

**The Case of the Runaway Who Ran Back***The Book of Philemon***Story-telling Tips**

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and/or prepare storyboard pictures, if using. (Included in Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the pictures, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary to fit your allotted time.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story.
2. Put up storyboard figures/add story action cues as you tell the story. Allow the children to help you put them on the board, if desired.
3. Include the children in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
4. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

**INTRODUCTION/ LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS**

**“Our story is called: The Case of the Runaway Who Ran Back. Here is your listening assignment... ”**

*Read from Detective Dan’s Listening Assignment signs, but questions are summarized below:*

**Detective Dan’s Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:**

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who ran away?
2. Why did he run back?

**Detective Dan’s Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**

Our Bible verse is Ephesians 5:1,2: “Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.”

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. What did Onesimus know he needed to do to live a life of love toward Philemon?
2. How could Philemon live a life of love to Onesimus when Onesimus asked him for forgiveness?

**Detective Dan’s Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:**

I found four clues, but one of them is NOT in the story.

They are: a hiding man; a house; a letter (scroll); a house; and, a monkey.

Hold up each of the four pictures for the children to see as you identify them. Better yet, put them up on your flannelgraph board, off to one side.

I need to know:

1. Which picture does not belong in the story?
2. How are the other three pictures important in the story?

**Detective Dan’s Lesson #4 Listening Assignment:**

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who asked Jesus to be his Savior?
2. What did they ask God to help them do, after they trusted in Jesus as their Savior?

**Detective Dan’s Lesson #5 Listening Assignment:**

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who heard the good news of Jesus and believed?
2. How did they change after they believed?

**Read the questions, THEN SAY,**

“Ok, Hide ‘n’ Seekers! Put on your best listening ears and see if you can hear the answers to Detective Dan’s questions. When I finish telling the story, we will see if we can answer all the questions.”

**“The Case of the Runaway Who Ran Back” The Book of Philemon**

*Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics) Numbers correspond to storyboard pictures and placement upon the storyboard. Always feel free to use less pictures, if it's best for your kids. Simply, black out the numbers next to pictures you do not plan to use. All pictures are found in the Visual Aids book. Put BG (background) pictures on storyboard ahead of time. SB pictures (listed below in story text) are added to board as you tell the story. These numbers are also found on the back of each picture.*

*Tip: Stack pictures in numerical order before telling story for easy use. Use sticky-back velcro to attach pictures to storyboard felt. Use sticky-tac putty to stick a picture on top of another picture.*

**(SB1) Philemon was a rich man who lived in the city of Colossae. He had a family and a big house with lots of land, and animals, and (SB2) people who worked for him.**

**Philemon was a very rich man in another way, too. He had been given a very special gift from God-- the one gift that makes a person richest of all. Can you guess what gift Philemon had been given?**

*Can you guess? We learned about it in our last story?*

**God had given Philemon the gift of (SB3) eternal life through Jesus!**

**Philemon (SB4) had travelled to a faraway city. And who happened to be there in that city at the same time? It was Paul! And I bet you can guess what Paul was doing there. He was sharing (SB5) the gospel-- the good news of Jesus-- with (SB6) all who would listen. Philemon stopped and listened with the others. This is (SB7) gospel Paul told them:**

**“(SB8) We are all sinners who disobey God. But God chose to send His Son, Jesus, to bring us back to Him!” Paul explained. “Jesus suffered and died on the cross. He paid for all the sins of God’s people with His own, perfect life, so they could be forgiven by God. On the third day, (SB9) Jesus rose up from the dead. He had beaten sin and death for God’s people!” Paul told them. “Come, be one of God’s people! Turn away from your sins! Trust in Jesus as your Savior and live for Him!” he invited them. “God wants to give you the wonderful gift of eternal life with Him.”**

**The (SB10) Holy Spirit worked in Philemon’s heart as he listened. He turned away from his sins and trusted in Jesus as his Savior. God forgave his sins and Philemon became one of God’s dearly loved people!**

**Philemon was so happy and so was Paul! “Thank you so much for telling me about Jesus!” Philemon told Paul. “I may be a rich man, but the gift of eternal life through Jesus is better than any riches!” Philemon now knew. He was so grateful to Paul.**

