

Weave fantastic Bible stories and keep kids' attention with these storytelling tips.

Christianity is a story-based faith. The stories of the Bible are crucial to our children's growth, but we leaders often spend an abysmally short amount of time preparing to teach it.

Look for ways to connect with kids' everyday experiences by emphasizing certain aspects of a story. A pastor once told the story of the prodigal son to an urban Bible club. He explained that the boy wasted all his money on things like video games and candy. Another teacher who told this story in a rural setting emphasized how the son ate pig food.

Dust off the people in the Bible story you tell and make them real. One man described Goliath as someone more than 2 feet taller than Michael Jordan. He got everyone's attention.

Decide who could best tell the story- you as parent, a person in the story, or a person outside the story. Dialogues often work well with children, especially when characters speak with kids in their own language. Costumes help and may be as simple as a bathrobe and a head covering.

During a story, ask questions such as: What do you think Noah thought about while he built the ark and it wasn't even cloudy? What do you think James and John's dad thought when they left their fishing boats and followed Jesus? How do you think it feels to be on the sea during a storm? Involvement Kids will remember better what they've experienced with several senses, rather than just what they hear.

Encourage participation by choosing words or phrases that you'll repeat several times throughout the story. Ask children to make certain sounds or motions whenever they hear these words. This keeps them attentive and active in the storytelling.

You can use this approach with a variety of stories, from Jesus telling his disciples to let the children come to him (the disciples tell the parents, "No, No, No," complete with shaking heads and fingers) to Jesus calming the sea (make motions and sounds for the rocking boat, the waves, being afraid, then being still).

Read the story for yourself. What does it say to you? Do you find it interesting? What could it say to your children? What questions would they ask about it? How can you make it interesting to them? How can you help them understand what the story is saying?

Have fun, get excited, and your kids will get excited and have fun learning from God's word!