

Storytelling & Engaging Children

GodSpace
Training



**Your word
is a lamp
that gives
light
wherever
I walk.**

Psalms 119:105 (CEV)



What's in today's session?

- Introduction – Good Stories
- Engaging Children: things to consider
- How to Tell a Good Story
- Q&A – Responding to Your Questions



A Good Story

A cartoon illustration of a spaceship cockpit. A large, rectangular screen in the center displays the text "A Good Story" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The screen is framed by a blue border with several hexagonal bolts. Above the screen, a string of flags hangs across the top of the cockpit. From left to right, the visible flags are: the Union Jack, the French flag (vertical stripes of blue, white, and red), the Canadian flag (red with a white square and a red maple leaf), the German flag (horizontal stripes of black, red, and gold), and the Australian flag (blue with the Union Jack in the canton and white stars). To the left of the screen, a green vine with leaves and small pink flowers is wrapped around a circular porthole. The porthole shows a view of outer space with a blue starry background and a green planet. Below the porthole, another string of flags is visible, including the Spanish flag (vertical stripes of red, yellow, and red), the Australian flag, and the Hungarian flag (horizontal stripes of red, white, and green). The cockpit's control panel at the bottom is filled with various instruments, including a large red dial on the left, several smaller dials and gauges, and a row of five red levers. On the right side of the control panel, there are two red joysticks. A small, glowing blue light source is visible on the right wall of the cockpit. In the bottom right corner, a small, rectangular screen shows a cartoon character with a lightbulb above its head, suggesting an idea or a story.

**Get ready
to type in
the chat**





**What is your
favourite story?**



One Thousand and One Nights

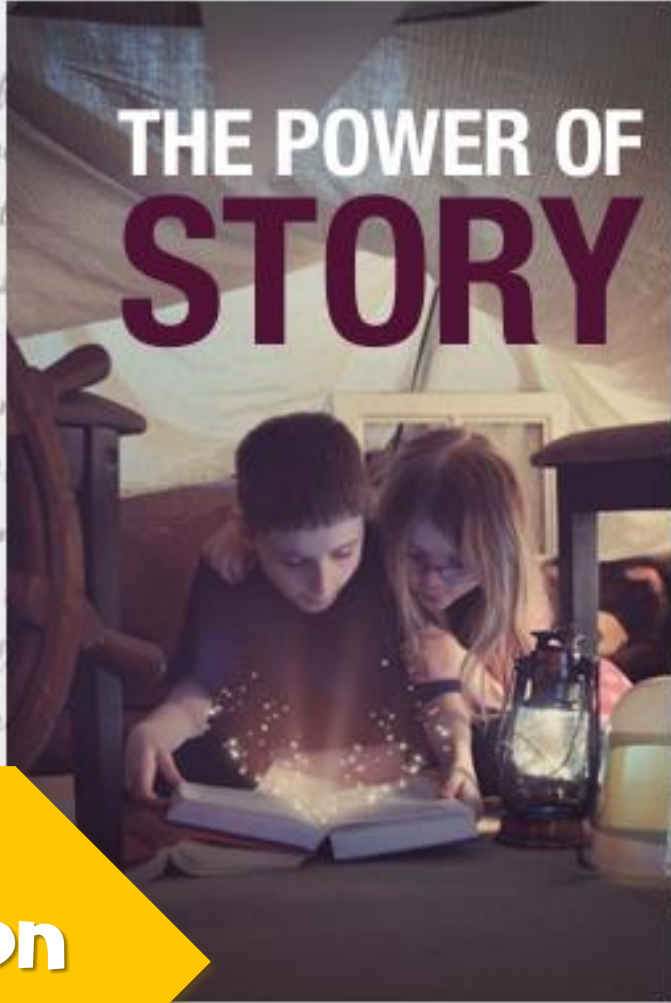


Sherazada and the Sultan (1849-1856). Persian miniature by Sani ol-Molk.

“ People need stories,
more than bread, itself.
They teach us how to
live, and why.”

Arabian Nights (2000). TV Mini Series

THE POWER OF STORY



By
**Daron
Pratt**

that comes with the conviction that the organisation's work must go on, and needs everyone's full engagement to make a difference in people's lives."

