

The Case of the Man in the Middle*Leviticus 6,16; Matthew 27; Hebrews 1-5,9,10,18***Story-telling Tips**

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and prepare storyboard figures/Story Scenes, if using. (In Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the storyboard figures/Story Scenes, 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/hold up Story Scenes 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 Man in the Middle. 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 know:

1. What one Man stood in the middle between God and people, so they could become God’s people? What worship gift did He offer up to God to make this happen?
2. What is that Man doing even now for God’s people?

Detective Dan’s Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is Hebrews 4:15-16:**

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

I need to know:

1. Who is the great high priest who offered the final worship gift for God’s people?
2. What is He doing for God’s people now?

Detective Dan’s Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:I found six clues, but two of them are **NOT** in the story.

They are: white clothes, rug, ladybug, sinful heart, worship gift, and a cross.

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

I need to know:

1. Which four belong in the story and which two don’t?
2. Who is always asking God to help God’s people?

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.

Answers to questions; the gospel; and, ACTS prayer are included with the story text.

The Case of the Man in the Middle *Leviticus 6,16; Matthew 27; Hebrews 1-5,9,10,18*

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. OR, if using the Story Scenes to tell the story, disregard the storyboard picture references listed below.

Do you know what a holiday is? It's a day when people stop their work and get together to celebrate something special. What holidays can you think of? (SB1) New Year's Day or 4th of July? Christmas or Easter?

Can you name any holidays?

Well, God's people in the Bible celebrated holidays, too. Perhaps you have heard of some of them. There was (SB2) the Passover, when they celebrated how the LORD rescued His people from being slaves in Egypt. (SB3) the Feast of the Tabernacles, when they celebrated God taking care of His people as they crossed the dry wilderness and brought them to live in the Promised Land. These holidays were days to look back and celebrate what good things God had done for them. There was so much to celebrate! God had been so good to them!

But, the Day of Atonement (SB4) was the most important holiday that God's people celebrated. "Atonement" is a big, Bible word that means "paying for sins so we can be God's people." Without atonement, the people could not stay God's people. And that made the Day of Atonement the most important day of the whole year.

You see, (SB5) God is all good. He is holy. (SB6) But God's people, long ago, were sinners, just like you and me. They had all disobeyed God. (SB7) They had all broken their friendship with Him. None of them deserved to be God's people. Do you know what they deserved instead?

Can you tell me?

They deserved to be forgotten by God, not loved, or helped by Him. They deserved His punishment.

(SB8) How could such people become God's people? Only through atonement. Only a special worship gift given to God could pay for their sins and allow them to be His people. And this wasn't even a worship gift the people could take to God, themselves! They had to have a special PERSON to take it for them to a special MEETING PLACE, in a very special WAY. The special meeting place was called the Tabernacle. It was the place of God's special presence here on earth. And the special person was called the High Priest. This was the only way they could stay near God as His people.

Here's the special way the high priest had to present the worship gift:

The high priest had to prepare himself very carefully. God was holy. He was not. He must do everything just right if he were to meet with God and his worship gift be accepted. (SB9) First, he washed himself from top to bottom. Scrub, scrub, scrub! (Remove BG3 to reveal BG2 Inner Tabernacle) Then, he went inside the Tabernacle and (SB10) put on his special Atonement Day clothes, clothes that he only wore this one day of the year. He had a special, white shirt, robe, and pants. Around his waist, he wrapped a special, white belt; and, on his head, he put a special, white hat. These clothes were so special that they were always kept in the Tabernacle.

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

After the high priest had washed and dressed like this, it was time for him to intercede (pray) for the people. (SB11) The people gathered outside the Tabernacle and watched as the high priest went in and out of the Tabernacle two times. Each time, he prepared a special worship gift and took it to present to the LORD.

(SB12) The first gift was for the high priest's own sin. (SB13) He took it into the Tabernacle and went behind the beautiful curtain covered in cherubim at the back. This tiny room was called the Most Holy Place. In it was the Ark of the Covenant, a golden box with two, cherubim angels bending over its cover. Inside the Ark were the Ten Commandments, the 10 Big, Laws God had given through Moses for His people to obey. The Most Holy Place was where God promised to receive the high priest's worship gifts and hear him intercede for (pray) the people.

