



STORYTELLING WITH

KID CONNECTION

TRAINING MANUAL



Storytelling with *Kid Connection*

A workshop for *Kid Connection* teachers

Focus

This workshop explores the dynamics of *Kid Connection's* large group sessions. The goal is to help *Kid Connection* leaders creatively share the stories of Scripture.

Time

1 hour and 15 minutes

Room Setup

This workshop is fun and interactive! Choose a room with enough space for participants to move around. Arrange chairs in a semicircle. If your group has more than six people, you may want to make extra rooms available for the **So What?** portion of this workshop.

To create a welcoming atmosphere, play music from the program CD as teachers arrive, and consider serving refreshments while people gather.

1 What's Up?

Introducing . . . Me!

Goal

To engage *Kid Connection* leaders in creative expression and challenge them to step out of their comfort zones as storytellers.

Time

10 minutes

Supplies

- Workshop agenda (Handout 1, p. 10), one copy per person
- One copy of Handout 2, p. 11
- Scissors
- A hat, bowl, or small bucket

Preparation

- Cut apart each item on Handout 2. Fold each slip of paper in half and place it in a hat that will be passed around the room.

Welcome everyone, and thank them for joining you at the "Storytelling with *Kid Connection* Workshop." Express your enthusiasm about their passion for nurturing faith in kids. Pass out the agenda (Handout 1), and give a brief overview of the workshop.

Then share something like this: **Being a good storyteller requires us to come out of our comfort zones, risk looking silly, and be daringly dramatic . . . all for the sake of making disciples! Let's break the ice today with a game of expressive introductions.**

Explain that each person is to draw a slip of paper from the hat and introduce themselves using the method described on the slip. This activity works best if each person shares his or her name and two other facts, so that they stay in character for one to two minutes. Suggest that participants tell what their hobbies are, describe their favorite Bible story, tell the number of years they have taught Sunday School, and so on. After each person takes his or her turn, have the group guess their method of introduction. Set a good example by going first and hamming it up!

Wrap up this step by applauding everyone's efforts and letting them know that this workshop will stretch them to tell the stories of God's faithfulness in a fresh way.

2 Guess What!

Telling a Tale

Goal

To provide and practice helpful ingredients for presenting stories.

Time

25 minutes

Materials

None needed

Begin this step by saying, **Think back to a teacher or public speaker who really captured your attention. Chances are, what you remember most about what you heard is how it was presented. Whatever you remember of the content is probably closely linked to how the speaker conveyed it.**

HOW a story is told has a huge impact on how it is remembered by the audience. There are many things you can add to your story to increase its impact on your audience.

Steven James, author of *The Creative Storytelling Guide for Children's Ministry*, compares building a story to baking a cake: the success is in the ingredients. James' recipe for a great story includes eight key ingredients. Let's look at each of those now.

Ingredient 1: Voice

God has blessed us with voices that can make all kinds of different sounds. You probably change the tone and pitch of your voice much more often than you realize.

Think about the sound of your voice when you ask your child to climb down from the coffee table. Now think about the sound of your voice when you ask your child to climb down from the coffee table for the tenth time in a row!

We use a different voice when we're on the phone with our boss or when we're on the phone with someone who is **THREE HOURS LATE for dinner. When you're telling a joke, you use a different voice than when you are telling someone you just smashed into their car.**

We instinctively know when to change our voice in our daily life to get results. Storytelling is the same way. Your voice is an incredible storytelling tool. You can use it to **SCARE PEOPLE INTO PAYING ATTENTION BY YELLING (*yell as you say the preceding words*) or you can **stop talking and insert a dramatic pause** (*pause dramatically*).**

We can also use our voices to imitate the sounds we hear. We can meow like a cat. Let me hear your meow! (*MEOW!*) We can beep like an alarm clock. Let me hear your beep! (*Beep-beep-beep-beep.*)

Your voice is an amazing storytelling tool. Let's see what we can do with it together!

Invite your group to make the following sounds:

- a friend at a sleepover quietly asking if her friend is asleep yet
- a lifeguard yelling at everyone to get out of the pool
- a police car siren
- a bee buzzing around your head
- the panic-stricken wife of Noah asking, "Where are the tarantulas???!"
- a nervous Moses, the first time he has to tell Pharaoh "Let my people go!"
- an experienced Moses, the eighth time he tells Pharaoh to "Let my people go!"
- a frustrated Martha clearing her throat to get her sister Mary's attention

Point out that people who are mentioned in the Bible were living, breathing, sound-making people, just like us! It's important that we give them more than a one-dimensional cardboard voice when we tell their stories. Say, **Each story in *Kid Connection* gives you lots of tips on how to use your voice to make stories come alive for kids.**

Ingredient 2: Facial Expressions

If I looked at you with this expression on my face (*choose an emotion to express: surprise, pity, anger, disgust, joy*) **what might I be thinking?** Try a few different expressions and encourage people to call out answers.

