

Seven Weird Bible Stories

Based on article from: <https://www.crosswalk.com/slideshows/top-10-weird-bible-stories.html?p=1>

1. ELISHA AND THE TWO BEARS

2 KINGS 2:23-25

What Happened: Elisha the prophet was traveling, going about his message-from-God business, when a gang of teenagers surrounded him and started harassing him, yelling insults and calling him “baldy.” Proving that the Lord doesn’t take mockery lightly, he answered Elisha’s prayer for justice with two angry bears who attacked the group and mauled over 40 of the young men. Hopefully, the other ones learned their lesson.

Less Weird When You Remember: If people don’t respect the prophet, they won’t respect the message he brings... and that’s a serious, life-or-death matter.

2. BALAAM’S DONKEY

NUMBERS 2-3

What Happened: The Israelites were marching into the Promised Land, conquering cities and winning battles, and the Moabite king got nervous. So he summoned a guy named Balaam to come and put a curse on the Israelites. Baalam started to leave for his curse-making assignment, but his donkey started acting really strangely, first running away, then smashing his leg against the canyon, and finally talking. He told Baalam, basically, “Quit beating me up! I’m just trying to keep you from being cut to pieces by the angel with the giant sword blocking our path.” Then the angel revealed himself, informed Baalam that the cursing would not work, and let him pass. (Spoiler alert: When he finally gets to his destination, Baalam is only able to bless Israel and prophesy good things about them, to no one’s surprise.)

Less Weird When You Remember: God was good at getting people’s attention in ways that made sense to their culture. Prophecies, plagues, stars, burning bushes, fingers writing words on a wall, talking animals—he can use anything to convey his message.

3. ELISHA & THE SUNKEN AXE

2 KINGS 6:1-7

What Happened: Elisha and his band of friends were chopping down trees to build a house, when one of the axes broke and sank in the nearby Jordan River. One of the men shouted the ancient equivalent of, “Oh no! That’s wasn’t even mine—I borrowed it.” So Elisha just whipped out a stick, set it on the surface of the water, and the axe head miraculously floated to the top.

Less Weird When You Remember: God even cares about the little things in our lives and can use them to show His power.

4. Jael & Sisera

JUDGES 4:14-23

What Happened: Deborah the prophetess and the Israelite army drove Sisera, the Canaanite general, to a frantic retreat. He took refuge with a desert-dwelling tribe that was an ally of his nation. Unfortunately for him, he chose Jael’s tent, and she was a double agent. She fed Sisera, promised to stand guard, and told him to go to sleep... and then she drove a tent peg through his head. Ouch.

Less Weird When You Remember: God has a history of using people who society sees as weak and unimportant—in this case, a foreign woman—to do mighty things. (Also, Deborah had prophesied earlier in the chapter that a woman would get the glory for Sisera’s defeat.)

5. ABSALOM & THE BAD HAIR DAY

2 SAMUEL 18:6-33

What Happened: King David's pretty boy son staged a coup and drove his father out of Jerusalem. I say "pretty boy" because he had lovely locks of hair that he actually weighed when he got a yearly haircut ([2 Samuel 14:26](#)). Later, when David had gathered his loyal supporters to take the kingdom back, Absalom fled the battle on his horse... until his long hair got tangled in a tree and left him hanging there until he was captured and killed. Should've gotten a trim before the battle, clearly.

Less Weird When You Remember: The little detail about Absalom's long locks was mentioned four chapters before the story of his death. The Bible doesn't typically mention a person's physical appearance unless it has something to do with the story, kind of like foreshadowing. (But does that make the method of Absalom's death less weird? Not really.)

6. DON'T FALL ASLEEP IN CHURCH

ACTS 20:7-13

What Happened: Paul was preaching in Troas, and a teenager name Eutychus decided it would be a great idea to sit on the sill of an open third-story window. Once the sermon ran long, Eutychus fell asleep... and fell out of the window, breaking his neck. Before his family could even start planning the funeral, Paul raised him to life again. Is it a cautionary tale about staying awake in church? You decide.

