

Scary Gross & Weird STORIES

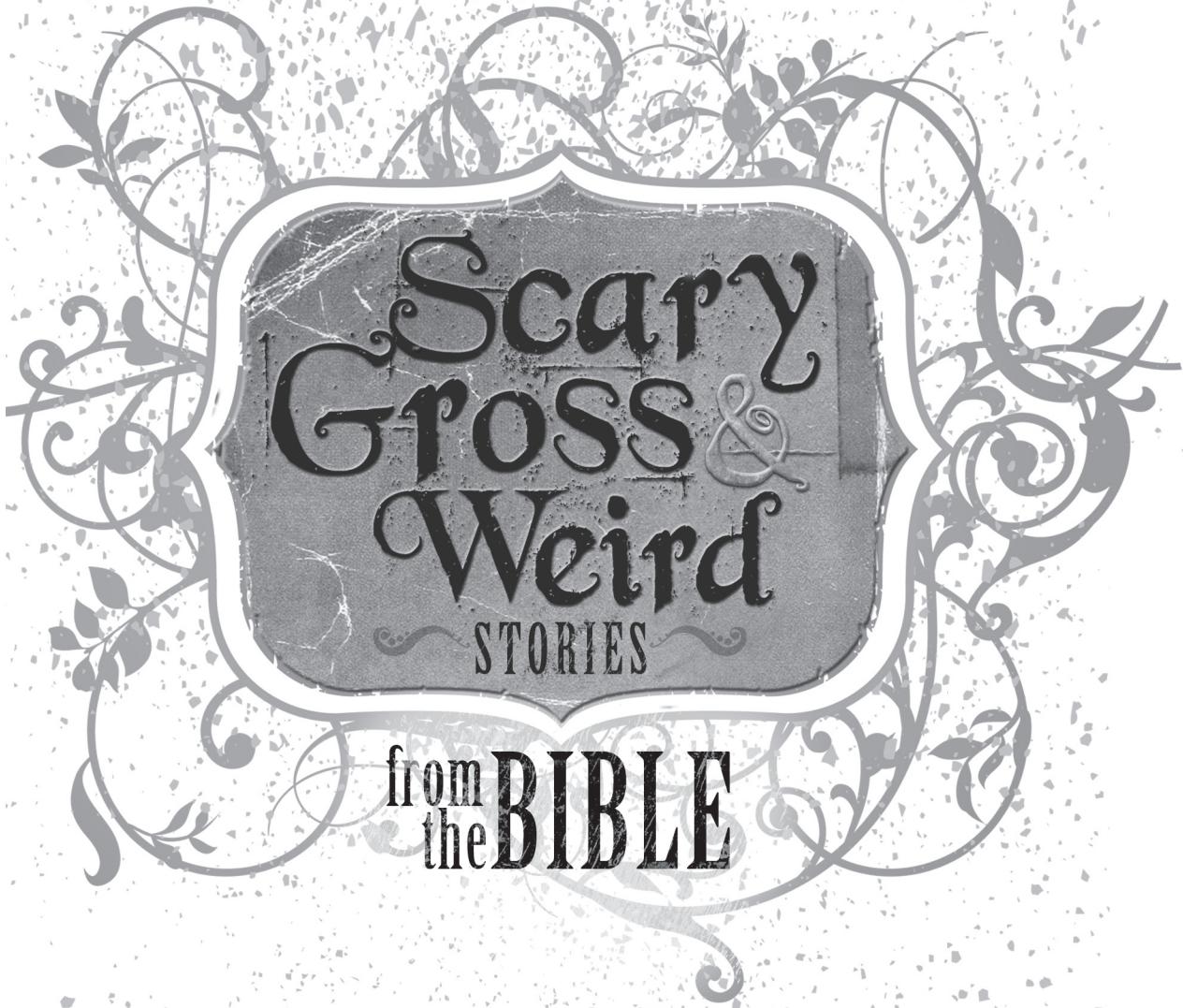
from the **BIBLE**

Bloody tent pegs, disembodied fingers, suicidal pigs



The truths buried in the bizarre

for youth ministry
13
LESSONS



Bloody Tent Pegs, Disembodied Fingers, and Suicidal Pigs...



the Truths Buried in the Bizarre

13 B I B L E L E S S O N S F O R T E E N A G E R S

Group

Loveland, Colorado
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Group resources actually work!

