

Sensory Stories



Our senses are incredible!

Babies and children first learn about the world around them through their senses... Good sensory input is vital for healthy brain development - it's what helps our brain to literally build and to form ... We use our senses to help us regulate and feel calm and safe ... and our senses are linked to our memory - they play a big part in how we retain and store information! The more of our senses we can engage in the learning process - the better we will understand and remember information.

To be honest, that's not really new learning - it was Confucius - the great chinese philosopher who was born in 479AD who said:

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."

Throughout the bible we see God interacting with His people through sensory acts of worship ... Deuteronomy 6 is great example of that!

In verses 1-9 God's people are encouraged to remember His wise instructions by talking about them in their homes with their families or as they walk along the road - to write them in their houses and to tie them to their bodies - to engage their senses in their worship!

We are sensory beings - that's how God created us - it's how He designed us.

So - how we can we engage the senses in our children's ministry?

Well one great way is to use Sensory Stories.

Sensory stories, as the name suggests, are stories that engage the senses and enable children to more fully experience the narrative - what they can see, what they can hear, what they can taste, what they can smell and what they can touch.

To give you an idea, here is my sensory story version of Mark 4:35-41 when Jesus calms the storm.

To find out more about the beautiful and fascinating world of sensory processing and the importance of both engaging and soothing the senses as we journey with children - check out the Wonderful Me! Sensory Soother training.

You'll find more information on how to use this story well within a session, in the Wonderful Me! Exploring Emotions resource.

All the details are on the Wonderful Me! website

wonderfulme.org.uk

That which we have seen with our eyes,
which we have looked at and our hands
have touched - this we proclaim

1 John 1:1

To find out more about Sensory Stories - particularly how to use them with children with profound and complex needs, I recommend the book 'Sensory Stories' by Joanna Grace



Boat in a storm

Today's story is based on Mark 4:35-41, when Jesus calms the storm.

We are going to tell the story in a sensory way - helping the children to hear, see, feel and touch the story.

The children will be using fans made from concertina folded paper - first to make the wind in the story and then to use in a prayer activity during huddle time. You might like to have these ready folded for use - or they could fold their own as they arrive.

- A4 paper
- Inflatable boat / cardboard box
- cushion
- water pistol
- storm soundtrack

In our story today, we are going to explore a time when Jesus did an amazing thing that didn't seem possible that helped to keep his friends safe.

Everybody is going to need a fan today to join in with our story - have you got yours ready? I will tell you when to use it - and you are going to need it later on too - so keep yours safe!

So our story today takes place in a boat. All day Jesus has been telling lots of stories to big crowds to help them learn more about how much God loves them. There are so many people that want to hear what Jesus is saying and so, at the end of the day, Jesus and His friends get into a boat and decide to row across a big lake so that the people on the other side can hear His stories too.

So, the disciples and Jesus get into a boat and begin to row across the lake.

Choose 3 children - 2 to be the disciples and 1 to be Jesus - to sit in the boat.

All - Rowing action

Jesus is tired - he has spent all day talking with big crowds of people and in the story that we can read in the bible, in the book of Mark, it tells us that He falls asleep on a cushion in the back of the boat.

Give the child playing Jesus a cushion and get them to act out falling asleep.

All - Snoring sound

The disciples carry on rowing across the huge lake but then something REALLY scary happens. A HUGE storm starts to blow - it starts with a strong breeze as the wind begins to blow and the boat begins to rock.

Children in the boat rock

All - Children use their fans to create the wind

But then the wind gets stronger and the waves get bigger and crash over the boat - and the disciples begin to think that their boat is going to tip over.

Children in the boat rock

All - Children use their fans to create the wind

- Story teller might like to use a water pistol for the waves crashing over the boat!

(Shoot the water pistol into the air so that the droplets fall on the children - rather than aiming at them!)

- You could play a few seconds of wind/storm sounds

This is a good track: [Epic Thunder and Rain](#)

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Boat in a storm - continued

Now - hang on a moment - let's pause our story!

Freeze frame - stop the soundtrack.

You might like to ask the children to step out of the boat for a moment to indicate that we have paused the story

I wonder how the disciples might have been feeling in this moment?

Ask for responses

I think the disciples would have been feeling some REALLY BIG feelings in that moment. But I think one of them would definitely have been fear - I think the disciples would have felt VERY afraid.

What does it look like when we feel afraid - show me your afraid face that's brilliant.

All - Practise pulling an afraid face

So let's go back to the story - the disciples were in the boat

Disciples get back in the boat

... and they were feeling very afraid...

Disciples can you act afraid - if you are not sure what that looks like, have a look at your friends in the circle and copy one of their afraid faces.

All - Children show their afraid faces

In the middle of that scary storm - do you know where Jesus was? ... He was still asleep on His cushion.

Jesus gets back in the boat and sleeps on his cushion

All - Snoring sound

Even though the boat was tipping and the wind was blowing and the waves were crashing in - Jesus was still asleep.

Children in the boat rock

Story teller might like to use a water pistol for the waves crashing over the boat!

Start the soundtrack again

All - Children use their fans to create the wind

(It might be helpful to quieten the soundtrack before you continue with the story)

But the disciples knew that when we are afraid, it can help to tell someone that we trust - And so the scared disciples wake Jesus up and shout 'Have you not realised we are in a scary storm? We need you to help us!'

And then ... Jesus stood up and said 'Quiet! Be Still!' ... and straight away, the wind stopped blowing and everything became calm.

All - Children use their fans to create the wind

Child playing Jesus says Quiet! Be still!

Stop the soundtrack and encourage every child to be as still and as quiet as they can.



Boat in a storm - continued

Brilliant thank you - disciples and Jesus, you can sit back down and wind you can be still.

The disciples were afraid - they were afraid because the storm was so scary and it didn't seem possible that they would be ok. But Jesus does amazing things that don't seem possible.

When the disciples were most afraid, Jesus was with them and was able to change a scary storm into a calm, quiet night.

And Jesus can do the same for us today.

We might not be in a boat with big waves and strong winds around us. But sometimes things happen that make us feel afraid and can make life feel stormy and scary.

And just like Jesus friends - we can tell a grown up that we trust - Hey! I'm afraid! I need you to help me.

Talking about things we are frightened about with grown ups that we trust can really help us to start to feel calm instead of feeling so afraid.

And when we feel afraid - we can also tell Jesus.

And when we remember that Jesus is in our boat with us - that Jesus is always with us - when we tell Him how we are feeling and ask Him to help us— that big feeling of feeling afraid can begin to settle and become a little more calm - just like the big waves and the noisy wind and rain became calm.

