



LESSON 14

Magnify Their Actions

ACTION METHOD EXAMPLES: The students are important participants in these methods. They join the teacher in actively telling the Bible story.

1. **ECHO PANTOMIME.** Whatever the teacher does and says, the students do too.

JOSEPH DREAMS TWO DREAMS

Words

Actions

Jacob was living in a strange land – Canaan.

Hold hands straight out in front of you and move in a circle.

Joseph was 17 years old, and helping his brothers.

Point to yourself, and then count others, as though they were with you.

Jacob loved Joseph VERY MUCH!

Wrap arms around yourself and hug.

Jacob gave Joseph a beautiful new coat.

Turn around in a circle and act like you are showing someone your clothes.

His brothers were all jealous.

Cross arms over chest and put a mean look on your face.

Joseph dreamed a special dream.

Put hands together and lay head on them as though sleeping.

Joseph told his brothers about the dream.

Move hands as you would when talking.

All of Jacob's sons were gathering grain.

Move hands like you are tying something together.

"My grain stood upright, and your grain all bowed down to me."

*Stand straight and tall.
Bow from the waist.*

Joseph's brothers shouted at him when they heard his dream.

Hold hands in front of your face like you are warding off a blow.

Joseph dreamed another dream.

Hold up two fingers and show all around.

Joseph told his brothers this dream too.

Move hands as you do when talking.

The sun, moon, and eleven stars all bowed to Joseph.

Make a large ball with hands for sun, make a smaller circle with hands for moon, and number to eleven with fingers for the eleven stars. Then, bow down to the floor.

When Joseph told his father this dream,
Jacob was angry.

*Move hands as though speaking, make your
face look angry.*

Joseph's brothers envied him because of the
dream, but his father thought about it all.

*Cross arms over chest and march around
the room acting upset. Then, stop, and
put hand on chin, and elbow in the other
hand as though thinking about something.*

Joseph didn't know what the dreams meant,
But he continued to trust God.

*Hold hands out and shrug shoulders, then
kneel down and pray.*

2. REGULAR PANTOMIME. This is a little different from the Echo Pantomime. In this type of pantomime, the teacher tells the story, and students act out the different parts. If they need help, you can tell them what to do. Let's see how Sister Barbara Westberg uses this method.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

*Ask for one volunteer to be the sower.
Divide the rest of the class into six groups.*

Listen closely while the story is being read, because you will need to do what I am talking about. You can find this story in Matthew 13 in your Bible. I have reworded it to make it easier for you to understand what to do.

A sower went out to plant some seeds. (*Sower, pretend you have a sack of seeds on your shoulder, and it is heavy! As you walk through the field, you scatter seeds along the way.*)

As he scattered it across his field, some seeds (group 1) fell on the hard path where many people had walked. (*Everyone in the first group, please, move out, and pretend you are a small seed lying on the path where people pass.*)

And the birds came and ate those seeds. (*Birds, group 2, go to the seeds and pretend to devour them.*)

Other seeds (group 3) fell on shallow, rocky soil. (*Group 3, fall around the edge of the class area, like the outside edge of a garden.*)

The plants sprang up quickly, but they soon wilted beneath the hot sun (that's me, the teacher) and died because the roots could not get any water or food in the shallow, rocky ground. (*Group 3, act like you are growing up, and then die quickly under the hot sun.*)

Other seed (group 4) fell among thorns (group 5). (*Group 4 and the thorns, intermingle at the front right side of the class area.*)

The seeds grew, but the thorns grew faster. They shot up and choked out the tender blades. (*Groups 4 and 5 pantomime.*)

But some seed (group 6) fell on good fertile soil (that is right where you are) and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted. (*Expand! Grow! Are you a thirty, sixty or hundred fold seed? Show us.*)

After you have completed the pantomime, apply it to the students' lives. This will vary according to the ages you are teaching. Younger children may not understand that the seed is compared to the Bible, and that the thorns, birds and rocks represent other things. However, they will understand about planting more than one seed, and that every seed you plant does not grow up to be good.

3. OBJECT LESSONS. These are used most effectively with older students. Sometimes, small children cannot relate things to ideas. They need a more direct method. Jesus used this often, as He loved using the things around Him. Here are some ideas to work with:

- Suppose we use an umbrella for our object. How could you relate this to something from the Bible?
- What about a ball point pen? Is there anything to compare it with in God's Word?
- What about a loaf of bread? How can we apply this to the Bible?