Less Weird When You Remember: Teen boys in the first century apparently had just as little common sense as modern teens—and attention spans of similar length too. But the real key to this story is found not in Eutychus, but in Paul. He abandoned his dignity – and his lengthy sermon – and rejoiced when Eutychus was brought back to life. It is a lesson for any "mature saint," to be filled with compassion and love for young believers – even when they aren't being smart.

7. EHUD & EGLON

JUDGES 3:12-30

What Happened: Ehud, a left-handed judge smuggled a weapon into an evil king's palace because they only frisked his left side, where most men would draw their sword. (Also, the king was really fat. That's important later.) He convinced the king he had an important private message, and when the king dismissed the court, Ehud stabbed him, pushing the sword in so deep that his guts fell out and the sword actually disappeared inside his belly, swallowed up by fat. And it gets better. No one wanted to go back inside because they were too worried that the king was using the privacy to the bathroom. When they finally checked in, they found their dead king and sounded the alarm, but Ehud had already made his escape.

Less Weird When You Remember: This one is pretty much just weird from any angle, but there is a special lesson tucked inside this story. Ehud was left-handed. Nowadays it means little, but in those days it was a knock against you. God used someone who was left-handed (and from the tiny tribe of Benjamin) to deliver Israel, and God still specializes in using those who society sees as "less-than."

Elisha & the Two Bears

Scripture

2 Kings 2:23-25 New Living Translation (NLT)

²³ Elisha left Jericho and went up to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, a group of boys from the town began mocking and making fun of him. "Go away, baldy!" they chanted. "Go away, baldy!" ²⁴ Elisha turned around and looked at them, and he cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of them. ²⁵ From there Elisha went to Mount Carmel and finally returned to Samaria.

Summary

What Happened: Elisha the prophet was traveling, going about his message-from-God business, when a gang of teenagers surrounded him and started harassing him, yelling insults and calling him "baldy." Proving that the Lord doesn't take mockery lightly, he answered Elisha's prayer for justice with two angry bears who attacked the group and mauled over 40 of the young men. Hopefully, the other ones learned their lesson.

Less Weird When You Remember: If people don't respect the prophet, they won't respect the message he brings... and that's a serious, life-or-death matter.

Activities

DISCUSSION:

Begin by asking students to summarize the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. If you have time, you can divide into small groups and give students a piece of paper to create an 8-box comic of the story.

STORY:

Act out the story without telling students what will happen. If you have some rowdy boys, let them be part of the gang of boys that makes fun of Elisha – perhaps seeing what happens to those who don't listen to God's messengers will remind them to behave. 😊

Ask students why this story would be included in the Bible. Remind them that EVERY WORD written in our Bibles is there for a reason, so God intended for us to get something out of this tale.

CRAFT:

Make pipe cleaner mini bears to take home:

<https://www.localfunforkids.com/crafts/2010/12/21/how-to-make-a-teddy-bear-out-of-a-pipe-cleaner.html>

VIDEO:

Show kids a video on bears: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54CDgurNMSI>

Balaam's Donkey

Scripture

Numbers 2-3

Summary

What Happened: The Israelites were marching into the Promised Land, conquering cities and winning battles, and the Moabite king got nervous. So he summoned a guy named Balaam to come and put a curse on the Israelites. Baalam started to leave for his curse-making assignment, but his donkey started acting really strangely, first running away, then smashing his leg against the canyon, and finally talking. He told Baalam, basically, "Quit beating me up! I'm just trying to keep you from being cut to pieces by the angel with the giant sword blocking our path." Then the angel revealed himself, informed Baalam that the cursing would not work, and let him pass. (Spoiler alert: When he finally gets to his destination, Baalam is only able to bless Israel and prophesy good things about them, to no one's surprise.)

Less Weird When You Remember: God was good at getting people's attention in ways that made sense to their culture. Prophecies, plagues, stars, burning bushes, fingers writing words on a wall, talking animals—he can use anything to convey his message.

Activities

GAME:

Students must say whatever the teacher whispers in their ear aloud. (For example, "My favourite bedtime snack is tuna fish on yogurt.")

DISCUSSION:

Show students pictures of different people and animals (about 10). Ask students to split the pictures into two categories: beings that can talk, and beings that can't. You can also write different people, animals and things on sticky notes and have students place them on the wall in two categories. Be sure to include a donkey as the last option.

