

A TRUE STORY

A Collection of Brief Stories from the Bible

Written in Easy English

For Conversational English Classes

Stories Written by Gary and Evelyn Harthcock

Teachers of English As a Foreign Language, Southeast Asia

*Illustrations Compiled by Debbie Corley
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***Notes About This Version of
A True Story by Gary and Evelyn Harthcock***

In 2007, the Friendship International ESL Ministry (sponsored by the Concord-Union Association WMU) in Ruston, Louisiana began using A True Story during the Bible study portion of our English lessons. To help our students understand and be able to re-tell the stories, we began compiling illustrations for each story, and also slightly revised the format of many of the stories.

Over time, volunteers in other ESL ministries became aware that we had prepared pictures to use with A True Story and began to ask for copies to use with their students. Since the Harthcocks have made their materials available to download free of charge, we decided to seek their permission to put our pictures with their stories and make them available, free of charge, to anyone desiring to use simple Bible stories with their ESL students. The Harthcocks graciously agreed, and also gave permission for us to “do any revising that you think would be helpful.”

The stories and illustrations provided here are the result of that process. The stories and illustrations are numbered according to the original stories, though some stories have been combined and renamed. Most of the stories appear in this format:

- ◆ Story number and title
- ◆ Text of the story (in simple English, based on Scripture)
- ◆ Location in the Bible where the story is found
- ◆ “Words to Know” – definitions of some words from the story
- ◆ “Questions” – to prompt a review of the story
- ◆ A second page with the sentences of the story in large print. These can be copied, cut apart, mixed up, and given to students to put in order as a review of the story.
- ◆ A page of illustrations that convey the meaning of the story in picture form. Some of the pictures were drawn by an ESL volunteer, and others are copies of illustrations from English Lessons from the Bible I and II, by Glenda Reece, Mildred Blankenship and Laurie Allen Klein. (The North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has given permission for literacy missions volunteers to copy these illustrations for use with their ESL students.)

Because of their content, the following stories do not follow this format, though there is a page of illustrations for each of these also: Story 1, the creation account; and Stories 124 through 133, which contain excerpts from several of the New Testament letters.

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Suggestions for Teaching These Stories

It is assumed that volunteers who use these stories with their ESL students have had some training in conversational English teaching techniques. They understand the importance of students comprehending the language material, practicing using it through a variety of repetition techniques, then being given the opportunity to use the new language material to accomplish a task by communicating with other students.

The suggested method of teaching these stories is based on the “Lipson Method.” The main purpose of this method is to use pictures to help students generate sentences of their own in the target language. The stories in A True Story are Bible stories, therefore the sentences must remain in sequence. The goal is that at the end of the lesson, students will be able to recount the Bible story using the pictures as prompts. They do not have to repeat the story verbatim as printed in the text. They are encouraged to use their own sentence structure and known vocabulary to tell the story in a way that is understandable. This can usually be accomplished by following the steps below in presenting the lesson. (**NOTE:** The amount of time spent on each step will be determined by the speaking level of the students.)

Step 1: Give each student a copy of the story, or project it on the wall through a computer or overhead projector. To set the stage for teaching the story, read the title of the story, show where it is found in the Bible, and have students follow along as you read the text of the story. Then select the main portion of the story (if possible) to read from the Bible. Provide copies of Bibles for students in a contemporary version, such as Contemporary English Version. (If desired, and if students have copies of the Bible in their

own languages, allow time for them to silently read the Scripture portion from their own Bibles. This will enhance comprehension.)

Step 2: Give each student a copy of the page of illustrations, or project the page on the wall. Ask the students to put away the printed version of the story, and only look at the pictures. Use the pictures to:

(A) Teach important vocabulary words from the sentences. Have students repeat these words several times as you teach them. Frequently return to words taught in previous pictures by pointing to the pictures to see if students remember the words they represent. Continue this process until all the words to be taught in the story have been covered. (HINT: If the whole story is too long to be taught in one class period, teach only the vocabulary and sentences for the first half of the story. Then teach the second half of the story during the next class period.)

(B) Teach the sentences of the story in sequential order. Point to a picture (or pictures) and say the sentence the picture represents. Have student repeat the sentence several times. Frequently review by pointing to previously taught pictures to see if students remember and can repeat those sentences. Continue until all the sentences have been taught.

Step 3: Ask and answer questions. Use the questions under the story text. Point to a picture and ask a question. The picture should prompt students to give the answer. They can answer chorally or you can call on individuals. One way to vary the question/answer practice is: point to a picture and have a student ask a question about that picture. Then call on another student to answer the question. You can also ask if any students have questions of their own about the story.

Step 4: Pass out the cut-apart mixed up sentences of the story. Have students work in pairs or groups of three to put them in sequential order using only the page of illustrations to prompt them. **Do not** let the students look at the story in printed form. When everyone is ready, check to be sure that everyone has the sentences in correct order by having students take turns reading the sentences in sequential order. If one student reads a sentence out of order, the other students will catch it.

Step 5: The students are now ready to try telling the story in their own words. The teacher should model this by telling the story one more time, using only the illustrations to prompt her. It is best if the teacher does not

repeat the sentences exactly as taught, but uses her own variations of words and structures. This helps students to know that it is OK for them to do the same. The goal is not perfect grammar, but the ability to convey meaning in English.

After the teacher models the story, put the students in pairs or groups of three with only the page of illustrations to use as prompts. (This can be individual copies or the pictures projected on the wall.) Each student must practice telling the story to his partner or others in his group. The teacher circulates among the students listening to their stories.

Step 6: Use this step only for students whose speaking ability will allow it. Ask the students if they would like to share something they learned from this story, or if they have questions they would like to ask.

We pray these stories will be useful to you in working with your ESL students. Our prayer is that God would be glorified in your ESL classroom, and that His Word will reach the hearts of many students and transform many lives. May God bless you as you serve Him.