



SESSION TWENTY-SIX:

Kingdom treasures

SESSION OVERVIEW

SUPPLIES

- ▶ **Echo the Story DVD/video** for this session
- ▶ **Echo the Story Sketch Journals** for every participant
- ▶ **Markers, pens, and colored pencils**

① **rewind** THE STORY [5 MINUTES]

The Story So Far video begins with a two-minute interaction for your group. Following this interaction, the video will show a fast-paced, animated review of the previous session's story.

② **prepare** FOR THE STORY [10 MINUTES]

Participants will draw their own version of this session's story symbol in their Sketch Journals. Then, a participant will read a section from the Sketch Journal that helps ready the group for imaginative listening.

③ **imagine** THE STORY [5 MINUTES]

The leader will now tell this session's Bible story. A carefully crafted narrative script of the story is provided in this Leader Guide.

④ **capture** WHAT YOU NOTICE [5 MINUTES]

The leader will ask someone of a different gender to do a second telling of the story. During this telling, participants will use their Sketch Journals to capture aspects of the story that stand out to them.

⑤ **remix** THE STORY *TIME PERMITTING [10 MINUTES]

Participants will be invited to choose from two REMIX activities (included in the Sketch Journal) that guide them to retell part of the Bible story in their own unique way.

⑥ **connect** TO YOUR STORY [20 MINUTES]

Finally, the leader will guide a group dialogue where participants are asked to share their observations and insights from the story. Dialogue questions are provided in this Leader Guide.

THE STORY SO FAR VIDEO

Leader Says:

Right now we're going to continue our journey through the Bible.

We're going to start with a short video. The first two minutes give you a chance to answer a question with a partner.

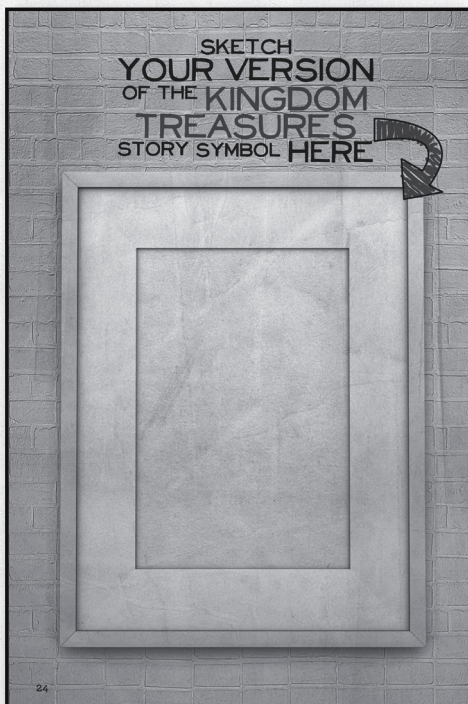
After the timer finishes, the next part of the video will start right away, reviewing the story from our last session. So find a partner and get ready, because this video moves really fast. You'll have to pay attention and listen carefully. *Are you ready?*

► CUE: Play The Story So Far video for this session.

Even though this is written like a script, please personalize the "Leader Says" parts. You'll be more effective if you're not just reading directly from the page!



prepare FOR THE STORY



Encourage participants to draw their own version of the story symbol, regardless of their artistic ability. The goal is not to create an exact replica but to capture your own interpretation.

DRAW THE STORY SYMBOL

- ▶ CUE: If you collected the Sketch Journals last session, pass them out to each participant. Remember to give Sketch Journals to any new people joining your group. Provide pens, markers, and colored pencils for participants to use.

Leader Says:

Our Sketch Journals are an important part of our Echo experience. They'll give us space to express our creativity, explore our questions, and capture the thoughts and ideas that these stories spark in us.

Each story will have its own **symbol** as a visual reminder of what happens in the story. Right now, turn to **page 24** and *draw your own version* of the symbol for the next story: KINGDOM TREASURES (coin) in your Sketch Journal.

