

## Ivan and the Storm in the Park

*A story for children, correcting mistaken views of God, and showing that God is "slow to anger and abounding in love" (Exodus 34:6).*

To intro  
music, "Let  
the Sunshine  
In"

- Slide 1: Title slide – Ivan and the Storm in the Park
- Slide 2: Ivan (puppy)
- Slide 3: Ivan's favourite park
- Slide 4: Ivan running round his favourite park

Narrator: *(Slide 5)* Ivan was having a run round the park... *(Slide 6)* when he bumped into the strangest looking dog he had ever seen. *(Slide 7)* Stunned and wide-eyed, Ivan asked

Ivan: What are you doing up there?

Geof: *(Slide 8)* I'm always up here. I'm a giraffe.

Narrator: The giraffe helpfully explained

Ivan: *(Slide 9)* A giraffe...

Narrator: repeated Ivan, processing this new information

Geof: My name's Geof

Ivan: You're Geof the Giraffe?

Geof: Yes, that's right. What's your name?

Ivan: Ivan. This is my favourite park.

Geof: It is a very nice park

Narrator: Agreed Geof the Giraffe. *(Slide 10)* Just then, thunder rumbled through the hot summer sky *(sound effect)*. *(Slide 11)* Ivan's hair stood on end and he froze in fright.

Geof: *(Slide 12)* We'd better take shelter

Narrator: said Geof, nudging Ivan in the direction of the nearest building, the old parish church.... *(Slide 13)* Ducking through the door, Geof was relieved to be able to stand to his full height once inside.

Geof: What lovely nice tall ceilings old churches have

Narrator: he said

Ivan: Should we be in a church if God is angry with us?

Narrator: questioned Ivan, staring around on high alert

Geof: What makes you think God is angry with us?

Ivan: *(Slide 14)* Because he's shouting in the sky!

Geof: Thunder isn't God shouting.

Narrator: Said Geof, reassuringly

Geof: There's lots of electricity in a thunder cloud and when there's too much it makes a loud bang and a flash. It's the weather, that's all.

Ivan: *(Slide 15)* Are you sure?

Narrator: asked an unconvinced Ivan

Geof: Yes, I'm sure. I know God, and he's not angry. Why do you think he might be angry with you?

Ivan: Because God wants everyone to be really good all the time, and then he tells them off when they're not. That's what he does.

Narrator: *(Slide 16)* In Ivan's mind, God said things like

Angry God: You must always be good! I'm watching you! You weren't good just then! This is Angry God, telling you off!

Narrator: *(Slide 17)* Geof was sad that Ivan thought God was angry all the time. Geof said

Geof: God's not waiting for us to do something wrong, so he can shout at us. *(Slide 18)* God watches over us, ready to pick us up when we fall down.

True God: Oh dear! He's fallen over again! Here, let me help you get back on your feet. That's better!

Narrator: said Geof's God. But Ivan replied

Ivan: *(Slide 19)* Are you sure? Because God doesn't like it when we have fun

Angry God: You! Yes you! Don't even think about having fun or enjoying yourself! You need to be serious all the time!

Narrator: shouted Ivan's angry God

Geof: *(Slide 20)* That's not what God says!

Narrator: countered Geof

Geof: God is sad when we do whatever we feel like, if whatever we feel like hurts someone else or hurts us. He doesn't want us to be selfish or get into trouble. But he does want our lives to be full of happiness and fun.

Narrator: Geof's God says

True God: Whether you're at work or play, I made this day for you to be happy in. Enjoy it! And if there's something very serious that needs doing and it's not a day for fun, don't forget I'm here to help you carry the load, so don't be sad.

Geof: Having fun and being happy isn't wrong!

Narrator: But poor Ivan's bottom lip was still trembling

Ivan: *(Slide 21)* What if I do something else wrong? Then I'll be punished.

Narrator: Ivan's angry God shouted

Angry God: You let your ball go into the neighbour's garden for the tenth time today! They are cross with you! I am cross with you! You will be punished!

Narrator: Geof continued to try and reassure Ivan

Geof: *(Slide 22)* There's no need to get upset. God isn't like that! He doesn't want to punish us. He wants to forgive us and see us learn from our mistakes. All we need to do is say sorry to God. Sometimes trouble comes our way as a consequence of what we've done wrong, but even then, God wants to help us out of it. He never leaves us in a mess, even if it is of our own making.

Narrator: Geof's God says

True God: I heard your apology. I know you're very sorry for what you did wrong. Let's put it behind us. I'm not going to hold this against you, and you're not to feel guilty any more. I forgive you.

Narrator: Surely Ivan would feel better now. *(Slide 23)* But no, he had another mistaken view of God

Ivan: I get things wrong lots of times. I don't think God can like me very much.

Narrator: Ivan's angry God shouted

Angry God: You are a disappointment to me! Bad puppy!

Narrator: *(Slide 24)* But Geof knew better than that

Geof: Don't ever think that! God loves you so much! When you love someone you want to forgive them and stay friends with them. God knows what you're going to do wrong before you do, and he still loves you. He always sees the best in you.

Narrator: Geof's God says

True God: Dear little puppy, you are the most precious thing in the whole world to me. I'm so proud of you and I love watching you growing into the best version of yourself. I love you so much I feel like my heart is going to burst. I feel that way about all my children.

Ivan: *(Slide 25)* Do you really think God is like that?

Narrator: Ivan asked

Geof: I know he's like that.

Narrator: Responded Geof with confidence

Geof: I've known him a long time. If you get to know him, you will see for yourself. *(Slide 26)* Your view of God isn't real, it's a lie. You can tear it up and put it in the bin. You don't need to hide from God, he's not going to shout at you and tell you off. He loves you.

Narrator: *(Slide 27)* Ivan was happy again. He had learnt lots of things today: what a giraffe looks like, what thunder is, and most importantly of all, that God is our friend, not our enemy.

*(Slide 28- Ivan and Geof, God heart in thought bubble – to exit music, "Let the Sunshine In")*

