

## The Power and the Story - Ideas for Children's Talks

Here are some suggestions for doing some child-friendly stuff in worship for the first section of Power and Story. In some stories there is more than one thing you can focus on, so you might want to trim the story to suit your overall theme, or you might want to focus on one bit with the children in the early part of the service and a different bit in the sermon (two bites at the cherry!).

I have not made any connections with the gospel readings as I thought there was enough material in the main Old Testament reading.

Feel free to adapt any of this material to your own needs. If you want to borrow a Godly Play kit, do get in touch ([revgillian@btinternet.com](mailto:revgillian@btinternet.com)).

Themes in stories:

TRUST IN GOD - Abraham + Isaac, Grumbling + Provision; 12 Spies

GOOD FROM BAD - Joseph, Jacob + Esau, Moses - birth + call, Deliverance

### Booklist

Hartman, Bob Telling the Bible Monarch Books

Hartman, Bob The Storyteller Bible Lion Books

McCaughrean, Geraldine The Jesse Tree\* Lion Books

Peterson, Eugene The Message NavPress

\* Books on the Jesse Tree are useful for the stories and symbols of this section of Power and Story. Also look online as there are plenty of Jesse Tree resources. The Jesse tree symbols might also make a good way of starting a children's talk.

### 1 - Creation

- A - Tell the story using Godly Play "Creation" from vol 2 of the Complete Guide to Godly Play
  - Otley Christian Resource Hub may have this kit

- or you can borrow my kit - Rev Gillian Houghton
- B - Read the creation account from a different translation
  - The Message by Eugene Peterson
  - The Lion Storyteller Bible by Bob Hartman
- C - Tell the story from Bob Hartman's "Telling the Bible" - p15
  - or use some of his ideas
- D - Tell the story in your own way
- E - Make it a memory game
  - Can they tell you which day something happened
    - e.g. you say "trees" + they say "day 3"
  - Can they remember each day in the correct order
- F - Can they tell you what God said at the end of each day?
  - Ask why God thought it was good
  - Which bits do they like best.
  - Remind that creation is a gift
    - Maybe we should say thank you
    - Which bits do they want to say thank you for?

## 2 - Adam + Eve

- A - I wonder
  - if you know who the first man + woman was?
  - if you know what happened to them?
    - Tell the story in your own words, or some other child-friendly version
    - Adam + Eve got things wrong
      - Bet you do too
      - I know I do!!
  - if you know the way to put things right when you make a mistake?
    - be truthful
    - say sorry
- B - I wonder
  - if you've ever met a snake who could talk?
  - No!!??
    - Well Adam + Eve did!
    - Tell the story in your own words, or some other child-friendly version

- I wonder whether the talking snake still exists?
- I wonder what the talking snake might really be?
  - take answers from children (or adults!)
  - sometimes we do things wrong, make mistakes
  - + sometimes we know we shouldn't but there's still a little voice saying, "go on, do it, I dare you!!"
- sometimes I think that talking snake is still around
  - trying to get us to go wrong
  - but there is good news
  - we can always ask Jesus to help us
    - + Jesus will keep us on right track

### 3 - Noah

- A - Tell the story using Godly Play "The flood and the ark" from vol 2 of the Complete Guide to Godly Play
  - Otley Christian Resource Hub may have this kit
  - or you can borrow my kit - Rev Gillian Houghton
- B - Tell the story in your own words or in some other child-friendly version
  - ask questions
    - I wonder
      - which bit you liked best
      - which bit is most important
      - whether there is any bit we could leave out + still have all the story we need
      - where you are in the story or which part is about you
- C - Tell the story in your own words or in some other child-friendly version
  - ask questions
    - I wonder
      - which is your favourite animal
      - whether there are any animals you wouldn't like on the ark
        - maybe the biting ones
        - or the smelly ones!!
      - but did you notice in the story
        - Noah had to have 2 of every animal
        - nothing got missed out
        - maybe we need to remember that
        - no missing someone out ,because God loves everyone