Facial expressions help communicate the emotions behind our words. They pull us into the excitement or sorrow of a story.

Have your group try these expressions together:

- the "Cut it out NOW" look, made famous by parents and grandparents
- an eager child opening a gift
- a person frantically looking for something that's lost
- Adam, seeing Eve for the very first time
- Peter as he hears the rooster crow
- the disciples as they receive the Holy Spirit on Pentecost
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as they faced the fiery furnace

Mention that facial expressions should look authentic. Say, **What would your expressions *really* look like if you were Mary gazing at baby Jesus, or Elijah watching fire fall from heaven?**

The *KC* small groups always include a time of wondering that helps kids connect with the story through their own experiences. Wondering questions might sound like this: "I wonder what it felt like when . . ." "I wonder what she was thinking when . . .," or "Has that ever happened to you?"

As the storyteller, your facial expressions can help kids wonder about the story. As they wonder we hope they'll discover that the people in Scripture have felt the way they've felt, and that God is a promise-keeping God who has a plan for them just as he had a plan for the people in his story!

Ingredient 3: Eyes

Many KC stories include dialogue between two storytellers, or between the storyteller and a character who isn't actually there. As you share stories, you'll need to use your eyes to look at and interact with all the unseen characters that can't be onstage with you . . . like the big fish Jonah met up with!

Let your group know that where they direct their eyes and how they move their eyes has a big impact on how realistic the story seems. Invite the group to direct or move their eyes as if they were telling a story and describing each of the following characters:

- Joseph when he realizes the men standing before him are his brothers
- the prodigal son, talking about working among the pigs before returning home
- a shepherd caught in the glorious light from God's angels

Then say, **Learning to balance your eye-contact between the audience and the unseen characters in your story requires the fourth ingredient:**

Ingredient 4: Imagination

Ask your group to close their eyes and imagine the answers to the questions below. Decide if you'd like to have them sit quietly or call out responses.

- What would you see if you were standing next to the tower of Babel as it was being built? What sounds would you hear?
- Imagine you're standing next to the burning bush. How tall is it? Can you feel the heat from the fire? What does it smell like? How far back would you stand from it if you were Moses?
- If you were in the boat while Jesus snoozed and the storm tossed your boat around, what would you hold on to? What might you bump into as you tried to keep the boat afloat? What would you feel on your skin?
- If you were lugging a basket of bread left over from the feeding of 5,000 people, how heavy would it be? Would you hold it with two hands, or balance it on your hip? How would your stomach feel after a picnic of bread and fish?
- What would Mary's anointing oil smell like as she poured it on Jesus' feet?

Say, **The challenge of a storyteller is to know the story well enough to imagine yourself inside it. Keep in mind the tastes, smells, and sounds you would experience if you were right there in the moment. Imagining the story unfolding around you will enhance all the other storytelling ingredients too.**

Ingredients 5-7: Posture, Movement, and Gestures

Say, **I'm going to tell a story using only the next three ingredients: posture, movement, and gestures. Shout out the name of the story if you think you know it.**

Act out a well-known Bible story, such as Jesus walking on the water and asking Peter to join him, or Noah loading the animals into the ark . . .

Say, **The way we move, stand, or slouch can communicate important qualities and ideas about the characters in our stories.**

Have everyone in your group stand to practice posture and movement by pretending they are:

- sneaky
- embarrassed

- frustrated
- the disappointed disciples the day after Jesus was crucified
- the young boy David, bravely using his slingshot against Goliath
- the wise and rich King Solomon pondering a riddle
- Moses, boldly raising his staff to part the Red Sea
- Jesus, humbly stooping down to wash the disciples' feet
- Lazarus, squinting at the sun as he steps out of the tomb

Caution the group that their gestures need not be greatly exaggerated. The more realistically they portray the characteristics of God's people the easier it will be for kids to identify with them!

Ingredient 8: Yourself

Say, **The last ingredient is the one that should come most naturally to you: it's YOU! Great storytellers put their heart, passion, personality, and style into the stories they tell.**

Have each participant turn to a neighbor and share which Bible story is their favorite and why that story "connects" so much with them.

Say, **As you become more comfortable as a storyteller, and focus on telling each story from the heart, you'll naturally emphasize the parts of the tale that you connect with most. As your passion shines through, the kids will sense your sincere faith and the value of God's message to them!**

3 So What?

Storytelling Practice

Goal

To provide practice in applying the storytelling ingredients to *Kid Connection* Bible stories.

