

Fun, practical, interactive  
Bible teaching material!

Becky May

# GOD'S STORY FOR 5-7s

36 Bible-based sessions for  
midweek and Sunday groups

- ▶ 36 key stories from the Bible
- ▶ A year's user-friendly session plans
- ▶ Wide range of easily sourced activities
- ▶ Differentiated learning styles



a FRESH approach  
to exploring  
God's BIG story!



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*Becky May*

# GOD'S STORY FOR 5-7s

36 Bible-based sessions for  
midweek and Sunday groups

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# Introduction

This book is the second in a series of three, providing a creative curriculum for children to explore God's story through a wide variety of activities, appropriate to different learning styles and preferences. This book provides a curriculum for children aged 5–7 years of age, with a combination of play-based and creative activities that they can use to respond to the story in their own ways.

## Who is this book for?

This curriculum has been prepared for those who share God's story with children aged 5–7 years. It could be used as a year-long programme to work through the big story of the Bible week by week, throughout the academic year, or the appropriate stories may be used to celebrate key festivals in the church calendar, with other sessions slotted in as best suits your teaching plan for the year. It is hoped that the book will stimulate your planning to incorporate a wider selection of activities to take account of children's different learning styles.

The materials can be used with a midweek group or as part of a Sunday morning programme, alongside the main Sunday service. For smaller, mixed age groups, you may prefer to combine some elements from this book with those contained in the other two books in the series.

The 36 sessions, which run in sequence, work together to tell God's big story from creation to Pentecost, meeting many of the key stories of the faith along the way. Although there is not space to include every Bible story, the selection builds together to form the overall narrative of God's story.

## Activity areas

Each session provides a selection of different activities for the children to engage with, providing opportunities for all children to explore the story in different ways. The range of suggested activities allows for different learning styles and preferences, recognising that children learn and respond in different ways and one size does not fit all.

It is suggested that you offer a wide variety of activities each time, so that children may choose which ones they engage with in the time given. Where time and space do not permit such a wide selection of activities to be used, try to select a few activities that offer the variety and scope for children to respond in different ways, perhaps offering different types of activity each week.

Included with the activities are suggested topics that you could talk to the children about as they participate in the activity. Ideally, an adult helper should work alongside the children at each station, to facilitate children's discussion and further learning. If this is not possible, you may wish to have an adult host at a selected number of activities and make space for independent exploration at other points.

Below you will find a short explanation of each area, and how it supports children's learning and exploration:

## **Small world play**

In this area, you will set up a model that relates to the story, perhaps using play figures to retell the story or exploring a situation that is familiar to the children, making connections to the story.

## **Role play / dressing up**

This activity will require a larger area, and often involves children acting out an element of the story or a scene to which they can relate, helping them to see the relationship between their own experiences and the Bible story.

## **Creative**

These activities make use of a wide range of materials, tools and techniques. Sometimes they are collaborative, perhaps producing something to be displayed as you explore the story together. Other times, the creative activities provide children with an opportunity to make something to take home with them, as a reminder of the story.

## **Construction**

The construction activities use a range of materials, tools and techniques to allow children to construct something, often on a larger scale, which relates to the story. These are, at times, collaborative projects, but sometimes provide children with more of a personal challenge. From time to time, the activity suggested in this area will require additional supervision and you may find it helpful to complete a risk assessment beforehand to establish safe practices.

## **Writing**

The suggested writing activities are short, simple writing tasks, which enable children of all writing abilities to participate, responding to the story in a quieter, more reflective way.

## **Books**

This section makes suggestions about the types of books that could be displayed for children to look at and read together, with support as needed. These may be Bible stories that retell the story, along with other books that help to provide a context for the story. Create a cosy, inviting environment, perhaps with cushions or beanbags, where children can sit together to share the stories.

## **Prayer and reflective activity**

These activities are intended to be adult-led, providing an opportunity for prayer and reflection or discussion and questioning through a range of creative activities.

## **Games**

Under this heading, for each session, suggestions are made about team games that can be played to support the theme of the session, or quieter board games that can be set out for children to use together.

## **Story time**

For each session, a script is provided for telling the story in an interactive, creative way. The script may suggest props or visual aids, or may include the children in acting out parts of the story themselves.

## Prayer

A short prayer is offered, focusing on what we might learn from the story, drawing the session together and giving the children the opportunity to respond in an appropriate way. You may find it helpful to introduce the prayer by saying, 'I'm going to say a prayer. Please listen carefully and, if you want to join in, you can say "Amen" at the end.'

## Songs

One or two songs are suggested, which can be used each day. Some of them have actions that children can perform, while others could include dancing with ribbons or streamers or accompaniment on percussion instruments.

## Take home

As you draw each session to a close, a simple idea is given for something that children can take away with them or do at home, to continue the discipling journey within the context of their own family and home.



