

English

Note: any activities involving photographing pupils must have parental permission.

Background information

Ruth

- The story of Ruth is set in the turbulent times not long after the Israelites had settled in Canaan (Israel) about the 12th century BCE. There was no king at this time and the story of Ruth introduces the family who are the ancestors of a future King, David.
- Ruth was the great grandmother of King David and an ancestor of Jesus.
- Ruth is the stranger from another land who shows how faith should be lived. She kept the Jewish law; honour your mother and father . . . care for the widow, etc.
- Ruth becomes a gleaner, someone who picked up the fallen bits of corn. Biblical law stated that a farmer could not pick anything that dropped or was left behind by mistake. Farmers also had to leave the corners of their fields for the poor to pick. Gleaning was a practice that carried on in Europe right through to the early 20th century. Francois Millet painted *The Gleaners* in 1857. Gleaning in a different

form is now returning as a green option for cutting down on food waste. Certain charities 'glean' food by arrangement with supermarkets and distribute it to those in need.

- Ruth's promise to Naomi from the King James Bible is some of the most beautiful language of the Bible, often chosen for weddings. The passage is poetry but it is not laid out as poetry. Hebrew poetry does not rhyme but is full of imagery and rhythm.

And Ruth said, 'Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me'.

Ruth 1:16-17



The Gleaners by Jean Francois Millet

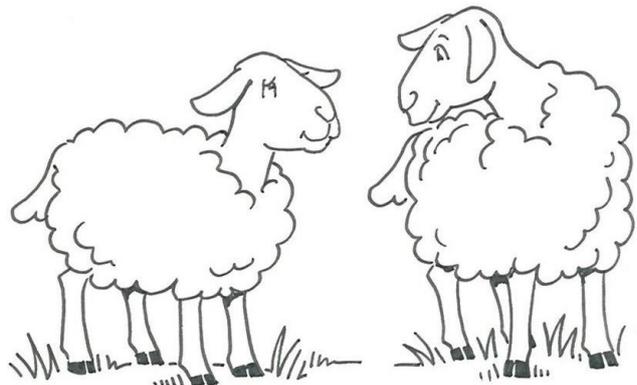
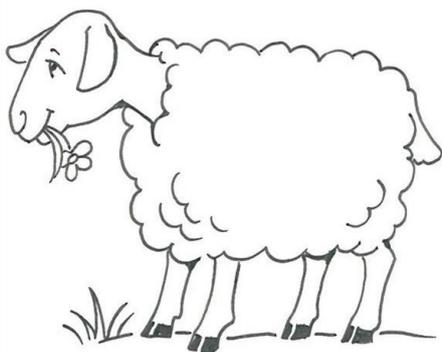
Note: the phrase ‘the LORD do so to me, and more also’ is an ancient vow. It would probably have been accompanied by a gesture such as a finger drawn across the throat.

Psalm 23

- This is known as a ‘psalm of David’. This is the same David that fought Goliath.
- David was a harp player and a shepherd in his early years. The psalms are poems that were probably sung in early Jewish worship. They are still used in worship by Christians and Jews. Many people will know this psalm as the theme music for *The Vicar of Dibley*.
- Jewish shepherds led their sheep; they did not drive them or use dogs.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 A time for everything

- The saying ‘A time for everything’ comes from the wisdom literature of the Bible, which is wise sayings for living well in relation to God and others. This saying is ‘unpacked’ in the poem that follows the saying in Ecclesiastes 3.
- This part of the Bible is not just saying that there is a right time for everything, it is saying ‘That is what life is like – full of varied experiences’. These words from the Bible remind people that life has its sad moments and its happy ones, its times for keeping and time for throwing away. Life is varied. A few lines, talking about war have been omitted in the versions given on these materials as they contain difficult ideas to explain to this age group.



Biblical poetry

- The book of Psalms is a collection of biblical poetry; psalms were probably sung in worship by the ancient Hebrews.
- The poems were written by King David and others.
- The poems often have a parallel form: i.e., one line echoes the meaning of another but key words are changed.

Biblical sayings

- The King James Bible was published in 1611. After 1660, and for three hundred years, it was the Bible most people used. It had a profound affect on language. Biblical words and phrases crept into the English language and are still in use today, though most people would not be aware of their origin. Because these new words and phrases were in a Bible they were accepted. Biblical English had authority. As the Bible was translated into other languages biblical phrases entered Welsh and Gaelic.

Example: Pride goes before a fall
Proverbs 16:18

Resources

For more words and phrases go to:
www.crossref-it.info/repository/sayings/?q=&submit=Go&p=1
A list of common sayings from the Bible

www.ainglkiss.com/wob/phras.html
Explanations of some common sayings and their origins

<http://users.tinyonline.co.uk/gswithenbank/welcome.htm> Click on 'diversions' and 'expressions and sayings' for a wider selection of sayings and their meanings and origins