Ask students to think of strange ways in the Bible that God sent a message to someone. For example:

- Angels (not really odd as much as it would be alarming for the hearer)

- Prophecies & prophets
- Plagues
- Burning Bush
- Fingers writing words on the wall
- Whales swallowing you whole

VIDEO STORY:

Show kids this video of the story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECXdURZ74gc> (or listen to the audio only as it has a watermark)

This one is more of a cartoon:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=37&v=qRtpm75-TAk

Ask students why God would include this weird story in the Bible. What do we learn. Make a list. For example:

- We need to be spiritually aware so that we can see spiritual things
- We shouldn't be mean to animals
- We should never try to curse God's people
- God can use anything to get a message across
- We don't always see angels, but they exist just the same

GAME:

Play a game of pin the tail on the donkey. Use a drawing on a whiteboard if you aren't able to put up a poster.

CRAFT:

Make a zebra finger puppet (<https://iheartcraftythings.com/finger-puppet-zebra-craft.html>) or face mask on a craft stick.

Elisha & The Sunken Axe

Scripture

2 Kings 6:1-7

¹⁻² One day the guild of prophets came to Elisha and said, "You can see that this place where we're living under your leadership is getting cramped—we have no elbow room. Give us permission to go down to the Jordan where each of us will get a log. We'll build a roomier place."

Elisha said, "Go ahead."

³ One of them then said, "Please! Come along with us!"

He said, "Certainly."

⁴⁻⁵ He went with them. They came to the Jordan and started chopping down trees. As one of them was felling a timber, his axhead flew off and sank in the river.

"Oh no, master!" he cried out. "And it was borrowed!"

⁶ The Holy Man said, "Where did it sink?"

The man showed him the place.

He cut off a branch and tossed it at the spot. The axhead floated up.

⁷ "Grab it," he said. The man reached out and took it.

Summary

What Happened: Elisha and his band of friends were chopping down trees to build a house, when one of the axes broke and sank in the nearby Jordan River. One of the men shouted the ancient equivalent of, "Oh no! That's wasn't even mine—I borrowed it." So Elisha just whipped out a stick, set it on the surface of the water, and the axe head miraculously floated to the top.

Less Weird When You Remember: God even cares about the little things in our lives and can use them to show His power.

Activities

GAME:

Play a game of sink or float. Fill a large clear plastic tub with water and set out a variety of items. As students take their turn, they may pick an item, and predict whether they think it will sink or float. Some are surprising! Items to try: apple, glue stick, tube of toothpaste, screwdriver, spoon, pipe cleaner, dry kidney bean, piece of fabric, house key, hair pin....

To make this activity more competitive, record each student's prediction in a table. The one who guesses right most often is the winner. You can award second and third place as well.

	ADAM	OLIVIA	ELIZABETH	AARON	ISAAC
APPLE	F	S	S	F	S
HOUSE KEY	S	S	F	S	S
HAIR PIN	F	F	S	F	S

Obviously our story has something to do with water today. Can you think of stories in the Bible that involved water? Split into two teams and make a list of all the stories you can think of.

Water is an important element in the Bible. Humans cannot control water (God does), which is why it was so significant when Jesus stilled the waves, calmed the storms, and walked on the water – it showed His power. Water is also significant because humans need it to live. That is one reason the Holy Ghost is compared to water in the Bible (out of your belly shall flow *rivers of living water*...) – we NEED IT to live!

OBJECT DISCUSSION & STORY:

If you have access to an axe, show kids what it looks like. If not, bring a hammer. Demonstrate how it will not float. Tell the story as written above (Message paraphrase).

DISCUSSION:

Ask students why God would include a story like this in the Bible. Perhaps this one will stump them. God performed this miracle through Elisha to show these men (and us) that He cares about the things that concern us. Ask students to think of a time when they've borrowed something expensive, valuable or important from a friend or family member. A game system, a pair of shoes, money. When they get older many of them will borrow the car, an expensive tool from dad's garage, etc. Some will borrow mom's fine china for a special meal, or a family heirloom to use on their wedding day. Some of these things CANNOT be replaced, and others cost quite a bit of money.

