

Writing Styles of the Bible



Selected Scriptures chosen by the group:
Habakkuk chs 2-3



When you walk into a bookshop, which section do you usually head for? You wouldn't walk into the travel section of a bookshop to find the latest fantasy novel, and you'd be disappointed to open a recipe book to discover a GCSE revision guide. Each genre of writing brings with it a different set of expectations, and the Bible is no different. Today we're going to discover the different writing styles used within the Bible and see how they impact our understanding of God's word.

You will need:

- Flipchart paper
- Felt tips
- Copies of the Bible (physical rather than digital)



Beat

Leader's notes:

Ask the group to list as many different book genres as they can (examples are shown below). Write down their suggestions and then discuss their likes and dislikes for the different genres. If they went into a bookshop, which section would they visit first/last? If your group aren't big readers, then link this to films or TV shows created from books.

Choose a couple of genres and discuss what the reader would expect if they opened a book from this section.

Examples of book genres:

Science Fiction, Fantasy, Mysteries and Thrillers, History, Biographies and Memoirs, Self-development, Health and Wellness, Business and Careers, Arts and Entertainment, Science, Study Guides, etc.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

If you could recommend one book for everyone in the group to read, what would it be?

 **Amplify****Say:**

We have discovered in the first two sessions of Bible Bassline that the Bible is a complex book written over a long period of time by a variety of authors. Each book incorporates different styles of writing that need to be approached in different ways. You wouldn't walk into the History section of Waterstones expecting to find a recipe for Victoria sponge. Today we are going to look at the different writing styles within the Bible.

Leader's notes:

Use the timings for the clip below and follow the discussion pointers.

Watch:

Writing Styles of the Bible and Why They're Important to Understand (5:27)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUXJ8Owes8E>

Watch: 0:00-2:26

Ask:

- What are the three main writing styles found in the Bible? Narrative 43%, Poetry 33%, Prose Discourse 24%
- Why are stories so important to us?
- What does a good story usually involve?
- How do Bible stories help us to think about our own lives?
- Why should we be cautious about using Bible characters as an example of Godly living?
- How are the adventures of characters in the Bible useful for our faith journey?
- What kinds of narratives are there in the Bible? Historical, Parable, Biographical
- What is your favourite story in the Bible? Why do you like it so much?

Watch: 2:27-3:19

Ask:

- How do Biblical poems help us to see the world differently?

- What different types of poetry are there in the Bible? Songs, wisdom literature and prophetic words.
- What piece of biblical poetry is special to you? Share it with the group.

Say:

If you don't have any biblical poetry that is special to you, then you could take a moment over the coming weeks to explore the Psalms, the book of Proverbs or read the prophetic visions of the prophets.

Watch: 3:20-4:43

- What is the purpose of prose discourse texts in the Bible?
- Where do we find examples of prose discourse in the Bible?

Ask:

Imagine that you have walked into a bookshop that is divided into the literary styles of writing found in the Bible – poetry, songs, history, biographies, non-fiction stories and academic writings. Which section would you visit, and why does this style of writing appeal to you?

 **Bridge****Leader's notes:**

At the end of the Bible clip, Ancient Jewish Literature is mentioned as an additional literary style. If your group would like to discover more about this style of writing, then watch and discuss the following clip together.

Watch:

How the Bible Is Unique as Literature (and Why It Matters) – Bible Project (stop at 4:05)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhmlJBUIoLk>

 **Sound Check****Leader's notes:**

For the Sound Check activity today, the young people will have an opportunity to creatively explore the different writing styles of the Bible. Each group will need a large sheet of flipchart paper and a selection of felt-tip pens. The aim is for the group to artistically portray each literature style (narrative, poetry and discourse), incorporating pictures, Bible references or extracts of Scripture. This activity should encourage discussion about the different literary styles and whether they fit neatly into categories. As the young people complete the activity, prompt discussion about how narrative style impacts the way we approach and read different parts of Scripture.

When each group has completed their artwork, they can share it together.

Ask:

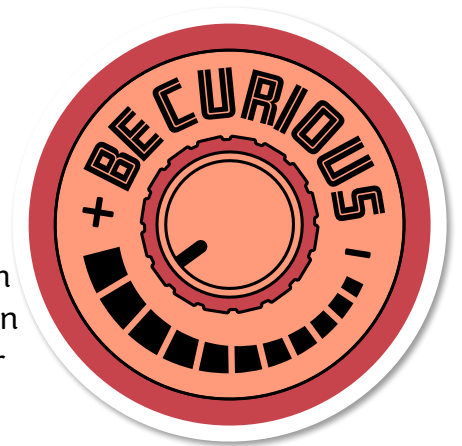
Today you have discovered more about the narrative styles within the Bible. How will this knowledge impact the way you read Scripture in the future?

 **Bridge****Leader's notes:**

In the 'Origin Story' session, the young people formulated three questions that they would like to answer about the Bible. Give them an opportunity to share what they have discovered.

 **Selah****Say:**

For our Selah section today, we're going to take a moment to reflect on a passage of Scripture that you may not be familiar with. There are gems of wisdom throughout Scripture if we're willing to discover them. These words of reflection are taken from the book of Habakkuk in the Old Testament. As the clip plays, listen to the message Habakkuk has, not only for his people, but also for us today.

**Watch:**

Habakkuk 2/3 - Listen (Do Among Us) - Bible in Song - Project of Love (4:16)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnbPrg-EYeM>

Leader's notes:

When the clip has finished, share together in prayer, responding to the words of Habakkuk.

 **Coda****Say:**

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?

What is the one thing you will take away from this session that has deepened your understanding of the Bible?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.

