



Sharable Parables: Creative Storytelling Explosion!

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Instructor: Steven James

In this workshop you will:

- Discover creative ways of incorporating chants, rhymes and movement in your storytelling.
- Retell six of Jesus' parables with audience involvement, creative dramatics and active participation.
- Identify the underlying message, patterns and narrative devices Jesus used.
- Learn four storytelling methods that emphasize effective use of audience participation.

1. F _____ T _____ M _____ P _____

2. D _____ P _____

3. Ask yourself, "What's going on in this story?"

a. A _____ -- Could we _____ out part of this story?

b. C _____ -- Could we _____ them?

c. P _____ -- Could we _____ events as they occur?

1. **The Good Samaritan** (based on Luke 10:30-37) -- An example of *Call And Response Storytelling*

- Cue the audience so people know when to do their part.
- Make the refrain funny and appropriate.
- Add your own flavor, style, and personality to the story.
- NOTES:

2. **The Four Soils** (based on Matthew 13:1-9) -- An example of *Narrative Pantomime*

- Look for stories with little dialogue and lots of action. Edit out long sections of dialogue.
- Use actors in unexpected ways. Surprise the audience.
- Pause after every action verb to allow the performers enough time to do the action.
- Respond to what's happening on stage. Whatever happens, use it.
- NOTES:



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3. **The Orchard Owner** (based on Mark 12:1-9) -- An example Of *Group Refrain Storytelling*
 - a. Make each group's part is fun and meaningful.
 - b. Pause after saying the "cue" word so the actors have time to say or do their part.
 - c. Make sure each group does its part about the same number of times.
 - d. NOTES:

4. **Creatures of the Night** (based on Luke 11:23-26) -- An example of a *Contemporary Retelling*
 - a. Tell the story in your own words.
 - b. Connect the story to the listeners' lives. Look for parallels in the world of your students. Add more than just a contemporary setting, strive to convey the mood and impact of the original.
 - c. Help them understand the application and relevance of the Gospel in their lives today.
 - d. NOTES:

5. **The Lost Coin** (based on Luke 15:8-10) -- An example of *Organic Storytelling*
 - a. Use the suggestions of the audience.
 - b. Stay within the framework of the story but use your imagination to explore possibilities.
 - c. Limit the responses and your reaction to them (for example, make them rhyme).
 - d. NOTES:

6. **The Lost Sheep** (based on Luke 15:1-7) -- An Example of *Banter and Puppetry*
 - a. A realistic puppet always looks at whomever he or she is speaking to.
 - b. A realistic puppet opens his or her mouth only when speaking.
 - c. A realistic puppet is always moving.
 - d. NOTES:



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Additional Ideas

7. **The Arrival of the Wise Guys** (based on Matthew 2:1-12) – An example of *Reader's Theater*
 - a. Copy a script for each reader.
 - b. Highlight each person's part.
 - c. Cross off every unneeded word.
 - d. NOTES:

8. **The Birth of Jesus** (based on Luke 2:1-20) -- An example of a *Audience Participation Storytelling*
 - a. Cue the children on what to say (or do) and when to say (or do) it.
 - b. Repeat sounds and patterns to help the children better remember the story.
 - c. Pause long enough for the children to say (or do) their parts.
 - d. NOTES:

9. **Big Bad Naaman's Big Bad Bath** (based on 2 Kings 5) -- An example of a *Storymime*
 - a. Demonstrate to the children how to respond to the storytelling by doing the movements or wearing the masks.
 - b. Pause after every action verb to allow time for your partner (and the listeners) to act out what's happening in the story.
 - c. Keep the stories short enough to engage your listeners and keep their attention.
 - d. NOTES:

Questions to ask:

- What is the main message of this story?
- How could I use this story with THIS group of children?
- What changes (in wording, content, or order) are natural to make to the story?
- How could I include music in this story?
- How could I retell the story to allow for creative movement or expression?
- Does the story include rhythms or rhymes I can use?
- How could I actively include participation in this story?
- How can the suggestions of the children help me to retell this story?
- What are some appropriate variations I could make to this story, to make it easier to tell?



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15 Sure-fire Ways To Mess Up Any Audience Participation Story

1. Demand that everyone join in. If the children don't feel comfortable or safe joining in, make them do it anyway! Be sure to embarrass those who don't.
2. Don't bother to teach the audience what to do, when to do it, or when to stop. They should be able to figure that stuff out on their own if they'd just pay closer attention!
3. Plan plenty of embarrassing actions that will be offensive to members of your audience.
4. Expect the audience to do everything perfectly the first time through. Cringe, scream, cry, beat your chest, throw a tantrum and run off to each chocolate if they don't.
5. When you're done, never do a cool-down activity. Leave the children wild and rowdy. Parents will love you for it!
6. Use audience participation techniques in lieu of story preparation. As long as you have lots of stuff to do during the story, you don't need to do a quality job of telling the story!
7. If children have settled in comfortably, be sure to ask them to stand up and sit down repeatedly throughout your performance. It won't be distracting!
8. Never cue the audience by nodding your head to them, pausing, or signaling in some way for them to join you. They should be able to read your mind and know precisely when you want them to participate.
9. If you make a mistake or forget a section of your story, break into tears, apologize profusely, run from the stage, and never tell another story again.
10. Make certain that all story refrains are difficult, long, and confusing. This way the audience will be forced to pay better attention.
11. If you hand out props, become angry if they get damaged, lost, or become a distraction during the story.
12. When you invite volunteers up front, never introduce them to the audience, make them stand onstage for a long time with nothing to do, and then tell them to sit down because they weren't needed!
13. Use plenty of fingerplays, felt-board stories, nursery rhymes, and picture books with pre-teens. They love acting like kindergartners in front of their friends!
14. When receiving suggestions from the audience, point out the stupidest ideas and invite everyone to laugh at the person who offered them.
15. Most importantly of all, make sure the point of the story doesn't come across clearly! Remember, you want the audience to remember your gimmicks rather than your story!