

## 10 Tips for Chatting about Bible Stories



1. Make sure that the pupils know this is a Bible story – with younger classes you can talk about the Old Testament stories as stories Jesus would have heard as a boy.

*This subtly introduces that Jesus was a Jew and his scriptures are what we know as Old Testament today. A timeline in the classroom including RE helps with this.*

2. Ensure the language/ translation/ version of the story is understandable by the class. Explain any tricky/ unusual words in advance of the story.

*In many ways we bring our methodologies and strategies from literacy into RE when we are working with stories. It also means that you can sometimes use RE texts when teaching literacy skills.*

3. A good opening question is to ask children to identify their key moment of the story/ favourite moment of the story/what they think is the turning point of the story. These are all different ways of enabling children to work out the core of the story.

*This also allows for individual answers – there is no one correct answer. RE is about big stories so avoid simple comprehension questions that allow for no thinking and only recall.*

**I wonder...**

4. Especially with younger classes use 'I wonder' questions so as pupils know these are questions that teachers wonder about too.....that they can answer as they think at that time.

*I wonder why the shepherd decided to go and look for the lost sheep? I wonder why Jesus told this story?*

5. If the story involves things that are not easy to understand e.g. miracles then don't feel you need to have easy explanations. Allow for wonder or disbelief- if children work with their own understandings, then they own their learning and can adapt or change their thinking rather than being left with the teacher's understanding.

*Don't be slow to say that you don't know how it happened but suggest that it must have had an impact on the people who were there, or it wouldn't have been reported and in the Bible today.*

6. If you've used a video or fictionalised story, encourage children to critique the story: is it the same as what is written in the Bible?

*What did the creator of the resource include/ leave out? How might you have told the story differently?*

7. As in other curricular areas use different types of questions e.g. recount questions, predict questions, questions about the feelings of the characters, imagining you were there etc.

*What do you think happened after our part of the story ended?*

8. Encourage children to also ask questions 'to' or 'about' the story. Remember these are ancient stories and people have asked questions about them for thousands of years.

*What questions do you have about the story? If you could ask one of the characters a question what would it be?*

9. Chat about why this story is important to Christians (New Testament story) or to Jewish people and Christians (Hebrew Scriptures/ Old Testament).

*What does the story teach us about what Christians believe about God/ about Jesus? You might find art relating to the story from centuries ago or more modern art. You can search [www.gloine.ie](http://www.gloine.ie) for stained glass windows of many Bible stories.*

10. Help children with the contextual information – much of this is in the Follow Me books or as notes on the slides. You may need to chat about 'when' the story took place, 'where' the story took place and other social elements such as houses/ food.

*Discussing this kind of material ensures children know the stories happened in a particular time and place and helps with understanding. The children are interpreting the stories and then thinking about what we learn from them today.*



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