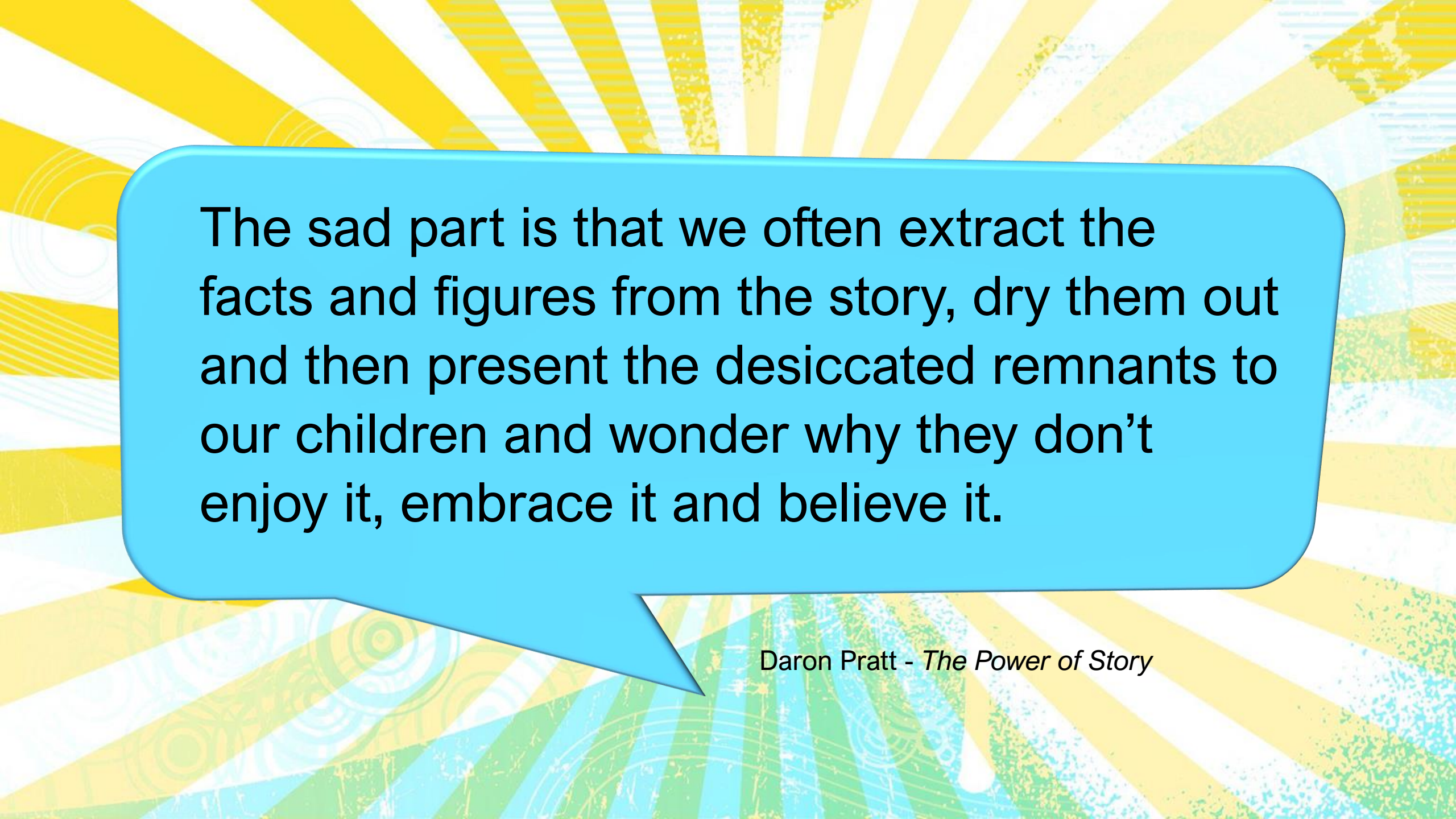
"...the more stories young children had read to them, the stronger their ability to imagine what other people are thinking and feeling"



6 | THE POWER OF STORY

[Link to Article](#)





The sad part is that we often extract the facts and figures from the story, dry them out and then present the desiccated remnants to our children and wonder why they don't enjoy it, embrace it and believe it.

Daron Pratt - *The Power of Story*

The background is a vibrant, stylized illustration of a spaceship's interior. A large, rectangular screen with a blue, textured surface is the central focus. Above the screen, a string of international flags is draped across the top, including the Union Jack, the French flag, the Canadian flag, the German flag, and the Australian flag. To the left of the screen, a green vine-like decoration is visible. Below the screen, a control panel is filled with various buttons, levers, and a small analog gauge. In the bottom right corner, a small, glowing blue light fixture is visible. The overall color palette is dominated by blues, greens, and the colors of the flags.

Engaging Children:

A few considerations

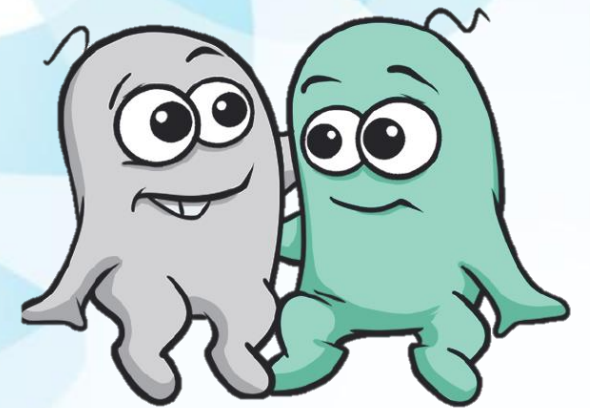
The unique challenges in SRE/RI

- Short lesson time
- Limited control over environment
- Different classroom teachers may have different expectations
- Limited information about students and contact with families



General Challenges

- Students with different needs, skill levels and prior knowledge
- Teacher/Instructor/Leader training & experience
- Volunteer recruitment
- Available resources
- Other events in student's lives



A note about Additional Needs

- **Check with the school** about strategies in place
- **Use the different age** lesson outlines to help select activities
- **Adapt ways to participate** e.g. instead of whole group discussions, break into smaller groups, write or draw a response etc.