## 4 - Tower of Babel

- **A - I wonder where you think God lives?**
  - take answers from congregation
  - Tell Babel story along these lines
    - a long time ago everybody spoke the same language!
    - + a long time ago people thought God lived up above the sky
    - people also thought that they were very very clever
    - so clever in fact that they decided to build a tower
    - not an ordinary tower like some churches have
    - not even a tower like Big Ben (picture might be useful here)
    - not even a tower like The Shard (or any other tall building you can find a picture of)
    - they decided to build a tower so big + tall that it would reach up to God
      - they thought they were so clever, so wise, so wonderful, they were equal with God!!
      - imagine that!
    - now God saw what they were doing
      - God knew people were not so wise
      - not so clever
      - + God was worried what people would do next
    - so God made it so the people spoke different languages
      - the people didn't understand each other
      - what they said to one another sounded like babble!
      - they stopped building the big tower of Babel
      - or maybe it should be called the tower of Babble
  - + since then we do speak different languages
    - + we've learned not to build towers to try + reach God!
- **B - We all speak English here**
  - but I wonder if anyone speaks another language
  - take answers from congregation
    - see how many different languages people can speak
    - + how many different languages people know
  - Tell Babel story along these lines
    - a long time ago everybody spoke the same language!
    - + a long time ago people thought God lived up above the sky

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  - what they said to one another sounded like babble!
  - they stopped building the big tower of Babel
  - or maybe it should be called the tower of Babble
- but the best thing of all is this
  - God understands what we say to him
  - whatever language we speak
  - because God is that clever!

## 5 - Abraham + Isaac

- this is a LONG story so you might want to focus only on one bit
- Godly Play vol 2 has a good version of this, but it is long
- Try the Storyteller Bible, which is not so long but is a bit selective
- Themes
  - we part of Abraham's family
  - Abraham's trust
    - moving/travelling with God more than once
    - trusting God so much that he would give up Isaac, his precious son
  - Abraham's laughter
    - I wonder why Abraham laughed
    - I wonder if you've ever wanted to laugh at God
    - sometimes God ask us to do things that seem impossible

- like love our neighbour
  - love bad people
  - + we might want to laugh
  - but if we trust God we will be able to do it
- Abraham's willingness to go to new places
    - to learn new things
    - to meet new people
    - + to find God in all those new places

## 6 - Jacob + Esau

- The Storyteller Bible has this one, in two parts
  - this is a difficult one!
    - it ends on a very bad note
    - Isaac has been tricked into giving his blessing to Jacob, his younger son
    - Esau, his older son is understandably annoyed + dismayed
    - it's not an easy story but here are some suggestions
- A - this is a bad start
- but many, many years later Jacob + Esau make it up
    - Jacob is now a rich man
    - + he grovels to Esau + apologies
    - Jacob makes things right
    - What??
      - because he knows he has become rich
      - he knows he has done well
      - + he knows he doesn't deserve it
      - so he can be kind to his brother
      - + sort things out
  - they become friends again
  - + that takes courage
    - courage to say sorry
    - courage to make the first move
  - + when he's ready to say sorry + put things right with his brother Esau, God gives Jacob a new name - now he's called Israel
- B - this is a typical family feud
- I wonder if you've ever argued with your family?
    - perhaps with brother or sister
    - or maybe with mum or dad

- all families have arguments
- God's people have them too
- God's family is made up of ordinary argumentative people like you + me + Jacob + Esau
- but God is still involved
- still wants to be part of our lives
- nothing we do can put us too far away for God to find us

## 7 - Joseph

- another bad story with a good ending - eventually!
- Themes
  - God can work in bad situations
    - Joseph's brothers weren't very nice + did a mean thing to Joseph
    - but in the end God made it work on it well
  - God can be where we are
    - God is with Egypt when he is far from home
    - when he's in prison
  - God can play the long game
    - it's a long time from the brothers getting rid of Joseph to the meeting between Joseph and his father, Jacob/Israel
  - God can work with people who don't seem to be very nice
    - Joseph certainly isn't!
- A we don't know what God is up to
  - I wonder what Joseph thought when he was sold as a slave?
  - I wonder what Joseph thought when he got into trouble + got put in prison
  - God doesn't always tell us what's going on
  - sometimes we just have to get on with life as best we can + trust that it will all come out right in the end

## 8 - Moses - birth + call

- you may want to focus on just Moses' birth or call, rather than trying to do both
- tell the story from Bob Hartman's Storyteller Bible
- tell the story of Moses' call from Bob Hartman's Telling the Bible
  - this only deals with Moses' call, not his birth
- tell the story in your own words
- Birth
  - I wonder

