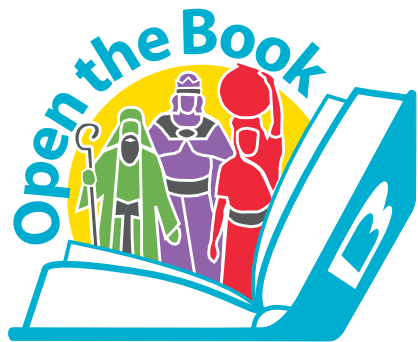




Handbook 3

A third year of Bible
storytelling



Bringing the Bible to life for every child
in every primary school

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Year 3 Handbook

Reprinted July 2018



What is Open the Book?

Hello and welcome to Open the Book and welcome to Bible storytelling in primary schools!

However tempting it may be, please don't skip these introductory pages, even if you have been involved in **Open the Book** before.

Open the Book is a project which offers primary school children an opportunity to hear the major stories of the Bible, presented chronologically or thematically, during one school year. It is a free service given to each school by a team of Christians from local churches, who present the stories during Collective Worship. Each presentation takes a maximum of 10 minutes and can be incorporated into a wider school assembly, or can stand alone.

Open the Book aligns to the criteria used by OFSTED, ESTYN and SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) when inspecting acts of Collective Worship.

The **Open the Book** project is part of the Bible Society and is made up of a three-year rolling programme with an additional, but optional year of material based on Christian Values, which form part of the criteria for Church school acts of Collective Worship.

In Year 1, all the stories are taken from *The Lion Storyteller Bible* written by Bob Hartman, and give an overview of the Bible from Creation to the Ascension. Years 2 and 3 take a more modular approach, where each Value comprises five stories clustered around a theme. For these years, additional stories are provided by the *Open the Book Bible Storybooks*, to supplement those from *The Lion Storyteller Bible*. This suits weekly and fortnightly visits, or the timing can be more flexibly used – for example, monthly or half-termly.

NB: Not every story in The Lion Storyteller Bible is used as part of the Open the Book programme.

The additional but optional Christian Values material provides an Old and a New Testament story for each of the designated Christian Values. This material is called *Christian Values: A biblical approach*. It is important to give



a breadth of Bible storytelling and to keep the balance between Old and New Testament stories. Should your school require more values material on the same value, our website provides a list of possible options from the existing material, which could complement the Old and New Testament stories in *Christian Values: A biblical approach*.

The *Open the Book* materials, i.e. the Handbook and Storybook packs, are available only to registered Storytellers via our website: openthebook.net.

For further information, help, advice or feedback about the project, please contact:

Open the Book, Bible Society

01793 418355

Email: enquiries@openthebook.net

Website: openthebook.net

How does Open the Book operate?

- Each school has a regular team of at least four to seven people drawn from their local church(es). Individual teams are responsible for liaising with their local school regarding day, time, usual customs, security and safeguarding.
- **Open the Book** acts of Collective Worship should be presented regularly – weekly, fortnightly, monthly or even half-termly in some cases where the school's Collective Worship timetable requires the mix of other faiths.
- Before a team can access the **Open the Book** materials or start visiting the school, each team must be registered with **Open the Book** after being safely recruited by their church. These materials and access to the creative ideas, templates to make props, etc., are only available to registered volunteers who have agreed to our Code of Conduct and Code of Practice. (Please see our website openthebook.net for details of how to register.)
- The team present scripted stories using a variety of storytelling methods. An **Open the Book** act of Collective Worship begins with a brief scripted introduction to ensure that each story is placed in context. For the Christian Values material, the value is unpacked or explained. The Handbooks give guidance on how to

present the individual stories with eye-catching visual aids and involving the children.

- After the story there is an opportunity for guided quiet reflection. This gives the children time to reflect on some aspect of the story or on something which relates directly to them and their friends. This is followed by a short closing prayer, which the children are invited to make their own by joining in with the 'Amen' at the end. It is very important that the children are not coerced into participating in prayer by the use of phrases such as 'Let us pray' or 'Close your eyes while we pray'.
- Additional advice is available from **Open the Book** to support teams working in a predominantly multi-faith school.
- **Open the Book** is a scripted intervention. All the scripting for the assembly is contained in this Handbook, and in *The Lion Storyteller Bible* (2008 expanded edition), *Storybooks 2 and 3* or *Christian Values: A biblical approach*. Head Teachers value **Open the Book** because they know what has been said and can answer any queries or complaints. Please uphold the integrity of **Open the Book** by sticking to the script. Great care has been taken to ensure that the material can be used in a Christian or multi-faith context. Please resist the temptation to change it. This is covered in training, but, should you need to seek clarification, please contact **Open the Book** via enquiries@openthebook.net.
- For copyright reasons we expect each volunteer Storyteller to have their own copies of *The Lion Storyteller Bible* and the relevant **Open the Book** Storybooks and Handbooks.
- **Open the Book** Storytellers are eligible to apply for an Enhanced DBS check (without a check of the barred list) before attending a school as an **Open the Book** Storyteller. It is the responsibility of the sending church(es) to ensure that Storytellers are safely recruited and the appropriate DBS checks are carried out in accordance with their own church or denominational procedures. The responsibility for this lies with the churches who send them into their local school; it is neither the role nor the responsibility of **Open the Book**.



Our Aims

- To present the Bible in primary schools in an accessible and enjoyable way.
- To tell the stories in ways which enable the children to engage imaginatively with the text.
- To equip, encourage and enable volunteers from churches to deliver good quality assemblies.
- To assist primary schools in meeting their statutory collective worship obligations.
- To contribute to the children's religious, spiritual and moral education.
- To contribute to the biblical literacy of each new generation.
- To enhance children's understanding of the nation's Christian heritage.
- To encourage links between school and church in a local context.

Our Code of Practice

All storytellers should agree to ...

- stick to the script and present the story simply, without addition or improvisation, following the guidelines in the **Open the Book** Handbooks.
- allow each story to speak for itself, as a Bible story, not as a sermon.
- liaise closely and sensitively with schools, and be mindful of the educational environment.
- make minimal demands on schools and be aware of being invited visitors.
- show respect and sensitivity to those of other faiths, and to those with none.
- fulfil the relevant safeguarding requirements – i.e. follow the **Open the Book** Safeguarding Policy and the Safeguarding Code of Conduct and any related procedures.
- uphold the copyright of **Open the Book** materials.

Storytellers must be accompanied by members of staff during all assemblies/acts of Collective Worship.

Hints and Tips for Storytellers

- Remember to open your *Lion Storyteller Bible* when you say the words 'Open the Book'. It is an action which enables children across the country to relate to the project.
- Elastic bands help to keep the pages open at the relevant story and also secure the Handbook (open at the correct page!) to the front or back cover of the book.
- When you and your team are preparing the **Open the Book** story, it's a good idea also to read the original story in the Bible. It will give you vital context and important insight.
- The Open the Book Storybooks have been designed to sit inside *The Lion Storyteller Bible*.
- It's well worth the effort of making some good quality, high impact props. Forward planning is the key to this! Many churches have capable people who may not like storytelling but who are willing to help in practical ways.
- To benefit from all the great prop ideas, alternative stories, etc., Storytellers will need to log in to the website with their unique registration login.
- Be inspired by other teams and share your experience too. Aim for variety in your presentation.
- Make sure you have a full run-through before you present the story to the children; if you are relaxed and confident, your enthusiasm will come across to the children.
- Ask for volunteers, give instructions and practise words or actions with the children before the Introduction, otherwise the flow is lost and you'll probably have to repeat it.
- When introducing a sound or action for pupil participation, include a clear stop signal in your instructions.
- Speak loudly and confidently, look up and smile – even if your knees are shaking!
- When characters say their own lines, the narrator can sometimes leave out 'he said' or 'she said'. Leave them in if they describe how the words are said: 'he whispered' or 'she shouted angrily'. If God is 'off stage', leave them in too.
- Remember that the reputation of **Open the Book** depends on Storytellers adhering to our Code of Practice. Please respect the fact that the wording in the booklets has been prepared very carefully with today's sensitive educational

environment in mind. However tempting it may be, avoid drawing points from the story or adding your own interpretation beyond those given in the booklets.

- Remember the three Ps – Pray, Prepare, Present.
- Above all – HAVE FUN! If you enjoy communicating, the children will love to listen!



How to use this Handbook

This handbook is your essential companion to **Open the Book** storytelling in Year 3, along with *The Lion Storyteller Bible* (2008 expanded edition) and the *Open the Book Storybook 3*.

Even if you've read them before, please make sure you've read the preceding pages so you're familiar with the **Open the Book** approach.

What's different for Year 3?

The stories for Year 3 are arranged thematically into six primary modules, each with five stories, giving 30 stories for the year. If you present the modules in the prescribed order, there will be a good balance between Old and New Testament stories, although you may change the order if you wish.

As in Year 2, we have added two additional modules especially for Christmas and Easter, as Modules 7 and 8. In these cases, there is the option to use either the first 'all-in-one' story, or to use stories 2 and 3 over two consecutive weeks.

Please note that a number of stories for Year 3 are taken from the *Open the Book Storybook 3*, and are indicated on the list opposite. For Year 3, it is essential for each team to have *The Lion Storyteller Bible* (2008 expanded edition).

The rest of this Handbook provides you with guidance notes to each story. The left hand page contains your 'script' for introducing and concluding the story. All text to be read aloud is in bold. The right hand page tells you what storytellers are needed, how best to prepare for the presentation (including ideas to increase the impact of the story) as well as additional resources that are available.

We have tried to re-use some of the props and resources you developed in Years 1 and 2, but do take time to look at the resources pages of the website, where there are additional ideas for props relating to the Year 3 stories.

Open the Book is committed to presenting Bible Storytelling at its very best, and this Handbook has been designed to help all volunteers to get the most from the stories themselves, and from the presentation opportunities they have.

