

Getting Started

Introductions

Set up circle and pocket chart.

Introduce Circlekeepers (names and church affiliation), class (state its purpose), and theme of current story series; review last week's story.

Pass out bags with nametag materials; participants make nametags.

Attendance

Take attendance, greet participants, distribute bonus items as appropriate: folders and brochures to first-timers, certificate...four times, book...six times.

Opening: The Story

Light candle, sing "Listen to the Word," tell story, pray.

Explain the Talking Piece

We'll do different activities to learn this story; sometimes we'll use a talking piece. The talking piece creates a space in which everyone can speak and listen in peace. Each person in the circle gets a chance to speak without being interrupted, and to listen without needing to respond.

When we are using a talking piece, here is how it works:

- 1. The talking piece is passed around the circle from person to person.**
- 2. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak.**
- 3. It is always okay to pass; just say, "I pass."**

Check-In Round

Today our talking piece is: **doll that bends over**

We will use it for a check-in round; when the talking piece comes to you please...

- 1. Say your name**
- 2. How familiar you are with this story (new, heard before, could tell)**
- 3. A word or more about how you are feeling today**

I'll go first...

Agreements Round

These are the four agreements we make for our time together:

- 1. Honor the talking piece—when it is being used, speak only when you are holding it**
- 2. Speak from the heart—tell your truth as you are comfortable to share**
- 3. Listen from the heart—be attentive, with a positive spirit; avoid side conversations, comments or questions.**
- 4. Protect personal privacy—Tell about God, Jesus, this class and the story we learn, but keep confidential personal information that is shared**

Now let us see if we can all accept these agreements: I accept these agreements ...

Engaging the Story—pick some of the following activities...

Word I Heard

Listen again to the story of **The Bent-Over Woman**

This time close your eyes or focus on the candle.

As you listen, notice if any word or phrase gets your attention... *Read or tell story*

Before you open your eyes, think of a word or phrase from the story that got your attention, or another word or phrase that comes to mind...

Ring chime... Now open your eyes.

For this round, name a word or phrase that you heard in the story, or that came to mind in response to hearing the story.

Your Word

In this round you can comment on the word/phrase you chose, or you can comment on any other word/phrase in our collection.

Repeat-After-Me

About the Story

Read-around handout

Storyboard

Might do just the healing part of the story (first two episodes)

Tell to a Partner

Instruct participants to pair up with a partner and take turns telling the story to their partner using their storyboard to help remember (no peeking at other side).

When both have told what they remember of the story, they check the script and evaluate what they remembered, left out, and/or added in extra.

Storyboard Favorites

Was there anything in your partner's storyboard you particularly liked?

Tell to a Small Group

Get in groups of 4 to tell

Connections Round

Each person has an opportunity to respond to possible connections between the story and their life experience.

Connection topics are named by the Circlekeeper.

➤ **When have you felt bent-over? What made you feel that way?**

➤ **Is there something you could give praise and thanksgiving for today?**

Winding Up: Prayer Cards, Collection, Closing