**But that was just the beginning. The Holy Spirit kept working inside of Philemon’s heart. (SB11) He helped him love God and live for Him more and more. So, when Philemon went home, he did things differently.**

*What are some things God might want Philemon to do, as one of His people?*

**Philemon (SB12) prayed to God and asked for His help to live each day for Him, and God did! Philemon told others (SB13) the gospel--the good news of Jesus. They turned from their sins and trusted in Jesus as their Savior, too. Soon, a (SB14) little church of people gathered at Philemon’s big house each week to worship God and help each other live for Him. How happy Philemon was!**

**Yes, Philemon was very happy, but there was someone else at Philemon’s house who was NOT happy at all! His name was (SB15) Onesimus.**

**Onesimus was a worker at Philemon’s house. Day after day, Onesimus worked. And day after day, Onesimus was unhappy. Onesimus became so unhappy that he decided to run away to a faraway city and never come back!**

**So...when no one was looking...(SB16,17) sneak, sneak, sneak, went Onesimus away from Philemon’s house. Onesimus ran and hid. Then he ran some more. Onesimus knew it was wrong to run away, but he did it anyway.**

**(SB18) Run, run, run, Onesimus! (SB19,20, 21) Hide, hide, hide, Onesimus!**

*Can you crouch down and pretend like you are hiding like Onesimus did?*

*Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)*

**Philemon (SB22) looked all over for Onesimus. Philemon was sad. Philemon was MAD! Onesimus was his worker! It was very, very bad that he ran away! If Philemon ever finds Onesimus, he will be in BIG trouble!**

**Philemon looked and looked, but he never found Onesimus. Onesimus had run away far, far away--all the way to the big city of Rome. There, among all those big buildings and all of those crowds of people, (SB23) Onesimus hoped he could hide and never be seen by Philemon!**

**Onesimus was right. Philemon never saw him in that big city, but someone else DID see him. Someone who knew Philemon, and had shared with him the good news of Jesus. Can you guess who it was?**

**It was (SB24) Paul! What would Paul do with Onesimus? Would he capture Onesimus and send him back to Philemon? Would he get Onesimus in trouble? Let's see...**

*Is Paul going to get Onesimus in trouble? What do you think?*

**Paul talked with Onesimus. He shared with him (SB25) the gospel--the good news of Jesus. And as Paul talked, (SB26) the Holy Spirit worked in Onesimus' heart, and he believed! Onesimus turned away from disobeying God and trusted in Jesus as His Savior. God forgave Onesimus, and gave him (SB27) the gift of eternal life. Onesimus had become one of God's people. He and Paul were so happy!**

*Let's cheer "yay"! Onesimus is one of God's people now!*

**But that was just the beginning. The Holy Spirit kept on working inside of Onesimus, helping him (SB28) love God and live for Him more and more. God used Paul to help Onesimus, too.**

**"God's people turn to God when they are in trouble. They don't run away," Paul told Onesimus. "They ask Him to help them do the right thing. You must go back and make things right with Philemon. This is what pleases God," Paul urged him.**

**"I will help you, too," Paul told Onesimus. "I will write a (SB29) letter to Philemon. Philemon may be a very rich man; and, you may be his worker, but most of all, you both love God and want to live for Him. That means loving and forgiving each other, too," Paul told him.**

**Onesimus listened to Paul and he knew what he had to do. He was one of God's people now. He had run away from Philemon. Now he had to run back. He needed to say sorry to Philemon. He needed to make things right with him. This was going to be very, very hard.**

**What WOULD Philemon do to Onesimus when he went back? Would (SB30) Philemon punish him? Would he forgive him? Onesimus didn't know and I wouldn't be at all surprised if he was very scared. Wouldn't you be?**

*Can you make a scared face? That's how Onesimus felt about going back to Philemon!*

**But as scared as Onesimus might have been to go back. And as much as he did not want to face Philemon, Onesimus wanted something even more. He wanted to do whatever God wanted him to do.**

**He was one of God's people now. He loved God and he wanted to live like Jesus would. Jesus trusted God and so would he! Yes, he would!**

**So Onesimus said goodbye to Paul and went (SB31) run, run, running back home to Philemon with Paul's letter in his hand. He trusted God to help him and Philemon with whatever happened next. And God did!**

*Let's cheer really loud! Yay! God helped Onesimus and Philemon!*

**Cracking the Case:** (story wrap-up for Listening Assignments)

It's time to see how we did with our Listening Assignment.

