

Fun, practical, interactive
Bible teaching material!

Becky May

GOD'S STORY FOR 7-11s

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!



Text copyright © Becky May 2016
The author asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work

Published by
The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF)
15 The Chambers, Vineyard
Abingdon OX14 3FE
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1865 319700
Email: enquiries@brf.org.uk
Website: www.brf.org.uk
BRF is a Registered Charity

ISBN 978 0 85746 426 2

First published 2016
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
All rights reserved

Acknowledgements
Cover photo: © Thinkstock

Every effort has been made to trace and contact copyright owners for material used in this resource. We apologise for any inadvertent omissions or errors, and would ask those concerned to contact us so that full acknowledgement can be made in the future.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Printed by Gutenberg Press, Tarxien, Malta

Important information

Photocopying permission

The right to photocopy material in *God's Story for 7–11s* is granted for the pages that contain the photocopying clause: 'Reproduced with permission from *God's Story for 7–11s* by Becky May (Barnabas for Children, 2016) www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk', so long as reproduction is for use in a teaching situation by the original purchaser. The right to photocopy material is not granted for anyone other than the original purchaser without written permission from BRF.

The Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA)

If you are resident in the UK and you have a photocopying licence with the Copyright Licensing Agency (CLA) please check the terms of your licence. If your photocopying request falls within the terms of your licence, you may proceed without seeking further permission. If your request exceeds the terms of your CLA licence, please contact the CLA directly with your request. Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS UK, Tel: 020 7400 3100, email cla@cla.co.uk; web www.cla.co.uk. The CLA will provide photocopying authorisation and royalty fee information on behalf of BRF.

The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) is a Registered Charity (233280).

Becky May

GOD'S STORY FOR 7-11s

36 Bible-based sessions for
midweek and Sunday groups

Contents

Introduction	6
--------------------	---

Old Testament stories

1. God creates the world.....	12
2. Adam and Eve make a bad choice	15
3. Noah and the ark	18
4. God's promise to Abraham and Sarah	21
5. Joseph is taken to Egypt.....	24
6. Joseph serves God.....	27
7. The baby in the basket.....	31
8. Escape from Egypt	34
9. God's special rules	37
10. Joshua and the walls of Jericho	40
11. Ruth: someone who cared	43
12. Samuel: a boy who listened	46
13. David and Goliath	49
14. David and Jonathan	52
15. King David praises God	55
16. Elijah and the fire	58
17. Daniel and the lions	61
18. Jonah: God's messenger	64

New Testament stories

19. Mary and the angel.....	68
20. Jesus is born	71
21. Jesus in the temple	74
22. Jesus' baptism	77
23. Jesus chooses his disciples	80
24. The wise and foolish builders	83
25. Jesus heals a paralysed man.....	86
26. The farmer and his seeds.....	89
27. Jesus feeds 5000 people	92
28. The good Samaritan	95
29. The lost sheep	98
30. The lost coin	101
31. The prodigal son.....	104
32. Jesus notices Zacchaeus.....	107
33. Palm Sunday.....	110
34. A very sad day and a very happy day	113
35. Jesus returns to heaven.....	116
36. God sends his helper	119
Templates.....	123

Introduction

This is the third and final book in a series exploring many of the key events from God's story, through a creative and diverse curriculum, with activities designed to meet the needs of children with a range of learning styles. Together with the curriculum for under 5-year-olds and 5- to 7-year-olds, this book completes the set, providing age-appropriate activities and ideas for 7- to 11-year-olds.

Who is this book for?

This curriculum has been prepared for anybody who wants to share God's big story with children aged 7–11. 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 can be used both in a midweek children's group and a Sunday morning group, perhaps alongside the main church services. For smaller, mixed age groups, you may find it helpful to use some of the activities contained within this book alongside those suggested in the other two books in the series, to create a programme that works well for your particular group.

The 36 sessions, which run in sequence, work together to tell God's big story from creation to Pentecost. Within one academic year, there is not time to explore the whole Bible, so this book contains a selection of key stories from both the Old and New Testaments.

Story time

For this age group (unlike the books for younger children), the story has been placed at the beginning of the session, with a range of related activities suggested to follow on from it. However, you may prefer to share the story after you have completed the other activities, depending upon the needs of your children and your own preferred teaching style.

Suggestions are made about how to read or tell the story. They often involve a small group reading the Bible together or enacting the story through drama activities, as described below, but there are occasions when other means are used to tell and explore the story together. In addition, you will find a number of open-ended questions to use as discussion starters with the children. They are by no means exhaustive and are intended to provide children with a starting point for thinking and discussing some of the things that we can learn from the story. You will also find key points required for explanation and further points for the children's own personal reflection and application.