The axe head that this man bought was not easy to replace. There was no "Canadian Tire" in ancient Israel, and the metal in the axe head was expensive. The time it took to make cost the man something. So he was rightfully quite concerned when it was lost. It was kind of like borrowing someone's car!

PRAYER:

Do students have things that concern them? Ask students what they worry about.

Do they have “minor” things that if taken care of would still be a miracle to them? Give some examples and testimonies from your own life. The Bible says that we should cast all our cares upon God, because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Ask students to privately write down something they are concerned about. They can fold it over so no one can see, but if they still feel it is too private, have them write “Private Concern.”

Ask students about another area of life where they “cast” something...fishing! Just like we throw our line out of the boat to try and catch fish, that is the kind of motion we need to think about when we “cast our cares” on God. Of course, we don’t “reel them back in” and keep casting them. With God, we can cast our cares...and leave them there!

Ask students to pray with you over the needs, and then cast their cares into the tub of water. Pray that students will leave their cares on God when they leave the room today. To “cast our cares” doesn’t mean we never think about them again. But it does mean that we don’t WORRY about them.

WORRY is the devil’s faith! When students feel themselves start to worry, they should immediately say a prayer instead, and replace their worry with faith.

MEMORY VERSE GAME:

If you have time remaining, play a memory verse game to learn 1 Peter 5:7: “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” Using masking tape, write each of the words and the reference of a lego block (do this twice), and have teams race to stack them in the correct order.

Jael & Sisera

Scripture

Judges 4:14-23

14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

15 And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.

16 But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left.

17 Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle.

19 And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.

20 Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.

21 Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

22 And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.

23 So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel.

Summary

What Happened: Deborah the prophetess and the Israelite army drove Sisera, the Canaanite general, to a frantic retreat. He took refuge with a desert-dwelling tribe that was an ally of his nation. Unfortunately for him, he chose Jael's tent, and she was a double agent. She fed Sisera, promised to stand guard, and told him to go to sleep... and then she drove a tent peg through his head. Ouch.

Less Weird When You Remember: God has a history of using people who society sees as weak and unimportant—in this case, a foreign woman—to do mighty things. (Also, Deborah had prophesied earlier in the chapter that a woman would get the glory for Sisera's defeat.)

Activities

DISCUSSION:

Tell kids about some real but amusing laws, like these ones:

1. It's illegal to hunt camels in the state of Arizona.
 - a. Considering there are NO wild camels in the state of Arizona, this law would be pretty hard to break.
2. Only babies can ride in baby carriages in the state of West Virginia.
 - a. Sorry to ruin your fun, but you're gonna have to find some other way to get around this part of the country.
3. People are prohibited from riding a public streetcar within four hours of eating garlic in Gary, Indiana.
 - a. Well, this is just common courtesy. Funky breath would ruin anyone's night out.
4. It's illegal to shoot a rabbit from a moving trolley car.
 - a. Please get off the trolley or wait for it to come to a complete stop, then fire away.
5. Virginia state's Code of 1930 includes a statute prohibiting corrupt practices or bribery by anyone other than political candidates.
 - a. Apparently politicians in all part of the country have picked up on this, too.
6. You can't take a French poodle to the opera in Chicago, Illinois.
 - a. We heard poodles prefer rock concerts, anyway.
7. Birds have the right of way on all highways in Utah.
 - a. If you're not sure who got to the intersection first, let the bird go before you.
8. In Pennsylvania it's against the law to sleep in your refrigerator.
 - a. If you're still doing this on the low, it may be time to buy a fan.
9. In Milan, Italy, it is illegal for citizens to frown in public—unless they're at a funeral or visiting someone in the hospital.
10. It's illegal to chew gum in Singapore. In fact, no gum is bought or sold here. The law is said to be in place to keep public spaces clean.
11. In Mexico, it is illegal for bicyclists to lift their feet off the pedals while riding as this might cause them to lose control of the bike.
12. In Switzerland, it's against the law to flush a toilet after 10 p.m. in an apartment building.
13. Why did the chicken cross the road? Who knows? But it better think twice about doing that in Georgia. There, it's illegal for a chicken to cross the road!
14. In other chicken news, there is a law in New Zealand that states you cannot fly with a rooster in a hot air balloon.
15. In Baltimore, Maryland, it's illegal to bring a lion to the movies. And we're not lyin'!
16. It's illegal to drive a dirty car in Russia.
17. According to a law in Scotland, you must allow someone into your house if he knocks on your door and needs to use the bathroom.
18. In Oshawa, Ontario, it is against the law to climb a tree.