Time

15 minutes

Supplies

- A Bible
- Handouts 4, 5, 6, and 7 (all or some of these handouts, depending on how many story scripts you use. See pp. 13-21.)
- "Hairy" fabric to place on arms for a skit prop (use a fuzzy sweater, scarf, or fur fabric).

Preparation

This activity can be done several ways, depending on the number of people in your group.

Option #1 (7 people or fewer): Divide the group into pairs or trios to present a story from a script. Read the story descriptions (below) and give groups their story assignment. Tell them they have 8 minutes to prepare before you call them back to present the stories.

Option #2 (7 people or more): Divide the group in half and give each half the same stories to work on. (You may or may not wish to use all of the story options.) Participants will have 8 minutes to prepare and then, in the **Do What** step, they'll have time to present their stories to the others in their half of the group.

Option #3 (any number of people): Present the stories “Sin Comes In” and “It’s Gotta Be a Miracle!” to the group as examples of the different storytelling techniques. *After* you tell each story, give participants a copy of the script and point out how easy it is to tell the stories with all the leader tips that are provided! If time allows, you can also ask for a volunteer to read through either of the two-person stories with you. (If possible, give a participant a copy of the handout for that story in advance to help the read-through run smoothly.) After reading through the two-person story, pass participants a copy of that story and point out the helpful tips that made telling a two-person story a snap. Mention that a story like this is a great way to involve a preteen!

Introduce this step by saying something like this: **Now that we’ve learned all the ingredients for sharing a great story, it’s time to tell some stories ourselves!**

If you’re using Option 1 or Option 2, share the story descriptions (found below), and give your volunteers their scripts (Handouts 4-7). As each person or group receives their story, send them on their way to practice, letting them know they have about 8 minutes to prepare. If you have multiple pairs practicing, direct the teams to practice areas inside or outdoors, and check in on each group to see if they have any questions. Give a three-minute warning before you call all the teachers back together.

If you’re using Option 3, move on to the next step and begin enthusiastically sharing *Kid Connection* stories (your choices from Handouts 4-7) with your group.

Use as many of these stories as possible for the size of your group:

Handout 4: Sin Comes In

This story is told by one person and is filled with simple ideas to help the storyteller.

Handout 5: Meet the Schemer

This story is told by two people and includes a fun prop!

Handout 6: Taking Care of God’s Creation

For this story you need one narrator and a storytelling assistant to take on the role of Adam. If you like imaginary animals, this one’s for you!

Handout 7: It’s Gotta Be a Miracle!

This is an audience participation story. It only needs one person to tell it, but asks for three or four volunteers to act as the audience.

Tip

Have a coin handy to flip, in case two people have their heart set on the same story!

Tip

Ask the shy workshop participants to practice being audience members for “It’s Gotta Be a Miracle!”

4 Do What?

Lights, Camera . . . Action

Goal

To give *Kid Connection* leaders the opportunity to practice sharing a story in front of an audience or to observe and participate as stories are told.

Time

15-20 minutes

Materials

The same as step 3

Preparation

None needed

Call participants back together and select a group to present their story first, announcing the title of the story before each presentation. If you have time, allow other groups to provide positive feedback after each story is presented.

After all the stories are finished thank everyone for their enthusiastic participation, and either close the workshop in prayer or, if there's time, complete the **What Else** step before closing in prayer.

What Else? (if you have extra time)

Making Beautiful Music Together

Goal

To prepare teachers to lead singing with *Kid Connection*.

Time

15 minutes

Supplies

- CD player
- Program CD
- Handout 3 from page 12

Before the Workshop Begins

- Set the CD player on track 11 and pause it until you're ready to begin the workshop.

Share these ideas with your leaders: **Leading *Kid Connection's* large group time includes singing with kids. For those of us inclined to sing boisterously off key, leading children in song can be especially challenging! So here are some tips to help us make beautiful music together:**

Tip 1: "It's not about me, it's about God."

Say, **Make this your motto! Singing with kids is not about how we look or sound, but all about bringing kids one step closer to God.**

Have the group say it together, "It's not about me, it's about God."

You may wish to share a story of someone you know whose singing skills weren't impressive, but whose enthusiastic efforts revealed a passion for God that had an impact on you.

Tip 2: Learn before you lead.

Say, **Sing in the shower! Belt out a song while you're stuck in traffic and croon a tune while you work in the garden. Then, when it's time to sing with the kids, you'll be able to relax, make eye contact, and have fun as you praise God together!**

Tip 3: Add the actions.