There is no limit to the "objects" you can use to teach lessons about God and His ways if you will use God's Word and pray. Open your mind and heart, and ask for help from the Master Teacher.

4. ROLE-PLAY. This method gets everyone involved in the story. The students feel the pain, and rejoice when God works. Many times, younger students will not use dialogue with this method. They may make sounds (as with animals in Noah's ark) but probably will not have enough imagination to come up with speech. Older students, however, will enjoy making their own dialogue – especially with role-play that deals with life situations. For example:

- Two teenagers are doing a role-play about what happens when someone tries to get them to do wrong.
- One student would play the role of the person persuading, and would make up his dialogue according to life experiences, or what he has read and heard.
- The other student might simply refuse the offer, or could even try to persuade the tempter to turn and do right.
- This scene can be used very effectively, even with young adults.

There are many stories in the Bible that work well with this, and your imagination is the only limit. Sister Barbara Westberg shares this example with us.

THE WOMAN WITH THE INFIRMITY

(Luke 13:11-17)

One day when Jesus went into the temple He saw a woman who for eighteen years had been bowed over and could not stand up! Imagine walking stooped, looking at the ground for eighteen years! That is what we are going to do. We are going to imagine what it would be like to be bowed over for eighteen years.

Bend over and touch your toes—or try to! Do not straighten up until I tell you. 1-2-3, I imagine eighteen years, not seconds! 4-5-6-7. For eighteen years she could not lift herself up to look anyone in the eye. 8-9-10-11-12. She could not stand tall and look at the stars, the birds, and the blowing trees. 13-14-15-16-17-18 years!

- Then Jesus came and saw her. Aren't you glad for the day Jesus came and saw you?
- He called her to Him and said, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity."
- Then He touched her! Oh, what wonderful things happen when Jesus touches us.
- I immediately she stood up and glorified God. You can stand up.
- Crack! Pop! Snap! Hear the bones protesting. Remember you, as this woman, have just been healed after eighteen years, not seconds. What would you do? (Here's what I would do. Do what I do.)
- I would carefully hold up my shoulders as straight and high as I could. I would take a deep breath, and lift one shoulder, then the other. I would take another deep breath.

- I would carefully feel my spine. Is it straight?
- Then slowly, oh so slowly, I would bend over—just a little bit, in case something might lock up again.
- I would straighten up, twist my shoulders, feel my spine. Take another deep breath and smile!
- Then I would bend over—way over, touch my toes, and straighten up!
- I would raise my hands, jump for joy and shout, “Hallelujah! I’ve been healed! Oh, thank You, Jesus!”
- I would laugh, spin around, and clap my hands. Let’s give the Lord a handclap of praise right now!

Were you bowed down by sin and unable to lift yourself up? Remember when Jesus came and touched you? Let’s thank Him right now for lifting us up. (Praise break.) And that’s how it feels to be healed after being bent double for eighteen years.

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5. **DRAMA.** When you involve your students in acting out the Bible story, they will remember it much better. However, this method requires advance preparation.
- The story should be told and understood in a previous lesson.
 - The things spoken by each character must be written.
 - Different students are chosen to act out each part.
 - Calling out the names of the different characters and asking for volunteers is one way to get things moving.
 - Having interested students remain after class and “audition” for a part is effective also.
 - Finally, the teacher might have to assign students to different characters.
 - This does not necessarily require rehearsals, but they are beneficial, especially if you plan to perform the drama for the congregation.
 - Each of the characters should have special scripture assignments to read for better understanding of how they should act/talk/move.
 - It may be necessary for you to gather simple costumes or props (shepherd’s staff, slingshot, or water pot) to help make the drama come alive.
 - The students may have ideas of how to make their character special and believable.

Below is an example of a simple drama used in a Sunday school class for teaching emphasis.

JOSEPH’S DREAMS

(Genesis 37:1-11)

MAIN CHARACTERS:

Narrator (to share the information given in italics)
 Joseph (the youngest son)
 Jacob (his father)
 Joseph’s ten brothers (all a good many years older than Joseph)

SETTING: Joseph and his brothers are tending the flocks (sheep) of their father, Jacob. Some of the girls in the class could be sheep.

JOSEPH: Good morning, my brothers!

