

Teaching Stories from the Word—Sunday School Workshop

Explore a Variety of Teaching Methods

Ages 7-10

Ready—Set—Go!

Ready?

- Know the story
- Visualize and plan your approach

Set?

- Plan the lesson from start to finish
- Gather supplies

Go!

- Prepare and motivate the students
- Teach, self-evaluate, celebrate!

5-part Lesson Menu

1. Introducing the Story
2. Reading the Story
3. Understanding the Story
4. Responding to the Story
5. Remembering the Story

1. Introducing the Story

Choose one activity to introduce the story.

Activity	Method
Story Basket	Put item(s) (or pictures of them) mentioned in the story into a large basket. Bring the item(s) out as you introduce the story. <i>e.g.</i> water (water to wine), rock (house on rock), shoe (Moses removes shoes), branch (I am the vine), star (Abraham, wise men), <i>etc.</i>
Generate Anticipation	Share 3-5 True/False statements relating to themes or events that encourage discussion. <i>e.g.</i> statements about Mount Sinai, Moses and the cloud on the mountain in preparation for reading the 10 Commandments.
Predict the Outcome	Pose a problem and ask the students to predict a character's response or to predict what may happen next. <i>e.g.</i> The Lord gave Moses the power to do miracles. Will Pharaoh be able to do them too?
Similar Situation	Have students think about a time they might have been in a situation similar to one that is in the story for the day, <i>e.g.</i> wanting something (Hannah wanting a child) or facing a difficult task (David and Goliath). Share their thoughts with a classmate or with the class.
Key Words	Tell the children one key word in the story <i>e.g.</i> ark, ephod, drought or leprosy. Brainstorm what the word means, and write responses down to activate prior knowledge.
Listening Key	Ask students to listen for a key word or phrase as you read the story. Raise their hands whenever they hear the word.

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Show a Picture	Any story. Many available on the Internet. Make it more interesting by showing only part of the picture and having students guess what it might be. Slowly reveal more until the entire picture can be seen.
Hide something in a box	Put something from the story into a box. Pass the box around. Let the children feel and shake the box to guess what's inside. Open and discover contents <i>e.g.</i> new truth from heaven (book), rubber snake (Aaron's rod) <i>etc.</i>
Visualize the setting	Have students close their eyes and describe the setting, customs or events that they will hear about in the story.

2. Reading the Story

Use one idea or combine several ideas in one lesson. Keep creative momentum and interest going throughout the lesson time by engaging students at every step.

Activity	Method
Use Props	Gather a few props to show the children as the story progresses <i>e.g.</i> a staff, piece of clothing, pitcher, oil, <i>etc.</i> Helps bring understanding to the story. Decide whether to spark interest by sharing ahead of time, or keep props hidden to retain interest later in the reading.
Book in Hand Theater (some preparation)	Prepare script by downloading the text from www.biblegateway.com and pasting into a Word document. Use colors or a variety of fonts to distinguish different characters in the story. Add character and narrator names. (This whole process should take less than 15 minutes.) Print one copy for each child in the class. Introduce the story. Give a few basic staging directions <i>e.g.</i> where a house, stream or mountain might be. The children will read the story as a play and act it out as they go. If the children enjoy it, repeat the reading and change who is reading which character.
Acting (more preparation)	Create as script (see above). Prepare costumes and a few props. Proceed as above. Present play to another Sunday School class.
Choral Reading	Children read a section of the story aloud as a group. Works well if there are phrases that recur <i>e.g.</i> All that the Lord has spoken, we will do. Write the phrase on a board, large piece of paper, or make copies and hand out as recitation slips.
Jigsaw Reading	Good for long stories <i>e.g.</i> Daniel. Divide the story into sections. Assign each section to a group of children. Each group reads independently. Groups get together and each group <i>tells</i> their part of the story to all of the children.
Reading Buddies	Divide the children into groups of 2 or 3. Take turns reading the verses aloud. When everyone has finished reading, discuss the story with the group.
Silent Reading	Give students a reading question, <i>e.g.</i> who helps David? Each child reads the story silently. Students discuss their answers together.

