THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

Developing Children's Ministry

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SESSION 15

Storytelling, Spiritual Formation,
and Biblical Interpretation

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SESSION 15

Storytelling, Spiritual Formation, and Biblical Interpretation

SESSION OVERVIEW

Understanding How Creativity, Play, and Story Influence Spiritual Formation

Developing Imaginative Storytelling Skills

Appropriate Biblical Interpretation

Application

Exam

Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should:

- understand how creativity can encourage spiritual formation.
- develop creative methods for storytelling.
- practice maintaining exegetical integrity in the teaching process.

SESSION 15

Storytelling, Spiritual Formation, and Biblical Interpretation

INTRODUCTION

The first attribute of God introduced in the Bible is creativity: "In the beginning God CREATED the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1, emphasis added). Soon thereafter, we learn that God created us (humankind) in God's own image. "In the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (v. 27). In this passage, we learn that we are both CREATED by God and CREATIVE (in God's image). From the moment a child is born (and perhaps even before), he or she begins to create. Children's leaders build on that creative impulse by incorporating opportunities for play, storytelling, and sound Bible teaching that cultivates a creative engagement with the child.

UNDERSTANDING HOW CREATIVITY, PLAY, AND STORY INFLUENCE SPIRITUAL FORMATION

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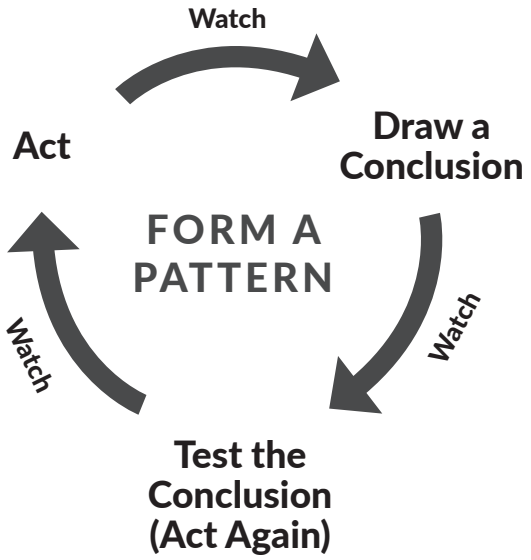
Let's stretch our imaginations a little and think about what a newborn infant is creating. Gopnik, Meltzoff, and Kuhl in their book *The Scientist in the Crib* (Harper, 2000) point out that newborns are creating bonds with their caretakers. They are creating patterns for recognizing faces, patterns for interpreting their surroundings, and patterns for interpreting their own body signals. According to these observers, children are making (creating) meaning from their first moments out of the womb. Making meaning will be the most important part of their learning in the first few years, and making meaning will continue to be a lifelong task. These infant scientists engage in the process of meaning-making through two processes: observing and interacting. These are the root of all learning. We observe, interact with, and then form tentative conclusions based on big categories. These activities serve as "pain or pleasure" for the youngest child, moving toward more and more complex thinking as the child grows.

All our lives, we organize ourselves by creating categories and classifications to understand better how the world works. We continually create opportunities to test and improve our understanding. Eventually, we use our understanding to express ourselves. A picture of that process might look like this:



The primary way children form and test patterns and categories is through play. Play, for children, is full of meaningful exploration. Consider one of the earliest forms of play: making sounds. Make some of those sounds right now. Babies make these sounds because they CAN, and it feels good. When these sounds

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bring a response from a face they know, they make these sounds to form a social connection. Eventually, over hundreds of times through the process, babies wordlessly conclude, "If I make sounds, Mommy makes sounds back to me." This conclusion, learned through play, becomes the foundation for learning language. Soon, babies discover particular sounds bring particular responses. A similar play process leads to the conclusions, "If I push it, it will move." "If I drop it, it will fall." "If I dump them, they will scatter."

As children get older, the processes become more complex. "If I stack blocks on top of each other, they stay. If I stack them too tall, they fall." "If I push on the tape, it sticks. If it gets stuck on my fingers, it won't stick to the paper." "If I make the same words as Mommy, we sing together and have fun."

