



GOD'S CREATURES TELL THE STORY ♦ START HERE

The Divine News Team

An Origin Story ♦ A Packet for Teachers, Parents, and Leaders

FREE ♦ PHOTOCOPY FREELY FOR YOUR CLASS

This is the book that begins the series — how Gabriel chose three unlikely reporters, what rules they swore to keep, and why a squirrel, an owl, and a donkey were exactly the right choice. The packet gathers the discussion questions, the Six Rules, and everything a leader needs to teach it.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 2 How to Use This Packet — and where to start in the series
- 3 Five Lesson Plans
- 4 Discussion Questions — Prologue through Chapter 4
- 5 Discussion Questions — Chapters 5 through the Epilogue
- 6 The Six Sacred Rules — teaching notes
- 7 The Training Scenarios — three role-play exercises
- 8 Which Reporter Are You? — reproducible
- 9 Six Threads Through the Series
- 10 Where to Go Next

God's Creatures Tell the Story ♦ Don D. Brown

Free for classroom, church, and family use · dondbrownbooks.com

Start Here

This is the front door of the series. Every other book stands on its own, but this one explains who the reporters are, why they were chosen, and what rules govern their work. Read it first and the rest of the series makes more sense.

For Family Devotions

1. Read one chapter per sitting — eight chapters, plus a prologue and an epilogue.
2. Use the discussion questions on pages 4 and 5; they mix comprehension, reflection, and Scripture.
3. Post the Six Sacred Rules where the family can see them.
4. Ask the question on page 8 at the dinner table: which reporter are you?

For Sunday School Classes

1. Open with the Prologue — Gabriel's concern is that Bible stories are not reaching today's children, which your students will recognize.
2. Spend a full session on the Six Rules (page 6). They carry the whole series.
3. Run one of the training scenarios on page 7 as a role play.
4. Close the unit with Chapter 7, the widow of Nain, and read Luke 7:11–17 alongside it.

For Homeschool Curriculum

1. Use the book as an introduction to point of view: three witnesses, one event, three true reports.
2. Pair Chapter 5 with a lesson on ethics — why rules exist and what they protect.
3. Assign a written report on a scene the student witnessed themselves, following Rules 1 and 2.
4. Study the Scripture references named in the questions: Matthew 19:14, 1 Corinthians 1:27, Matthew 7:7, Ephesians 4:16, Proverbs 27:17.

Penny sees the heart. Hoot sees the context. Dominic sees the questions.
Together they see more than any of them could alone.

Target age is nine to twelve. Younger children follow the story easily when it is read aloud; the reflection questions are what stretch older readers.

Five Sessions

Five sessions across ten chapters. Each is anchored to a Scripture the book itself names, so the lesson and the story point at the same verse.

Lesson 1: No One Is Too Small

Key verse: 1 Corinthians 1:27 ♦ Read: Prologue and Chapter 1

Main point. God chooses the unlikely on purpose. Penny was small and unsure — and exactly right.

Activity. Have each student name one ordinary thing about themselves that could be a gift to others.

Lesson 2: Knowledge Needs a Heart

Key verse: Romans 12:7–8 ♦ Read: Chapter 2

Main point. Hoot knew everything and was still missing something. Facts alone do not make a true story.

Activity. Tell one fact about a classmate, then tell one thing you understand about them. Compare.

Lesson 3: Honest Questions Are Not Doubt

Key verse: Matthew 7:7 ♦ Read: Chapter 3

Main point. Dominic feared that questioning meant doubting. It does not — it can lead deeper in.

Activity. Write down a question about God you have never asked out loud. No names on the papers.

Lesson 4: Different Gifts, One Body

Key verse: Ephesians 4:16 ♦ Read: Chapters 4 and 6

Main point. The team failed at first because each one thought their way of seeing was the whole picture.

Activity. Run the Teamwork Test on page 7 and compare the three reports.