BROTHER 1: What’s so good about it? We are out here taking care of father’s sheep, while he is at home enjoying good things to eat and relaxing.

JOSEPH: Why does a man have sons if he can’t relax in his old age? Father has earned his rest!

BROTHER 2: You are just saying that because he gives you special favors!

JOSEPH: I am honored to be able to serve our father in any way possible.

NARRATOR: *(When they return from the field, Joseph goes to see Jacob.)*

JOSEPH: Father, why do my brothers quarrel and fight so much? Why don't they enjoy taking care of the sheep, and thank God for the many blessings He has given us?

JACOB: My son, some people are never satisfied. If they are in the field, they want to be at home. If they are made to stay at home, they want to be in the field. They are never content with what God has given, and so find an excuse to complain always.

JOSEPH: I pray that God will help me to always be thankful for what we have. I am especially thankful for YOU, father!

JACOB: And I am thankful for YOU, Joseph. You are a joy to me and a delight to my old age. God knew what He was doing when He waited to allow your mother to have you—my special gift!

NARRATOR: *(Jacob embraces Joseph, and then sends him off to sleep with his brothers. That night, Joseph has a troubled sleep. He dreams but doesn't know the meaning of it.)*

The next morning . . .

JOSEPH: Good morning, brothers!

BROTHER 3: There he is again—that smiling, tattling baby. Why don't you grow up, Joseph, and leave us alone!

JOSEPH: I had a strange dream last night.

BROTHER 4: Now you have started having special visitations from God, have you? What makes you so special, Joseph?

JOSEPH: I don't know that I am special, only that I am confused by what I dreamed.

BROTHER 5: Well, what was it? Maybe one of us can help you understand the meaning.

JOSEPH: I dreamed we were together in the field, binding our sheaves from the harvest. My sheaf stood straight and tall, and yours did too. Suddenly, all of your sheaves bowed down on the ground to mine. What can this mean?

BROTHER 1: Are you actually "dreaming" that all of us will bow down to you? Will you become our ruler and lord? Who do you think you are? You are just a weak nothing, and the youngest of us, except for baby Benjamin! If anyone is ever "worshipped," it will be me. I am the oldest and the heir! Go away and leave us alone!

NARRATOR: *(All the brothers join in the general outcry against the idea that they would show respect and actually bow down to Joseph, and they drive him away.)*

That night, Joseph has another dream, and again, does not understand it.)

JOSEPH: Good morning, brothers.

BROTHER 6: There comes the dreamer. Ha!

JOSEPH: I wish I didn't keep having these strange dreams. They really do trouble me. I have had another one last night.

BROTHER 7: Another one? Well, aren't you going to tell us about this one too?

JOSEPH: I will tell you, but it isn't easy. This time the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down to me. What can this be?

BROTHER 8: This has gone far enough! I am going to get father and see what he thinks about all these "bowing" dreams!

NARRATOR: *(The brothers go and call Jacob, and he comes to listen to what Joseph has to say and to try to calm his other sons down a bit.)*

JACOB: What is troubling you, my son?

JOSEPH: Father, I have had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars bowed down and paid me homage. What could this possibly mean?

JACOB: Am I the sun, and your mother the moon? Are your brothers the eleven stars? Will we become your servants and bow to your every wish? Joseph, I am surprised at you! Are you getting ambitious?

JOSEPH: No, Father. I am only repeating what I have seen in my dreams, and I don't know what they are all about.

BROTHER 9: Well, if we have anything to do with it, this will NEVER happen!

BROTHER 10: I wouldn't bow down to you if I had to! You can forget about that, LITTLE brother!

BROTHER 2: Don't tell us about any more dreams, Joseph. We are sick of your fancies.

NARRATOR: (*The brothers walk away angrily.*)

JACOB: I don't know why you have dreamed this, Joseph, but I pray the Lord will help you with whatever is troubling you. I will help you pray about it.

JOSEPH: I love you, Father!

JACOB: And I love you too, Son!

The End

This drama follows the scripture passage closely. Yet it gives the students a chance to use expression and feel the emotions of the story. It makes Joseph's experiences come alive in their minds and helps them understand the other events in his life.

- How do Joseph's dreams relate to the rest of his story?
- This is a good opportunity to get your students to search in the Bible for answers to this question.
- Let them come back with their findings and give a report.
 - Did Joseph's dreams ever become a reality?
 - When?
 - How?