

## Principles of Storying and Dialogue for 8 Main Stories

There are two goals each time you story:

1. The hearer walks away able to retell the story
2. The hearer walks away able to apply the story to his or her life

The first objective is accomplished through telling the story, and then retelling it or walking through it as necessary in order to help the hearers learn it. The goal is for them to learn it well enough to walk away and tell it to someone else. The second objective is met through the dialogue time.

As you story, there are three principles on which to focus:

1. Tell the story accurately
2. Tell the story like it's the greatest story of all time (which it is!)
3. Trust the Lord to work through the proclamation of His Word

It's important to tell the story accurately, because it's God's Word. We must accept the responsibility of doing all we can to tell the story correctly. We must also tell the story with enthusiasm, as if we truly believe that it is the greatest story of all time! Finally, we must trust the Lord to work and realize that the burden of transforming hearts and lives does not rest on us. Though you may feel hesitant at first, focus simply on the charge of proclaiming His story well and go for it! We have the privilege of proclaiming His Word, and God works through the proclamation of His Word.

In the dialogue time, center the dialogue around six attributes of God:

1. God is all righteous
2. God knows all things
3. God has all power
4. God hates sin and will not dwell with sinners
5. God is the source of all grace
6. God always keeps His promises

There are more attributes of God, but these six give us a framework for the dialogue time. Walk through each one, giving hearers an opportunity to tell you how they see (or don't see) each attribute of God in the story you just told. Know also which key truth(s) you want to bring out of the story (e.g. in the first story, God's power over Satan and the problem of sin), and be sure to emphasize those points. Direct the dialogue time through questions, helping hearers to learn about God, His Word, and how their lives should change through hearing and receiving that story.

With each story, be sure to bring out any of the key themes of salvation:

1. Sin
2. Sacrifice
3. Salvation by faith

These are all critical to bring out as they will then be summed up in the offer to salvation, which is told after the last story.

Be sure to accept questions at the end, and remember that the facilitator can never answer the questions. The authority is the story, not the teacher! When asked a question, immediately ask the group if the story or a previously-told story gives the answer. If it doesn't, then the group may talk about it amongst themselves, but no one may answer from a future story, other Scriptures, or their own experience, background, or theology.

Through the story and dialogue, simply remember the two main goals. Pray for God to work, strive toward those two goals, and trust the Lord to transform lives in His way and according to His will! Often lives are changed not during the initial story or dialogue, but further down the road after reflection on the story either individually or in community. Our task is to simply share God's Word as best we can and as much as possible, trusting the Lord to work through the proclamation of His Word!

# **Eight Main Stories Written Out**

## **1. The Creation of the Spirit World**

(Genesis 1:1; Job 38:4-7; Psalm 8; Isaiah 14:12-15;  
Ezekiel 28:11-19; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:1-4, 7-9)

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. When God created the heavens and the earth, the angels were already there. When they saw his power and glory they sang together and shouted for joy, giving glory to God.

But there was one who was not so happy to see God praised in this way. His name was Lucifer, which means “bright morning star.” He was the leader of the angels. When he saw the honor they gave to God he became jealous and said in his heart, “I will raise my throne above the throne of God, and I will be like God.” Lucifer went about to deceive the other angels and to get them to worship him. One third of the angels began to follow him instead of God.

But God knew what Lucifer was thinking and doing. So God judged Lucifer and the angels that had been deceived by him, and he cast them out of heaven and said that one day he would punish Lucifer and the fallen angels. God changed Lucifer’s name to Satan and the fallen angels are now called demons.

To this day, Satan continues to lead his demons in a rebellion against God. He and his demons roam about the earth, trying to deceive people so that they follow Satan instead of God. But God’s angels continue to serve Him, always striving to bring Him glory.

## **2. The Creation of the World**

(Genesis 1:1-2:3)

When God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was without shape and empty. There was only water and darkness, and the Spirit of God hovered over the water.

God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. God separated the light from the darkness. He called the light “day” and the darkness “night.” This was the first day.

Then God said, “Let there be a separation in the water.” He called the separation “sky.” This was the second day.

Then God said, “Let water under the sky be gathered together and let dry ground appear.” He called the waters “seas” and the dry ground “land.” Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation with plants and trees that bear fruit with seed in it.” This was the third day.

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the sky.” And God made the sun and moon and stars to watch over the day and the night. This was the fourth day.

Then God said, "Let there be fish in the sea and birds in the air." And it was so. And God blessed them and told them to increase and fill the earth. This was the fifth day.