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3. Understanding the story

Activity	Method																				
Attribute Chart	<p style="text-align: center;">List qualities with evidence from the story</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DAVID</p> <hr style="width: 50%; margin: auto;"/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; width: 100%;"> Attributes <i>e.g.</i> brave Examples <i>e.g.</i> fought without armor </div>																				
Feeling Chart	<p>List 3-5 key events in a story on the left side of chart, character list across the top. Note the feeling or response of each character to each event.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Mary</th> <th>Angels</th> <th>Herod</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Jesus is born</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shepherds hear news</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wise men hear news</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Herod hears news</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Mary	Angels	Herod	Jesus is born				Shepherds hear news				Wise men hear news				Herod hears news			
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Actions Chart	<p>Note actions of characters toward each other <i>e.g.</i> David and Saul.</p>																				
<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class 	<p>Identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most important part of the story • Different (better) decisions that could have been made by people in the story • Consequences of poor decisions • Teacher lead discussion to connect previously learned ideas students could not connect on the own 																				
Drawing	<p>Illustrate one scene of the story.</p>																				
Drawing	<p>Draw a main character, a person with whom they most relate, a symbol in the story, or important object.</p>																				
Story Map	<p>Use pictorial symbols to illustrate what happens in the story at various places.</p>																				
Journey Map	<p>Trace the journey of a main character <i>e.g.</i> David's flight from Saul.</p>																				
Large Scale Map	<p>Use rope (indoors) or chalk (outdoors) to outline a map of Canaan. Include main cities (<i>optional</i>: make standing signs) and walk the routes taken in the story. Use sturdy tape or paint to make a more permanent map in your Sunday School space and use it again and again.</p>																				

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Terrain Box	Create the terrain of the story in a box using sand, rocks or clay. Use figures to show the action.
Sequencing	Put pictures or story cards with people or events in the order they appear in the story.
Use Your Setting	Use the outdoors to measure out the Tabernacle of Israel, set up a tent or re-create the burning bush by tying colored fabric strips to a bush.

4. Response Activities

This list of activities is only beginning! Use these ideas as a springboard for your own creative ideas!

Activity	Method				
Illustrated Book	Students create their own miniature book on a theme e.g. Elisha's miracles. Depending on how you design the project, this may continue on from week to week.				
Board Game	Teacher or students can create a board game for an ongoing story in the Word. Keep and play again later.				
Who Am I?	Put the name of a character on the back of each student and have them try to figure out who they are by asking questions that can be answered "yes" or "no."				
Story Ladder	Retell story through pictures and words in 4 panels, after dividing paper into 4 rectangles (fold, or used prepared paper) <table border="1" style="margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <tr> <td>Rebekah hears Isaac telling Esau to prepare a stew.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rebekah helps Jacob prepare a stew.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jacob covers himself with skins, offers his stew and receives the blessing of the firstborn.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Esau brings his stew and finds out that Isaac has been tricked. He begs for a blessing also.</td> </tr> </table>	Rebekah hears Isaac telling Esau to prepare a stew.	Rebekah helps Jacob prepare a stew.	Jacob covers himself with skins, offers his stew and receives the blessing of the firstborn.	Esau brings his stew and finds out that Isaac has been tricked. He begs for a blessing also.
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Accordion Book	Fold a long strip of paper in accordion fashion and make book with text and pictures. Write or illustrate a story in sequence e.g. Creation. <i>Optional:</i> glue on a front and back cover.				
Jigsaw Puzzle	Glue a picture on to lightweight cardboard. Cut the picture apart to create jigsaw pieces. The child reassembles the picture. Send home in an envelope or Ziploc bag!				
Banners	Banners may be made for permanent display, or in simple form to provide a learning experience. Divide up the characters in a story, give each child a piece of felt and have them cut out figures. Use alphabet templates to cut lettering. Assemble as a class. Banners may be arranged in sections to show a sequence of events, or depict one central theme or scene.				

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Art Projects	<p>The sky is the limit! Here are a few tips to help you :</p> <p>Glitter—put the project to be glittered on a large rectangular baking tray or low-sided cardboard box. The tray will catch the extra glitter. Tap it in to one corner and pour back into the container.</p> <p>Paints—use a muffin tin to separate colors.</p> <p>Use a Paper Cutter—to reduce preparation time—stack the paper and cut out multiples.</p> <p>Buy a Rotary Fabric Cutter—layer the fabric and cut once.</p>
Crossword Puzzles and Word searches	<p>Create your own! Sites on the internet can help you make your own. You may also purchase a program fairly inexpensively. Enter keywords from the story. Make the activity simple or complex depending on the ages of the children. Some programs allow you to create puzzles in appealing shapes.</p>

5. Remember the Story

Memorable experiences help children retain what they have learned. Review what children have as you conclude weekly lessons and periodically throughout the year. Many activities that are listed above may be used both as teaching and review tools. Here are a few more to add to your teaching “bank”.

Activity	Method
Students Make up Questions	Students write up a question about the story for other students to answer.
20 Questions	Teacher has a person from the Word, incident or book of the Word in mind. Students are invited to ask 20 questions to see if they can discover the answer. Teacher gives yes/no answers.
Adapt a commercial game	Look for games that are fun for children, but which could lend themselves to Bible stories <i>e.g.</i> Pictionary. Students will illustrate stories or characters from the Word while others guess what they are drawing. Teams advance with correct guesses.
Songs	Singing songs that tell the stories from the Word is a great way to review. The powerful pairing of words and music may stay with a person for a lifetime.