



Journeys in the Spirit

Children's work

Additional resource 118.A

Getting Ready Sharing Bible stories with children



1. Get to know the story

Read the story yourself several times. If possible, read it in different versions of the Bible. If you have a Bible with a commentary, read what this says about the story.

Ask others about the story and see what they say about it. We all interpret stories differently and we create their meaning for ourselves.

Even if it is a story you know well, remember that our understandings of stories can change when we come back to them because we are not the same people as we were when we last heard them.

Ask yourself:

- Who first told the story and when? What can you find out about the storyteller(s)?
- Who was the story first told to? What can you find out about the audience? What were their lives like? What was important to them?
- When was the story first written down? Remember that some stories in the Bible will have been passed down from generation to generation orally before being written down.
- What is the story about and why was it told? Is it a **true** story, based on an event which happened or is it a **truth** story, told to convey an important lesson or idea? Many stories have elements of both. Some stories in the Bible are understood differently by different people at different times. For example, some people might regard Noah's Ark as a true story, whereas others might regard it as a truth story, told to encourage people to take better care of the world we live in.

2. Think about the relevance of the story for today

Think about your own context and the children in your meeting. Ask yourself:

- What insights do you gain from the story personally?
- What are you hoping that the children will gain from hearing the story?
- Which aspects of the story will interest the children? Think about which parts of the story you plan to emphasise and which parts you might simplify.
- How does the story fit with any themes that the children or the meeting as a whole have been thinking about and how does it fit in with any other activities you plan to cover in your session?

3. Make the story come alive

Think about ways in which the children can use their different senses to experience the story. Think about:

- **Hearing:** Adapt the story to suit your audience, writing it in your own words. Don't be afraid to shorten it, simplify it and choose language appropriate for the ages of the children who will be

listening. If there is any music or singing in the story, think about how you could reproduce this and how the children might join in.

- **Seeing:** Consider using pictures, play dough/plasticine/Lego figures, felt boards, puppets, drama or Godly Play. For more information about Godly Play, see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/children-and-young-people/work-quaker-setting/resources-all-age>
- **Touching:** Are there any objects in the story that you could bring along and invite the children to touch or hold?
- **Tasting:** Is there any food, such as fruit or bread, in the story? You could prepare and share some with the children at the appropriate point. Remember to consider any food allergies.
- **Smelling:** What smells would the characters in the story have experienced? It might be a challenge to replicate these whilst telling your story but you could mention them and encourage the children to imagine the smells.

You can also encourage the children to use their imagination to **picture themselves within the story**. Ask questions like:

- Which character would you be if you were in this story?
- What do you think you were doing just before/after the story happened?
- How did you feel when...?

Think about ways to enable the children to identify with the **feelings** of the characters in the story. Ask them how they think the characters are feeling at different points: happy, sad, surprised, scared...?



Stories can also involve **movement**. You could put a different feeling in each corner of the room (see paper plates above) and ask the children to run to each one to show how they think the characters are feeling at different points in the story.

For younger children, you could add actions for the children to do each time a particular character appears in the story or each time a particular thing happens.

Many Bible stories involve journeys between different towns and different countries. Telling different parts of a story in different parts of the meeting house or garden to represent the different places can make these journeys memorable.

Alternatively, you could cut a simple written story into parts and hide the parts to make a story treasure hunt. Younger children will enjoy finding the parts, whilst older ones will enjoy trying to put the pieces in the right order.