Year 3 Stories

module	story	title	page	based on
Module 1 All About Paul	1	On the Road to Damascus	12	based on Acts 7–9
	2	Mistaken for Gods *	14	based on Acts 14
	3	Prison Praise *	16	based on Acts 16
	4	Problems for Paul *	18	based on Acts 19
	5	Paul is Shipwrecked	20	based on Acts 27
Module 2 Surprising Stories	1	Tea at Aunties' House *	22	based on Luke 10
	2	The Greedy Farmer *	24	based on Luke 12
	3	The Unforgiving Servant	26	based on Matthew 18
	4	Everyone Gets the Same *	28	based on Matthew 20
	5	The Widow's Coins	30	based on Mark 12/Luke 21
Module 3 David, the Shepherd King	1	Samuel the Kingmaker	32	based on 1 Samuel 8–16
	2	The Two Kings *	34	based on 1 Samuel 16
	3	Best Friends *	36	based on 1 Samuel 18–20
	4	Run for Your Life! *	38	based on 1 Samuel 23–24
	5	King David Dances *	40	based on 2 Samuel 5 & 6
Module 4 Even More About Jesus	1	Lazarus, Friend of Jesus *	42	based on John 11
	2	The Man Who Came Back	44	based on Luke 17
	3	Waiting for a Friend *	46	based on John 4
	4	The Good Shepherd	48	based on Matthew 18
	5	The Pharisee and the Tax Collector	50	based on Luke 18
Module 5 Women Who Dared to Do Right	1	Esther was a Star	52	based on Esther
	2	Ruth Finds a New Home	54	based on Ruth
	3	Deborah the Judge *	56	based on Judges 4
	4	Hannah's Prayer *	58	based on 1 Samuel 1 & 2
	5	Brave Abigail *	60	based on 1 Samuel 25
Module 6 Meals to Remember	1	The First Passover Meal *	62	based on Exodus 12
	2	The Remembering Meal *	64	based on Luke 22
	3	The Wedding Feast *	66	based on John 2
	4	Sarah Spends Her Savings *	68	based on Mark 14
	5	The Writing on the Wall *	70	based on Daniel 5
Module 7 More Christmas Stories	1	Just Hoping *	72	based on Luke 2/Matt 2
	2	Christmas Journeys *	74	based on Luke 2/Matt 2
	3	God's Good Idea *	76	based on John 1
Module 8 More Easter Stories	1	A Soldier's Story *	78	based on Mark 15 & 16
	2	Peter's Saddest Day *	80	based on Mark 14
	3	Peter's Happiest Day *	82	based on John 20 & 21

All stories are taken from The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition), except * which are taken from the Open the Book Storybook 3.

INTRODUCTION

Today we start a new set of stories all about the life of one man whose name was Paul. Sometimes he's known as St Paul. You may have heard of St Paul's Cathedral in London which is named after him. Why is he so famous? Why are so many churches and cathedrals named after him? In fact, at the beginning of the story, Paul has a completely different name!

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'On the Road to Damascus'.

Read On the Road to Damascus in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

CONCLUSION

This story is all about a man who changed. He changed his behaviour – and he even changed his name – because he met Jesus. Over the next few weeks we'll find out more about Paul's amazing adventures as he began to travel far and wide telling people about Jesus.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Close your eyes for a moment and think about these words from the story: 'Paul never grew tired of telling people that Jesus, the man he hadn't liked, liked him anyway and had given him another chance.' Christians believe that no one is too bad for a second chance.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, we pray for people who have done wrong things and who are trying to change. Please give them the courage to make a fresh start. And help us, too, when we behave badly and need a second chance. Amen.

Story 1 On the Road to Damascus

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Saul, Ananias.

Additional: Voice of Jesus, a 'friend' to lead Saul to Damascus.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- Saul could stand centre stage at the beginning of the story, with a grim expression and arms folded. A slow exaggerated shake of the head can follow each 'not at all' or 'not one bit'. He could mime taking the coats as he watches Stephen's stoning.
- After 'putting them to death', Saul could strut up and down a little, pointing at one or two children (prearranged) and saying things like, "This one's a follower of Jesus. Throw him in prison!" and so on.
- Saul could mime the rest of the story, although it would add impact if he spoke his final line: "You can call me Paul from now on." When he is led to Straight Street, he needs to sit down to one side of the staging area.
- Ananias should appear on the opposite side and then 'travel' across to meet Saul.
- Have Jesus' words spoken out of sight.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- A sword might help to make Paul more threatening.
- A screen to hide Jesus if the hall requires it.
- A chair for Saul to sit on at the house in Straight Street.
- A powerful flashlight or something with which to make a 'blinding flash'. If you move the light around the room it will make more of an impact.
- A cymbal clash could be used to accompany the light.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- See ideas for costumes in the Basic Kit section of the website.
- Ideas for using screens.

MY NOTES

Story **2** Mistaken for Gods

INTRODUCTION

Last week we began hearing the story of Paul. If you remember, Paul was the man who hated the followers of Jesus and loved nothing better than to have them thrown into prison – or worse! However, when he met Jesus for himself he was a truly changed man. He had been given a fresh start, and wanted everyone to know that Jesus could give them a fresh start too! We'll find out what happened in today's story.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Mistaken for Gods'.

Read Mistaken for Gods in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Oh dear! Paul and Barnabas really got themselves into trouble, didn't they? The problems began when the lame man began to walk. They knew it was God's power that had healed him, but the crowd thought Paul and Barnabas themselves had special powers. But despite all the problems, the two men were determined to carry on.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Let's close our eyes and think about the story. Paul and Barnabas were treated very unfairly at Lystra. It must have been hard for them – they got into trouble when it had all been a misunderstanding.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, help us to be calm when things go wrong for us, especially when we are misunderstood or treated unfairly. Give us the right words to say, and, like Paul and Barnabas, help us not to give up. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Paul, Barnabas (non-speaking so could be a child), lame man, Jewish leader.

Additional: Extra leaders and small crowd.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- The text of this story is very short so don't rush it!
- Set the scene beforehand with a small crowd of children sitting on the floor with the lame man. Paul can then 'preach' to them.
- Pause at the appropriate part of the story for the healed man to shout and jump – make sure he calls to individual crowd members, saying "Look at me!"; "Hey – you! Look at me!"
- You will need a scene break after 'and look at him they did'. Paul and Barnabas can quietly slip 'offstage' while the crowd continues to make a fuss of the man.
- After 'big celebration to honour them', have a short pause for the crowd and the healed man to put up a few decorations to suggest a celebration. Either insert suitable comments such as, "Hey! Let's hang this up here!" or fade in some celebratory background music. Don't forget to fade the music out again!
- Mime the stoning. Paul and Barnabas need to flinch and call out as they are hit by the stones. Don't prolong this unnecessarily.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- To emphasise that Lystra is a Greek city, a picture of a Greek temple or Greek symbols could be projected, or painted onto fabric and draped over a screen.
- An old fashioned wooden crutch or a walking stick for the lame man.
- Some suitable decorations, e.g. silk leaves and flowers, garlands or flags.
- Authentic celebratory music would be hard to find, but Handel's *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* would be the next best thing.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Keep adding to your collection of basic costumes – read the web resource pages for ideas.
- Using simple screens for backdrops.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to tell you more about the life of Paul. At the start of today's story Paul and his friend Silas have been thrown into prison for helping a slave girl to get better. Why would they be in prison for doing such a kind thing? Well, the girl's cruel master made her tell fortunes to earn money for him. When she got better she didn't want to tell fortunes any more. Her master was very angry and had Paul and Silas thrown into prison. What will happen to Paul and Silas now? Will they get out of prison? Or will things get even worse for them?

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Prison Praise'.

Read Prison Praise in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Paul and Silas did two amazing things in today's story. First of all, they sang hymns of praise to God while they were chained up in prison! Secondly, they didn't escape when they had the chance! They didn't want the jailer to get into trouble.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Close your eyes and think about why Paul and Silas didn't try to run out of the prison.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

They knew the jailer would be in trouble – he might even lose his life – if his prisoners escaped. So they stayed where they were.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, help us to behave in the right way so that we don't get other people into trouble. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Paul, Silas, jailer.

Additional: (CD operator if using sound effects.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- Check that Paul and Silas will be visible to all the children if they sit on the floor. If not, you may have to compromise and put them on stools.
- There is little dialogue in the story, so Paul and Silas could say their own lines. A crib sheet on the floor helps – but make sure the text is large enough to see!
- The jailer could also say his own lines.
- The singing needs to be loud and cheerful. Choose a simple, jargon-free praise song.
- You could use a sound effects CD for the earthquake OR pre-rehearse the children with some drumming effects such as fists beating on the floor. Make sure they know the signal for stopping and starting.
- Paul and Silas should rock from side to side for the duration of the earthquake.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Do whatever you can to set the scene. Draped grey cloth would convey the gloomy prison interior.
- The characters will need simple costumes. Emphasise the jailer’s role with a belt, a toy sword and some large keys.
- If you made a door for ‘Praying for Peter’ in Year 2 (Module 1 Story 4) then you could re-use it here, perhaps with added chains and padlocks.
- Similarly, you could re-use the prison bars made for the Joseph stories in Year 1.
- Use chains from a DIY shop for chaining hands and feet. Metal chains make a great sound, although plastic ones are lighter.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Instructions for making a freestanding door.
- Instructions for making prison bars.
- Suggestions for finding and using CDs of pre-recorded sound effects.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

When Paul met Jesus, his life changed so much that he wanted to tell his story to everyone he met. Many people listened and became followers of Jesus too. But other people didn't like Paul's message and caused trouble for him. In today's story, Paul finds himself in danger once again.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Problems for Paul'.

