



The Christian Education Resource Center & Women's Studies

Bibliodrama Leaders Training

Dear friends and Partners in Ministry,

Greetings,

It is with a thankful and grateful heart that I write about our latest training event, Bibliodrama Leaders Training, that took place between May 22-25, 2014, in the Dhour El Shweyr Evangelical Center, Lebanon.

Our long time friend and partner from DanMission, Agnete G. Holm, who has led many Bibliodrama sessions in the CERC NEST with Mrs. Ele Bonde led our training event of three days. It was a real blessing for all who participated.

Our group which must needs be very small for such a training in Bibliodrama, consisted of 11 participants.



Ele Bonde on the right and Agnete G. Holm on the left.

Our program included Bibliodrama sessions as well as learning to use Bibliodrama elements in our contexts. (Please read at the end of this report what some of our participants shared)

Here is a brief explanation about Bibliodrama:

Bibliodrama is not drama or theater – but it is spiritual counseling in a group with the help of biblical texts. There is a Bibliodrama leader who guides and leads the group through the text and through the issues that appear. Bibliodrama was invented in a Cappuccine monastery in Germany and is inspired by the Ignacian spirituality. We all know that we learn very much through experiences. But in our churches we are used to sitting down and listening. How can we experience the biblical stories without performing drama or theater? Bibliodrama gives the biblical story a physical place in the room.

The biblical story can be appealing and inspiring, but it does not impose anything on the participants. There is room for the individual to find a place in the biblical story which is relevant and rewarding in life and faith. No matter what, the participants will feel a relation to the biblical passage and there will be room to feel if there is a life-giving calling from the biblical story. The dialogue within the outline is a contemplative listening to the other participants. We listen without commenting and we listen in a way that allows us to focus our attention on what processes are happening in us while we are listening. In the workshop we learn how to make space for this kind of dialogue.

The participants meet again after their experiences in the outline, then the session is rounded off with a sharing of faith and experience. This helps participants to relate to the experience in a way that is relevant for their life and faith. This is an existential dialogue, where the instructor is present as a spiritual counselor and the participants become companions in each other's lives. In the workshop participants also learned to connect their feelings and experiences gained from this spiritual journey to their everyday life.



The Bibliodrama group enjoying some rest, fun and fellowship time.



Here are some of the reflections of the participants:

- *I found the workshop of Bibliodrama very interesting, very insightful, practical and helpful for me personally, and also for my ministry. I found the idea of breaking down the texts and creating different spaces out of them very interesting and very helpful for meditation and going deeper in reading and understanding the text and myself.*

Also I liked our reflections after each reading very much. I could hear different reflections and ideas from the text, or different readings of the text that I would not even think of. This was a chance to see different perspectives and realize that it is very enriching to read a text and meditate on it in a group of various people. This was an eye-opening experience for me...

I found creating spaces and different scenes of the text very insightful. The scenes we created from John about the trial of Jesus in front of Pilate brought the story into life and helped me to see myself in that place....

All these were very helpful tools in reading the text in a practical way, and in analyzing the stories and letting the text talk to us in our situation here and now...

I thought and decided that I can use this way of creating spaces with our ladies group, since it is a small group; of course I can use it with the youth-group too.

The next week of our workshop, I was invited to give the main topic of the ladies' one day retreat of the National Evangelical Synod's churches in Lebanon and I used what I learned from the workshop there. This made my presentation very powerful. I read Mary and Martha's story from John 11, when Jesus raised Lazarus. My topic was about Mary and Martha. The three spaces that I created were:

- 1- The house of Mary and Martha, where there was loss, grieving, crying, and deep sadness.*
- 2- Outside the house, outside the village, the wilderness, where Martha went to meet Jesus, and brought her sister too. In this place she had a deep emotional and theological discussion with Jesus: "If you were here, my brother wouldn't have died", "I believe"... This is a place of arguing with God, questioning, blaming, doubting and stating our faith.*
- 3- The grave, the place of death, where the greatest miracle happened. Mary and Martha saw the glory of God, when Lazarus came out of the grave.*

So I invited the ladies to think where they are in their lives.