- why Moses' mum thought he was special?
  - just because he was her baby
  - or did she something else?
- why Pharoah's daughter thought Moses was special?
  - was he a beautiful baby?
  - or did she see something else too?
- if you think you're special?
  - or perhaps you think you're too small?
- God knows you're special
  - God may not have a big job for you to do, like Moses
  - but he does have a very important job for you to do, to be kind to the people around you, all the time
- Call
  - I wonder what you think of Moses?
    - I mean he's had a strange start to life
      - a baby floating in a basket on river
        - because someone wants to kill him
      - rescued by a princess
      - brought up as a prince
      - I wonder what you think of Moses?
      - I suppose that's not so bad!?!
    - then he goes + kills someone
      - that's not good at all
      - + he runs away because someone wants to kill him
      - not again!!
      - I wonder what you think of Moses now?
    - so he runs away + becomes a shepherd
      - he gets married + has a son
      - I wonder what you think of Moses now?
    - + just when things are all settled down + it seems like everyone should live happily ever after
      - God pops up
      - not a big booming voice
      - not a flash of lightening
      - but a burning bush
        - how odd!
    - + Moses stops to have a look
      - well you would, if you saw a burning bush in the middle of field!
      - + God gives him a job to do
        - not an easy job
        - not a little job
        - but a great big scary job

- + after a bit of a talk with God, Moses agrees to try + do the job
- I wonder what you think of Moses now?

## 9 - Deliverance

- tell the story using Bob Hartman's Telling the Bible
  - But Pharaoh Would not Listen
- tell the story using the Storyteller Bible
- tell the story in your own words, emphasising the bit of the story you want to focus on

### A - I wonder

- if you've ever not listened?
  - when your Mum's asked you to do a job + you want to play?
  - when someone's said the word HOMEWORK + you didn't want to do it
- why Pharaoh wouldn't listen?
  - didn't like Moses
    - thought Moses was not important
  - didn't want to lose all the slaves who worked for him
    - was greedy
- whether we should take a moment now to listen in our hearts

### B - play some sort of game trying to remember the plagues in the correct order

- how many times did Moses have to go + speak to Pharaoh
- that must have been a bit scary
- I wonder how many times Moses asked God for help, to make him less afraid when he spoke to Pharaoh
- I wonder if you've ever been afraid?
- It's always good to ask God for help
  - God may not send plagues
  - God may not drown your enemies
  - but God will be there beside you

## 10 - Grumbling + Provision

- Bob Hartmann Telling the Bible p36 "I will be your God" - a story which covers more material but would fit well with this week's theme

- Tell story using The Storyteller Bible
- Tell it in your own words

#### A - I wonder

- what it felt like to be free?
- what the people wanted to do now they were free?
- whether being free was scary with no-one to tell them what to do?
- if we like the past, the things we know, better than the things we don't know in the future?
  - when we're in primary school in yr6 we want to go to big school
    - it'll be exciting we think
  - then when we get there it's a bit scary
    - so many people
    - so many new things
    - easy to get lost
    - + there's homework!!
  - maybe it was like that for Moses + people of Israel
  - but like Moses kept saying
  - Trust God! It'll be ok!
  - + slowly, slowly they learned to trust God
  - + slowly slowly so do we
    - but it isn't always easy
    - sometimes we get fed up or scared
    - but God knows + God is always there to help

## 11 - Twelve Spies

- Tell as much of the story as you want
  - I think I might include the early part of Numbers 14 about the grumbling people

#### A - I wonder

- if you can remember why Moses + people of Israel were out in wilderness
  - rescued by God from Egypt where they were slaves
  - travelling to new land promised by God
  - land flowing with milk and honey
    - don't think it was meant literally
    - they'd get wet + sticky!
    - but a way of saying it would be a good place
    - plenty to eat
      - nice place to live + build home

- very different from when they lived in Egypt, with no money, too much work, and always being told what to do
- so Moses sends 12 spies to go + see what this new land is like
  - + there's good news + bad news
    - good news - lots of lovely food, we'll live well here + get fat, after wandering in the desert all these years
    - bad news - the people there are very big + strong + fierce
  - + guess what!?!
    - people start to argue + say silly things
    - let's go back to Egypt
      - Egypt??!
      - where you were slaves + didn't have enough to eat + your sons got killed when they were born!
    - oh dear, we can't fight big, fierce people, we'd better not go to this new land God promised
  - and I don't know about you but I'm beginning to think "Here we go again! Not trusting God - again!"
  - I wonder what God thinks!!
  - God may ask us to difficult things
    - things we are scared about
    - but God will never, ever forget us
  - + he didn't forget his people
    - but to hear what happens next, you'll need to come back after Christmas for the next instalment!