Read Problems for Paul in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

There were many changed people in Ephesus after Paul's visit. Some had become followers of Jesus and others had been healed of their illnesses after Paul prayed for them. But the greedy traders didn't care about that. They were angry that they weren't able to sell so many souvenirs of the goddess Diana.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Imagine you were one of the people who listened to Paul. What would you have said was more important – making lots of money or helping people?

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, please help us to see that helping people is more important than making lots of money. Amen.

Story **4** Problems for Paul

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Paul, Demetrius, magician, Gaius.

Additional: Supporters of Demetrius, extra magicians, a crowd (children), town clerk.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- There are several mini scenes in this story, each with a small crowd. Use a storyteller to 'lead' each scene with children to bulk out the crowd. The narrator will need to read all the lines, or provide confident readers with the words on a card.
- Each scene could wander offstage as the next begins.
- A raised hand over each head would convey an attitude of prayer when Paul is praying for people.
- Think carefully how you will handle the riot. Miming is a safe option! Providing Demetrius as the leader will keep the children in check. Make sure the riot calms as the town clerk speaks. Again Demetrius can lead this.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Re-use the doorframe from Year 2 covered in shiny drapes to convey the temple. A sheet painted with the outline of a Greek statue could hang between the frames.
- A silver-coloured object for Demetrius – try wrapping a Barbie doll in kitchen foil!
- If you wish to use a backdrop, see Story 2 for ideas. Either use the interactive white board if the school has one, or the overhead projector (make sure it doesn't obscure the view for the children).
- A large cardboard book of 'Spells and Magic' would help to distinguish the magicians. Avoid Harry Potter style props.
- Another way of presenting this story would be to simply read it with accompanying pictures. Technically able teams could research suitable pictures and put them into a PowerPoint presentation.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Explanation of how to create PowerPoint slides and use a digital projector.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered how the message of Jesus spread all over the world? If we wanted to share news around the world today we would use newspapers or television or the internet, but 2000 years ago none of those things had been invented! It was Paul who started it all off and he had to travel to spread the message.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Paul is Shipwrecked'.

Read Paul is Shipwrecked in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

CONCLUSION

The places Paul visited in today's story were Crete, Malta and Rome. Today many people go there on their holidays. And these are all places where people heard the message of Jesus from Paul around 2000 years ago! We still have the letters he wrote to those first Christians. They make up a large part of the Bible – the book we use for all of our OPEN THE BOOK stories.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Close your eyes and think about what Paul wrote in one of his letters: 'Don't be worried. Just be thankful and tell God what you need. Jesus will give you the peace of God and that will help you to face anything.'

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, help us to know that when we are worried we can talk to you. Please give us your peace. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Paul, passengers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This story has too many scenes for you to depict them all individually. The best approach would be to stick to simple mime.
- Paul needs to travel slowly across the stage for each part of his journey. He could turn to the audience, fold his arms and shake his head firmly for every 'not at all'.
- Cowering actions would convey the beatings, and stooped walking the part where he is put in chains.
- The storm should be easy to mime, but don't overdo it or the effect will be comical.
- Paul could speak his own lines from the boat.
- For emphasis, you could insert a few appropriate call-outs after '... the soldiers and sailors thought only of themselves', such as "I'm getting out of here!" and "It's every man for himself!"
- If the passengers are children you will need a short rehearsal beforehand.
- Don't rush the letter writing at the end. If Paul stands up and reads from his parchment it will help the children remember that Paul was a writer of letters.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Chairs and benches to sit on in the boat – look around in the hall to see what is available.
- If you made a boat front for Year 1 you could use it again here.
- A roll of tea-stained paper and a quill pen.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Instructions for making a boat front. We also have instructions for making a boat that falls apart for the shipwreck!

MY NOTES

Story 1 Tea at Aunties' House

INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to hear the first story in our collection of 'surprising stories'. It's all about two sisters called Mary and Martha. They were friends of Jesus and he often came to visit them. We don't know very much about their family, but we have imagined that they have a niece – we've called her 'Becky'. Today we'll find out what happened when Becky visited her two aunts on the same day that Jesus came for tea.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Tea at Aunties' House'.

Read A Tale of Two Houses in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Poor Martha had such a lot of work to do – and nobody seemed to be helping her! You might have expected Jesus to ask Mary to go and help, but he didn't, did he? Instead he asked Martha to stop working for a while and come and sit down with the others. I wonder why he did that?

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Let's close our eyes and think about the story. There are so many things to keep adults busy at home – cooking, washing, gardening ... and children can be busy too, doing homework, playing on the computer, watching television ... Sometimes it's important to stop doing those things and make time for sharing and talking together about the really important things in life. Think now about what things are really important to you.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, in our families help us to make time for each other – time to think, and time to talk about the things that are really important. Amen.

Story **1** Tea at Aunties' House

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Mary, Martha, Jesus, Becky.

Additional: Friends and neighbours (use children).

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- It is difficult to present this story without all the characters, so think ahead how you will manage this. Becky could be a child, but will need to practise with you beforehand. Check with the Head Teacher about the 'hugging' in the story. It's always helpful if one of the team has a child or grandchild in the school, in which case the hugging is always acceptable.
- One side of the staging area should represent the kitchen and the other side the living area.
- Make sure the living area has seats for everyone. Perhaps have some cushions on the floor too.
- Martha needs to appear busy and flustered from the beginning. As Becky arrives she should be busy washing or cleaning and should put down her cleaning things and wipe her hands in an exaggerated way.
- Similarly, the 'crash, bang, wallop' section needs a bit of emphasis, with Martha banging pans (or similar) in irritation. The narrator should pause at this point and only continue the story when the crashing has finished.
- If your storytellers feel that the children will not understand the phrase 'throwing a wobbly', then substitute other words of similar meaning.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Apron and tea towel for Martha.
- Rugs and cushions and/or chairs to sit on.
- A few kitchen items, e.g., plate of cakes, pots and pans and cloths, set out on a table so the children can see them.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Basic Kit has ideas for costumes for women.
- Ideas for making simple props very quickly.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Today we have another of our ‘surprising stories’ from the Bible. Last week, Jesus told Martha to stop worrying about the housework and to spend time with him, learning about the important things in life. Today, Jesus tells a story to help people understand what really is – and what really isn’t – important. And there’s a big surprise in store for the man in the story!

Let’s OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called ‘The Greedy Farmer’.

Read The Greedy Farmer in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Did you spot the surprise? After all his hard work, the farmer didn’t live long enough to enjoy all the money he had made! Not so much a surprise as a nasty shock! The farmer was selfish and greedy. He had far more than he needed and wouldn’t share what he had with anyone else – even the really poor people.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Let’s close our eyes and think about these words from the story: “By storing up riches for himself, he forgot all about the really important things in life.” (*Allow time to think*)

And now let’s think about this – if being rich isn’t important, then what is?

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I’m going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say “Amen” at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, please help us to know what is really important in life, and what isn’t. And help us not to be like the greedy farmer, but to share what we have with others. Amen.

Story **2** The Greedy Farmer

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, farmer.

Additional: Second narrator, props helper.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This story would work well with two narrators, one to read the narrative and one to read the spoken words, or the greedy farmer could say his own lines.
- It really isn't necessary to have all the additional characters. It would be perfectly acceptable for the children to imagine them.
- The farmer needs to mime convincingly, nodding, hand rubbing and using large dismissive gestures towards the servants.
- A chair on one side of the stage could signify 'home'; a step ladder on the other side could represent the barn. The farmer can then walk between the two each day. Climbing up a couple of the steps would help to convey the impression of climbing to the top of the barn. However, please put safety first! If in doubt, mime climbing on the level.
- At the end of the story, the farmer can sit down in his chair and quietly close his eyes at the point where he dies.
- You might like to involve the children in the repeated line, 'Mine, all mine.' Hold up large cards showing the words. It's important to practise this before the introduction.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- A costume for the farmer – make it look rich and colourful.
- A sturdy stepladder would be useful, but see caution above!
- A chair, maybe draped with a rich-looking cloth.
- Paper bird puppets (see below) are simple to make and highly effective, or simply make pecking movements with hands.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- There is a simple downloadable template for bird hand puppets on the website. You may have used it last year in 'Elijah and the Ravens'.

MY NOTES

Story 3 The Unforgiving Servant

INTRODUCTION

I wonder if, like me, you sometimes upset someone and have to say sorry. Sometimes we hurt people on purpose, and sometimes by accident when we don't mean to. Either way we still need to say "sorry". What's the best thing you can hear after you say sorry? I like to hear, "Hey, that's OK."

Now divide up the group. Have one half practise saying, "I'm really sorry!" and the other half replying, "Hey, that's OK!" at a given signal, as suggested by Bob Hartman at the back of The Lion Storyteller Bible.

We'll need you to say those words several times during today's story – so don't forget to watch as well as listen!

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'The Unforgiving Servant'.

Read The Unforgiving Servant in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

CONCLUSION

Well – what a surprise! The man who had been let off millions of pounds couldn't even forgive the man who owed him a few pennies! No wonder the king had him thrown into jail.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Let's close our eyes for a moment. Did you notice the end of the story? Jesus explained that God is like the king. He keeps on forgiving us, and expects us to do the same. Think about whether you can be that sort of person; the sort of person who says, "Hey, that's OK".

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, we all like to be forgiven when we make mistakes. Please help us to make the world a happier place by forgiving others as God forgives us. Amen.

Story 3 The Unforgiving Servant

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, king, two servants.

