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# STORY HOUR

An Evangelistic Program  
for Preschool and Kindergarten Children



## YEAR ONE

Featuring 21 original songs by Mary Rice Hopkins

Revised Edition



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CRC Publications  
2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560

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Illustrations by Christina D. Schofield

Original songs and accompanying cassettes by Mary Rice Hopkins

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## THEME

### Getting Acquainted

# Session 1: Welcome to Story Hour

Matthew 18:5

## Goals for Today

Children will be given opportunities to

- get acquainted with Story Hour staff, the routine, and their room.
- feel loved and welcome.

## Personal Meditation

Welcome to Story Hour! Whether this is your first experience in children's ministry or you've lost track of the number of years you've been involved, we invite you to embark on an exciting faith adventure.

Jesus welcomed little children with open arms (see Matt. 19:13-15) and emphasized the importance of your ministry with these words: "Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me" (Matt. 15:5, NIV). Pray that you will welcome each child with the unconditional love of God, who sees beyond a child's stature or appearance or behavior to a precious humble heart.

Through your words and actions, you will plant seeds of learning about God's love in the minds and hearts of young children that can bear fruit for all eternity. What an awesome challenge and calling! To lead a little one to Jesus and to trust the Holy Spirit to work is an act of commitment and faith.

Welcome, child of God—another part of your faith journey is about to begin.



## BIBLE STORY

### Materials for Telling the Story

- Story Hour puppet

## Preparation

Today's session is designed to introduce the children to Story Hour. This may be a child's first experience in a group setting away from home. Children need to sense your love for them and to learn that Story Hour is a safe place to be. This will take time, but a warm welcome and an explanation of the routine will help each child feel comfortable.

We suggest using a puppet to help you tell the welcome story today and to introduce new songs and Bible words throughout the year. You can make a simple puppet from a sock or

a paper bag, or you can use a stuffed animal. Give the puppet a name, or let the children name their new friend.

Unless you know the children in your group well, you will find it helpful to have nametags for them. You may want to have these ready in advance or have children make their own as they arrive today. You'll want to know names as you tell the story.



### Big Ideas

- Welcome, boys and girls! It's story time at Story Hour.
- We'll do lots of fun things at Story Hour.
- It's okay to feel scared in a new place.
- We'll try really hard to remember a few simple rules.
- We'll make new friends.

### Telling the Story

We've included a dialogue outline for your welcome story. You will want to fill in the details and adapt the story to fit your program. Let your puppet friend invite your little ones to join you for story time. Explain that you will usually tell a Bible story during this time. Today your loving actions will tell the story of God's love for children expressed in Matthew 18:5.

#### ***The story follows:***

**Leader:** Welcome, boys and girls! It's story time at Story Hour!

**Puppet:** Story time! Story Hour! Does that mean we get to listen to stories for a *whole hour*?

**Leader:** Well, not exactly, [puppet's name]. We do lots of fun things at Story Hour. We'll sing songs and listen to a story from God's book, the Bible. Sometimes we'll play games together and learn snappy words that rhyme. Sometimes we'll work with glue and scissors and colors and pretty paper. And we'll have a snack too.

**Puppet:** Songs? And stories? Oh, I can hardly wait.

**Leader:** That's right, [puppet's name]. We're going to have a wonderful time together. I'm so glad you're here, [puppet's name]!

**Puppet:** But [leader's name], I feel a little bit scared. I've never been here before. This room doesn't look like my room at home.

**Leader:** It's okay to feel scared in a new place. But let's take a look around our room—I think you'll like it! (**Take children on a tour of the room, and point out the play centers and other points of interest.**)

**Puppet:** I didn't see a bathroom. That's pretty important for kids like me.



### Storytelling Option

If using puppets is not your style, two leaders can tell the dialogue story. One leader could dress up and play the part of a child (the puppet's part in the dialogue).



**Leader:** Oh, I'm so glad you reminded me, [puppet's name]. We do have a bathroom, and you can use it whenever you need to. **(Lead group to bathroom, and explain any rules you want the children to remember about using the bathroom. If the bathroom is away from your regular room, let children know that an adult will always go with them and wait for them.)**

**Puppet:** That sounds good! But what if I need help with glue—you know, all that sticky stuff? And sometimes it's hard to share. Then what?

**Leader:** You ask such good questions, [puppet's name]! We have lots of helpers at Story Hour. I'd like you to meet them right now. **(Introduce your leaders to the children. Encourage leaders to get down on the child's level, and let the children know they are caring helpers.)**

**Puppet:** Wow! I think I'm going to like Story Hour!

**Leader:** Oh, [puppet's name], I know you will. I'm glad you thought about sharing too. We will all try really hard to remember a few simple rules. **(Briefly state a few simple rules—see p. 28 in the Introduction for guidelines.)**

**Puppet:** I'll try really hard, [leader's name].

**Leader:** I know you will, [puppet's name]. And I just know you're going to make lots of new friends too.

**Puppet:** Are all these kids coming to Story Hour too? Will they be my friends?

**Leader:** Yes! Isn't that wonderful! I want you to listen carefully. I'll say everyone's name so we can get to know each other. **(Name each child—you'll probably need nametags to help you.)**

**Puppet:** Now I know for sure I'm going to like Story Hour! Welcome, everyone!

- Do you think anyone else might feel a little scared, like [puppet's name] did?
- What do you especially like in our room?
- [Name each child], I wonder if you know how glad we are that you came today.

