

# HOW TO DO A DEVOTIONAL CYCLE USING BIBLE STORYTELLING

## DEVOTIONAL CYCLE:

- A Devotional Cycle explains, illustrates and applies a Life Lesson (Bible truth).
- The number of Life Lessons and illustrations depends upon the needs of your specific group of listeners and the time available.

## PRESENTATION:

- **First, tell the Bible story.**
- After telling the Bible story, do the  
**DEVOTIONAL CYCLE.**
  - **State the first Life Lesson** (a Bible truth taken from the story that applies to the lives of the listeners). Afterwards:
    - (1) **Explain** the Life Lesson (Bible truth).
    - (2) **Illustrate** the Life Lesson (Bible truth).  
Use one or more illustrations from the Bible and/or from everyday life situations.
    - (3) **Apply** the Life Lesson (Bible truth) to the lives of the listeners.
      - *If you are finished, stop. Option: End with prayer.*
      - *If you are not finished, continue.*
  - **State the second Life Lesson.**
    - (1) **Explain.**
    - (2) **Illustrate.**
    - (3) **Apply.**
      - If you are finished, give a **conclusion**: briefly summarize the first and second Life Lessons.
      - *If you are not finished, continue.*
  - **State the third Life Lesson.**
    - (1) **Explain.**
    - (2) **Illustrate.**
    - (3) **Apply.**
  - **Conclusion:**
    - Briefly summarize the first, second and third Life Lessons.
    - **Suggestion:** Close each devotion with prayer.

## EXAMPLE OF A DEVOTIONAL CYCLE

**BIBLE STORY:** “Parable of the Talents”

**TEXT:** Matthew 25:14-28

**BIBLE STORY:**

**BACKGROUND OF STORY (Initial Situation):**

■ On a certain occasion Jesus was sitting on the Mountain of Olives with His disciples. He told them several parables. One of these parables or stories was called the Parable of the Talents.

■ In Jesus day, one talent was worth more than a thousand dollars in today’s currency.

■ (As you tell the Parable of the Talents, keep your Bible open to the story.)

**STORY (PARABLE):**

A man was going on a journey. Before leaving he called his three servants, entrusting his belongings to them. To the first servant he gave five talents. To the second servant he gave two talents. And to the third servant he gave one talent. He gave each one according to their capabilities. Then he left on his journey.

The first servant with five talents left immediately and gained five more talents.

The second servant with two talents also left immediately and gained two more talents.

But the third servant with one talent dug a hole and hid his talent in the ground.

After a long time, the master returned from his journey. He called his servants to him, wanting them to give account of the belongings he entrusted them with while he was gone.

The first servant said: *“Master, you entrusted me with five talents and I have gained five more talents.”*

The master replied, *“Well done good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things and I will give you more responsibility. Celebrate with me!”*

The second servant said, *“Master, you entrusted me with two talents and I have gained two more talents.”*

The master replied, *“Well done good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things and I will give you more responsibility. Celebrate with me!”*

The third servant said, *“Master, I knew that you were a hard master. You harvest where you have not sown seeds. You gather where you have not scattered seeds. I was afraid. So I hid my talent. See, here it is, just the way you gave it to me.”*

But the master replied, *“You knew that I was a hard master! I harvest where I have not sown seeds! I gather where I have not scattered seeds! At least you could have deposited this money in the bank and brought back the interest to me!”* The master took away his talent and punished this servant.

■ Close the Bible and say, *“This is the Parable of the Talents.”*

### **1<sup>st</sup> LIFE LESSON: Talents and abilities need to be developed to honor God.**

**Explanation:** The first two servants received their talents and immediately multiplied their talents. Their master was very pleased and gave them more responsibilities.

**Illustration (1):** The Old Testament tells how David developed his talents and abilities for God.

When King David was a young boy, he helped his father by watching their flock of sheep. Through God’s help, David struck and killed a bear

and a lion in order to protect the sheep.

Later his father asked him to take some food and check on his brothers, who were fighting their enemies. He obeyed and left. When David arrived, he saw that everyone was afraid to fight against the enemy's nine foot leader Goliath. David told the king that with God's help he would fight Goliath. God helped David as he slung the rock from his sling shot and conquered Goliath!

Afterwards, King Saul gave David a high rank in his army. God enabled David to win every battle he fought.

Then David became king, leading God's people, the Israelites.

David was known as "a man after God's own heart."

**Illustration (2):**

King David also developed his music talent.

When David was a boy watching his flock of sheep, he wrote Psalms 23, "The Lord Is my shepherd; I shall not want..."

He played instruments. Several times he was invited to go and play music for King Saul, who was sick. David's music soothed and helped King Saul feel better.

Even today we can enjoy many of David's songs which are in Psalms in the Old Testament. His songs soothe our hearts to know God's majesty, power, forgiveness and grace.

**Application:**

God has given each of us talents. Some have several talents, while others may just have one. It doesn't matter how many talents we have or what our talents are, because God wants us to develop these talents for His honor and glory. When we do, He will be very pleased and increase our responsibilities.

*(Option: Continue with second Life Lesson.)*

**2<sup>nd</sup> LIFE LESSON: Fear can be overcome by trusting in God.**

**Explanation:**

The third servant was afraid and hid his talent. As a result he lost his talent.

**Illustration:**

When missionary Doris Day was in Brazil and began to do workshops on storytelling, she was afraid. One of things Doris was afraid of, was that the Brazilians might not understand her Portuguese. Her Portuguese pronunciation and grammar were not always correct. She asked herself, "Would they understand the Bible stories I shared, or would they inwardly laugh at my mistakes?"

Then Doris remembered the story of Moses. When God called Moses to go and talk with Pharaoh, the Egyptian ruler, to free the Israelite people, Moses was afraid. He told God that he couldn't do it, because he was not an eloquent speaker. God told him that He had made his mouth and He would help him speak and teach him what to say. But Moses still asked God to send someone else. As a result, God still used Moses, but He allowed Moses to have his brother Aaron help him with the task. Aaron was a great helper, but sometimes he hindered Moses' ministry.

So Doris decided to trust in God to help her with the task of telling Bible stories to people wherever He sent her. Doris learned that she could

not tell the Bible stories alone, but God would work through her. God enabled Doris to overcome her fears as she told His stories. And God touched the lives of the listeners to apply the truths found in the Bible stories to their lives. God continues to do immeasurably more than Doris can ever imagine.

**Application:** Whenever you are afraid, trust in God. If you are afraid to tell Bible stories, trust God to be with you as you tell the stories. God will use you far more than you can ever imagine.

**CONCLUSION:**

- Talents and abilities need to be developed for God's glory.
- Fear can be overcome by trusting in God.
- When we do this, we say the words of Paul in Ephesians 3:20-21, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory..." (NIV).

**PRAYER:** (optional)

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