



**Creativinme**

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**Series:** Creativinme

**Lesson:** 2 – Living Creativity

**Scripture:** Matthew 13

**Supplies:** Rory's Story Cubes OR Magnetic Poetry Tiles OR pieces of paper with random story words (nouns, verbs, locations, etc.) and a baton

**NOTE:** The subject matter of this series lends itself to lots of options and variations on the core lesson.  
Boxes of text note options that can be used in place of the standard lesson.

**Opening Game: *Once Upon A Time***

**Supplies:**      Rory's Story Cubes <http://www.storycubes.com> or Magnetic Poetry Tiles  
<http://magneticpoetry.com> or pieces of paper with random story words (nouns, verbs, locations) and/or a baton.

**Instructions:** One of the best parts of childhood is hearing a good story from a good storyteller. You are going to tell a story in 2 minutes using little cues to help you along the way. Begin with "Once Upon a Time" and end with "The End."

Start a 2-minute countdown on screen or a 2-minute timer on the table and begin. Show them a word tile, story cube, or paper to help them with their story. They can use up to nine in their two minutes.

You can have one person do the whole thing. Or, get students in groups and have them hand-off the story at each cue. Just some silly fun with storytelling.

**creative option:** If you have an iPhone, iPod Touch or iPad, you could use the *Rory's Story Cubes* app and project it on screen using Apple TV. Just a fun way to mix technology and creativity in a lesson. You could also get the Story Cubes MAX which are larger and might work better for a large group situation. You could also have someone using a whiteboard to draw pictures that summarize the story as they tell it to provide a visual element.

**Transition to Large Group Teaching**

Wow! Creativity in storytelling can be fun and hard! Today, we're continuing in the second week of our four-week adventure focused on creativity. We are moving from talking about God, the Creator, to talking about His Son, Jesus. Grab your Bible and open it to Matthew chapter 13.

## Large Group Teaching

[Slide 1 – Title Slide]

(Notes on this lesson are based on the New Living Translation, unless otherwise noted. On a side note, this is a great translation to use with students, especially due to its readability and accuracy.)

***There are a lot of Scripture references made in this lesson to cover several examples of Jesus' creativity in one lesson. You would do best to be prepared to summarize most of them, choosing specific ones you want to read or have a volunteer read.***

The following is a quote from the book *Dangerous Wonder* by the late Michael Yaconelli. His focus is on play, but as you should see in this series, play and creativity are often interlinked. You simply read this material to help prepare you to teach, or you may choose to share part of it as a quote in your teaching.

"Jesus' words are filled with playfulness, irony, metaphor, and hyperbole. He must have said them with a twinkle in His eye. He continuously used stories, parables, and actual events to expose the blindness of His critics. When the stakes were high, when men and women's souls were hanging in the balance, when truth was on the line, Jesus would play with His listeners, would verbally spar with His critics, forcing into the open those who cared nothing about truth. No wonder that when Jesus was done speaking, "the crowds were amazed at his teaching" (Matthew 7:28). No wonder people said, "He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Matthew 7:29, emphasis added). Jesus' words were not somber, oppressive, smothering, and threatening; they were lively, full of colorful images and earthy characters—fun stories that left His listeners wanting more.

In *Living the Message* Eugene Peterson points out how powerful a playful parable can be:

Jesus' favorite speech form, the parable, was subversive. Parables sound absolutely ordinary: casual stories about soil and seeds, meals and coins and sheep, bandits and victims, farmers and merchants. And they are wholly secular: of his forty or so parables recorded in the Gospels, only one has its setting in church, and only a couple mention the name God. As people heard Jesus tell these stories, they saw at once that they weren't about God, so there was nothing in them threatening their own sovereignty. They relaxed their defenses. They walked away perplexed, wondering what they meant, the stories lodged in their imagination. And then, like a time bomb, they would explode in their unprotected hearts. An abyss opened up at their very feet. He was talking about God; they had been invaded!

Jesus understood He could protect the seriousness of the gospel by interspersing His life and message with a sense of playfulness."

Excerpt From: Yaconelli, Michael. *Dangerous Wonder*, pages 68-69. NavPress, 2003. His quote is from Eugene Peterson, *Living the Message* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), p. 13.