You may be wondering why we are redrawing this symbol when it's printed on the next page. When we each create our *own* version of this story's symbol it helps embed this image in our minds and helps get our **creativity flowing** for the rest of the activities we'll do later.

The goal isn't to copy the symbol—*be creative and make it your own!*

- ▶ CUE: Don't spend a lot of time on this activity—*two minutes or less.*

THE BIBLE IS LIKE . . .

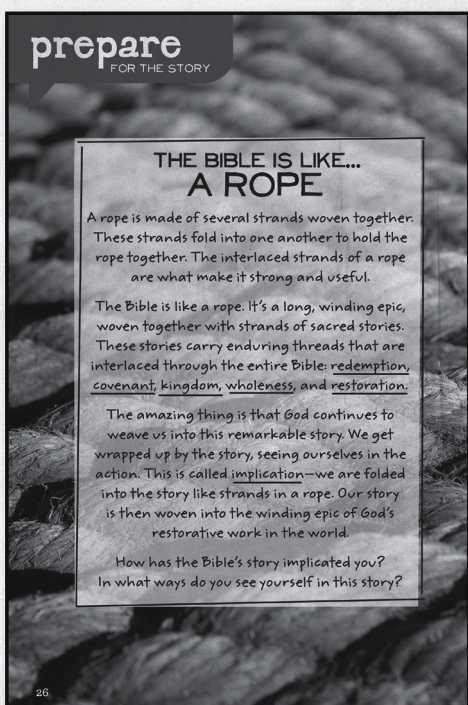
Leader Says:

Each session of Echo will invite us to experience a story from the Bible. But before we dive into each story, we'll slow down and take time to *prepare ourselves*. To help us do this, we'll compare the Bible to a different image or object.

The image for this session is **a rope**.

Let's hear more about this from **page 26** of your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ CUE: Ask for a volunteer from your group to read page 26 of their Sketch Journal.



ABOUT THIS STORY [read silently]

Leader Says:

Take a moment **in silence** to look at the **ABOUT THIS STORY** section on **page 27** in your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ **CUE:** After twenty seconds of silent reading, move to the next section. (You don't need to discuss the "Think About" question.)

IMAGINATIVE LISTENING

Leader Says:

Imaginative listening is not passive listening. As you hear the story, use your imagination to visualize the characters and their surroundings, noticing the details of the story as it comes to life with your questions and ideas.

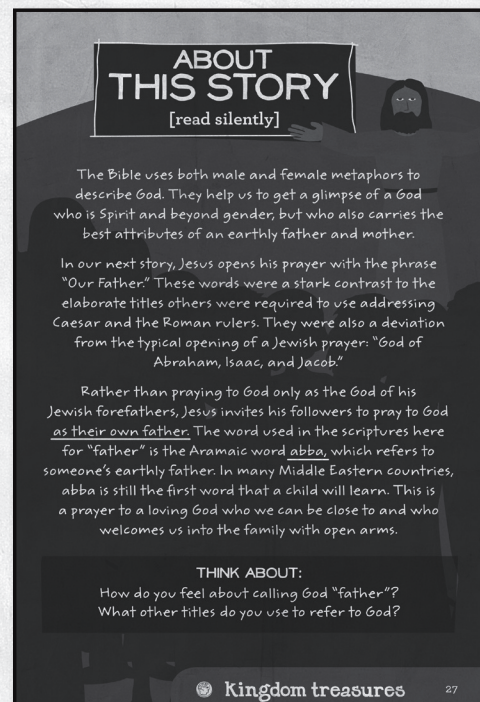
Let's slow down and prepare ourselves for the next story. Push out any distractions and use your imagination to enter the story, seeing it come to life in your mind.

You might want to close your eyes or focus on the image on **pages 28-29**. After we hear the story read once, you'll have a chance to capture what you noticed in your Sketch Journal.

Are you ready?

Take a moment of silence. Sit up straight in your chair. Take a deep breath, slow down, and clear your mind. Whisper a prayer asking God to show you something meaningful from this story.