Say, **Even you won't have time to feel self-conscious when you're busy clapping, snapping, and toe-tapping! Your willingness to look silly will put the older kids—the mumblers—at ease. (Let them in on your "It's not about me, it's about God" motto!)**

Tip

This verse repeats three times during the song. If your team is large, splitting into three groups will allow each group to take a turn demonstrating their motions as the song plays.

At this point, play song 11 from the Program CD as you pass out Handout 3, which has Proverbs 3:5 printed on it. When the music is finished, have the group work together to think of motions for this song. If you have six or more leaders you may want to pair off, or split the group into smaller groups. Allow 5 minutes before calling everyone back together to sing the song using the new motions.

Tip 4: Turn up the volume.

Say, **As you just heard, using the songs on the KC program CD will make it sound like there are many more of you! And here's a tip: before teaching a new song, play it as background music while the kids are doing an activity. You'll be amazed at how much of the song seeps into their memory!**

Tip 5: Make friends with a musician.

Say, **Invite a musical guest in occasionally to sing with you. Grab the guy with the guitar in the hallway, scoop up the kid with the tambourine, or ask the praise band drummer to drop by with some rhythm sticks. It's great for kids to be up close and personal with the folks they see "up front" during the worship service.**

Tip 6: Include kids in the process.

Say, **Look for ways to involve kids in leading songs. Invite kids to stand beside you and help you lead the songs you sing. Before teaching a new song, see if anyone else knows it and would like to sing it with you. Encourage kids to teach you some of their favorite praise songs!**

Some songs can be easily broken into pieces so that kids have their own roles in a song. The Halleluiah song is a fun example.

Split the group of leaders into three parts:

- the "Hallelu" group
- the "Ya" group
- the "Praise ye the Lord" group

Have the teachers sing their parts at your signal:

Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu

Ya

Praise ye the Lord.

Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu

Ya

Praise ye the Lord.

Praise ye the Lord

Hallelu

Ya

Praise ye the Lord

Hallelu

Tip

This is a great way to include preteens!

Ya

Praise ye the Lord

Hallelu

Ya

Praise ye the Lord!

Congratulate your team on a job well done! Then wrap up this portion of the workshop by encouraging your teaching team to participate fully in singing during *Kid Connection*. Kids learn to follow their leaders, so every *KC* leader, whether they are up front or standing among the kids, should be belting out the tunes with a gusto they hope the kids will catch!

WORKSHOP AGENDA

What's Up?

Introducing . . . Me!

An exercise in creative expressions

Notes:

Guess What?

Telling the Tale

Storytelling ingredients

Notes:

So What?

Storytelling Practice

Practice using *Kid Connection* Bible stories

Notes:

Do What?

Lights, Camera . . . Action

Presenting the story

Notes:

What Else?

Making Beautiful Music Together

Leading children in singing

Notes:

Introducing . . . Me!

Introduce yourself like a weather reporter caught in a hurricane.

Introduce yourself like a bitter, angry person.

Introduce yourself like a star athlete being interviewed after a big win.

Introduce yourself like a fugitive on the run.

Introduce yourself like a juggler in the circus.

Introduce yourself like an auctioneer.

Introduce yourself like a Southern belle.

Introduce yourself like a rock star or hip-hop artist.

Introduce yourself like a sportscaster announcing the name of a star athlete.

Introduce yourself like a boxer intimidating the opponent.

Introduce yourself like an aerobics instructor.

Introduce yourself like someone who is extremely embarrassed.

Introduce yourself like Miss Universe receiving her crown.

Introduce yourself like a game show host.

Introduce yourself like a referee calling a play.

Introduce yourself like a child.

Introduce yourself like an opera singer.

Introduce yourself like someone who is in love.

Introduce yourself like you are dripping wet.

Introduce yourself like you are very cold.

Introduce yourself like you are extremely hot.

Introduce yourself like you are impatient.

Introduce yourself like you are sorry and regretful.

Making Beautiful Music Together

Proverbs 3:5 is set to music in song 11 on the *Kid Connection* Year 1, Unit 1 program CD. After hearing the song played through, read the verse printed below, then make up motions that will help kids connect with the music and meaning.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.

—Proverbs 3:5

Story Script: Sin Comes In

For the past few weeks we've been learning about God's creation. God made an amazing world filled with light and colors, skies and seas, every kind of animal, and all kinds of food to eat. God made a man and a woman, Adam and Eve, to take care of creation. God provided them with everything they could possibly want or need. God gave them one special instruction—they could help themselves to fruit from every tree in the garden except one. If they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die. Everything was perfect—until sin—dressed up as a snake—entered the garden. And that's where our story begins today.

A snake appeared one day to Eve. The snake was really the devil in disguise, and he was there to trick Eve. He began his lies with a question.

Look sneaky. Lift your shoulders and squint your eyes.