## Prayer Time

Dear God,  
Thank you for Story Hour and for bringing each child here. We want to learn about your love for us . Amen.

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Choose only as many activities as your time schedule allows.

### 1. Bible Words, Songs, and Action Rhymes

(Note: We will begin the Bible words in session 2.)

## Session Song

### **"Little Miracle"**

I'm a little miracle  
all put together well,  
designed by my Father  
with a price too high to sell.  
I'm different from my brother,  
yet unique as I can be.  
You know that I'm special  
'cause there's only one of me.

*Chorus:*

Miracle . . . I'm a miracle.  
I think that you'll agree,  
I'm unique as I can be.  
Miracle . . . I'm a miracle.  
You know that I'm special  
'cause there's only one of me.

You know that I was thought about  
before the world began.  
God the Father made me  
with his own to loving hands  
from the top of my head  
to the bottom of my feet.  
He gave me ten fingers,  
and he even made my seat.

—Mary Rice Hopkins, © 1980, 1998, Big Steps 4 U (admin. by Music Services, 209 Chapelwood Dr., Franklin, TN 37064). All rights reserved. ASCAP. Used by permission.

Words and music for this song are in the Songs section of this program guide and on the accompanying cassette *Sing-along Creation Songs* by Mary Rice Hopkins.

## Other Suggested Song

### **"Here We Are Together"**

(tune: "The More We Get Together")

Oh, here we are together, together, together,  
Oh, here we are together at Story Hour today.  
*(Slap the floor with hands if sitting; stomp with feet if standing.)*  
There's Janie with Baxter, and Jesse with Sarah . . .  
*(Substitute names of children from your group. Go all away around the circle saying each child's name twice.)*  
Oh, here we are together at Story Hour today.  
*(Slap or stomp the floor again.)*

Words and music for this song are in the Songs section of this program guide. As you begin singing, invite children to form a circle. You may wish to join hands or put arms around shoulders and sway to the music. At first, you will want to say each child's name—look each child in the eye to affirm their value as a special child of God. Gradually as children feel comfortable, they can say their own name and will remember everyone's name in the circle.



### Session Action Rhyme

#### "Wiggles "

Wiggles here, *(wiggle arms)*

Wiggles there, *(wiggle legs)*

Wiggles, wiggles everywhere! *(wiggle whole body)*

In my shoulders, *(wiggle shoulders)*

in my nose, *(wiggle nose)*

in my hands, *(wiggle hands)*

and in my toes. *(wiggle toes)*

Wiggles slow, *(wiggle whole self slowly)*

Wiggles fast, *(wiggle whole self rapidly)*

Wiggles, wiggles, *(gradually slow down)*

Gone at last! *(stop wiggling; sit down as though exhausted; end with a sigh of relief)*

—Adapted from action rhyme by Shari Haan in *Story Hour*, © 1988, Church Development Resources (CRC Publications).

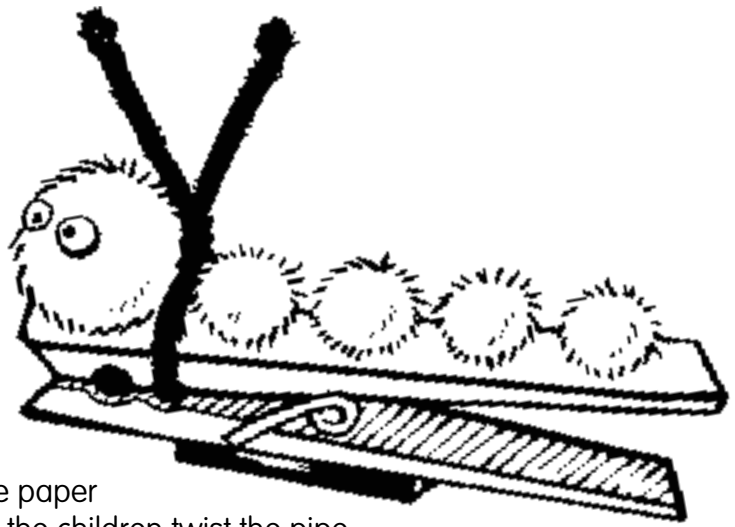
## 2. Creative Critters

### Materials

- Spring-type clothespins (one per child)
- 3" (8 cm) magnetic strips (one per child)
- Glue gun
- Various small, colored pom-poms (three or four per child)
- Wiggly eyes (two per child—optional)
- Pipe cleaners (one per child)
- Tacky glue
- Paper punch (optional)
- Black construction paper (optional)