This Group resource helps you focus on "The 1 Thing"®—a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. "The 1 Thing" incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:

Relational

Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable

The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based

Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.



Group

Scary, Gross & Weird Stories from the Bible

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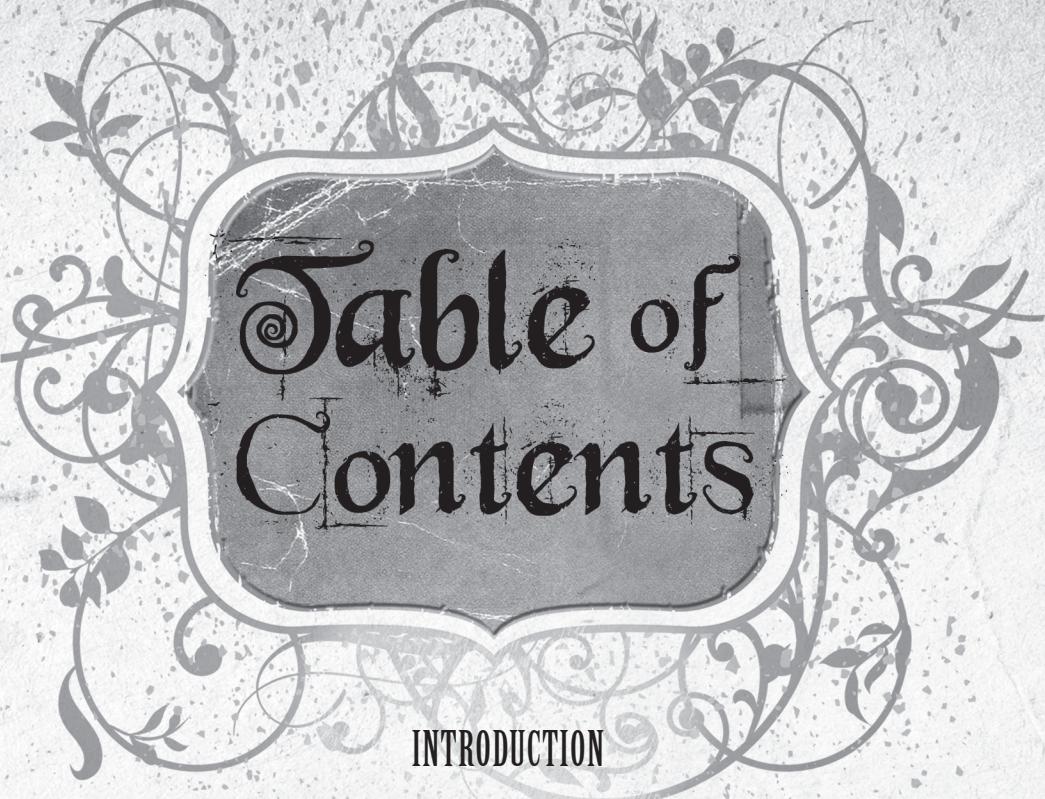


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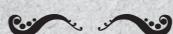
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Scary Gross & Weird STORIES

from the BIBLE

Introduction

Most of the youth in your ministry undoubtedly know the familiar, likely Bible accounts. They've read them dozens of times. Adam and Eve in Eden, God calling Samuel, Esther's courage, Saul's transformation into Paul. Of course, these are amazing highlights from the story of God's loving relationship with his people. But what about the unfamiliar characters? The unlikely accounts? Do your students know just how offbeat and uncomfortable some parts of the Bible can be? How terrifying? How...dare

we say it...**weird?**

Scary, Gross, & Weird Stories from the Bible explores 13 bizarre true stories with a can't-look-away approach. Now, we understand very well that your teenagers probably won't be shocked by what they find in these passages; they've become immune to drama and gore and the grotesque like no generation before. However, they may have never before associated any of that with God's Word. In fact, their view of the Bible might run more along these lines: sterilized, predictable, safe, dull. So here's your opportunity to surprise them, shake the faith dialogue up a bit, and guide them through some provocative, life-transforming experiences. Think of these 13 decidedly non-safe stories as the back-alley accounts of the Bible...where God's light often shines the brightest.