Then God said, "Let there be animals of many different kinds." And it was so. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image and let him rule over all creatures." So God made man and woman. He blessed them and told them to increase and fill the earth and rule over it. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. This was the sixth day.

By the seventh day, God had finished all the work he had been doing and so he rested. He blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he rested from his work.

### **3. The First Sin and Judgment**

(Genesis 3:1-24, with transition through Genesis 1:26-2:25)

When God created man and woman, he placed them in a garden called Eden. There were many trees in the garden and in the middle were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were to eat of any tree but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told them that if they ate of that tree, they would surely die.

One day the snake came to the woman, who was named Eve, and said to her, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" Eve answered him, "No, we can eat from any tree in the garden, but we are not to eat from or touch the tree in the middle of the garden, or we will die!" The snake said, "You will not die. God knows that when you eat of it you will be like God, knowing good and evil!"

When Eve saw how good the fruit looked, and that it would make her wise, she took some of it and ate. She also gave some to the man, who was called Adam, and he ate of it. Instantly they realized they were naked and they sewed together leaves to cover themselves.

In the cool of the day Adam and Eve heard the Lord God walking in the garden, so they hid themselves. God called out to the man, "Where are you?" Adam answered, "I heard you coming and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." God answered, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you disobey my command and eat of the tree I told you not to eat from?" Adam blamed Eve, saying, "It was the woman. She gave me some fruit and I ate." Then God said to Eve, "What is this you have done?" Eve blamed the snake, saying, "The snake deceived me, and I ate."

So God said to the snake, "Because you have done this, you are cursed above all wild animals. You will forever crawl on your stomach and eat dust. I will put hatred between your offspring and the offspring of the woman. You will bite his heel, but he will crush your head."

Then God said to Eve, "Because you have done this, you will have pain in childbirth. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

Then God said to Adam, “Because you have listened to your wife, the ground is cursed because of you. It will produce thorns and weeds. You will eat of it only by the sweat of your brow. You will die and return to the ground, for dust you are and to the dust you will return.”

Then God made clothing for them out of animal skins. God said, “The man has become like us, knowing good and evil. He must not be permitted to take also from the tree of life and live forever.” So God cast Adam and Eve out of the garden. He put angels in front of the garden with a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life.

#### **4. Noah and the Flood** (Genesis 6:9-9:17)

Adam and Eve had children, and those children had children. Over time, they multiplied and there were many people on earth. However, they became very wicked. They did not live in a way that was pleasing to God. God saw how wicked the works of man were and he said, “I will destroy everything I have created.” But there was one man who followed God and God decided to save him. His name was Noah.

Noah had three sons. Their names were Ham, Shem, and Japheth. Noah followed God, but the other people on earth were wicked, so God said, “Noah, I will destroy all that has been created because the people are evil. Only you and your wife, your three sons, and their wives will live. I want you to build a big boat, because I will cause a flood to destroy the earth. You should also take with you from every group of animals and birds, male and female. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it as food for you and for them.”

God told Noah exactly how to build the boat and Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Then one day God told Noah that he and his family should take all of the animals and birds and go into the boat. He promised to send rain that would last for forty days and nights. When Noah and his family and all of the animals that came to them went into the boat, God shut the door. Then it began to rain and everything was covered with water, even the highest mountain. There was no way for people or animals to escape, so they all drowned.

After many months, the flood subsided and the boat came to rest on top of a mountain. God told Noah to come out of the boat with his family, and the animals. Noah built an altar and made an offering, worshiping God. God was pleased with his offering. He told Noah and his family to have many children and fill the earth. God placed a rainbow in the sky as a sign to them that he would never again destroy the earth by flood.

#### **5. God Provides a Substitute Sacrifice** (Genesis 22: 1-19, with transition through Genesis 12-15)

Many years passed since the flood. God promised a man named Abram that he would bless him and that his descendants would be many. He also promised Abram that his descendants would inherit a country called Canaan. He also promised Abram that all peoples of the world would be blessed through him.

Abram and his wife, Sarai, had no children. God promised Abram that his descendants would be many, like the stars in heaven. Even though Abram had no children, he believed God and God considered him righteous. God changed Abram's name to Abraham, which means "father of many."

One day God told Abraham that his descendants would go to a foreign land and be enslaved and mistreated there for 400 years, but that God would then punish that nation and they would come out with many possessions.

When Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90 years old Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a boy. They named him Isaac.

