Workshop:
Reading the Bible in Public

EXPLORING *your call* 1

About

This is a basic course to train those who read the Bible in public worship. It includes video/audio material to focus discussion, discussion questions with notes for the leader about key points to identify, and opportunities to practice.

We recommend you use a flip chart to take notes during the discussions.

You will need a copy of Handout 1 for each person, and one of each of the other handouts for every three people. If you can't access the David Suchet video or audio, notes on the content are also provided.

Discuss

Why do we read the Bible in public?

Key points:
- The Bible is at the heart of our faith: through it, God speaks to us
- It contains all things necessary for salvation.
- It teaches and instructs us, so that we know what we believe.
- It ensures that we hear the breadth of Scripture.
- It links us with the church across time and space.

Discuss

Think of a time when you heard someone read really well in public. What did you notice?

What about when someone read badly? What did you notice?

Watch

The Gospel according to John, chapter 1, verses 1-18, read by David Suchet (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKiAXVxOm6o, minutes 0:07-2:50)

His reading of the full gospel can be found here:
The Gospel according to St John, read by Sir David Suchet

OR

Listen

The Gospel according to John, chapter 1, verses 1-18, read by David Suchet (https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/?recording=nivuk-suchet)

An audio version of the whole bible can be found here:
The Bible, read by David Suchet

Respond

Having listened to that reading, are there any things you would add to your list? (See Handout 1 for key points.)

Optional

Watch the video on this page about reading with intonation (5 mins): https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z8pbf82#z39gwsg

Practice

Working in groups of three, ask each person to read one of the poems on Handout 2 aloud. Give each other feedback.

Discuss

What have you learned from reading poetry that would be useful in reading the bible? What makes reading the bible different?

Watch

Reading the Bible: an Interview with David Suchet (https://vimeo.com/252844408)

OR

Listen

Reading the Bible: an Interview with David Suchet (audio link: https://cofecarlisle.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/Interview_with_David_Suchet_audio.m4a)

Respond

What did you learn about preparing to read the bible? Are there any other things you think are important?

Practice

Again working in groups of three, ask each person to read one of the passages in Handout 3. Give each other feedback.

Respond

What have you learned from reading aloud?

Practical hints:
- Print the text out double spaced.
- Mark up the text, showing where you want to pause, where your voice should go up and down, volume, and other aspects of intonation.

Discuss

What do people need to know before they are ready to listen?
- Who is speaking?
- Where is it?
- What happened beforehand? (This is important if the reading begins with something like, "The next day.")

You may need to give a brief introduction with these details, for example,
- "Jesus said," "The Lord said," or "Paul wrote"
- "At Mount Sinai"
- "After the wedding at Cana"

But this is not a mini sermon!

Practice

Ask each person to read one of the passages in Handout 4. If you have time, it is useful to do this in the space in which you habitually worship, so they can get used to the space and get feedback in that context; otherwise, do it in groups of three. Give each other feedback.

Respond

What are the key things you have learned in this session?