

How to Connect with Older Elementary Students

Introduction

Technique One: _____ Storytelling

- Two people tell a story together, alternating speaking parts. They take turns playing the part of different story characters while the story is told.
- This technique takes a little extra time and effort, but the results are worth it!
- Variation—Two people act out a discussion. For example, two actors could play the two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-34), or the two spies in Jericho (Joshua 2). They carry on their conversation in a dialogue that the audience gets to witness!

Technique Two: _____ Storytelling

- Write down the story, leaving out some key words.
- Fill-in the blanks with suggestions from the audience.

Technique Three: _____ Retelling (Matthew 25:1-13)

- Find connections between the biblical story and the lives of your listeners.
- Retell the Bible story by changing the place, events, or characters to make the story more contemporary.
- Instead of going out to meet the bridegroom, the girls could be . . .
- Instead of forgetting to buy oil, they could have forgotten to . . .
- Instead of being locked out of the wedding, they could be denied . . .

What Is This Story Similar To?

"The Four Soils" (Luke 8:4-15)

• **Story Summary**—Ask, "What is this story about?" In this story, a farmer scatters seeds along the path. Only a small percentage of the seeds take root and produce fruit. The other seeds are eaten, trampled, or choked out.

• **Story Similarity**—Ask, "What (in today's world) is this story like?" This is similar to . . . sending out an e-mail message with a link to a great new web site. Some of your friends delete the message, others ignore it, still others save it but never read it. Only those who take the time to read it and apply it (by logging on) will benefit.

• **Story Starter**—Once upon a time, there was a kid who discovered a great new web site where he could download some of the coolest games on the web for free. He decided to let his friends know about this new site by e-mailing each of them the link to the site. . . .

"The Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:25-37)

• **Story Summary**—Ask, "What is this story about?" In this story, a hurting man is ignored by two religious leaders and then helped by someone who would typically be his enemy.

• **Story Similarity**—Ask, "What (in today's world) is this story like?" This is similar to . . .

• **Story Starter**—

Tell a Story from an Object's Point of View

- **Elijah's cloak** tells of his adventures with the famous prophet and his young apprentice; "I still remember the day he slipped me on...."
- The **book of the law** that had been lost and forgotten tells what it was like to be found and read once again; "It was dark and lonely. I didn't think anyone would ever read me again. But then one day, the lights went on...."
- The **sandals that didn't wear out** share their version of the Israelite's trek through the wilderness; "Whew! You wouldn't believe the smell of some of those feet! ..."
- **David's slingshot** recalls what it was like to be used to slay the giant; "Yeah, Dave was my owner, alright. And we had lots of adventures...."
- **Moses' staff** shares about the plagues and miracles; "O' Mo and I, we go way back! We first met when he started working as a shepherd out there in the hills...."

Technique Four: Reader's _____

- This technique is easy, fun, and engaging for students.
- Choose volunteers who are comfortable and confident being onstage.
- Variation—Read part of the story and then tell part of the story.

Technique Five: _____ Storytelling

- Ask yourself how a story might have ended. Look for ways to use this technique to spark interest and discussion.
- Take children by surprise when you tell this type of story. Let them start thinking, "That's not the way that story is supposed to go . . . is it?"
- Variation—Pretend you're a TV reporter. Pull out your imaginary microphone and briefly interview students. You can poke fun at your own story, create interactive sections to the story, or provide an interlude between stories. You can even have one person pretend to be a Bible character and interview her!

Technique Six: _____

- Tell the story from the point of view of one of the characters in the story.
- Don't limit yourself to people! You can also tell a story from the perspective of God, Satan, angels, demons, animals, and even objects!
- Variation—As you tell a story, one person from the audience calls out a different character or emotion. You immediately take on that character's personality (or the new emotion) and continue telling the story. It can be a little tricky, but it's lots of fun!

Technique Seven: Spontaneous _____

- Volunteers act out the story as it is told (or read).
- Notice how each character has a specific time to be onstage, and something active to do. When they're done with their part, they leave the stage until they're brought back onstage by the continuing action of the story.