

# BIBLE STORYTELLING — FACILITATOR GUIDE

*A Flexible Storytelling Training for Any Narrative Bible Passage*

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

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Bible Storytelling is a training method for helping participants memorize and retell narrative Bible passages. Stories are one of the most natural ways people connect, learn, and share truth. When followers of Jesus know the stories of Scripture well enough to retell them, they are equipped to share God's Word naturally in everyday conversations — as the Holy Spirit opens doors.

This guide provides a step-by-step teaching process you can apply to any narrative Bible passage. Participants will see the storytelling method modeled, practice it together, and then practice independently with a partner. The session closes with a small group Scripture discussion.

Anyone who engages with the passage will encounter God's Word in a personal and memorable way and will have the confidence to share it with others.

## NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR

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*Before leading this session, choose a narrative Bible passage for your group to work with. Bible storytelling works best with narrative accounts — the Gospels, Genesis, Exodus, Ruth, Acts, and similar books. Avoid epistles or purely instructional passages for this method. Familiarize yourself with the passage well enough to retell its main details in order before the session begins. The participant handout is available as a separate download — print one per person before your session.*

## SESSION OVERVIEW

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### Step 1 — Introduce Bible Storytelling

Before diving into the passage, take a few minutes to explain what Bible storytelling is and why it matters. Help participants understand that memorizing and retelling Bible stories is not just a classroom exercise — it is a way of storing God's Word in their hearts so they are ready to share it when the moment comes.

You might say something like:

*"One of the most natural ways people connect is through stories. The Bible is full of them — and when we know those stories well enough to retell them, we are equipped to share God's truth in everyday conversations without needing a Bible in hand or a lesson prepared. Today we are going to learn a story together, and by the end of this session, you will be able to tell it to someone else."*

Before moving into the tips and the passage, open your time together in prayer. Ask God to open hearts to His Word and to give participants confidence to carry the story with them.

## **Step 2 — Teach the Storytelling Tips**

Before reading the passage, walk your group through the storytelling tips below. Return to these tips every time you begin a new story with your group.

- **Give a thought-by-thought account.** Memorize the main details in order — not word-for-word. This allows for a smooth and natural retelling in everyday settings.
- **Stick to the story.** Do not add details, invent names, or modernize the narrative. God's Word does not need your creativity added to it — and doing so can unintentionally make it feel less serious than it is. The story itself is sufficient.
- **Explain unfamiliar words.** Define terms that someone without Bible background may not know. For example: Scribes = Religious Teachers; Repent = Turn from your sin toward God.
- **Leave out distracting place names.** It is appropriate to leave out unfamiliar locations. Instead say something like, "On one of Jesus' travels, he entered a new town."
- **Never start with "Once upon a time."** God's Word is true — treat it that way. Instead try: "There is a story in the Bible where..." or "What you said reminds me of a story in the Bible."

## **Step 3 — Storyboard the Passage Together**

**Provide Context:** *Before reading the passage, give your group the historical and narrative background they need to understand it fully. Help them know: Where in the Bible is this passage? What is happening in the larger story? Who is speaking and to whom are they speaking? What has led up to this moment? Taking 2–3 minutes to set the stage prevents misinterpretation and helps participants understand not just what happens, but why it matters.*

This step is where participants begin learning the passage. You will read the passage in sections, retell each section in your own words, and draw images on a whiteboard to represent the story. The group follows along and draws with you on their participant handout. Before you begin, reassure your group that drawing ability does not matter — stick figures are encouraged.

1. Read the passage aloud to the group. Then ask them to give you a basic overview — what is happening in this passage?
2. Read 1–3 verses aloud. Stop and retell only that section in your own words, drawing images on the whiteboard that represent what just happened. Use arrows between images to show the story's flow.
3. Have participants draw along with you. Their drawing can match yours or be entirely different — what matters is that they are engaging with the story.
4. Read the next 1–3 verses and repeat the process. Before adding new images, go back and retell the passage from the beginning, adding the new section at the end. Continue this cumulative retelling with each new section until the passage is complete.
5. Once all sections are drawn, retell the entire passage from beginning to end as one cohesive narrative. Model the storytelling tips as you go — begin with "There is a story in the Bible where...", avoid adding details, and explain any unfamiliar words naturally as they come up.

**Alternative method — Acting it Out:** *For groups that would engage better through movement, Acting it Out is an effective alternative to storyboarding. Read the passage aloud and discuss the basics together — the setting, the people, and what is happening. Then break into smaller groups and give them a set amount of time to come up with their own way of acting out the passage. Bring everyone back together to perform for the group. Like storyboarding, the goal is to help participants connect with and internalize the story before moving into partner practice.*

#### **Step 4 — Partner Practice**

Break the group into pairs. Each person will take a turn retelling the passage in their own words while their partner listens.