"Did God really tell you that you can't eat the fruit from any of the trees that are in the garden?"

Stand tall again.

Now Eve knew that wasn't true, and she told the snake there was only one tree that God said they weren't allowed to eat from or they would die.

Look sneaky again and take one step closer to the audience.

Moving forward with his sneaky plans, the snake said to Eve, "You won't die. God knows that if you eat the fruit, you'll know new things. You'll even know the difference between good and evil. You'll be like God!"

Stand tall again. As Eve considers the tree and its fruit, you may want to tilt your head slightly from side to side as though you are considering what the snake has said.

Eve liked the sound of what the snake was saying, and so she took another look at that tree. She decided its fruit was looking very tasty. She decided the fruit from that tree looked like it could make people smart. So, Eve decided to disobey God and eat the fruit. Then she gave some to Adam, and he decided to disobey God and eat the fruit too.

Get ready to yell as though someone has just seen you naked!

AHHHHH! After eating the fruit Adam and Eve knew some different things alright! Only they weren't great things like the snake had suggested. Adam and Eve realized they were naked, and they weren't OK with that anymore! Suddenly they knew how it felt to be ashamed and guilty and afraid. Adam and Eve, who had been living in God's perfect world, had disobeyed God. So they ran off and hid when they heard God coming. They had become sneaky, just like the snake.

Step out of the story for a moment—it's helpful to physically step out of the story by taking one step forward or sideways as you stop and talk to the group.

Imagine how Adam and Eve must have been feeling. Think about a time you decided to do something you knew you weren't supposed to do.

Pause.

Now think about how you felt after you did the bad thing.

Involving Preteens

It might be fun to let your preteens know beforehand that at one point during today's story you'll be yelling AHHHHH! And invite them to echo your yell so that it sounds like the reactions of both Adam and Eve.

Pause.

You might have felt afraid or ashamed, and your insides might have felt kind of heavy—like you'd just swallowed a really big rock! Maybe Adam and Eve were feeling some of those things as they tried to hide from God among the trees in the garden.

Now step back into the story.

Of course, God knows everything, and God knew what had happened in the garden. God is so good that he gave Adam and Eve the opportunity to come forward and tell what they had done. God called to Adam, "Where are you?" and Adam said, "I heard you coming and I was afraid. I hid because I was naked." "How did you know you were naked?" God asked. "Did you eat from the tree I told you not to eat from?" Instead of admitting their sin and saying they were sorry, Adam and Eve began playing the first "blame game." The nerve of those two! Adam said it was Eve's fault for bringing him the fruit, and Eve blamed the snake for tricking her.

Step out of the story again.

I wonder how God felt? Think about a time you discovered someone had touched your stuff when they knew they weren't supposed to or when someone broke a special promise they had made to you.

Pause.

Maybe they even blamed someone else and didn't say sorry.

Pause.

You might have felt angry, sad, or very disappointed. I wonder how God felt when Adam and Eve decided to disobey.

Pause.

Let's find out what God does with Adam, with Eve, and with the snake.

Step back into the story.

God punished the snake first. God told the snake that he would have to crawl on his belly and eat dust for the rest of his life. God told Eve that from now on, having babies would be painful. God told Adam that he was going to have to work hard to get food from the ground; life was not going to be so easy anymore. Remember when that devilish snake told Eve she would never die if she ate the fruit? That was a lie. God told Adam and Eve that instead of living forever, one day they would die and be buried. And then God made Adam and Eve some clothes and sent them out of the garden. They were not allowed to live there anymore.

Look solemnly at the group; then suddenly and happily say the following:

But wait, that's not the end of the story! Even though people were disobedient and the snake thought his sneaky plans were successful, God didn't give up! God told the snake that one day, a child would come into the world who would crush sin. That child was Jesus, and God's promise that Jesus would come was made on that sad day so long ago in a beautiful garden. God didn't give up on the world, and God doesn't give up on us!

Let's thank God together.

Pray together using your own words or this prayer:

God you are so great! Even though Adam and Eve disobeyed and your perfect creation was messed up, you never gave up on them. Sometimes we disobey you by doing things we know we're not supposed to do. We're sorry, God. Thank you for never giving up on us either. Amen.

Family Magazine Connection

Show the children where the same story is found in their Guess What! magazines—only this time told by two birds. Encourage them to read it at home with their families.

Story Script: Meet the Schemer

Leader: *[opens Bible to Genesis 27]* You can read about this schemer in the Bible, in Genesis 27. This guy stopped at nothing to get what he wanted! He was so tricky he even—

[Jacob rushes in. His arms are wrapped in fur fabric and he looks very nervous. He keeps looking around and behind himself to make sure he isn't being followed.]