Free Resource

Spotlight on Adapting Lessons for Students with Additional Needs

Responding well to diversity in today's classes is one of the most important things a teacher can do, as well as one of the most challenging.¹ There are many small changes you can make which will make a big difference to your students.

Adapting Lessons

GodSpace is designed to support diverse needs. The lesson notes and teaching tips often provide points to consider for different students. Check the different age groups for activities that best suit your students. The lesson aim will remain the same, but how you get there might be different. This might include:





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All Categories 

All Types 

Search keywords



3 Year Curriculum Overview

PDFS

Category Curriculum

Download



GodSpace Values

godspace.org.au

Quick Tips – Behaviour Guidance

- Clear expectations
 - Instructions
 - Guidelines for participation etc
- Transitions
- Attention Grabbers

Relationships

**Free
Resource**

Engaging Students

Children – all unique and wonderfully made!

God has made each child unique, with different gifts, abilities and preferences. Some are quick to understand words, logic or spatial relations. For others, music, movement or stories are powerful learning tools. Or they may learn best from exploring relationships or connecting with nature.

Activity Choices

- Choose a variety of activities, not just what you are comfortable with.
- Make sure you choose activities from each section: Question, Explore, Discover
- Ask a colleague or check our website for tips and advice.

Classroom Management

A positive classroom environment supports learning outcomes for all children. Often we think about classroom management in the negative sense - how to avoid challenging behaviour and keep students on task. Classroom management is much more than this, notice when things are going smoothly and what you can learn from this too.

Top Tips for Classroom Management

- **Provide Clarity**
Provide clear instructions and expectations for students, especially when starting something new. Stick to your expectations.
- **Focus on the Positive**
Model and acknowledge positive behaviour. Students will follow your lead. Catch students who need more redirection when they are engaging well and praise them.
- **Know Your Students**
Learning student's names and something about them supports communication, empathy and engagement.



Q & A Chat






Student Engagement:

**What are some
challenges for you?**



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Why Pair With Storytelling?

Relational

Jesus told stories



The background of the text area is a warm gradient from red at the top to orange at the bottom, with a pattern of small, glowing yellow circles. Two large, stylized orange hearts are positioned on the left and right sides. In the bottom left corner, there is a large, dark brown footprint, and several smaller white footprints are scattered throughout the text area.

Love God
with all your heart,
soul, mind and
strength.

Mark 12:30-31 (ICB adapted)

**Love... God... with all your heart;...
soul, ... mind and ... strength.**

Love others
as much as you
love yourself.

Mark 12:30-31 (CB adapted)

Relational

Jesus told stories

**An example or
prompt for people to
reflect on**



Relational

Jesus told stories

Often how we explore the Bible



Question - Explore - Discover

Question

What students know about the Big Idea

Explore

What the Bible teaches about the Big Idea

Discover

How students will respond to the Big Idea





Question

What's in My Bag? (2-3min)

You will need: a bag or box containing 3-4 items (or symbols) important to you such as: a photo of your family, a souvenir, your own Bible, something given to you as a present.
Invite students to guess what's inside. As each item is revealed, share why it is important to you.

Thinking Song (4-5min)

See Explorers Lesson 1.

Sing: Our God is a Great Big God by Vineyard Kids arranged by Phil Davidson.

Instruction Game - Drawing (3-4min)

Ask for a volunteer to stand with their back to the screen. Give them a thick texta and paper.
Display the PPT or print from the PDF. Give one instruction at a time to help the students draw the picture on the screen. (See instructions on PPT or PDF.) Compare their drawing to the original.
Ask: What was similar and different? Can you tell what it is?
Link: These are sketches, but today we will be looking at the amazing things God made.

Unit 1 Introduction Video: Exploring With Goober (1min)

See Explorers Lesson 1.

Explore

Video: In the Beginning (5-6min)

See Explorers Lesson 1.

God's World (5-8min)

Use the storytelling pictures on the PPT or PDF to tell the story.

Say: In the beginning there was only God. God made everything from nothing. The earth was dark and had no life, but God was working... On the first day of creation, God said, 'Let there be light'. And light appeared. God said, 'It is good'. On the second day, God said the earth should have an atmosphere with clouds in the sky and water on the earth. And it happened as he said. On the third day, that dry land and water should separate. And that's what happened. He said plants should cover the ground, and they did. God said, 'It is good'. On the fourth day, God said there should be light from the sun and moon and stars. And there was. God said, 'It is good'. On the fifth day, God filled the sky with birds and creatures living in the seas and waters. And it happened just like he said. God said, 'It is good'. On the sixth day God filled the land with animals. But that wasn't all... He also made people. People are special to God. God put them in charge of everything he made. People were made to know God and be like him. When God saw everything that he had made, he said it was very good. The Bible says that the whole universe and everything in it is God's creation. He made it and he understands it best. He knows how it should work. This year we will learn about life with God in his world.

