

Lesson 4: “The STORY I Tell”

A Facilitator’s Guide for Mid-Elementary to Adult Bible Classes

I. Welcome & Prayer (5 mins)

II. Ice-Breaker Questions (no more than 2-3 mins)

- Who has a funny story about something that happened just this morning (or in the last few days)?

III. Discussion & Application (30-35 mins) – write comments on the board to build momentum & reflection.

- You may only get to 3 of the 4 questions. No problem. Choose the ones that are most important for your class or adjust on the fly. Focus on prompts that are provoking stories. Once the stories dry up or have produced an environment where everyone feels their own story, move on to the next question. The goal is inspiration and transformation, which come when one person has learned from another and is ready to share their own story.

1. Let’s see if we can tell the story of the Bible as a class, writing on the board as many major characters and events in order from the 66 books as possible. **(7-10 mins)**
 - a. Follow up: Can anyone tell an abbreviated version of this story without looking at the board?
2. What is the main narrative(s) in the world today? Who is in charge of that narrative? What are the truths and falsehoods in this worldly narrative? **(7-10 mins)**
 - a. Prompt: Who are the heroes/villains in the world’s eyes? What do these heroes/villains do that make them good/bad? What is the plot and end of the story, according to the world?
3. How do we as a church and bible class fit into the story of God? If we did not exist (like on *It’s a Wonderful Life*), how specifically would our homes, community, schools, jobs be any different? What positive contribution have we as a church and bible class made to God’s story? **(7-10 mins)**
4. Does anyone know their own spiritual journey well enough to share it with us in 1-2 minutes? **(5 mins)**
 - a. Prompts: How would your story be different without God? How would God’s story be different without you?

IV. Application (2-3 mins to explain and make sure everyone understands):

Believe: Write out your own version of the story of the Bible from Gen-Rev on 1 page (so it’s easy to memorize). For additional challenges, write out the Gospel story (Jesus’s death, burial, & resurrection) and your own faith story (see detailed instructions under “Lesson Outline for Individual Study”) on a page.

Act: Live out this month as though you are a supporting actor in the story of God. Let your words, actions, and plans draw others to the words, actions, and plans of God in the larger world and in their own lives.

Teach: Share your own summary of the Bible from Gen to Rev with someone this month. For additional challenges: share the gospel story and your faith story with a friend, family member, or stranger. Post your stories on [College Church Chat](#) to encourage all of us.

Lesson Outline for Bible Class (Birth to Mid-Elementary)

Believe: Share some of the major characters & events in the biblical story from Gen to Rev—e.g. Adam/Eve (Eden & sin), Noah & family (flood), Abraham (promise of Canaan), Moses and Joshua (10 commandments and entering Canaan), Ruth & David (kingdom & good kings), Manasseh (bad kings and exile), Ezra & Neh & Esther (return from exile), Mary & Jesus (a new, good king), the apostles & Paul (the church & coming heaven). You can have the kids put pics in order to tell the story several times until they know it.

Act: You can sing songs & use hand gestures to teach some of the events (*creation* of the world [circle hands up], then *fall* of the world into sin [drop hands down], *flood* waters [fingers wave & move up], promise to the *nations* [hands go out to the side]). Talk about the good & bad examples in the story & how we can live like the good characters & avoid the bad. Let each kid choose 1 character to imitate this week.

Teach: Take turns having each child recall 1 thing they remember from class. See if they can share or act out what it would look like to imitate that character at home, school, & in public this week. Bonus points if they tell their parents which character they are going to imitate. Ask them the following week how it went.

Lesson Outline for Small Groups & Families

Believe: Begin the study by sharing your favorite Bible character/story. Then, let others take turns sharing their favorites. Discuss why these became your favorites, and how your lives have been modeled after them.

Act: Write out your own small group/family version of the story of the Bible from Gen-Rev on 1 page (so that you can memorize it). For additional challenges, write out the gospel story of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection and your own family's/small group's faith story.

Teach: Take turns sharing the story of the Bible in under 3 mins, the gospel story in 1 min, and your family/group's faith story in 2-3 mins.

