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PRACTICES + SKILLS FOR CATECHISTS & EDUCATORS

Video Guide

Sharing Bible Stories with Children
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Sharing Bible Stories with Children

Ideas from the Video Presentation

Experiencing the Scripture Stories

Bible stories are at the heart of how children come to know God. When we share Scripture with them, we're not just teaching about the faith. We're opening a door into the character of God and into the life of Jesus. It helps build a faith that feels alive, personal, and meaningful.

Children grow closer to Jesus when they explore Gospel stories. They begin to understand God's love, God's mercy, and God's faithfulness by *experiencing* the stories of Scripture. That's why incorporating Bible stories into your time with children is essential in faith formation.

So how do we do this well? Let's look at several ways you can bring Scripture to life in your ministry.

Scripture Activity 1. Inviting Wonder

One of the most powerful tools to use with children is the gift of wondering. After reading a story, ask open-ended questions — questions without a single right answer.

“I wonder how it felt to cross the Red Sea.”

“I wonder what Jesus' friends were thinking when the storm grew stronger.”

“I wonder who the shepherds talked to first after meeting baby Jesus.”

When you wonder alongside children, you help them enter the story and discover insights about God for themselves. Wondering opens the door to imagination—and once that door is open, children are ready to step right into the story.

Scripture Activity 2. Bringing Stories to Life Through Play

Since children learn with their whole bodies, dramatic play invites them to step inside a Bible story. Simple props — scarves, paper crowns, stuffed animals, puppets — can transform your space into the world of Scripture. When children act out a story, they don't just hear it. They *feel* it. They remember it. They make it their own.

Scripture Activity 3. Drawing and Creating While You Read

Art is another powerful way to help children connect with Bible stories. Drawing and hands-on activities can bring the story to life in a whole new way. As you read the story in short sections, invite children to draw each scene on strips of paper OR give them clay and let them mold characters or important moments. This helps them visualize the narrative and stay connected from beginning to end.

Scripture Activity 4. Guiding Imaginative Prayer

And while art helps children see the story, a guided imaginative prayer can help them *feel* the story. It allows them to enter the scene in a quiet, prayerful way. Invite children to close their eyes and imagine being there—hearing the sounds, seeing the people, feeling the emotions. Ask them what they notice. Ask what Jesus might be saying to them. This gentle form of Ignatian imaginative prayer helps Scripture become personal and prayerful.

Scripture Activity 5. Exploring Stories Through Stations

Once children have entered the story personally, you can deepen their experience by letting them explore it from different angles. Story stations are a wonderful way to do that. Stations allow children to experience a Bible story in a variety of ways. You might set up a reading corner, a craft table, a reflection question, and a drawing station. Small groups can rotate through the room, discovering the story piece by piece.

Scripture Activity 6. sing Sound and Motion with Younger Children

For younger children, movement and sound bring stories to life. Simple sounds and motions will get them even more involved in the stories of the bible – waving arms like ocean waves, making a whooshing sound for the wind, baa-ing like sheep, and calling out like a shepherd – can be fun interactive moments for young children. Props can help too: sheep headbands, Pentecost flame headbands, or small items to hold up at key moments. This engagement can make stories unforgettable for young children.

Scripture Activity 7. Practicing Children’s Lectio Divina

As children grow, we can begin to introduce them to the prayerful listening of Scripture. Even young children can learn to hear God speaking through His Word and we call this Lectio Divina. Read a short passage slowly and ask: “What word or phrase stood out to you?” “What do you think God is saying to you today?” This simple form of Lectio Divina teaches children that Scripture speaks to them personally.

Scripture Activity 8. Encountering Scripture through Sacred Art

Another meaningful way to help children encounter Scripture is through sacred art. Art invites them to slow down, notice details, and see the story through the eyes of the Church. Show a religious painting, icon, or stained-glass image of a story from the Bible and ask what the children notice. “What emotions do they feel?” What might the artist be teaching?” This builds visual literacy and reverence, and it helps children experience scripture both cognitively and affectively.

