

Bible Story Groups

Stories are often told in a disconnected fashion, like single pearls from a broken string. To stop stories appearing as disconnected items, it is often advisable to group stories according to their theme. This allows the teacher to explore a concept in depth. One such theme would be forgiveness. If a number of stories are used, many aspects of forgiveness can be explored.

Forgiveness

- Jacob and Esau (Jacob feared not being forgiven)
- Joseph and his brothers (not exacting revenge)
- David and Saul (mercy and forgiveness are beyond justice)
- The unforgiving servant (those who are forgiven should forgive)
- The woman who washed Jesus' feet (those who are forgiven much, love much)
- Peter's question (carry on forgiving, seventy times seven)
- Jesus and Peter (forgiving yourself)
- The prodigal son (willingness to forgive)

Grouping stories in themes allows for continuity and progression. Forgiveness as a concept may be tackled more than once during a child's time at school, but each time the teacher can select a different aspect and illustrate it by stories most suitable for the age group. This prevents the constant use of a few well-known stories and the skating over of difficult concepts.

Grouping Bible stories

The following lists contain Bible stories arranged under headings. The stories listed under each heading are only examples, not exhaustive references. Some stories could legitimately be studied under several headings, and are therefore included twice. The majority of the material included is in story format, but some teaching and laws are also referred to, in order to allow teachers to follow up the theme of a story in biblical teaching.

The Kingdom of God

- Parables of the Kingdom: (see under Parables)
- Jesus preaching the Kingdom: Matthew 19.16-30; John 3.1-21; 18.36
- Children and the Kingdom: Matthew 18.1-9; Mark 10.13-16
- The Kingdom is within: Luke 17.20-21

Thanks

- The ten lepers: Luke 17.11-19
- Giving thanks: Psalm 136
- Thankful at all times: Philippians 4.4-7

God's unusual choices

- Samuel: 1 Samuel 1.1-28
- Mary: Luke 1.26-38
- Jeremiah: Jeremiah 1.1-19
- Moses: Exodus 3.1-4.31
- Gideon: Judges 6.1-24, 33-40

Authority

- Jesus spoke with authority: Matthew 7.28-29
- The authority of the Bible: 2 Timothy 3.15-17
- The casting out of the money-changers: Mark 11.15-18
- Authority to forgive sins: Mark 2.1-12
- Jesus' authority: Matthew 28.18-20
- God's authority: Job 38.1-41
- The centurion's servant: Luke 7.1-10

Bravery and fear

- Deborah and Barak: Judges 4.1-24
- Esther: Esther 4.1-7.10
- David and Goliath: 1 Samuel 17.1-58
- Jonathan: 1 Samuel 18.1-4; 19.1-7; 20.1-42
- Peter: Matthew 14.22-33

People who changed or faced great changes

- Zacchaeus: Luke 19.1-10
- Paul: Acts 7.54-8.3; 9.1-31
- Jacob: Genesis 25.19-34; 27.1-29.30; 30.25-33.20
- Joseph: Genesis 37.1-36; 39.1-45.28

Life out of death

- Lazarus: John 11.1-44
- Jairus' daughter: Mark 5.21-43
- The widow of Nain: Luke 7.11-17
- Eutychus: Acts 20.7-12
- Elisha and the woman's son: 2 Kings 4.8-37

Sharing

- David and his soldiers: 1 Samuel 30.1-25
- The widow who shared her last meal: 1 Kings 17.7-16
- Feeding the five thousand: Mark 6.30-44
- Lazarus and the rich man: Luke 16.19-31
- Jesus shares a last meal: Luke 22.7-38
- The early church: Acts 4.32-37; 6.1-7

Giving

- The widow's gift of two coins: Mark 12.41-44
- God's gift of Jesus: Luke 2.1-20
- The woman of Shunem: 2 Kings 4.8-17
- Peter and John and the lame man: Acts 3.1-26
- The woman with precious ointment: Mark 14.3-9
- David: 2 Samuel 24.18-25

Laws

- The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5.1-7.29
- The Ten Commandments: Exodus 20.1-17
- Josiah: 2 Chronicles 34.1-33
- The rich young man: Matthew 19.16-30