STORY:

Have kids discuss what laws are for. Who enforces them? Talk briefly about our legal system. Then discuss the legal system of Deborah's day. She was a judge, and one of her jobs was to ensure that the people of Israel followed God's laws. Did they? No! To punish them, God would send neighbouring ungodly nations to conquer them. Canaan was one of these nations. Their king was named Jabin and their army general was Sisera.

Read kids a storybook version of this story (often listed as Deborah & Barak instead of Jael & Sisera, as that is only one part of the story).

VIDEO REVIEW:

Watch a video to review.

GAME:

Play a human version of Battleship. Create two 4X4 grids with tape or foam squares and label them A1-4, B1-4, C1-4, D1-4. Hang a sheet between them. Let children choose their spot. Now, each team will take turns calling out a numbered square. If someone is standing there, it's a HIT. If no one is standing there, it's a MISS. First team to eliminate all of the enemy "ships" wins.

Absalom & the Bad Hair Day

Scripture

2 Samuel 18:6-33

Summary

What Happened: King David's pretty boy son staged a coup and drove his father out of Jerusalem. I say "pretty boy" because he had lovely locks of hair that he actually weighed when he got a yearly haircut ([2 Samuel 14:26](#)). Later, when David had gathered his loyal supporters to take the kingdom back, Absalom fled the battle on his horse... until his long hair got tangled in a tree and left him hanging there until he was captured and killed. Should've gotten a trim before the battle, clearly.

Less Weird When You Remember: The little detail about Absalom's long locks was mentioned four chapters before the story of his death. The Bible doesn't typically mention a person's physical appearance unless it has something to do with the story, kind of like foreshadowing. (But does that make the method of Absalom's death less weird? Not really.)

Activities

OBJECT DISCUSSION:

Bring a scale and let kids test out their weights as they would like to. Ask them to guess how much hair would weigh if they got it cut just once per year. Tell them there was a man in the Bible who weighed his hair annually when he got it cut, and it was 2.2 kg! That's about 5 lbs (4.85)! The average person only produces about 0.076 kg of hair per year, or 0.2 pounds. So this guy – Absalom – had a lot of hair. Let me tell you some other things about him....

STORY & DISCUSSION:

Set up the story by explaining how Absalom killed his brothers, and also tried to take his father's throne. Ask them what they think of Absalom. Would you want him to be your king? Do a relay race to represent David's army and Absalom's army, the "race to the throne." Who do kids think wins in the actual story?

Tell the story of Absalom's revolt:

King David ruled the great country of Israel from his palace in the city of

Jerusalem. David was a good king. But his wicked son, Absalom, wanted to

steal David's throne. "If I were king," Absalom thought, "people would bow down to me. They would give me expensive gifts. And, best of all, I would be the boss!"

Every morning, Absalom went to the city gate to meet people who had complaints for the king. Absalom listened to the people's problems and then said, "The king won't listen to you. But if I were the king, I would listen!"

Absalom wanted the people to like him more than they liked King David.

Absalom gave the people of Jerusalem so much attention that some people started wanting him to be their king! Soon, King David became afraid of Absalom's followers—there were so many of them. King David knew that his son had enough soldiers to take over the city. So David gathered his followers and fled from the city to the desert. There, David went up on a mountain and cried about all the bad things his son had done.

Before long, Absalom gathered a huge army and marched out to fight David and his men. It was a terrible battle—thousands and thousands of men died. But King David's army won! In the midst of the battle, Absalom was killed. When David learned that his son had died, he cried again. Despite all the bad things Absalom had done, David still loved him. "Oh, my son Absalom," he wept. Because Absalom didn't honor his father, thousands of people died.

Ask kids why David won. He had God on his side. But why did he also "lose?" Because he lost his son.