- ▶ **CUE:** After about fifteen seconds of quiet, begin narrating the story.



imagine THE STORY

Don't just read this story;
bring it to life with
your voice!

Leader Narrates:

SCENE ONE: KINGDOM PRAYER

One day, Jesus challenged his followers, *"When you give to those in need, do it secretly. When you pray, go away by yourself and shut the door. Don't be like the hypocrites who only give and pray in public so others will think more highly of them."*

*When you pray, pray like this:
Abba—our father above,
Let the world know of your great name.
Bring your kingdom into our reality.
Reflect your ways on earth, as they are above.
Give us the food we need for today,
and forgive us, as we forgive those who've wronged to us.
Save us from our trials, and rescue us from evil.
Amen."* [pause]

Jesus continued to teach, saying, *"The money and possessions you store up on earth don't last. Moths and rust will eat them away. Instead, invest in God's kingdom ways. What you treasure on earth will reveal your true heart."*

SCENE TWO: A RICH FOOL

Many of the parables that Jesus told were about money and possessions. One time, a man called out to Jesus from the crowd, *"Teacher, please tell my brother to divide our family inheritance with me."*

Jesus replied, *"Who made me a judge to decide these kinds of things? Be careful. Guard yourself against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own."*

Then Jesus told this parable to the crowd:

"A rich man had a successful farm that produced a huge harvest. The man said to himself, 'I don't have room for all of the crops. So I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. That way, I'll have enough stored for years to come and can sit back and relax. I can just take it easy, spending my days eating, drinking, and being happy.'

But God said to the man, 'You've been foolish. Today you will die. So who will get all that you stored up for yourself?'"

Tell the story from beginning to end— don't stop!

You'll cause confusion by stopping to answer a question, teach, clarify, give application, or make an observation in the middle of the story.

Then Jesus said to the crowd, *"Why hoard possessions for yourself? Instead, be generous and give everything to God."*

Jesus now turned to his disciples and said, *"Don't fill your life with worry about what you'll eat and what you'll wear. Worry won't add a single moment to your life."*

Follow the example of the birds—they joyfully sing without concern about their next meal. And God provides for them.

Look to the lilies in field—they are radiant, without a fret about work or clothing. God cares for them—and certainly cares for you.

Seek God's kingdom above all else and let go of your worries. Sell your possessions and give to those in need."

SCENE THREE: A RICH RULER

Once, a religious leader asked Jesus this question: *"Good Teacher, what should I do to live in God's kingdom?"*

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "Only God is truly good. But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'Honor your parents. Don't murder, steal, or lie. Be faithful to your spouse.'"

The man replied, *"I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young."*

Jesus said, *"There is still one thing you haven't done. Sell everything you have and give the money to the poor, and you'll have great reward in God's kingdom. Then, come and follow me."*

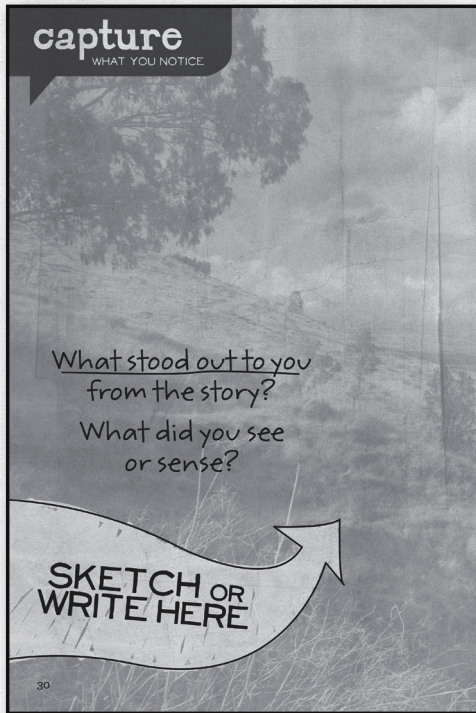
When the man heard this he became very sad, for he was very rich.