As we develop language, we realize it is not necessary to act directly in order to form our conclusions. We can watch others or HEAR their stories. We can see their pictures, and they become our pictures. We can feel their emotion, and it becomes our emotion. In fact, the older we are, the more we rely on stories over play. For example, most of us know about skydiving because we have watched it and imagined it, not because we have donned our own parachutes. We COULD jump from an airplane. We could play out the action ourselves. But instead, we rely on representations of the action to gain our knowledge. We know it's exciting because our hearts thump when we watch the pictures or hear the accounts of the skydivers. We become story processors more than play processors. The stories become our way of knowing the real thing.

Play and experience will always be part of our lives, but we learn to rely more and more on language and images to help us understand reality. According to some skydivers, sometimes the stories we embrace are even more engaging than the real act! Through the stories of skydiving, we become confident that we "know" skydiving. We would recognize it anytime we saw it. Stories become for us a way of knowing what we choose not to physically experience.

Stories are also a way of knowing things that we are physically unable to experience. We cannot physically experience the Garden of Eden, for example. Yet we know it through the story of our faith. We know it by description. We know it by the events that occurred there. We know it by its place in relation to the rest of human history. We know it by comparison to the garden in our yard or the local park. For us, the Garden of Eden is real, even though we have never been there, and we cannot find it on a map. Not only do we "know about" the Garden of Eden, we trust it. We have a relationship to it. The story about the Garden of Eden helps us make sense out of the rest of our lives. It is a pattern for understanding our own experience.

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The main characters of the story are God, Adam, Eve, and Satan. The setting is "perfect." The conflict is whether Adam and Eve will obey God or follow Satan. The end of the story is the loss of the garden, the loss of "perfect." However, it is not only the details of the story we share. It is the consequences. We do not have a perfect homeland, and the story of the Garden of Eden helps us understand why. The story happened to Adam and Eve, but it also happened to us.

Good stories do not just happen—they happen to us. They become part of our experience. They shape our understanding of our lives. The world is filled with wonderful stories. Read aloud and listen to the following short poem about a great adventure series. Try to identify the sources of the stories the poem describes:

> "Sea monsters, dragons, magicians, and spies!
> Riddles and mystery! Intrigue and surprise!
> Heroes and villains and giants and midgets,
> Palaces, dungeons, and madmen and witches!
>
> Kings, queens and emperors, wise men and fools;
> Miracles, plagues, hidden treasure and jewels!
> Angels and demons, rebellion and war,
> Deception, disaster and mayhem and gore!
> (Ew . . . yuck . . .)
>
> Time travel! Romance! Adventure! Betrayal!
> Freedom from slavery! Escaping from jail!
> Soldiers and warriors and healers and saints,
> And poems of thanksgiving, praise, and complaints!
>
> Partying prophets and killers who preach,
> Fish who eat people! Donkeys that teach!
> Shipwrecks and journeys and blessings to give!
> And the world's greatest SUPERHERO ever to live!"
>
> Steven James, *The Creative Storytelling Guide for Children's Ministry*
> (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 2002), 22

The source, of course, is the Bible. While there are other sources for stories about such creatures as sea monsters, kings, and angels, the Bible is full of action and characters who grab our imaginations and invite us into the greatest story ever told. About 52% of the Bible is narrative and 48% is law, poetry, wisdom literature, and letters. All Scripture is God-breathed, alive, and useful, but there is something about stories that engages us in deep ways. Stories from the Bible are

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not the only ones that help us think about God. Stories of God's ongoing work in the hearts and lives of believers are very important ones to share. They are the true stories of modern-day saints.

Stories from outside the Bible may help to illustrate the truths the Bible teaches and build skills in exercising imagination. However, let's be very clear about the role of the church in the spiritual formation of children. We teach the foundational story of faith that we believe to be from the most credible source: the truth of God revealed through Scripture and shared with believers throughout history. Our primary content for education in the church is the shared stories of our faith in the Bible, so we take part in a common history. We remember what God has done in preparation for what God is doing. These are the stories that tie us to God's people in the past, present, and future.