Leader: Um, excuse me? Can I help you, mister—?

Jacob: *[quietly]* Jacob. My name is Jacob.

Leader: Hey, welcome, Jacob! It's great to have you here!

Jacob: *[whispering]* Yeah. *[looks nervously over his shoulder]* Thanks.

Leader: *[noticing furry arms]* What are you wearing?

Jacob: *[quietly]* Would you mind speaking a little quieter?

Leader: *[speaking a little softer]* What are you wearing on your arms?

Jacob: Umm . . . nothing special.

Leader: *[sniffing]* Jacob? *[sniffing]* You smell kinda funny.

Jacob: *[whispering]* Really? I hadn't noticed.

Leader: Why are we speaking so softly? What's going on?

Jacob: Oh, nothing. *[quickly looks behind himself]* Really. I just like to speak softly.

Leader: Come on. You smell like a goat, you've got something weird on your arms, and you just interrupted my lesson—what's going on?

Jacob: *[looks around once more, then leans toward leader]* I'm making my getaway.

Leader: Your getaway? What did you do—rob a zoo?

Jacob: Actually I stole . . . uh, snuck . . . uh, won . . . that's it . . . I WON a blessing! And now I'm trying to get away from the guy I won it from!

Leader: Oh. *[pause]* What's a blessing?

Jacob: Where I come from, the oldest kid in every family gets one from their dad. It's really important. When your dad blesses you, it's kind of like getting a promise for the future. It means that when you grow up your life will be really great and you'll get all your dad's stuff when he dies.

Leader: Wow! A blessing sounds like a big deal. How did you steal . . . I mean WIN your blessing?

Jacob: Well, I have this twin brother. His name is Esau and—

Leader: Aw! Twins are sooo cute!

Jacob: *[rolls his eyes]*—he was born first, which makes him older than me and—

Leader: Aw! You're the little one! That's sooo cute!

Jacob: ANYWAY, the older brother gets all the perks. Which really bugs me! *[gets louder and more agitated with each sentence]* How much older is he than me? A minute or so? It's not fair!

Leader: And this has to do what with winning the blessing?

Jacob: [*calms down*] It means that Esau gets the blessing, since *technically* he's the oldest.

Leader: But you said YOU got the blessing.

Jacob: Here's what happened. My dad, Isaac, is very old, and he doesn't see very well. The other day my mom, Rebekah, heard my dad tell Esau to hunt some wild animals, prepare a special meal, and bring it to him. After the meal, my dad planned to give Esau the blessing.

Leader: So what did you do?

Jacob: Well, my mom had this great plan. When Esau was out hunting, she sent me out to kill two goats. And while I was doing that, she cooked a special meal for my dad. When the food was ready, I brought it to him.

Leader: But wasn't your dad expecting Esau? Wait a minute—are you *identical* twins? Aw! Identical twins are sooo cute!

Jacob: [*rolls his eyes*] No, we're not identical twins! Anyway, like I told you, my dad can't see very well anymore. All I had to do was sound, smell, and feel like Esau.

Leader: That sounds a little weird.

Jacob: Well, Esau spends all his time hunting, so he's REALLY SMELLY!

Leader: OK, that explains the smell. I still don't get the arm thing you've got going though.

Jacob: Esau is also REALLY HAIRY. My mom covered my hands and neck with the goatskins so that if my dad reached out to touch me, he'd feel hairy Esau arms.

Leader: That's quite a scheme you and your mom cooked up! What happened?

Jacob: When I went to my dad's tent, I told him I was Esau. I gave him the food and asked for the blessing.

Leader: Did he fall for it?

Jacob: Well, he seemed a little suspicious at first because I don't really sound like Esau.

Leader: Aw! Identical twins that sound different. That's sooo cute!

Jacob: [*frustrated*] I told you we're not identical twins!

Leader: OK, whatever you say. And I suppose your brother doesn't get as cranky as you do either!

Jacob: As I was saying—my dad seemed a little suspicious at first, so before he gave me the blessing he touched my furry—I mean hairy—arms and smelled me. Then, believing I was Esau, my dad gave me the blessing.

Leader: What did he say?

Jacob: My dad said I would be given the abundance of the earth's richness. I would be in charge of my brothers. He said that those who curse me will be cursed and those who bless me will be blessed. It was very cool.

Leader: And then what did you do?

Jacob: I left.

Leader: What about Esau?

Jacob: Well, that part has me a little worried.

Leader: I thought it might.

Jacob: Esau found out that I got the blessing, and he's not happy. I think he wants to kill me.

Leader: Do you think he really means it?

Jacob: [*sheepishly*] Well, this isn't exactly the first time I've tricked him.