# 16

## Elijah and the fire

### For the team

#### Session theme

This session retells one story from the life of Elijah, the prophet, when God demonstrated his power and authority by sending fire down on the altar, in front of King Ahab and the prophets of Baal. During this session, we will remind the children that nothing is too difficult for God.

Bible text: 1 Kings 18

#### Team prayer

*Almighty God, thank you that you have power and authority over all things. Help us to grasp hold of the truth that whatever we are dealing with, nothing is too difficult for you, and to share this truth with the children we work with. Amen*

*Refer to pages 6–8 to see how the activity areas work together*

## Activity areas

### Small world play

Provide building blocks for the children to use to build an altar, and playdough in red, orange and yellow for the children to use to create flames which they can stick to one of the altars, as they re-enact what happened in the story.

Talk about what happened in the story. Can the children imagine what it would have been like to be there that day?

### Role play / dressing up

Set up a post office area with paper, pens, envelopes and stamps for printing. Invite the children to write and post letters before delivering them, perhaps to other children in the room.

Talk about the way that we send and receive messages in the post. Talk about how Elijah brought his messages from God.

### Creative

Provide sheets of paper and paint in a variety of 'fire' colours, along with plastic forks and combs. Create fire paintings by pouring a small amount of each of the fire colours in the centre of the paper and spread the paint out in all directions with the combs or forks.

Talk about the way that God sent fire down on to the altar. There is nothing that God cannot do.

## Construction

Gather twelve equally sized stones and invite the children to try to build an altar, just as they did in the story. Challenge the children to see how many different ways they can organise the stones to build their model altars.

Talk about the way that people had to build altars, in the times of Elijah, to make a sacrifice to God, but because Jesus went to the cross, we don't need to any more!

## Writing

Provide a selection of postcards and pens and invite the children to write a message to a friend or family member, which they can take away with them at the end of the session.

Talk about how Elijah was a messenger from God, who reminded people to listen to them. How can we tell our friends about God?

## Books

Books offered today could include children's story Bibles and books which retell this story, as well as other stories about Elijah.

Support the children in reading the books, where necessary, and discuss with them the things that interest them.

## Prayer and reflective activity

Provide some crown templates (see page 124) and a selection of craft materials which the children can use to decorate their crowns, including shiny papers, sticky gems, and so on. Invite the children to decorate a crown to wear, and to think about what it means for God to be the king in our own lives.

Talk about the way that Ahab was a bad king, because he did not honour God. God can be king of our lives if we listen to the things that he says and try to do them.

## Story time

This story is told through the use of fabric visual aids, built up layer by layer, as you tell the story. For smaller groups, this could be done on a fabric base on the floor with the children seated around. For larger groups you may wish to prepare a board or banner which can be hung in front of the children.  
*Set out a large neutral-coloured piece of fabric as a base.*



Elijah was a prophet, a messenger of God. He had to give people messages from God, telling them when they needed to change their ways and listen to God again.

One day, God sent Elijah to speak to King Ahab, to warn him that there would be no rain until Ahab stopped worshipping Baal and started worshipping the real God. Then he showed King Ahab exactly what God could do.

He called together the prophets who followed Baal and King Ahab, and took them all up Mount Carmel. Then he told Baal's prophets to build an altar, so they did, stone by stone.

*Lay out some small, grey felt rock shapes to build an altar.*

Then he asked them to choose their offering to lay on the altar.

*Lay a red piece of felt on top of the altar.*

He challenged the prophets to pray to Baal to ask him to send fire. So they danced and sang, they shouted and prayed. But nothing happened at all.

‘Perhaps your god has gone to sleep,’ laughed Elijah. ‘Or maybe he’s gone to the toilet!’

Then Elijah built his altar to God.

*Lay out twelve small, grey felt rock shapes to build an altar alongside the first.*

He dug a trench all around the altar.

*Lay a narrow strip of black felt around the base of the altar.*

He placed his offering on the altar.

*Place a red piece of felt at the top of the altar.*

Before pouring water all over it.

*Use small pieces of blue felt to represent the water, sprinkled over the offering and filling the trench below.*

Then Elijah prayed. And as he did, God sent fire which burned the offering and the altar!

*Use red, orange and yellow flame shapes to cover the altar.*

Everyone could then see that God is the true God. They all worshipped him. And then God sent the rain once again.

## Prayer

***Dear God, thank you that you listen to our prayers, just as you listened to Elijah. You are the true God and nothing is too difficult for you! Amen.***

## Songs

Songs today could include:

- ‘No other God’ (Paul Jones)

## Take home

Encourage the children to take some time this week to think about how we can make sure we treat God as a king in our own lives, and don’t put others above him.



