

Introduction

Upfront Bible Dramas 2.0

As we prepare for presenting things for a large group - a drama or a Bible reading, or even a song – let's remind ourselves that we are in the time of 2.0. The ethos that has always been the key to effective communication, in drama, the theatre, the arts, and in the classroom has become more widely recognised through the development of the second generation of the internet.

Where first generation sites were one way interfaces, with monoliths of information, web 2.0 is interactive, the user helps generate, evaluate, critique and give feedback. The interface is two way. We've come to expect this of our technology, but it has always been true of communication, and of relationships.

For a very short couple of decades, in the early days of TV, we got a little stuck in the couch-potato stunned stare at the screen. And this has unfortunately had a negative impact on amateur drama.

You've probably seen a lot of it if you've been on a camp, or a mission team.

The Upfront Bible Dramas here are written with 2.0 in mind, but also the great history of street theatre, melodrama, storytelling and pantomime which draws the audience in to create the drama themselves.

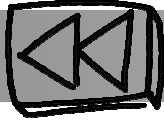
Note that there is often one person presenting words – and this person should have every muscle and sense operating at full tilt to engage the audience – leaning forward, working the space, enlarging their physical presence, creating a symphony from their voice in volume and intonation.

Sometimes there is a pair of presenters – and the dynamic relationship between them should create a space for the audience to also get involved, as if the audience is like a third person in their conversation.

There are also often others who are drawing volunteers up from the audience, not verbally but with the gesture and the open eyes, modelling a little of the action themselves, a smile and offer of a prop or costume.

You will also note that the Bible is actually read, out loud at quite some length in each of these presentations. This is because the Bible is the most powerful storytelling equipment we have. The way the Bible says it – is actually important.

Prepare the actual reading of the Bible as thoroughly as anything – as if you were going to an audition for a lead part in a Shakespearean play. The text should sound as lively as if you were Adam Hills delivering his routine at the comedy festival. Use every muscle in your face – and in your body-- to project the text; use light and shade – vary the pace. Take pauses, plan your breathing.



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Each time we read the Bible out loud, we must remember that it began as an oral tradition – stories told from memory around the fire, or over the dinner table, or along the road. And people loved them, and were given life through them.

Listen to yourself – and ask, is this reading, this telling, this speaking of the Words of God living and active? Is it life giving to the hearer?

Ultimately, it isn't because we live in a techno time of web design that this kind of communication is vital. The story of God has always been interactive; it has always required a response. Our aim is not to tell stories, but to make disciples. It's a process, it's a together process, it's a mutual process.

Perhaps it is better not to think of presenting a Bible Drama, or a Story, but facilitating an encounter with the Word. FEW 2.0

A great way to measure how effective our Upfront Bible encounters have been is to consider whether we have been shaped, accosted and transformed in the process of opening the Bible with others.