One day years later God told Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, whom he loved very much, and sacrifice him to God on the mountain.

Early the next morning Abraham gathered the things needed for making a sacrifice and they began their journey. On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the mountain in the distance. He told the servants to stay where they were. He told them that he and Isaac would go to worship God and then they would return.

As they went up the mountain, Isaac carried the wood and Abraham carried the knife and the fire. As they walked, Isaac said, "Father, we have the wood and the fire for the sacrifice, but where is the lamb?" Abraham replied, "My son, the Lord himself will provide the lamb."

When they came to the place, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he took his son Isaac and he tied him and put him on the altar. He raised the knife to kill him, but just then the angel of the Lord spoke to Abraham and told him not to kill Isaac.

Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the bushes. Abraham took the ram and sacrificed it instead of his son. Abraham called that place Jehovah Jireh, which means "the Lord will provide."

## **6. The Passover**

(Exodus 12)

Years later, Isaac grew up, got married, and had a son named Jacob. Jacob then had twelve sons. There was a severe famine in the land, and Jacob and his whole family moved to Egypt for food. God gave Jacob the name "Israel" and Jacob's family and descendants became known as "Israelites." After many years, the Israelites began to multiply in Egypt and the Egyptians

mistreated and enslaved them. But then God raised up a man named Moses. God used Moses and his brother, Aaron, to warn Pharaoh, the leader of Egypt, that God would bring plagues upon the people of Egypt. These would be a sign that they should release the Israelites from their captivity.

After many terrible plagues, Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go. So God told them that the final plague would involve the death of all the firstborn of humans and animals in every household. There would be loud crying and wailing throughout the land. Then Pharaoh would let the Israelites go.

But God told Moses how the Israelites should avoid the plague. Each family was to take a lamb from their flock. It was to be a year old male lamb, one that was perfect. They were to take the lamb, and on the night of the plague they were to kill the lamb and put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of the door to their house. They were to stay inside their house, eat the meat, and be fully clothed and prepared to travel. They were to eat it quickly because it was the Lord's Passover. God instructed the Israelites that they should celebrate this day as a festival to the Lord so that generations to come would remember what God had done for them.

God said that on that night he would pass through the land. He would kill every firstborn where he did not see the blood. But when he saw the blood of the lamb, he would pass over that house and the firstborn would be spared. So the Israelites did as God told them.

At midnight, the death angel of the Lord God came through the land. Everywhere he saw the blood of the lamb on the door, he passed over that house and spared the firstborn. But where there was no blood, he entered the house and killed the firstborn. There was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was no Egyptian home in which someone did not die. Even Pharaoh's firstborn son died. Then, the Egyptian people urged the Israelites to leave quickly. Pharaoh also summoned Moses and told him to take the Israelites and leave his land.

As they left, the Israelites took many possessions from the Egyptians. The people had stayed in Egypt about 400 years.

## **7. The Prophecies and Birth of Jesus**

(Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, 53, Micah 5:2, Malachi 3:1-2, Luke 2:1-7,  
with transitions through Exodus 19:1-20:21, 25-40, Leviticus 1-7, Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, John 1:29-34, 3:1-21)

The twelve sons of Jacob became the twelve tribes of Israel. They became a nation and God was their king. They did inhabit the land of Canaan. God told them that if they obeyed him, he would make them into a great nation.

He gave them many laws for the people to obey and religious leaders to lead them in obeying those laws. For the forgiveness of their sins, the religious leaders sacrificed animals to God.

Over the course of time, the people of Israel sinned greatly against God. God sent many prophets to the people. God told these prophets to warn the Israelites that he would punish the people because of their sin. Many of the Israelites were worshiping other gods. God did not want the people to worship idols and evil spirits.

God also told the people of Israel, through the prophets, more about the coming of a promised descendant who would defeat Satan. These prophets told of a future time, when a king would come who would establish the kingdom of God. They told that he would be born in a town called Bethlehem and that his mother would be a virgin. They predicted that he would be killed, but that he would also establish a kingdom that would be like no other Israel had ever known, a kingdom that would fulfill promises God had made to Adam and Abraham.

The last prophet of the LORD in that time was called Malachi. Malachi told of a great day of judgment that was coming. But he said that before it came, God would send a prophet who would prepare the way for the coming King.

After Malachi there was no other prophet for 400 years. For 400 years God said nothing to his people.

About 400 years later, there was a young woman named Mary who was engaged to a man named Joseph. One day the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that God had blessed her and that she would give birth to a child, whom she should name "Jesus."