**creative option:** To add to the teaching, the leader teacher could dress up like a storyteller at the library. They could have a comfy sweater and a pair of reading glasses. You could also decorate your room or stage like a child's reading area with a couch, rocking chair, rug samples for kids to sit on, bean bag chairs, a coffee table with a big photo album or family Bible. For fun, if you can pull it off, it would be great to have the lead teacher peeling an apple with a knife so that the whole peel comes off in one piece as they teach, like someone sitting out back on their porch eating apples and sharing stories with their neighbors.

Have students open their Bibles to **Matthew 13**.

(Talk to a student or students ahead of time about reading Matthew 13:34 for the group. Give them a chance to read it over ahead of time. This is a great opportunity for someone who wants to participate up front but is nervous. A one-verse assignment!)

As students are getting their places in their Bibles, remind them of the definition of creativity.

[Slide 2 – Creativity]

**Creativity is the use of imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of an artistic work.**

Ideas matter. In the activity we did to start today, you had some words or pictures to help you, but the story only worked if you put good ideas in place. Last week, we looked at creation and how God was the inventor of creativity - He turned the forming of the world into an artistic work spread out over the seven days of creation! Hopefully, many of you did or are working through a time of remembering and celebrating our Creator God through focusing on those days in your own life.

Let's move now from talking about God who invented creativity to talking about how His son, Jesus, lived creativity.

Ask your student reader to read as everyone follows along, **Matthew 13:34**.

[Slide 3 – Matthew 13:34]

**Matthew 13:34**

**Teaching**

**“Jesus always used stories and illustrations...”**

How many of you have or still do think of church as boring?

How many of you have friends, classmates, neighbors, parents, etc. who think of church as boring?

Now, how many of you have or still think of stories as fun?

How many of you have friends, classmates, neighbors, parents, etc. who think of stories as fun?

We know this is true all the way to Hollywood. Pixar, an animation company known for successful, award-winning movies, is known for saying, “Story is king.” (They even tweeted that exact phrase at 3:30pm on May 25, 2011.) Story drives everything they do.

If people find church boring, they are probably not paying close enough attention to Jesus.

If they think of it as fun, it might just be because they noticed how much fun Jesus is.

He was fun because He lived out the creativity of God, His Father!

I am told, for example, that Jesus only directly answered three of the almost two hundred questions that the four gospels record him being asked! The rest of the time, he responded with a question or a story!

[Slide 4 – It was written...]

**“It was written...”**

We know he was good at quoting from the Bible, which he would have studied and memorized growing up as a Jewish boy. Here are just a few examples of his direct quotes: Luke 24:46; John 6:45; 10:34; 19:20.

**creative option:** If you have a coffee table prop with a photo album, you could say, “Do you have a family member who says, “Did I ever tell you about the time . . . Here, let me show you this picture and tell you about the time . . . ” That’s someone who remembers and enjoys passing on stories of times from the past. I imagine Jesus was like that.

[Slide 5 – Suppose or Imagine]

**“Suppose” or “Imagine” or “There once was/were...”**

Did you know Jesus was a master storyteller? Not only did he quote the Old Testament, but he also made up stories to help people understand what he was teaching. (These really come across if you read them from The Message translation.)

Here are a few examples:

**Matthew 22:25; Luke 7:41; 11:5; 15:8**

[Slide 6 – Healing, Mark 7:31-35]

**Healing**

Those teaching examples may not impress you, but did you see how Jesus healed? Sometimes he would just say someone was healed and they would be. But other times, almost going back to what God, the Creator, did at creation, Jesus got messy and creative to heal.

Check this out:

**creative option:** To illustrate these without getting too gross, you could have a bottle of water you are drinking as you teach. Then, when you make the points, take a drink and spit it out into a large container, like a 5 gallon bucket. For the mud illustration, maybe uncover a plate full of dry dirt that you spit into and make some mud. To get bonus points, find an adult leader ahead of time who will let you smear it on their eyes as in illustration - or who will make the mud and smear it on your eyes!

**Mark 7:31-35**

Jesus used his own spit to heal a deaf man!

[Slide 7 – John 9:1-11]

**John 9:1-11**

Jesus made **mud** with his own **spit** to heal a **blind** man!

