

Information sheet: Engaging with the Bible through drama, image and art

Engaging through drama:

Reading the Bible or hearing it being read is not the most helpful method of exploring Scripture for some people. How might we encounter it in a different way? The Church has a long tradition of engaging with Scripture through image and drama from stained glass windows to Mystery Plays. The BILC tool-box has gathered a number of resources that continue this tradition and these might offer ideas for further ways in which image and drama might be introduced into our engagement with Scripture. These resources point to ways of doing that through drama, image and imagination.

Devising Biblical Drama: a 'Do-it-yourself' way of Exploring and Experiencing Scripture's Possible Worlds – this article by Mary Witts explores the use of drama as a tool for Biblical interpretation. It focuses on field work Mary undertook in Gambella, Ethiopia and explains and offers a framework for devising drama as a way of exploring Scripture.

Case Study – Drama of Pharisees and Tax-Collectors – from Mary's work in Gambella an example of how drama can be used.

Call Me Naomi – a one-woman dramatised monologue written and performed by Jenni Feheley which takes us into the mind of Naomi as she explores the significance of all that happened to her.

The Psalm Pilgrimage – how might have the psalms been used by pilgrims going to Jerusalem? A congregational drama using the psalms.

Engaging through image and art:

Marsabit pictures – on the hill just outside the rural town on Marsabit in Kenya is a Roman Catholic retreat house with a collection of paintings taking the viewer right through the Biblical story. How might these be used to enable us to engage with the Bible in different ways?

Norwich Maps – a series of five 'maps' that take us on a journey through each of the Gospels with word and image.

St Andrew's Kabare – is a theological college in Kenya and the chapel doors have carved upon them six images prompted by biblical narratives. They offer a way into exploring these Scriptures.

The Methodist Church in the UK has placed the images from their [Modern Art Collection](#) on the web. They say, "this unique collection of Christian art includes more than 40 works by Graham Sutherland, Elisabeth Frink and many other renowned artists. It has been seen and appreciated by thousands of people, and now you can also experience it on this website. Most of the images are accompanied by expert commentary. You may also use these images in your local church. See [Use of images](#) for details."



[Woodcuts and sculptures](#) by Margaret Parker. Margaret (or Peggy) is an artist who has explored her Biblical understandings through sculpture, woodcuts and etchings. Visit her website to see the range of her work. Peggy also produced the woodcuts that accompany the Bible studies on the book of [Ruth](#) found elsewhere in the BILC tool-box. Recently Peggy was commissioned to create a new sculpture, Mary as Prophet, for Virginia theological Seminary, USA. In an E mail to Stephen Lyon she said of it,

Mary as Prophet - He has filled the hungry with good things... I was asked to represent the Visitation, and I was struck by the realization that Mary's revolutionary words position her squarely in the line of the Old Testament prophets. In the sculpture I show Mary tense with prophecy, and in that moment unaware of her surroundings, and vulnerable; Elizabeth reaches out to protect and comfort her. What I think will particularly interest you, however, was that I depict Mary and Elizabeth as African women. This was not a decision, but rather a gift given to me as I neared the end of the process and was considering faces for the figures. I saw some of our beautiful African students and African-American faculty in chapel one day, and it simply came to me that Mary and Elizabeth would be African.