Discover

About Genesis 1 (3-4min)

Ask: What did we discover about God? (He made everything.) About people? (They were important.) What did God ask people to do? (Be in charge.)
Say: We'll find out more about this next lesson.

GodSpace Prayer (2-3min)

Show a pinwheel or feather and blow on it.

Say: We can't see our breath, but sometimes we can see what it does. We can't see God, but we can see what he has made.

Ask students to think about what they might learn about God this year.
Invite them to pray with you, asking God to help them learn.

Unit 1 Bible Verse (3-4min)

See Explorers Lesson 1.

Adventurers Magazine (5-8min)

Complete the activities while listening to Jesus is the One Who Made the Universe by Quiz Wox.

Finish Off

Say: The Bible tells us that God made everything and everyone. He wants people to live the way that is best.

Learning Outcome

Adventurers will describe what God made.

Resources List

OSong: Our God is a Great Big God (Question)

OUnit1_Lesson1.ppt (Question and Explore)

OUnit1_Lesson1.pdf (Question and Explore)

ODrawing resources (Question)

OUnit 1 Introduction Video (Question)

OIn the Beginning (Explore)

OPinwheel or feather (Discover)

OSong: Jesus is the One Who Made the Universe (Discover)

Explore

Video: In the Beginning (5-6min)

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Adventurers (Stage 1) Lesson 1

Question

○ What's In My Bag? (2-3min)

You will need: a bag or box containing 3-4 items (or symbols) important to you such as: a photo of your family, a souvenir, your own Bible, something given to you as a present.
Invite students to guess what's inside. As each item is revealed, share why it is important to you.

○ What Does the Bible Say About Creation? (3-4min)

Use the Unit1_Lesson1.ppt or pictures from the PDF, to introduce the creation account as one that has the purpose of telling people who created the world, rather than being a scientific account.

○ Getting Started (3-4min)

See Navigators Lesson 1.

○ Unit 1 Introduction Video: Exploring With Goober (1min)

Watch Unit 1 Introduction Video together as Goober introduces God the Creator, his creation including people; and Jesus.

Link: Today we'll hear from the very first chapter in the whole Bible. (Hold up CEV Bible.)

Explore

○ Creation Story (6-8min)

See Navigators Lesson 1.


Ask: What does the Bible say God did? What does this say about God? About people?

Say: We'll hear more about this next lesson.

○ Creation Drawing (5-8min)

Distribute A4 paper to each student and ask the students to fold their paper into six squares. They can label each square as Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, Day 4, Day 5 and Day 6 and use the back for Day 7.

Say: We are going to listen to the story of creation from the Bible. It is found in Genesis 1. As you are listening, try to draw everything you hear on each of the days.

Read Genesis 1 from the CEV Bible or play the audio track *Genesis 1*. 

Discuss: What does the Bible say about God? What was special about people? What special role were they given? What happened on the last day? Why? (God rested, not because he was tired but because he wanted to enjoy all that he had made.)

Conclude: This passage from the Bible tells us about the many things God has created for us to enjoy. Everything God has made helps us to know who God is and his great love for us.

Discover

○ Knowing God (2-3min)

Ask: If you could ask God anything, what would you ask him? What would you like to know more about?

Allow students to opportunity to write questions down. They may be collected, placed in a question box, or written in their student magazines.

Say: This year, we will have the chance to explore some of those questions and thoughts about God and about our lives.

○ Prayer (2-3min)

Think-Pair-Share: What are your favourite things about creation?

Invite students to reflect or pray with you as you thank God for creating those things.

○ Voyagers Magazines (5-7min)

Complete the activities that ask students to reflect on the passage.

Listen to *My Best Friend* by The Lads while students complete the activities. 

Finish Off

Say: This year we will be looking at different parts of the Bible to explore who God is.

Explore

○ Creation Story (6-8min)

See Navigators Lesson 1.

Ask: What does the Bible say God did? What does this say about God? About people?


Say: We'll hear more about this next lesson.

○ Creation Drawing (5-6min)

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Conclude: This passage from the Bible tells us about the many things God has created for us to enjoy. Everything God has made helps us to know who God is and his great love for us.

Voyagers (Stage 3) Lesson 1

**Why pair
storytelling
with student
engagement?**

Stories are relational

Jesus told stories

Often how we explore the Bible


Good skills practise



SRE/RI issues

- Students wanting to tell you everything
- 'Heard it before'
- Never heard it before
- Comments about different views 'e.g. my dad said...' 'in science...'





