

Overview

During the regular school year, part of each *Promise* lesson is always dedicated to hearing the Sunday Gospel story. In this lesson, the children will learn the Parable of the Good Samaritan and act it out using finger puppets.

Share Experiences

Gathering Ritual: Have volunteers prepare the ritual space in your classroom. Ask the children to gather there as they arrive. Begin with the Sign of the Cross. Invite the children to offer petitions that they would like the group to pray about. After each petition, lead the children in the response that your parish uses at Sunday Eucharist. Then invite children to thank God for people or events for which they are thankful. Conclude this sharing by thanking God for the members of the class and asking God to bless your time together. Close by singing “Yes, Lord, I Believe” (*Promise/Good News Music CD, CD-2, #26*).

Telling Stories: A.A. Milne, the creator of Winnie-the-Pooh, was the youngest of three sons. He recalled that when the three boys snuggled on the sofa with their dad to hear a folk tale, the story would often begin, “There once was a man who had three sons.” Milne’s two older brothers would immediately jab an elbow in his ribs because they knew which of the sons would be the hero and get the princess—the third son. In the three little pigs, it is the third pig who outwits the wolf. Good stories use the rhythm of threes to help us anticipate and remember.

Use the following outline to tell the story of the three little pigs to your class. Many of them will know it and be able to add details.

Materials

- Copies of the “Gospel Puppets” activity page
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils; scissors; tape
- If possible, have an aide or parent volunteers available to help with the cutting and taping. You may also wish to prepare a set of your own puppets to accompany your reading of the parable.
- *Promise/Good News Music CD* and CD player

Three little pigs left home to be on their own. They each built a house:

- *First pig built a house of straw.*
- *Second pig built a house made of sticks.*
- *Third pig built a house of bricks.*

A big bad wolf heard there were pigs living in his neighborhood. He decided he would eat them all up. The wolf went to the house of straw first.

“Little pig, little pig, let me in,” the wolf demanded.

“Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin,” the little pig replied.

“Then I’ll huff and I’ll puff and I’ll blow your house in,” the wolf declared.

So the wolf huffed and puffed and blew the house down. But the little pig escaped and went to his brother in the house of sticks.

(Repeat as above for the second and third pigs.)

When the wolf tried to blow the house of bricks down, it was too strong. The wolf huffed and puffed, but nothing happened. Finally he decided to climb on the roof and slide down the chimney. But the three little pigs caught on to his plan. They had a big pot of hot water waiting in the fireplace. The wolf landed in the pot, screamed and yelled, and ran out of the house and into the forest. The wolf never bothered the piggies again.



Ask the children what makes this a fun story. *Scary, but not too scary. Know the wolf will be defeated. Repetition. Happy ending.* Does the story teach a lesson? Think ahead about danger. *Help your friends. Use your imagination to solve a problem.*

Tell the children Jesus was a good storyteller. His stories were called parables. Write the word *parable* on the board or newsprint. A parable is a story that teaches a lesson about people and how to behave. Ask them to listen carefully to the parable you will read or tell to them.

Discover Gospel and Doctrine

The Parable of the Good Samaritan: Read this story of the Good Samaritan aloud, or tell it in your own words. Set the scene for the children by telling them that Jesus liked to teach. Lots of times the people he was teaching would have questions for him. This time, Jesus answered the question by telling a story. Ask them to listen carefully so they can tell the story back to you.

The story is in reader parts. If your children are strong readers, you may wish to duplicate the story and assign parts. Or ask another adult to be the teacher and the three men while you are storyteller and Jesus.

STORYTELLER: One day, a person who studied and taught others about God's law had a question for Jesus.

TEACHER: Jesus, what must I do to have life forever?

JESUS: What does the law of God say?

TEACHER: You shall love God with your whole heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and you must love your neighbor the same way you love yourself.

JESUS: That's right! Do this and you will live forever.

TEACHER: Jesus, who is my neighbor?

STORYTELLER: Jesus didn't answer. Instead, he told the teacher a story.

JESUS: There was a man who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robbers stopped him, took his money, beat him up, and left him for dead. After a while an important person in the Temple walked by on that same road.

TEACHER: What did he do?

JESUS: He saw the man who was hurt, but he didn't stop. He went to the other side of the road, and kept going to Jerusalem. Another man, a Temple assistant, came by, too, but he didn't stop either. Finally, a man from Samaria came down the road.

TEACHER: The people from Samaria are not pleasing to God. They do not keep God's laws.

JESUS: But the Samaritan stopped. He bandaged the man's wounds, put him on his own donkey, and took him to an inn.

SAMARITAN: Please take care of this man. Here is money. I will stop on my way back and make sure the man is okay.

JESUS: Which one of the three people who saw the hurt man was a neighbor to him?

TEACHER: The one who stopped and took care of him.

JESUS: Go and act like him.

Luke 10:25-37



Help the children retell the story. Be sure they know that people in Jesus' time thought men from Samaria were not pleasing to God. Ask questions about why the first two people did not stop and help. Accept the children's speculations. Why did the third man stop? What do they think the teacher who questioned Jesus thought about his story? Did Jesus' answer help him know what to do? Why did Jesus tell this story rather than just answer the teacher's question?

Role Plays: Gather the children at one end of your meeting space. Read aloud the following scenarios and let four children act them out using the pattern of Jesus' parable.

- A bully has dumped a first-grader's backpack all over the playground. The first-grader is trying to get all his papers back before they blow away.

Ask for one child to be the first grader. Two others walk by and tell why they can't stop. The third child helps. Continue with as many other scenarios as you have time.

- Your teacher has her arms full of books and bags of things and wants to get into school.
- Your little brother is crying in his booster seat. Your mom is making supper.
- Your little sister is sitting on the swing in your yard. She wants a push.
- A classmate forgot his lunch.

Sing: Conclude your Gospel time by gathering in a circle and singing. The children can learn by repeating the lines after you and then singing it though a few times.

Sing to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It":

If someone has a problem, stop and help.
If someone has a problem, stop and help.
Don't pass by the needy one,
Even though it's not always fun.
If someone has a problem, stop and help.

Live the Gospel

Gospel Puppets: Distribute copies of the "Gospel Puppet" activity page and crayons, colored pencils, or markers. Identify the four people from Jesus' story. Give the children time to color and cut out the puppets. Divide your class into groups of four. Each child tapes one of the figures around his or her index and middle fingers of one hand. If your class is small, the children can put a puppet on each hand.

Begin the story by reminding the children of the conversation between Jesus and the teacher.

Then ask a group to use their puppets to tell the story. They will have to imagine how the hurt man is feeling and what the three travelers feel when they see him and have to decide whether they should help or not. The puppets are in present-day clothes, so the children don't have to remember anything about the Temple. Let all the groups participate in telling the parable to the group, using their puppets.

Someone might ask why none of the characters is a woman. In Jesus' time, most women did not travel or have jobs. They worked at home growing food and taking care of the children and the animals. Whole families would go to Jerusalem for special feast days. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph went to Jerusalem the time Jesus stayed behind in the Temple and his parents thought he was lost.

Closing Prayer: Close by singing the Gospel song again.

Gospel Puppets



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