Your students will be surprised and intrigued by the strange things (and people) in these passages—but keep in mind that strangeness isn't the focus. We're not helping your students encounter weirdness for weirdness' sake (or grossness for grossness' sake—you get the picture). Instead, the goal of these unique encounters with unexpected, unsettling stories is solely to show your teenagers more of who God is. And, well, God is pretty unexpected and unsettling. Not to mention utterly creative. So creative, in fact, that he included a lot of head-scratching, cringe-inducing, and downright disturbing stories in his Word. And each one reveals something about God and what it means to be in an intimate, redeeming relationship with Jesus Christ.

We've designed each of the 13 studies in this resource to achieve that very purpose: to equip your students to *really* dig into fresh, startling Scripture passages...so they'll be astounded by our extraordinary Creator and Savior, and moved to love and serve him with their lives.

To that end, here's a full breakdown of how we've built this resource.



Each fun, practical, and peculiar study centers around one **main theme** that is highlighted through every experience and discussion. This main theme helps teenagers grow spiritually and live in ways that glorify God. A detailed **supply list** and **preparation and setup** guide give you everything you need to get ready. The materials are generally easy-to-find, but consider borrowing from congregation members whatever you don't already have.

 **THE GOO**...The study starts with a bang: something both active and interest-capturing to pull teenagers into the study's tone—and introduce the main theme.

 **THE GUTS**... Here's the meat of the study: a fascinating, in-depth exploration of the Bible study. The storytelling is dramatic and innovative, emphasizing the scary, gross, or weird aspects of the story (think story time around the campfire). You'll also explore the theme and dig into Scripture for context and other supporting passages.

 **THE GRIT**...In this final part of the study, you'll help guide students to a personal connection with the theme. This might involve an on-the-edge challenge, an interactive experience, or a simple contemplative response. Whatever the activity, it will lead naturally to...

 **THE GEL**... Where students are given a clear opportunity to make practical commitments for living out what they've discovered. These application steps are relevant, doable, and meaningful.

IN EACH STUDY, YOU'LL ALSO FIND:

 **pit•tip.** Scattered throughout, these tips give you helpful hints and suggestions for specific activities or situations.

 **Cleaning Up.** This is an additional collection of open-ended, thought-provoking questions. Use all or some of them to complement—or even replace—the debriefing questions for each activity. You can guide students through this section all together or form smaller discussion groups for more intimate dialogue.

 One **photocopiable piece**. Your students will interact with this handout in some way during the study, whether as script, guide, map, journal, or list.

 A **creative prayer**. In perhaps the most profound moments of the session, teenagers will connect with God through a unique prayer practice.

 An **interesting quote**. Share this funny, strange, or informative blurb with your students—or just store it away for later.

 **Media Infusion.** Here's a brief optional activity for watching a movie clip, listening to a song, or mining the Internet for a surprising spiritual link. You can fit this serious, offbeat, or poignant idea into the study wherever you'd like an added punch.

 **Believe It or Not.** Check out this real-life gross, weird, or scary story that relates to the Bible story your group is exploring. Share it with your students as a fun bonus before, during, or after the study. Or, better yet, have a volunteer read it aloud.

 **Mixing It Up.** This box highlights two or three other Bible stories that contain a similar “weirdness” or touch on the same theme. You can plan to read these together as a group or suggest that your students explore them on their own.