Forgiveness

- Jacob and Esau: Genesis 25.29-34; 27.1-40; 33.1-11
- Joseph and his brothers: Genesis 37.1-36; 42.1-45.28
- David and Saul: 1 Samuel 18.1-19.17; 26.1-25
- The unforgiving servant: Matthew 18.21-35
- The lost son: Luke 15.11-32
- The woman who washed Jesus' feet: Luke 7.36-50
- Peter's question: Matthew 18.21-22
- Jesus and Peter: Luke 22.54-62; 24.34; John 21.15-19

Promises

- Abraham: Genesis 12.2; 15.1-21; 17.15-16; 18.1-33; 21.1-8
- Noah: Genesis 6.5-9.17
- Moses: Exodus 3.1-22; 12.1-42
- David: 1 Samuel 16.1-13; 2 Samuel 7.1-17; 22.1-51; Psalm 89
- The Messiah: Isaiah 9.2, 6, 7; 11.1-9; 53.1-12; Micah 5.2

New Testament promises

- The Holy Spirit: John 14.15-18,26; 15.26; 16.12-15
- God with us: Matthew 28.20b
- A new heaven and a new earth: Revelation 21.1-5; 22.1-5

Friends

- Jonathan and David: 1 Samuel 18.1-4; 20.1-42
- Ruth and Naomi: Ruth 1.1-22
- Paul and Silas: Acts 15.22-41; 16.16-40
- Paul and Timothy: Acts 16.1-2; 1 Corinthians 4.17; Philippians 2.19-22; 2 Timothy 1.2
- The disciples: Luke 6.12-16; John 15.9-17
- Women who followed Jesus: Luke 8.1-3
- Martha and Mary: Luke 10.38-42

Trust and obedience

- The woman with a haemorrhage: Mark 5.25-34
- Peter walks on water: Matthew 14.22-33
- Gideon: Judges 6.1-7.24
- Joshua: the spies and Jericho: Numbers 13.1-33; 14.1-9, 26-30; Joshua 5.13-6.25
- Naaman: 2 Kings 5.1-19
- Jonah: Jonah 1.1-3.10
- The centurion's servant: Luke 7.1-10
- The two houses: Matthew 7.24-27

Rescuers

- Moses: Exodus 12.31-42; 13.17-14.31
- David and Goliath: 1 Samuel 17.1-58
- Esther: Esther, especially 4.1-7.10
- Joshua: Joshua 5.13-6.25
- Gideon and the Midianites: Judges: 6.1-7.24

Parables

- Parables of the Kingdom
 - ▶ The mustard-seed: Matthew 13.31
 - ▶ The yeast: Matthew 13.33
 - ▶ The treasure and the pearl: Matthew 13.44-46
- Prayer parables
 - ▶ The Pharisee and the tax-collector: Luke 18.9-14
 - ▶ The friend at midnight Luke 11.5-8
 - ▶ The persistent widow: Luke 18.1-8
- Other parables
 - ▶ The good Samaritan: Luke 10.25-37
 - ▶ The sheep and the goats: Matthew 25.31-46
 - ▶ The great feast: Luke 14.15-24
 - ▶ The workers in the vineyard: Matthew 20.1-16
 - ▶ The lost sheep: Luke 15.1-7
 - ▶ The lost coin: Luke 15.8-10
 - ▶ The lost son: Luke 15.11-32
 - ▶ The houses on rock and sand: Matthew 7.24-27
 - ▶ The two sons: Matthew 21.28-32
 - ▶ The rich fool: Luke 12.13-21
 - ▶ The unforgiving servant: Matthew 18.21-35
 - ▶ The sower: Matthew 13.1-23
 - ▶ The talents: Matthew 25.14-29
 - ▶ The wise and foolish girls: Matthew 25.1-13

Prayer

- Prayer parables: (See under Parables)
- The Lord's Prayer: Matthew 6.9-13
- Jesus' advice on prayer: Matthew 6.5-8; 7.7-12
- Hannah's prayer: 1 Samuel 2.1-10
- Mary's prayer: Luke 1.46-55
- A help prayer: Psalm 70
- A thankyou prayer: Psalm 136
- A sorry prayer: Psalm 51
- A praise prayer: Psalm 8
- An asking prayer: Psalm 25

