



# INTRODUCTION

Get ready to have lots of fun with the children in your class! Believe me, they will love these brief excursions into the lives of biblical people. To make the best use of these activities you might want to use the following directions for sharing each type of story.

## ■ ACTION STORIES

Action stories include gestures and movements to interpret each line. This method involves children in the process and assures that the Bible story is meaningful as well as memorable.

To use an action story, have the group of listeners sit or stand facing the leader who tells the story and demonstrates all motions. Words to be repeated can be written out on newsprint or on a chalkboard or can simply be emphasized with the voice so that the listeners understand the key word(s). The group or the leader may also improvise additional gestures and movements.

## ■ ECHO STORIES

In an echo story the leader says a line and places special emphasis on the last phrase of each sentence, the capitalized words in the script. A gesture, such as raising a palm at the point where repetition is to begin, gives the children a clue to listen carefully for the words they are to repeat. Then the leader and the participants echo or recite these words together.

## ■ RHYTHM STORIES

The words of rhythm stories can be written on newsprint or on a chalkboard or may simply be emphasized with the voice.

To tell the story, have the children sit or stand facing the leader. Begin by establishing the clapping pattern, one clap on the knees and one clap of the hands. Practice the beat several times. Say the first line of the story to this rhythm and tell the group to echo (or repeat) it back. Communicate the entire story in this manner. Maintain the established rhythm throughout.

## ■ SYLLABLE STORIES

Share a Bible passage by using the two syllables in each line to tell the story. Establish the rhythm by slapping thighs once and snapping fingers of first one hand and then the other. Maintain this rhythmic pattern throughout the entire story. Say one syllable of the first line as thighs are slapped and the second syllable as fingers are snapped. The entire narrative is told in this quick, catchy manner.

These stories are ideal for faith formation classes, parochial school programs, vacation Bible school sessions, intergenerational events, family devotions, home schooling, and more. The beauty of this book is that no matter your teaching situation and no matter the lesson assigned, you can use and re-use the contents to find a fresh approach to telling biblical stories—and, ultimately, to help children make them their stories. Jesus used storytelling as his primary teaching tool, and he improvised his lessons based on his listeners and their needs. While none of us can expect to teach like the Master, we *can* adopt a more flexible approach that allows creativity and innovation to guide our lesson preparation and presentation.

Have fun with these stories—I know you will.

—*Phyllis Vos Wezeman*