

Scripture Storytelling Ideas: Sense Stories

An effective and engaging storytelling technique to introduce a new story is to tell it from a sensory perspective. Not only does this technique engage students' senses, it also affords their insights into the context of biblical times. As each prop is brought out, it is important to provide key background to its place in biblical times.

Five simple steps to a successful sense story:

1. Decide on a scripture passage that would lend itself to being told from a sense perspective, such as Jesus' visit to Mary and Martha, Luke 10:38-42. Adapt the passage so that it can be told from a sensory perspective. When students have heard the story from this perspective and understand the setting, it can then be retold in its original format. (See an example of adapted story below: 'Jesus visits Mary and Martha'.)
2. Decide on a relevant prop that might be used for each of the senses: smell, sight, sound, taste, and touch. Collect these and place them in a suitably sized box. Ensure you have the necessary background/contextual details for each prop appropriate to students' ages and circumstances. (See example of props and relevant prompts that might be used for 'Jesus visits Mary and Martha' on the following page.)
3. Give careful consideration to the prompts you intend to use to create anticipation of the story. As you draw each prop from your box, your prompts are to raise students' imagination, interest and anticipation.
4. Before telling your story, introduce each sensory prop separately, passing it around the group as you ask the relevant prompts. As each prop is discussed and shared place it carefully and deliberately into the centre of the circle.
5. Begin telling your story picking up each prop in turn as you move through the story.

ADAPTED SCRIPT FOR SENSE STORY: JESUS VISITS MARY AND MARTHA



Indicates appropriate time during storytelling to pick up and focus attention on the relevant prop. Pick it up deliberately and slowly. Pause before moving to next part of the story.

- Jesus and his friends entered a village. Martha welcomed him into her home. *Pause.*
- [Pick spice bags.] Delicious aromas were coming from the pot wafting through Martha's home. *Place bags back in circle centre. Pause.*
- Martha's sister, Mary sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. [Pick up tile.] Over near the oven, Martha was being distracted by her many tasks. *Place tile back in circle centre. Pause.*
- [Hit the two saucepan lids.] She was very busy with her pots and pans. *Place lids back in circle centre. Pause.*
- [Pick up the images.] She was busy cooking. *Place images back in circle centre. Pause.*
- [Pick up the bread and hommus.] She wanted to make a delicious meal for Jesus. *Place the bread and hommus back in circle centre. Pause.*
- Eventually Martha went over to Jesus and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

Jesus Visits Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42)

<p>SENSE PROPS Have these items inside your story box and bring out one at a time.</p>	<p>PROMPTS Today I am going to tell you a story and I wonder if you can tell me where it might take place. I am going to take from my story box some items which will give you clues to where this story might be set. (When all are displayed begin telling the story.)</p>
<p>SMELL Have some aromatic spice such as ground cardamom or coriander seeds tied into two small tied bundles of cloth. Spices are at the heart of Mediterranean cooking and as women cooked in their simple rustic ovens spicy aromas would waft throughout the home.</p>	<p>SPICE Pass one bag around in one direction and the second one in the other. Ask students to smell it carefully and then to pass it on. As bags are being passed around ask following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think this might be? • Have you smelt this aroma before? • How would you describe the aroma: sweet, strong, gentle...? • Where would you smell this aroma? How would it be used? • I wonder what this tells us about our story.
<p>TOUCH Have two small samples of granite or similar texture tiles. The simple ovens during Jesus' time were made from mud bricks and would have been rough to touch.</p>	<p>GRANITE TILE SAMPLES Pass each in different directions around circle asking students to touch the piece and feel its texture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it feel like? Smooth, rough, dry, hard, soft? • Where might you find something like this? What purpose would it have? • What would you do with it? • I wonder what this tells us about our story.
<p>SOUND Have two pot lids in the box but do not reveal them. Hit them together.</p>	<p>SOUND Ask students to listen carefully to what they are about to hear. Bang the two pot lids together without being seen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could make this sound? • Where and when would you hear such sounds? • I wonder what this tells us about the story. Now reveal the lids.
<p>SIGHT Have images of a simple cooking area in a village home typical of Jesus' time.</p>	<p>SIGHT As you take the image out of your box suggest to students that this last clue will probably make it very obvious where this story is set. If they have already guessed the setting then before you take it out ask them what this clue might be then. Take it out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you see happening here? • Would you see someone cooking like this in your home? • I wonder what this tells us about the story.
<p>TASTE Two plates with pieces of flat pita bread and small dish of hommus on each. Flat bread baked by the women was part of each meal. A paste of ground chick peas often accompanied the bread.</p>	<p>BREAD & HOMMUS Pass plates of pita bread and hommus around in two directions. Ask students to take one piece of the bread and carefully dip it into the hommus and eat it slowly. Encourage them to feel it on their tongue; to think about its texture and taste.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it smooth, crunchy, dry, moist? • Is it sweet, bitter, sour, bland? • What it is used for? What is it? • I wonder what this tells us about the story.