- 1- Are they in a state of grieving, crying over a lost dream, job, thing or a person, feeling that Jesus has not heard them and not come to change their situation?*
- 2- Or they are in a state of meeting with God, they have left the house grief and now they are facing, challenging God with their questions...or saying that they believe.*
- 3- Or they are reconciled with God, in peace with Him, have seen His glory and ready to tell about His greatness....*

This was a very good exercise. This was very interesting for the audience and brought the subject into life for the women. After I finished many said that they are in the grieving space since years.... We had a time of conversation and many told me that they liked this demonstration very much...

I thanked God for allowing me to participate in the workshop of Bibliodrama, because it was a chance for me to learn new tools, see and experience new things when reading any text from the Bible. I think that this can be a powerful tool to understand a text, go deeper in it and to touch the lives of the people, as it touched me personally.

Many thanks to Agnetta, Ele, and Shake` for this great workshop...

I would certainly like to learn more and have more experience in this area... (A.A.G.)

- *The trainers well-articulated the process of Bibliodrama, allowed us to experience it, and showed us how to apply it, which is helpful and useful. They were understanding and caring, making it a warm environment in which I could easily share my personal thoughts and reflections. The training was beneficial and I learned a lot from it personally. I would like to apply it to my Bible study group and Sunday School class. I feel like I grew as a person and dealt with personal struggles I was not able to face on my own. I liked the flow of the training and that there was enough break time. I didn't feel like there was too much or too little of anything. (P.P.)*

- *There were a lot of useful elements, which I will use most probably later in my ministry. I can imagine, that I will do further education in counseling and in that score the Bibliodrama weekend was a quite inspiring session. I liked, that we divided the room in different parts, so that the different sections were strong for itself. It was positive, that we first read the story together and later on we split the story in different parts. As helpful as well for me were the reflection parts. I was enormously impressed by the question skills of the leader. It seems that it needs a lot of training to reach this level of being able to ask questions as she did. I was excited and I am still excited to learn more about Bibliodrama. (L.R.)*

- *I want to thank you again for this great opportunity you gave me to take part in the Bibliodrama training that you organized so well with such precious leaders. Again this encounter gave me the opportunity to see where I was last time and where I am now. I was so desperate to be able to go further than a beautiful friendship to a place where after about a year, I can now expect in prayer that they will come out of this land of slavery into the promised land. They are on the way, and I feel a little bit like Zacheus on his tree waiting to see them pass, on their way with Jesus, or like one of Moses' goats, expecting to see him come back with them following him! I am every time surprised about this defining places, and "changing places" and how it gives me an experience, a perspective I did not expect at all!! Thanks again and be blessed. (H.A.)*

- *I would like to thank you for what you have prepared and worked for so we can enjoy and learn from 3 days Bibliodrama retreat. And I have to say that I was waiting for this, and that I was expecting something different, which I found. Concerning what we have done, I highly appreciate the whole idea of Bibliodrama, because of many reasons:*
 - 1- *It made me find a place for myself in the OT stories, which is something really required, mainly because we read them with theology in our heads. Therefore, it was important to find a place inside the text for myself and not only studying it.*
 - 2- *As for the NT, I highly admire the idea of preparing the scene for the events where Jesus is there. To face Jesus and talk with him is important even if we were acting, because acting is part of our lives too.*
 - 3- *The issue of counseling through using the Bible is essential, because it does not give the feeling of stress, or as if someone is asking about the inner self, rather it is so smooth, and the person is the one who choose where he/she wants to stand. It makes the person the one who takes the initiative role and start the therapy.*

I really recommend it for the women because it heals by itself, and it gives the chance to see oneself in the biblical narratives.

I would also like to thank the Danish leader, Agneta and Ele, for their presence and their knowledge concerning the training. Hope to meet again and again in the future, because till next time I think I will have more things to discover and share.(M.S.)

I would like to thank our dear partners DanMission and esp. Rev. Agnete G. Holm for all her effort in bringing this training to fruition.
May God bless you all.

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