

Storytelling Tip Sheet

Try your own “taste test” experiment by listening, learning and then telling one of the short Bible stories that can be heard online by clicking on “Story Set” in the Resource section found at www.StoryRunners.com

As you listen to the story, you may find it helpful to visualize or imagine the story taking place. Meditate on story and picture each scene in your mind. Practice telling the story alone and out loud. Then give it a test run by telling it to your family or friends. Finally, tell it to your Sunday School class or small group. But remember to have fun! Don’t get caught up in using the exact words you heard in the story. Use your own words as long as they have the same meaning of the words used in the story. Eventually as you retell the story you be able to picture what happens and is said next. It will be like you’re describing what you once saw and heard. You will tell the story differently each time but without contradiction. The more you tell a story, the better it gets because you get so familiar with it. You will be able to tell it naturally just as if you were there when it happened. Strive for naturalness NOT memorization.

Don’t use religious terms or other words that would be awkward that you don’t normally use. Avoid words and phrases used in some Bible translations but which are not used in everyday speech or can be confusing. For example, instead of saying “Pharisee” consider using the word “religious leaders or teacher.” Instead of sin, consider using the phrase “disobedience to God.” Other difficult words include righteous, forgive, atonement, baptism, repent, and saved. Never add facts to Bible stories. However, we know that a story in Luke may omit facts from the same story found in Matthew. Feel free to do the same thing to make the story shorter and understandable but don’t change the meaning of the story.

A formal storytelling session will have the following parts:

1. A STUDENT RETELLS THE STORY LEARNED IN THE PREVIOUS SESSION
2. STORYTELLER TELLS A NEW STORY

Tell the group, “I you to listen carefully so you will be able to retell the story after I tell it. Turn off your cell phones. Close your books. Don’t take any notes.” Begin the story by saying, “This is a story from God’s Word” and end the story by saying “This was a story from God’s Word.”

After telling the story, do a “walk through” of the story by saying, “What happened first?” After a correct response simply ask, “What happened next?” or “What was said next?” or “Then what?” until the story has been reviewed completely from start to finish. If the review gets off track, the group will “self correct” with accountability questions like, “Is that what happened?” or “Is that what was said?” or “Did something else happen first?” If the group can’t put it back together then retell the story and do another “walk through.”

After the walk through, divide the group into pairs of two. Then say, “Your job is to tell the story in your own words to your partner. As you tell the story, your partner will correct any mistakes and tell you anything you left out or added to the story. Just tell the story that I have told you. Don’t tell what you think it means, don’t add or take away from it. After you tell the story, switch roles with your partner. Each person will have 5 minutes to tell the story. Begin now.” Give a little extra time if

necessary to learn the story. However, if a story takes more than 5 minutes once it has been learned, then it's too long and must be shortened. A short story is easier to learn and tell.

Now say, "Tell the story to your partner in your own words from beginning to end without interruption. At the end of the story, your partner will correct any mistakes and tell you what you added or left out. Then switch roles with your partner. Each of you will have 5 minutes. Begin now."

Now ask for a volunteer to tell the story to the whole group or simply pick someone to tell the story to the whole group.

NOTE: When using stories to teach English to a group without advanced English skills, make the stories shorter and the words simpler until the group understands the story. Consider first teaching the story through a translator in the language of the group. Once they know the story in their language, pair them with English speakers who can help them bring the story to English.

3. STORYTELLER LEADS A DISCUSSION BY ASKING THESE QUESTIONS.

LIKE: What did you like about the story?

You could rephrase it by asking, "What was the most interesting part of the story to you." You can also rephrase the other questions in the way to suit your preference.

DISLIKE: What did you not like about the story?

Or you could ask, "Was there anything confusing or difficult to understand about the story?"

PEOPLE: What did you learn from the story about people?

GOD: What did you learn from the story about God?

APPLY: What did you learn from the story about something God wants you to do or not do?

When the session has been completed, you will have reviewed the FACTS (which is observation), asked the first 4 DISCOVERY questions (which is Interpretation) and asked the last APPLICATION question (which allows a person to state what God wants him to do with what he's learned.)

The listeners should memorize 6 basic characteristics of God to help in the discussion of Question 4. Simply ask listeners to tell what events in the story suggest a characteristic of God? Those 6 basic characteristics are that God is:

1. Good
2. All knowing
3. All powerful
4. Giver of all good gifts
5. Hates and punishes disobedience
6. Keeps all His promises.

In the discussion phase, the storyteller should only ask questions and let the Holy Spirit prompt the group with the answers. When someone gives a wrong answer ask, "Is that what the story says?" or "What do the rest of you think about that?"