

Bible Drama Workshop

for use within Wintershall Education Character Education

'Virtues Enquiry' unit of work

RESPOND Session 4

Aims and Objectives:

Using scripture as a starting point, and previous learning related to the linked virtue, pupils dramatise the bible story through a series of drama exercises and script writing. This creative process helps pupils to deepen their enquiry and personal reflection and to communicate their learning to others about what Jesus and his followers can teach about a specific virtue.

Resources needed:

- Copies of the bible text (enough copies for pupils to work in pairs)
- [Script excerpt and character list](#) for chosen scene
- [Wintershall Life of Christ Video clip](#) of chosen scene
- [People from the Bible](#) flash cards

Suggested location: school hall or outdoors if weather is favourable

Setting up the workshop space: Seat pupils in a horseshoe shape to allow a stage area at the open end (with plenty of additional floor space to allow group work) and explain to pupils that they are being set a challenge which is quite demanding, to dramatize scripture linked to their values learning.

Agreeing a verbal group contract: *If drama is not a usual feature in your classroom, we suggest creating a group contract (linked to class values and behaviour) regarding attitudes and choices related to the drama workshop.*

Ask the question: what do we need for our creative journey to dramatize this life changing story?

In order to ensure each pupil's contribution is needed and valued, they must feel safe to express themselves. Suggestions for a group contract could include:

- ✓ Listening to others and to yourself
- ✓ Mutual respect
- ✓ Find Inspiration from own experience.
- ✓ Freedom to experiment with ideas,
- ✓ Courage to improvise
- ✓ Celebrating other's contributions
- ✓ KS3 might want to consider issues of injustice, inequality

Activity 1 - Scripture scrutiny -reading and recalling

Remind the group of the bible story you are looking at. Refer to relevant background information for this biblical account, to ensure pupils understand the context of the story and the position of faith of the people in the account (this can be found in the introduction to each virtue). Discuss what is difficult to understand, what it might have been like for people at the time.

Retell the story using story circle/consequences

In the horseshoe pupils retell the story they have just heard, each person taking the story up where the previous person left off. An object can be passed around to focus pupil's attention.

Additional creative ideas for exploring Bible stories can be found in 'Thirty story activities' in Margaret Cooling's – [Story and Drama Toolkit](#)

Consider the following: What information has been given to us in the biblical account? For example, what message does the story offer, where did it happen, how many people were there?

INSPIRE The tradition of dramatising Scripture

Explain that this Bible drama workshop is part the tradition of retelling stories and particularly Bible stories goes back many years. The event that you have just read from the Bible, was first shared by word of mouth, people talking to each other, and not written down until much later. Jesus was known a creative story-teller and the Bible is full of examples. Followers of Jesus continue to communicate God's Story, including the life of Jesus and teaching on the kingdom of God. Drama is a particularly powerful tool for story-telling.

Activity 2 - How have others dramatised this biblical account?

[Watch](#) the video clip that links with the scripture chosen from The Wintershall Life of Christ

Consider with pupils

- *I wonder what you liked best about the clip? I wonder if you thought anything was missed out?*
- *How does the dramatised version help you understand the biblical account?*
- *What does it reveal about the chosen virtue – Patience, Humility, Love?*

Identify the level and angle of pupil's engagement with the story:

Discuss these motivational questions in pairs:

- *Why do we want to tell this story?*
- *What message do we want to get across?*
- *What aspects of the story do you feel strongly about? For example; injustice, inequality, suffering, miracles, love*

Activity 3 –Translating Bible stories into scripts

Look at the [script excerpt](#) for your chosen scene. How is it different to the bible scripture?

What aspects of the account needs to be amplified to help the actors and audience engage effectively? What needs to be shown rather than told? (pupils in pairs annotate their scripts)

Discuss what sources can we use to help us add material to the script?

Suggestions: our own experiences, The Bible, historical accounts, other people's responses - paintings, passion plays.

Nominate 2 pupils to take notes of peer responses and agree additions as a group to add to the script to make it the groups.

Activity 4 - Choosing characters for the Cast

Using the cast list, discuss what different characters will help us explore and explain the story. Who communicates the message? Who is essential and why? Who would be an extra in the background?

What different viewpoints are needed? crowd members and temple worshippers, for example, Jewish priests, men, women and children, Gentile men, women and children, Roman soldiers.

Director tip: When casting adult Jesus, choose 2 or 3 to play the part at the same time. This allows for a wider response.

Pupils discuss and decide on casting characters to retell the story.

Role play viewpoints and responses

Choose a series of character groups so that everyone has a part to play. [The Life of Christ 'People' profiles](#) might be useful as a reference here. In character groups think creatively about possible responses: for example, disciples, Pharisees, scribes, Gentiles, Jewish people, temple worshippers – amazement, disbelief...

Display the script outline on the interactive whiteboard and ask pupils in character groups to role play a series of different responses between them. Support pupils in thinking about appropriate responses that they can rehearse as a group and contribute to the scene. Script editors observe each group and make additions to the script while the rehearsal takes place.

Additional game for getting into role: Get into a circle in their character group. Give a series of sentence prompts, for example: I saw, I heard... invite them to imagine being in the scene and choosing a viewpoint using these prompts. Like Chinese whispers, for example, *I saw ...Jesus take a bowl of water from the servants, I saw...Jesus wash everyone's feet, I heard....*

Return to horseshoe and rehearse the scene

With teacher support the cast rehearse the sequence of events in the scene, using the responses practiced by each group. Script editors complete revised script while the run through takes place then share it with the cast as directors

Activity 5 - Use 'what if?...' questions to prompt creative thinking and sharpen drama.

Pupils consider What if? Moments. e.g.: What if the disciples had refused to have their feet washed? What if the person with the disease wasn't healed? What if Simeon didn't recognise the baby Jesus?

Director tip: Actors use improvisation to generate ideas. If you get stuck with improvisation use absurd ideas in order in to return to what is needed.

I wonder if you took something out, or added something in, would it still be the same story? Do you need the crowds? The disciples? Jesus?

Activity 6 - Run through 2

Pupils prepare for a second run through. Support pupils in considering the following pointers about additions and subtractions:

- *What helps you understand the story and its message?*
- *Is the script entertaining?*
- *Does it translate the story clearly?*
- *Are we serving ourselves or benefitting the story?*
- *Do we have enough information?*
- *Is any of the dialogue, action adding to the story – or taking away from it?*

Activity 7 (KS2 and KS3) Consider TRANSFORMATIONS

Think through each character's experience:

How does each character including Jesus come into scene and go out?

How do they change and go through transformation?

How can you show this change – using body language and position during the scene.

Bible Drama Workshop Plenary Reflection

What have we learnt about the virtue through dramatising scripture?

Consider Jesus's example and viewpoint, his follower's viewpoint, your peer's viewpoints, your own viewpoints?

How do we understand the virtue more?

The drama can be used as part of an assembly; however, we can often get carried away with the quality of the final performance! This workshop focuses on the process of creating the drama rather than producing a perfect show