

The Case of the Lover Who Left It All Behind*Luke 1-2; John 1,6***Story-telling Tips**

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and/or prepare storyboard figures, if using. (Included in Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the storyboard pictures, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story.
2. Put up storyboard figures/add story action cues as you tell the story. Allow the children to help you put them on the board, if desired.
3. Include the children in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
4. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

INTRODUCTION/ LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS

"Our story is called: The Case of the Lover Who Left It All Behind. Here is your listening assignment." Read from Detective Dan's Listening Assignment signs, but questions are summarized below:

Detective Dan's Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:

I need to find out:

- 1. Who was the lover? Who did He love?**
- 2. What did He leave behind and why?**

Detective Dan's Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:

Our Bible Verse is John 6:38: "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me."

I need to find out:

- 1. Whose will (plan) did Jesus come down from heaven to do?**
- 2. What was the plan and did Jesus do it?**

Detective Dan's Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

I found six clues, but only 4 of them are in the story.

Our six clues were: a tulip, a fish, a crown, a book, a woman named Mary, and a sailboat.

Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.

I need to figure out:

- 1. Which four belong in the story and which two don't?**
- 2. What did the people ask Jesus to give them? What did He give them instead?**

Read the assignment questions, THEN SAY,

"Ok, Deep Down Detectives! Put on your best listening ears and see if you can hear the answers to Detective Dan's questions. When I finish telling the story, we will see if we can answer all the questions."

Read the Bible Truth story, answer questions, present the gospel and lead in prayer.

Answers to questions; the gospel; and, ACTS prayer are included with the story text.

The Case of the Lover Who Left It All Behind *Luke 1-2; John 1,6*

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics) Numbers correspond to storyboard pictures and placement upon the storyboard. Always feel free to use less pictures, if it's best for your kids. Simply black out the numbers next to pictures you do not plan to use. All pictures are found in the Visual Aids book. Put BG (background) pictures on storyboard ahead of time. SB pictures (listed below in story text) are added to board as you tell the story. These numbers are also found on the back of each picture.

Tip: Stack pictures in numerical before telling story for easy use. Use sticky-back velcro to attach pictures to storyboard felt. Use sticky-tac putty to stick a picture on top of another picture.

(SB1) On one, special night, baby Jesus was born to Mary. Jesus cried like other babies. He was hungry like other babies. He needed his mother to care for him like other babies. Yes, in many ways Jesus was just like us.

But there were some things that were very different about baby Jesus, too. Jesus didn't have a man for a father like us. (Joseph was Mary's husband, but not Jesus' father.) Do you know who Jesus' father was? (SB2) The angels sang about it on the night Jesus was born. Do you remember what they said?

Do you know?

They told the world that Jesus was GOD'S Son, the Savior!

And what's more, Jesus didn't begin to be alive as a baby like you and me. No! He had always been alive even BEFORE He was born a baby. He had always been alive enjoying (SB3) the Perfect Wonderfulness of love and fellowship with God, His Father and God, the Holy Spirit. And oh, how perfect and wonderful that life was! It was the kind of life no one would ever want to leave.

But Jesus DID leave that Perfect Wonderfulness. Not because He was bored or didn't like it anymore. He did it because He was going to (SB4) carry out God's great plan. Do you know what that plan was?

Do you know?

It was to save people from their sins so they could be God's dearly-loved people and enjoy Him forever. Yes, it was for love of God, His Father... and for love of us, that Jesus left His home in heaven to come to earth to be born to Mary.

Jesus was born a baby, but He didn't stay that way. (SB5) Up, up, up, He grew, just like we do.

And when Jesus had grown up to be a full-grown man, it was time for Him to TEACH people about God and why God had sent Him. And, it was time to SHOW them by God's amazing power that He really was God's Son, sent to save them.

So off went Jesus and His disciples. (SB6) Up to the fish town of Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee. (SB7) Down to the big, city of Jerusalem. (SB8) And even out, over, and away, to some of the cities of Israel's enemies. And everywhere Jesus went, He TAUGHT the people about God and why God had sent Him; and He SHOWED them by God's amazing power that He was God's Son, sent to save them.

As Jesus spoke about God, people wanted to hear more that He had to say. And as Jesus did amazing things by God's power, people wanted to see Him do even more. No one had ever heard someone teach about God like Jesus did. No one had ever seen someone do the amazing things that Jesus did.

