

An Introduction to Making a Story Line

This is an exercise that can help children reflect on which parts of a story are happy or sad. This can generate considerable discussion in a family or group of students, depending on the story. We are enclosing an activity sheet that can be used for this activity and some alternatives.

The first step is to identify 6-10 key events in a story. (The first event—the Lord calling Peter to be one of His disciples—is entered for you.) To make the story line, you will need to decide whether each event is happy or sad or somewhere in between. Take for example, the Lord and Peter walking on the water. Is this event happy, sad, or somewhere in between? There is a neutral, middle line. Anything above the line is happy, and anything below the line is sad. The degree of happiness or sadness is shown by how far away from the middle line it is placed.

The story line can be plotted out on paper (see below) or on a chalk board. You can also write the events on index cards, place them in sequential order, and then arrange them on a table or the floor (making the neutral line with a rope or masking tape). Another alternative is to have each person represent one event and stand “above” or “below” the neutral line.

Decide whether you want to make a story line showing your response to each event or how a character in the story responded to the events. Discussion is key here! Make 2 separate story lines if students disagree and have good reasons for different points of view. Older students can work in small groups to develop story lines from the point of view of different characters.