Lesson 5: Rules That Protect

Key verse: Proverbs 27:17 ♦ Read: Chapters 5, 7, and 8

Main point. Six rules, not one — because witnessing well is harder than it looks.

Activity. Ask each student which rule would be hardest for them, and why.

Lesson 5 is the one to protect if your time gets cut. The Six Rules recur in every book in the series, and students who learn them here carry them forward.

Prologue through Chapter 4

Each set mixes comprehension, reflection, and a Scripture connection. Use as many or as few as fit your group and your time — three good questions beat five rushed ones.

Prologue — Heaven’s Problem

1. Why does Gabriel decide that Bible stories are not reaching today’s children? What evidence does he see?
2. Have you ever heard a Bible story that felt distant or hard to connect with? Which one, and why?
3. What does it mean to be a *witness* to something? How is that different from being a participant?
4. In Matthew 19:14 Jesus says, “Let the little children come to me.” How does the Prologue show that same heart?
5. If Heaven could send any kind of reporters to help you understand the Bible, what would you want them to be like?

Chapter 1 — The Squirrel Who Gathered More Than Nuts

1. Penny gathered stories instead of nuts. What stories do you collect from the people around you?
2. Why did Gabriel choose Penny even though she was small and unsure of herself?
3. How does 1 Corinthians 1:27 — God choosing the weak things — fit Penny’s calling?
4. Have you ever felt too small to do something that mattered? What happened?
5. Penny’s ordinary curiosity turned out to be her gift. What ordinary thing about you could be a gift?

Chapter 2 — The Owl Who Knew Too Much

1. Hoot was very smart, but Gabriel said something was missing. What was it?
2. Why is knowledge alone not enough to tell a true story? What else does a story need?
3. His bow tie is always slightly crooked, however often he straightens it. What does that tell you about him?
4. Romans 12:7–8 speaks of using your gifts faithfully. How does Hoot’s gift fit there?
5. When has knowing facts about something not been the same as understanding it?

Chapter 3 — The Donkey Who Asked Too Many Questions

1. Why would Gabriel choose someone who questions everything?
2. In Matthew 7:7 Jesus says, “Ask, and it shall be given you.” How does Dominic honor that?
3. Have you ever been afraid to ask a question? What stopped you?
4. Why is asking *why* brave rather than rude?
5. What question about God have you always wondered about but never asked?

Chapter 4 — When Three Become One (Eventually)

1. The reporters did not get along at first. Why does the story show them struggling?
2. Why were they stronger together than alone?
3. Ephesians 4:16 describes every part of the body working together. How does that connect here?
4. Have you worked on a team where everyone was different? What was hard? What was good?
5. Which reporter do you most identify with — or are you a mix?

Chapter 5 through the Epilogue

The second half of the book turns from who the reporters are to what they are asked to do. The questions get harder here, which is the point.

Chapter 5 — The Rules (And Why They Matter)

1. Why does Gabriel give six rules instead of one big rule?
2. Which rule would be hardest for Penny? For Hoot? For Dominic? Why?
3. Rule 1 is *Observe Without Interfering*. Why is that so hard when you see someone hurting?
4. Rule 6 is *Protect Free Will*. Why is human freedom so important to God that it must be protected?
5. If you were on the team, which rule would be hardest for *you*?

Chapter 6 — The Training Scenarios

1. Why is it important to practice making mistakes safely before a real assignment?
2. In the Teamwork Test, what did each reporter contribute?
3. Can you think of a real training scenario you have been through — a chance to practice before the real test?
4. Proverbs 27:17 says iron sharpens iron. How do the reporters sharpen each other?
5. If you were preparing for an important assignment, what would your training look like?

Chapter 7 — The Practice Assignment

1. The widow of Nain is a real account — Luke 7:11–17. Why do you think Jesus performed this miracle?
2. Penny wanted to help but had to keep Rule 1. Why was that so hard for her?
3. What did each reporter learn about themselves on this assignment?
4. In what ways are we all witnesses — to our friends, our families, the world?
5. If you had been at Nain, what would you have wanted to write down?