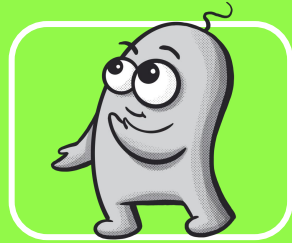
Telling a Good Story



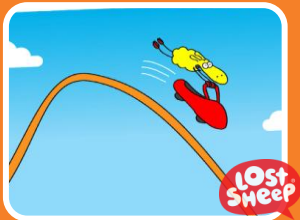
Preparation



Skills



Attitudes



The Roller-Coaster

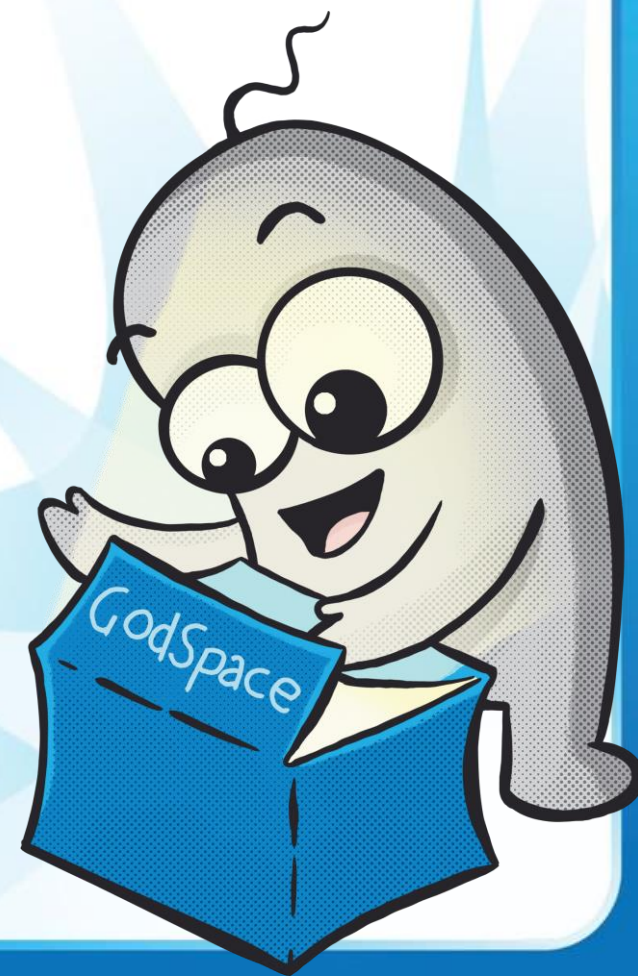
Spotlight on Storytelling

It is through stories that we discover who we are.¹

They engage our thoughts, feelings, imagination, memory and experience. Through story we pass on culture and values. Much of Scripture is written in narrative form and Jesus regularly used stories (or parables) to teach about God. Storytelling is often how the biblical content of a lesson is shared with students.

Top Tips for Storytelling

- **Read the Story**
Read from both the Bible passage, and the lesson outlines. In GodSpace sessions the story supports the aim of the lesson. Keep lesson aims and outcomes in mind as you read the story.
- **Flow**
All stories have a beginning, middle and end. There are people (or characters), a setting and action. How does this play out in your story? What part should be emphasised as the key moment in the story?
- **Tone and expression**
Once you have the flow of the story, add meaning through your voice and expression. Start at a neutral level so that you can increase or reduce your volume. Remember a quiet voice can draw listeners in, sometimes even better than a loud one. What tone, facial expressions, body language or gestures will add to the emotion in the story?
- **Timing**
Make sure you speak slowly and clearly so that you can be well understood. At times changing your speed, or a pause, can increase the action - but use this sparingly.
- **Enthusiasm**
Practice telling the story aloud, so that you are familiar with it and can make eye contact with your audience.



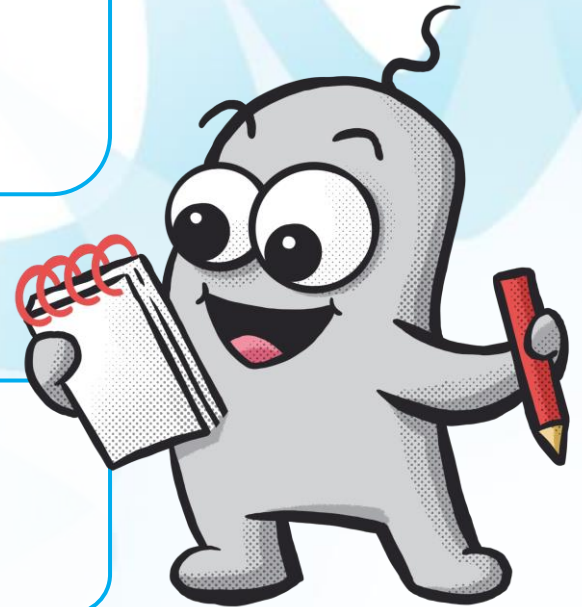
**Free
Resource**

Preparation

Read the story, Bible passage & lesson notes

- Is there anything to note for your group?

Practise telling the story





Levi Follows Jesus: PPT Script

This script accompanies the PPT slides for *Levi Follows Jesus*.

Script



Ask: Does anyone know what tax is? (Money people pay to the government.)

Say: In Australia, everyone who works has to pay tax to the government. It was the same in Jesus' day, except people would give their money to tax collectors for the Roman government. These tax collectors were known for being greedy and dishonest. They would ask people for more money and then keep the extra for themselves. Tax collectors were not liked and they didn't have many friends.



The Bible tells us that there was a tax collector called Levi.

Ask: Even though Levi had lots of money - do you think he looks happy? Why not?



Say: After Jesus had healed the man who couldn't walk, he went out and saw Levi working.