These stories of the Bible help us know God in context, so we can recognize God everywhere, much as the stories of skydiving help us recognize a skydiver when we see one. The stories help us to create patterns for responding to God wherever we see Him. Undoubtedly, the children we teach will **watch** (or listen to) the story, **interact** with that story, **watch** what happens, form a conclusion, and test it again and again until the message of the story becomes real for them.

Children interact with stories in many other ways. In fact, their first interactions with stories are often interactions that help them commit the stories to memory—an imaginary link between play and story that is deeply formative. Gretchen Pritchard notes that children deserve the opportunity to respond in a variety of methods: with clay, paint, and crayons, with their bodies and their voices, with their imaginations and their hearts, in worship, in sacrament, in celebration, and in play. Bible stories learned at church are joined by other stories, events, and experiences in children's daily experience that lead toward relationship with the great God of the Bible, who loves, cares, forgives, protects, directs, and saves. This approach requires an attitude of openness toward children's play, creative process, and imagination that is sometimes in conflict with our models for a well-run classroom. Here are some general tools for attitudes and practices that nurture spiritual formation. You can share these with parents in your church:

- Respect children's spiritual sensitivity.
- Listen to children's perceptions of God and the world around them. Listen. Look. Listen some more.
- Honor children's special position as defined by Jesus.
- Provide opportunities for children to minister to each other and to the church.

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- Give children opportunities to be wrong and discover right through sensitive questioning rather than lecturing.
- Trust that God is at work in them.

In addition, we should give children time and space to allow stories to shape them. Some strategies that assist our efforts include the following:

- Provide for quiet times as well as activity.
- Help the children experience the awe of "sacred places" and times, such as the altar and communion, and beautiful objects that reflect the glory of God.
- Help children be aware of clouds, stars, animals, and other expressions of God's creativity.
- Provide times to choose how to respond to God as well as structured activities.
- Wonder aloud together about the work of God without giving answers.
- Look for beauty and creative human expression as gifts from God.

Encourage "sanctified imagination" experiences, imagining how God might act or feel based on shared stories or experiences. Only "correct" these impressions if they explicitly violate what we know about the nature of God through Scripture.

In addition, we should model hearing the voice of God before children and in our personal lives. We can employ a number of practices to help us in this matter:

- Pray together in a natural way and share answers to prayer.
- Talk about our experiences of God and how God is changing us.
- Share the Bible verses and devotional thoughts with others.

We can also recall our own childhood and try to stay in touch with what some people call "the inner child"—that part of us that experiences wonder, play, and moments of hurt and joy in a vulnerable way.

One of the church's primary responsibilities is to assist parents in their spiritual formation so that they can "live out" the Christian story before children. The tasks of the church in supporting parents include the following:

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- Nurture personal attentiveness to God.
- Encourage spiritual community through small groups.
- Empower and encourage spiritual life in families.
- Provide the resources and opportunities to mature as spiritual leaders.
- Connect parents to the world through networks of prayer and ministry.

When children experience someone loving them who also loves God and lives a Christ-like life, it is a powerful model for lifetime commitment. Children learn Scripture as it is lived out by adults. Living out the story before children is crucial in their nurture.

DEVELOPING IMAGINATIVE STORYTELLING SKILLS

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According to Dale and Liz Von Seggen, there are four general aspects to telling a good story. First, we need to *maintain eye contact*. One of the most important methods to capture an audience is to look them right in the eye. This communicates confidence and a personal touch. You also express emotions through your eyes that help listeners pay attention and experience what you are feeling. It has been said the eyes are the pathway to the soul. If your eyes wander to the ceiling or the floor, it will be difficult for your audience to connect with you. In addition, we will not be able to read our audience. By looking at them, we can determine if we need to cut the story short or if we have captured their attention. If our eyes are fastened on notes or a script, we cannot maintain this kind of connection with the audience.

