

WALKING THROUGH A LESSON

Where You'll Find Today's Story

In the Bible

Here we've listed where in the Bible you will find the stories. We recommend using the *New Revised Standard Version*.

In Children's Bibles

If you plan to use a children's Bible for storytelling, you'll need to choose a Bible and locate the story. Here we've provided space for you to write in the page numbers of the story in the Bible that you choose.

In Our Sunday Lectionary

This section tells when the story or scripture passages are read in our Sunday worship service as part of the Old Testament, epistle or gospel reading. The lectionary refers to the Episcopal version of the Revised Common Lectionary.

Some stories may be told more than once a year, and some stories may be told only in part. This will be true especially of the longer stories, such as the Exodus story.

Year A, B or C refer to our lectionary year, which begins on the first Sunday in Advent. (Year A begins in Advent 2013, then again in 2016.)

When we refer to Proper 12 or Proper 28, these terms mean the specific Sunday in Pentecost. Since the weeks in Pentecost are set by the variable date of Easter, the Episcopal calendar assigns propers to the different weeks in Pentecost. You will find the three-year lectionary cycle online at the

official website of the Episcopal Church in the US:
www.episcopalchurch.org.

Summary of Today's Story

This is a brief account of the story on which the lesson focuses.



Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

This section tells the context in which the particular story fits into the great story of the Bible and of our salvation. Some thoughts about how this story fits into our own story of faith are also included.



The Episcopal Thread

This section is for you and the older children. Use the *Book of Common Prayer* to explore how the day's lesson connects with our Episcopal faith as reflected in the *Prayer Book*.

You can also discuss how the Anglican tradition incorporates the themes, theology and ethics of the lesson as part of our faith.



Gathering

(5-10 minutes)

This is the time when children begin entering the classroom.

To keep the children busy as other children filter in, provide them with a simple, fun activity that relates to the lesson. Younger children enjoy drawing or molding figures with play dough. Older children enjoy word games and puzzles. You will find an online resource for creating puzzles under Gathering Ideas on pages 1-2 in the Appendix.

Simple lesson-related entry activities are suggested in each lesson. In some lessons, Gathering Activity

handouts are provided in the activity section at the end of the lesson. Additional Gathering activity ideas can be found on pages 1-2 in the Appendix, also found on the website.

As an option for the older children, you might offer a brief fellowship time, giving the children a chance to visit with each other, share past news and establish friendships. This social time is important for building community in the church school class and we encourage you to offer this fellowship time on a regular basis.

Mark the end of the gathering time with an opening prayer. For younger children, we suggest using the same simple prayer each Sunday, such as:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for bringing us all here together today. Thank you for all the children who are here, and bless and remember those who are absent today. (*You may name individuals.*) Amen.



Telling the Story

(5-10 minutes)

This is the storytelling time. We recommend that you read the story to the children from a children's Bible or tell the story in your own words. The emphasis is on the *story*, not on the words, so we encourage you to tell the story as you would tell a story from your own life.

Occasionally we give suggestions for how to enhance the story with puppets, drama or other lively storytelling methods. There are more ideas in the Appendix on pages 2-3.

We suggest that you not try to analyze or discuss the story at this time, but wait until the story has sunk into the hearts and minds of the children. We are encouraging an appreciation for the story as a whole, without adding our analytical "thinking"

ideas yet. Bible stories are powerful, and most of them are clear in their meaning and their message.



Prayer

(5-10 minutes)

This is the worship time. Have the children set up the worship center with a simple altar, placing on the altar any special items they might have made during Gathering time. This is a way to help give the children a sense of true participation in the worship of their Lord.

Begin the worship time with a short reading from the lesson's scriptures. This will help the children connect the Bible story that they have just heard to the Bible, itself. Scripture suggestions are provided in each lesson.

We recommend you do the reading as it is done in church, with the preface "A reading from the book of...", followed by "The word of the Lord." The children then respond, "Thanks be to God."

Then lead the children in prayer, inviting each child to offer prayers of thanks, praise and petition.



Sharing

(5-10 minutes)

This is a good time to give the children their physical nourishment, after the spiritual nourishment of the word of God.

Begin the sharing time with a simple grace, either using the one provided in the lesson or sharing one that you or one of the children say at home. Additional graces can be found on pages 12-13 in the Appendix.

This is also a good time to discuss the story and the children's feelings about the story. Mealtime often makes conversation easier and more open than a formal discussion time. You will want to encourage the children to speak and ask questions

freely, but you will need to guide them in staying on the subject of the lessons and what they may have learned or feel about the story. Conversation starters are provided in every lesson.

For the very young children (preschoolers), a discussion of the story will not be beneficial. Let them just enjoy the stories and the activities connected with the stories.



Activities: Arts, Crafts, Games, Drama, etc.

(10-20 minutes)

This is the activity time when you can reinforce and enrich the story by offering the children a variety of story-related activities. While the children are doing an activity, be sure to talk about the story so they make the connection.

Suggested story-related activities are provided at the end of every lesson. This document includes suggested arts and crafts activities for four age groups: *preschool* (up to age 4), *primary* (kindergarten to first grade), *elementary* (second and third grades), and *intermediate* (fourth to sixth grades). Other suggested activities include videos, drama, games, discussions, field trips to parts of the church and visits by others, including clergy. These may be done instead of or in addition to an art or craft project.

In addition, a variety of general activities that can be adapted to any lesson can be found in the Appendix on pages 3-6. Feel free to use your own ideas.



Memorization

(variable time)

To enable the older children to better participate in the church service or do Bible study, we recommend some memorization. It is especially important for the children to know the books of the Bible and certain passages from the Bible (such as the Ten Commandments) and from the *Book of Common Prayer*. Other Bible passages are important as “spiritual guideposts.” We suggest memorization exercises in each lesson.

We’ve provided suggestions for ways to help children with their memorization on page 15 in the Appendix, also found on the website.

Note: Though memorization is recommended primarily for intermediate-aged children, some passages, such as the Lord’s Prayer, may be appropriate assignments for younger children.



Weaving Our Faith

(2- 5 minutes)

As God’s people, our faith and our lives are woven together from the sacred story of God and our own personal and sacred stories. In order to know how God’s story is connected to our own stories, we first need to be able to tell God’s story. Then, to weave the story into our faith and our lives, we need to understand the story so we can absorb it in our minds and hearts.

As the class draws to a close, help the children begin this weaving process by asking them a few questions such:

- What was our story about today?
- Who (or what) did we talk about?
- What did we learn from the story?