Leader: So what are you going to do?

Jacob: [*heads for the door*] Get as far away from Esau as I can!

Leader: [*calling*] But you have the blessing!

Jacob: Yeah, but it won't do me much good if I'm not alive to enjoy it! I'm gonna go hide out with my mom's relatives for awhile . . . oops! Did I say that out loud? I mean, I'm going far, far away for awhile . . . at least until Esau has had time to cool off and forget about this whole blessing thing.

Story Script: Taking Care of God's Creation

Genesis 2:4-25

Narrator: A long, long, long time ago, God made the world. And God looked at what he'd created—the sensational sky, the spectacular plants, the winding waters, the amazing animals—and God saw that they were LOOKIN' GOOD. In fact, they were GREAT!

Yet something was missing! But God knows everything and God knew precisely what that missing something was . . . so God created again.

God scooped some earth, molded it into the shape of a man, and breathed into it. The breath of God brought the man to life. God created the first person and called him Adam. *[Enter Adam strolling along slowly, looking all around him—up, down, backwards—in awe at what he is seeing.]*

God planted a garden in Eden and, since God does everything perfectly, this garden was amazing! It had a river and was filled with plants and trees—some to look at, some to eat. God let Adam live in the garden and told Adam to take care of it.

Adam: Wow! What a day! I get to be alive, I get a home in Eden—which is like only the best garden in the whole world—and I get my first job! This is awesome!

Narrator: Along with life, a home, and a job, God gave Adam some very special instructions. God told Adam he could help himself to the fruit from any tree in the garden—except one tree. The only tree Adam wasn't allowed to eat from stood in the middle of the garden. God called it the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and told Adam that if he ate from it he would die.

Adam: OK. Let me see if I have this right. I can help myself to all the fruit I want from any tree in the whole garden except one? And if I eat fruit from the one tree you told me not to touch, I'll die? Hmmmm. OK!

Narrator: The garden was really great and Adam had lots to do. God rounded up all the animals he had made and brought them to Adam. God gave Adam a very special job—he got to name every animal.

Adam: *[watching the animals go by as he names them]* Let me see . . . you're a tarantula, no, actually let's call you alligator. You're a monkey, you're a cow, you're a fluffy scoop-e-loo . . . hey, what's wrong with fluffy scoop-e-loo? Fine, then, you're a bat. Alright, what about you? Did I give you a name yet? How about rhinoceros? That's taken? OK, let's go with ladybug. . . .

Narrator: Although Adam enjoyed naming and getting to know all the animals, God could see that Adam was lonely and hadn't really found that special someone yet. So God created someone who was just right for Adam. God put Adam to sleep. *[Adam falls asleep sitting up where he was naming animals.]* While he was sleeping, God removed one of Adam's ribs, patched him back up, and created a woman from the rib. Adam couldn't believe his eyes when he saw his new friend.

Adam: Ooh-la-la! You are mighty fine! We were made for each other!

Narrator: Adam showed the woman around the garden, introduced her to the animals, and explained the rule about the tree and the fruit they weren't allowed to eat.

Adam: Oh, and you've got to taste this. I've been calling it "orange"—isn't it great? You've got to meet porcupine too; he's a little rough around the edges at first. Hey, you up there! Giraffe, right?

Tip

If there is no one available to assist you in telling the story, you can play Adam yourself by simply changing your posture and voice when reading Adam's part.

Ya wanna bring down a coconut for the lady here? Now about that tree we need to stay away from. . . .

Narrator: So God’s creation was complete. God had created something from nothing—the world and everything in it. And God created people to care for the world. The Bible tells us God blessed Adam and Eve and gave them the earth to live on, all the plants to eat from, and all the animals to rule over. Along with the gift of creation, God gave Adam and Eve the special responsibility to care for all that had been created. God gives the same gifts and responsibilities to us.

And that is the rest of the creation story.

Walk over to the bag marked “Gift from God” and ask the group what they think might be inside. Reveal the “world.”

The gift from God to us is the same gift God gave to Adam and Eve so long ago. God lets us be in charge of the world. Why do you think the words “Handle with Care” are on this gift? (*God expects us to care for the world*). That’s right, God expects us to care for creation too, just as Adam and Eve did. During small group time today you’ll have a chance to think about the ways you can care for God’s world and you’ll have the chance to do some things to care for God’s world.

Story Script: It's Gotta Be a Miracle!

There are two ways you can help me tell today's story. First, whenever you hear me say a number during the story, you need to shout out the question, "HOW MANY?" Second, whenever you hear me say the word "WOW" you should say, with great expression, "IT'S GOTTA BE A MIRACLE!"

