

The Case of the Marvelous Mess

Acts 19; Ephesians



Story-telling Tips

Ahead of time:

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

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 Marvelous Mess. 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:

I need to find out:

- 1. What caused the mess in Ephesus?**
- 2. What made it so marvelous (good)?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:

Our Bible Verse is Psalm 119:97-98, ESV

“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me.”

I need to find out:

- 1. Who learned to love God’s laws and wanted to live by them?**
- 2. What did they stop doing because they loved God’s laws and wanted to live by them?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

I found six clues, but only 4 of them are in the story.

They are: a fake god; a sandwich; city leader; a fire; a shopkeeper; and, a flower.

Hold up each of them for the children to see as you identify them.

I need to figure out:

- 1. Which four belong in our story?**
- 2. What did Paul praise God for using His Word to do inside many people in Ephesus?**

Read the assignment questions, THEN SAY,

“Ok, Deep Down Detectives! 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.”

Read the Bible Truth story, answer questions, present the gospel and lead in prayer.

Listening Assignments answers; the gospel; and, an ACTS prayer are included with the story text at the end.

The Case of the Marvelous Mess *Acts 19; Ephesians*

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 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.

Ephesus was a big, beautiful city. It was a city that was rich and merry from (SB1, SB2) worshipping fake gods and goddesses.

People came from many lands to worship the fake gods and goddesses of Ephesus--especially, (SB3) the fake goddess Artemis, in her big, beautiful, worship house.

People (SB4) spent lots of money buying worship gifts for Artemis and throwing big, worship parties to celebrate her. They (SB5) spent lots of money buying big books that were supposed to be Magical. And, they (SB6) spent lots of money buying little statues of Artemis to keep on worshipping her when they went back home.

This was how life had been in Ephesus for a very long time. Rich and merry from worshipping fake gods and goddesses. But now things were about to change. One man with one book was coming to Ephesus; and oh, my, there was going to be a mess in Ephesus soon!

The (SB7) man was Paul. And the book? Can you guess what book was causing so much trouble?

What's your guess?

It was God's Word, the Bible.

"(SB8) I have good news for you," Paul told the people of Ephesus. "Right here in God's Word, God promised that He would send a Savior to save us from our sins. And guess what? He's come!" Paul exclaimed.

"Jesus is that Savior. He is God's Son come from heaven to save us. Jesus lived a perfect life— He never, ever sinned. He chose to suffer and die on a cross, offering up His life to God as the full payment for the sins of God's people. Then on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory showing He really beat sin and death for them," Paul told them.

"Come, turn away from your sins. Turn away from worshipping fake gods! Trust in Jesus as your Savior and be forgiven of your sins. You can become God's people, too. You can have eternal life with Him!" Paul urged them all.

Can you remember what the big Bible word is for this good news? It's the gospel!

God helped Paul to boldly preach the good news of Jesus to the people of Ephesus. He also gave Paul a special gift to help people know that Jesus really was His Son, the Savior. (SB9) He gave Paul the power to heal sicknesses in Jesus' name. Paul would just place his hands on sick people and God would heal them. Blind people. Lame people. Every kind of sick people. God healed them all. Wow!

All over Ephesus Paul went. In the (SB10) synagogue-worship place, (SB11) in the marketplace, and (SB12) everywhere in between. And wherever Paul went, he would share the good news of Jesus and God would heal people in Jesus' name. Oh, how Paul prayed that these people would turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior! He wanted them all to become God's people!

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

But Paul wasn't the only one who wanted these people to be saved. Someone else did, too.

Who else wanted these people to become God's people?

That Someone Else was God! (SB13, SB14, SB15) God's Holy Spirit worked inside people, as they listened to Paul preach God's Word. He worked inside them, as they saw how God used Paul to heal sick people in Jesus' name, and they believed!

"This Jesus is not like our fake gods. He is alive! He is powerful to help us! He is powerful to save us from our sins!" they exclaimed. "Let's turn away from these fake gods. Let's trust in Jesus as our Savior!" they decided. Paul was so excited at how God was using His Word and His power to save many people in Ephesus!

God had used His powerful Word to save these people of Ephesus, and that was amazing. But God was not done yet. He hadn't planned to just SAVE these people from their sins and have them keep on living their old way. God had planned to CHANGE them and give them a wonderful, whole new way of life, too. How? God's Holy Spirit would use that one man with that one book again.

Who was the man? What was the book? Can you remember?

Yes, God would use Paul and His Word, the Bible once more.

Paul gathered (SB16) the new believers together and taught them even more from God's Word. He taught them more about Jesus. He taught them more about God's great plans. He taught them more about how to love God and love one another.

And as these new believers listened to Paul preach God's Word, the Holy Spirit worked in their hearts. He helped them want to love God more. He helped them want to serve God with their whole lives. And He helped them want nothing to do with those old, fake gods and goddesses anymore, not even Artemis! Uh oh...here comes the mess!