Activity areas

Each of the 36 sessions explores the story and themes through a selection of different activities. These meet the needs of children with a number of different learning styles and preferences, and of different ages and abilities. Where you have time, space and available adults to support the children's learning, the curriculum works best if all activities can be prepared and set up for the children to explore. For smaller groups, or those with other constraints on resources, try to provide a variety and range of activities that meet the needs of all the children, choosing from the activities described below, perhaps from different categories each session.

The drama activity or a group discussion could be completed by the whole group together at the start of the session, to share the theme and set the scene for further learning and exploration through a range of other activities. It is suggested that the other activities are set up to run simultaneously, allowing the children to choose which activities to engage with in the time given. At the end, there is an opportunity to bring the group back together as you draw things to a close.

Included with the activities are a selection of things that adult helpers can talk about with the children as they complete the tasks. If you have enough helpers available, an adult could work alongside the children at every station. If this is not the case, you could either talk to the children at specific activity areas or create space within the group time at the end of the session to explore some of the ideas and questions raised.

Below you will find a short explanation of each activity area, with instructions on how to set up the environment for the best possible outcome.

Drama

These activities often offer a suggestion about how the children can re-enact the Bible story, using a variety of simple drama techniques. At other times, the activities provide an opportunity to explore some of the wider themes found within the Bible story, in a way which relates more to the children's own experiences, encouraging them to think about how to apply the lessons they learn from the story.

ICT

These activities make use of a range of ICT techniques, many of which will be familiar to the children. The activities require a few widely available resources, such as a laptop or tablet with access to the internet, with only a few other easy-to-source pieces of equipment and no expensive software programmes. You will need to ensure that the children understand how to work safely when accessing the internet.

Creative

The activities suggested here make use of a wide variety of artistic techniques, materials and equipment. Some of the activities are designed for collaborative work, perhaps to create something for use elsewhere in the sessions, while others enable the children to make something to take away with them as a reminder of the session or the themes explored.

Construction

Many of the suggested construction activities enable the children to work together as a team to create something on a larger scale. These activities could be carried out in small competing teams or as a whole-group collaboration. There are also opportunities for individual construction. The construction activities make use of different materials, tools and techniques and will often require adult supervision to ensure the children's safe working.

Writing

The suggested writing activities offer a quiet, reflective, individual activity for the children to engage with, alongside the more active and collaborative activities suggested elsewhere. A 'quiet table' with the required resources will be needed, as well as support for children who have difficulty in writing but choose to engage with this activity.

Books

Each session outline suggests a number of themes that can be explored in a selection of books. These could include Bibles and books that retell the story, alongside other related Bible stories with which the children can make connections and discover more about the related themes of the session. A reading area, perhaps with a rug, cushions or beanbags, would help to make this activity appealing and accessible for the group.

Prayer and reflective activity

These activities are adult-led, offering a significant opportunity to discuss the teaching of the session and to raise issues or questions in greater depth. They also provide children with a creative opportunity to respond to the teaching of the session at a personal level, perhaps through personal prayer or a practical application to their own daily lives.

Games

Most of the suggested games are large and active, including team games and well-known playground games. Some simple items of equipment will be required, alongside a large playing space. On other occasions, suggestions are made for board games that children can play together in smaller groups.

Challenge

These activities involve an element of problem solving or competition, sometimes taking the form of an extra game or construction activity. They offer a combination of collaborative and individual ways to engage and respond.

Prayer

A short concluding prayer is offered, which draws together the key learning points of the session and provides children with an opportunity to respond in a simple 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

For each session, one or two songs are suggested, which can be sung together, either with a live musician leading or with backing track recordings. A number of the songs make use of simple actions for the children to learn and use. You may also need to think about projecting the words for children to follow.

Take home

At the close of each session, a suggestion is made for something that the children can do in the following week to put into practice or further explore the themes of the session. It might involve encouraging the children to take home something that they have made, or to go away and find out something new. There are times when you may find it helpful to recap in the following session, inviting the children to share what they have learnt or raise any further questions they may have, continuing the discipling journey.



16

Elijah and the fire

For the team

Session theme

In this session, we discover one of the stories about the prophet Elijah and how he challenged King Ahab in his beliefs. As a messenger of God, Elijah was not afraid to share God's messages with people, no matter how challenging or difficult. This session reminds us that our God is able to deal with all challenges; nothing is too difficult for him.