Standing in front of the Ark was like standing before God in heaven. (SB14) The high priest sprinkled some of the worship gift onto the Ark, then prayed, "Forgive me, LORD, so I can come before You and pray for the people," as he offered his worship gift.

(SB15) Next, the high priest went back out and prepared the worship gift for the people. (SB16) Then, once more, he went into the Most Holy Place and (SB17) sprinkled some of this worship gift onto the Ark. This time, he prayed for the people. "Forgive Your people's sins. Be near us. Keep us close to You, so we can be Your people another year. LORD, help Your people," he prayed, as he offered the worship gift for them.

(SB18) When he finished offering these gifts, the high priest took off his white clothes and put his regular, high priest clothes back on. (SB19, SB20) Then, he went outside the Tabernacle and the people watched as he offered two more worship upon the big, fiery, bronze altar that stood near the Tabernacle. These were burnt offerings, one for the high priest and one for the people. Once more, he prayed for the LORD to receive these offerings and keep them as His people.

And then it was all done... at least until the next year. The LORD had accepted the worship gifts. He had made the way for His sinful people to stay near Him as His dearly-loved people for another year. How grateful the people were for this plan that the LORD had set up! How they needed that high priest, that man in the middle! He was the only way they could stay near the LORD as His people!

(SB21) For hundreds of years, God's people saw one high priest after another come and go into that Most Holy Place. Each offered the special gifts. Each prayed the special prayers asking God to be near His people, to provide for them, and to forgive their sins for another year.

Why did those high priests have to go back, year after year? Why couldn't they just go in once and make one, big worship gift for the people for all time? Well, it was because there was something wrong with every single one of those high priests and every single one of the worship gifts they offered. They weren't good enough to forgive the sins of God's people!

You see, all those men may have scrubbed their skin until it was shiny clean. They all may have worn special, white clothes. And, they all may have gone into the Most Holy Place on the right day, in just the right way. But the problem was that underneath it all, every one of those high priests had something bad in their hearts, just like everyone else. Do you know what it was?

Can you tell me?

(SB22) It was sin! And by God's law, (SB23) only a PERFECT high priest, with NO SIN, bringing a PERFECT worship gift would be good enough for God to forgive sins. Only this kind of high priest could truly intercede for the people and have God answer his prayers for the people. That's why all these high priests and their worship gifts were just tie-overs until the perfect, REAL high priest with the perfect, FINAL worship gift came. THIS high priest would put an end to the worship gifts forever. He would pray for God's people and His prayers would last forever.

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

But WHERE would the people ever find a perfect high priest with a perfect worship gift? Was there no hope for God's people?

What do you think?

Yes, there was hope! There would never be a perfect high priest or a perfect worship gift among the people, but God would send them one from heaven: His perfect Son, Jesus!

(SB24) Yes, Jesus came from heaven to be born a baby. He was God's Son, but now he was a human, too, the son of Mary. Jesus didn't stay a baby. He grew up, up, up to be a man. (SB25) And with every day of His life, Jesus always loved God and kept all of God's laws. Jesus was perfect! And because He was perfect, He could be the perfect high priest God planned Him to be. Here, at last, was the One who could be the final Middle Man. He could present a worship gift for the sins of God's people that would last forever. But where would Jesus get the needed worship gift? It had to be just as perfect as He was.

Do you know where Jesus would find the perfect worship gift needed?

There was only One who could be that perfect, worship gift. It was Jesus, Himself. Yes, Jesus would be not just the perfect high priest, but the perfect worship gift for sin, too.

And that's just what Jesus did, though it was so very hard. (SB26) Jesus went to the cross to suffer and die. He gave His own life as the perfect worship gift, the perfect payment, for the sins of God's people, once and for all time! And, while the other high priests took their worship gifts into the Tabernacle, behind the cherubim curtain, to sprinkle on the Ark of God's presence here on earth, Jesus took His worship to a very different place. (SB27) When Jesus died, He went up to heaven and stood before the real cherubim and God, His Father. And there, Jesus presented His very life as the one, final, perfect worship gift for all of God's people. And do you think God accepted it? (SB28) He certainly did! Now, God's people will always be near to God as His dearly-loved people.

