

Spotlight on Storytelling

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

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. You don't have to be super-outgoing to be a good storyteller, use your own personality. If you are interested in your story, your students will be as well.

Different ways to tell stories



GodSpace lessons provide a variety of ways to retell Bible stories to engage the diverse learning styles of your students. Whichever method you use, the same principles of storytelling apply. Provide clear expectations so students know what to do, especially if students are helping to tell the story. Keep actions, props and costumes simple.

What if it's not a story?

Many skills used in storytelling can be used when exploring other Bible passages. Practise and use expressive communication. Use the lesson aim and outcomes to focus on what relates to your students.



Developing your skills

Practise may not make perfect but it does make better. Consider doing some of the following:

- Keep practising and rehearsing your stories.
- Tell stories to family and friends or record yourself.
- Watch other storytellers in action. Who is good at telling stories at your church or school? Visit a local library storytime or watch Play School.
- If your activity doesn't go as planned - don't give up! Move onto the next activity and reflect on the experience afterwards. What strategies can you use next time?
- Allow the Bible Story to speak. Values and meaning are embedded within stories rather than overtly stated. This is what gives stories their lasting influence. Reducing them to a list of facts or a moral, robs stories of their ability to captivate hearts, minds and imaginations. Don't be tempted to jump into the application too quickly.



Responding to Story

We need to allow space for students to encounter God's story - many for the first time. Allow time for the word of God to speak into student's lives and give them opportunity to share their responses. They may notice something you haven't. Stories are a powerful tool for communication. How much more so the word of God which is 'active and alive' (Hebrews 4:12).

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