 **Bizarre Bonus.** Here's a powerful, take-it-to-the-next-level idea for students—either to do outside of the group or together if you have time. This is an over-the-top experience that relates to the Bible story and theme you're exploring. Consider it a cool-but-weird challenge (that should take more time and prep work) to drive the discovery home.



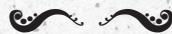
REMEMBER: You know your teenagers best, so please use this resource in ways that fit your group, space, time, and individual needs. The activities, statements, and questions are simply tools to help you facilitate meaningful experiences—so feel free to follow them word-for-word, adapt liberally, or springboard to your own ideas.

While we don't really know (though we eagerly anticipate) what will come from your teenagers' encounters with these stories, this resource does come with a few guarantees. First, it will be relevant for students of various ages, backgrounds, and faith levels. Second, it will work with groups of three, 100, and anywhere in between. Third, it will challenge teenagers to a deeper, more mature relationship with Jesus Christ. These things we promise—the rest is up to you and your students. Our prayer is you'll undergo a weird, wild, and wonderful adventure...



(Lot's Wife Turns to Salt)

BIBLE STORY: GENESIS 18:16-33



THEME: THE PERFECT CHARACTER OF GOD

Subtopics: Obedience, Justice, Perseverance, Following Through, Family

Students will learn how God did what he said he would do when Lot's wife disobeyed, but also how God rescued Lot and his children. Students will discover that God graciously rescues and justly does what he says he will do. They'll also be challenged to obey God fully, even when they don't understand his plan.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- a new toothbrush for everyone
- a can of vegetable shortening
- a foam cup for everyone
- water

- paper towels
- a small prize for everyone (piece of candy, soda, dollar bill, etc.)
- pencils
- Bibles
- 10 pieces of paper
- mirror (the biggest you can find)
- glass cleaner
- (optional) salty snacks
- (optional) computer(s) with an Internet connection

PREPARATION AND SETUP:

- Fill a big bowl with the prizes you've designated. Label it "The Big Bowl of Fabulous Prizes."
- Photocopy a "Mad Lib" handout (p. 8) for every two or three students.



**Greet everybody as they arrive.
Start with an ultimate challenge.**

pit • tip

Buy cheap toothbrushes in bulk or look for deals in dollar stores. If your group is too large or you just can't swing the expense, have students use the "finger-brushing" method.

SAY Anyone who competes in this toothbrushing contest will receive an awesome prize from The Big Bowl of Fabulous Prizes. Everybody participating will load their brushes up with some of this shortening and brush their teeth as long as they can. The person lasting the longest can choose two prizes out of the Big Bowl of Fabulous Prizes and will be considered to be *double fabulous*. Let's do it!

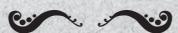
Help volunteers load their brushes (or fingers) up with the lardy goop, give the signal to start, and see who can last the longest. Distribute foam cups everyone can spit into when they are done. When it comes time to reward those who participated and proclaim a winner, do something surprising: award the fabulous prizes to those who didn't participate. Cheerfully grant the top prize to the biggest no-funner of the bunch. Give students a moment to protest, and then:

ASK • How mad are you that I didn't follow through with what I promised?

- Why is it a big deal to be trustworthy?
- What would the world be like without justice?

→ At this point, you might want to distribute prizes to everyone before full-on anarchy erupts.

SAY I can't begin to imagine what it would be like if God didn't do the stuff he said he would do—good stuff and punishment stuff. We couldn't trust anything in the Bible. We'd be left to guess about everything—could we trust him to save us when we die? It's a great thing to see his mercy woven through the pages of the Bible, but it's also pretty comforting to see how he kept his promises time and again, and did what he said he would, even at times when it must have grieved him. Today's story is a good example of both God's mercy and his justice.



Bizarre Bonus

Here's a crazy idea to do together after the study. Load up a table in the room with all kinds of salty junk food. Have everyone partner up. While one person keeps their eyes shut, the other one should chew a mouthful of food, then see if their partner can identify it by looking at the mush in their partner's mouth. Take it a step further with two- or three-food-combo challenges. Use the goofy salt-connection to segue into a discussion about what it means to follow Jesus.



groups can read the goofy story together.