1. **Partner Share.** The first person retells the passage from memory. They may reference their storyboard drawing if needed — but if they can retell it without looking, encourage them to try.
2. **Feedback.** When they finish, their partner gives one piece of feedback — either a key detail that was left out, or affirmation that the retelling was complete.

**3. Switch.** The second partner retells the passage and receives feedback in turn.

If time allows, invite a few volunteers to retell the passage aloud to the whole group before moving into the Scripture Discussion.

### **Step 5 — Scripture Discussion**

Bring the group back together to discuss what they encountered in the passage. These questions can be used for any Bible narrative and are designed to move participants from knowing the passage to understanding its meaning and seeing where it connects to real life.

- What does God want you to know about Him, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit from this passage?
- What does God want you to know about the specific people, humanity, or yourself, from this passage?
- What is your response to this passage?
- In what circumstance would knowing and sharing this account be beneficial?
- Do you know someone who may need to hear this account? If not, pray this week for God to give you eyes to see who might need it.

***A few notes as you lead this discussion:*** *Count to seven silently before re-asking or rewording a question — those seconds give people room to think without feeling rushed. Use "What else?" rather than "Are there any other answers?" to draw out more responses. Share your own thoughts last so the group has space to respond first. If the group is quiet, have them turn to a partner to share before sharing out loud to the whole group.*

Close the session in prayer. Thank God for His Word, ask Him to bring to mind the people each participant identified, and pray for boldness to share when the opportunity comes.

## APPENDIX — EXAMPLE LESSON: THE PARALYTIC MAN (MARK 2:1-12)

The following is a written example of how Step 3 — Storyboard the Passage Together — might sound in the room. This is not a script to read word for word. It is a model to help you understand the flow of the method before you lead it yourself.

**A note on drawing:** the images in a storyboard are meant to be quick visual cues that help participants recall the story during the learning process. The goal is for the story to be memorized.

*The facilitator has already completed Steps 1 and 2 — the group has been introduced to Bible storytelling and has reviewed the storytelling tips together.*

### Reading the Passage and Getting a Basic Overview

"I am going to read Mark 2:1-12 aloud. Follow along in your Bible or on your handout."

*[Read Mark 2:1-12 aloud.]*

"Just off the top of your head — what is happening in this passage? Give me the basics."

*[Allow the group to respond.]*

"Now we are going to draw this passage together to help us remember it well enough to retell it. You do not need to be an artist — stick figures are encouraged. Draw along with me and make it your own."

### Section 1 — Mark 2:1-2

*[Read Mark 2:1-2 aloud.]*

"There is a story in the Bible where Jesus returned to a town, and so many people crowded into the house where he was staying that there was no room left — not even at the door."

*[Draw a simple house with stick figures packed inside and around the door. Draw Jesus at the center. Add an arrow pointing to the next section.]*

## Section 2 — Mark 2:3–4

*[Read Mark 2:3–4 aloud.]*

*Retell from the beginning, then add:*

"While he was teaching, four men arrived carrying their friend on a mat. Their friend could not walk. They could not get through the crowd, so they went up to the roof, made an opening, and lowered their friend down on his mat right in front of Jesus."

*[Add four stick figures on the roof with a mat being lowered through a hole toward Jesus.]*

## Section 3 — Mark 2:5

*[Read Mark 2:5 aloud.]*

*Retell from the beginning, then add:*

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'"

*[Draw a speech bubble from Jesus to the man on the mat.]*

## Section 4 — Mark 2:6–7

*[Read Mark 2:6–7 aloud.]*

*Retell from the beginning, then add:*

"Some religious teachers — men whose job was to know and teach God's law — were sitting nearby and began thinking to themselves: who does this man think he is? Only God can forgive sins."

*[Draw a small group of figures to the side with thought bubbles.]*

## Section 5 — Mark 2:8–11

*[Read Mark 2:8–11 aloud.]*

*Retell from the beginning, then add:*

"Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, 'Which is easier — to say your sins are forgiven, or to tell you to get up and walk? I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' Then he turned to the man and said, 'Get up, pick up your mat, and go home.'"

*[Draw an arrow from Jesus to the man. Show the man beginning to stand.]*

## Section 6 — Mark 2:12

*[Read Mark 2:12 aloud.]*

*Retell the entire passage from beginning to end as one complete narrative.*

*[Draw the man walking out with his mat. Draw the crowd with hands raised. Add a final arrow to close the storyboard.]*

*From here, move into Step 4 — Partner Practice. Participants now have a complete storyboard and have heard the full narrative retold multiple times. They are ready to try it on their own.*