



# FILLING A LITTLE SPACE

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This story may be told in one, two or three sessions.

The circle (●) indicates where to divide the narrative when teaching two sessions.

The triangle (▶) indicates the breaks for three sessions.

**ONLINE HELPS:** Free key word sheets are available for this story. Visit [shop.biblevisuals.org](http://shop.biblevisuals.org) and search for item #K5720.

## Introduction

Susanna rubbed her swollen belly and wondered how much longer it would be before this little one decided to join them. She was seven months pregnant. Glancing around the small kitchen, she noticed that the fire burning in the brick fireplace needed stirred, the chairs needed straightened and her plant in the corner needed watered. *Those can wait*, she told herself as she thought about how little food they had on hand at the moment and that there would still be hungry little bellies to fill at dinner. She was just thankful they had a roof over their heads. They had been in debt for a long time, and it seemed that no matter what her husband Samuel did, they couldn't get ahead.

In 1697, they had moved to Epworth, Lincolnshire (show map) hoping to get a fresh start, but after more than ten years there they were still in debt. There was always another trip Samuel needed to take as the minister, another crop that had failed and yet another mouth to feed. Susanna didn't mind being poor, but she did hate it when people criticized her husband for not providing well for the family.

Yes, their house was small, their food scarce and their possessions few, but she was content. Her happiness came from knowing God and being known by Him. She prayed that her children would know this same happiness.

This baby she was carrying was number 19 for her and Samuel! Despite the fact she was weary and felt as if she'd been sick and pregnant for most of their married life, she wasn't going to take this little one for granted. Though illness, disease and tragedy common in those days, nine of her 19 children were already buried, most of them as infants, and Susanna knew that each day with her remaining children was a gift. She breathed a quick prayer. "Thank you, Lord. I know that 'tis no small honor to be entrusted with the care of so many souls."



### Show Illustration #1

The kitchen door was suddenly flung open by Susanna's daughter Hetty. The girl paused in the doorway breathless. Susanna was about to scold her for disturbing the peace when she noticed that the girl's eyes were filled with tears.

"Why, Hetty, whatever is the matter?" she questioned. "It's Father," Hetty wailed and her body shook with sobs. "Someone just came to say that they've taken him again!" "Who's taken him?" Susanna inquired calmly as she moved to her daughter's side. Hetty flung herself into the arms of her mother. "They've

arrested him and said they are taking him to jail again because of his debt," Hetty finally managed to get out.

Susanna took a deep breath and quietly stroked her daughter's hair to calm her. It also gave her time to gather her own thoughts. This wasn't the first time Samuel had been arrested and taken to debtors' prison. Unless someone sent money to pay off the debt, he'd have to stay in the prison until he could work it off there. From around the corner of the hallway, she could see three or four more curious little faces sticking their heads out, watching the scene before them unfold. "Mother, are we really so poor? Can they just take Father away like that?" Hetty asked, lifting her head and sniffing. "Yes, Hetty, we are. And yes, they can." Susanna answered honestly. This brought more tears. "Oh why does this have to happen to us? What are we ever going to do? And Mother, what have we done to deserve this? Why does God allow such things to happen?" Hetty couldn't stop the questions from flowing. Susanna gently held Hetty at arm's length so she could look her in the face. "Listen, Hetty. As long as we have God, it doesn't really matter what's going on or where we are. God is enough. You must trust in His love and goodness. Now, dry your tears. We shall have no more of those. There is nothing we can do for the time being but wait to hear from your father."



### Show Illustration #2

Suddenly feeling the strong need to pray, Susanna sent Hetty on her way before throwing her apron over her head and sinking onto a stool. Her children knew that they were not to disturb her whenever the apron was over her head, so she could be guaranteed some quiet for the time being.

Despite what she had said to Hetty, she could feel the discouragement and fear in her own heart. Many years on her knees had brought her to the realization that prayer was her greatest weapon during such battles. As a child, she'd made a commitment that for every hour she spent in entertainment, she would spend one hour with God in prayer and in the Word. Now, as an adult, she found this was impossible. Instead, she'd decided to spend two hours a day in prayer. In her mind, this was time well spent. So often she found herself needing wisdom or peace. *Oh God*, her heart moaned. *I know that You are here. Help me to endure this well. You know how much harder it is for me to feed the family when this happens. Help my children's faith in You to be strengthened through this trial as we see You provide once more. Lord, I am content to fill a little space if You are glorified.*