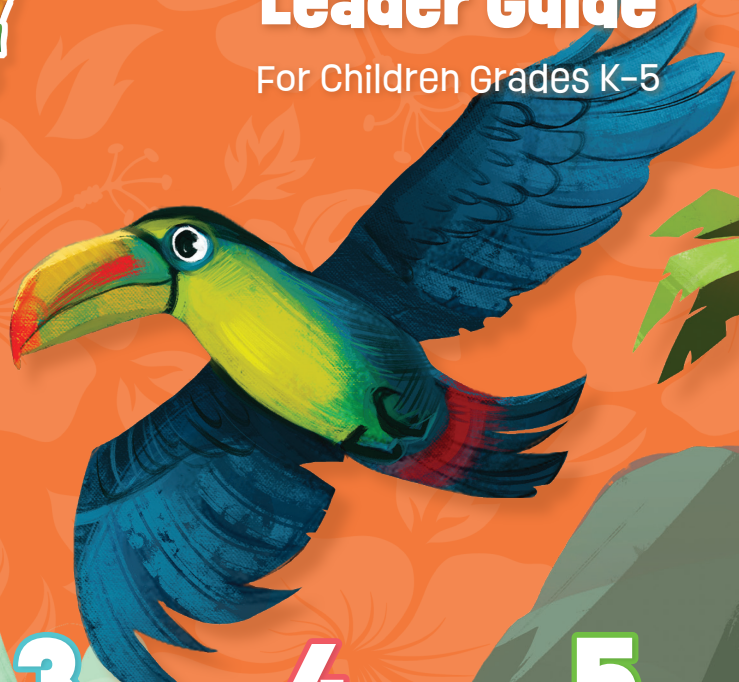




Elementary Storytelling Leader Guide

For Children Grades K-5



1



God Saves Baby Moses

Exodus 1:8-14, 22;
2:1-10

**God finds me
when I have
troubles.**

**Call upon Me
in the day
of trouble;
I will
deliver you.**

Psalm 50:15

2



Ruth and Naomi

Book of Ruth

**God finds me
when I'm
lonely.**

**Fear not,
for I am
with you.**

Isaiah 41:10

3



Jesus and Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

**God finds me
when I'm
lost.**

**You are
precious in
My eyes . . .
and I love you.**

Isaiah 43:4

4



Jesus Rises from the Dead

Luke 24:1-12

**God finds me
when I think
there's no hope.**

**You, O Lord,
are my hope,
my trust.**

Psalm 71:5

5



Jesus Appears to Paul

Acts 9:1-19

**God finds me,
no matter
my sin.**

**Christ Jesus
came into
the world to
save sinners.**

1 Timothy 1:15

Elementary Storytelling Leader Basics

How Does Elementary Storytelling Work at VBS?

One of the sites kids visit after the Opening is Elementary Storytelling. Kids move in Teams—groups of five or six kids with one Team Leader. Ask your Director how many Teams will visit your site each rotation and how many rotations you will do each day.

What You Do

- Share God’s Word with the children, helping them discover how the Bible account applies to their everyday lives. Though the site is called Storytelling, these are not made-up stories—they are the true Word of God! Every day, children will hear about the Father’s love for them in Jesus Christ. Storytelling is engaging, memorable, active, and fun!
- Decorate this site, asking others to help.
- Share the Take-Home Point with actions.
- Direct and lead Storytelling activities.
- Supervise Teams as they review the Bible story and do activities in the *Elementary Leaflets*.

Prepare

Read the accounts from the Bible, the five lessons in this guide, and the Leader Devotions so you can accurately and engagingly share the Word of God. Ask your Director for access to these and other materials from the *Director Guide*, the *Director USB*, or the online digital content center.

Pray

Ask God to bless your work and to prepare the hearts of the children and the families you will reach. Pray that the Holy Spirit would work through His Word to create and sustain faith.

Look the Part

Each day, a prop or costume may be suggested to help capture kids’ interest. You can add your own ideas as well. Be creative!

Recruit Help

Having helpers to handle props and assist Team Leaders makes for a smoother presentation. Practice beforehand so each person knows his or her part. Middle or high schoolers make great Site Helpers!

Show Enthusiasm

Be an active, involved, enthusiastic storyteller! Use lots of voice inflection and dramatic gestures in your presentations. As you tell these exciting Bible accounts, keep kids interested by using props and moving around the area. Help kids hear, see, touch, smell, move, think, and feel. Children learn and remember best by using all these God-given senses for learning.

Role of Team Leaders

Team Leaders develop relationships with the children in their groups and work to keep them involved, focused, and connected. At Storytelling, they lead their Teams as you request. They also use the “Elementary Leaflet Guide” found at the end of each lesson (also on the *Director USB* and in the digital content center) to direct children through the *Elementary Leaflets*, if you choose to use them at this site.