Scripture Activity 9. Creating a Mini Mural

As a way of engaging the whole class together, consider having them work on a mini mural to turn a Bible story into a shared work of art. Give each child a piece of the story to draw: a character, an object, a part of the scenery. As you read the story aloud, invite them to add their piece to the mural. By the end, the whole story is displayed as a beautiful, collaborative creation.

Scripture Activity 10. Building Anticipation through Prediction

An effective way to draw children into Bible stories is by encouraging them to make predictions as they listen. While you read aloud, invite them to pause and think ahead. Give them a moment to imagine what might happen next and why. This simple practice builds anticipation, strengthens comprehension, and helps them connect more deeply with the story.

Pause at key moments—right before a surprising event, a character’s decision, or a turning point—and ask the children what they think will come next. Their guesses don’t need to be correct; the value lies in the thinking process. Prediction keeps them actively engaged, sharpens their listening skills, and turns the story into an interactive experience rather than a passive one. By weaving prediction into your storytelling, you transform reading time into a lively, thoughtful conversation that helps children understand the narrative in a more immersive way.

Bible stories are more than lessons—they are encounters. Encounters with God’s love, God’s faithfulness, and God’s presence. When we help children enter these stories with imagination, curiosity, and joy, we give them a gift that can shape their faith for a lifetime and bring them closer to Jesus.

Sharing Bible Stories with Children - Checklist

Bible stories are not just lessons — they are encounters with God's love, mercy, and faithfulness. Use this checklist when planning how you will help children experience Scripture, not just hear about it.

1. Inviting Wonder

- ☐ Have I prepared open-ended “I wonder” questions with no single right answer?
- ☐ Do my wondering questions invite imagination rather than testing recall?

2. Bringing Stories to Life Through Play

- ☐ Have I gathered simple props (scarves, paper crowns, stuffed animals, puppets) for dramatic play?
- ☐ Have I planned a way for children to act out the story themselves, not just watch or listen?

3. Drawing and Creating While Reading

- ☐ Have I planned to read the story in short sections, pausing for a drawing or clay activity?
- ☐ Do I have materials ready (paper strips, clay, art supplies) for this activity?

4. Guiding Imaginative Prayer

- ☐ Have I planned a guided imaginative (Ignatian-style) prayer inviting children to enter the scene with their senses?
- ☐ Have I prepared reflective questions (“What do you notice? What might Jesus be saying to you?”)?

5. Exploring Stories Through Stations

- ☐ Have I set up multiple stations (reading corner, craft table, reflection question, drawing station) for this story?
- ☐ Have I planned how small groups will rotate through the stations?

6. Using Sound and Motion with Younger Children

- ☐ Have I planned simple sounds/motions tied to the story (waves, wind, sheep, shepherd calls)?
- ☐ Have I gathered simple props if needed (headbands, small items to hold up at key moments)?

7. Practicing Children's Lectio Divina

- ☐ Have I chosen a short passage to read slowly, more than once?
- ☐ Have I prepared the questions: “What word or phrase stood out to you?” and “What do you think God is saying to you today?”

8. Encountering Scripture through Sacred Art

- ☐ Have I selected a religious painting, icon, or stained-glass image connected to today's story?

- ☐ Have I prepared questions inviting noticing before explanation (“What do you notice? What emotions do you feel? What might the artist be teaching?”)?

9. Creating a Mini Mural

- ☐ Have I divided the story into pieces (characters, objects, scenery) for each child to draw?
- ☐ Have I planned how the mural will be assembled as the story is read aloud?

10. Building Anticipation through Prediction

- ☐ Have I identified key pause points in the story (before a surprising event, decision, or turning point)?
- ☐ Have I prepared to ask children what they think will happen next at each pause?
- ☐ Am I prepared to affirm the thinking process, regardless of whether their prediction is correct?

Scripture Activity Planner

Use this table to choose which Scripture activity or activities you'll use for today's story.

Bible Story/Passage	
Activity/Activities Chosen	
Materials Needed	
Key Wondering/Reflection Questions	
Pause Points (if using prediction)	

Reminder

Bible stories are more than lessons — they are encounters. Encounters with God's love, God's faithfulness, and God's presence. When we help children enter these stories with imagination, curiosity, and joy, we give them a gift that can shape their faith for a lifetime and bring them closer to Jesus.