



Introduction

Welcome to these resources to help explore the Bible with young people. The aim of these resources is to give an overview of the God's story by exploring many of the key stories that make up the Bible. In doing so, they seek to help young people explore the character of God through the grand narrative of scripture, and help them see how the Christian Faith can be lived out in today's world as much as it could in the past.

These resources have been commissioned by the Diocese, and have been developed over a number of years by one of our Children and Youth Support Network, Jonny Price. This means that they have been put together by somebody with years of experience (and university qualifications) in youth ministry and developed through engagement with young people. If you have any questions regarding these resources Jonny is happy to help, so please do contact him at jonny@cliftonparish.org.uk

Depending on your circumstances you can use sessions in a chronological order, or chose Bible characters that fit with the themes your church are exploring for a particular season. We do encourage you however to ensure that you give your young people the opportunity to explore as broad a spectrum of the Bible as possible. I really pray that however you use these resources, they will help you and your young people to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Blessings

Carolyn Edwards

Diocese of York Children and Youth Adviser



User Guide

Each of the sessions is split into a number of sections. The hope is that these will help you be creative in your preparation of sessions, rather than feeling prescriptive and limiting.

Leader's reflection

This is for you to read through to help give a good grasp of the flow of the story and some of the key themes in each. It may be that you want to incorporate some of the leader's reflection into the session, although this needs to be done carefully.

Aim

This is a key part of preparing each session as it helps to ensure that the session you are planning is doing the thing you want it to. There is an aim given for each story, but you may feel that you want to write your own.

Main points to cover

These are the 2 or 3 points that are key to exploring the story for that session. When preparing, they are useful for referring back to in order to keep on track with where each session is going.

Focus on

Again this is to help keep a focus for the session and not get distracted.

Activity ideas

These are meant to be used as a starter for preparation, and you may wish to use all or none of them for each week. Your session should incorporate an introductory activity, a main teaching segment, and a closing or reflective activity. This will allow a natural flow to the teaching segment and focus each part of the session on what it sets out to do.



	Theme	Aim	Bible passages
Abraham	God's promise to Abraham	Trusting in God's promises even when they seem unbelievable	Genesis 17; 18:1-15; 21:1-7
	Abraham and his foolish plan	Trusting in God's protection, rather than focusing on our own plans	Genesis 12:10-20; 20
	Abraham's faith is tested	Remembering that God has a plan, even when we don't see it	Genesis 22:1-19
Jacob and Esau	Jacob, Esau and the stolen inheritance	Considering how when we only think about ourselves we can hurt the people around us	Genesis 25:19-34; 27
	Jacob, Esau and the reunion	Forgiveness and love change the world	Genesis 32, 33
Joseph	Joseph, dreams and unhappy brothers	Explore where God is in this story and why we might not be able to always see him clearly	Genesis 37
	Joseph, Potiphar's wife and prison	Integrity and reliance on God are possible, even when things don't seem to go to plan	Genesis 39-40
	Joseph, famine and reunification with his brothers	Explore how integrity is demonstrated by actions and the power of forgiveness	Genesis 41-45
Moses	Moses in the Reeds	Explore how God uses people's actions and how God more often than not uses people to fulfil his plans.	Exodus 1:15-2:1-10
	Moses flees and finds the burning bush:	Explore how Moses felt when he was rejected by his people and chosen by God.	Exodus 2:11-17, 3-4:17
	Moses vs Pharaoh: The Plagues	Explore how God shows His love for His people by working for their good and the patience He shows the Egyptians by giving them many chances.	Exodus 5, 7:14-11:10
	Crossing the Red Sea	To consider how God acts for the good of his people, but asks us to act too	Exodus 12:13-42, 13:17-14:31
	Complaining in the wilderness: God provides what is needed	Explore how God provided for His people and how He provides for us today.	Exodus 15:22-27, 16
	God gives His law: The Ten Commandments	Explore why the commandments were given and why they make a difference.	Exodus 19:20-25, 20:1-21



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Moses	The Incident with the Golden Calf	To think about how we can be blind to God's provision and worship idols just like the people of Israel	Exodus 32
	Moses loses his temper, and much else besides	To consider the difference between belief and disbelief	Numbers 20:2-13
Exile	Daniel and his friends become vegetarian	To show that when we stand for God in the little things, it prepares us for the big things	Daniel 1
	The Statue and the Fiery Furnace	To show how as Christians we may be called to follow a different way of life than those around us, and that God will be with us if it is a tough choice	Daniel 3
	Daniel and the Lion's Den	To show that Daniel trusted in God and believed that God was King, not Darius	Daniel 6
Judges	Gideon	To remember that God shows us the best way to live, and if we ignore Him we are turning away from that.	Judges 6:11-16, 36-40; 7
	Deborah	To explore the character of Deborah and see why she was so respected by the people around her.	Judges 4
	Samson	To think about how do we might mis-use the gifts that God gives us	Judges 14-15
Priests	Eli	To explore how our attitudes and actions have an impact on the way others see God	1 Samuel 1-4
	Samuel	To explore how God calls each of us, but it isn't always clear it is God	1 Samuel 3
Jonah	Jonah is given his instructions and runs	To see how God shows His love for the world through us, even if we try to hide from Him.	Jonah 1
	Jonah is saved and finally does what he is asked	To see that Gods love is for all people, even if we sometimes think they don't they deserve it.	Jonah 2:10-3:10
	Jonah doesn't understand	To show that we need to listen to God and have our hearts shaped by Him	Jonah 4