Ask kids why this story is in the Bible. Then teach kids about the acronym JOY (Jesus Others Yourself). When we are self-absorbed and thinking of ourselves, our own ambitions and our own desires, we are more like Absalom and less like David (and more importantly, Jesus). The bible says Absalom "stole the hearts of the men of Israel." We are given the impression he was good with people, but was rotten on the inside. We are also given the impression he was vain (he weighed his hair...). Remember that Absalom was willing to kill his own father to be king!

Have children share some examples of when they are putting Jesus before themselves. What about “others” before themselves? Discuss how obeying our parents is another way we put others before ourselves – if Absalom had obeyed and honoured his father his life – and everyone else’s – would have been totally different. You affect a lot of people (not just yourself) when you are selfish.

GAME:

Play a game of blob tag called “Absalom’s Friends” instead. Choose three students to be Absalom’s friends, and have them stand in the middle and link arms. As the other children walk by, they may try to tag, but their arms must stay linked. Explain that Absalom gained much of his momentum to take over the kingdom by getting lots of friends, but that he was still rotten on the inside.

Don't Fall Asleep in Church

Scripture

Acts 20:7-13

Summary

What Happened: Paul was preaching in Troas, and a teenager name Eutychus decided it would be a great idea to sit on the sill of an open third-story window. Once the sermon ran long, Eutychus fell asleep... and fell out of the window, breaking his neck. Before his family could even start planning the funeral, Paul raised him to life again. Is it a cautionary tale about staying awake in church? You decide.

Less Weird When You Remember: Teen boys in the first century apparently had just as little common sense as modern teens—and attention spans of similar length too. But the real key to this story is found not in Eutychus, but in Paul. He abandoned his dignity – and his lengthy sermon – and rejoiced when Eutychus was brought back to life. It is a lesson for any “mature saint,” to be filled with compassion and love for young believers – even when they aren’t being smart.

Activities

OBJECT LESSON:

Bring a doll or toy figure in to class and talk about how it would be fun if our toys could come to life (like in Toy Story). Ask kids if it is possible for toys to come to life in *real life*. Can they make their toy come to life? Why not? Who gives life?

STORY:

Read the story of Eutychus from the New Living Translation or the Action Bible (sharing the images).

VIDEO: Show this video as a fun review of the story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyxUzjbml00>

DISCUSSION:

Ask kids about the point of this story. Beyond the obvious “don’t fall asleep in church” (haha) lesson, this is a tough one that kids may not see right away. Ask them to focus on what Paul did in the story.

Now discuss a very important Greek word in this story (remind kids that the NT was written in Greek originally and sometimes we can learn meaningful things if we go back and understand the original language). The text tells us that Paul went down to Eutychus, and bending over him took him in his arms. In Greek, the word *epipesen* means, “he threw himself on him”; the text apparently implies a loss of dignity or station, since dignified people are not apt to hurl themselves at others. *Epipesen* is a rare word in the New Testament, but one of the few places it does appear--the only place, in fact, in this exact grammatical form and nuance of meaning--is in the parable of the prodigal son, at the moment of the reunion between the father and his younger son: “So he [the younger son] set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him” (Luke 15:20). (from: <http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?m=4377&post=1792>)

GAME:

Play a game of “Wink Murder,” perhaps having players “fall asleep” if they are winked at instead. In each round of play, one player is secretly assigned the role of “murderer”, perhaps by handing every player a playing card with a particular card signifying that the recipient is the murderer. The murderer has the ability to “kill” other players by making eye contact and winking at them. If a player is winked at, they must count silently to five before feigning sudden death, and either lying on the floor where they died, or silently leaving the playing area.[2]

If a player suspects they know the identity of the murderer, they may raise their hand and announce “I accuse”, without naming their suspect. At this point, the game pauses and the accuser asks for somebody to second their accusation, again with neither naming a suspect. When they have a seconder, both of these players simultaneously point to their suspect; if they are both pointing to a player who admits to being the murderer, the game ends. Otherwise (if they are pointing to different players, or to an innocent player) the accusers are both eliminated as if they had been murdered. Players are forbidden from communicating their thoughts on who the murderer might be, and players who are not the murderer are not allowed to wink.[2]

The objective of the murderer is to murder as many people as possible without being caught.[2]

CRAFT:

Finish the day with a coloring page.