Site Setup and Decorating

- Transforming your area into a tropical island is a breeze! Try one or more of these ideas. Use green plastic tablecloths, fabric, and backdrops to cover walls and tables. Add silk greenery or hang premade *Tropical Leaf Decorations* and *Tropical Flower Decorations*. Make a dormant volcano by covering a pile of boxes with green fabric and flowers. Create a plumeria grove by twisting craft paper into branches and adding tissue-paper flowers. Pile craft-paper boulders or drape a gray tarp over a large box to make a cave. Use a long piece of blue fabric to make a winding river leading down to the sandy canvas-tarp beach. Don’t forget to use the fun images on the *Decorating Posters*!
- Hang the Elementary Storytelling Site Sign (available on the *Decorating Posters*) near the entrance to the room.

Take-Home Point

Each day has a new Take-Home Point. You will say the Take-Home Point and Teams will respond, “**Jesus came to seek and to save!**” using these actions: **Jesus came** (point index finger to palm of each hand, then make beckoning motion) **to seek** (hold hand above eyes, looking around) **and to save** (form a cross with both forearms)!

We want to know what you think!

Fill out a survey at cph.org/vbsfeedback. Thank you!



Lesson 1

God Saves Baby Moses

Exodus 1:8–14, 22; 2:1–10

Take-Home Point: God finds me when I have troubles.

Bible Memory Verse: Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you. Psalm 50:15

Preparing for the Lesson

Bible Points to Emphasize

Bible Background: Each of the exciting Bible narratives you will share with the kids at VBS shows how God seeks and finds us in every situation we encounter in life.

The people of Israel were God's special people. They were the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons, rescued his family during a famine by bringing them to Egypt, where they remained for around four hundred years. Jacob's family grew to be a large nation of over a million people, and the pharaoh became afraid of them. Pharaoh tried to control them by making them slaves and mistreating them. He even commanded that every Israelite boy that was born should be killed.

Trusting that God would care for him, Moses' mother placed him in a basket in the Nile. God moved Pharaoh's daughter to adopt Moses as her own. Later, God would work through Moses to free His people from slavery in Egypt.

Law: Sin and evil in the world cause suffering and threaten our safety.

Gospel: Our heavenly Father sees the troubles we are experiencing, and He cares. He intervenes to help and save us.

Island Connection: *Winding river.* Rapids, waterfalls, crocodiles—troubles abound in island rivers and in life! God knows our troubles, and He cares. He helps and saves us.

Jesus came to seek and to save! God saw the troubles of His people in Egypt. He saved Moses' life and delivered His people from their troubles. God finds us in our troubles too. He sees our struggles, and He cares. He helps us and saves us from our greatest troubles through Jesus.

Supply List

Materials for Storytelling

- Bible for yourself and each Team Leader
- Twelve "Trouble Squares" kids can stand on (these can be pieces of cardstock or poster board that you will write on; see "Getting Ready" below)
- Basket with a baby doll in it
- Small container of colored pencils for each group (if using *Elementary Leaflets*)

Leader Costume

- None needed

Getting Ready

- Read Exodus 1:8–14, 22; 2:1–10; "Bible Points to Emphasize"; and the Lesson 1 Leader Devotion (ask your Director for a copy of the Leader Devotions).
- Review the lesson and practice.
- Prepare twelve "Trouble Squares." Write an unusual "trouble" in red marker on the back of nine of the squares (e.g., BEAR ATTACK, SHIP SUNK, CRUSHED BY MONSTER TRUCK). Write SAFE in green marker on the back of the other three squares.
- Place the twelve "Trouble Squares" blank side up on the floor in the Storytelling area, making a grid of three rows of four squares each. One square in each row should be a SAFE square.
- If you are using the *Elementary Leaflets* at this site, photocopy the "Elementary Leaflet Guide" (found at the end of this lesson) or print it out from the digital content center, and give copies to Team Leaders.

Bible Story Experience

Welcome the children. If children are in Teams, show Leaders where their Team should sit.

Hello, everyone! I'm [your name]. I'm so glad to see you all. Welcome to Bible Storytelling, where we'll learn about Jesus, who came to seek and to save the lost. Do you know which lost people Jesus came to find? Listen to responses. We'll talk about that a lot this week and learn how much God loves us.

Take-Home Point

At Vacation Bible School, we have a special way to remind one another that Jesus came to seek and to save us. I'll say our Take-Home Point for the day, then we will all say, "Jesus came to seek and to save!" using these actions: Jesus came (*point index finger to palm of each hand, then make beckoning motion*) **to seek** (*hold hand above eyes, looking around*) **and to save** (*form a cross with both forearms*)!

