

The Case of the Unexpected Ending*Matthew 27-28; Mark 15-16; Luke 24; John 20-21***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 book)
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 Unexpected Ending. 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. **How did Jesus die?**
2. **What was unexpected about His death?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is Luke 24:5-6, ESV***“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.”*

I need to find out:

1. **Who was looking for a dead man? What did they find instead?**
2. **What had happened to the dead man? Why?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

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

They are: an angel; a cactus; a dead body; a soldier; an ambulance; and, a weeping woman.

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

I need to figure out:

1. **Which four belong in the story and which two don’t?**
2. **What did the weeping woman have to praise God about?**

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 Unexpected Ending *Matthew 27-28; Mark 15-16; Luke 24; John 20-21*

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.

(SB1) Soldiers led Jesus and the two robbers to Golgotha. (SB2, SB3, SB4, SB5) People watched the soldiers put the men up on crosses. They watched Jesus suffer. Soon He would be dead. This was the end of Jesus. Everyone could see that!

(SB6) Jesus' enemies were happy about this. "Jesus was a bad man. He was a fake Savior," they thought.

They said mean things to Jesus as He hung on the cross. "You saved others, now save yourself, if you really are the Savior sent from God!" they shouted at Him. "Come down from that cross, if you can!"

But, no matter what His enemies said or did to Him, Jesus did not come down. He stayed up on that cross and suffered and died.

Were those enemies right? Was Jesus just a fake Savior like they said He was?

What do you think?

(SB7) Jesus' followers had been there, too, watching Jesus as He suffered and died on the cross. They were sad. And they were confused. They thought Jesus was the real Savior. They thought He had come to save God's people and be king over God's kingdom right here on earth.

They cried to see Jesus suffer and die. This wasn't what they thought should happen to Jesus! They had seen God's mighty power at work in Jesus. Would God use it now to rescue Jesus and bring Jesus down off the cross?

What do you think?

No, He would not. Jesus didn't come down. He stayed up on that cross and suffered and died...but NOT because He was a fake like His enemies thought... and NOT because He wasn't the Savior, the king over God's kingdom, like His followers feared.

Jesus stayed up on that cross because it was where He CHOSE to be. He stayed up on that cross because (SB8) He loved God and He loved God's people. He WAS the Savior and this was God's plan to save God's people. He suffered and died there to take God's punishment for their sins...so they wouldn't have to...so that they could be forgiven and live with God forever.

So for three hours, from noon to three, Jesus hung on that cross. And as He did, (SB9 covers up BG1) the sun stopped shining and the land went dark. It was as if the very world was dark with the sadness of what Jesus was doing for God's people. "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken Me?" Jesus cried out as the punishment for sins of God's people bore down upon Him. (SB10) These were the words that the LORD had given King David, many years early, foretelling of what Jesus would do to save God's people.

Oh, what a terrible price Jesus paid for God's people as He hung on the cross! None of us could pay for our sins if we suffered for a lifetime; yet in three hours, (SB11) Jesus, the Son of God, gave His perfect life to pay for all of the sins of all of God's people so they could be forgiven, once and for all time!

At last Jesus cried out again. "(SB12) It is finished," He said, as He breathed His last breath and died. The (SB13) ground shook and (Remove BG3 from BG4) the curtain in the Temple that separated God from the people tore in two. "(SB14) Surely, this was the Son of God," exclaimed one soldier who watched it all.

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

(SB15) Some of Jesus' followers took Jesus' body down from the cross. They wrapped it in linen and nice-smelling spices and (SB16) placed it in a cave-grave. (SB17) They rolled the huge stone in place. (SB18) Soldiers stood guard outside the grave cave to make sure no one took Jesus' body. Jesus was dead and His enemies wanted to make sure everyone knew that.

Friday passed, then Saturday. Day One and Two. Jesus' body lay dead in that grave. (SB19) "it is finished," Jesus' enemies happily thought. "Jesus is dead. His life is over. That fake is gone for good."

(SB20) "It is finished," Jesus' friends sadly thought. "Jesus is dead. His life is over. The Messiah is gone for good."

It certainly looked like Jesus' friends and enemies were both right--Jesus' life seemed finished. But they were all WRONG! They didn't understand what Jesus meant when He said, "It is finished." Jesus didn't mean His life was finished. He meant that He had finished suffering and dying for the sins of God's people! Jesus had beaten sin and death for them, but He was NOT gone for good! Only the sins of God's people were!

And that's why on Sunday, Day Three, in that dark, dark cave-grave, a mighty change happened that neither Jesus' enemies nor His followers expected.

The ground had shaken when Jesus died, and (SB21) now it shook again! (SB22) An angel came down from heaven (move SB17 to side) and rolled the huge stone away from the opening to the cave-grave. (SB23) Oh, how terrified were those soldiers were as they watched! What was going on?!!!

Do you know what was happening?