(SB29) Ripppppp! That beautiful curtain in front of the Most Holy Place split in two when Jesus died. The true high priest had come and made atonement. God and His people could be together now. (SB30) And on the third day, Jesus proved it, when He rose from dead. God had accepted Jesus' perfect worship gift. He had beaten sin and death for God's people.

(SB31) Then, Jesus rose up to heaven to rule. He's there, even now. And He STILL continues to be the Man in the Middle, the great high priest, for all of God's people. All day, all night, all the time, not just once a year, Jesus is interceding (praying) for them. And guess what God's answer to all of Jesus' prayers for them is?

Can you guess?

(SB32) It's always "Yes and Amen!" Yes, your sins are forgiven, FOREVER! Yes, everything you need to live for God will be given, FOREVER! Yes, you will always be close to God and He will be close to you! Jesus makes sure that God's people keep on believing in and living for God their whole lives. He gives them everything they need to live for God!

What a wonderful high priest God's people have in Jesus! Thank You, God, for sending Your Son to be the Man in the Middle that we need!

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:

I need to know:

1. What one Man stood in the middle between God and people, so they could become God's people? What worship gift did He offer up to God to make this happen? Jesus was the man in the middle. Jesus was the final, high priest who offered up His own perfect life as the worship gift to pay for the sins of God's people.

2. What is that Man doing even now for God's people? He is ruling in heaven. He is carrying out His Father's good plans. He is listening to the prayers of God's people and praying for them. He is making sure they have everything they need for life and godliness.

For You and Me:

God's people long ago needed Jesus, the perfect High priest, to pay for their sins and bring them to God, once and for all time. We need Jesus to do this for us, too. He is happy to, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior. Ask Him to help you! He loves to answer this prayer!

Detective Dan's Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is Hebrews 4:15-16:**

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

I need to know:

1. Who is the great high priest who offered the final worship gift for God's people? Jesus was.

2. What is He doing for God's people now? He is ruling in heaven. He is carrying out His Father's good plans. He is listening to the prayers of God's people and praying for them. He is making sure they have everything they need for life and godliness.

For You and Me:

God's people long ago needed Jesus, the perfect High priest, to pay for their sins and bring them to God, once and for all time. We need Jesus to do this for us, too. He is happy to, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior. And, if you do, you, too, can know that He is ever praying for you. He will help you keep on believing in God and living for Him.

Detective Dan's Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

I found six clues, but two of them are **NOT** in the story. They were: white clothes, rug, ladybug, sinful heart, worship gift, and a cross. *Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.*

I need to know:

1. Which four belong in the story and which two don't? The white clothes, sinful heart, worship gift and cross belong. The rug and the ladybug do not.

2. Who is always asking God to help God's people? Jesus is.

For You and Me:

God's people long ago needed Jesus, the perfect High priest, to pay for their sins and bring them to God, once and for all time. We need Jesus to do this for us, too. He is happy to, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior. And, if you do, you, too, can know that He is ever praying for you. He will help you keep on believing in God and living for Him.

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:**

Why Do God's People Keep Believing in Him? It Is God's Sustaining Grace...

Jesus Provides God's People with Everything They Need to Live for God!

We need Jesus to provide us for everything we need to live for God. Why? Because we have all chosen to turn away from God. We can never please God or love Him or live for Him by ourselves. Oh, how we need a Savior!

And that's why God, in His great mercy, sent Jesus. Jesus gave His life to pay for the sins of God's people. Even now He is ever listening to their prayers and praying for them. He is making sure they have everything they need to love God and live for Him. These can be God's gifts to us, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. How good God has been to us by sending Jesus!

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

- A** Jesus, we praise You for being the Son of God, the Giver of all the grace God's people need to live God's way.
- C** We confess that many times we don't want to do what You want us to do, or we feel too weak to do it. We forget that if we are God's people (those who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus), we can depend on Jesus to always give us the grace we need to live God's way. We need You to be our Savior!
- T** Thank You, Jesus, for always giving Your people the grace they need to live God's way. Thank You for promising to be praying for all who trust in You, even now, as You rule in heaven.
- S** Work in our hearts that we would turn from our sins and trust in You, Jesus, as our own Savior. Help us to love one another, and to love God God and live for Him, every day of our lives.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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