The first mess those new believers made was (SB17) throwing out all their Magical books of those old, fake gods. They made a huge pile of them and guess what they did next?

Can you guess?

They set them on fire right there in town! They didn't need those old books any more. They were going to live for Jesus now! The only book they needed was God's Word. The other people in Ephesus were shocked! Why would these people burn up all these Magical books!

That was a big mess, but it wasn't the only mess. There was more mess to come!

Then, (SB18) the believers stopped spending their money on those big, Artemis worship parties and those little, Artemis statues. Now they wanted to use their money the way God's Word told them to, like taking care of each other and telling more people about Jesus.

Paul was so happy! He thanked God for using His Word to not just save these people in Ephesus, but to really change them, too.

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

Yes, Paul was so happy, but there were a lot of other people who were NOT happy at all--especially (SB19) the shopkeepers who sold the little, Artemis statues and all the things for the big, Artemis worship parties. They were very, very unhappy!

“We don’t make much money any more,” they grumbled. “People aren’t spending money on big, Artemis worship parties anymore. They aren’t buying our little, Artemis statues either. And it’s all because of that one man with his one book! What a mess he has made in Ephesus! We have to get rid of Paul and clean up this mess! And let’s do it right now!” they decided.

What do you think they will do to Paul?

The (SB20) shopkeepers gathered together a huge, angry crowd. They were shoving and bumping! They were yelling and grumping! “Hurray for Artemis! Boo for Jesus! Get rid of Paul!” they shouted, as loudly as they could, for hours and hours and hours! What a mess there was in Ephesus now!

At last, (SB21) city leaders came in and quieted down the crowds. They sent them all home and told Paul to leave the city. (SB22) Paul packed his things, said goodbye to the believers and left Ephesus that very day. Surely this would clean up the mess in Ephesus, the leaders thought.

Do you think that would clean up the mess, to have Paul leave Ephesus?

But those leaders were wrong. Maybe the man had gone, but that book-- the Word of God-- had certainly not! The new believers would go on reading it and learning from it. And God would go on using it to change them. These men and women would go on loving God and living for Him. They would go on boldly telling others the good news of Jesus.

The mess in Ephesus was far from cleaned up. It was there to stay. And that was a very good thing!

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. What caused the mess in Ephesus? Paul preaching God's Word, and God's Word changing people made the mess.

2. What made it so marvelous? It was marvelous (good) because many people in Ephesus turned away from their sins and trusted in Jesus as their Savior.

For You and Me:

God can use His Word to do marvelous things inside of us, too. He can use it to help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. He can use it to change us and help us to love Him and others more and more. Ask Him! He loves to answer this prayer!

Detective Dan's Lesson 2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 119:97-98:**

"Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me."

1. Who learned to love God's laws and wanted to live by them? Many people in Ephesus who listened to Paul preach God's Word.

2. What did they stop doing because they loved God's laws and wanted to live by them? They set their Magical books on fire and they stopped buying statues and stuff for the big worship parties for the fake gods.

For You and Me:

God's laws are so good. They teach us how God wants us to live. God can use them to help us to live for Him. God wants us to meditate (think about) His laws, too. His Holy Spirit can work in our hearts and help us to live by them. He promises to help all who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Detective Dan's Lesson 3 Listening Assignment:

Our six clues were: a fake god; a sandwich; city leader; a fire; a shopkeeper; and, a flower.

1. Which four belong in our story?

The fake god; city leader; fire; and shopkeeper.

2. What did Paul praise God for using His Word to do inside many people in Ephesus?

He praised God for using His Word to save and change many people in Ephesus.

For You and Me:

God can use His Word to save us and to change us, too, just like He did in the people of Ephesus. God loves to work in our hearts as we listen to God's Word. Ask Him to work inside you! He can help you turn from your sins and trust in Jesus as your Savior. He can change you to love Him and live for Him, too. How good and powerful is our God!

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:****What's So Special about the Bible?****It Alone Is God's Word...****God uses it to change His people!**

Paul preached God's Word to the people of Ephesus. God worked in the hearts as people listened. He used His Word to save many, then to change them. How powerful was God's Word in their lives! God can use His Word to work powerfully in our lives, too. He can use to help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus. He can use it to change us, too.

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

- A** We praise you, God, for giving us Your powerful Word. You are able to change us.

- C** God, we know that we disobey You and should change, but sometimes we don't want to. Please forgive us.

- T** Thank You for all the ways You can change us through Your Word. Thank You that You can help us to love You and live for You.

- S** Work deep inside our hearts as we hear Your Word! Help us to turn away from disobeying You and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Change us, so that we love You more and more.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Go to Lesson Plan, p.9 for the script to the rest of the lesson.