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PRACTICES + SKILLS FOR CATECHISTS & EDUCATORS

Video Guide

Sharing Bible Stories with Teens
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Sharing Bible Stories with Teens

Ideas from the Video Presentation

Encountering Living Stories

Sharing Scripture with adolescents is a real privilege. Young people are hungry for meaning, connection, and authenticity, and the Bible offers all of that. As catechists, we're not just reading ancient texts with teens; we're helping them encounter living stories that shape identity, spark curiosity, and invite real relationship with God. Here are some practical, engaging ways to bring Bible stories to life so that adolescents don't just hear Scripture—they experience it.

Activity 1. Making Real Life Connections

Adolescents engage Scripture best when it feels connected to their real lives, their questions, and their emerging sense of identity. Here are several ways to help teens enter Bible stories with depth, curiosity, and personal meaning.

- Start by helping them see how Scripture speaks into the world they inhabit.
- Present a real-life scenario – something involving peer pressure, justice, forgiveness, or courage – and invite them to explore how a particular Bible story sheds light on it.

When teens connect Scripture to what they're experiencing at school, in friendships, or online, the story becomes alive and relevant.

Activity 2. Exploring People in the Bible

You can also invite teens to take a deeper look at the people within the story. A character deep dive encourages them to explore a biblical figure's motivations, flaws, strengths, and moments of growth. When adolescents slow down and really sit with a character, they begin to see Scripture not as distant history but as a collection of very human stories—full of emotion, conflict, and transformation.

Adolescents resonate with imperfect heroes—people like Peter, David, or Mary Magdalene—because they see their own struggles reflected in them. These figures wrestled with doubt, fear, impulsiveness, and purpose, just like teens do. When young people recognize that even the great saints and leaders of our faith had complicated journeys, it opens the door for honest conversation, deeper empathy, and a more personal connection to the story.

Activity 3. Creatively Interpreting the Bible

Creativity is another powerful doorway into Scripture. Ask teens to retell a Bible story through a short video, an interview, or a mini-podcast episode. These creative projects help them interpret the story in their own voice and discover layers of meaning they might otherwise miss. Creating illustrations, drawing graphic novels or painting mini murals encourages adolescents to process the scripture stories with a deeper meaning and more space for reflection.

Activity 4. Hosting Scripture Debates

For teens who enjoy debate and discussion, consider hosting Scripture debates. Assign different characters or viewpoints and let teens wrestle with a moral question raised by the story. Encourage them to step into the shoes of their character—what might this person fear, hope for, or misunderstand? How would they defend their choices or challenge someone else's?

This kind of dialogue not only builds critical thinking but also helps teens see Scripture as dynamic, complex, and deeply human. When they argue from a character's perspective, they begin to notice nuances they might have missed before: conflicting motivations, ethical tension, or the emotional weight behind a decision. Debate becomes a path to empathy, imagination, and a richer understanding of the story's message.

Activity 5. Finding Your Mission in Scripture

You can also invite adolescents to choose a Scripture passage that speaks to their purpose or mission—something that expresses who they hope to become or what they feel called to stand for. This can be a verse that comforts them, challenges them, or names a value they want to grow into. When teens select a passage themselves, they begin to see Scripture not as something handed to them, but as something they can claim and carry.

Encourage them to illustrate the passage they've chosen or create a **visual reflection**—a drawing, a collage, a digital graphic, or even a symbolic image that captures the heart of the verse. The creative process helps them slow down, sit with the words, and notice what stirs within them.

This practice helps them see Scripture as a companion in their discernment—a steady voice they can return to as they navigate questions they are confronted with every day. Over time, these chosen passages can become touchstones that remind them of who they are becoming and the God who walks with them.

Activity 6. Exploring the Context of a Bible Story

Finally, after reading a Bible story together, give teens the opportunity to explore the historical, cultural, or political context behind it. Study bibles or biblical commentaries will offer this information.

Understanding the world of the text often transforms how youth interpret the story. Once they've learned this background, ask them to reflect again: "What do you notice now?" "What changes for you?" This deeper dive helps them see Scripture not simply as history, but as a living story with real depth and relevance.

Creating Space for Encounter

As you continue sharing Scripture with the young people entrusted to you, remember that your role is not to have all the answers, but to create space for encounter. Adolescents are discovering who they are and who God is, and your presence, patience, and creativity help open doors that Scripture can walk through. When you invite them to wonder, question, imagine, and wrestle with the stories of our faith, you're helping them build a relationship with God that is honest and alive. These practices can support you as you guide teens to see the Bible not just as a book to study, but as a living story that speaks into their own stories.

Sharing Bible Stories with Teens - Checklist

Adolescents are hungry for meaning, connection, and authenticity — and Scripture offers all three. Use this checklist when planning how you will help teens encounter Bible stories as living stories, not just ancient texts, remembering that your role is to create space for encounter, not to have all the answers.

1. Making Real-Life Connections

- ☐ Have I identified a real-life scenario (peer pressure, justice, forgiveness, courage) connected to today's Bible story?
- ☐ Have I planned how to invite teens to explore how the story speaks into their world — school, friendships, or online life?

2. Exploring People in the Bible

- ☐ Have I chosen a biblical figure for a character deep dive (motivations, flaws, strengths, growth)?
- ☐ Have I planned to highlight this figure's imperfections (doubt, fear, impulsiveness) so teens can see themselves in them?
- ☐ Have I prepared space for honest conversation once teens recognize the character's complicated journey?

3. Creatively Interpreting the Bible

- ☐ Short video retelling
- ☐ Interview format
- ☐ Mini-podcast episode
- ☐ Illustration, graphic novel panel, or mini mural

4. Hosting Scripture Debates

- ☐ Have I identified a moral question or tension raised by today's story?
- ☐ Have I assigned characters or viewpoints for teens to argue from?
- ☐ Have I prepared guiding questions (What might this person fear, hope for, or misunderstand? How would they defend their choices?)?

5. Finding Your Mission in Scripture

- ☐ Have I planned time for teens to choose a passage that speaks to their own purpose or mission?
- ☐ Have I offered a visual reflection option (drawing, collage, digital graphic, symbolic image)?
- ☐ Have I framed this as something teens can claim and carry, not just something handed to them?

6. Exploring the Context of a Bible Story

- ☐ Have I gathered study Bible notes or commentary on the historical, cultural, or political context of today's story?
- ☐ Have I planned follow-up reflection questions after sharing this context (“What do you notice now? What changes for you?”)?

Creating Space for Encounter

- ☐ Am I approaching this session as creating space for encounter, rather than needing to have all the answers?
- ☐ Have I built in room for teens to wonder, question, imagine, and wrestle with the story?

Scripture Activity Planner

Use this table to plan today's Scripture session with adolescents.

Bible Story/Passage	
Real-Life Connection	
Activity/Activities Chosen	
Materials/Technology Needed	
Key Reflection Questions	

Reminder

Your role is not to have all the answers, but to create space for encounter. Adolescents are discovering who they are and who God is, and your presence, patience, and creativity help open doors that Scripture can walk through.