Once everyone has finished, ask the groups to find Genesis 18:16-33. Give them enough time to read the verses among themselves, then prompt them with these questions to talk about in their groups.

ASK • What surprised you most when you read this?

• What did you learn about God's mercy in these verses?

SAY Unfortunately, there weren't even ten good people in the town of Sodom. Instead, God found only Lot and his family. He told them he would lead them out of the city so they wouldn't get barbecued with the others. Let's pick up the story there. Keep reading at Genesis 19:15-29.

MEDIA INFUSION (optional)

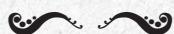
Search news Web sites, magazines, or newspapers for examples of famous people who faced indictment or were sentenced for breaking the law. Discuss the punishment they received or didn't receive, and talk about whether or not it was fair. (If you need ideas, here are some names your teenagers might be familiar with: Paris Hilton, O.J. Simpson, Martha Stewart, Scooter Libby.)



Give students a few minutes to finish reading the Bible story. Then:

ASK • What do you think caused Lot's wife to turn back?

- How would you label her punishment: appropriate, too harsh, just plain weird, or something else?
- Explain your answer.
- What can you know about God based on this story's ending?



pit • tip

If you don't have access to a big mirror, or if your group is just too big, give each student a piece of aluminum foil they can smear up with Crisco and write on. (Faster clean-up, too.)



Use your can of vegetable shortening from earlier to smear up a large mirror. Spread it evenly until the whole surface is covered.

This can be done quickly, right in front of students as you talk.

SAY Mercy is a great thing when we are the ones getting off easy. But something inside us stirs when justice isn't served. It is that quality of justice within God that required a punishment for sin: we all mess up and disobey him—a capital offense punishable by death. The mercy of God came by way of his perfect son, Jesus, who made payment on our behalf by dying a terrible death to save us from hell. If you don't fully understand what Jesus did for you on the cross, please come and talk with me after our study.

SAY I want you guys to think about God's perfect character. Write some qualities that describe him with your finger onto this glass. Let's start by writing two we've talked about today.

→ Use your finger to write "just" and "merciful" into the grease, then give students a chance to crowd around the mirror and write their thoughts in the shortening. Provide paper towels for clean-up.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:12 aloud:

"Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

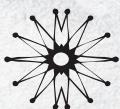
SAY It is a challenge to love and serve God when we can't see him, hear him, or touch him. We can only see bits and glimpses of his character in Scripture and in the things around us. God's faithfulness and consistency are crucial to our understanding of who he is. He has to do what he promises, even if it breaks his heart and ours. It is also obvious through Scripture and his plan for saving us that he has tremendous mercy and compassion on us. This verse we read has a neat promise. One day, we are going to see God face to face and know him the way he knows us, through and through.

→ *(At this point, use the glass cleaner to clean the mirror off, showing a distinction between making out only a fuzzy description of God, to seeing clearly.)*

SAY Until that time, it is important to read his Word and learn what we can about who he is. Just think about these questions silently—you don't need to answer them out loud.

ASK

- How does God's character differ from your own?
- In what ways has God been merciful to you?
- How has he proved to you that he means what he says?
- How does this change the way you think, feel, and connect with Jesus?



The Gel...

Offer your teenagers three challenges to help them better know and understand God's character:

- Keep a running list of every example you find in your Bible reading of God's justice and of his mercy.

- Identify one God-like characteristic you will focus on every day of the coming week.
- Spend five minutes before bed just being quiet with God, and see if you learn anything about him during that time.

→ Ask students to pray with a partner by simply naming aloud different aspects of God's character and thanking him for who he is. Here are a few to get them started: God is merciful. God is just. God is kind. God is holy. God is good...

After several moments, close your meeting with a prayer.

SAY God, thank you for taking the guesswork out of things. Because you consistently do what you say, we know we can trust your words to be true. That gives us hope because we are counting on your mercy and holding onto your promise of help and salvation. Thanks for being faithful and reliable and, above all, merciful toward us. Amen.



