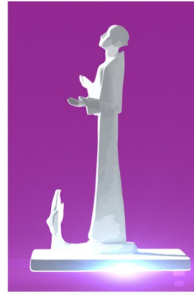


EXPLORING THE BIBLE

a St Francis College short course



Theme 1: A place to start

1a. What's your favourite Bible story?

1. What appeals to you about hearing others tell about their favourite Bible story? What do you notice about the way they tell their story?
2. Identify a story or character from the Bible that made an impact on you. What was it about the story that made such an impact?
3. In what ways might you explore that story further? Consider exploring the context out of which the story was written, finding other versions of the story or just reading it several times over to revisit the characters and message.

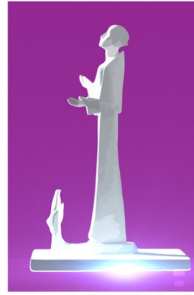
Archbishop Phillip Aspinall

There are so many favourite New Testament bits. I love the parables and a real favourite is the parable of the prodigal son especially when you read a little bit about Middle Eastern culture. You see what sacrifices the father was prepared to make for his wayward son. In Middle Eastern culture fathers don't run anywhere, so that scene where the father sees his son coming in the in the distance and he races to meet him, he has to get there to the edge of the village before the villagers do because the villagers will condemn the son and banish him. The father just won't have that so he runs despite all the cultural rules about not doing that to make sure he gets to his son first.

So I think it's a marvellous story. People often ask, if the Prodigal Son is the whole Gospel in one story, where is the cross in it? I think the

EXPLORING THE BIBLE

a St Francis College short course



cross is in those sacrifices that the father makes. He allows his son to take what the son calls 'his share' of the inheritance (it's not his share at all while his father's still alive), but his father allows himself to be humiliated to meet that request of his son. Then he runs through the village to get there first to redeem his son. These costs that the father pays tell us something profound about the cross I think.

Greg Jenks

I think one that's always been in my favourites is the burning bush episode in Exodus chapter 3, not so much because of the burning bush but because of the um the divine description that we get there, you know the which in the old English versions was 'I am who I am' um so its um אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה ehyeh 'ăšer 'ehyeh .

I love it when it's translated as 'I will be what I will be'. I guess the reason I love that story is that it validates one of my own spiritual instincts (and that what makes us love certain bits of the Bible because it reinforces what we think any way). But what I resonate with in that particular text: the idea is God is saying in that story 'you will never put me in a box, you won't even put me in a book'. 'I will be what I will be, just wait and see, you will discover who I am as we move on together' and that's probably THE Old Testament text that really resonates with me.