Ask: What might Jesus have said to Levi? (Don't be greedy.)

Say: Jesus said to Levi, 'Follow me.' Jesus knew who Levi was. He knew what Levi had done.

Ask: Why do you think Jesus asked Levi to follow him? What does this tell us about Jesus?

Say: Levi would have been so surprised that Jesus was choosing him - all people - to be his friend!

Ask: How could Levi respond?

Say: The Bible says that Levi got up and went with Jesus. He left everything behind - his money - his job. He left everything to follow Jesus.



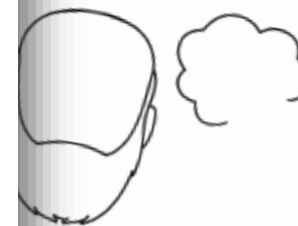
Picture Story



Drawing & Props



Squiggle Picture



Explore

○ Jesus Has Power Over Death (6-8min)

Prepare four large wooden 'people', a strip of bandage and a box with a lid. Sit near a table.

Say: Jesus had three very good friends. They were Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary. *(Place three wooden people on a table.)* One day, Lazarus got very sick. *(Lie 'Lazarus' down.)*

Mary and Martha knew that Jesus was teaching nearby. *(Place 'Jesus' at the other end of the table.)*

They knew that Jesus loved them. And they knew that Jesus could make their brother better. So, they quickly sent someone to tell Jesus about Lazarus.

Skills

Expression

- Voice & tone
- Body language & facial expression

Flow of the Story

- Pace
- Structure / Where is the drama?



Attitudes / Mindset

Be Present

Calm-attentive

Be
Enthusiastic

Interest, passion, wonder

Be Curious

Wondering questions, adapt,
flexible, problem-solve



The Storytelling Roller-Coaster

MODULE

2

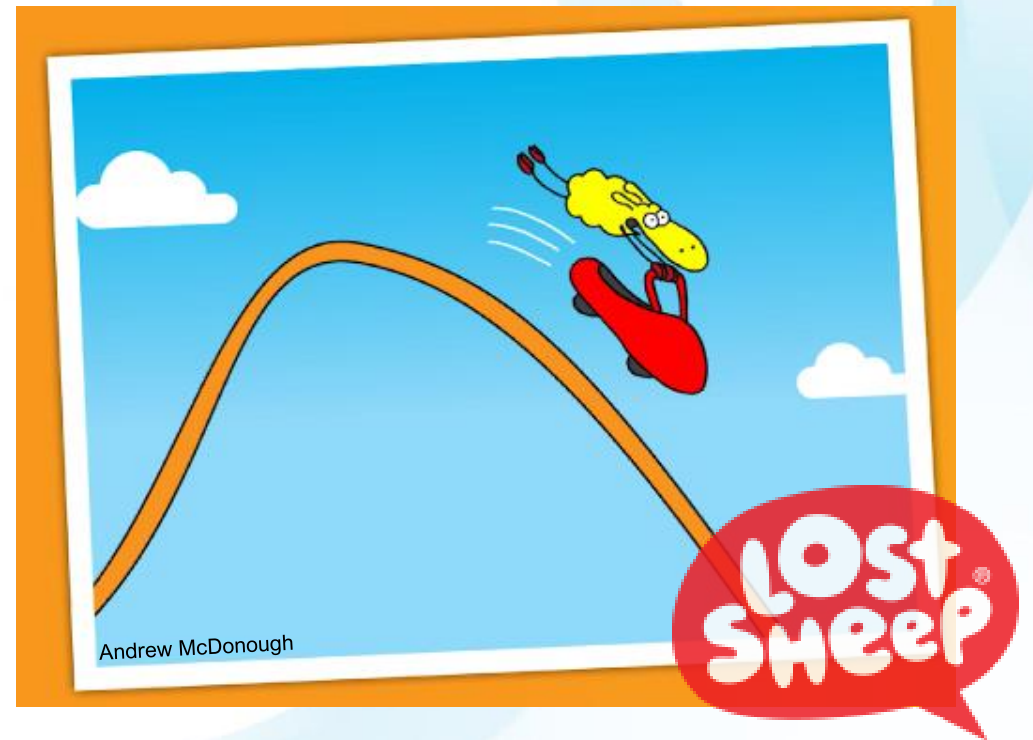
Skills for Kids' Ministry



Children & Family
Ministries

VIDEO FOUR:

Telling Stories



Considering Interruptions

- **Context information** – discuss before or after
- **Application** – discuss after OR give students a prompt to ‘listen for’ whilst the story is told
- **Expectations** – discuss before / practice before
 - Drama – ‘audience expectations’
 - Instructions for participation
 - > e.g. actions for specific words
 - ‘you’ll see……. We’ll discuss this afterward.’



State guidelines for 'audience'

Mark 2 Reader's Theatre

Characters: Narrator, Person 1, Person 2, Friend 1, Friend 2, Friend 3, Friend 4, Teacher 1, Teacher 2 and Jesus.

Script

Narrator: Jesus grew up in an area called Galilee. He started travelling around to teach people about God and to heal all kinds of sicknesses. People saw that there was something different about Jesus and news spread when he returned home.