Second, we should *paint pictures*. Provide details, details, details. Help listeners experience the scene you are describing. Help them experience the smells, the sounds, the sights, and the emotions of those involved. Sometimes, visuals will help children experience and remember. Variety is a big issue. The more we can repeat a word or concept in different ways, the more likely it will be remembered.

Third, we can use *sound effects*. Children love to hear different voices and speaking sounds. Change your voice for the sweet child and the grouchy old man. Make the sound of wind, rain, thunder, animals, or creaking doors. Pretend to cry or yell, hack and cough, and so on. Not only is it fun and interesting, but it will help the children remember the story.

Fourth, we should use *vocal variation*. Alternate between loud and soft tones and fast and slow. If we have been talking softly, then raise our voice for the next line. Use pauses and silences to build suspense in the story.

When reaching the climax of the story, begin to speed up; slow down when reaching the conclusion of the story.

Obviously, a key strength in storytelling is committing the story to memory. While some stories prove easy to read, many stories function much better if we know the narrative well enough to "tell" rather than "read" the key components. Committing to memory does not always mean telling the story word-for-word but maintaining the major flow of the story and recalling key moments while focused on the children, not the story. Storyteller Steven James offers these seven ideas to help you remember your stories.

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1. Walk It. Move around as you practice the story. Your gestures, posture, and facial expressions will help you remember the story.
2. Watch It. Many people remember images better than words. They find they can remember stories easily if they watch them in their minds like watching a movie. When telling the story, they simply explain what they see in their imagination.
3. Draw It. Think of the story as a progression of three or four different scenes. Then, draw a picture of each scene on a sheet of paper. As you tell the story, picture the scenes in your head.
4. Tour It. Some people find they can more easily picture a story by pretending to walk through a house, watching each scene of the story happen in a different room.
5. Chunk It. If you remember words better than images, try learning the story a few lines at a time. You can learn each "chunk" of text if you write the story in four to seven chunks.
6. Question It. Instead of worrying about remembering the exact images, pictures, or words, retell the story in your own way. If you cannot remember what comes next, ask yourself, "What would naturally come next?" Then, double-check in your Bible to see if you forgot any important sections. Practice again. Each time you practice, you'll remember more and more details.
7. Explain It. We remember better what we understand. Make sure you really know what is happening in your story. Tell someone about it. Explain what happens and why. Don't worry about actually telling the story, just talk about it. After a few times through, we'll feel more comfortable with the story. See the "Story Structure Checklist" below for more help:
    - Who is this story about?
    - What lesson is being taught?
    - What names do I need to remember?
    - What struggle or problem do the characters face?
    - How is the problem solved?
    - How does the story end?

Fifth, we can employ several strategies to make the story more engaging. Only ask closed-ended questions during the story. Use the questions in places children can join the telling with a YES, NO, or one-word answer. Follow the story with

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open-ended questions that encourage imagination and interpretation. "Why do you think God chose a big fish to swallow Jonah? When there's dialog in the story, do not look at the audience. Look at the place where the other character would be standing or look up to dialog with God. Choose a simple prop instead of pictures to go with your story. Pass it around and let children experience it.

If we are asking the children to participate in the story in some way, teach them the appropriate response, the cue you will give, and a cue to stop. Give the cue, and let the children practice the appropriate responses before the story. Have the children stop and wait for the cue to respond during the story. Appropriate participatory actions include:

- Make a gesture or sound with a particular word in the story. Each time you say *ark*, the children will respond with hammering their fists three times into their open palms.
- Teach a refrain. For the creation story, you say, "God looked around and said . . ." The children respond, "Hey! This is GOOD!"

Use creative dramatics or pantomime. Pause at each verb and encourage listeners to act out the motion in their own way.