# 28

## The good Samaritan

### For the team

#### Session theme

This session explores one of Jesus' most well-known parables, and discovers what it really means to show love to all people, regardless of race, status or background, following the example of the good Samaritan in the story.

Bible text: Luke 10:25–37

#### Team prayer

*Father God, forgive us for the times when we forget that we are all your children, known and loved by you. Help us to share that unconditional love with all people. Amen*

*Refer to pages 6–8 to see how the activity areas work together*

### Activity areas

#### Small world play

Set up a small hospital or doctor's surgery scene with the appropriate play figures and related props for the children to act out how people care for those who are sick.

Talk about the children's own experiences of being unwell and visiting a doctor. How did they make them feel better?

#### Role play / dressing up

Provide a selection of different bandages and dressings and work with the children to 'dress' different wounds on one another, wrapping up the limbs as the children choose to do so. If you have any qualified first aiders in the group, they could use this time to teach some basic first aid to the children.

Talk about the way that you wrap the 'wounds', and how the good Samaritan took care of the wounds of the injured man in the story.

#### Creative

Provide a selection of craft materials, including coloured card, scissors, glue and a range of collaging materials. Invite the children to create a 'Get well soon' or 'Thinking of you' card for someone they know who is unwell or feeling down.

Talk about the different issues that this activity raises for the children as they make their cards. How can we be a good Samaritan, by helping to make other people feel better?

## Construction

Provide a selection of junk modelling materials and invite the children to work together with you to create a 'junk model' donkey. Challenge the children to make sure that the donkey can stand up independently when it is complete.

Talk about the way that the Samaritan scooped the injured man on to the back of his donkey to take him to a place where he could be looked after.

## Books

Set out a display of books about people who help us, along with children's Bibles and story books which retell this and other parables.

Support the children in reading the books, where necessary, and discuss with them the things that interest them.

## Prayer and reflective activity

Hang up a large piece of paper and provide a selection of newspapers and magazines, together with scissors and glue. Invite the children to cut out pictures of different people to create a collage, including people of different races, genders, ages, physical appearances, and so on.

Talk about the great diversity in the human race and how we can celebrate God's great creation. We are all God's children and he wants us all to feel included and loved in his family.

## Games

There are a number of appropriate board games that you could set up to support the theme for this session, including those games based on themes of doctors or hospitals, as well as games that involve donkeys.

## Story time

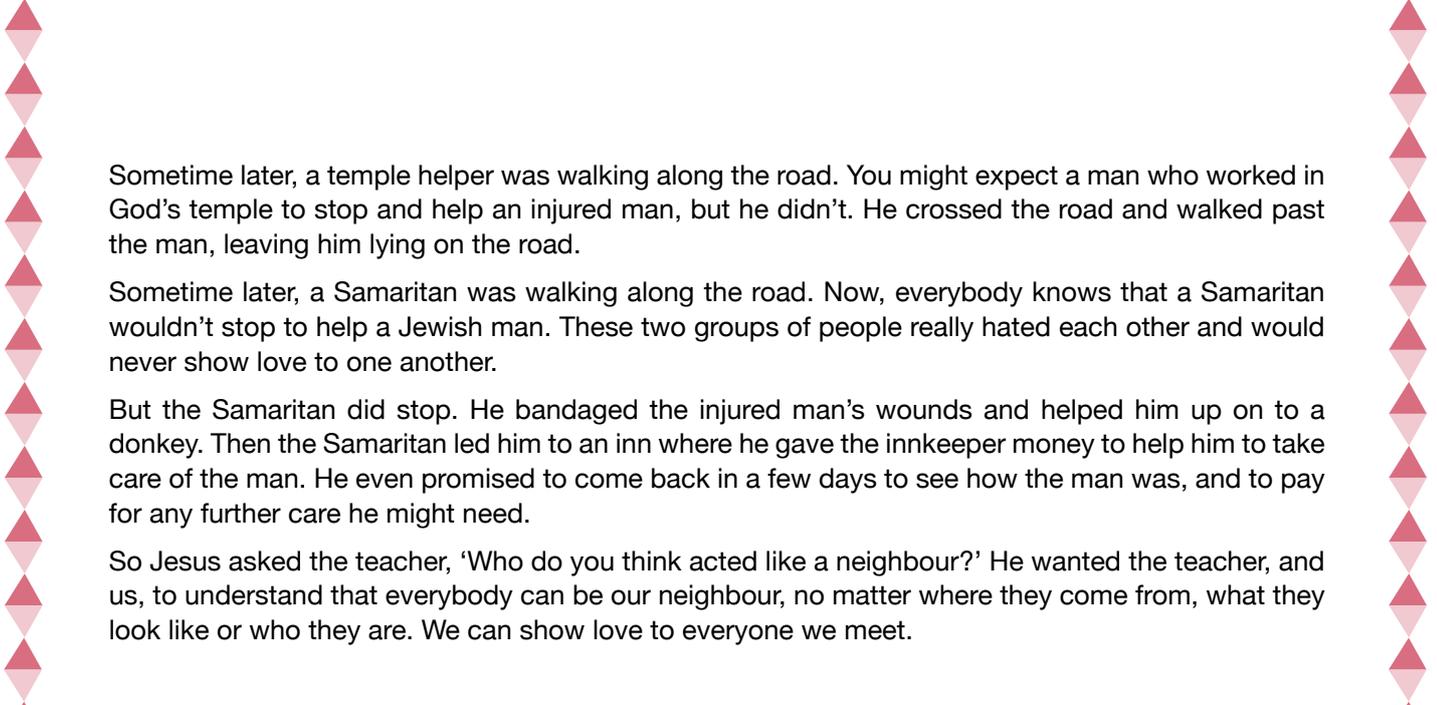
This story retelling uses volunteers to act out what happened, as you narrate. You will need somebody to play the part of the victim, a small group to play the robbers, a priest, a temple helper, the Samaritan and an innkeeper. You could also provide a selection of simple costumes and props, including a hobby horse, bandages and a bag of coins. This retelling could be rehearsed in advance, or simply ask the volunteers to step up and mime appropriately at the relevant point in the story.