God had raised Jesus from the dead! Jesus' body had come back to life! God had given Him a special new life, resurrection body, one especially made to live forever in heaven. God filled Jesus' body with new life! (SB24) Off came the white sheets wrapped around Jesus' body! (SB25) Then Jesus stood up and walked out into the light of day! Jesus had risen from the dead, never to die again. Jesus was alive forevermore!

Jesus appeared to many of His followers on that wonderful Sunday. He appeared to (SB26) the three women who had come to His grave to care for His dead body. "It is!! I am alive! I have risen from the dead!" Jesus told them. How happy they were!

Then Jesus appeared to (SB27) some of His friends as they walked down the road to Emmaus. "God's Word promised I would suffer and die for God's people. Now it is done!" He told them. How happy they were! Jesus had beaten death for God's people!

And last of all, Jesus appeared to (Remove BG6 to reveal BG7) ten of His closest followers on that wonderful Sunday, "It is!! I am alive! I have risen from the dead!" Jesus told them. How happy they were!

At last they understood what had been finished when Jesus suffered and died on the cross. It wasn't Jesus' life that had been finished. (SB28) It was the punishment for the sins of God's people that was finished that day.

Yes, Jesus had beaten sin and death for all God's people—for all who would ever turn away from disobeying God and trust in Jesus as their Savior. And now, because of what Jesus did on the cross, they could know and love God in their hearts (SB29) through the Holy Spirit. And one day, (SB30) they would get to live happy with Him forever in heaven. Thank You, Jesus, for what you did for God's people! Thank You, for making the way for us to be God's people, too!

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. How did Jesus die? He suffered and died on a cross.
2. What was unexpected about His death? He died on a cross like a bad man, but He had done nothing wrong. On the third day, He rose up from the grave. He had beaten sin and death for God's people.

For You and Me:

Jesus died on the cross for the sins of God's people. He rose from the dead proving He had really beaten sin and death for them. We can be God's people, too, if we turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior.

Detective Dan's Lesson 2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is Luke 24:5-6, ESV:**

"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen."

1. Who was looking for a dead man? What did they find instead? Some women who were Jesus' friends went to the cave-grave to tend to His dead body. They didn't find His body. Instead, they found an angel and an empty cave-grave.

2. What had happened to the dead man? Why? Jesus had risen from the dead. He had beaten sin and death for God's people. God raised Him up from the dead to live forevermore. Death could not hold Him in the grave.

For You and Me:

Jesus died on the cross for the sins of God's people. He rose from the dead proving He had really beaten sin and death for them. We can be God's people, too, if we turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior.

Detective Dan's Lesson 3 Listening Assignment:

Our six clues were: an angel; a cactus; a dead body; a soldier; an ambulance; and, a weeping woman.

1. Which four belong in our story? The angel, the dead body, the soldier, and the weeping woman.

2. What did the weeping woman have to praise God about? She praised God for raising Jesus from the dead! She praised God for beating sin and death for God's people!

For You and Me:

Jesus died on the cross for the sins of God's people. He rose from the dead proving He had really beaten sin and death for them. We can be God's people, too, if we turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior.

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:****What Did Jesus Come to Do?****Jesus Came to Bring Us to God...****He Rose from the Dead!**

What did Jesus come to do? Jesus came to bring us to God... He rose from the dead. What a wonderful day it was when Jesus rose from the dead! That was the proof that Jesus had really paid for all of God's people's sins! You see, all people have chosen to disobey God and His good ways. No one lives the perfect life that pleases God. That is why we all deserve His punishment for our sins. God would have been perfectly fair to give us all His punishment for sins. But, He is so full of mercy and love that He chose to save His people through Jesus. Jesus died on the cross to take all the punishment for the sins of God's people. Jesus died and was buried that sad day; but, He didn't stay that way! On Day Three, God raised Jesus up from the dead. Jesus had really done it! He had beaten sin and death for God's people.

And Jesus was just the first! Now all of God's people --all who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior -- get to share in Jesus' gifts of salvation. They get to know God in their hearts all the days of their lives. When they die, their spirits will go to live with God forever. And at the very end of time, God will give them another gift-- perfect, brand-new bodies, like Jesus' to enjoy forever. We, too, can be God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior. *Close in prayer.*

Closing ACTS Prayer

- A** Jesus, we praise You for being our Savior. You came to bring us to God. We praise You for beating death. You rose from the dead!
- C** Jesus, we are all sinners who have chosen to disobey God and His good laws. We deserve His punishment. We need to turn to You for forgiveness. We need You to be our Savior!
- T** Thank You, Jesus, for dying on the cross to save all who trust in You as their Savior. Thank You for rising from the dead in victory! You show us that You really have beaten sin and death for all who turn away from their sins and trust in You as their Savior.
- S** Jesus, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins. Help us to trust in You as our Savior. Help us to love You more and live for You more. Jesus, come back soon! We long for the day when You will bring sin and death to an end forever. Help us to be ready for that day! In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

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