

Living the Word

Bringing God's Great Story to Life



When I first started working on ways to connect with children in worship, I noticed a trend. They did their best to sing along with the hymns and musical responses. They gladly contributed to the offering and helped pass the collection plates to their neighbors. They gleefully shook hands and gave high fives during the Passing of the Peace. They came down to the front (sometimes running or skipping) for the children's message. But then when it came time for the Bible story...it was like asking them to listen to a book report. All of a sudden, they got antsy, wiggly, they "had to go to the bathroom."

Let's face it - they were bored.

But this was important stuff! These stories were something I really wanted them to hold onto, to cherish. I started looking for ways to engage the children, to move them away from being passive "consumers" and lead them into being active participants. And that's what *Living the Word: Bringing God's Great Story to Life* is all about. This collection of 20 Bible stories includes classic favorites as well as a few less-familiar gems. Everything from active listening games, to call and response, to sound effects, to pantomime is used to engage young people...to invite them into the story.

Each story starts with very simple instructions on how to facilitate the interactive telling. Then after the Bible story, there is a brief Holy Conversation to help young people explore how these great stories from years ago still have great meaning for us today. And while these interactive stories can be facilitated in-person with young people, each was designed to be just as effective in an online, virtual setting.

Thank you for all you do to help young people know they are each a living part of God's great story. Enjoy!

Mark Burrows

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Quick-Look Overview

This Bible Story Experience

Brings This Scripture to Life

The Ten Commandments.....	Exodus 20:1-17
Bread from Heaven	Exodus 16 and 17
David and Goliath.....	1 Samuel 17
David Dances Before the Ark	2 Samuel 6:16-23
King Cyrus' Heart	Ezra 1:1-4
Wow.....	Psalm 8
God Calls Isaiah	Isaiah 6:1-8
Jonah.....	Jonah 1 - 3
Mary, Joseph, and the Birth of Jesus.....	Luke 2:1-7
The Angels and Shepherds.....	Luke 2:8-20
The Peaceable Kingdom.....	Isaiah 11:6-9
Four Faithful (Creative) Friends.....	Mark 2:1-12
Jesus Blesses Little Children.....	Mark 10:13-16
Jesus and the Rich Man.....	Mark 10:17-27
Feeding the 5,000.....	John 6:1-14
Palm Sunday	Matthew 21:1-11
The Lord's Supper.....	Mark 14:22-26 and Luke 22:14-20
The Women Find the Empty Tomb.....	Luke 24:1-12
The Early Believers.....	Acts 2:43-47 and Acts 4:32-37
Lydia.....	Acts 16:11-15

Jonah

Based on Jonah 1-3



This story has a lot of sounds and actions for us to do together. Watch and listen. I'll guide us through each sound and action as it occurs in the story.

Once there was a man named Jonah, a prophet of the Lord who walked from place to place telling people what God wanted them to do. **(Walk in place.)**

One day God said, "Jonah, I want you to go to the city of Nineveh. Tell the people there they must change their ways." But Jonah was afraid to go to Nineveh. The people there were mean. So he ran as fast as he could in the other direction. **(Run in place.)**

When Jonah reached the sea, he got on board a ship to take him even further away from Nineveh. **(Sing to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"):**

**"Sail, sail, sail away - far from Nineveh.
I don't want to go there at all. Nope, no way, uh-uh!"**

Jonah was still tired from all the running. Once he got on the ship, he went below deck to take a nap. **(Snore.)**

While he was sleeping, a storm arose. **(Make rain and thunder sounds using body percussion. Use vocal sounds to imitate wind and crashing waves.)**

All the sailors were very frightened, and they woke up Jonah. **(very pirate-y): "Arr!"**

Jonah knew the storm was his fault. He hadn't listened to God. Jonah told the sailors to throw him overboard so the storm would end. So they did, and the storm stopped. The sea became peaceful again. **(Make gentle wind sounds.)**

"Well," thought Jonah as he bobbed up and down in the water, "that takes care of the storm. So now what?" But Jonah didn't have to wonder for very long. In the water...coming straight toward him...was a great fish that swallowed Jonah whole! **(Make "shark" arms and munching sounds.)**

So there Jonah sat in the belly of the whale (in time out) for three whole days. **(Tick-tock...)**

And while Jonah sat there, and thought about what he had done, he prayed to God. Then God commanded the fish, and it spat Jonah out onto dry land. **(PRETEND to spit.)**

Again God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, to tell the people to change their ways. This time, Jonah obeyed. **(Walk in place.)**

The people of Nineveh changed their ways and God forgave them. **(Say, "Amen!")**

Holy Conversation Starter

God gave Jonah a second chance to do the right thing and go to Nineveh. God also gave the Ninevites a chance to change, and they *did*. When was a time someone gave you a second chance? How did it feel?

The Lord's Supper

Based on Mark 14:22-26 and Luke 22:14-20



Listen closely to this story about a special meal Jesus shared with his friends, the disciples. We will have four opportunities to use American Sign Language to sign, "We remember love."

Let's learn how to sign these important words:

we – with pointer finger, draw this shape across the chest:

remember – touch forehead with one thumb, then bring the thumb down to touch the thumb of the other hand

love – cross both fists over the chest

(There are great online video dictionaries available for learning ASL – check out signingsavvy.com or signASL.org to see the words above.)

Jesus and his friends were sharing a meal together. He knew that very soon he would leave this world to be in heaven. But he wanted to give his friends a special way to remember that no matter what, his love would *never* leave them.

We remember love.

While they were eating together, Jesus took some bread. He gave thanks, broke the bread, and then gave it to the disciples. He said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

We remember love.

Then Jesus took a cup. He held it, gave thanks, and said, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." Then after singing a hymn together, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

We remember love.

Through body, mind, spirit, and voice, Jesus wanted his friends to remember that they would never be alone. His love would always be with them.

We remember love.

Holy Conversation Starter

We have so many ways to remember love.
What song helps you remember love?
What Bible story helps you remember love?
What relationships help you remember love?

The Early Believers

Based on Acts 2:43-47; Acts 4:32-37



Today's Bible story takes place after Jesus went into heaven.
As I read in rhythm, you pat a steady beat. And after every four lines we'll all say in rhythm –
"Together. Together. We'll be the church together." (Practice once or twice.)
Ready? Here we go!

The followers of Jesus
Took care of one another.
They treated those around them
Like a sister or a brother.

Together. Together. We'll be the church together.

They sold all their possessions.
They had no need for "stuff."
They shared with those in need
And found they always had enough.

Together. Together. We'll be the church together.

They spent good time together.
Their hearts were full of love.
They ate and prayed and offered praises
To the Lord above.

Together. Together. We'll be the church together.

When others saw their kindness,
They knew just what to do.
They joined with the believers
And their numbers grew and grew.

Together. Together. We'll be the church together.

Let's follow their example
Not just by what we say,
But how we *reach out* to the people
We see every day.

Together. Together. We'll be the church together.

Holy Conversation Starter

Those early believers didn't meet in big buildings with stained glass, or pipe organs, or screens, or guitars. *They* were the church. They each did what they could to love and support one another and the communities where they lived. When was a time you were away from the church building, but still felt connected to others in your faith community?