Then Jesus looked at him and said, *"It's easier for a camel to squeeze through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God's kingdom!"*

Some who were listening asked Jesus, *"Then who in this world can be rescued?"*

He replied, *"What's impossible for people is possible with God."*

capture WHAT YOU NOTICE



MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Leader Says:

Take a moment to close your eyes and let the story replay in your mind. Pay attention to what stands out to you from the story.

- ▶ **CUE:** After fifteen to twenty seconds, transition to the second reading.

SECOND TELLING & CAPTURING

We're going to listen to the story one more time, but this time with **a different voice telling it**. During this telling of the story turn to **pages 30-31** and write or draw the words or images that come to mind. Use these pages to capture anything that you notice—even if it seems like a small detail. You will be surprised—even small things that you notice will spark thoughts and insights from our group.

- ▶ **CUE:** For this second telling, use a storyteller of a **different gender** from the person who read the first time. *Different voices help people to listen with fresh ears.*

REMIX ACTIVITIES

Leader Says:

Now that we've heard the story twice and begun to capture what we noticed, let's REMIX the story. There are two REMIX activities, designed to help you retell part of the story in your own unique way.

There is a **drawing activity** on **pages 32-33** and a **creative writing activity** on **pages 34-35**.

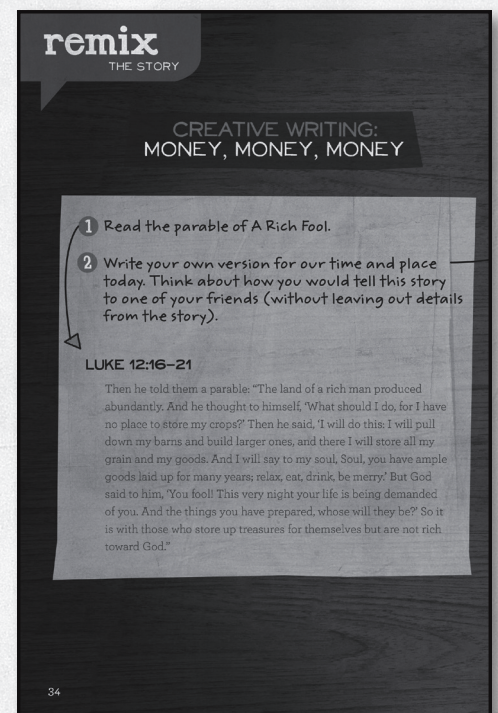
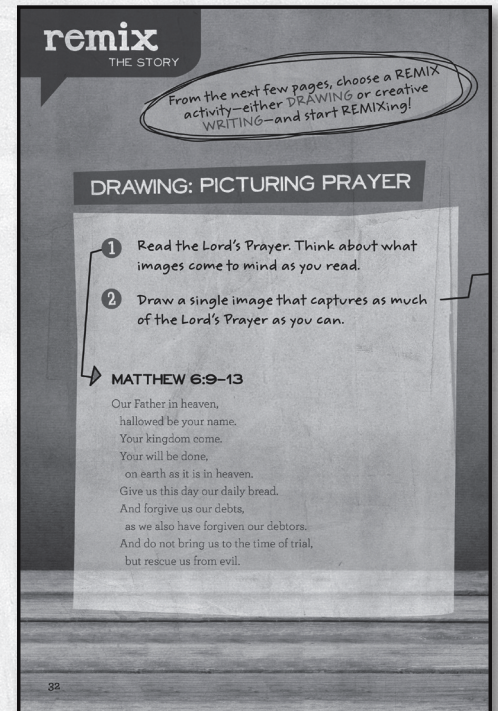
These are *not* fill-in-the-blank activities! These activities are designed to help you express yourself and share what you see in the story.

Or if you'd prefer, you may instead **continue to develop** your thoughts and drawings from the CAPTURE pages you just worked on.

