

An Introduction to Making a Story Line

This is an exercise that can help children reflect on which parts of a story are happy or sad. This can generate considerable discussion in a family or group of students, depending on the story. We are enclosing an activity sheet that can be used for this activity and some alternatives.

The first step is to identify 6-10 key events in a story. To make the story line, you will need to decide whether each event is happy or sad or somewhere in between. Take for example, Daniel praying to the Lord in his room. Is this event happy, sad, or somewhere in between? There is a neutral, middle line. Anything above the line is happy, and anything below the line is sad. The degree of happiness or sadness is shown by how far away from the middle line an event is placed.

The story line can be plotted out on paper (see below) or on a chalk board. You can also write the events on index cards, place them in sequential order, and then arrange them on a table or the floor (making the neutral line with a string or masking tape). Another alternative is to have each person represent one event and stand “above” or “below” the neutral line.

Decide whether you want to make a story line showing your response to each event or how a character in the story responded to the events. Discussion is key here! Make 2 separate story lines if students disagree and have good reasons for different points of view. Older students can work in small groups to develop different story lines from the point of view of different characters.

Daniel in the Lions' Den Story Line

(based on the story in Daniel 6)

Decide whether each event is happy or sad. Draw a line going up and down from left to right to show how the different parts of this story make us feel.
Optional: Take a different color pen or marker and plot another story line from the perspective of Darius the king. How do these lines compare?

Very happy										
Rather happy										
A little bit happy										
Neutral or mixed feelings										
A little bit angry or sad										
Rather angry or sad										
Very angry or sad										
	Daniel is a good governor under king Darius. Daniel prays three times a day to his God.	Some men are jealous of Daniel, because the king wants to give Daniel more responsibilities.	The men get king Darius to pass a law that would prohibit Daniel's prayers.	Daniel knows about the new law, but he prays to his God anyway.	King Darius is forced to punish Daniel by putting him in the lions' den.	Darius hopes that Daniel's God will keep him safe.	The king was very worried about Daniel and stayed awake all night long.	The Lord sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths because Daniel was innocent.	King Dairus was very glad, and he had Daniel lifted up out of the lions' den.	There was no injury on Daniel because he believed in his God.