Today we're learning that GOD FINDS ME WHEN I HAVE TROUBLES.

TEAMS: JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE!

Lead into the Bible Story

We're going to start with "The Troubles" game. Only one player will make it safely through "The Troubles" today! Let's see who it is. Choose four kids and tell them to pick a square in the first row to stand on. Ask each player, one at a time, to pick up their square, turn it over, and read it. Repeat what they say so everyone can hear it. If the square has a red trouble, the player sits down on the square and doesn't move on. If the square is a green safe spot, the player puts it down with the writing side up, then picks a new square in the next row and stands on it. Choose three new kids to pick a remaining square from the second row and stand on it. Have each kid in the second row read their square and either sit (trouble square) or move on (safe square). Repeat once more for the final row to see who stays safe from trouble! Have all kids sit back down with their groups.

These aren't the kinds of troubles we face every day, but we do have lots of other troubles. Can you name a few? Listen to responses. No matter what our troubles are, God finds us and helps us!

Tell the Bible Story

The people of Israel in today's Bible account had huge troubles! They'd been living in Egypt peacefully for many years, but a new king decided he didn't like them. What kind of things can a king do if he

doesn't like you? Listen to responses. This king, called Pharaoh, put strict bosses in charge of the people and forced them to do very hard work. He made them slaves. But the people of Israel grew stronger.

Pharaoh was worried the Israelites might decide to fight him, so he made a new, evil rule. He ordered that every baby boy born to the people of Israel must be thrown into the Nile River. He wanted these boys to die so they wouldn't grow up to be strong men. What do you think about that?

For this next part, I'm going to need four actresses. Assign girls to act as Moses' mom, Miriam, Pharaoh's daughter, and a servant as you read the story. This story involves a lot of watching, and we'll all do that by using our binoculars. When I say "WATCH," use your hands as binoculars to watch with me. Practice.

There was an Israelite woman who had a baby boy. She decided to WATCH for trouble and hide her baby boy, Moses, for three months. When she couldn't hide Moses anymore, she made a special basket and put him in it. She hid the basket in tall grass that grew in the river and walked away. Place baby in the basket. But she left someone to WATCH Moses.

Miriam, baby Moses' older sister, stood at a distance to WATCH baby Moses. Miriam was amazed at what happened next! Pharaoh's daughter, a princess of Egypt, came to the river for a bath. All Miriam could do was WATCH as the princess spotted the floating basket and sent her servant to get it. Miriam was happy to WATCH the kind smile on the princess's face when she saw the baby in the basket. The princess wanted to raise the baby as her own! Now let's all WATCH what Miriam did next. She ran up to the princess and said that she knew someone who could nurse the baby for the princess. The princess was grateful and even paid Moses' own mom—without knowing she was his mom—to nurse baby Moses. Have everyone applaud the actresses.

Isn't that amazing? Pharaoh planned for this baby boy to die. How did God work to save and help baby Moses? Focus on three key points: (1) Baby Moses didn't die in the river. (2) A kind woman, the princess, found Moses and wanted to raise him as her baby. (3) Moses' own mother got to spend lots of time with little Moses and even made money to help her family.

There's another important gift God gave them: Moses grew up in Pharaoh's household, so he was treated as someone important, was taught by the best teachers, and became comfortable around the royal family. Years later, God would send Moses to talk to the Pharaoh and help free all God's people



Lesson 2

Ruth and Naomi

Book of Ruth

Take-Home Point: God finds me when I'm lonely.

Bible Memory Verse: Fear not, for I am with you. Isaiah 41:10

Preparing for the Lesson

Bible Points to Emphasize

Bible Background: The book of Ruth tells the true story of the great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother of King David: Ruth and Naomi.

Naomi's husband, Elimelech, left Bethlehem with their family to escape a drought. They settled in Moab, where their two sons married Moabite women. Tragedy struck, leaving Naomi alone without a husband or sons. Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem and urged her daughters-in-law to return to their homes and their gods. But Ruth would not leave Naomi alone, declaring, "Where you go I will go. . . . Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16).

God did not leave these women alone either. He invited Ruth into His family and ultimately blessed Ruth and Naomi with a new family through Boaz. Ruth and Boaz's son Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David, who was the forefather of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Law: In loss and loneliness, we lose hope, and we wonder if God is with us or for us.

Gospel: Our faithful God welcomes us into His family and gives us new hope through faith in Jesus.

Island Connection: *Dormant volcano.* Dormant volcanoes can be beautiful, but lonely, places. When we find ourselves in a lonely place, we can remember that God promises to be with us.

Jesus came to seek and to save! Naomi and Ruth felt lonely when their husbands died. God found them in their loneliness and gave them a new family. There are times when we also feel lonely. Remind the children that they are never truly alone. God is always with them, loving them and caring for them. He invites them into His family through Jesus.