Person 1: Let's go hear Jesus teach.

Person 2: We better hurry if we want to get close.

Narrator: There soon grew a crowd so large that no one could get through the front door. Four men arrived carrying their friend who couldn't walk on a mat.

Friend 1: We're too late. Look at all the people. There's no way we can get through.

Friend 2: But we need to see Jesus. He can heal our friend.

Friend 3: I've got an idea. Follow me.



Drama & Actions

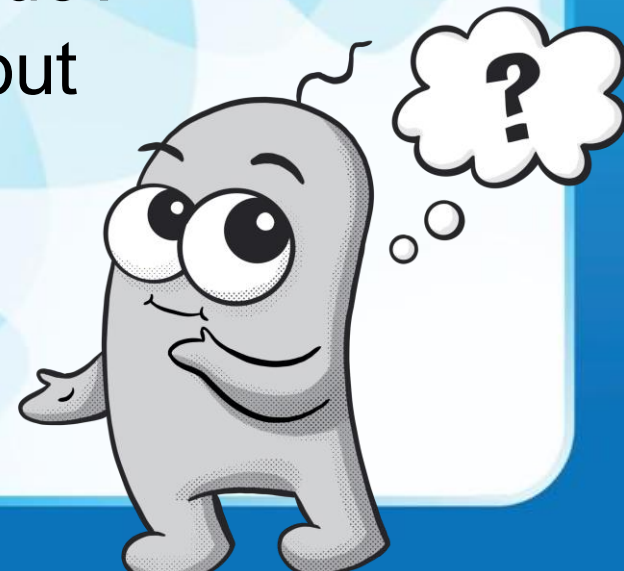
Considering Interruptions

- **Student Questions**

- Quick answer, or wait until after
- Ask students to write on post-it notes

- **Storytelling questions**

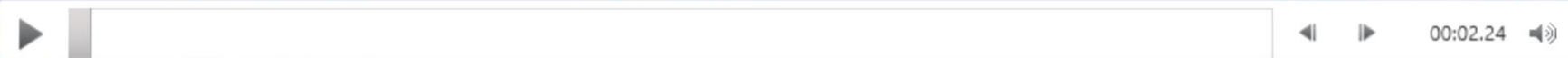
- E.g. How might Mary have felt? What would you do?
- These can keep students engaged in the story, but they may also distract. Practise. Be Flexible.
- If needed, skip and return to later.



Provide a prompt
or something to
'look for'

MATES of the MIRACLE MAN

Video



Considering Interruptions

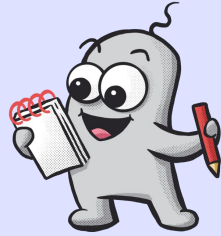
What if I need to respond to student's behaviour??



Developing your storytelling will help

PREPARATION

- Review materials
- Rehearse



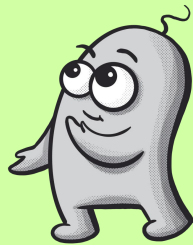
SKILLS

- Expression
- Flow



ATTITUDES

- Present
- Enthusiastic
- Curious



RIDING THE ROLLER-COASTER

- Get into the Story
- Stay in the Story



What if I need to respond to student behaviour?

- Try storytelling techniques to keep your lesson engaging
- Try responding in minimal ways (avoid interrupting if possible)
 - Redirecting with a look or gesture, or short phrase
 - Use an attention grabber
 - Comment on positive behaviour
- Check out the next section of encouraging the story to speak
- Reflect on your lessons and/or talk with others for advice

The background is a stylized, cartoonish illustration of a spaceship's interior. A large, rectangular screen with a blue, textured background is the central focus. Above the screen, a string of flags hangs across the top, including the Union Jack, the French flag, the Canadian flag, the German flag, and the Australian flag. To the left of the screen, a green vine-like decoration is visible. Below the screen, a control panel with various buttons, levers, and a small circular gauge is shown. On the right side, a bright blue, glowing object is visible, and a small, framed picture of two characters is hanging on the wall.

Allowing the Story to Speak

Telling Stories



Full Video Link

Note: This video is for all children's ministry contexts. Some ideas may not be suitable for SRE/RI classes.

Student Participation

Getting Started

- Clear expectations
- Start small
- Keep it short / simple
- Have an attention grabber ready

Troubleshooting

- Consider your expectations
- Consider who will be volunteers
 - How is this managed?
 - What will other students do




Trusting the Story

- Be encouraged that the word of God is active and alive
- Allow students opportunity to ask questions, and work out what they think for themselves
- Include open-ended **Discover** activities in your lesson



A Note on Resources

The background is a detailed illustration of a spaceship's interior. A large, rectangular screen in the center displays a blue, textured surface. Above the screen, a string of flags hangs across the top, including the Union Jack, the French flag, the Canadian flag, the German flag, and the Australian flag. To the left of the screen, a green vine-like decoration is visible. Below the screen, the cockpit's control panel is shown, featuring various buttons, levers, and a small circular gauge. On the right side, a bright blue, glowing object is visible, and a small, framed picture of two characters is attached to the wall.

