

Pastor John's Favorite Bible Stories for Children

These are Pastor John's 30 favorite Bible stories to read to, and to share with, children. This list is not exhaustive, and you may not see your favorite Bible story represented. Please feel free to add your favorite story to the list.

Genesis 2:4b—3:24

The second creation narrative, which includes the story of Adam and Eve, as well as the human propensity to be as God (*Genesis 3:4-8*). It is a great story to indicate our inherent disobedience. On examination of the text, God's response and the human response tells the story of the need for reconciliation in Christ Jesus.

Genesis 4:1-16

Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve. The story is violent and a painful reminder of the result of sin. Murder and sibling rivalry have arrived on the scene.

Genesis 6—8

The story of Noah—a great prelude to baptism given, as indicated in *1 Peter 3:20-21*. As God saves Noah and his family, so he saves his own beloved in the flood of the waters of baptism. The dove imagery is a symbol that foreshadows God's promises and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 18

The dynamic of Abraham's call, lived out in relationship to Sarah. While Sarah laughed, the Lord fulfilled his promises of offspring in the birth of Isaac (*Genesis 21:1-7*).

Genesis 22

The story of Abraham and Isaac, and the provisions of God amidst Abraham's faith.

Genesis 28

Jacob's dream and the promise of God's presence to Jacob: *"I am with you wherever you go."*

Genesis 37

The betrayal of Joseph by his brothers and the selling of him to the Ishmaelites.

Genesis 45

The forgiveness on the part of Joseph his betrayal by his brothers—the brothers meant the sale for evil, but God turned the circumstances around for good—to provide mercy and forgiveness unearned.

Exodus 3

Moses at the burning bush, where God declares to Moses who he is: *"I am who I am."* (*Exodus 3:14*)

Exodus 14

Crossing the Red (or Reed) Sea, where the Lord delivers the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. A narrative that would be held in the deepest memory by the people of Israel, as well as a precursor to the rescue from bondage provided by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Exodus 16

Bread from heaven. A great way to connect to *John 6:31-35*, where Jesus retells the story of God providing manna, or bread, in the wilderness and now describes himself as the Bread of Life. Both stories also provide tremendous sacramental imagery for the body of Christ given, the Bread of Life.

Exodus 19, 20, 24

The giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses and the subsequent listing of the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 32

The golden calf narrative—the impatience and disobedience of the people while they wait for Moses to return from Sinai, in addition to Aaron’s culpability. A stunning text and story on how quickly God’s people neglect and forget the promises of God.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20-25

Recite these words to your children. Diligently observe all that God has commanded you.

1 Samuel 3:1-18

The calling of Samuel as a young boy: *“Here I am Lord, speak to your servant.”*

1 Samuel 17

David and Goliath. A story of faith, courage, and the presence of God against overwhelming odds.

2 Samuel 11

David, God’s chosen one, falls into temptation and sin with Bathsheba. The treachery runs very deep as the cover-up literally destroys lives, especially in the case of Uriah the Hittite. 2 Samuel 12 adds beautifully to the story as the prophet Nathan names David’s sin. The king has fallen.

Ruth 1—4

A great story of loyalty and faithfulness beyond ethnic or religious heritage: *“Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.”*

Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 6:20-26

Memorize the Beatitudes. Enunciate the text to your children that they may savor the words of Jesus, radically articulated.

Luke 2:21-36

Simeon and the story of Jesus being presented at the temple—glorious words—also a critical part of the liturgy.

Luke 5:1-11

The great catch of fish and Simon Peter's confession of his own unworthiness.

Luke 9:28-36; Mark 9:2-9; Matthew 17:1-8

The Transfiguration narrative. A great text to accentuate the chosenness of Jesus. Also, a festival in the church year, the last Sunday prior to Ash Wednesday.

Matthew 13:24-50

The parables of the Kingdom, with explanations—graphic illustrations of Jesus using things of the earth, ordinary things, to highlight what the Kingdom of Heaven is.

Luke 10:29-37

The Good Samaritan—a tremendous story of inclusion and radical love, demonstrated in response to a presumption of goodness and self-justification (*Luke 10:23-26*).

Luke 15:1-32

The story of (1) the Two Lost Sons, (2) the Prodigal Son, or (3) the Running Father—a glaring example of God's coming in Jesus not for the righteous but the sinner, not for the found but the lost.

Luke 22:14-20; Mark 14:22-25; Matthew 26:26-29

The Last Supper narratives.

John 13:3-16, 31-34

The Footwashing narrative—a stunning scene that connects beautifully to the Maundy Thursday ritual of footwashing.

John 19

The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which the Gospel of John handles in a compelling and elaborate manner.

John 20:1-18; Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12

The Resurrection narratives.

Acts 9:1-23

The Conversion of St. Paul—a story of ongoing significance to the life of the church, and the beginnings of the Christian faith.