	Theme	Aim	Bible passages
Actions of Jesus	Baptism of Jesus	To uncover some of the symbolism of Jesus' baptism, and to show why baptism is an important sign of choosing God.	Matthew 3:1-3, 13-17
	Jesus is tempted	To show that temptation can distort our view of God, that we can resist it, and that the Bible can help us see clearly what God wants for us.	Matthew 4:1-11
	Jesus sends out the Disciples	To show that Jesus trusts us to get on with the job he gives us, but that we are not to live to the same standard as everyone else.	Matthew 10: 1-20
	Jesus comforts John the Baptist	To show that doubting is a normal part of faith, and can happen to all people when they go through hard times.	Matthew 11:1-18
	Jesus confronts the Pharisees	To show that Jesus did the right thing, even when it was difficult and the results could be bad for him.	Matthew 12:1-14
Miracles of Jesus	Water into Wine	To explore what Jesus did to help but also the further significance of the miracle.	John 2:1-12
	The man with the paralysed hand	To help the young people explore how they can bring joy to people around them.	Mark 3:1-6
	The healing of Peter's mother in law	To see why people wanted to be around Jesus so much, and how we can learn from that.	Luke 4:38-40
	The healing of blind Bartimaeus	To explore how Bartimaeus is an example of what it means to follow Jesus as a disciple.	Mark 10:46-52
	The healing of the paralysed man	To consider how our faith can benefit others	Mark 2:1-12
	Calming of the storm	To wonder at the amazing power of Jesus and what it tells us about who he is.	Mark 4:35-41
	Feeding of the 5000	To wonder at the absolutely ridiculous of the scale of the miracle	John 6:1-14
	Jairus's daughter	Explore the impact Jesus had on the everyday lives of people	Mark 5:21-43



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Parables of Jesus	What are Parables?	To think about what a parable is and why Jesus used them	Matthew 13:10-16
	Parable of the Lost Sheep	To Explore why Jesus used shepherd and sheep imagery and how they relate to us	Luke 15:1-7
	Parable of the Mustard Seed	To think about how our faith can grow, when nurtured, into something that makes a difference to our whole lives	Matthew 13:31-32
	The Wise and Foolish Builders	To consider what difference a strong foundation makes and how we choose the foundation we build our lives on	Matthew 7:24-27
	The Good Samaritan	Thinking about who our neighbour is and how we can help them	Matthew 10:25-37
Pentecost and the Early Church	Pentecost	To see the difference the Holy Spirit made to the disciples	Acts 2
	Peter heals miraculously	To explore how the power of Jesus is still working today	Acts 3
	Arrest and escape	To see the bravery and trust the disciples have in what they are instructed to do	Acts 5:12-end
	Helping others	To explore how being part of Church means that we have a wider family to take care of and take care of us	Acts 6:1-7
Miracles of the Early Church	Peter and John heal a blind beggar	To consider how Peter and John became more like Jesus	Acts 3:1-10
	Paul heals and is declared a god	To see how Paul and Barnabas care more about sharing God's love than personal power	Acts 14:8-30
	Paul bores a man to death and then brings him to life	To consider Paul's priorities: spending time with people and helping them	Acts 20:7-12
	Paul is declared a god again and heals plenty of people	To think about the example of Paul's faith through the tough times	Acts 28:1-10
Paul	Persecutor and the shock of a lifetime	To see how it is God that changes us	Acts 7:54-8:3, 9:1-9
	The tables have turned		Acts 9:10-22, 2 Corinthians 11:24-27



Some notes on storytelling

It is not specified in the resources where telling the story for each session should be. This is because the story telling may work better in different places depending on what else is going on in the session. For example, you may want to do an introductory activity to introduce a theme, and then tell the story after that to allow the young people to pick out that theme in the story. Alternatively it may be that starting by telling the story at the start works better as it allows more space to explore the story and characters openly.

There are some key things to be aware of when telling these stories. Remember that these stories come from a time and place that is different to our own. This means that you may need to do some groundwork before telling the story to clarify what certain words or phrases use, or simply to set the scene of where the story you are covering falls in the greater narrative. Don't be afraid to do this and to cover some of the technical details regarding this with the young people. Doing this allows the young people to use these tools for themselves, rather than being spoon fed, and means they become active partners in their own learning.

Don't be afraid to paraphrase the story that the Bible is telling. We can feel beholden to the text, and can feel that we must read the text in full to tell the story properly to our young people. This can mean that we starve the story of its excitement, particularly depending on the translation we are using. For example, the NRSV uses a particular method of translating the ancient text which means it is incredibly accurate, but the language can feel clunky and forced. This can result in stories feeling dry and stodgy, when they should be exciting and fluid. Also translations such as the Message can feel dated, as they use language that was contemporary when they were written, but are less so now. The important things to ensure when storytelling from scripture are that the key details are included, and the story remains intact.

Also don't assume the young people you are working with will have come across these stories before. For many of them, these stories unknown and as such need to be approached in a way that allows them to explore the stories and the possible endings. They may be surprised and shocked by things that you take for granted.



This should be something we view as exciting, as we are the first to communicate some of these great and ancient stories to a new generation, allowing them to see them in a light that we may not have seen before. We need to be open to their questioning and exploration of these stories, rather than binding them to our own experiences of these stories.

Don't underestimate the power of being told the story by a person in the room. Often we can jump straight on YouTube and search for some animation that tells the story we want. We need to remember that a certain amount of interpretation will already have taken place to produce these videos, and they may have focused on things you don't want to focus on. However there is a power to personal storytelling, particularly if the person telling the story has an imaginative way of conveying what is going on.

Remember that these stories were told by word of mouth long before they were written down. By passing these stories on we are becoming part of that ancient tradition.

For background information on many themes and books of the Bible look at the Bible Project website or YouTube channel.

For some in depth thoughts on communicating scripture to young people, check out Mark Griffiths, *Don't Tell Cute Stories, Change Lives*.