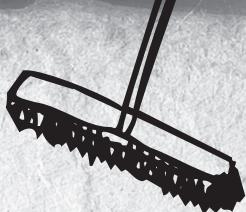
Don't Pee on
My Leg
and Tell Me
It's Raining

—Title of book by Judge
Judy Sheindlin





NO TURNING BACK (Lot's Wife Turns to Salt)



CLEANING UP

Here are some additional open-ended, thought-provoking questions.

Use all or some of them to complement—or even replace—the debriefing questions for any of the activities in this study. You can guide students through this section all together, or form smaller discussion groups for more intimate dialogue.

- How would you rate today's story on a weirdness scale of 1 to 10?
- Sum today's Bible story up in one sentence.
- How would you define justice?
- How would you define mercy?
- Why is it frustrating when someone doesn't get what they deserve?
- Name a time you were relieved that you didn't get something you deserved.
- How would the world be different if God wasn't merciful?
- How would the world be different if God wasn't just?
- Name one thing you can do, starting today, to be a more merciful person.
- Tell God thanks, in your own words, for his flawless character.



Consider writing the "Cleaning Up" questions onto pieces of paper, one question per page. Beforehand, tape the pages to the wall or onto the table. At this point in the study, distribute pencils and have teenagers walk around to all the different questions and write their answers on the paper.

For huge groups, write the questions onto ten pieces of poster board so there is more room for writing. For really huge groups, make two or three posters for every question so students aren't all bunched up trying to write on the same ten boards.

Mixing It Up

Judges 11:21-40
(Jephthah makes a vow)

1 Samuel 24:1-10
(Saul uses a public potty)

2 Kings 2:23-25
(bears eat bullies)

The town of Sodom was a []], [] town. People
WORD FOR BAD WORD FOR REALLY BAD

there were []-ing constantly. They ignored God and
A SIN
broke the most important rule: []. God was fed up.
A RULE

Abraham pleaded with God to spare Sodom. If God could find some good guys

there, perhaps he could rain down [] instead of fire
SOMETHING FLUFFY AND NICE
and brimstone.

"God, if you find 50, or 40, or 30, or 20, or 10 guys half as good as [],
A NICE PERSON IN YOUR GROUP
would you please not wipe out Sodom with a big fireball?" God agreed. Unfortunately, God
only found one good guy there. Only Lot and his family would be spared.

They were given special instructions: Pack the [] and the
A NECESSITY ITEM

[]. Don't forget the []
A BREAKFAST CEREAL
[].
SOMETHING YOU'D WISH YOU HAD IF YOU WERE ON THE SHOW LOST

They would be led out of their hometown by angels, and then,

"[]!" Total destruction! "[]!"
A LOUD SOUND AN EXCLAMATION

"Whatever you do, don't turn back," Lot's family was sternly warned. But Lot's
wife didn't listen. Did she go back to turn off the []?
AN ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE

Only God knows. The moment she looked back, she was turned to a pile of salt. God keeps
his promises—the ones we want kept, and those we choose to ignore.

13 BIBLE LESSONS

Not for the Faint of Heart

Have you heard about the
bloody tent pegs? The disembodied fingers? Or the suicidal pigs?
It's all in the Bible. And these stories are *sick*.



And totally interesting.

Behind the bizarre of the Bible lurks the truth that helps us know God in greater ways. Some of the craziest stories in the Bible are also some of the most revealing!

Use these 13 peculiar & profound lessons to grab attention—and equip faith for life. Each lesson focuses on a relevant topic that connects to a Bible story. Plus, a game, daring activity, and discussion questions that help teens uncover life application.

Surprise your teenagers...with the disgusting truth!

- Gross them out during youth group time
- Start up a weekly study
- Create a *Scary, Gross, & Weird* retreat

Allow one hour per lesson.

Ooze, slime, and pus not included.

Group
Real. Bold. Love.

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