Mary was surprised, as she was a virgin, but she believed the angel. An angel also appeared to Joseph and told him not to leave Mary because the baby that was inside of her was from the God. So Joseph took Mary to be his wife but did not lay with her until she gave birth. After Joseph and Mary were married, they visited a town called Bethlehem. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born. Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son, and she placed him in a feeding trough among the animals, because there was no room for them any other place.

When Jesus grew up, there was a man named John who preached to many people, telling them to repent from their sins. One day, when John saw Jesus coming toward him, he told everyone around, "Look! This is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

Jesus wanted John to baptize him. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, heaven was opened and he saw the Holy Spirit descend on him like a dove. A voice came from heaven, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

After Jesus began publicly speaking to the people and performing many miracles, there was a religious leader named Nicodemus who came to him at night. He said, "Teacher, we know you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the miracles you are doing if God were not with him." Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."



Nicodemus said, "How can this be? How can a man be born again when he is old? Surely he cannot enter his mother's womb a second time!" Jesus replied, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not die but have eternal life."

### **8. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus**

(Matthew 26:36-56, Matthew 27, Mark 14:32-52, Mark 15, Luke 22:39-54, Luke 22:66-23:25, John 18:1-13, 19-24, 28, John 19:6, Matthew 27:31-66, Mark 15:20-47, Luke 23:26-56, John 19:17-42, Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-35, John 20:1-18, Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24:26-53, Acts 1:4-11, with transitions through Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26, Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25, Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39, John 11:1-46, Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-34, John 12:1-30)

As Jesus traveled around preaching and teaching, he performed many miracles. He healed many people. He calmed a storm. He cast out demons. He raised a dead man to life.

It was tradition for the Israelites to celebrate the time of Passover as they remembered how God saved their ancestors and brought them out of Egypt. Jesus observed the Passover with his twelve disciples, men he had selected to follow him as he traveled around and preached and performed miracles.

Before eating the Passover meal, one of the disciples, a man named Judas, had gone to the religious leaders. Judas knew that they were jealous of Jesus and wanted to kill him, and he offered to help them in exchange for some money. They agreed to his help.

After they finished the Passover meal, Jesus and his disciples went to pray. While they were praying, Judas came with soldiers who were sent by the religious leaders to capture Jesus. After they arrested Jesus, they took him to different people for trials.

One of the people they took him to was Pilate, the governor. Pilate examined Jesus closely and found nothing wrong with him. He told all the people, "I find nothing wrong with this man." Then Pilate told the people that since it was their custom for him to release one prisoner each year, he would release Jesus. But the people wanted a criminal named Barabbas to be released instead of Jesus, so they shouted, "Not him! We want Barabbas!"

Pilate asked, "What shall I do with Jesus then?" The crowd replied, "Kill him!" Pilate said, "Why? What crime has he committed?" They shouted even louder, "Kill him!"

Pilate decided to let the crowd win, so he washed his hands in front of them and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your responsibility!" All the people said, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

Pilate sent Jesus to have him beaten and killed. All of the soldiers gathered around him and stripped him of his clothes. They beat him and beat him. They put a crown of thorns on his head. They spit on him and said many bad things to him. They kept on beating him and beating him. When they were finished, they sent him away to be killed.

They took Jesus and put him on a cross. As he hung on the cross, Jesus prayed, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Jesus was killed with a criminal on his left and a criminal on his right. One of the criminals said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus said, "Today you will be with me in heaven."

Darkness came over the whole area as the sun stopped shining for three hours that afternoon. Then Jesus cried out, "It is finished." And he died.

At that moment, the earth shook and rocks broke apart. Some graves opened and many holy people who had died came back to life.

When those guarding Jesus saw all that had happened, they were terrified and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

Jesus was taken off of the cross and laid in a grave cut out of rock. A large stone was rolled in front of the grave. Because it was the time of the Passover, no one could go to the grave until the third day. Some women knew that Jesus' body had not been properly prepared for burial, so they went to prepare it. They wondered how they would remove the stone, but when they arrived at the grave, they saw the stone rolled away! Suddenly two angels appeared and said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen!" So the women left and told everyone what they had seen.

After Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples and many followers over a period of forty days. He told them how he was the fulfillment of the old prophecies. Then he led his followers out of the city and blessed them. He told them that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came on them and that they would be his witnesses in their area and all over the earth. He told them to go and make disciples of all people, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that he had said. And Jesus promised that he would be with them always. Then he was taken up before their eyes and went into heaven.

