



Bible App for Kids Curriculum: Ending Strong With Story Time

It's nearly the end of the experience. You have a set of Story Cards in front of you paired with the squirmiest small group ever seen. You're wondering just how long you can hold their attention ...

Welcome to Story Time! We've all been there. But there are ways to make Story Time your absolute favorite part of the experience. Seriously!

Try these **four tricks** for ending strong with Story Time.

- 1. Focus on relationships early.** A successful Story Time starts as soon as Play Time begins.
 - **Play.** Kids connect to people who know how to have fun and play. Harness the power of play, and use it to build trust with your kids and to model that taking turns is not just for toys, but for talking and listening, too.
 - **Listen.** If a kid comes to you with exciting news, listen. If they come to you with a problem, help them to solve it. Letting them know that you respect what they have to say will help them respect the direction you give to them later.
 - **Learn names.** Use play time to learn the names of new kids and to let them know who you are, too. Don't forget your regulars, though! They need to know you remember and love them, too.
 - **Identify the "gasoline" and "open flame."** These are kids in the room whose interactions end in an explosive blaze of distracting or unsafe behavior. If you see a relationship like this, place the kids in separate small groups, so your Story Time (and every time) will run smoother.
- 2. Keep it fun!** Kids don't want to leave when they're having a good time.
 - **Do it again!** If your kids loved the "Remember" game, had a favorite story card action, loved saying the Bible verse, or simply wanted to mix all the cards up and put them in order, repeat the activity.
 - **Don't rush the chit chat.** If kids are having a good time sharing things that are important to them with you, let them. Story Time is just as much about relationships as it is about review.
 - **High five, fist bump, and praise.** When kids focus in, share something personal, say the verse, or help you out with the story, celebrate! Keeping a fun climate will keep kids interested.
 - **Let kids lead.** Kids love being the boss, so give them a chance. Let them try to trick you with the "Remember" game, let them lead prayer, and let them "read" the story to you!

3. **The Small Group Leader Guide is your best friend.** It has more than enough activities to keep you busy until parents arrive. Here are some ways to stretch the fun:
 - **Get acquainted ahead of time.** Check your Small Group Leader Guide before the experience begins, or online at <https://leaders.life.church> during the week. Knowing the content ahead of time will help you to keep moving forward when you're trying to keep your kids focused and having fun.
 - **Keep an eye on the guide.** Did you find you ended your story and you have more time to fill? Scan the leader guide again. If you skipped something, there's no rule against going back and doing that part!
4. **Save Adventure Books for later.** The directions for Adventure Books are on your Small Group Leader Guide, but resist the urge to dive on in. Use Adventure Books for these purposes, instead:
 - **Partner with parents.** It's okay if kids don't get to color Adventure Books in the room, and it's even better if you hand the book directly to parents so it can be completed at home. Adventure Books are primarily a resource for parents to disciple their kids during the week.
 - **Keep check out time smooth.** If you're in charge of the door at check out time, your small group will need something to do while your connecting with parents. Adventure Books to the rescue!

A final note: Remember the purpose. Yes, there are review elements to keep the group moving along. But what really matters is showing your kids that you're a trusted friend who listens, and keeps them safe every week. Children learn and retain information better from a trusted adult than from any other source, and you're teaching them the most important lesson of all: Church is a place full of God's love, where they're welcome and where they belong.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is the main goal of Story Time?
2. What's the number one challenge you have, or you think you might have, when leading Story Time?
3. Which of the four strategies above might help you with that challenge?
4. What are some ways you will try to apply the strategy for Story Time success?

Prayer

God, thank you for giving us the opportunity to be a trusted adult to a small group of children each week. Please teach us how to steward that responsibility wisely so kids can learn that your church is a place full of your love, where they are welcomed and where they belong. In Jesus' name, amen.