

Playback Bibliodrama: A new innovation

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Playback Bibliodrama is a new variation that conjoins elements of Bibliodrama and Playback Theater. Esly Regina Carvalho, MS, LPC, TEP, developed it as part of training events in Ecuador and Brazil and first described it in her Spanish Manual de Bibliodrama (Carvalho, 2002). It is debuting in the USA with her blessing. This experiential session will demonstrate the method using participants as tellers and actors and provide introductory training. It will include a modicum of didactic presentation and discussion. Participants of all backgrounds will find this to be a form that they can readily learn and use.

Rob directs an ongoing Bibliodrama group, was a founding member of Salt City Playback Theater, and is the Director of Shepherd's Staff Training in Psychodrama.

I. Introduction

A. Format

1. Demonstration Session.
2. Bibliodrama as Bible Study ("text-centered" Pitzele, 1999, p. 62, 225 – 226).
3. Training-like model (Warm-up, Action, Sharing, Processing).

B. Focus on the transcendent (Jonathan Fox, April 29, 2006, Keynote Address at these meetings, *Superdynamic Community*, identified a "transpersonal" domain of which "spiritual transcendence" is the hallmark, and of which "materialism" prevents it. Also consistent with Natalie Winter's (1999) "Fourth Role Category."

1. Moment of silence – for prayer, centering, etc., whatever is important for the participants to step into some sacred space.
2. Recognition of the transcendent value of respect, confidentiality, and being in process (still learning).
3. Symbolic agreement to commit to these values – step forward to the center of the room as a sign of your commitment – be aware of the others around you and the larger group – be aware there is more that connects us than separates us.

C. Identify and honor different religious traditions (points of view to honor and respect) – different belief groups step forward to the center of the circle of participants.

D. Timelines/ spectrograms of experience with psychodrama, playback theater, and bibliodrama.

II. Warm-up

A. Why Bibliodrama, Why Playback Bibliodrama.

1. The origin of the texts, the story and "spoken" word in contrast to the study of the written words (Peterson, 2006, pp. 92 - 94).
2. Implicit in the Greek writers use of the "historical present" tense. In the preliminary pages of the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB, 1971, p. x.) the

editor explains a notation that few have commented on, the presence of the asterisk in numerous texts, as follows:

In regard to the use in Greek of the historical present the Board recognized that in some contexts the present tense seems more unexpected and unjustified to the English reader than a past tense would have been. *But Greek authors frequently used the present tense for the sake of heightened vividness, thereby transporting their readers in imagination to the actual scene at the time of the occurrence* [italics added]. However, the Board felt that it would be wise to change these historical presents into English past tenses. Therefore verbs marked with an asterisk (*) represent historical presents in the Greek which have been translated with an English past tense in order to conform to modern usage.

3. Playback encourages spontaneity as opposed to a wooden reading or rendition of the text (reading from different translations is encouraged for this same reason).
 4. Consistency with the vantage point of the author (recounting a story told by others, e.g. Luke (1:1-3) "...to compile an account... (from) ...eyewitnesses... (and) to write it out for you in consecutive order..." in contrast to recording one's own experience, e.g. John (21:24) This is the disciple who bears witness of these things, and wrote these things...").
 5. The reluctance of some participants to get out of their seats. Pitzele (n.d.) admits, I actually hate the term "Bibliodrama." People are afraid that they are going to make asses of themselves, that it's all about being dramatic, but there is no stage. It's hard to explain what it really involves -- you have to experience it. I might change the name to "Biblical Transformations." I'll give a \$100 prize to anyone who comes up with a better name.
 6. This approach respects the theological views of the participant teller.
- B. Text choices, made sociometrically, Abraham's offering of Isaac (Gen. 22: 1-19) or the restoration of Peter after his denial of Christ (Jn. 21: 1-19).

III. Action.

- A. The reading of the text.
- B. Background, observations, questions of the text, what jumps out at you?
- C. Choice of a "teller" a volunteer to retell the story (incorporating the white fire along with the black fire [Pitzele, 1999, pp. 23 -24]). (Esly Carvalho has the Biblical character do the telling, I am having one of the group participants do so. Another alternative could be to have the author of the portion of scripture do the retelling.)
- D. Characters chosen and enrolled as the story is told.
- E. Enactment.
- F. "Take two" if necessary.

IV. Sharing.

- A. What did you see anew as a result of the enactment?
- B. What spoke to you? What will you take away from this passage of scripture/enactment?
- C. A second moment of silence to let it sink in.

V. Processing and questions.

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Contact Information

Rob Pramann: Shepherd's Staff Training in Psychodrama/Shepherd's Staff Christian Counseling Center, Inc., 731 East 8600 south, Sandy, UT 84094, www.sccc.com, utahssccc@aol.com

Esly Regina Carvalho: Plaza del Encuentro, PO Box 915, Little Elm, TX 75068
www.plazadelencuentro.com, esly@plazacounselingservices.com (Esly is currently in the process of moving to Brazil, hence her e-mail address and website may be the best way to reach her.)