

The influence of the Bible

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

This section looks at the influence of the Bible on art and English. For more information see:

- **Music**
- **Art**
- **English**
- **History** (influence on society)

General introduction

Show a Bible, a pen, paper and some paints. Ask pupils to suggest reasons why they are all together. Explain that writers and artists were influenced by the Bible, particularly the King James Bible.



Naomi entreating Ruth and Orpah to return to the land of Moab by William Blake

Art

Introduction

Discuss standing by our friends in difficult times. Explain that this session is all about friendship.

Core material

Select from the following activities:

Explore the painting *Naomi entreating Ruth and Orpah to return to the land of Moab* by William Blake

1. Use the presentation *Ruth in Art*

- Show William Blake's painting on slide 2
- Ask pupils to tell you what they see. What do they think is happening?
- How do the people feel? How do you know what they are feeling?
- William Blake painted this scene because he had read a story in the Bible. Tell the story of Ruth using the presentation *The story of Ruth*. Select audio or read from *The story of Ruth* for a commentary. This can be also be printed as handouts to create a picture story.
- Which of the pictures on the handout shows the same scene as the painting?
- How does this picture differ from the painting? What is the same?

- What do the painting and the story tell us about how Ruth and Naomi thought about each other?
- What did helping Naomi involve Ruth in doing? (Going to a strange country, working in the fields.)

2. The words behind the painting/pictures

- Show the words that lay behind William Blake's painting on slide 6-7.

Naomi said, 'Turn again, my daughters . . . go your way.' And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. Ruth 1:8, 10, 11, 14 (King James Version)

*The kiss is a goodbye kiss.

*Clave is an old word meaning 'clung' or 'held onto.'

- Read the quotation to the pupils and see how much they can understand. Ask them to listen for unusual words and explain any old words. Now look at the words in modern English.
- How has William Blake really captured this part of the Bible in his painting? Look for crying and clinging.
- Recreate the painting as a tableau and photograph it. Print it and ask pupils to add their own comments in bubbles around the picture.

3. Creating their own pictures

Ask pupils to choose a different moment from the story that they think is important and draw a picture of that moment or create a tableau and take a photograph.

Reflection (optional)

Ask pupils to think of times when they have helped friends even if that has not been easy. Think of times others have helped them.

Resources

Other paintings of Ruth are available on the presentation if you wish to use them. www.bible-art.info/Ruth.htm Gives a range of paintings of Ruth and Naomi.

See also www.textweek.com/art/ruth.htm

English

Introduction

Various phrases have come into English from the Bible. As a class create a drama around the saying, 'There is a time and a place for everything.' For example, a person suddenly getting up and dancing in the middle of a talk in assembly and a teacher explaining that, 'There is a time and a place for everything.' The saying must be included somewhere in the drama.

Core material

Select from the following activities:

1. Explore Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4 using the presentation *A time for everything*

Look at the saying in the King James Version and in modern English.

- This saying is based on a passage from the Bible:

To every thing there is a season,
and a time to every purpose under the
heaven:

... A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
(Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4)

In modern English we might say, 'There is a right time for everything. There is a right time to cry and a right time to laugh. There is a right time to be sad and a right time to dance.'

- Explore the opposites in this saying.

- This part of the Bible is not just saying that there is a right time for everything. It is also saying, 'That is what life is like.' Life is made up of sad times and happy times.

2. Creating opposites pictures

Pupils choose one line of the saying. Divide a piece of paper in half diagonally. Ask the pupils to create two drawings that will show the two opposites in that line. Sad or happy colours can be used. The pupils can dictate or write the words to go underneath.

Reflection

Talk about times when it is right to laugh and dance or cry and be sad. The pupils do not have to share their thoughts. The Bible talks about, 'Weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice'. It does not mean we have to cry with people; it's a way of saying we can comfort those who are sad and join in the happiness of those who are happy.