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

News about Jesus spread quickly. Soon big crowds followed Him. One day, (SB9, SB10) a huge crowd sailed with Jesus to a mountain on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. They docked the boats and climbed with (SB11, SB12) Jesus and His disciples to the top of a mountain. More and more people gathered until there was over five thousand people. What a crowd! They listened to Jesus (SB13) tell about God from God's Word. (SB14) They brought their sick to him to heal by God's power.

The people stayed up on that mountain all day with Jesus. They stayed so long that they had to spend the night there. They stayed so long that they ran out of food and were hungry, "Grumble! Grumble!" went those thousands of hungry stomachs. "We need food," said those thousands of hungry mouths, but no one had any food with them in that faraway place.

No one, that is, except (SB15) a boy with two fish and five, little loaves of bread. But that little bit of fish and bread could never feed thousands of grumbly stomachs...or could it?

What do you think?

(SB16) Jesus took the fish and bread, gave thanks to God, His Father, and (SB17) gave it to the crowds to eat. God's power was at work through Jesus once more. Wonders of wonders, that little bit of fish and bread spread further and further and further and further, until everyone there had bellies full of food! Why, there was even (SB18) twelve baskets of fish and bread scraps leftover after they had finished eating!

How excited the crowd was when they saw what Jesus had done! (SB19) "Surely Jesus is the special leader Moses promised God would send us one day," the people told each other. "Let's grab him and make him our king," they decided. "Just think, if Jesus is our king, he could use his amazing powers to give us everything we want. It could be like the days of Moses when God gave our people manna--the yummy food, straight from heaven," they thought. "Why, he could give us more than that! He could give us ALL the good things we want and he could give them to us RIGHT NOW. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a king like that?" they exclaimed.

But Jesus knew just what those people were thinking. They had it all wrong! Yes, He WAS the special leader God had promised to send one day. And yes, He was a king—their king. But (SB20) He wasn't the kind of king they thought He was. He hadn't come just to fill their bellies with good food from heaven or to give them other good things they wanted right then. (SB21) He had come to do God's will and give them something they needed much more. Do you know what it was?

Do you remember?

Jesus had come to save them from sin and death so they could be God's dearly-loved people forever.

Now, the people might LIKE their bellies filled with bread. They might LIKE to get whatever good things they wanted. But what they really needed was what Jesus had come to do—to be their Savior to save them from their sins. So Jesus refused to do things the way these people wanted Him to. He would do things God's way. He would be their Savior!

So (SB22) Jesus went further into the mountains, away from the crowd so they couldn't find Him. Then late that night, (SB23) He and the disciples secretly sailed back across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum without the crowds knowing where He had gone. (Remove SB22)

The next day, the people realized Jesus was missing. They went looking everywhere for Him. They couldn't stop thinking about how He had given them all that yummy fish and bread by God's power! They wanted Jesus to give them more food and other good things like that, so they looked and looked for Him.

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

"Jesus, where are you? Are you up on the mountain where you gave us the food yesterday?" they wondered. No, Jesus was not there.

"Are you way up on the mountain by yourself somewhere?" they wondered. No, Jesus was not there.

They sailed over the Sea of Galilee in boats back to Capernaum. "Jesus, are you here in Capernaum?" they wondered. (SB25) Yes, there He was!

"Teacher, when did you come here?" the crowd asked. They seemed so excited to be with Him again!

But Jesus knew they weren't looking for Him for the right reasons. They had grumbly stomachs they wanted Him to fill. They had good things they wanted Him to give them by God's power. (SB26) They wanted Him to be their king and give them these things. Would Jesus give in this time?

What do you think?

No, Jesus wouldn't. "(SB27) God gave His people heavenly bread to eat long ago in Moses' day, but now He's giving you something from heaven that's even better than food," Jesus told the people. "This time God has given you something even better than bread from heaven. This time He's given you ME—a Savior!"

"Prove this is who you are!" the crowd replied. "Use God's power to give us food from heaven like Moses did long ago!" they demanded.

But Jesus would not!

"I've come down from heaven to do God's will, NOT just to give you bread that fills your grumbly stomachs for just a little while, then leaves you hungry. NOT just to give you the good things you want that make you happy for a little while. No! God's will is for ME to give you something far better than these things. His will is for Me to save you from your sins so you can have wonderful life with God forever," Jesus explained.

