

the  
**Message**  
of  
the **Cross**

# Telling the Whole Story

## Discuss:

**What Bible story or stories shaped your faith as a child?**

**Think about how different stories resonated at various ages.**



# Bible Society of NZ Survey

? In your own words, what do you believe to be **the central teaching of the Bible?**

Christians



VS



New Zealanders

37%



Kindness, love, and treating others as you would yourself

27%



25%



How to live a good life / be a good Christian by following the teachings of the Bible

20%

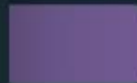


14%



Have faith in God

10%



16%



Human salvation/Jesus' sacrifice on the cross so we may live again

9%



11%



The story of Christ/the way to God is through Jesus

7%



7%



Don't know

16%



“At the heart of our Christian faith is a story. Unless the story is known, understood, owned, and lived, we and our children will not have Christian faith.”

**John Westerhoff**



# The Big Story

- The Bible tells a single story



“Now, if instead of making the Bible a book of tasks, we make it a book of delightful stories, it will make all the difference in the world in the child’s future attitude towards it.”

**G.H. Archibald (1909)** The Sunday School of Tomorrow

Do you agree?



# The Big Story

- The Bible tells a single story
- The story is about Jesus





# The story is about Jesus

## 1. Look for what God is doing

- What is God doing for his people in this story?
- How does God do the same for us in and through Jesus?
- So what? How does believing this good news change how we live ?



# The story is about Jesus

## 2. Look for who God is

- What does the passage teach us about who God is?
- How is this aspect of God revealed most fully in Jesus?
- So what? How does believing this good news change how we live?



# The story is about Jesus

The work of Jesus

Context

The person of Jesus

Slow down and look carefully



# The Big Story

- The Bible tells a single story
- The story is about Jesus
- Teaching stories in isolation can distort their meaning



## Discuss:

**Did you learn the Bible as a collection of stories or as one big story about God and his plan?**

**How does your experience impact your understanding of the gospel today?**

**Does your children's ministry's curriculum point to Jesus in every session? How can you ensure this happens?**



# Accuracy and Age-appropriateness

- Stick to the core message
- Avoid 'tidying up' stories



# Activity

What part of this story is usually told to children?

What do we often leave out?

How might you tell this story to a 5-year-old, an 8-year-old, or a 12-year-old in a way that is accurate, age-appropriate, and gospel-centred?



# Letting Scripture speak

- Wonder
- Open ended questions
- Listen





Meaning is embedded in the story itself... listeners hear and interpret the story as it connects with their own understanding, experience and need. For this reason, explaining what a story means may short-circuit its impact for learners.

**Scottie May**



Give the children the Bible, rather than someone else's idea of the Bible. We must have more faith in the child, more faith in the Bible, and more faith in the Holy Spirit's power to teach the truth to the child.

**G.H. Archibald (1909)**