**Directions:**

Ahead of time, glue magnetic strips onto the back of the clothespins with a glue gun. Show the children how to dab tacky glue on the top side of the clothespin and stick on pom-poms. Show them how to add eyes to their critters. (If you think the wiggly eyes might be a safety hazard for families with small children, omit the eyes or use paper circles made with a paper punch.) Help the children twist the pipe cleaner around the clothespin to make antennae. Praise your children for their creative work and point out how beautiful each critter is—just like each of them is special and beautiful. Suggest that children put the critters on their refrigerator at home to hold things they bring home from Story Hour.



### 3. Bible Story Book Cover

**Materials**

- Note to parents (one per child from pattern GA-1A)
- Year 1, Getting Acquainted, Session 1 take-home cards (one per child—set available from CRC Publications)
- Stickers
- Crayons or markers
- Three-ring 6" x 9" (15 cm x 23 cm) binders or 1" (2.5 cm) binder rings (one per child)

**Directions:**

We introduced you to the Story Hour take-home cards on page 22 in the Introduction. If you've purchased one set for each child in your group, you'll want to send the cover card home this week. Ahead of time, copy and cut out the note to parents (pattern GA-1A).

Set out the cover cards, a variety of stickers (hearts, flowers, birds, characters from Bible stories), and crayons or markers. Invite the children to design a collage of stickers on the back side of the card, and help them write their names in the blank. Praise each child's creative ideas. As children work, explain that you will tell them a story every week from the Bible, God's book. (You will talk more about God's book next time.) Tell them that every week they will take home a card with a Bible story and picture. Show them the binder or binder ring, and help them slip the card into the binder or ring. Let the children sense your excitement that they will have their very own story Bible.

## 4. Leaf Rubbings

### Materials

- Dried leaves
- Catalog
- Welcome cards (pattern GA-1B)
- White letter-size paper (one sheet per child)
- Poster putty
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Zigzag, waved, or scalloped scissors or pinking shears (optional)

### Directions:

Ahead of time, collect large leaves and flatten them between the pages of a catalog. Copy and cut out the welcome card (pattern GA-1B).

Help the children anchor a leaf to the table with a small amount of poster putty. Show them how to lay the white paper over it and rub the area with crayons or colored pencils. Watch the shape and design of the leaf appear on the paper. Show children how to move their paper and add as many leaves as they can fit on the paper.

Help them glue on the welcome card. For added fun, cut around the edge with child-sized scissors that make zigzag, waved, or scalloped edges (available at craft and department stores) or with pinking shears. Older children will enjoy doing the cutting themselves. Talk about how God designed beautiful leaves—and beautiful children like [name]. Write each child's name on the welcome card as you say the children's names out loud. Remind children to display their pictures at home—maybe on the refrigerator with their creative critter magnets.

## 5. Sponge Paint Reminders

### Materials

- Heart pattern GA-1C
- Book pattern GA-1D
- 3" x 4.5" (8 cm x 11 cm) sponges
- Large safety pins
- Spring-type clothespins
- Tempera paints (two or more colors)
- Foil pie plates
- Construction paper (one sheet per child)
- Markers
- Blow dryer (optional)
- Plastic grocery bags (one per child)

### Directions:

Ahead of time, make a copy of the heart pattern (GA-1C) and the book pattern (GA-1D). Trace the pattern onto the sponges.

Cut out one set for every two children in your group. To make sponge painting less messy for children, insert a large safety pin into a damp sponge. Attach a spring-type clothespin to the safety pin to make a handle. Pour bright-colored paints into shallow foil pie plates.

Show the children how to dip the sponges into the paint and stamp the designs on construction paper. Make sure each child has a chance to use both the heart and the book

sponge. Repeat some of the puppet's concerns from the story as children work. Remind the children that Story Hour is a place where they will be loved and where they will learn about God's love. Use a marker to write the words *love* and *Bible* on one set of stamps on each child's paper. If you wish, provide copies of the welcome card (pattern GA-1B) for children to glue to their pictures. If necessary, use a blow dryer to speed up the drying process. Send the pictures home in a plastic grocery bag. Encourage the children to display the picture on the refrigerator with their creative critter magnet.

## 6. Snack Time

### Materials

- Finger foods
- Small bowls or paper cups

### Directions:

Set out a variety of finger foods (snack crackers, raisins, halved grapes, and the like) and small bowls or paper cups. Encourage children to take some of everything or to choose a favorite. Use this time to help children learn names, practice sharing and caring, and enjoy this first time at Story Hour. To establish the routine of prayer, say a brief prayer of thanks for each child and for God's love.



Remember to send a Bible story card (Year 1, Getting Acquainted, Session 1) home with each child.