A teacher once visited Jesus to ask him more about what it means to show love to our neighbours. He was hoping that Jesus would give an easy answer, but Jesus challenged him to think about the people we really show love to. Jesus told the teacher this story...

There once was a man who was travelling along a road, on his own, when suddenly a group of robbers jumped out and attacked him! They hurt the man and took all the things he was carrying away with them, leaving him lying on the road.

Sometime later, a priest was travelling along the road. You might expect the priest to stop and help an injured man, but he didn't. He crossed the road and walked right past the man, leaving him lying on the road.



Sometime later, a temple helper was walking along the road. You might expect a man who worked in God's temple to stop and help an injured man, but he didn't. He crossed the road and walked past the man, leaving him lying on the road.

Sometime later, a Samaritan was walking along the road. Now, everybody knows that a Samaritan wouldn't stop to help a Jewish man. These two groups of people really hated each other and would never show love to one another.

But the Samaritan did stop. He bandaged the injured man's wounds and helped him up on to a donkey. Then the Samaritan led him to an inn where he gave the innkeeper money to help him to take care of the man. He even promised to come back in a few days to see how the man was, and to pay for any further care he might need.

So Jesus asked the teacher, 'Who do you think acted like a neighbour?' He wanted the teacher, and us, to understand that everybody can be our neighbour, no matter where they come from, what they look like or who they are. We can show love to everyone we meet.

## Prayer

***Dear Jesus, thank you for the stories you told that help us to understand important ideas. Help us to be good neighbours, showing love to the people we meet and know, whether they are like us or very different from us, because you love all people. Amen***

## Songs

Songs today could include:

- 'Jerusalem to Jericho' (Ian Smale)

## Take home

Remind the children to take home the 'Get well soon' and 'Thinking of you' cards that they have made, ready to pass on to their friends or family members. They may wish to do something else, together with their family, to show love to those people, perhaps offering a gift or doing something practical to help, as a good neighbour.

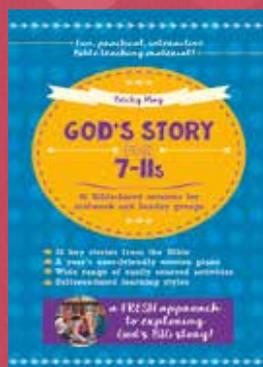
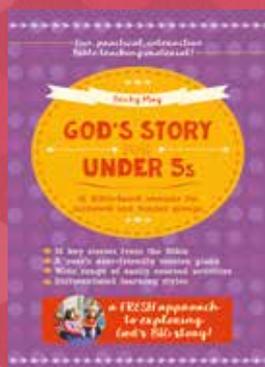


# LET'S SHARE GOD'S BIG STORY!

Use as a year-long weekly programme or dip in and out to highlight individual stories at key times of year and supplement other activities. Varied storytelling methods enable children to engage with God's big story in different ways, with a range of activities to illustrate and explore the story, catering for different learning preferences and using materials that most children's groups will already have to hand.

Each session includes a theme summary for the team and a team prayer, a wide range of activities including small world play, role play, dressing up, creative, construction, reading, reflective activity, games, story time, a closing prayer, suggested songs and a take-home idea.

Also in this series:



*Becky May has led various children's and youth programmes over the past 20 years, including Sunday morning discipleship groups for children aged 0-12 and midweek outreach groups for both primary-age children and teenagers.*



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