Supply List

Materials for Storytelling

- Bible for yourself and each Team Leader
- Cute plush animal
- Small container of colored pencils for each group (if using *Elementary Leaflets*)

Leader Costume

- Shawl for Naomi

Getting Ready

- Read the book of Ruth, "Bible Points to Emphasize," and the Lesson 2 Leader Devotion (ask your Director for a copy of the Leader Devotions).
- Review the lesson and practice.
- As teams arrive, pull aside two Team Leaders and ask them to help with the opening. Ask one to be a captain of a team and ask the other to be the person who will not be picked by any team. Give this second Team Leader the plush animal to hold.
- Photocopy the "Elementary Leaflet Guide" (found at the end of this lesson) or print it out from the digital content center, and give copies to Team Leaders.

Bible Story Experience

Welcome the children. If children are in Teams, show Team Leaders where they should sit.

Welcome back to Storytelling! I'm [your name], and I'm looking forward to sharing another Bible account with you today!

Take-Home Point

Today we're learning that **GOD FINDS ME WHEN I'M LONELY.**

TEAMS: JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE!

Actions: **Jesus came** (*point index finger to palm of each hand, then make beckoning motion*) **to seek** (*hold hand above eyes, looking around*) **and to save** (*form a cross with both forearms*)!

Lead into the Bible Story

See "Getting Ready" to prepare for this section. **Let's divide into two teams.** You will be one captain; the Team Leader captain you talked with ahead of time will be the other. Take turns picking people for your teams, praising each one. Point out how unfortunate it is that no one is picking the preselected Team Leader, who will act sadder and sadder. When everyone except the Team Leader has been picked, say, **Wow! We picked everyone! These are great teams. Are we ready to play?** Wait until someone notes the person you ignored. **Oh, right. We can't forget our most important teammate!** Go over and yank away the plush animal from the Team Leader. **We need Fluffy, right? What? Did I miss something?**

Let them tell you why what you did isn't right. **You're right.** Apologize to the Team Leader who was left out and put him or her on a team. **I imagine you felt pretty lonely over there. Have any of you ever felt left out? Sometimes we like being alone, but it's no fun when you don't have a choice.**

Hopefully our game will help us feel appreciated instead. We'll give both teams a few minutes to circle up and come up with something great about each person on the team. Once you're done, send the last person to pet Fluffy so I know you're finished. Give groups a short time to finish the activity.

Tell the Bible Story

Hold up your Bible. **The account I'm going to share with you is from the Bible, God's Word. We know that everything in the Bible is true!**

Today's true Bible story is about someone who was very lonely until God helped her in wonderful ways.

But let's have her tell the story herself. Naomi? Either turn around and put a shawl over your head as a costume or have a guest storyteller come in as Naomi.

Hello, children. I'm Naomi. It's good to meet you. I heard you're learning about how God finds us when we are lonely and we need Him most. That's both wonderful and true. God certainly sent special people to help me when I needed Him most.

My story starts when my dear husband, Elimelech, and I and our two handsome sons moved to another country, Moab. Have you been to another country? It's interesting to learn about different people and places. It can also be lonely because you miss your family and friends and home.

At first, we were happy in Moab. But then my husband died, and it was just me and the boys. Things looked brighter when my sons married lovely Moabite girls named Ruth and Orpah. I was so looking forward to having grandchildren. But then my sons died too, and I was left alone without anyone from my homeland. It was just me and my daughters-in-law. I figured these young women didn't need their dead husbands' mother anymore, and I was so lonely, so I decided to move back home to Bethlehem. This was scary. As an old woman with no children or husband, I didn't have anyone to take care of me.

That's when my sweet daughters-in-law surprised me. They said they'd go home with me, which would make them foreigners in a strange land. But they were still young, so I told them to leave me and stay with their families, who would help them find new husbands. Orpah kissed my cheek and left, but Ruth said, "Where you go I will go. Where you live I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." She promised to stay with me for the rest of my life. I cried because I had such a wonderful daughter-in-law. We didn't have much, but at least we had each other as we traveled back to my hometown of Bethlehem.

There in Bethlehem, Ruth and I had nothing to eat, and I was too old to work, so Ruth worked in a kind man's field, gathering grain scraps. That man, Boaz, saw Ruth working hard. He heard how she'd given up her family and homeland and everything for me, so he told his workers to take care of Ruth and treat her like family. Boaz made sure Ruth gathered plenty of grain and that she was kept safe.

Day after day, Boaz treated Ruth generously because of how she cared for me. He praised her and gave her special kindness as she worked in his fields. Each night when Ruth came home, I thanked God