

Writing idea with numerous applications

FIRST PERSON ACCOUNTS

by Dave Weiss

OK, so you really want to get your writers into the Word of God. Here is a great way. Have them write first person accounts. The nice part about this activity is that you can apply this to almost any story in the Bible. It's simple to do.

Step one:

Select the story. Find accounts in the Bible that will speak to your kids and have them read the account very carefully. Then have them make notes on the story. Ask them questions like "How would this action make you feel?" and "If you were in this person's shoes what would you do?" (I have created a worksheet to help you with this process and to help them make good notes.) You can assign one story to the whole group, divide into small groups or give different stories to each student in the group.

Step two:

Teach on the story (or stories) to give them historical background, context and anything else you can dig up that will help them to solidify the picture in their mind.

Step three:

Read the story to the students. Have the students close their eyes and picture the scene. You may want to repeat this step a few times in order to really allow them to get a feel for the scene.

Step four:

Have them start writing. Ask them to put themselves into the position of a character in the story and have them describe the action. There are several ways the story can be written:

- Write from the perspective of one of the main characters in the story.
- Write from the perspective of a nameless character watching the scene taking place.
- Write as if they were a new reporter reporting the scene.
- Write it as if they were interviewing one of the main characters.
- Write it as a dialog.

The possibilities are endless, but the idea is to put them into the story, to make the Bible come alive in their hearts. This will make the

Bible seem more real to them. Have them write the crucifixion from the perspective of a Roman Guard who watched the scene unfold. Have them write the life story of Joseph (from Genesis) or focus in on a specific period in his life. Write the story of Daniel in the lion's den from the perspective of Daniel, the king, the angel that closed the lions' mouths, one of those who plotted against Daniel or even a lion in the den. The following is a short account I wrote on the prodigal son as he came near to his home after wasting his inheritance. It is not a first person account but hopefully this will give you an idea.



Picture it in your mind. As he crests the hill, the one he and his brother played on so many times as a child. He hears the sounds of the farm, and sees the fields all lush and green, his brother and father have been hard at work while he was gone. The livestock, cows and sheep, look strong and healthy and there is not a pig in sight.

He's still pretty far away but it feels so good to be home. He worries, will I be welcome, or will I have to leave again. I've come this far. I'm so close. What will dad say? Will he even speak to me? "Look at that beautiful estate," he thinks "that could have been mine if I hadn't been so stupid." He hangs his head and starts to weep like he never had before. As he opens his eyes, his vision still clouded by tears he sees a shape coming toward him from far off. At first he can't make out who it is but as the man gets closer he can hear the man calling his name, it is his father. He is so dumbfounded that he just freezes. His father wrapped his arms around him with a force that almost knocked him off his feet and kissed him.

He started his speech. "Father I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. . ." but before he can finish the father starts

shouting orders to the servants, "Quick, bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it." So far life is great unless your the calf who likes to eat. "Let's have a feast and celebrate." For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. So they began to celebrate.

Get the idea? The possibilities here are as endless as the stories in the Word of God. Once the stories are written, there are numerous things you can do with them:

- Compile them into a booklet that they can distribute to their friends and families.
- Give the finished stories to your visual artists and have them illustrate the stories and do an art exhibit that combines the story with the illustration.

- Take the art that's generated and scan it to create a power point presentation that can be used in conjunction with a public reading of the stories.
- Gather the stories together and brainstorm a script for a drama, then in conjunction with your drama people create a play or video based on the story. Perform the play or show the video.
- Have everyone work on the same story and assign each of them a different character and write the story from their perspective. Then stage a reading to show all the angles to a story.
- Assemble the stories into a message for the students to present as part of a worship service.

Again the possibilities are endless. The idea is to get the students to read these stories with new eyes and to help them to see the people in the Bible as real people that they can relate to. This will help them to see the relevance of the Word of God in their lives and that is a big part of our ultimate goal.



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