

BIBLE ENGAGEMENT



Intergen

1 Peter 2:18-25

(Lectionary Year A, Easter 4)

By Beth Barnett

Read the passage with intention to challenge the participants to think about God's love for all people, especially those in pain or without freedom

NB Although the lectionary reading for this week begins at verse 19, we have begun in the verse before, which is clearly part of the one text, and significantly sets the context (slavery) for the words about suffering in what follows

| | |
|----------------|--|
| You will need: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large “envelope” (as large as possible ie: large white goods box) addressed to: <i>The Slaves who are followers of Jesus</i> <i>In Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia</i>• Large poster of art image by Chris Booth, inside the ‘envelope’ with text of 1 Peter 2:18-25 on the reverse side |
| Time required: | 7-10 minutes |

Connect

Today we are reading a part of the Bible that has been written to the followers of Jesus in places far from the towns Jesus visited, and long after the time Jesus lived, died, and rose again in a visible human body on Earth.

Context

The bit we are reading today was written especially to the slaves in the communities of Jesus' followers.

It is written in the form of a letter.

In the ancient world, there were many slaves – different kinds of slaves, but none of them had any rights – not the right to marry, not the right to own property, not the

right to keep their own children. Some were treated with harsh punishment and violence. All slaves were under the threat of violence with no protection. And all slaves were thought to be untrustworthy, and deserving of punishment. Any suffering they endured was their own fault – or so people thought.

Content

So, how amazing that they have a part of the Bible written especially for them – though I wonder if its going to be good news ...?

Let's open it and see...

Call some volunteers to help open the ‘envelope’ and take out the ‘postcard’ image with the text on the reverse side.

Invite people to comment on what they observe in the picture.

Then read the text slowly, inviting interjections that identify parts of the picture that align with the text.

Observations might include:

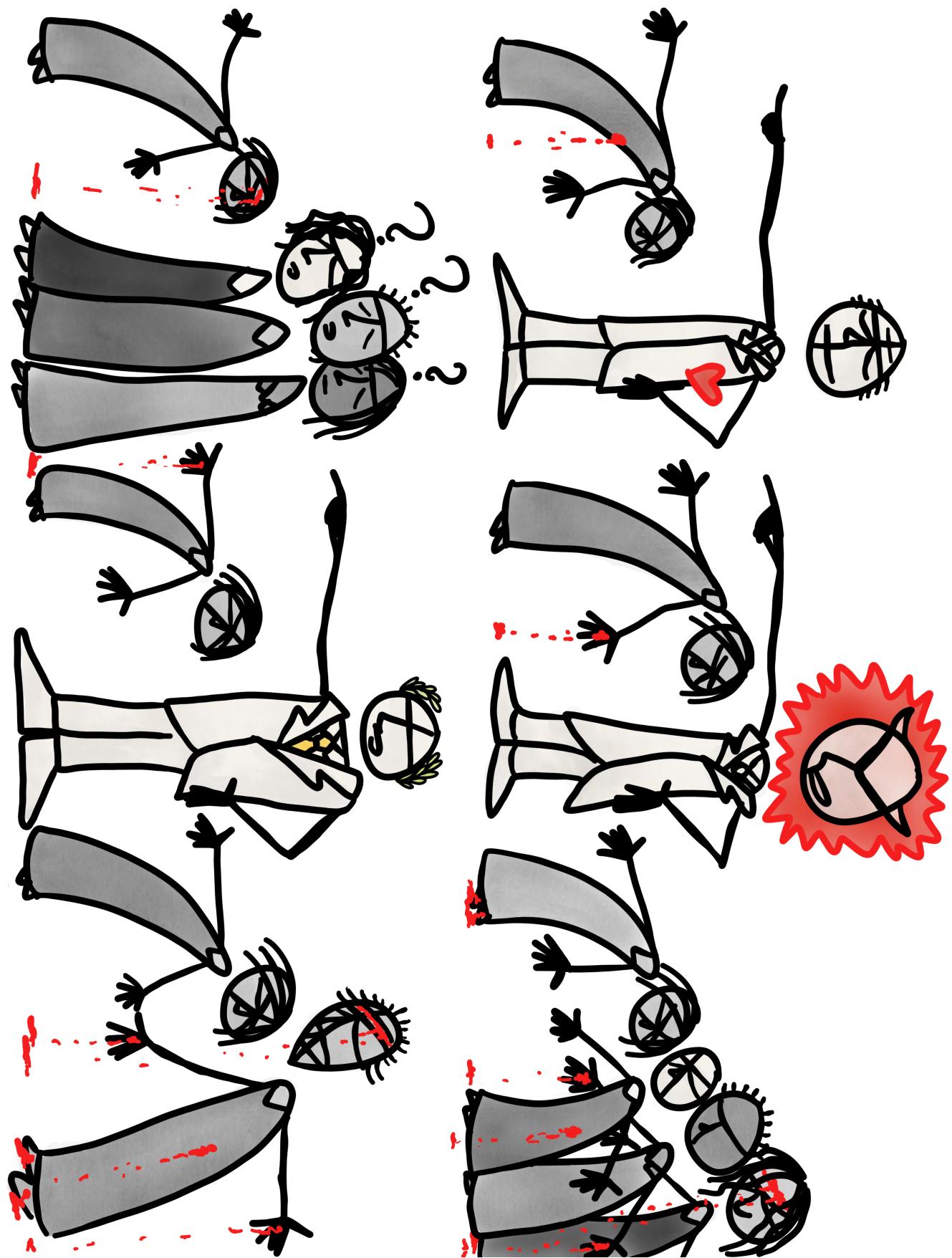
- Slave has different wounds in each picture
- Kind master/harsh master
- Community of slaves
- People question why the slave suffers – is it because they deserve it?
- Emperor doesn't help
- Jesus appears as a slave
- Jesus has more wounds and suffering than the slave; Jesus bears the wounds of all the slaves

Consequence

Today we have read part of the Bible that specifically tells you that it is speaking to slaves, but very often, the first hearers and tellers of the stories of the Bible were slaves. As we read the Bible ourselves, it is good for us to wonder how the story would be received and understood by a slave. It can help us better understand God's ways, and love for all people, especially those in pain, or without freedom.

Options

- *Make smaller individual postcards of the image and text for households to take home*
- *Use the small postcards in your gathering and invite participants to have a go explaining the passage to one another using the image on the postcard.*



Postcards



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www.intergen.org.au