Sixth, don't be afraid to introduce humor or "modern day equivalents" to older groups of children. Avoid "over the head" jokes or confusing sidetracks for younger listeners. For example, if you're talking with older children about Ishmael in the desert, it might be appropriate to say, "Boy, I bet he wished he'd plugged in his cell phone!" However, this comment would likely interrupt the story and confuse younger listeners who are trying to make a concrete connection to the story. Enlist assistance. Have the kids hold props, read short parts, or be a silent character.

Tie God's story to our personal story When using the story of David and Goliath, we might bring a rock from our backyard. Say, "I was getting ready for this lesson this week, and I decided to take a walk in my yard. I bent down to search for something, just like I imagine David must have searched. I found grass, and sticks, and an old gum wrapper. And then I found this perfect little rock. And I began to wonder, was this rock bigger than David's rock? Smaller? Flatter? Did it have sharper edges? What made his rock just right to be used by God in the hand of a boy?"

Manage the atmosphere. If the children get too rowdy, work with their energy, slow the pace. Make larger, exaggerated gestures and slow-motion to a freeze, preferably in a strange posture. Reduce your volume to a whisper. Increase your volume with a one-word interjection, such as AND or BUT. Then make a dramatic pause. Redirect the children to discover the action. "Let's find out what happens."

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Give the children a quick task. "Clap three times and sit on your hands." Slip into a falsetto or monotone robot voice, and repeat, "Must have silence." However, do not overdo this. Start on one side of the room with a hush or other silence signal. Move steadily and intentionally across the audience. Then, begin to energetically tell the story. Acknowledge that the children are having fun. Then, request that they engage in the story. "I know this is fun, but I want to tell you the rest of the story." If none of these actions work, stop the story. Pleasantly say, "Stories can't be told without listeners." Redirect the children to another activity.

Always work to let the story be yours. Care about the story, know it well, and creatively imagine the details. Create your own words to tell the story. Curriculum offers one suggested way to tell it. Consider the particular audience. You are more obligated to interact with the listeners than to maintain a scripted approach. Give up self-consciousness, and let your inner actor out.

Give kids guidelines of what to listen for. Give an introduction that poses a problem or sets the stage for interest. "I'm going to tell you a story, and I want you to be listening for the character in the story who is most like you." "I want you to pay careful attention to what happens first, middle, and last." "I want you to decide which character makes the best choice." All of these gear children to listen for particular kinds of details and help keep them from wandering away from the action. Keep the story moving, but not too quickly. There's a brain-function principle at work here. As children watch our pace, they cannot get focused. Stand in one place too long, and they check out. When you carefully use the space you have, the children can redirect their focus periodically. This is important for short attention spans. It also encourages the children to use different parts of their brains as they engage with the story.

We have discussed some hints and tips for HOW to tell a story. Now, let's talk about maintaining the integrity of the stories we tell.

APPROPRIATE BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

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"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Children's leaders live with this scriptural admonition. However, we often fail when we do not realize that there are several categories of truth influencing our handling of Scripture. Above all, there is absolute truth: This type of truth is absolute—it always was true and always will be true: God is love, God created the universe, God reserves a special place in creation for humanity, Jesus will come again.

There is also tentative truth. This type of truth is based on shared information, but may change with new information. For instance, it was once believed that aspirin was harmless. Under most circumstances this is true, but further research has demonstrated that it can cause bleeding complications. Taking aspirin is not harmless for those who are allergic to the medication.

A third category includes contextual truth. This type of truth remains true because of the circumstances, but it cannot be generalized to all circumstances. We say, "Don't go into the street because there is a car coming." The next day, you ask the child to cross the street. He or she responds, "I can't. You said to not go into the street." God told His people not to eat animals with cloven hooves, like pigs. Most Christians today do not consider eating pork a sin.

A fourth category includes personal truths. Personal truths reflect a matter of preference or personal circumstance. Some call this "relative truth." A husband declares, "My wife is the most beautiful woman in the world." A child says, "Cat food smells disgusting." While stated in a general form, the clear meaning is based on personal perspective.