Additional: Jesus, Peter, person to act as jailer and 'fetcher'.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- At the beginning of Jesus' story, the king could look into a 'book of debts', running his finger down the page. The narrator could pause after 'millions and more!' to allow the king to frown a little and shake his head.
- A fifth person could be the 'fetcher' and the jailer, bringing the servants backwards and forwards as the story unfolds.
- As the servant leaves the palace he should emphasise his joy with big gestures, calling, "I can't believe it! I can't believe it!"
- Have the first and second servants bump into each other, and then draw apart as the first servant puts on an exaggerated menacing expression.
- Read the last part of the story slowly and with suitable emphasis to allow the meaning to come across.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Simple costumes for the servants.
- A rich and colourful cloak plus crown for the king.
- A large piece of card folded to look like a book would serve as the 'book of debts'.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Several ideas for making crowns and other kingly regalia.

MY NOTES

Story **4** Everyone Gets the Same

INTRODUCTION

“It’s not fair!” How many of you have said that ... to your Mum ... to your friend ... or even to your teacher? I wonder what their reply was? We all seem to have our own idea of what is fair, don’t we? Do we sometimes shout, **“It’s not fair!”** even when we know that it was fair but don’t want to accept it?

Today we are going to hear another of our ‘surprising stories’ – and what an interesting story it is! Remember to listen carefully – don’t miss the surprise at the end!

Let’s **OPEN THE BOOK** to the Bible story called ‘Everyone Gets the Same’.

Read Everyone Gets the Same in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

When Jesus finished telling this story his friends must have been very surprised indeed. The farmer didn’t need to pay those who came late as much as the others, but he decided to anyway. It didn’t seem fair, but the farmer was generous and gave them more than they deserved! He didn’t want those who came early to think they were more important than the others who came later on.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

While you close your eyes, think about all the people who take care of you and give you what you need because they love you, not because you deserve it.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I’m going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say **“Amen”** at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for those times when we get more than we deserve. Help us to be pleased when that happens to other people, too. Help us also to remember that other people are just as important as we are. Amen.

Story **4** Everyone Gets the Same

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, farmer.

Additional: 10 workers in pairs (use children), clock operator.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This story can be mimed very simply with the narrator reading all the words. Alternatively the farmer can say his own words. (Children may not feel confident saying their words at short notice.)
- If using children, have a quick practice beforehand. Position them on one side of the staging area in pairs. They can come forward as it's their turn to play the role of farm workers. Encourage them to act the part of the different workers.
- They can shake the farmer's hand as the agreement is struck, and then walk across to the other side and mime picking grapes – quietly!
- To emphasise the passing time, hold up a large clock face showing the correct time at all the relevant points in the story.
- Make the final payment slow and deliberate. Make sure the children at the front of the queue look first pleased, then disgruntled as they realise what has happened.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Set the scene at the farmer's house with a chair, side table and plate of grapes. He can return to this after each hiring.
- It would be impractical to dress all the farm workers, but the farmer himself could have a simple costume.
- The payment could be mimed, but it might be more effective to use some toy money (or similar).
- Ask the school if you can borrow a large clock face with movable hands from the maths cupboard. Alternatively make your own. Check in advance that this is large enough to be seen by all the children.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Instructions on making a clock face with movable hands.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Today we have another 'surprising story' for you. It involves quite a bit of counting and we'd like you to help.

At this point, divide the children into three groups. Rehearse one (younger?) group in counting up to 10, the next in counting to 20 in twos, and the rest in counting up to 40 in fives, as suggested at the back of The Lion Storyteller Bible.

That's good! Get ready to join in when I give the signal.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'The Widow's Coins'.

Read The Widow's Coins in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

CONCLUSION

Jesus' friends were constantly amazed by the surprising things he taught them. And in today's story, Jesus said something really surprising – that the poor widow had given more than the rich man! She was very poor indeed; her husband had died and she only had two coins left in her purse. She wanted to help others so she gave both of the coins away. It was only a small amount of money but it was everything she had.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Let's be quiet and think about what we might be able to give to help others. We could perhaps give some of this week's pocket money to a charity. Or if we don't get pocket money, we could give up some time to give extra help at home or help tidy the classroom.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, it's so hard to give things away instead of just wanting to get things all the time. Please help us to work out how we can be 'givers' and not just 'getters'. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

How important is the wrapping on your presents? Does it make any difference to what's inside? Do we choose our friends by what they are wearing? I hope not. I hope we choose them because they are nice inside. Today we are going to hear how God went about choosing a new king for his people. I wonder who God will choose? Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Samuel the Kingmaker'.

Read Samuel the Kingmaker in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

CONCLUSION

Well, that was a surprise! I would have expected one of those big, handsome sons to be chosen as king, not David, who could easily have been overlooked. Over the next few weeks we will be hearing stories about how David became one of the most famous kings in the Bible.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Do you remember what God said to Samuel? God said he looked at what people were like inside, not how good-looking or strong they were. Think about a time when you have forgotten to look on the inside of someone and have only cared about the outside – what they looked like, or the things they had or didn't have. Think about what that person was really like on the inside.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Thank you, God, that the important part of us is what is on the inside – in our hearts and in our thoughts – and not what is on the outside. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Last week we heard how David, the shepherd boy, was anointed by Samuel to be the next king, even though Saul was still king. Saul had forgotten his promises to God to be a good king – he had become jealous and greedy and a liar. Today we hear how his jealousy got the better of him.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'The Two Kings'.

Read The Two Kings in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

We shall have to wait until next week to see what happens! But now let's think about David. I expect we would all love to be a hero and be brave like David. David was a good shepherd; day after day he cared for the sheep, which gave him the courage and the skill to fight and defeat the giant. And remember, David trusted God all the time – not just when things were difficult.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Think of something you have learned this week that will help you in the future. It might be in the classroom, something you have been hearing about in assembly or maybe you've learned something in the playground. Have you been learning that lesson well, like David did?

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, help us to prepare ourselves for whatever the future holds by following David's example and learning the lessons of today well. Amen.

Story **2** The Two Kings

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Saul, David.

Additional: Brothers, servants.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- Although you may have a Goliath banner from Year 1, there is no need for a Goliath in this story as the focus is on David. He can simply mime whirling the sling and imagine the giant falling somewhere in the distance with someone providing the ‘thud’ noise as Goliath falls to the ground.
- The narrator can easily read the brothers’ comments if you are short of storytellers. It works better if David says his own lines.
- Clearly establish one side of the stage as the fields with sheep, and the other as the palace, so that David can cross repeatedly between them.
- The storytellers playing David and Saul need to be consistent for the remainder of this module. If this is impossible, make sure the same costumes are used every week.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- If your David storyteller is comfortable singing a psalm, this will simplify matters. Otherwise miming with some taped music will convey the scene.
- The contrast between David and Saul needs to be emphasised by clothes and size. Kingly robes and a crown contrast with rough spun clothes and a (mock) sheepskin (many haberdashery shops sell fake fleece).

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Cut-out sheep are useful in many stories. Instructions and pictures are on the website.
- The same cut-out technique can be used to create a harp. See photo of harp.
- If you want to include the Goliath figure, look on the website for instructions.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Even though it's good to have lots of friends, sometimes there is someone who is extra special to us – we might say he or she is our 'best friend'. Having a special friend can be great, but in today's story, as we hear more about David, we find out that being best friends can sometimes land you in trouble.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Best Friends'.

Read Best Friends in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

What a difficult situation for Jonathan to be in – between his father's jealousy and his best friend. How brave of him to try and do the right thing, and save his friend's life.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

We may not often be in a position to save our friends' lives, but every day we can choose to do the right thing for our friends. I want you to think of a time when you could have stepped in to help your friend, maybe yesterday or last week, and you didn't. Think about what you might do differently next time.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, please help us to look after our friends and stand up for them if we need to. Amen

INTRODUCTION

It must have been difficult for David, knowing that King Saul hated him and wanted to kill him, even when David had done nothing wrong. Sometimes he must have wanted to get his own back at King Saul. I wonder what will happen in today's story?

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Run for your Life!'

Read Run for your Life! in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

David knew it was God who was in control and that God would deal with Saul at the right time. In the Bible there is a section of songs called Psalms. Most of them are written by David and give praise and thanks to God. In one of them, Psalm 18, he says: 'How I love you, Lord! You are my defender. The Lord is my protector; and with you I am safe.'

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Feeling safe is when we know we are taken care of, and that no harm can come to us. Let's sit quietly now and think about feeling safe.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you that David could feel safe because of you. Thank you that we can feel safe with you. Thank you for those who work to protect people from harm. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Think about people at a football match – they get pretty excited, don't they? How do they show that excitement? (*Invite a few answers from the children.*) They sing songs and shout, they wave banners and scarves in their team colours and sometimes they jump up and down. Today's story is called 'King David Dances'. I wonder what he was so excited about? Somehow I don't think it was football!

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'King David Dances'.

Read King David Dances in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Why was King David so excited that he danced? Who can tell me? (*Take answers from the children.*) Yes, it was because he had brought back the special box that reminded them that God was with them. David knew that to be a good king, he would need to follow God's way. David was king for many, many years and the Bible tells us that as long as he followed God's ways, everything went well.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Isn't it a shame that David's wife criticised him and made fun of him for being so excited and happy? It's very easy to make other people feel bad by making fun of them. Can you think of a time when you have made someone else sad by laughing at them in a mean way? Think about how you could put that right and what you might do differently next time.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you that David was so excited that he danced all the way to Jerusalem even when his wife laughed at him. Please help us to do the right thing even when people laugh at us. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, David, Joab, Michelle.

Additional: Priests, builders, soldiers, musicians.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This story has two parts: the invasion of the city and the procession.
- When the children are coming into assembly, ask for a central aisle to be kept clear to make space for a procession; some halls already have lines marked for sports or you could mark the aisle on the floor with masking tape before the children come in. Involve as many children in the procession as you feel you can cope with, but give them each something to do – e.g. clap hands, or carry something.
- David dancing may feel a bit odd for some storytellers – this is about conveying excitement, not doing fancy footwork! Try leaping up, punching the air, running and jumping, swirling someone around. Small shy movements simply won't convey this. Celebratory processional music may convey the mood.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- David needs royal robes to throw off to dance – a cloak would convey this.
- The Ark of the Covenant is an important physical symbol; use a large wooden box or a cardboard box. The easiest way is fix two poles to the box for the children/priests to hold on to.
- You might like to project a picture of the hills around Jerusalem as a backdrop.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Ideas for armour.
- Instructions on making the Ark of the Covenant.
- Pictures to represent Jerusalem in David's time – use as a scenic backdrop.
- Explanation of how to create PowerPoint slides and use the school's digital projector.
- Suggestions for finding and using CDs of pre-recorded sound effects.

