

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING IN WORSHIP AND EDUCATION

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN



This is a sample outline of a lesson plan that can be used for each story in the book *The Power of Storytelling in Worship and Education*. It establishes a routine that creates a helpful environment for learning (as described in Tip 12 in the book) and is intended as a starting point. Those who have purchased the book may duplicate this lesson plan as needed for use in their own congregation or with their own group.

THINKING TIME

(a time for teachers to listen and for children to critically reflect internally or out loud)

All of these questions can be shared individually, or in pairs or triads first, then shared with the whole group. Working in pairs increases collaboration skills. Read (or repeat) the story, to refresh memories.

1. Encourage listening skills. Ask these questions as they apply to the specific story.
 - ✦ “Tell me about the story.” (Ask the children to re-tell the story.)
 - ✦ List key words on newsprint as the children share the story, for use later as the story is processed.

2. Encourage problem-solving skills.
 - ✦ “What problems did the main characters face in the story?”
 - ✦ “Have you ever experienced something like this? Can you tell us about it?”
 - ✦ If a character in the story goes through changes: “Describe the changes.”
 - ✦ *Clarify the difference between facts and opinions.* When it comes to debating *facts* (such as how tall are you), the fact with more evidence is correct; when it comes to *opinions* (such as, which colour is prettier), there may be different points of view and different answers. Is this a case of debating fact or opinion? Why? Describe another example of different opinions.
 - ✦ Can you share an example of when you chose something in your life? Describe what it felt like.
 - ✦ Can you share an example of when a choice was made *for you*? Describe what it felt like.
3. Encourage self-awareness and other-awareness (being aware of thoughts and feelings).
 - ✦ Describe how you felt as you heard the story.
 - ✦ Describe how each character might have felt.
 - ✦ What did you like (or dislike) about the story? Why?
 - ✦ How do you feel after hearing the story?
 - ✦ Describe what you thought about as you heard the story.
 - ✦ What do you think each character in the story was thinking?
 - ✦ What were you thinking about when you listened to the story?
4. If a character in the story goes through changes ...
 - ✦ “Describe what changed in the story from the beginning to the end.”
 - ✦ “Describe how the character might have felt during the changes.”

- ✿ “What feelings changed?”
 - ✿ “What feelings stayed the same?”
5. Encourage analytical skills (being aware of consequences).
 - ✿ Identify an action and ask, “What was the effect of the character’s actions?”
 - ✿ What do you think is the purpose of the story?
 - ✿ What questions do you have about the story?
 6. Encourage imagination.
 - ✿ What do you think could happen next if the story had continued?

ACTION TIME

(to encourage varied perspectives, teamwork, memory, creativity, movement)

7. Create a play; act out the story. Do this several times to allow children to play different roles, to gain different perspectives. You will be amazed at how fruitful (and fun) this activity can be.

SHARING TIME

(to encourage communication, collaboration, and appreciation of varied perspectives)

8. Did you think of any new questions after playing different parts from different points of view?
9. Did you discover any new feelings after playing different parts from different points of view?

ACTION TIME

(to encourage creativity, individually or in teams)

These activities can be done as a whole group, or in pairs or small groups. They could all work on drawings at the same time, progressing through the suggested list; or each group could be given a different assignment.

10. Draw a picture about the story.
11. Write a poem about the story. (If the group hasn’t learned to write yet, they could speak the lines as the teacher writes them on newsprint.)
12. Create a craft project about the story.

SHARING TIME

(to build a sense of group identity and a point of entry for newcomers)

13. Invite children to share the pictures, poems, or projects with a friend in the class by telling a story about it (take turns). Ask children to explain their creative work and how it retells the story.
14. Take a series of pictures (individual and group poses) of the children and their projects. Add this to an ongoing wall of pictures, or to a scrapbook of pictures, which in the future can be the source of stories to share for reflection, or as a way of welcoming a new class member.
15. Conclude with, “What will you remember about this story?”

PRAYER TIME

(to secure the day’s learning in our religious roots)

16. “Thank you, God, for this special story and for the special stories we each bring to the group, and for what we learn when we share.”
17. Invite children to add their own comment to the prayer.
18. Conclude with, “Thank you, God, for listening to our own stories as we listen to your stories about Jesus, Creation, and about caring for all the living beings in your beautiful world.”