Chapter 8 — The Next Chapter

1. The team is sent to witness Zacchaeus. Why is that a good next assignment for them?
2. Zacchaeus was a tax collector nobody liked. What does Jesus visiting his house show about how God sees people?
3. What is different about each reporter now compared with the Prologue?
4. What does the title mean — for the reporters, and for you?
5. What would you most want to ask Penny, Hoot, or Dominic?

Epilogue — A Note to Readers

1. Why does the author write directly to readers at the end?
2. Which reporter are you most like — or are you a mix of all three?
3. Why does it matter that a book imagining new perspectives still gets the actual Bible right?
4. What Bible story would you like the team to witness in a future book?
5. Has your view of the Bible — or of God — changed after this book? How?

The Six Sacred Rules

Six rules, sworn as an oath, that recur through every book in the series. Students who learn them here will recognize them everywhere after. Each entry below gives the rule, what it means, and where the teaching lives.

I. Observe Without Interfering

The reporters are guests in history, not its authors.

Teaching note. The hardest rule, and the one children argue with. Ask why God allows suffering He could stop — then let the question sit rather than resolving it too quickly.

II. Report Truth, Not Opinions

Facts first; feelings belong in their own perspective, not disguised as fact.

Teaching note. A natural lesson on the difference between *what happened* and *what I felt about it*. Both are real. Only one is reporting.

III. See With Love, Not Judgment

The reporters witness people at their worst and choose love anyway.

Teaching note. Ask how the class would report on someone they dislike. Then ask how God reports on them.

IV. Work as a Team, Not Alone

Pride says “I have it.” Wisdom says “We have it.”

Teaching note. The clearest lesson in the book for group work. Pair with the Teamwork Test on page 7.

V. Respect the Story

Scripture belongs to God and to the people who lived it. No showmanship.

Teaching note. Worth naming plainly: this is why the series does not embellish the Bible, even when a bigger version would be more exciting.

VI. Protect Free Will

God gave humans the freedom to choose, and the reporters never override it.

Teaching note. The deepest of the six. Ask whether it is loving to stop someone from making a bad choice — and what that would cost them.

*The full oath is on the free one-page classroom poster, **The Six Sacred Rules of Divine Reporting**, available at dondbrownbooks.com.*

The Training Scenarios

Gabriel trains the reporters by letting them fail safely. All three scenarios work as classroom role plays, and all three make a point faster than a lecture would.

Scenario One — The Empathy Test

Tests Rule 1: Observe Without Interfering. A young angel is learning to fly. She falls, again and again, and begins to cry. Her instructor stays close but offers little help. Penny's gift is empathy — and her gift is exactly what makes this unbearable for her.

Run it like this. Read the scene aloud, then stop. Ask the class what they would do. Ask what would be lost if the angel were rescued from every fall. Ask whether wanting to help is ever the wrong thing — and whether wanting to help and acting on it are the same.

Scenario Two — The Teamwork Test

Tests Rules 2 and 4: Truth Not Opinions, and Work as a Team. The three reporters watch the same teacher speaking in a temple courtyard, each from a different position — Penny near the children, Hoot behind the teacher where he can see the scrolls, Dominic among the adults at the back. Ten minutes to report.

Run it like this. Send three students to different corners of the room and stage a short scene. Bring them back and take three reports. The disagreements will be the lesson. Then ask which report was *true* — and watch the class discover that all three were, and none was complete.

Scenario Three — The Free Will Test

Tests Rule 6: Protect Free Will. A young person stands at a crossroads. One path glows; the other is plainly shadowed and leads nowhere good. The person turns toward the shadow. Gabriel says: you will not interfere. Dominic objects that the wrong choice is obvious. Gabriel asks a question worth the whole book: *Is it obvious to them, or only to you?*

Run it like this. Best as a discussion rather than a role play. Older students will push back hard, which is the right response. Do not rush to resolve it.