Bible text: 1 Kings 18

Team prayer

Thank you, God, that you are the true God, who will never let us down. You are in every circumstance and every situation, and nothing is too difficult for you. Amen

Refer to pages 6–9 to see how the activity areas work together

Story time

Share the story together, looking at the Bible passage, or in a children's Bible story book, or perhaps retelling the story orally. Alternatively, discuss the points and questions suggested below as you complete the drama activity.

- How do you think Elijah felt when he stood on the mountain?
- What do you think King Ahab and his men expected to happen?
- What surprised you most about this story?
- What do we discover about God?

Explain to the children that this story happened during a difficult period for God's people, when they had a series of different rulers, some who were good and others who had their own ideas about how to govern the people, not following God's instructions. There were many times when God's people found it hard to trust God and to do the things that he said, but through all of this God was faithful to his people and never let them down.

Say: I wonder if there are times when we find it hard to trust God. I wonder if there are times when we feel as though we are on our own in trusting God. Just as God was there for Elijah, he is there for us too. We are never on our own when we follow God; he is always with us.

Activity areas

Drama

Ask for one volunteer to play the part of Elijah and the other children to stand on the side of Ahab. Provide a selection of props, including stones (or small boxes) for building the altars, a watering can and coloured cellophane or tissue paper flames. As you read the story, encourage the children to ad lib appropriately, playing the roles they have been assigned, and responding to the story as their given characters would.

Talk about how surprising this story was. When the story begins and you see Elijah standing alone, you may wonder what he could do against the king and all his men, but Elijah had God on his side and was not alone.

ICT

Set up a laptop with a camera and simple motion grabbing software to create a short stop motion animation film which retells the story of Elijah and how God sent fire on the altar. You will need small play figures for the characters and simple props such as stones to build the altar and fiery coloured modelling clay or cellophane to represent the flames.

Talk about how the children will retell the story, perhaps sketching a simple storyboard first, as they think about how to include all the details needed.

Creative

Source a number of plain glass tea-light holders, together with tissue paper in fiery colours and PVA glue, or glass paints or pens. Invite the children to decorate their own tea-light holder to create a flame design around the glass. You could provide a tea-light or battery operated tea-light for the children to put into their holder to see the decoration light up.

Talk about the way that God sent fire down to the altar, consuming everything that was there and proving that he is the one true God.

Construction

Provide copies of the passage 1 Kings 18:30–35 and access to the things that the children will need to build the altar in the same way that Elijah did: large stones, wood and water, perhaps in a sand tray where they can dig a trench too. Invite the children to read the passage and to copy the actions of Elijah in building his altar.

Talk about each element of the altar, what the stones represented, why Elijah poured water over it, and so on. Explain that in Elijah's time, people had to make sacrifices to God for the things they had done wrong, but when Jesus went to the cross, that was the ultimate sacrifice, made for each of us.

Writing

Provide some flame shapes cut from red, orange and yellow paper and invite the children to write their own prayers on these flames, which can later be combined with the rock shapes used in the prayer and reflective activity, to create a small display.

Talk about how the children feel about praying independently, and any issues or questions raised. This story reminds us that God is the true God who hears and answers our prayers.

Books

Display a selection of children's Bibles and Bible story books, retelling this and other stories from the life of Elijah.

Talk about the things that interest the children when they look at the books, as appropriate, and be available to support those less able to read independently. You may like to explain more about who Elijah was, and the things that he did.

Prayer and reflective activity

Prepare some cards in rock shapes and invite the children to add their own names for God, or words to describe God on each of the paper rocks. Use the shapes to build a picture of the altar.

Talk about the way that altars were used at this time to make a sacrifice to God as an act of worship. We do not need to do this any more as we use other ways of telling God how great he is.

Prayer

Father God, thank you that you are the true God and that nothing is too big or too difficult for you. Help us to trust in you, just as Elijah did, and do the things that you say. Amen

Songs

Songs today could include:

- 'No other God' (Paul Jones)

Take home

Challenge the children when they go home to discover more of the stories of Elijah, perhaps using a Bible or children's Bible story book, or using an online Bible. If appropriate, you may wish to provide them with a list of particular passages to look up, to discover more about this messenger of God.



28

The good Samaritan

For the team

Session theme

This session explores one of Jesus' better-known parables and challenges us to think about those people we may normally choose to ignore. Through the activities we explore how we can be a good neighbour to all, regardless of status or background, showing love to everyone.