Select from
slides needed

Delete unused
slides

The screenshot displays a presentation software interface. On the left is a vertical slide thumbnail pane with a ruler on its right side. The thumbnails are numbered 8 through 13. Slide 10, titled 'LEVI FOLLOWS JESUS', is highlighted with a yellow border. The main slide area shows a large screen with the text 'LEVI FOLLOWS JESUS' in white, set against a blue background with a starry space pattern. The screen is framed by various international flags (Spain, Australia, Italy, Finland, UK, France, Canada, Germany, and the USA) and three yellow circular icons (a backpack, a face with wide eyes, and a smiley face). A cartoon dolphin character is standing at the bottom right of the screen, holding a small grey device. Below the main slide area, there is a text box that says 'Click to add notes'.

8 Mark 2:13-14 Wild Bible

9

10 LEVI FOLLOWS JESUS

11

12

13

Click to add notes

Selecting resources



Icons - Age Guidelines
Use if helpful



'School Delivery'





ABOUT US ▾

WHAT WE DO ▾

RESOURCES ▾

PARTNER WITH US

DONATE

Enter search terms

All Types ▾

All Media

All Curricula ▾

All Series ▾

THE GOOD SHEPHERD ▾

HOME DELIVERY

SCHOOL DELIVERY (SRE/RI)



The Good Shepherd

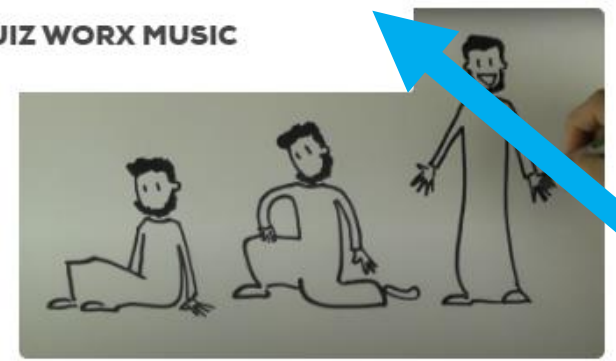
PDF VIDEO



The Good Shepherd Music Video

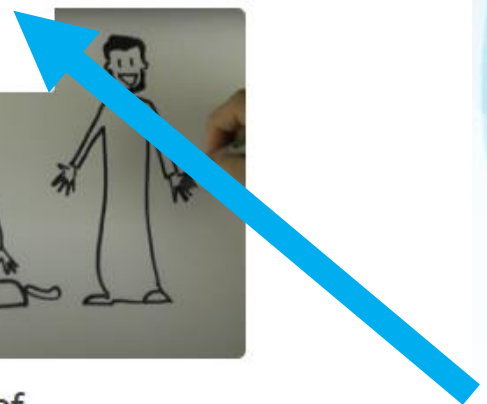
SONG VIDEO

QUIZ WORX MUSIC



Man Through the Roof

VIDEO



Selecting resources



Icons - Age Guidelines



'School Delivery'



YouTube

- Check suitability
- Check with Approved Provider
- Consider copyright



Developing Your Capacity

The image is a vibrant, cartoon-style illustration of a spaceship's interior. A large, rectangular screen in the center displays the text "Developing Your Capacity" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The screen is framed by a blue border with small, hexagonal details. Above the screen, a string of flags hangs across the top, including the Union Jack, the French flag, the Canadian flag, the German flag, and the Australian flag. To the left of the screen, a green vine with leaves and small flowers is visible. Below the screen, the cockpit's control panel is shown, featuring various buttons, levers, and a small circular gauge. On the right side, a bright blue, glowing energy source or engine is visible, with a small, cartoonish character peeking out from behind it. The overall color scheme is dominated by blues and purples, with accents of red, yellow, and green from the flags and other elements.

Practise, Practise, Practise!

- 'Sing into your hairbrush'
- Pick an area to work on – don't try and improve everything at once
- Watch other storytellers in action -
 - Watch Playschool
 - Quiz Worx
 - Preachers and Comedians
 - Library Story Times
- Reflect on what worked and what didn't



How could stories help with these issues?

SRE/RI Challenges

Short lesson time

Limited class info / resources / set-up

Different teacher expectations

Storytelling Challenges

Student comments

‘Heard it before’ / Never heard it before

Distractions

General Challenges

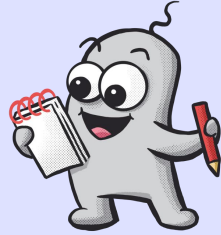
Student needs / experiences

Teacher experience / limited resources

Volunteer Recruitment

PREPARATION

- Review materials
- Rehearse



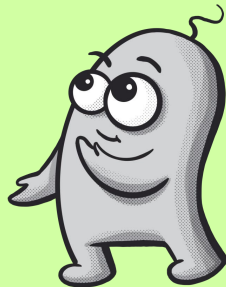
SKILLS

- Expression
- Flow



ATTITUDES

- Present
- Enthusiastic
- Curious



RIDING THE ROLLER-COASTER

- Get into the Story
- Stay in the Story



Storytelling & Engaging Children

GodSpace
Training