As Jesus' followers were looking up into the sky, suddenly two men dressed in white stood before them. They said, "Why are you looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

## Offer of Salvation after Completion of Storying Track

I'd now like to ask you to look back at all of the stories we have learned. Do you remember the first story about the creation of the spirit world? Do you remember how we saw the power of God over Satan and all other spirits? Do you remember also seeing that power as He created the world and later brought a great flood? We then saw that same power as Jesus healed many people, calmed a storm, cast out demons, and raised a dead man to life!

Jesus was different than anyone who had ever lived before, and John said of him, "Look! This is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!" Why was that statement important? It's because of the problem of sin, isn't it?

We can remember the first story of the creation of the spirit world, as Satan rebelled against God and wanted to be like God. He sinned as he went against God. We saw sin again as Adam and Eve rebelled against God and lied to Him. By the time of Noah, there were many, many people who were sinning against God. They were not living in a way that was pleasing to him, so he destroyed them. Later God told the Israelites that if they obeyed him, he would make them into a great nation, but they sinned greatly against him. Throughout the course of the world, we've always had a huge problem with sin. And that is a critical, because God hates sin and will not dwell with sinners.

Through the stories, we've also seen the theme of sacrifice. God sacrificed an animal to provide clothes for Adam and Eve. Noah offered a sacrifice to God after God saved him and his family and the animals. Abraham was to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, but God provided a substitute. The Israelites needed a sacrifice substitute of the lamb in order that they would not be killed during the Passover. Then, Jesus was called the "Lamb of God." That's interesting, isn't it? But what were the qualifications of the Passover lamb? The lamb had to be male and perfect. We know that Jesus was male and as Pilate found out, he was perfect as well. Jesus fit both requirements!

The people of Israel were to offer sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sin. But no sacrifice was good for all time, and no people were good enough to never sin. Jesus is the only person to have ever been perfect and worthy of the sacrifice, and he was the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Sin is the one huge problem that has hung over mankind throughout the history of the world, and Jesus is the one who could be the perfect lamb and worthy sacrifice!

But if Jesus is the worthy substitute sacrifice, does that alone mean that he could be our Savior? What were the promises that were made about the one who would defeat Satan? He was to

be born in Bethlehem and born of a virgin. He would be killed, but he would establish a kingdom that would fulfill every promise made to Adam and Abraham. Was Jesus born in Bethlehem, born of a virgin, and killed? Yes! And what were the promises? God told the snake that he would bite the heel of the offspring of the woman, but that he would crush the snake's head. To Abraham, God said that all people on earth would be blessed through him. If Jesus is the sacrifice for the sins of all people, would he not crush the head of the snake, who we've said is Satan, and bless all people? He certainly would!

If Jesus is our sacrifice, are we then saved simply because of what he did? How were people saved through the stories? They were saved by faith, weren't they? Noah was saved because he believed God and built a boat. Abraham believed God and was given a son, and then he believed God and God spared the life of his son. The people of Israel believed God and sacrificed the perfect lamb during the Passover, and their lives were saved. We see that through the stories, people are always saved by believing God. There is no other requirement, as we saw through story of the thief on the cross. He was a sinner, but he was saved simply by faith in Jesus. He had no time to do good works or anything else. He was saved simply by faith. Salvation comes by faith.

So, then, Jesus' sacrifice is for the forgiveness of our sins, and we can be saved if we have faith in him. God truly is the source of all grace! We are sinners and God does not dwell with sinners, but he has provided a way for us to have our sins forgiven if we have faith in Jesus. As Jesus told Nicodemus, "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not die but have eternal life." Just as Jesus conquered death and rose again, through faith in Jesus our sins will be forgiven, we will be saved and born again, and we will defeat death and live with God forever!

Now, the question sits before you: will you believe? We all know the problem of sin, and how salvation comes by faith in the perfect sacrificial death of Jesus. Will you believe? Will you believe in Jesus and be saved? Because Abraham believed God, God considered him righteous. As we believe in Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we, too, are considered righteous. Just as God provided a substitute sacrifice for Isaac, God has provided one for us. Jesus truly is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world," and we can say with Abraham that surely the Lord has provided for us!

*> Next, have time of prayer with those ready to trust in Jesus.*

*> Then, emphasize the importance of learning more stories and always living in a way that is pleasing to God. Encourage them to live out Jesus words about making disciples of all people.*

*> Be sure to connect them with a local pastor and church.*