[Slide 8 – Feeding]

**Feeding**

Okay, now that we are grossed out, let's talk about food. We know from Jesus' lesson in Matthew 25 that feeding people who are hungry is a big deal to him. Yet, he found the strangest way to feed a large crowd . . . and did it twice!

**John 6:1-13**

Jesus fed over **5,000** people with a young boy's **lunch**!

[Slide 9 – Matthew 15:32-38]

**Matthew 15:32-38**

Jesus fed over **4,000** people with **7** loaves of bread and a few small **fish** . . . and had **7** baskets of **leftovers**!

So Jesus taught by telling stories, some that were true and some that he made up on the spot.

He healed people - sometimes just with words and other, more creative times, with his own spit.

And Jesus used food that wasn't even enough to feed himself and the disciples to feed thousands of hungry people - and even had leftovers!

God invented creativity. Jesus definitely lived creativity.

[Slide 10 – Title Slide]

***Transition to Small Groups***

Now, let's get into our small groups for a chance to review and make sure you were paying attention while also giving you some specific action steps to take this week based on the truth that Jesus lived creativity!

## **Small Groups**

**Supplies:** None

**creative option:** If you have time, you could use the Magnetic Poetry tiles or Rory's Story Cubes in your small group time. Or you could just talk about everyone's favorite moments - both good and bad - during this large group activity.

**Instructions:** We are going to play *The Question Game*. Here are the rules.

- 1) Everyone sits in a circle facing inside.
- 2) After the first person starts, all you are allowed to say is a question. You must look at one other person in the group and ask them a question. Then they look at someone else and do the same thing.
- 3) If anyone answers a question, they are out.
- 4) If anyone asks a question to the person who just asked them a question, they are out.
- 5) If anyone repeats a question that has already been asked, they are out.

(You start the group with the first question. The group is usually pretty good at remembering and monitoring if a question has been asked. Play until there is a winner or until about 5-10 minutes have gone by, depending on how much time you have for your small group.)

After the activity, spend some time discussing the large group lesson. Ask the group if they were able to see Jesus' teaching with a new perspective. Discuss the creative ways Jesus taught his disciples. Talk specifically about the personal touch Jesus made when He spit to heal people. What are the students' thoughts and emotions when they process this?

[Slide 11 – The Meet Jesus Challenge]

### **The Meet Jesus Challenge**

Tell students that their challenge this week is to meet Jesus for the first time... again. They need to read about Jesus again as if they were reading for the first time. There are lots of Bible passages listed in today's notes. Their challenge this week is to read a few of these each day, but not from their normal Bible.

They can go online to [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) and pick from a variety of translations and versions. I highly recommend using *The Message* for a fresh look at familiar Bible passages. They can also choose more visually creative translations like *The Adventure Bible* by David C. Cook Publishing or *Manga Messiah* by Tyndale House Publishers.

Students should read these old, true stories as if they had never heard them before. Then, brainstorm creative ways to share them with others. It could be as simple as drawing a picture or re-writing the story in a modern version. Or, they might be able to include these in a homework assignment at school or creative writing contest in their community. Or you might just challenge them to bring their work back next week to share with the group.

*Creativinme: Lesson 2*

The point is that most people don't think of Jesus as being very creative. But it wasn't hard today for us to see at least six different examples in three different areas of his life, where Jesus lived creativity. Is that the kind of Jesus we think of and follow? The challenge this week is to reintroduce ourselves to the real Jesus and follow him in living creativity. (Just don't go spitting on anybody.) (close with prayer)

[Slide 12 – Title Slide]

### Optional Student Outline

(You can use this if you offer a handout for your students. Simply remove the underlined words and make them blanks for students to fill in.)

#### **Creativinme: Jesus**

**Matthew 13:34** (& several others)

**Creativity** is the use of imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of an artistic work.

#### Teaching

“It was written...”

**Luke 24:46; John 6:45; 10:34; 19:20.**

“Suppose” or “Imagine” or “There once was/were...”

**Matthew 22:25; Luke 7:41; 11:5; 15:8**

#### Healing

**Mark 7:31-35**

Jesus used his own spit to heal a deaf man!

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#### Feeding

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Jesus fed over 5,000 people with a young boy’s lunch!

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#### **The Meet Jesus Challenge**