It is important to recognize that the existence of one of these kinds of truths does not undermine the existence of the other kinds of truth. The problem occurs when we take one kind of truth and teach it as though it were another. Christians are sometimes guilty of trying to teach truths that are personal, contextual, or tentative as though they were absolute. They have sometimes taken part of a truth and taught it as an absolute without considering the "rest of the verse." Non-Christians have been guilty of trying to teach absolute truth as though it was not absolute. Both approaches cause problems with faith.

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When truth is not handled correctly, as God's Word charges us to do, we create problems. We cannot change the way non-Christians handle truth, but we can be responsible for our own integrity. We must be aware that, particularly with children, when we teach something that is not an absolute truth as though it were, we can unintentionally set up those children for faith crises later in life. These crises often surround the controversial issues within the universal Church, issues that are not critical to our salvation unless we allow them to distract us.

In the Church of the Nazarene, we recognize some of these theological differences without taking a position. We as individual believers may have an opinion, but we recognize other believers have Scriptural bases to support their perspectives, too. How should a children's leader avoid teaching children false concepts about God through misrepresentation of Scripture? Following are some guidelines to help us with responsible biblical interpretation.

First, select a good Study Bible. Find a recommended Study Bible that has notes on the text, introductions to each book, and general articles or major sections that help to clarify the Scripture. Consult with your pastor for sound recommendations.

Currently, three kinds of translations are available: Word Literal, Dynamic Equivalent, and Free Paraphrase. The Word Literal versions attempt to translate terms as close as possible to the original languages of the Bible. The problem with this kind of translation is that it is more difficult to read because it does not always flow easily. Examples include the New American Standard Bible (NASB), Revised Standard Version (RSV), La Biblia Reina-Valera Bible (RVR), and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Dynamic Equivalent translations use some contemporary language that seems "equivalent" to the phrases in the original languages. These translations prove easier to read, but sacrifice literal readings that may be more accurate; they may also depend on colloquial phrases based on where the bibles were created (including American and English phraseology). Examples include the New International Version (NIV), Today's English Version (TEV), and the New English Bible (NEB). The Free Paraphrase translations often represent one person's or a few people's rephrasing of a current version of Scripture (thought they may consult the original languages). These translations are good for devotional reading or introductory reading. Examples include The Message (MSG) or The Living Bible (TLB).

Leaders may want to read from all three of these in order to get a broad range of meaning. Most biblical scholars prefer the Word Literal translations, since the translation remains closely connected to the original languages. We do need to recognize that even Word Literal versions remain bound by current language and grammar usage.

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Second, locate, limit, and then listen to the text. After you have located a biblical passage or story to study, read the verses before the passage you are reading. This may set the stage for the story or passage you are preparing to read. Look for a complete thought or unit. We can look for indicators to see if a new thought is being established. A new thought might start with phrases like: "Therefore," "After these things," "Now," or "Finally." Usually, the end of a thought will be obvious. Once you've located the thought unit, read it over and over, listening for what it says. The Bible was primarily written to be read aloud and listened to.

Third, ask historical questions of the text. What is the historical context in this passage? Who is the author? What is the time and place of writing? Who is the audience? What is the purpose for which the text was written? Are there any events occurring at the time of the writing that might have an effect on what is being written? Often, a sound Study Bible will include this information in the introduction.

Now ask, Is the history within the text the same as the history of the text? For example, if the psalmist is writing about the Exodus, the history within the text concerns the time period of the Exodus, not the time period of the psalmist. Study bibles or Bible commentaries often include this basic information as part of the study notes.

Also ask literary questions of the text. What is the literary form of this text? Is it narrative, a historical review, a poem, a hymn, a parable, a dramatic illustration, a letter or a specific portion of a letter, a wise saying? Sometimes, this line of questioning requires consulting a commentary or other source. Identifying the literary form can lead to a broader understanding of the life situation typically addressed by this kind of writing. For example, a wisdom saying is a general truth about life and not a law. Literary devices used in a passage can be helpful to our understanding as well. Parallelism, repetition, word play, puns, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, irony, and rhetoric are all used by biblical authors. It would be a mistake to make what was intended to be a pun into a rule for holy living!