Worship

- With music and dance: Psalm 149.1-5; 150
- Paul and Silas in prison: Acts 16.16-40
- The worship of heaven: Revelation 5.11-14
- "With all your heart... ": Matthew 22.34-40

Church

- Life in the early Church: Acts 2.42-47; 4.32-37; 5.12-16; 6.1-7
- The body: Romans 12.3-8; 1 Corinthians 12.12-31
- The Church under persecution: Acts 5.17-42; 6.8-15; 7.54-8.4

Temptation and wrong

- Paradise spoilt: Genesis 3.1-24
- The temptation of Jesus: Matthew 4.1-11
- Woman taken in adultery: John 8.1-11
- Forgiveness of sins: Isaiah 1.18; Psalm 103.12; Micah 7.19
- Jesus teaches about forgiveness: Matthew 5.38-42; 6.12-15; 18.21-22
- David and Bathsheba: 2 Samuel 11.1-27
- David asks for forgiveness: Psalm 51

Heaven

- Paradise again: Revelation 21.1-5; 22.1-5
- A place where God's will is done: Matthew 6.9-10
- Plenty of room in heaven: John 14.1-3
- Better than we can imagine: 1 Corinthians 2.9

God

- Holy: Isaiah 6.3; Revelation 4.8
- Creator: Genesis 1.1-2.25
- Saviour: Exodus 12.1-42
- Just: 1 Kings 21.1-22
- Loving: 1 John 4.7-21
- Judge: Genesis 6.5-9.17
- Shepherd: Psalm 23
- Father, mother: Isaiah 49.15; 66.13; Deuteronomy 1.31
- Provider: Exodus 16.1-17.6
- Shield and fortress: Psalm 18.2

Jesus

- Birth: Matthew 1.18-2.12; Luke 2.1-20
- In the Temple at twelve: Luke 2.40-52
- Baptism: Matthew 3.13-17
- Temptation: Matthew 4.1-11
- Transfiguration: Luke 9.28-36
- Example of preaching: Matthew 5.3-16; 38-48
- Entry into Jerusalem: Matthew 21.1-11
- Death: Luke 23.26-56
- Resurrection: John 20.1-18; Luke 24.13-35; John 20.19-21.14
- See other sections for parables and miracles

Jesus' miracles

- Power over death
 - ▶ Jairus' daughter: Mark 5.21-43
 - ▶ Lazarus: John 11.1-44
 - ▶ The widow's son: Luke 7.11-17
- Power over nature
 - ▶ Calming the storm: Mark 4.35-41
 - ▶ Walking on water: Matthew 14.22-33
 - ▶ 5,000 fed: Mark 6.30-44
 - ▶ A great catch of fish: John 21.1-11
 - ▶ Water into wine: John 2.1-11
- Power over sickness
 - ▶ The leper: Mark 1.40-45
 - ▶ The centurion's servant: Luke 7.1-10
 - ▶ Blind Bartimaeus: Mark 10.46-52
 - ▶ The paralysed man: Mark 2.1-12
 - ▶ The ten lepers: Luke 17.11-19
 - ▶ The man born blind: John 9.1-41
 - ▶ The Gaderene demoniac: Mark 5.1-20
 - ▶ The woman healed on the Sabbath: Luke 13.10-17
 - ▶ At the Pool of Bethesda: John 5.1-15

The Holy Spirit

- The valley of dry bones: Ezekiel 37.1-14
- At the baptism of Jesus: Matthew 3.13-17
- Pentecost: Acts 2.1-11
- The gifts of the Spirit:
1 Corinthians 12.1-11
- The fruits of the Spirit: Galatians 5.22-23
- Nicodemus: John 3.1-21
- Jesus teaches about the Spirit:
John 14.15-31; 15.26-16.16

Judgement and punishment

- Noah: Genesis 6.5-9.17
- The rich fool: Luke 12.13-21
- The sheep and the goats:
Matthew 25.31-46
- Judgement belongs to God:
1 Corinthians 4.5
- Lazarus and the rich man: Luke 16.19-31
- Hell, separated from God:
2 Thessalonians 1.9
- Judgement by God: 2 Corinthians 5.10

Note. When exploring a topic such as judgement with younger pupils, it is better to concentrate on punishment as being exclusion from God's presence – a central image of hell in the Bible – rather than to use images such as fire.

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