"How can Jesus say He came from heaven?" the people said. "(SB28) Isn't He just the son of Joseph and Mary? We all know them! Come on, let's leave. Jesus is just a fake!" they decided, and they left Him. (Remove SB25)

Soon, it was just Jesus and His disciples. Everyone else had gone. "Will you leave Me, too? Jesus asked them.

What do you think?

No, they would not! They had heard Jesus' amazing words about God. They had seen God's power working in Him. (SB29) The Holy Spirit had been working in their hearts, giving them faith. Yes, Jesus was Mary's son. The crowds had that right. But Jesus mostly certain was NOT Joseph's son. No! Jesus was God's Son, the Savior!

"How can we leave you?" they said to Jesus. "Where else would we go? (SB30) We know and believe that God has sent You to save His people from their sins," they told Him.

Jesus' disciples were right, weren't they? For on just the right day, (SB31) Jesus suffered and died on the cross to take the punishment for the sins of all God's people—all who would ever turn away from disobeying God and would trust in Jesus as their Savior. Then on the third day, (SB32) Jesus rose from the dead. He had beaten sin and death for God's people! He had come down from heaven to do God's will and He had done it!

Cracking the Case: (story wrap-up for Listening Assignments)

It's time to see how we did with our Listening Assignment.

Detective Dan's Lesson 1 Listening Assignment:

1. Who was the lover? Who did He love? Jesus was the lover. He loved God and He loved sinners, like you and me.

2. What did He leave behind and why? Jesus left behind the Perfect Wonderfulness of life with God the Father and Holy Spirit in heaven. He left it behind so He could be our Savior.

For You and Me:

Jesus didn't just come to earth to save people who lived long ago. He came to save people from every time and place...He even came to save us! How can we be saved? By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior.

Detective Dan's Lesson 2 Listening Assignment:

Our Bible Verse is John 6:38

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me."

1. Whose will (plan) did Jesus come down from heaven to do? God's plan.

2. What was the plan and did Jesus do it? God's plan was for Jesus to be our Savior. Yes, He did!

For You and Me:

How amazing that Jesus would chose to leave His home in heaven to come to be our Savior! How amazing that He would suffer and die on the cross in the place of God's sinful people! But that's exactly what He did. And He rose from the dead on the third day, proving He had really done it! We, too, can become God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

Detective Dan's Lesson 3 Listening Assignment:

Our six clues were: a tulip, a fish, a crown, a book, a woman named Mary, and a sailboat.

1. Which four belong in our story?

The fish, the crown, Mary, and the sailboat.

2. What did the people ask Jesus to give them? What did He give them instead? The people wanted Jesus to be their king who would use God's power to give them more bread and other good things to enjoy now.

For You and Me:

It's easy to understand why the people wanted Jesus to use God's power to give them good things. We all love for God to give us the good things that we enjoy. But

how good it is that Jesus chose to do God's will and be our Savior! He gave us what we needed most: forgiveness from our sins. You and I can know God's forgiveness and become His people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)

Our Bible Truth is:

What Did Jesus Come to Do?

Jesus Came to Bring Us to God...

He Left His Home in Heaven to Save Us!

How great is God's love for sinful people, like you and me! That He would send His own Son to live a perfect life and offer it as the full payment for our sins. That He would suffer the punishment we deserved as He suffered and died on the cross! It sounds too good to be true, but it IS true! How do we know? Because on the third day, Jesus rose up from the grave to live forevermore. He had come down from heaven to do God's will and He had done it! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior are forgiven their sins. They get to be God's dearly-loved people forever. Ask God to help you to do this! He loves to answer this prayer!

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

- A** Jesus, we praise You for being willing to leave the Perfect Wonderfulness of heaven to be our Savior. You came to bring us to God.
- C** You came to bring us to God because we are all sinners who deserve God's punishment. How we need You to be our Savior!
- T** Thank You, Jesus, for dying on the cross to save all who turn away from their sins and trust in You as their Savior.
- S** Work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins. Help us to trust in You as our Savior. Help us to tell others about You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Go to Lesson Plan, p.9 for the script to the rest of the lesson.