Bible text: Luke 10:25–37

Team prayer

Lord Jesus, for the times when we do not live out the things that you teach us, we are sorry. May we share honestly the times when we find your teachings challenging, and encourage the children with whom we work to do the same. Amen

Refer to pages 6–9 to see how the activity areas work together

Story time

Share the story with the children from an appropriate Bible translation or Bible story book, or encourage the children to discuss the points raised as they complete the drama activity below.

- Why do you think the man asked this question?
- How do you think the people who heard the story would have reacted to what Jesus was saying?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to tell this story?
- How does this story challenge us?

Explain to the children that this story would have been very powerful to those who first heard it. Jesus chose to tell the story, using groups of people that the audience would have been familiar with, to help them understand what it meant to really love our neighbour. You may wish to explain this in more detail and explain who Jesus was referring to in the story.

Say: I wonder who we could put into the story to make it as challenging for us today. I wonder who we might be challenged to show love for, as a neighbour. Jesus was not just telling a feel-good story; he was challenging his listeners to understand that being a neighbour, as God wanted, meant showing extravagant love to the most unlikely people.

Activity areas

Drama

Explore the parable together from the Bible text before setting the children the challenge of retelling it in a modern context. Encourage the children to think about who would take the place of the key characters if Jesus were telling the story today.

Talk about how this parable is still as powerful and challenging now as it was at the time when Jesus first told it. How does changing some of the details to bring it up to date help us to better understand the meaning of the parable?

ICT

If possible, take the children out into the local area (this activity can be combined with the prayer and reflective activity) to take some digital photos to show what makes up your neighbourhood.

Talk about who your neighbours really are. How well do you know the different groups represented in your local area? What can you do to get to know them better?

Creative

Use the photographs taken in the ICT activity, together with a selection of pictures taken from magazines and newspapers, to create a collage of 'our neighbours', both on a local and a global scale.

Talk about how we are connected to all these people. What is it that brings us all together? How can we show neighbourly love to these people, even when they are far away from us?

Construction

Source a large number of small building bricks and ask the children to construct a detailed model of the scene, showing the road from Jerusalem to Jericho and what occurred there in this parable. Provide Bibles or copies of the story for the children to use as they decide what to include in their model.

Talk about what happened in the story and the significance of the location of the events. Why did Jesus choose to include a Samaritan as the hero of the tale? What does this story tell us about how we judge others?

Writing

Before the session, consider the opportunities that you have to form links with other communities, perhaps a church of a different ethnic background whose members meet in your own local area, or a Christian mission organisation working overseas, to which you are linked. Provide writing paper and pens and invite the children to write introductory letters to the other community, as a first step towards forging links with them, which can be followed up over time.

Talk about the way that we are all linked as children of God, no matter what differences there are between us. Discuss the children's thoughts and ideas as they write their letters, and the issues raised.

Prayer and reflective activity

If possible, go out into your local community and sit down together somewhere that you can watch what is going on close by. If you cannot go out to complete this reflection, film some footage of a local area that you can replay to the group.

Talk about the things that you see when you look really closely at your local community. Who or what often passes us by unnoticed? How can we make sure that we do not ignore anyone and the things which they may need?

Challenge

Arrange for one of your leaders, who has the appropriate skills or qualifications, to teach your group some basic first aid skills, perhaps looking at wound dressing, practising on one another.

Talk about the way that the good Samaritan in the story took care of the man he found, tending to his wounds and getting him to a place where he could be looked after.

Prayer

Father God, thank you that we are all your children, known and loved by you. Help us to show love to others, regardless of how different they are from us, so that we can be good neighbours. Amen

Songs

Songs today could include:

- 'You can reach out' (Doug Horley)

Take home

Suggest to the children that they look for an opportunity to show love to somebody else in their community, with their parents' permission, and offer help as needed—walking a dog for a neighbour or baking cakes to take into school, for example.

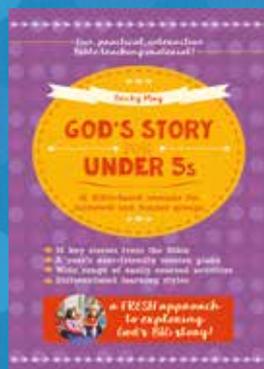


LET'S SHARE GOD'S BIG STORY!

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 drama, ICT, creative, construction, writing, reflective activity, games, challenges, 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.



Barnabas
for
Children

An imprint of BRF
978-0-85746-426-2

UK £12.99



9 780857 464262

Design by Rebecca J Hall

Visit barnabasinchurches.org.uk for resources
for your ministry among children and families