint, on the footpath/sidewalk with chalk, in the sand or with any other surface or materials at your disposal. [Instructions and examples of this method can be found here.](#)

10. Puzzles for Teaching

MATERIALS:

Picture, scissors

DIRECTIONS:

Take a picture you would use for a visual aid and cut it into pieces, and then let the children put it back together like a puzzle. You can also tell the story using these puzzle pieces. [Click here to learn how.](#)



11. Stand-up Figures

MATERIALS:

Paper or plastic cups, pen/marker

DIRECTIONS:

Draw simple characters from the Bible Story and attach them to upturned paper or plastic cups. These characters can be used to "act out" the story. [More instructions and examples can be found here.](#)

Alternatively, try using dolls and even blocks of wood or stones instead; these can easily become characters in the

imagination of a child.

©Mission Bible Class 2011-2024 Copies may only be made for personal and ministry purposes. Not to be sold or profited from in any way. www.missionbibleclass.org