**Detective Dan's Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:**

- 1. Who ran away?** Onesimus ran away from working for Philemon.
- 2. Why did he run back?** When Onesimus believed in Jesus, his life changed. Now he lived for Jesus. That even meant going back to Philemon and asking his forgiveness for running away.

**For You and Me:**

Believing in Jesus means we should live for Jesus, too. God tells us in His Word, the Bible, how He wants us to live. Sometimes it means doing things we don't like to do, but we know are right, just like Onesimus did when he went back to Philemon. God will help us to live for Him, just like He helped Onesimus. Ask Him! He loves to answer prayers like this.

**Detective Dan's Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**

Our Bible verse is **Ephesians 5:1,2**: "Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us."

- 1. What did Onesimus know he needed to do to live a life of love toward Philemon?** He needed to go back home and ask for Philemon's forgiveness for running away.
- 2. How could Philemon live a life of love to Onesimus when Onesimus asked him for forgiveness?** He should forgive him.

**For You and Me:**

If we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, we become God's people. That's just the beginning. God wants His people to live a life of love, just as Jesus Christ has loved them. Sometimes this is very hard, like it was for Onesimus and Philemon; but, God always promises to help His people live for Him. Thank you, God!

**Detective Dan's Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:**

I found four clues, but one of them is NOT in the story. They are: a hiding man; a house; a letter (scroll); a house; and, a monkey.

- 1. Which picture does not belong in the story?**  
The monkey does not.
- 2. How are the other three pictures important in the story?** Onesimus hid as he ran away from Philemon's house. When Onesimus changed and began to live for God, he knew he must go home and ask for Philemon to forgive him. Paul sent a letter urging Philemon to forgive Onesimus.

**For You and Me:**

Believing in Jesus means we should live for Jesus, too. God tells us in His Word, the Bible, how He wants us to live. Sometimes it means doing things we don't like to do, but we know are right, just like Onesimus did when he went back to Philemon. God will help us to live for Him, just like He helped Onesimus. Ask Him! He loves to answer prayers like this.

**Detective Dan's Lesson #4 Listening Assignment:**

- 1. Who trusted in Jesus as his Savior?** Philemon and Onesimus.
- 2. What did they ask God to help them do, after they trusted in Jesus as their Savior?** They asked God to help them live for Him.

**For You and Me:**

We can turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, too. We can ask God to help us to live for Him. God loves to answer these prayers!

**Detective Dan's Lesson #5 Listening Assignment:**

- 1. Who heard the good news of Jesus and believed?** Philemon and Onesimus.
- 2. How did they change after they believed?** Philemon started telling everyone about Jesus and gathered people at his house to worship God. Onesimus went back home and asked Philemon for forgiveness.

**For You and Me:**

If we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, God will help us change, too. He will help us to love Him and live for Him, and love others more and more, too.

**The Gospel** (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)

**Our Bible Truth is:**  
**How Should God's People Live?**  
**They Should Live Like Jesus!**

But I'm sad to say that none of us really live like Jesus. We ALL disobey God. Just like Onesimus in our story, we need a Savior!

Who is that Savior? It's Jesus!

To everyone--even you and me--who says sorry to God and asks Jesus to be their Savior, God promises to forgive them and save them, just like He did Onesimus!

If we do, what a wonderful beginning that will be! We will get to know Him in our hearts now. Then one day, we will go to live happily with God forever.

And every day in between, God's Holy Spirit will be at work in us, helping us to live like Jesus!

*Close in prayer.*

### **Closing Unit 12 ACTS Prayer**

A=Adoration C=Confession T=Thanksgiving S=Supplication

- A** God, we praise You for giving us Jesus, so we can know how You want us to live.
- C** God, many time we don't love You or others as You want us to. Please forgive us. We need a Savior!
- T** Thank You, God for promising to help us live like Jesus, by Your Holy Spirit.
- S** Please work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to live like Jesus did, loving others and loving You most of all.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.