



Teaching a Biblical Worldview with Stories


By Michael James Dowling

Before God graciously called me to faith in Christ, I was deeply involved in the New Age Movement and Eastern religions. Back in the 1970s, these ideas were on the fringes of society. Today, they are mainstream. Most Americans would agree with many of the following erroneous statements:

- Many different spiritual paths can lead to God.
- We should fight against all instances of intolerance and inequality.
- Truth is found within each person, so it can be different for everyone.
- Happiness is the goal of life.
- Organized religions do more harm than good.
- Gender is a choice.
- Promoting the self-esteem of children is of primary importance.
- Sin is an unhealthy, outdated concept.
- Jesus was an enlightened spiritual leader who came to teach us the path to fulfillment.

These unbiblical notions are on TV, in movies, in our schools, and everywhere. This is the environment our children and grandchildren are growing up in. As Christians, we are exhorted by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:5 to “destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and to take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

Unfortunately, the trends are not encouraging. In his *American Worldview Inventory 2020*, pollster George Barna reports that fewer than six percent of Americans possess a Christian worldview. That’s half of what it was only twenty-five years ago. In the 18 to 29-year-old bracket, the current figure is a mere two percent. No wonder our culture is becoming more confusing, chaotic, combative, and corrupt!



*“Train up a child
in the way he
should go . . .”*

Proverbs 22:6

WE ARE IN A BATTLE

For many of us, our most important battlefield will be within our own family. As Christian parents and grandparents, we are instructed by Proverbs 22:6 to “train up a child in the way he should go.” But how can we effectively communicate the gospel message to our children and grandchildren in today’s noisy environment, with its constant bombardment of unbiblical ideas and images from social media, TV, movies, video games, and the internet?

One answer is through stories. Chuck Colson, the late founder of the Colson Center for Christian Worldview, expressed it this way: *“Stories shape our thoughts, move our emotions, and enlarge our imaginations. The images we plant in our minds have an enormous influence over the kind of people we become. They both express and shape our beliefs and values.*

Think of the effective use Jesus made of images and stories. He could have simply said, ‘Take care of people who are hurt and victimized.’ Instead, He spun the tale of the Good Samaritan. He could have just said, ‘God forgives your sins, so forgive others.’ Instead, He told the parable of the unmerciful servant. Why? Because a story gets at aspects of truth that are beyond the power of didactic teaching.”

The Bible should be our starting point, and biblical stories can be supplemented with good Christian storybooks. We also can use books that are not overtly Christian. For example, consider the popular book *Goodnight Moon*. Before reading it with the child, look up relevant Scripture using a concordance. A search on the word *stars* will lead to passages like Psalm 147:4, which talks about how God calls each of the stars by name. A search on the word *heavens* will point to passages like Psalm 136:1-9, which instructs us to “give thanks to the Lord, who made the moon and the stars to rule over the night.” Referring to Scripture while reading good stories can teach the child about our amazing God.

FROG’S RAINY-DAY STORY AND OTHER FABLES

I wrote *Frog’s Rainy-Day Story and Other Fables* specifically to teach a biblical worldview. The book’s eight award-winning fables, which my wife, Sarah Buell Dowling, illustrated, contrast the erroneous narratives of our culture with the truth of God’s Word. It appeals to all ages. In fact, I call it “an apologetics book for adults disguised as a children’s book.” Let’s briefly look at a slightly edited version of one of the fables to see how the book works.

“Duck’s Wrong Turn”

One hot day, Duck set out to find a pond where he could take a swim. After waddling along for a while, he arrived at a fork in the road where a beaver had just finished painting a sign.

“Is there a pond near here?” Duck asked Beaver. “I’m dying for a swim.”

“There is a pond of cool water just up the road to the right,” said Beaver. “See, I just finished painting the sign.”

“But that way goes uphill, and in these feathers that would be uncomfortable on this hot day,” said Duck. “I like the path to the left better. It goes downhill.”



“But there’s only one way to the pond,” said Beaver. “The arrow points the way.”

“I’ll fix that,” said Duck. He took Beaver’s brush and made some changes to the sign.

