**CHM Leadership Certification**

**Level IX, Course #5**

**TIPS FOR GREAT STORYTELLING**

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**(Presenter’s Notes)**

**Children’s Storytelling for Church Services**

Whenever the opportunity arises encourage pastors to set aside time every sabbath morning for the children’s story.

While it is best for the pastor to do this part of the service for the children, others can participate also.

The following Guidelines should be helpful to both pastors and laity who are willing to make the children feel special by devoting a portion of the church service just to them.

Whenever the story is given to a church member, give them the list of guidelines to go by. Include on the handout the date for the story. Call them on the telephone the week they are to give their story to remind them.

1. **Choose a story you like and can enjoy telling**
   * Select a story that is right for the occasion
2. **Have a definitive teaching objective**
   * **Example**
     1. When you prepare your Bible story, list all the sensory experiences from the story. If your story is about Paul and Silas in jail, think about the smells, sights, sounds, feelings, and tastes. Weave these sensory connections into your facial and body gestures to make the story come alive.
3. **Be sure it is appropriate to the age and experience of your audience.**
   * + - 1. Look for ways to connect with kids’ everyday experiences by emphasizing certain aspects of a story.

**Example**

A pastor once told a story of the prodigal son to an urban Bible club. He explained that the boy wasted all his money on things like video games and candy. Another

teacher who told his story in a rural setting emphasized how the son ate pig food. (<https://childrensministry.com>)

1. **Most children who come to listen are beginners through primary age. Choose a story that appeals to ages between 3 – 7.**

* **Illustration**

One man described Goliath as someone more than 2 feet taller than Michael Jordan. He got everyone’s attention.

1. **Choose a story that will help a child grow spiritually and in character. That means it will be “Grace” oriented.**

* Know the sermon topic and choose a story that will lead the children into listening to the pastor.

1. **Choose stories that children can identify with.**

* Avoid stories that are gruesome, fairy tales, or beyond their years of experience such as World War II stories.

1. **Request children to listen for an answer, a special word, an event or person that is connected to your story or that had a similar experience.**
2. **The best sources to consider are personal experiences: “When I was a little \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,” and the Bible.**
3. **Use the Bible** 
   * Use one key scripture
   * Use familiar versions with words the children can understand
   * Repeat the verse as often as is appropriate. It can be at the beginning, the end and within the context of the story.
   * Let a child read the verse when appropriate
   * Encourage them to repeat it with you

* In preparing your story decide on one thing you want the children to know (your aim) and what you want to see them do about it (your application)
* Focus your story to the end.
* Avoid “Tacked or” Or Unnatural moral endings.

1. **The length of story should not exceed 5-7 minutes.**
   * Use the first minute to direct their attention. This can be done by visual aids, body language or your voice.
   * Establish and maintain eye contact from the very beginning.
   * Avoid side comments to the adults.
2. **Use as many sensory modes as is appropriate**
   * Let them see, hear, touch, taste and smell.
   * It is not necessary to use all of them in one story.

**Example/Illustration:** You can use this approach with a variety of stories, from Jesus telling his disciples to let the children come to him (the disciples tell the parents, “No, No, No,” complete with shaking heads and fingers) to [Jesus calming the sea](https://childrensministry.com/articles/jesus-calms-the-sea/) (make motions and sounds for the rocking boat, the waves, being afraid, then being still). (https://childrensministry.com)

1. **Use A Microphone Whenever Possible.**

* This avoids discipline problems they cannot hear.
* It allows the adults to hear, too.
* They can benefit from the story.

**The Planning Stages**

**The Beginning**

* + **Is to get \_\_\_\_\_attention\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
  + **Is to set the \_\_\_\_\_\_scene\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the story**
  + **Should be very \_\_\_\_\_short\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
  + **\_\_\_\_Leads or moves\_\_\_\_ into the middle section**
  + **Use a \_\_\_\_\_picture \_\_\_\_an \_\_\_object\_\_\_or an \_\_\_action\_\_**

**The Middle**

* **Gives the \_\_\_\_details\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **Moves the story in a \_\_\_\_series\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of events**
* **Builds the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_suspense\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **Leads to a point where an \_\_\_\_action\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_decision\_\_\_ must be made.**

**The End**

* **Shows the \_\_result\_\_\_\_ of the decision or action**
* **Draws a \_\_\_conclusion\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
* **Elicits a \_\_\_\_response\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
* **Stop\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!**

**Prepare and deliver**

* **Read the story as many times as necessary to take a picture of the series of events in your mind.**
* **Visualize the characters and how they act.**
* **Plan how you will begin**
* **Make a brief Outline of the action and events**
* **Plan exactly how you will end.**
* **Think your story through from beginning to end, visualizing it in your mind**
* **Prepare any visual aids and learn to use them effortlessly**
* **Practice telling it without notes.**

**Telling the story**

* **\_Live\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_the story as you tell it.**
* **Use your \_\_voice and facial expressions to portray your character’s emotions or reactions.**
* **Use \_\_\_\_\_\_\_conversation dialog\_\_\_\_\_between characters.**
* **Only use \_\_\_visuals, facts, moving\_\_that will give meaning to the story.**
* **Keep it \_\_\_simple\_\_\_\_\_\_. Keep it \_\_\_moving\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
* **\_\_Look\_\_\_in the eyes of those you are telling the story to.**

**A page of No, No’s**

**Avoid**

* + **Personal mannerisms and repetitive statements except as they enhance the story.**
  + **Correcting yourself**
  + **Adding facts you forgot**
  + **A too loud or too soft voice except where it impacts the story.**
  + **Constant referral to notes**
  + **Looking around everywhere but at your audience**
  + **Tacking on unnatural endings**
  + **Talking down to your audience**
  + **Reading the story (except in rare circumstances).**
* **Children can accept Jesus at a very early age, even though they do not act on this decision until later.**
* **Do not hesitate to end your story by asking for a decision to accept Christ.**
* **We must give the children the opportunity to accept Him by asking them directly.**

Reference:

Guidelines for children’s story for church services  
and Telling a great story by Barbara L. Manspeaker