Identify and study key terms and concepts. Use different readings of the text to make clear what the key terms, themes, and concepts are. Do research to understand how the author is using those words and ideas. Use a concordance and Bible dictionary to clarify these ideas. If the key characters in a passage are the Assyrians, find out who the Assyrians were.

Discover the major theological affirmation of the text. At this point, we should have a pretty clear perspective of the primary theological emphasis of the passage. Ask, what did the writer intend when this text was written? What is being said about:

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- God?
- People?
- Evil?
- Salvation?
- The community of believers?

In essence, we are trying to discover the theological thrust of the passage. Try to summarize it in one sentence. Then ask, how does this insight relate to the larger theological understanding of the biblical book where we find the text? How does this insight relate to other biblical insights found in both Old Testament and New Testament?

We can then apply the text to contemporary life. What does this passage teach about God, about us and our relationships to God, and about our way of living in the world? Even more importantly, what does it say to the children we minister to? Ask:

- How did this text function when it was first heard?
- How does this text function today?
- What are the human needs being addressed in this passage?
- What should we do in response to what we are hearing in this text?

It may be time-consuming to go through this process for every lesson. However, once you have done it for a chapter, you will not need to go through the whole process again. Also, commentaries and biblical resources will speed the process. A well-developed teacher's guide for your curriculum will have much of this work completed for you. The point is, pastors and teachers have a great responsibility to handle God's Word correctly. They must not risk teaching children concepts that will have to be unlearned later.

APPLICATION

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1. Talk with parents about the creativity they see in and through their children.
2. Interview someone who tells children's stories. How do they prepare? How do they know when they have told a story in a way that captivates children?
3. Choose one of the following passages and work through the approaches to interpreting Scripture: 2 Kings 20:20-21; Job 5:1-2; Psalm 144:5-6; Proverbs 23:22-25; Luke 22:36-37.

EXAM

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1. Important tasks for children include:
   A. Observing.
   B. Meaning making.
   C. Interacting.
   D. A and C.
   E. All of the above.

2. Play can prove to be distracting for children engaged in meaningful exploration.
   A. True
   B. False

3. While we cannot physically experience everything in the Bible, we can encounter Scripture through:
   A. Study.
   B. Memorization.
   C. Story.
   D. A and C.
   E. All of the above.

4. Stories outside the Bible:
   A. Illustrate biblical truth.
   B. Challenge our faith.
   C. Build imagination.
   D. A and C.
   E. All of the above.

5. The majority of Scripture is narrative.
   A. True
   B. False

6. A good storyteller does not have to worry about memorizing the story.
   A. True
   B. False

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7. Good storytelling requires:
   A. Variety in voice and tone.
   B. Attention to details.
   C. Special strategies to hold the story together.
   D. A and C.
   E. All of the above.

8. There is one kind of truth, and we need to be sure to proclaim it.
   A. True
   B. False

9. Translations vary based on:
   A. Staying close to the original language (Greek and Hebrew) in Scripture.
   B. Borrowing from an existing translation.
   C. Trying to make Scripture more contemporary and readable to people.
   D. A and C.
   E. All of the above.

10. Often, Bible passages vary based not only on historical context but also the form of literature they represent.
    A. True
    B. False

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT

NOTES

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor.

1. Where do we encourage creativity and play in the life of the children but also in the life of the church?
2. What are the positive opportunities and potential problems with storytelling in the church?
3. Do most adults realize there are multiple forms of truth? What difference does this realization make in how we work with children?
4. How does sound Bible preparation help communicate scripture in a way that is both meaningful but also creative?

Review your answers with your mentor, then respond to the following:

How many responses focus on supporting children (particularly in areas where they are not yet fully self-reliant), and how many answers focus on empowering children?

Which of these answers support the goal of living Christlike relationships? Why?

What do we need to add to our list to make our approach more comprehensive, more faithful? Which do we need to incorporate into the role of the children's leader as one who both supports and empowers Christlike relationships with children?