Ehud & Eglon

Scripture

Judges 3:12-30

Summary

What Happened: Ehud, a left-handed judge smuggled a weapon into an evil king's palace because they only frisked his left side, where most men would draw their sword. (Also, the king was really fat. That's important later.) He convinced the king he had an important private message, and when the king dismissed the court, Ehud stabbed him, pushing the sword in so deep that his guts fell out and the sword actually disappeared inside his belly, swallowed up by fat. And it gets better. No one wanted to go back inside because they were too worried that the king was using the privacy to the bathroom. When they finally checked in, they found their dead king and sounded the alarm, but Ehud had already made his escape.

Less Weird When You Remember: This one is pretty much just weird from any angle, but there is a special lesson tucked inside this story. Ehud was left-handed. Nowadays it means little, but in those days it was a knock against you. God used someone who was left-handed (and from the tiny tribe of Benjamin) to deliver Israel, and God still specializes in using those who society sees as "less-than."

Activities

GAME: Jousting:

Pair students and have them face each other and stand close enough that they can reach out and touch the other person (arm's length). Now each student will hold one arm out and lock the elbow straight (no punches!), then stand on one foot. The first person to force their opponent off-balance and put their foot down is the winner of that round.

STORY:

Use pillows and other props to act out the story of Ehud & Eglon with your students. Read from the NLT, and tell students to pay special attention to details – there will be a review game at the end.

REVIEW:

Using images from "The Brick Bible"

(http://www.thebricktestament.com/judges/10000_moabites_killed/jg03_12.html), print out a set of the images for two teams (there are 20 per set). Divide into two teams (it would be helpful to have a teacher or helper on each team). You can also do this all together, but two groups will allow students to interact more with the images. Read the text associated with each image (listed below) and go through the story, putting the images in order.

1. Judges 3:12: Again the Israelites did evil in Yahweh's sight.
2. Judges 3:12,17: And Yahweh gave King Eglon of Moab power over Israel. King Eglon was a very fat man.
3. Judges 3:14: The Israelites were enslaved to King Eglon of Moab for eighteen years.
4. Judges 3:15: Then the Israelites cried out to Yahweh.
5. Judges 3:15: And Yahweh raised up a deliverer to rescue them: Ehud of the tribe of Benjamin. He was left-handed.
6. Judges 3:15: The Israelites sent him to King Eglon of Moab to pay their tribute payment.
7. Judges 3:16: Ehud made himself a double-edged dagger about a foot long.
8. Judges 3:16-17: He strapped the dagger under his cloak on his right thigh and brought the tribute payment to King Eglon of Moab.
9. Judges 3:18-19: After presenting the tribute, Ehud said to King Eglon, 'I have a secret message for you, O king.'
10. Judges 3:19: 'Quiet!' commanded the king, and all his attendants withdrew.
11. Judges 3:20: Ehud approached him while the king sat alone in the cool of his upstairs room, and said, 'I have a message for you from God.'
12. Judges 3:20-21: As King Eglon rose from his seat, Ehud drew his dagger with his left hand and thrust it into Eglon's belly.
13. Judges 3:22: The handle went in after the blade, and the fat closed over it. Ehud did not pull the dagger out of his belly.
14. Judges 3:23: Ehud escaped through the latrine, having locked the doors of the upstairs room behind him.
15. Judges 3:24: After he had gone, King Eglon's servants came and found the doors to the upstairs room locked. They said, 'He must be relieving himself in the latrine.'
16. Judges 3:25: They waited a long time until they felt embarrassed, and then used a key to open the doors. And there lay their master, lying dead on the floor.
17. Judges 3:26,28: Ehud escaped to safety at Seirah where he said to the Israelites, 'Follow me, for Yahweh will deliver your enemy the Moabites into your hands!'
18. Judges 3:29: They followed him and captured the fords of the Jordan River opposite Moab.
19. Judges 3:29: They killed about 10,000 Moabites that day, all strong, capable fighters. Not one of them escaped.
20. Judges 3:30: And the land had peace for eighty years.

REVIEW GAME: Tic-Tac-Toe:

Divide into two teams. Use the following questions to play a review game with students; when their team gets an answer right, they can place a person in a square on the tic-tac-toe board.