Whatever you choose, take the next ten minutes to **use your imagination** to create your REMIX and then we will share them with each other. Invest yourself honestly in this and you will be surprised at your insight and creativity.

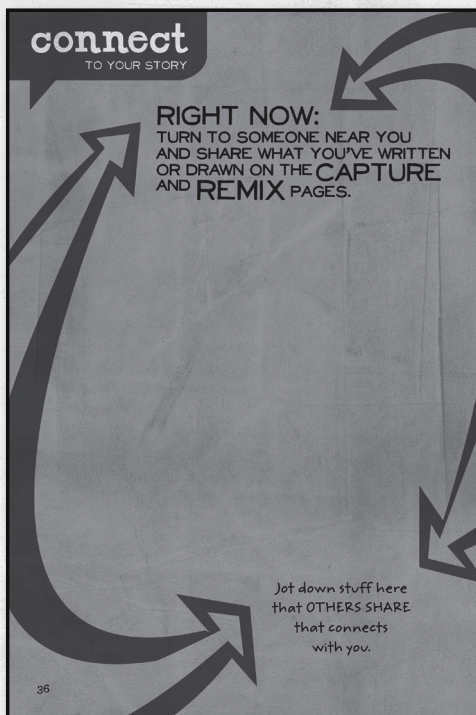
- ▶ **CUE:** After ten minutes (or less if your group finishes sooner), go to the next section.

Work at being fully present, attentively listening and making eye contact.



DIALOGUE PREP

1. There are probably more questions here than you'll have time to ask. Pick a few questions ahead of time that you want to make sure to ask.
2. Questions in gray and marked with a dash are for follow-up. Ask them as time allows and as they are needed.



connect TO YOUR STORY

TURN & SHARE

Leader Says:

Now, turn to someone near you and share your CAPTURE or REMIX with them. Remember to respect each other's ideas and encourage one another.

- ▶ CUE: After two minutes, begin the dialogue.

GROUP DIALOGUE

Leader Says:

Now we'll share as a group. This time is about sharing observations and **seeing the story through one another's eyes.**

Remember, when someone else shares something that connects with you, write it down on **page 36** of your Sketch Journal.

- + So what stood out to you from this story?
- + What did this story make you wonder about?

LEADER: Don't give answers to participants' wonderings and questions. In fact, share an example of what you are wondering about the story.

- + Who'd like to share something you've written or drawn from the CAPTURE or REMIX sections?

Leader Says:

I have a few more questions to ask you about the story. Remember, I am not looking for "correct" answers; this time is about you sharing your observations. **I want to see the story through your eyes.** Ready?

- + How would you describe Jesus in this story? Say the first thing that comes to your mind.

The first scene focused on Jesus teaching the disciples a prayer. (often called the Lord's Prayer).

Leader's note: At this point you may want to go back and read this prayer again from the story script.

- + What part of the prayer Jesus taught do you remember most? Why?
 - How is it the same as or different from other versions that you've heard?
- + Why do you think the first Christians continued to pray Jesus' prayer? Why do you think we continue to pray it today?

In the second scene, Jesus tells a parable about a man foolishly hoarding possessions for himself.

- + Why do you think Jesus often taught about possessions and money?
- + How do you think the poor people in the crowds felt about Jesus' teachings about money? How would you have responded if you were in the crowd?
- + What do you think it means to "seek God's kingdom above all else"?
- + How might worry and possessions be linked together?

In the third scene, Jesus challenges a rich ruler to sell everything and give his money to the poor.

- + Why do you think Jesus emphasized selling possessions to give to the poor?
- + How would you describe Jesus in this story? Say the first things that comes to mind.
 - What is Jesus like?
- + What do you think this story shows us about God?

FINAL QUESTION

Take a quiet moment to think about this final question:

- + What does this story say about us? About you?