Let's practice. Yesterday, as I took my SEVENTEEN pet spiders (pause for kids to shout "HOW MANY?") SEVENTEEN pet spiders out for their afternoon walk, I discovered that ONE spider (pause for kids to shout "HOW MANY?"). ONE spider had broken free from his leash, run toward the curb, and fallen over the edge! Moments later he climbed back up onto the sidewalk unharmed! My spiders and I yelled, "WOW!" (pause for kids to shout "IT'S GOTTA BE A MIRACLE!").

Let the kids know they sounded awesome! Hold up your Bible and say:

My spider story was exciting, but the miracle Jesus did in the TRUE story I'm about to tell you from the Bible is really INCREDIBLE! This story can be found in the book of John, chapter 6:1-15.

One day, as Jesus and his disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee to find a place to rest, they were followed by a huge crowd of about FIVE THOUSAND people (HOW MANY?) FIVE THOUSAND people who had heard about Jesus' amazing miracles.

Jesus and the disciples climbed to the top of a hill and sat down. As Jesus looked out over the crowd he could see that the people were hungry. Jesus said to a disciple named Philip, "Where can we buy bread to feed these people?" He said this to stretch Philip's faith because Jesus already knew what he was going to do.

Philip answered, "TWO HUNDRED silver pieces (HOW MANY?) TWO HUNDRED silver pieces wouldn't be enough to buy bread for this crowd of people!"

Then a disciple named Andrew said, "There is a little boy here who has FIVE loaves of bread (HOW MANY?) FIVE loaves of bread and TWO fish" (HOW MANY?) TWO fish. "But," said Andrew, "that couldn't possibly feed this crowd of FIVE THOUSAND people (HOW MANY?) FIVE THOUSAND people."

Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." So FIVE THOUSAND people (HOW MANY?) FIVE THOUSAND people sat down on the grass. Then Jesus took the FIVE loaves of bread (HOW MANY?) FIVE loaves of bread that the little boy had brought, gave thanks, and gave it to the crowd. Jesus did the same thing with the TWO fish (HOW MANY?) TWO fish. Everyone ate as much as they wanted. (Pause dramatically) WOW! (IT'S GOTTA BE A MIRACLE!) It was!

Involving Preteens

Make signs that say, "HOW MANY?" and "IT'S GONNA BE A MIRACLE" and have a preteen hold up them up at the appropriate times as you tell the story.

Tip

Kids will follow your lead! Be expressive with your face, voice, and whole body as you practice the responses together!

Tip

Some kids may be unfamiliar with the term "disciple." Explain that this is a word used to describe a group of twelve men Jesus chose to be his students. Jesus taught them many things about God. The disciples also watched him do miracles, and later they described those miracles for us to read in the Bible.

After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples to gather up all the leftovers so that nothing would be wasted. They went to work and filled TWELVE large baskets (HOW MANY?) TWELVE large baskets with all the food that was leftover from the loaves and the fish. (Pause dramatically). WOW! (IT'S GOTTA BE A MIRACLE!) It was!

After the people saw Jesus' miracle they became very excited and figured that he must be the Prophet they'd been waiting for God to send. Jesus could see that they wanted to make him their king, but he knew his Father, God, had more important plans, so he slipped away and went up the mountain to be alone for a while.

Isn't Jesus amazing? He'd been busy doing miracles and healing people all over the place. Although he was probably looking forward to a nice boat ride and some quiet time on the mountain with his disciples, he knew and cared that people were hungry. So he used his amazing power to take the food a little boy was willing to share and fed all FIVE THOUSAND people. (HOW MANY?) FIVE THOUSAND people.

Here's the really cool thing. Jesus cares the same way about each one of you! He knows each of your needs and has the power to take care of them! Not only that, Jesus has the power to use what you are able to share to help others!

If you are organizing a Food Drive, introduce it now. If not, go directly to the closing prayer. Say, **You have an opportunity to do just that next week. We're collecting food for the Food Bank (or other organization) next week. If you're able, we'd like you to bring some lunch food to share with others in need. Think about some of the food you saw today when we built our Tower of Lunch and see if you have one or more of those unopened foods at home that you could bring and we could give away. You might bring a jar of jam, a can of tuna, a jar of peanut butter, some soup or some macaroni! Just think about how many people Jesus can feed with our gifts!**

Let's talk to Jesus before you head off to your small groups. Pray using the following prayer or your own words.

Jesus, you are so amazing! Thank you for showing us your awesome power. It's great to know that you care about each of us here just like you cared about all the people on the mountain with you long ago. Help us to share what we have to help others. Amen.

Dismiss kids to their small groups. Either distribute the Food Flyers now, or give a stack to the small group leaders to hand out after class. Suggest they give one to the oldest child in each family.

