



Encounter God's Word in a fresh, interactive way: oral Bible storytelling. This captivating method helps you connect with and internalize God's Word in a unique, powerful way. In just three steps—Listen, Learn, Reflect—you can engage your heart and mind with Scripture as an oral learner. And, as a bonus, you can learn to tell oral Bible stories to others.

### **Step One: Listen to the story**

Visit [The Promise](#) and decide which story you want to experience. Each story is about 2-3 minutes long. If it's your first time experiencing oral Bible storytelling, we recommend beginning with a story from the life of Jesus, like Authority or Astonishment.

After you have selected your story, listen to it once. Visualize the story, like it's a movie playing out in your mind. Then, listen to the same story a second time. During the second listen, notice the different scenes in the story. Make a mental picture for each scene of the story.

*Important: Do not write any notes or read the original passage when you listen to the story. This will help you engage as an oral learner!*

### **Step Two: Learn the story**

Now that you've listened to your story twice, it's time to start learning! This may be challenging, and that's OK! You're trying something new! Your goal isn't to memorize the story, but simply to be able to retell the story, with the necessary details, in a natural and theologically accurate way.

*Important: Just like when you listened to the story, it's important not to write down notes or read the passage when you're learning the story.*

1. Try to retell the story aloud, sentence by sentence, checking yourself every couple of sentences with the original recording. Replay the mental picture scenes you came up with earlier.
2. Next, listen to the story using a learning technique. Pick one of the following:
  - **Storyboard:** Divide a piece of paper into a grid. As you listen, pause after the first scene. Draw the first scene in the first grid. Listen to the second scene, pause and draw that scene in the second grid. Continue drawing the story until you have each scene on your storyboard. Tell your story out loud with the storyboard a few times.

- Props: Listen to the story, pausing in between scenes, and use ordinary objects (paperclips, sticky notes, cups) in the room to reenact the story. Tell your story out loud with the props a few times.
  - Hand motions: Listen to the story, pausing after every sentence or two. For each sentence, create a hand motion to represent the main thought of that sentence. Listen to the story a few more times with your hand motions, then tell the story out loud a few times with the hand motions.
3. Tell your story without the learning method. Listen back to the original recording to check yourself. Were there any scenes or details you forgot? Focus on those and practice them.
  4. Tell the story in front of a mirror to help cement the story in your brain.
  5. Tell the story to a person, whether in person or digitally.
  6. Keep practicing your story, repeating any helpful steps, until you feel confident!

### **Step three: Reflect on the story**

Now that you've learned the story, it's time to engage with it at a heart-level. We use the same basic questions to help you reflect for every oral Bible story. Take enough time to thoughtfully answer each question before moving on to the next question. You will likely have several answers for each question as you reflect.

*Important: As you reflect on the story, stay in the story itself. The story may have reminded you of another passage of Scripture or a book, but staying in the story will help you better internalize and know the story itself.*

1. What did you like in the story?
2. What didn't you like in the story or what in the story was confusing?
3. What did you notice about God in the story?
4. What did you notice about people in the story?
5. Ask yourself an application question. Some favorites are "What do you learn about yourself/your heart in this story?" "What can you apply from this story to your life?" "Who do you most identify with in the story and why?"
6. Who will you share this story with?

Congratulations! You've just completed an oral Bible storytelling experience! You can use the same steps for each of our 40 stories in *The Promise*, a panorama series of Bible stories from Creation to the Return of Christ.

## **Bonus: Tell the story**

God's Word isn't just meant to shape only our personal lives—He can use our experiences with His Word in the lives of others! You can easily tell the story you learned to an individual or in a group context, like a small group Bible study.

### **Telling a story in a group**

You can tell a story in a small group setting, whether with believers, not-yet believers or a mixture. You can do this in person or even digitally through live video calling. Story groups work best with four to eight people.

*Important: Just like when you learned the story, reading the passage of Scripture and taking notes are prohibited.*

Follow this simple formula in order for story learning in a group:

1. Tell the story to the group.
2. Tell the story again. Encourage the group to listen closely this time, visualizing the scene.
3. Ask the group to retell the story together. "Who remembers what happened first? Then what happened?" If people forget the order, stop them and say, "Oh, something happened before that. Does anyone remember?" Let them help each other and jump in when they're lost.
4. Tell the story again twice with some kind of learning method. Some ideas are:
  - Everyone acts out the story together.
  - Use objects, like keys and pens, to dramatize the story.
  - Assign each sentence of the story a hand motion.
5. Divide everyone into pairs. In each pair, one person will tell the story from start to finish, while their partner listens and helps. Then they switch roles. This way, everyone practices telling the story.
6. Gather the group back together and have a brave volunteer tell the story to the entire group.

Now it's time to discuss the story. Ask the following questions and give people plenty of time to come up with their answers. There's no need to rush to the next question. Also, stay in the story itself. If anyone has a question about the story, ask, "What does the story say?" The story is the teacher, not the storyteller. Sometimes the story doesn't answer someone's question, and that's OK.

1. What did you like in the story?
2. What did you not like or find confusing in the story?
3. What did you learn or notice about people in the story?
4. What did you learn or notice about God/Jesus/God's Spirit in the story?

5. Ask an application question. Pick the one that's best for your group. Some ideas for good questions are: "What do you learn about yourself/your heart in this story?" "What can you apply from this story to your life?" "Who do you most identify with in the story and why?"
6. Who will you tell this story to?

And, that's all you need to lead a small group with a story!

### **Telling a story to an individual**

Telling a story to an individual from God's Word is an easy way to naturally have a spiritual conversation; and, everyone loves a good story! You can tell a story in person, over the phone or in a video call.

#### **Step one: Transition to the story.**

How you introduce your story will depend on the context. Here are some easy, natural ways to bring up a story:

##### **To introduce a story that is not related to the conversation, say something like:**

"I just learned a story from the Bible. Can I tell it to you? I'd love to get your thoughts on it!"

##### **To introduce a story that is related to the conversation, say something like:**

"That reminds me of a story from the Bible about \_\_\_\_\_. Can I tell you that story? I'd love to hear what you think about it."

#### **Step two: Tell them the story! Be your natural, expressive self.**

#### **Step three: Ask some general questions.**

Ask one or more (depending on how receptive they are) of the following:

"Have you ever heard that story before?"

"What did you like in the story?"

“What did you not like in the story? Was there anything in the story you thought was confusing or hard to understand?”

“What do you notice about people in the story?”

“What do you notice about God in the story?”

“What do you think this story shows about yourself?”

**Step four: Ask some more specific questions related to the story itself.** Brainstorm these in advance. Here are some examples of questions you could ask:

Authority: “What kind of needs would you want Jesus to address in your life?” “How would you want Jesus to heal you?”

Astonishment: “What storms are you facing in your life right now?” “What storms in your life would you like Jesus to calm?”

**Step five:** Keep exploring and ask permission to share more.

- If your listener is engaged, ask good follow up questions to what they share.
- Ask permission to share how this story is related to your own story/testimony. For example, with the story Astonishment, you could ask, “Can I tell you how God has calmed storms in my life?”
- Ask permission to share the gospel. For example, with Astonishment, you could say something like, “Actually, God didn’t create us to experience storms. But, he wants to offer us hope in the midst of the storms we experience. Could I tell you some more about that?”

**Step six:** If you get to a point where you can share the gospel but you don’t know how, we recommend using the Knowing God Personally booklet within the God Tools app. You can literally just read each point together, and you will successfully share the gospel!