

Tips on taking in and remembering Bible content

By Aurora Betony

Introduction



I'm dyslexic. So I need to approach the Bible in ways that take my dyslexia into account. These ways may be useful for anyone who finds reading difficult and everyone else too. So I'd like to share them with you in this guide. I hope they will help you to find an approach that works for you.

A note about the hyperlinks and footnotes

There are hyperlinks embedded in this guide, indicated by underlined text. You don't need to read them to make sense of the guide.

Things I do to help myself engage with the Bible



1) I use a **translation or paraphrase in contemporary language**

I recommend

- a) [The Contemporary English Version \(CEV\)](https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/bibles/english-bibles/cev)¹
- b) [Mr BibleHead blog](http://mrbiblehead.blogspot.co.uk)²
- c) 'The New Testament for Everyone'³

2) I use a **multi-sensory approach**

As well as print format, I also use audio, visual, drama and music.

For example

¹ <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/bibles/english-bibles/cev>

² <http://mrbiblehead.blogspot.co.uk>

³ By Tom Wright. ISBN 978-0281064267



Audio

- a) 'You've got the time'⁴
- b) 'PodBible'⁵
- c) 'The Message'⁶



Illustration

- a) The Lion Graphic Bible⁷
- b) The Good News Bible Colour Reference edition⁸
- c) 'Free Bible images' website⁹



Film

- a) 'The Bible' TV mini-series¹⁰ (2013)
- b) 'Jesus' film¹¹ (1979)
- c) 'The Pitch' films¹²
- d) 'Lifekids' animations¹³
- e) Channel 4's 'Stop Look Listen' Animated Bible Stories¹⁴

⁴ <https://soundcloud.com/biblesociety/sets/youve-got-the-time>

⁵ <http://podbible.com>

⁶ On Bible Gateway at <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/#booklist> - open the chapter you want to listen to and click on the audio icon

⁷ By Jeff Anderson and Mike Maddox ISBN 978-0745949239

⁸ Paperback ISBN 0564 00821 4. Hardback ISBN 0564 00831 1

⁹ <http://www.freebibleimages.org>

¹⁰ <http://bibleseriesresources.com>

¹¹ <http://www.jesusfilm.org/film-and-media/watch-the-film>

¹² <http://www.enterthepitch.com>

¹³ <https://www.life.church/watch/early-childhood> Aimed at children. I find them helpful because they are very clear and vivid.



Musical settings

- a) Handel's 'Messiah', Mendelssohn's 'Elijah', Schubert's Psalm 23
- b) Michael Hurd's 'pop' cantatas for children
- c) 'Songs & Hymns of Fellowship'¹⁵

3) I use an **interactive approach**

a) I make my **reading / listening active**



Active reading or listening is when you read or listen with the aim of answering certain questions. I find the following questions really helpful:

- What does this chapter say about God?
- What does this chapter say about people?
- How should we respond to this chapter?

b) I **recreate Bible content**

For example

- I **retell a chapter in my own words**

I revisit the chapter as often as I need until I can recount the whole chapter without looking at the text. I've also done this in a group, where each person contributes whichever bit of the story they like.

- I **set a story to music**, as a hymn or song

- I **dramatize** Bible content

- I go into role

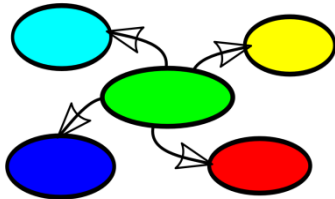
For example as Job, I paraphrase the chapter I've just read or discuss it with Eliphaz, Bildad or Zophar.

¹⁴ <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/stop-look-listen-animated-bible-stories> Aimed at children. I find them helpful because they are very clear and vivid.

¹⁵ Integrated Music Edition. ISBN 0 86065 528 8. Includes a scripture index.

➤ I 'act out' a chapter

It is entirely up to you whether you try the following technique as it won't appeal to everyone. However, in private Bible study, I find it helpful to use something to represent each character (or group of characters) as I act out the story. For example, sand animals, paper cut-outs, pens, wooden spoons, stones.



- I **create a visual presentation of Bible content**

I draw a timeline, spider diagram or annotated family tree.

c) I **study the Bible with others**



Hearing other people's responses to a Bible story adds to my own understanding.

Discussing Bible content also makes it concrete and therefore more memorable for me.

Recently, I gave a short Bible reflection to a group. I rehearsed what I was going to say many times, over the course of 2 weeks. So by the time I gave the talk, I knew the story well.

4) I **gradually build my learning** of each passage **in small steps**

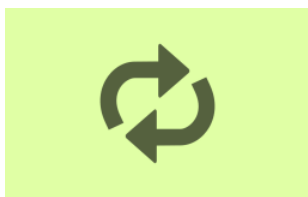


I start by gaining the gist of the passage before reading it in print. I do this by using other formats (see section 2 above), or summaries such as 'Psalms for young children'¹⁶ and The Lion Storyteller Book of Parables¹⁷.

¹⁶ By Mari-Hélène Delval and Arno ISBN 978-0802853226

¹⁷ By Bob Hartman and Krisztina Kállai Nagy ISBN 978 -0745964461. Also aimed at children.

5) I **'overlearn'** Bible content



I re-expose myself to each passage many times, using different formats. For example, I create a comic strip, using pictures from <http://www.freebibleimages.org> and text from [Bible Gateway](#)¹⁸. Then I listen to the passage using ['You've got the Time'](#)¹⁹, and following the pictures.

6) I use a **flexible approach**

I adapt my approach for each chapter as required.

7) I use **an approach that is realistic for me**

For example with chapters I find particularly difficult, I limit my objectives by identifying one thing that stands out for me.

Further information

- 1) ['Engaging with the Bible: versions, approaches and strategies'](#)²⁰
- 2) ['Ways of studying the Bible' Study Day Worksheet](#)²¹
- 3) ['7 top tips for reading the Bible'](#)²²

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¹⁸ <https://www.biblegateway.com>

¹⁹ <https://soundcloud.com/biblesociety/sets/youve-got-the-time>

²⁰ <https://www.unitedbiblesocieties.org/can-help-dyslexic-people-engage-bible>

²¹ Page 11 from 'Getting to Grips with the Bible - Tutor Guideline'
<http://urcshop.co.uk/training/tls-lite-publications/getting-to-grips-with-the-bible-tutor-guideline>

²² <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/articles-about-the-bible/7-top-tips-for-reading-the-bible>