

How to Teach Writing from the Bible

By Dr. Dan Runyon

To teach a particular writing style from the Bible, have students read the recommended text, respond to journaling questions modeled after those below and then write their own material.

Narrative writing is modeled in Ruth 1-4. Useful journaling questions include the following:

1. Search for a spot in the narrative where the author expresses an opinion. If you can find such an expression, explain whether it is appropriate or inappropriate given the context.
2. Showing action is an important part of many narratives. In your opinion, what is the most exciting action that takes place in this story? Give specific details. Why do you like it?
3. What are the issues behind the main conflict in this narrative? Give details.
4. From what point of view is this story told? How would the story feel differently if it were told from the point of view of Boaz?
5. Dialogue is used in this story to reveal character. In what ways do you feel you know Ruth better because you have "heard" her talk?
6. Compare this story with a news article from the front page of a newspaper. What is the bias of each author?
7. What techniques of narrative writing have you learned from Ruth that will come in handy for writing your own narrative?

Descriptive writing is modeled in Judges 5. Useful journaling questions include the following:

1. Which of the five senses (taste, touch, smell, sight, sound) is dominant in Debora's description of the conflict? Speculate on why this may be deliberate. Which of the five senses do you wish she would explore more thoroughly? Write a sentence or two that you can recommend for inclusion in case she ever revises her paper.
2. Make a lists of at least five ways in which Judges 5 is different from the Judges 4 narrative of the same event and explain which version of the conflict you prefer.

The art of **illustration** is modeled in 1 Corinthians 12. Useful journaling questions include the following:

1. Metaphors are a type of illustration. How does the "Body" metaphor help the reader comprehend the author's meaning?
2. Describe the images that jump into your mind as you read about the "Body" metaphor and try to think of another metaphor that could illustrate the same truth to a modern reader. Is your metaphor better than Paul's? Why or why not?

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