MY NOTES

Story **1** Lazarus, Friend of Jesus

While Jesus was on earth, he made many friends. Some of them travelled around with him, and some of them invited him to stay with them whenever he was in town. The family of Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus were good friends of Jesus. They loved having him to stay. When something went wrong they immediately called for Jesus to help.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Lazarus, Friend of Jesus'.

Read Lazarus, Friend of Jesus in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Mary and Martha must have been so unhappy when Jesus didn't turn up in time to make Lazarus better. They didn't know what an amazing thing Jesus had planned for them.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

We may not be able to do the wonderful miracles that Jesus did, but we can always do good things for our friends when they need us. Imagine if your friend came to you with something that was worrying them and making them sad – what do you think you could do to make your friend feel better?

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you that you care when we are worried or sad. Remind us to ask you for help, like Mary and Martha did. Amen.

Story **1** Lazarus, Friend of Jesus

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Mary, Martha, Jesus, Lazarus.

Additional: Small crowd of visitors (you can use children).

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- The repetition of the days of the week provides this story with a structure.
- Establish the kitchen table to one side and have Lazarus go into the next 'room' to lie down.
- Don't overplay the emotional aspects of Lazarus's death as this may be distressing for young children.
- While the attention is back on the kitchen, quietly bring a screen covered with a grey painted 'rock' in front of Lazarus' bed to create a tomb.
- When Jesus arrives at the 'house', Martha and Mary could take Jesus on a journey around the hall to get to the 'tomb'.
- It can be helpful for the children if the same person plays Jesus for this entire module. If this is not possible, then ensure that Jesus' clothes are distinctive and used by the different storytellers each week.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- The bedclothes can be drawn over Lazarus's face to indicate he has died.
- Use an existing screen, if available, or have two children hold up a large sheet to represent the tomb.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Example of painted sheet or screen to represent a tomb.

MY NOTES

Story **2** The Man Who Came Back

INTRODUCTION

At the time when Jesus lived, some people suffered from a painful skin disease called leprosy. Nowadays medicine can cure people of leprosy but then there was no cure, and people with leprosy were made to live away from everyone else in case they spread it to others. What a hard and lonely life that must have been. In today's story we meet 10 people with leprosy. I wonder what Jesus will do? Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'The Man Who Came Back'.

Read The Man Who Came Back in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

CONCLUSION

Jesus was happy to heal the men with leprosy so they could lead normal lives again – but I bet he was even more pleased with that one man who came back to say thank you.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

We often forget to thank people who do something special for us. We even forget to thank those around us who do special things for us day in and day out. I want you to picture in your mind someone you really should thank more often.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

And now, the next time you see that person, make sure you remember to thank them.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, I'm sorry that I often forget to say thank you to you for all the good things that happen to me every day. I do notice and I do appreciate the good things, even if I don't always remember to be grateful. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

- Essential:** Narrator, Leper no.10, Jesus.
Additional: Nine other lepers (you can use children).

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- Ask the children to help you count the numbers each time (as described by Bob Hartman in the back of *The Lion Storyteller Bible*). This is a short story so take time to emphasise this.
- Instruct the 10 lepers to rush off leaping with happiness away from Jesus but have the ‘one who came back’ turn around quickly and return to him.
- Although we have used the term ‘leper’ in these notes, be careful not to use this word with the children. ‘A man with leprosy’ is a more sensitive and correct description.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- An array of headscarves, bandages, slings, sticks and crutches will help convey the condition of the lepers.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- An old-fashioned wooden crutch is a useful object for many stories. Instructions for making one are on the website.

MY NOTES

Story **3** Waiting for a Friend

It isn't nice to be left out of things and feel that nobody likes you, is it? It's nice to have someone to talk to; it's nice to have someone to play with. We all need friends, don't we? The woman in today's story was very unhappy because she didn't have any friends at all.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Waiting for a Friend'.

Read Waiting for a Friend in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

We don't know if Leah was her real name, but wasn't it lovely that the woman in our story found a friend in Jesus? Someone who really liked her just as she was. She got so excited when she was telling her neighbours about Jesus that she forgot how unkind they had been. Jesus must have had quite an effect on her.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Close your eyes and think about something that made you feel so excited that you wanted to tell everyone about it.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you that Jesus became the friend that Leah was looking for. Help us to look out for people like Leah who need a friend. Please help us to be good friends. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Leah, Jesus.

Additional: Other women (you can use children).

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- Establish the location of the well clearly on the other side of the stage from the village.
- Make much of Leah waiting and watching at the beginning of the story. Read slowly and add pauses. Perhaps she could sit down while 'waiting' and then stand and walk over to an imaginary window to do the 'watching'.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- The tabards used in the Jericho story in Year 1 can be draped over some chairs to create a well.
- A large jar or clay pot can be used for water collection. Amphora/urn-shaped lightweight pots can sometimes be found at garden centres.
- Leah is clearly different from the other women. You could let her go bare-headed while the other women wear head coverings to emphasis this point.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Canvas or heavy cotton sheets can be painted to show a variety of backdrops and objects, and then draped on screens. Have a look at the website for an example of a well.
- Tabards are illustrated on the web resource pages for Year 1 Story 11.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Many of the religious people in Jesus' time found it hard to understand that God cared about everyone. Jesus showed this by being friends with everyone he came across, even if they weren't leading very good lives. In our story today, Jesus explains why he does this.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'The Good Shepherd'.

Read The Good Shepherd in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

(Note: this story is called 'The Lost Sheep' in earlier versions of the LSB)

CONCLUSION

Isn't it exciting to know that each one of us matters to God in our own special way? Jesus was telling us that even if we feel far away from God, or go our own way, he will still want to find us and take care of us.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Sometimes in a big school, or in a world with lots of grown-ups, it can be easy to feel that we don't matter as individuals, that we are not important and that no one takes any notice of us. Never forget that you do matter, just for who you are. You are special, and precious. Say that to yourself now, silently in your head – "I am special, I am precious."

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Thank you, God, that I matter to you. Help me to know that you want to take care of me, no matter where I am or what I am doing. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, shepherd, Jesus.

Additional: Sheep (you can use children).

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- Involving the children as the sheep is always popular.
- The narrator can read the story as if speaking for Jesus or you can have a separate Jesus who tells the story.
- The shepherd can look all around the hall, among the children and the furniture for the lost sheep.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Give the children hand-held cut-outs of sheep (see web resources for details). Alternatively use any sheep masks you may have made in previous years. This makes it easy to hide one of the cut-outs somewhere in the hall to be 'found' at the appropriate time.
- A cuddly toy lamb can also be hidden, if you are not using cut-outs.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Pictures and instructions for making cut-out sheep.
- Masks and other ways of conveying animals.

MY NOTES

Story **5** The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

INTRODUCTION

I'm sure you all try to work hard, be kind to your friends and obey your parents and teachers. And that's really good. The problem is that we can very quickly start thinking too much of ourselves, and think we are better than the people around us. People in Jesus' time were no different from us, as we will see in today's story.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'The Pharisee and the Tax Collector'.

Read The Pharisee and the Tax Collector in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

CONCLUSION

That was surprising, wasn't it? God didn't listen to the prayer of that religious leader who thought he was perfect, but he did listen to the prayer of the tax collector; he was honest about where he had failed, and God was pleased with that and forgave him.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

When we look around the room, do we think, 'I'm better than him or her' or 'I'm cleverer, I'm prettier, I'm smarter'? Think about your classmates now and think of something really worthwhile about each of them.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, help us to pray as the tax collector did. We know we are not perfect so we ask you to forgive us and we thank you for loving us. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Pharisee, tax collector, Jesus.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This is a very short story. Make more of it by using Bob Hartman’s suggestions at the back of *The Lion Storyteller Bible*. Divide into groups before the introduction so you don’t lose the flow. Tell the first group, “You are going to be the Pharisee in our story today. Pharisees were religious leaders who thought they were better than everyone else. They weren’t very popular!” Then rehearse them in copying the lines as they are spoken.
- Tell the second group, “You are going to be the tax collector in our story. Tax collectors would collect money for the rulers of the land, but they often cheated and stole money. They weren’t very popular either!” Then rehearse them in copying some of their lines.
- Have each of the characters pray facing the audience so that their facial expressions can be seen.
- You might like to use a simple backdrop to create a temple interior.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- In this story both characters are wealthy, but perhaps use a bishop-style hat or other religious headgear to denote the Pharisee.
- The tax collector could have a large money bag.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Using simple screens for backdrops.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

For the next few weeks we're going to be telling you stories about some brave women in the Bible, women who dared to do right. One day in the land of Persia long, long ago, the king was looking for a new queen. He decided to have a competition to find the most beautiful woman in the whole country. Out of hundreds of women he chose a girl called Esther. I wonder why?

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Esther Was a Star'.

Read Esther was a Star in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

CONCLUSION

Esther, Mordecai and all their people were saved. Just imagine how the story might have ended if Esther hadn't been brave enough to speak to the king.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Esther's uncle was wise enough to see that God had placed her in the palace at just the right time. He encouraged Esther to trust God and speak to the king. Close your eyes and think about the times when you are scared to speak out. Perhaps God can help you to be brave like Esther too.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, Esther must have been very scared going to see the king. Thank you that you helped her when she was frightened. When we are frightened please help us to speak out too. Amen.