Which Reporter Are You?

Penny sees the heart. Hoot sees the context. Dominic sees the questions. Most of us are a mix — but one usually leads. Read each statement and mark the ones that sound like you. — Photocopy this page for your class.

Name: _____ Date: _____

If this sounds like you — Penny

- ____ I notice when someone is upset before they say so.
- ____ I remember how a story made me feel more than what happened in it.
- ____ I find it hard to watch someone struggle without helping.
- ____ I collect little details about the people around me.
- ____ People tell me things they do not tell others.

If this sounds like you — Dominic

- ____ I ask *why* even when nobody wants me to.
- ____ I notice the thing everyone else is stepping around.
- ____ I would rather understand than agree.
- ____ I have been called stubborn by someone who meant it as a complaint.
- ____ Questions do not scare me, even hard ones about God.

If this sounds like you — Hoot

- ____ I want to know how a thing works before I use it.
- ____ I remember facts easily and enjoy explaining them.
- ____ I look things up when a story does not add up.
- ____ I would rather be accurate than quick.
- ____ I like knowing the background nobody else bothered with.

Now talk about it

- Which column had the most marks? Was that a surprise?
- Which reporter would you want next to you in a hard moment, and why?
- Which gift is hardest for you — and who in this room has it?
- Gabriel needed all three. What would a report be missing without your gift?

There is no scoring and no winner. The point of the exercise is the last question.

Six Threads

Each book in the series stands alone, but six themes run through all of them. Naming these for a class gives students something to carry from one book to the next.

Everyone Has Value

No one is too small, too different, or too broken to matter to God.

Where to find it here. Penny's calling in Chapter 1; Zacchaeus in Book Two.

Questions Are Okay

Honest questions can lead deeper into faith, not away from it.

Where to find it here. Dominic in Chapter 3, and every time he interrupts thereafter.

Differences Make Us Stronger

We need people who see the world differently than we do.

Where to find it here. Chapter 4, and the Teamwork Test in Chapter 6.

Transformation Is Possible

With God, people can change in profound and beautiful ways.

Where to find it here. The reporters themselves, measured from Prologue to Epilogue.

Love Is Action

Real love does something — it witnesses, serves, and sacrifices.

Where to find it here. Chapter 7, at Nain, where witnessing *is* the act of love.

Trust the Process

God's timing is better than our intervention.

Where to find it here. Rules 1 and 6, and the whole of the Free Will Test.

Where to Go Next

Reading Order

Every book in the series stands on its own. But for a class or a family meeting these characters for the first time, start here — the Origin Story explains who the reporters are and what rules bind them, and every book after it assumes you know.

After that, order matters less than interest. Choose by the biblical story you are studying, by a theme from page 9, or simply by what a child asks about. Reading in publication order shows the most character growth, but all paths are valid.

Other Free Downloads

1. **The Six Sacred Rules of Divine Reporting** — a one-page classroom poster with the full oath.
2. **Meet the Divine News Team** — a one-page reader's guide to Penny, Professor Hoot, Dominic, and Gabriel.
3. **David and Goliath: Teacher's Packet** — ten pages, including the physics of the sling and a Bible detective hunt.
4. **Daniel in the Lions' Den: Teacher's Packet** — ten pages, including five lesson plans and a quiz.

All are free to download and photocopy at dondbrownbooks.com.

*We will observe what is, not what we wish.
We will report truth, not our pride.
We will see with love, not with judgment.
We will work as one, not as three.*

A Word to the Teacher

This series exists because Bible stories deserve better than being told the same way to every generation. Penny, Hoot, and Dominic are made up. Everything they witness is not. The reporters change; the Scripture does not.

If you use this packet with a class or a family, I would be glad to hear how it went. Teachers have shaped more of this series than they know.

— Don D. Brown ♦ dondbrownbooks.com