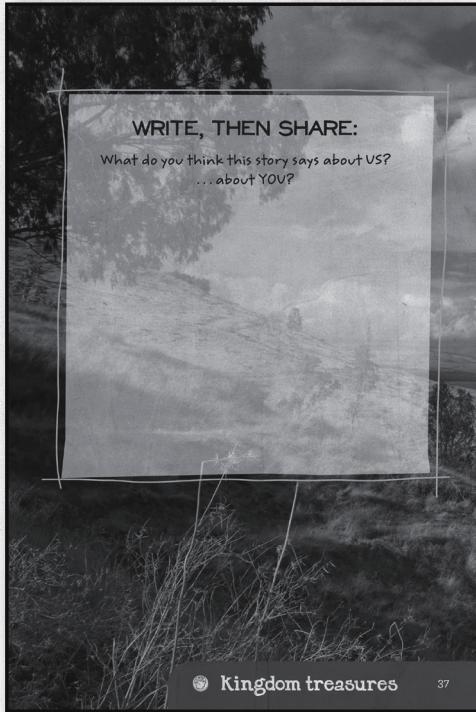
Allow for Silence

This approach to the Bible will be new for many people. For the first few sessions, your group may be hesitant to share as they try to orient themselves. Don't worry! Allow quiet time for participants to reflect on the story without trying to provide answers. After a few sessions, you will see people begin to open up much more.

Optional Ending: Praying the Lord's Prayer

Take a moment to pray aloud the Lord's Prayer together. The scripture is printed on the bottom of [page 32](#) in the Sketch Journal.

connect TO YOUR STORY



Write a quick response on **page 37** in your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ **CUE:** After twenty to thirty seconds of quiet, ask a few participants to share. Encourage participants to personalize their ideas using “I” and “me” instead of “you” and “we” to keep them from being overly general or preachy.

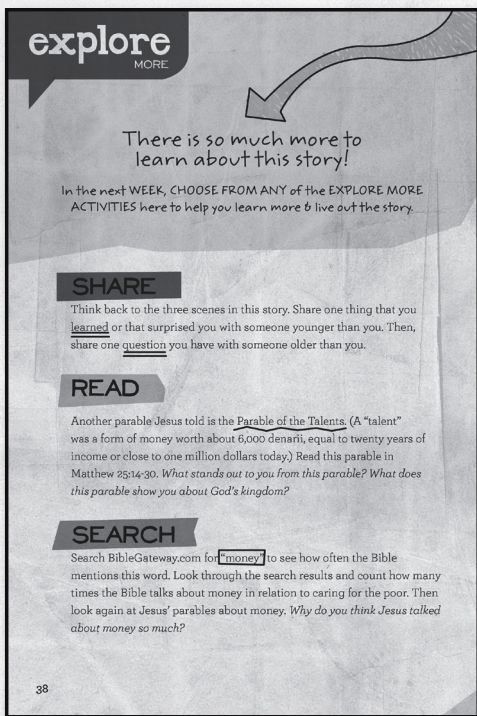
Leader Says:

This was a really meaningful time. *Thank you!* You did a great job. I’m looking forward to gathering together again so we can experience the next story.

If you’d like to learn more about this story, there’s a section called EXPLORE MORE on **pages 38-39** of your Sketch Journal.

You are welcome to take your Sketch Journal with you and try some of these activities, but be sure to bring it back for the next story. If you’re worried about forgetting it, you can leave your Sketch Journal with me.

- ▶ **CUE:** To close this session, ask someone to lead the group in prayer.



OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO GO DEEPER:

- + Take a moment and close your eyes. (Pause, then continue slowly.) Imagine you have a camera and you are watching this story take place right in front of you. Pick a moment in the story to take a picture of. (Pause for ten seconds.) Do you have your picture? Who would like to share what you snapped a picture of?
- + Jesus pointed to the birds and the flowers as examples not to worry. What could Jesus point to from our world today as an example of something that is “worry free”?
- + Agree or disagree? Why?
“Life is not measured by how much you own.”
“Worry won’t add a single moment to your life.”
- + What do you think the rich man expected Jesus to say when he asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life?