Story 1 Esther was a Star

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Esther, king, Mordecai, Haman.

Additional: Servants/soldiers, Star-holder/maid-in-waiting.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- There's an almost pantomime-like tone to this story with lots of opportunity for dramatic action and dialogue. Look for the alliteration and repetitive phrases. With careful planning of exits and entrances the story will have a dramatic impact. Be aware of the different 'scenes'.
- The climax of the story is when Esther reveals the truths about herself and Haman in front of the king. She can point with passion!
- Choose a group of children to play the parts of servants who bow to Haman. They can also be on hand at the banquet to take Haman out of the room when the king commands his death.
- If you don't have enough adults for the main characters, a child could play the part of the king, sitting in a fixed place throughout.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Table with cloth, plates, bowls etc. and three chairs. Have this behind the characters for the first part of the story. It can either be brought by the servant, or the characters can move behind it at the appropriate time.
- Crown and robe for the king.
- A throne – drape bright or shiny fabric over a chair.
- Colourful robe for Esther with lots of jewellery and a sparkly headband.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Alternative version of the story.
- Ideas for conveying royalty.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Do you remember the story in the Bible about the walls of Jericho falling down? Wasn't it exciting when they crashed down after the soldiers had marched round them seven times? One of those soldiers married a woman from Jericho called Rahab and they had a son they called Boaz. He's in our story today.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Ruth Finds a New Home'.

Read Ruth Finds a New Home in The Lion Storyteller Bible (2008 expanded edition)

CONCLUSION

Ruth could have taken the easy way out and left Naomi to travel alone. But instead, she did the right thing and went with her to Bethlehem. It must have been very difficult, arriving there with no home and no food and no money. I'm so glad that Boaz agreed to look after them, aren't you?

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

We all need looking after sometimes, whether we're grown up like Naomi and Ruth or children like you. Close your eyes and think of someone who looks after you.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you that Boaz looked after Naomi and Ruth when they needed help. Show us how we can help people who have no home or food or money. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

When we read the Bible we find that most of the leaders of God's people were men, but today's story is about a woman and her name was Deborah. She had a very important job to do and she knew she could only do it with God's help. Let's hear why.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Deborah the Judge'.

Read Deborah the Judge in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

I can understand why Barak wasn't keen to go into battle, can you? I would think twice about attacking such a fierce army, too. But Deborah knew that God had a plan and she trusted him.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Close your eyes and imagine how surprised Barak was when it started to rain and the dry riverbed turned to sticky mud. Can you think of a time when things turned out better for you than you thought?

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you that Deborah asked for your help and listened to your reply. Please remind us that we can ask you for help when we don't know what to do. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

The woman in our story from the Bible today is very unhappy because she wants to have a baby of her own very much. Eventually, she decides to ask God for help. What do you think happened? Shall we find out?

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Hannah's Prayer'.

Read Hannah's Prayer in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Do you sometimes say, "It's not fair!"? It doesn't really help, does it? Hannah realised that it was better to tell God how she felt rather than moan or complain. Wasn't it wonderful when God answered her prayer!

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Close your eyes and think quietly about something that is bothering you at the moment. Perhaps if you talk to God he can help you too.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for listening to Hannah's prayer. Help us to remember that you listen to our prayers too. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

- Essential:** Narrator, Elkanah, Hannah, Peninnah, Eli.
Additional: Children, young Samuel.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- Make sure you place the narrator away from the action so that their words aren't lost when the characters move from scene to scene.
- In the story it is only Hannah who is in the temple with Eli. Make sure that their important conversation isn't 'crowded out'. Keep the 'temple' in a clearly defined space.
- Hannah needs to go offstage after visiting the temple and return carrying the baby.
- The children could sigh loudly at the words "It's not fair" to emphasise the repetition.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Baby doll wrapped in a blanket.
- A small coat or tunic for Samuel (but make sure it's not too modern!).
- In your scene planning, establish where 'home', 'Shiloh' and 'temple' are. Use signs if you think they will be helpful.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- The website has suggestions for costumes for women and men.
- The freestanding door made in Year 2 can denote the temple if draped with gold cloth.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

When you are asked to share something, what do you say? Do you moan? Or do you say, "Yes, help yourself"? The good thing about sharing is that you make other people happy. It's not good to be selfish and keep everything for yourself. In today's story we hear about a very selfish man. I wonder what happened to him?

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Brave Abigail'.

Read Brave Abigail in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Abigail wanted to help David and his men because they were hungry. She knew it was right to help them by giving them food.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Close your eyes for a moment and think about all the people in the world who are hungry and need help.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you that Abigail was brave enough to take food to David and his men. Please help all the rich countries in the world to share their food with all the poor countries in the world. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

- Essential:** Narrator, Abigail, Nabal, Lachan, David.
Additional: David’s men.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This story is written in the present tense to give a sense of urgency. It needs to be read at a good pace.
- If you don’t have enough adults, the part of Lachan could be mimed by a child.
- Nabal can show his bad temper by banging on a table.
- Choose someone to be Nabal who is able to fall to the ground, or adjust the text if he needs to ‘die’ in a chair!

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Household paraphernalia for Abigail.
- Table, chair and dining equipment for Nabal.
- Hessian bags (supermarket long-life ones, turned inside out) for packing the food.
- Abigail can simply mime riding on a donkey or she can use a donkey puppet, or a ‘donkey on a pole’.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Instructions for making puppets or suggestions for purchase of puppets.
- Pictures and instructions for a ‘donkey on a pole’.

MY NOTES

Story 1 The First Passover Meal

INTRODUCTION

There are lots of stories in the Bible about meals: from the fruit that Adam and Eve ate to the barbeque that Jesus had on the beach with his disciples. So, for the next few weeks we are going to tell you some of the stories about meals in the Bible. Today's story explains why a special meal, that happened for the very first time thousands of years ago, is still being celebrated today.

We don't know the names of all the people who ate the meal, but we have called the boy in the story 'Shuni'.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'The First Passover Meal'.

Read The First Passover Meal in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

This special meal, called Passover, is still celebrated every year by Jewish people. They are descendants of the slaves, like Shuni, who escaped from Egypt so long ago. We can still read the story of their dramatic escape in the Bible. At the Passover meal, Jewish people still eat the same things that Shuni's father told him about – the lamb, the special bread called Matzos and other food to remind them to give thanks to God for rescuing them from slavery.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Close your eyes now and, while you are quiet, think about the children around the world who have no proper home, no school and no freedom to enjoy growing up.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, all over the world there are children, like Shuni, who need to be set free from terrible situations. Please show us how we can help them and not forget about them. Amen.

Story 1 The First Passover Meal

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Shuni, father.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This is a simple story recording a conversation between a father and son (but could be played by women, of course). Next week's story is a similar conversation between a grandmother and her granddaughter. The only action in the story is the dabbing of 'blood' on the doorway, which could easily be mimed.
- Shuni only asks simple questions so this part could be read by a capable child with minimal rehearsal. Consider this if you don't have any younger team members.
- If you have the characters reading their own lines, dispense with the "he said" and allow the dialogue to flow more naturally.
- The biblical account of the Passover is very graphic. We have deliberately downplayed the blood and death elements for our younger listeners. For example, the blood is 'dabbed' on the doorpost instead of painted.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Something to represent a large piece of meat, e.g. painted piece of foam, and a 'bloodstained' cloth – use paint or food colouring. Alternatively, simply wrap a cushion in two pieces of stained cloth and only remove the outer layer.
- Pitta bread or similar, and a bunch of herbs, laid on a table with bowls, etc.
- A doorway (see below) or use a convenient doorway in the assembly hall.
- Shuni and his father need to be dressed in biblical style costumes to show that this story takes place in that era.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Free-standing doorway from Year 2.
- Ideas for basic kit, including headdresses.

MY NOTES

Story **2** The Remembering Meal

INTRODUCTION

In last week’s story we heard a father telling his son about a meal that was called the Passover meal. Did you know that the last meal Jesus ate before he died was a Passover meal? In today’s story a little girl is asking her grandmother about Jesus’ last meal and, as her grandmother answers, she learns about another special meal. Let’s **OPEN THE BOOK** to the Bible story called ‘The Remembering Meal’.

Read The Remembering Meal in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Our story calls this special meal ‘The Remembering Meal’ but in churches today it is called Holy Communion, Mass, The Lord’s Supper or the Eucharist. It is a time when Christians come together as a family to remember the death of Jesus. Jesus knew that his friends would miss him very much after he died so he used the simple act of sharing bread and wine to help them remember him in a special way.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

It’s good to make time to remember our friends. Perhaps you have friends or family who are far away and you don’t see them very often. Close your eyes and spend some time thinking about them now.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I’m going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say “Amen” at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you that Jesus understands how important it is to have friends. Thank you for Jesus’ friends. Please help us to remember all our friends – those we see every day and those who live far away. Amen.

Story 2 The Remembering Meal

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Miriam, Grandmother.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This story reads as an everyday conversation between a girl and her grandmother. The timing is very important to give a natural flow. Allow time to rehearse this.
- Have Miriam sit at one side of the table. Grandmother can be busy sorting out things for the meal, but then sit down when Miriam says, "Tell me again".
- Have Grandmother, then Miriam, pick up a bread roll as they say the appropriate words in the script. Likewise, Grandmother can pick up a pottery goblet as she explains about the wine.
- Ideally, choose a younger member of your storytelling team to take the role of Miriam. If this is not possible, you could ask a child to take on the role, but make sure she is a competent reader and allow plenty of time for practice.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Chairs/stools and a table set with wooden or pottery plates and bowls, jugs etc. A pottery goblet is useful – keep an eye out in charity shops.
- Two small bread rolls.
- Simple biblical costumes, with an apron for Grandmother – remember the story is set only a few years after the death of Jesus.
- The scripts can be propped unobtrusively on the table.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- The website has ideas for making props very simply and quickly.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Whether it's a long way back in Jesus' time or right now in our time, weddings are special occasions! People work very hard preparing for a wedding and often spend a lot of money. There's always a great worry that something might go wrong and spoil the day. There's a wedding in our story today and also a very worried man. I think you will agree that it turns out to be a 'meal to remember'! Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Jesus and the Wedding Feast'.