“That didn’t move the pond,” said Beaver.

“Thanks for your help,” said Duck, waddling merrily down the path to the left.

“Watch out for the fox around the bend,” Beaver called after him. But beavers have soft voices, and Duck was already quite far down the road.

Moral: If there’s only one way, it’s foolish to say another way is okay.



USING THE FABLE TO TEACH A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

Let's briefly discuss how this fable can be used in family devotions, homeschool studies, and church and Christian school classes. At the end of each of the book's fables, quotations from the culture are juxtaposed against quotations from Scripture. Below are two pairs of opposing quotations for "Duck's Wrong Turn."

The Culture Says:

"There are many paths up the mountain, but the view from the top is always the same." **Ancient Chinese proverb**

"One can reach God if one follows any of the paths with wholehearted devotion." **Ramakrishna, Indian spiritual leader**

God's Word Says:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." **Proverbs 3:5-6**

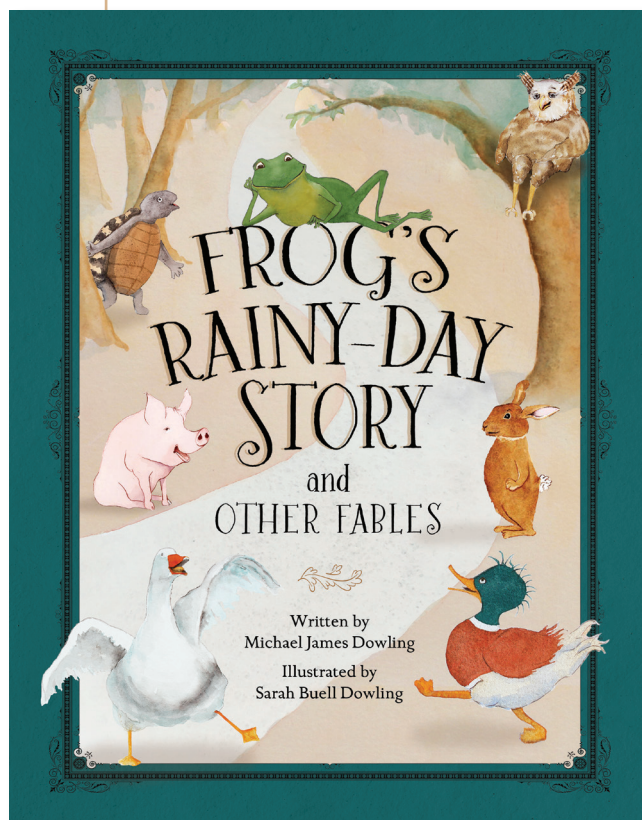
"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.'" **John 14:6**

Obviously, the above quotes from the culture are incompatible with the two quotes from Scripture. The world tells us that we can construct our own reality, that we need to move beyond intolerant, narrow-minded thinking and view life through a "both/and" lens. Scripture tells us that choosing the wrong path can be not only foolish but eternally deadly! Just as Duck's changing the sign in the fable didn't move the pond, merely saying something is true doesn't make it so.

By the way, why do you think Duck bothered to change the sign? Why didn't he just head down the path to the left? Isn't this how our culture behaves? When people act contrary to God's will, the natural tendency is to look for affirmation from other authorities.

And what if the sign that Duck changed doesn't get changed back? Whoever next comes to that fork in the road could go the wrong way. Likewise, as the signs in our culture get changed away from a Christian worldview, people are put at risk.

Additional discussion questions like the ones above can be downloaded for free from FrogsRainyDayStory.com. They make the fables a powerful tool for increasing discernment about the culture and knowledge about God's Word. ■



Frog's Rainy-Day Story and Other Fables is an excellent and beautifully illustrated book to teach children biblical truth. That's why we have added it to our list of biblical worldview resources available on our website at shop.renewanation.org.

Michael James Dowling is a Christian grandparent and the author of *Frog's Rainy-Day Story and Other Fables*, which his wife, Sarah Buell Dowling, illustrated (FrogsRainyDayStory.com). Michael and Sarah live in Nashville, Tennessee.