

# W<sup>The</sup>holeArmor of God *Ephesians 6:10-20*

## The Storyteller

**U**sing a story to teach is an art, not a science. If storytelling were a science, everyone who volunteered to teach would be handed a formula and told to follow it. To get the correct results in a math problem you must follow an exact formula; this is not true of teaching or storytelling. If, however, you are willing to listen and put forth the effort, you can learn this “art.”

### **Purpose of a Story**

Every story has a purpose. Otherwise, why tell the story? Knowing the purpose of the story will help you tell the story well. The purpose of telling a Bible story is usually to convey information about people (or a particular person), crucial events, values, and appreciation for the truth of God.

### **Parts of a Story**

Every story has an introduction, progression of events, climax and conclusion. While suggestions and ideas have been provided in these lessons, you may have a better idea. If you do, use it!

The introduction should be brief and create interest in what you plan to teach. The introduction must relate to the story, but not give the story away.

An introduction may be a question, a short illustration or it may tell about an event that takes place later in the story. The body of the story is where the progression of events takes place. You will have to determine how much or how little of the progression of events you will tell.

Keep in mind the age of your children. Young children will lose interest quickly with unnecessary details or if the action is slow.

The climax of the story is usually one statement. It is the high point of the story—where the problem or conflict is resolved.

Be brief with the conclusion. Don’t wrangle on and on. Since the climax of the story has been revealed, the conclusion should bring everything together.

### **Preparing for the Story**

Preparation is the most important part of storytelling. It is the essential salt that spices up a good story because you know the story inside out.

It is important that you read the entire story first. Read it for enjoyment. The second time you read the story take notes on how you want to adapt the story for your group of listeners. You may need to change the vocabulary as the concepts may be advanced and need simplification.

Or, there may be facts in the story that you need to explain or remove because they hurt the flow of the story for your audience. Be sure not to remove facts that are essential to the action of the story.

Facts of a story are important, but it is the understanding of how that story affects the students personally in their lives that will be most beneficial.

Your students need to understand how the story can be applied to their lives. Communicate more than facts—communicate the meaning of the scripture.

Older students may follow the story for themselves in their Bible. For younger children, let the characters, situation and time of story speak for itself.

Preparation is the most time-consuming portion of teaching because you will need to read and reread the story and think it through from beginning to end.

Practice by telling the story aloud. If you are inclined, tape yourself and then listen to the tape. Look at yourself in a mirror while telling the story. What are your facial expressions?

Early on you will find that sitting in a quiet room at home in front of a mirror while a tape records your story is far easier than in front of a group of wiggly, distracting children.

### **Presenting the Story**

You are now well prepared to tell the Bible story. Relax and enjoy sharing the story with your students. This is what it is all about and it should be a delightful experience for you and your students.

As you tell the story, maintain good eye contact with all your students. When you do this you are saying to them, “I am telling you the story.”

Be sure your students are comfortable. Many teachers prefer sitting with the children gathered round them in chairs or sitting on the floor. It gives a feeling of closeness.

Some stories need gestures. By all means jump into action if needed. The most important thing is that you and your students are comfortable and connected.

Your voice is an instrument. Use it effectively to communicate the story. Speak clearly and with enthusiasm. Enthusiasm does not mean loud. It does mean with sincerity and with interest.

You may whisper, sing, speak sternly, shout, laugh or cry. Do not, however, speak fast. Effectively using your voice, facial expressions and gestures will come with practice and experience.

Always use dignity when telling the Bible story. Remember the purpose of telling a Bible story is to teach the very Word of God. It is not your purpose to merely entertain the children.

Interruptions are usually unavoidable. When they occur, answer the student’s question or make a remark briefly, but go on with the story. Sometimes a child gets caught up in the story and just blurts out a comment. Don’t make a huge deal of it; just acknowledge it and move on with the story. You at least know they are following the story and are interested.

Prior to storytelling, pray for yourself and your students. Ask God to help you prepare your heart and mind for this important opportunity to teach. Ask God to give you the understanding and godly wisdom needed to teach. Ask that He guide you as you teach your students.

Begin your prayer for guidance before you prepare to read the first story and continue the prayer as you learn the art of storytelling.