



## What is a story circle?

This storytelling technique has proved particularly useful and adaptable for us in the Barnabas Children's Ministry Team. You can use it to tell most Bible stories and it is also a way of involving your entire group in simple acting without embarrassment.

## How does it work?

- Sit your group in a circle and number off everyone 1 to 5 or just 1 to 3 for a smaller group. The idea is that there should be at least two or more with the same number.
- Say: 'This is our story circle. When I begin telling the story, I will call out a certain number. If that is your number, then please come into the centre of the circle ('on stage'), take a bow and be ready to mime the story.
- 'Every now and again, I will wave my arms over the circle, this clears the circle and you sit back in your place. I will then invite out another number group to continue acting the story'.
- Start your story by inviting all the 3s to enter the story circle, as you have explained. Keep clearing it so that the children know that they can all have a chance to act, and that clearing doesn't mean they have failed in some way.
- Include lots of actions in your storytelling - don't just say 'He was happy' - say 'He grinned from ear to ear'. And use lots of colourful adverbs and phrases - e.g. he walked very cautiously.....and he dug with all his might etc.
- Don't force anyone to act, but because everyone can have a go and no one is being 'exposed' for long, most people are happy to join in.
- Wherever possible, turn and involve the ones who are not acting at any given moment and who are the audience, by inviting them to contribute ideas or comment - e.g. 'now, what did he pack for his journey?', 'which way should she go?' or 'do you think he looks really tired?'

As the storyteller, you simply narrate the Bible story and each group of actors brings it to life. Aim to keep it moving at a fairly fast pace and change the group of actors as often as possible.

## Give it a go!

Here is an example of a version of a Bible story written by Lucy Moore, designed to be told in this way. Change the acting group with every new paragraph.

### **Matthew 13: 44** - A hidden treasure

Gordon was walking home very early in the morning. He had been at a party all night. He rubbed his aching head and his aching legs.

He wasn't looking where he was going and all of a sudden he tripped up! Gordon sat on the dewy ground rubbing his toes and frowning.



But then he wondered what he'd tripped over. He stretched out his hand and felt around... until he found a sharp edge sticking up out of the grassy field.

He knelt down and scrabbled away with his hands, only pausing now and then to wipe his sweaty face.

And he heaved and he tugged and he pulled, until the shape popped out of the ground, knocking him over backwards. And what should it be, but an enormous treasure chest!

Gordon heaved open the massive lid and looked inside. He lifted out beautiful diamond necklaces... bags of gold coins... strings of pearls... and a horrible old mouldy sandwich that must have dropped in there by mistake.

Gordon grinned from ear to ear - what a find! But then he scratched his head. No-one except him knew it was there, but the treasure still belonged to the person who owned the field. He had an idea!

Gordon put the treasure chest back in the hole, shovelled the earth back over it, and arranged it to look like a molehill.

Then he ran home, got out his wheelbarrow and put in it everything he owned - his lap-top, his bike and his wide-screen TV. Then he wheeled it down to the second hand shop.

He sold everything, grabbed the money, went to the farmer, bought the field and ran back to dig up the treasure which was now his. Yippee