Lesson Outline for Individual Study

Believe: Write out your spiritual journey. Take a sheet of paper and plot out significant moments in your life across time with dots. Place the dots high or low based on how they have impacted your spirituality. Be sure to include events, people, books, choices, and anything else that contributed to these pivotal moments in life. Connect the dots to reveal how far you've come spiritually. Finish the chart with dots indicating where you want to be spiritually in the future & how you plan to get there (books, prayer, people, choices, etc.).

Act: Begin to fulfill your spiritual growth plan by taking 1 new step each week this month.

Teach: Share your spiritual journey with a family member or friend this month. Be open to hearing their story, if they are ready and willing to share.

Additional Scriptures & Discussion Questions for Weeks 2-5 (Bible Class, Small Groups, Families, or Individual Study)

General Prompts

1. What is the world teaching us to believe or not believe about God's story and our own? How is the world teaching us this? What difference does it make if we believe the narrative(s) of the world?
2. What makes the story of the Bible different from other stories in the world—whether it be stories in movies/tv, books, or told by other religious groups?
3. What *resources* have helped you know, live, & share the story of the Bible and your own spiritual story?
4. What part of the story of the Bible (or individual stories) do you wish your life was more like? How is your life better than certain scenes in the Bible? What can we learn from all of this?
5. What can we say to those who are having a hard time seeing a connection between the biblical narrative and their own life—they don't see an active, loving God, involved in their own life story right now?

Specific Weeks

*You can study these lessons in any order; however, there is a specific Christmas lesson ("week 4").

Week 1: Summarizing the Story of the Old Testament—Read Ps 136, Neh 9, Acts 7, & Heb 11. What are the basic elements in these summaries of the Old Testament? What is missing that you think is important in the OT story? Can you tell the OT story in your own words using major characters and events? Who are the audiences of these 4 accounts and do we have occasion to share the biblical story with these same types of audiences? Have you shared the OT story as a whole with anyone lately; if so, with whom & on what occasion? Can we as a group/family summarize the OT story with hand gestures or a song so that we can remember it and say it out loud? What are some benefits to knowing how to summarize the OT story?

Week 2: Summarizing the Gospel of the New Testament—Read 1 Cor 15:1-8 and Acts 2:22-36 (you could read the actual accounts of the death, burial, and resurrection from Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John for additional material). What are the basic elements in telling the Gospel story? Can you tell the Gospel story in 1 minute? Can you draw the Gospel story on paper for someone to visualize? Can you sing the Gospel story? What is so good about the good news (and what is the bad news)? What is the proper response to the Gospel or good news? Have you responded to it like that? What are some effective ways of sharing the good news with others? What is a benefit to reminding those who are already Christians about the Gospel?

Week 3: Telling Your Spiritual Journey—Read Acts 9:1-31; 22:1-21; 26:1-32. How many times does Paul recount his own conversion story and to whom does he recount it? What does Paul include in his conversion story that we might want to include in ours? What does Paul not include that we typically include? How long does it take to read Paul's conversion story? Can we share our conversion story in a similar amount of time? What is your conversion story? Who have you told it to in your lifetime? Under what conditions could you see sharing your conversion story before rulers today? How would you do it? What do you expect would happen?

Week 4: The Nativity Story—Read Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2. What had you never noticed about the story of Jesus's birth? What part has always been your favorite? What was your birth story like? What difference can a baby make to a family? What difference did Jesus make to his own family? What difference did Jesus make in his own hometown? What difference did Jesus make on the Jews awaiting a messiah (healer, priest, prophet, king, savior)? What difference did Jesus make on the rest of the world, including you and me today? What difference can you and I make as children of God today?

Week 5: Telling the World's Story—Read Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 plus one or two more chapters of your choosing from Eccl. How does the story of life go—from the beginning, to the middle, to the end—in a Godless narrative? What can we expect in this life without God? What can we expect in this life with God? What have we contributed to the story of God? What has God contributed to our story? What is the good news in these passages from Ecclesiastes? What is the bad news? How would our small group/family summarize the narrative of the world—from beginning to middle to end? How different is our story from the story told by the world? How can we help others see the differences in the narratives out there and encourage them to participate in the story of God rather than the story of the world?