Read The Wedding Feast in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

This story is an important one because it tells us about the very first miracle that Jesus did. Until this moment Jesus had been working as an ordinary carpenter just like Joseph, but Mary never forgot that Jesus was also God's son. Perhaps she thought it was time for Jesus to start his special work.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Mary couldn't help the bridegroom's father but she knew that Jesus could – and that is why she asked him! Sometimes we need to ask for help. Who should we ask to help us? Close your eyes and think about the people who can help you when you don't know what to do next.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, this story reminds us that Jesus helped with everyday things – even something like wine for a wedding. Help us to remember that you can help us with everyday things too if we ask you. Amen.

Story 3 The Wedding Feast

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, bridegroom’s father, Mary, Jesus, Master of the Feast.

Additional: Servants and guests (you can use children).

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This story can be presented in two ways: one is to have the wedding festivities on stage, in which case you will need additional children to play the guests. Don’t let the ‘partying’ overshadow the father’s dilemma at the beginning of the story. Give careful thought to the placing of the characters who speak so that they can be seen and heard.
- Alternatively this story could be presented with the party action offstage (through a doorway) with all the onstage action happening in front of the children ‘out the back’. This is recommended if you have a small stage area or a small team.
- When Jesus indicates the jars to the servants, they should look and nod their heads in response.
- The servants have a lot of important action. If children play the parts of servants their words should be spoken by the narrator. This needs to be rehearsed and clearly seen by the audience at the appropriate points in the story. Rehearse the children in all their actions and, if possible, have an adult to lead each group. The children will find it easier to follow them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- This story gives an opportunity for more elaborate costumes, suitable for a wedding, if desired. Try draping sparkly scarves over regular tunics.
- Use the same costume for Jesus as in previous stories – a simple, light-coloured costume so that he stands out from the rest of the people.
- The stone jars can be painted cut-out props, painted onto a screen or kept ‘offstage’ and merely indicated. The ‘filling’ with water should be mimed.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Instructions for making cut-outs.
- Ideas for creating painted screens and backdrops.

MY NOTES

Story 4 Sarah Spends Her Savings

INTRODUCTION

Are you good at saving? Do you save your pocket money? Do you save your sweets or do you eat them all at once? In our story today there is a woman who has been saving for a very long time. But she's not saving money. She's not saving sweets. She's saving something very unusual. Listen carefully!

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Sarah Spends Her Savings'.

Read Sarah Spends Her Savings in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Well, that was a meal to remember, wasn't it? I'm sure the guests would have talked about what happened for a very long time afterwards.

In the story in the Bible this woman isn't given a name, but we have called her Sarah. Can anyone tell me what Sarah saved? (*Invite answers.*) Yes – it was perfumed oil. Her jar of perfumed oil was very precious to her and she was going to sell it. But she changed her mind when she heard that Jesus was in town. She wanted to give Jesus the most precious thing she owned; she wanted to give him her precious perfumed oil.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Jesus understood that Sarah had done many wrong things and she needed to show that she was sorry. As we close our eyes let's think about how important it is for us to show we are sorry when we do wrong things.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, we know that we often do wrong things and need to say sorry. Help us to show that we are sorry by our actions. Amen.

Story **4** Sarah Spends Her Savings

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, Sarah, Simon, Jesus.

Additional: Guests, servants, neighbours.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- There are two scenes in the story: Sarah’s house and Simon’s house. Keep the actions in them clearly separate.
- Emphasise the importance of the jar by the dramatic action of lifting the lid and smelling the perfume. Make sure the jar is clearly seen by the children throughout the story.
- Make sure Jesus is sandalled or barefoot. Don’t pour the oil (a Health and Safety hazard afterwards!) but simply dab some on his feet.
- Put Jesus in front of the table (if used) so that the significant action can be seen.
- Let Simon speak his thoughts out loud. He needs to make a big show of ignoring Jesus.
- Children could take the parts of the additional characters, but this isn’t essential. These characters could be imagined.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Sarah needs a wig or headscarf secured to the head in such a way that it can represent long hair to dry Jesus’ feet. Make sure this is not comical; it would be better to mime it.
- A small pot or glass jar with a lid, half filled with olive oil or similar. Make sure it is large enough to be seen by all the children but small enough to be ‘precious’.
- A rich, ostentatious costume for Simon.
- Benches can take the place of a table, with cushions for Jesus and the guests to recline on, although you need to take care that any action at floor level can be clearly seen by the children.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Basic costumes.
- The website has ideas for making props very simply and quickly.

MY NOTES

Story **5** The Writing on the Wall

INTRODUCTION

This is the last in our collection of Bible stories about ‘meals to remember’. It’s a story about Daniel. We like telling you stories about Daniel. Daniel respected God all his life, even when it got him into trouble. Do you remember when God rescued him from the lions’ den? Even though Daniel is now an old man, God still uses him to pass on an important message to someone who doesn’t respect God at all.

Let’s OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called ‘The Writing on the Wall’.

Read The Writing on the Wall in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Well, I don’t think anyone would forget that meal, would they? Belshazzar was very frightened when he saw the hand writing on the wall. He’d made God very unhappy – not only did he get very drunk, but he used the special cups that were set aside for holy occasions. It was very sad that he didn’t respect God like Daniel did.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

King Belshazzar misused the gold and silver cups from the temple. Sometimes we use things that don’t belong to us. Close your eyes and see if you can remember a time when you used something without asking.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I’m going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say “Amen” at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, please help us to respect other people’s property and respect you too. Amen.

Story 5 The Writing on the Wall

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, King Belshazzar, king’s mother, Daniel.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- Have the characters sit around a richly decorated table, all facing the audience.
- The king can ‘invite’ all the children to the party.
- If you want the children to join in, they can repeat “Hooray” after the king has said “Hooray for the god of gold!”
- The narrator needs to adopt a dramatic tone when the hand appears.
- Allow a pause at the end of Daniel’s speech so that all the characters can stand and turn their backs to the audience and the narrator can come to the front to deliver the final lines.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- The ‘writing on the wall’ could be projected onto a wall or screen using an OHP or PowerPoint at the appropriate point in the story. Imagined writing can be very effective too!
- Visit your local party shop for gold or silver cups or goblets. Or try spraying plastic cups with gold/silver paint, or simply wrap kitchen foil around cups.
- Decorate the table as gaudily as possible – a pedestal of fruit, shiny cloth, candelabra, etc.
- Cloak and crown for king and mother.
- A simple costume for Daniel.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- The website has ideas for making props very simply and quickly.
- Instructions for making PowerPoint slides and using the school’s digital projector.

MY NOTES

Story **1** Just Hoping**INTRODUCTION**

Good morning, everybody! This morning I could say to the teachers – I hope you are all feeling well. I hope you are happy to be in school today. I hope you will enjoy (*or have enjoyed*) your lessons today. I could say to my friends here – I hope you are ready to tell the story. I hope you won't make any mistakes. I hope you have fun. But what I'm going to say to you is – I hope you're sitting comfortably. I hope you're looking forward to today's story. I hope you're ready to listen.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Just Hoping'.

Read Just Hoping in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

This story reminds us that Christmas is about a little baby who brought hope to lots of people – not just to Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the star watchers, but to people all over the world.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Christmas is a time to think about Jesus as a baby bringing hope to the world. So as we look forward to our Christmas, let's close our eyes for a moment and think about the children who need hope at this time: the children who have lost their homes, perhaps because of disasters or war; the children who have nothing to look forward to because of poverty or illness.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for the good things that will happen to us this Christmas. Help us to remember all those children who have forgotten how to hope for good things. Please show us what we can do to help them. Amen.

Story **1** Just Hoping

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

- Essential:** Narrator, Mary, Joseph, innkeeper, shepherd, angel, star-watcher.
Additional: Shepherds, two more star-watchers (you can use children).

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- Carefully plan the placing of the different ‘scenes’ – Mary’s home, Bethlehem and stable, shepherds’ hillside, star-watchers’ home. Use your assembly space fully to incorporate the three journeys, or, if space is limited, zig-zag through the available space.
- Alternatively, use only a narrator to tell the story scene by scene, without any dramatisation. Using two or more narrators for alternate sections will add variety.
- Suitable music at the appropriate time would convey the angels’ singing.
- The angel can be a loud voice ‘offstage’.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Simple costumes for Mary, Joseph and shepherds. Add some rich colour and sparkle to the star-watchers’ robes and an apron or tea towel for the innkeeper.
- Piece of cloth for Mary to ‘sew’.
- Baby ‘Jesus’ doll suitably swaddled and placed in a basket, box or crate to represent animal trough.
- Three presents.
- The angel (if a physical appearance) will be expected to wear white! A surplice provides an easy angel costume – ask your local vicar or church choir! Alternatively, an angel banner will have use in many stories.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- An angel banner made in previous years.
- Pictures on the website with instructions for making kingly gifts.
- Doorway made for earlier stories in Year 2 could show the stable entrance.
- Angel costume and crowns.
- Suggestions for finding and using CDs of pre-recorded sound effects.

MY NOTES

Story **2** Christmas Journeys

INTRODUCTION

Do you like going on a journey? Perhaps you have been by car or perhaps a bus? Or maybe you have even been in a taxi to the airport and then caught a plane to go on holiday? Today's story starts with an angel going on a journey.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Christmas Journeys'.