1. Why did God allow the king of Moab to have more power than the Israelites? (v.12)
2. How many years did King Eglon rule over Israel? (vs.14-15)
3. Who was the left-handed man that God sent to save his people? (vs.15)
4. Why did Ehud go to see the King? (vs.15-17)
5. When they were alone, what did Ehud say that upset the king? (vs.20)
6. How did Ehud respond? (vs. 21)
7. While the servants of the King waited for him to come out of the room, what did Ehud do? (vv.26-27)
8. Who told Ehud that they would have victory over their enemies? (vs.28)
9. What happened for the next 80 years? (vs.30)

STORY:

Today we are going to have two stories; this one is not in the Bible, but it may help us to understand a very important Bible lesson.

The Broken Pot

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on an end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the masters house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his masters house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream.

"I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your masters house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts." the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the masters house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again the Pot apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pots side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my masters table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But if we will allow it, the Lord will use our flaws to grace His Father's table. In Gods great economy, nothing goes to waste. Don't be afraid of your flaws.

Acknowledge them, and you too can be the cause of beauty. Know that in our weakness your strength is made perfect.
(2 Corinthians 12:9)

Take

Home

Pages

(one page for each week; split in half to send one half-sheet with each student)

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

What Happened: Elisha the prophet was traveling, going about his message-from-God business, when a gang of teenagers surrounded him and started harassing him, yelling insults and calling him “baldy.” Proving that the Lord doesn’t take mockery lightly, he answered Elisha’s prayer for justice with two angry bears who attacked the group and mauled over 40 of the young men. Hopefully, the other ones learned their lesson.

Less Weird When You Remember: If people don’t respect the prophet, they won’t respect the message he brings... and that’s a serious, life-or-death matter.

Read It Here: 2 Kings 2:23-25

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What Happened: The Israelites were marching into the Promised Land, conquering cities and winning battles, and the Moabite king got nervous. So he summoned a guy named Balaam to come and put a curse on the Israelites. Baalam started to leave for his curse-making assignment, but his donkey started acting really strangely, first running away, then smashing his leg against the canyon, and finally talking. He told Baalam, basically, “Quit beating me up! I’m just trying to keep you from being cut to pieces by the angel with the giant sword blocking our path.” Then the angel revealed himself, informed Baalam that the cursing would not work, and let him pass. (Spoiler alert: When he finally gets to his destination, Baalam is only able to bless Israel and prophesy good things about them, to no one’s surprise.)

Less Weird When You Remember: God was good at getting people’s attention in ways that made sense to their culture. Prophecies, plagues, stars, burning bushes, fingers writing words on a wall, talking animals—he can use anything to convey his message.

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What Happened: Elisha and his band of friends were chopping down trees to build a house, when one of the axes broke and sank in the nearby Jordan River. One of the men shouted the ancient equivalent of, “Oh no! That’s wasn’t even mine—I borrowed it.” So Elisha just whipped out a stick, set it on the surface of the water, and the axe head miraculously floated to the top.

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Less Weird When You Remember: God has a history of using people who society sees as weak and unimportant—in this case, a foreign woman—to do mighty things. (Also, Deborah had prophesied earlier in the chapter that a woman would get the glory for Sisera's defeat.)

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What Happened: King David's pretty boy son staged a coup and drove his father out of Jerusalem. I say "pretty boy" because he had lovely locks of hair that he actually weighed when he got a yearly haircut ([2 Samuel 14:26](#)). Later, when David had gathered his loyal supporters to take the kingdom back, Absalom fled the battle on his horse... until his long hair got tangled in a tree and left him hanging there until he was captured and killed. Should've gotten a trim before the battle, clearly.

Less Weird When You Remember: The little detail about Absalom's long locks was mentioned four chapters before the story of his death. The Bible doesn't typically mention a person's physical appearance unless it has something to do with the story, kind of like foreshadowing. (But does that make the method of Absalom's death less weird? Not really.)

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Less Weird When You Remember: Teen boys in the first century apparently had just as little common sense as modern teens—and attention spans of similar length too. But the real key to this story is found not in Eutychus, but in Paul. He abandoned his dignity – and his lengthy sermon – and rejoiced when Eutychus was brought back to life. It is a lesson for any “mature saint,” to be filled with compassion and love for young believers – even when they aren’t being smart.

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