Read Christmas Journeys in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Sometimes journeys can be long and boring, and we ask, "Are we there yet?" But I bet the angel and the shepherds and the wise men, and all those who came to Jesus, were pretty excited. They couldn't wait to get to see the baby. When our family or friends have a newborn baby we all get excited and rush round to see them, don't we? All babies are special, but this story shows us that Jesus was a very special baby. The Bible tells us that he was God's own son.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

As we close our eyes let's think about how the baby Jesus grew up to be a man – a man who made many journeys to tell people how much God loved them.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you that each year we can remember the birth of Jesus and all that he did when he grew up. Help us to remember how much you love us. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

- Essential:** Narrator, angel, Mary, Joseph, star.
Additional: Sheep and angels (you can use children).

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- The dialogue is short so storytellers could learn their lines if they wish. Alternatively, a narrator could read all the words, with storytellers (or children) simply making the journeys.
- The physical arrangement of the room can be used to good effect for all the different journeys. Perhaps create a central aisle when the children file into the hall (see suggestions in Module 3 Story 5).
- Emphasise the repetition of the word 'journey' visually by having all the action move towards, and eventually end up at, the crib of Jesus. You will have created the traditional Christmas 'tableau'.
- Simply telling this story may create more impact than acting it. Using more than one narrator would increase the sense of excitement. The narrators could move from different places as they read.
- Mary can simply produce the baby when the narrator says 'down to a stable'.
- Involving the children as sheep or angels would be fun for them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Try telling this story without costumes but perhaps each person wearing a brightly coloured scarf, or a single signature artifact or headdress (e.g. a star, a crown, a headscarf).
- Cut-out sheep or masks for the sheep, and tinsel for the angels' halos.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Instructions and pictures for making cut-out sheep.
- Masks and other ways of portraying animals.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Do you have good ideas? I do, sometimes. And sometimes, nobody listens to my good ideas. Sometimes I have a good idea but I don't get round to doing anything about it. It isn't any good just having an idea, is it? You have to do something with it. In today's story we hear about the most amazing idea ever.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'God's Good Idea'.

Read God's Good Idea in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

So God's good idea was to send Jesus into the world. He had tried so hard to show people that he loved them but most of them just didn't understand. He entrusted Jesus with an important job – to show people the greatness of God's love for them.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Close your eyes and, in the quiet, think about how much you love and care for the special people in your life. How can you show that?

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, it's sometimes hard to really understand how much you love us. Help us to think about this as we celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas time. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator.

Additional: Voice of God, John.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- This story presents the Christmas story as told at the beginning of John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word ..." It needs to be read with pace, confidence and excitement, so rehearse it well.
- This story is deliberately written in a different style from the other Open the Book Christmas stories. Told well, it should convey a sense of mystery and wonder.
- There is no obvious acting needed for the story: in fact, too much action could detract from the story.
- A second narrator could speak the words of God while the character of John could step forward and say his words.
- If you wish to include the children, they could follow an adult in the last paragraph and cluster quietly around a crib, looking at the baby.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- PowerPoint presentation of images to fit the story, e.g. heart, light, burning bush or with dramatic abstract photographs, many of which can be found on the internet. In the same way, background music (which does not distract) could add to the story. Whatever you decide to do, keep the aim in mind, i.e. to create a sense of awe and wonder.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- The website describes how this story was presented by a single storyteller with some imaginative props.
- Hints for finding and using CDs of music or pre-recorded sound effects.

MY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

Do you sometimes stand at the edge of things and watch what's happening? Like standing at the edge of the football field watching the game. Like standing at the edge of a party watching other people dancing. Like standing at the edge of the playground watching other children playing games. Today's story was written especially for Open the Book based on what we read about Easter in the Bible.

It imagines that there was a soldier who watched everything that happened to Jesus.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'A Soldier's Story'.

Read A Soldier's Story in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

The soldier didn't understand why Jesus was being treated so badly when he hadn't done anything wrong. It wasn't until he saw Jesus alive again that he started to understand.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

In our story the soldier wasn't happy about the bad things that were happening to Jesus. In his heart he knew it wasn't right. Close your eyes and think about a time when your heart told you that something wasn't right.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, when our hearts tell us that something isn't right, help us to know what to do about it. Amen.

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Narrator, soldier, Pilate, Jesus, Mary.

Additional: Other soldiers, Jesus' friends, a second angel.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- Place the narrator and soldier on opposite sides, with the action being acted or mimed in the centre.
- Be careful not to clutter the stage with too many people, which might detract from the story. You might prefer to keep the actors to a minimum: for instance, if the narrator were to speak all the words, you could simply have characters miming.
- Because this story tells the entire Easter story, there is a lot of action and several scene changes. A simple way to present it is by having the characters speak the parts only (more like radio than TV!). Static storytellers facing the audience, perhaps seated on barstools, or standing on different sized boxes or benches, can read their parts with simple props and actions.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Jesus needs a purple cloak at the beginning, and a white robe for his later appearance.
- A 'crown of thorns' – wrap some soft foliage into a crown shape (willow works well) or make a paper band, with the outline of thorns drawn on.
- Armour, helmet and sword for the soldier.
- White robes for angels (see suggestion in Module 7 Story 1).
- Instead of dramatisation, a PowerPoint presentation of appropriate images could be projected.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Ideas for armour and soldiers' helmets.
- The Basic Kit webpage gives ideas for costumes for Jesus and the other characters.
- A Roman-style toga and headdress for Pilate.
- Explanation of how to create PowerPoint slides and use a digital projector.

MY NOTES

Story **2** Peter's Saddest Day

INTRODUCTION

Do you like being with your friends? What do you enjoy most – playing games, watching TV or going out together? Jesus had some special friends and we've told you a lot of stories about them, but Jesus also had some enemies. Some people were jealous of him and even frightened of him because he was different. They didn't like the things he said or what he did. They thought he was dangerous so they wanted to get rid of him. This made Peter and Jesus' other friends very sad.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Peter's Saddest Day'.

Read Peter's Saddest Day in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

Poor Peter! He must have felt so unhappy to see what happened to Jesus and know that he had done nothing to help him. But, don't worry, things turned out all right in the end, as we shall hear next week.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Sometimes we do things that we are sorry about later. Sometimes we wish that we could go back and change what we have done. Close your eyes and try to remember a time when you might have let one of your friends down. Do you remember how sorry you felt?

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, please forgive us when we let our friends down or make them unhappy. Help us to say sorry and put things right. Help us to forgive them if they have let us down. Amen.

Story 2 Peter's Saddest Day

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Jesus, Peter, servant girl, man in garden.

Additional: Friends, soldiers, people in garden.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- To present this story dramatically you need to move the action three times. Use the space you have available to create three different scenes.
- You could create a central aisle through the children (see suggestions in Module 3 Story 5) and move the story through it, using children to speak and act the additional parts as each scene stops near them.
- The soldiers can take Jesus out of the hall to the 'offstage' house of the High Priest.
- The story can be simply but dramatically narrated, with team members and children taking the speaking parts. You could position the characters among the children so that the voices create impact as they are heard from different places.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- A brazier can be made with a wastepaper bin (preferably rustic, not plastic) with shiny gold paper inside. Handheld flames can be propped up inside for extra effect; you may have made these for the Year 2 story, 'The Helper Arrives'.
- Swords for the soldiers.
- It is hard to make an authentic cockcrow sound and this one mustn't be comical. Either search the internet and download one, or look on CDs of sound effects. Public libraries sometimes have these.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Instructions on making handheld flames.
- Hints on using pre-recorded CDs.

MY NOTES

Story 3 Peter's Happiest Day

INTRODUCTION

Do you remember how sad Peter and his friends were because Jesus had died? Peter let Jesus down, didn't he? Do you remember how many times Peter had said that he didn't know Jesus? That number is important. If you listen carefully to our story you will hear why.

Let's OPEN THE BOOK to the Bible story called 'Peter's Happiest Day'.

Read Peter's Happiest Day in the Open the Book Storybook 3.

CONCLUSION

How many times did Peter say he didn't know Jesus? (*Allow time for an answer.*) And how many times did Peter say that he was Jesus' friend? (*Allow time for an answer.*) Jesus knew just how to put things right with Peter and how to make his friend feel better.

QUIET MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

Sometimes friends can do things that hurt us. This story shows us that it's good to forgive our friends when they are sorry. Close your eyes and think about any friendship that might need mending today.

Allow time for reflection – silently count to 10 s-l-o-w-l-y.

PRAYER INTRODUCTION

Now I'm going to say a prayer and if you want to make it your prayer say "Amen" at the end after me.

PRAYER

Dear God, Jesus always knew the right things to say to his friends. Help us to say things to our friends that are good and kind and not to say things that are hurtful. Amen.

Story 3 Peter's Happiest Day

STORYTELLERS NEEDED

Essential: Peter, John, Mary Magdalene, Jesus.

Additional: Friends.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRESENTING THE STORY

- The story starts with Peter and John (and friends) inside a gloomy house. Place this scene to one side. Drooping shoulders and sad faces will portray this.
- Peter and John could run to a convenient door in the hall and pretend that the tomb is inside.
- They need to return to the 'house' so that Jesus can join them there. Jesus can either enter the hall from outside or remain hidden out of sight until this point in the story. He will need to exit again to reappear for the beach scene.
- Place the sea and beach scene on the opposite side with a 'boat'.
- Bring Jesus and Peter to centre front for the final important scene. Don't rush these words.
- After Peter's final words Jesus could put his arm around Peter's shoulders and they (and any other characters) could walk to one side while the narrator comes to centre front to deliver the final sentence.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VISUAL IMPACT

- Create a real or imaginary doorway for Mary to knock at – you may have made one in a previous year.
- Use a boat (and nets) to create the sea scene.

EXTRA RESOURCES – DOWNLOADABLE FROM WWW.OPENTHEBOOK.NET

- Instructions for making a free-standing door.
- Instructions for making a boat.

MY NOTES



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