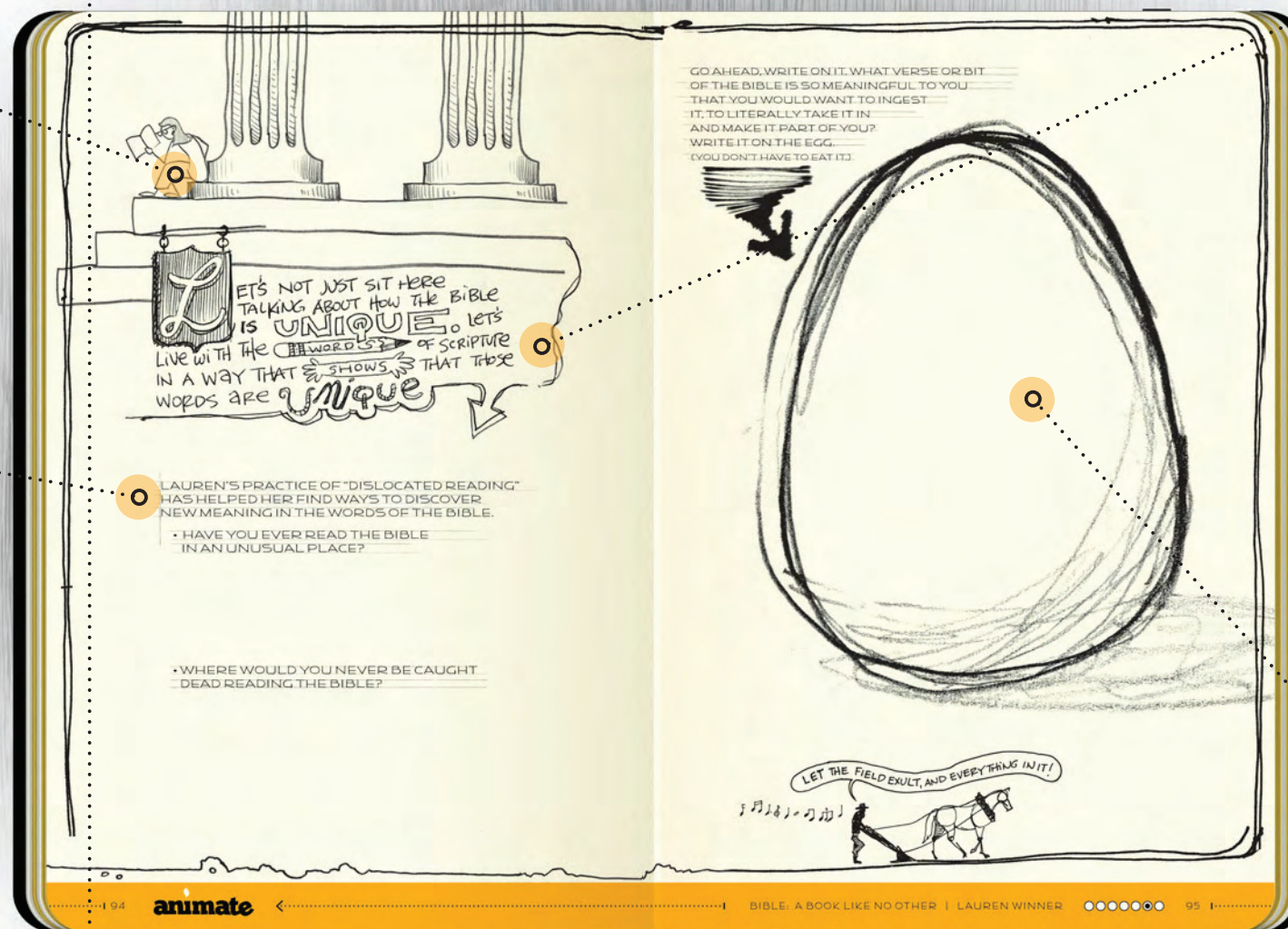




LAUREN IS A PROFESSOR OF Christian Spirituality, and she works hard not to just stay in her head. Take advantage of her very physical and creative Bible reading practices—try it in different places, on a hard-boiled egg or cake, singing at the plow—to help you be creative with your group. You might even think of foods that could be fun or funny (Bible fortune cookies?) or places in your building that would enhance parts of the session. Go with it!

RECENT RESEARCH HAS FOUND THAT PEOPLE ACTUALLY DO THINK DIFFERENTLY DEPENDING ON WHERE THEY ARE. THEY THINK BETTER WHEN THEY ARE LITERALLY "OUTSIDE THE BOX." WHERE WE DO OUR THINKING IMPACTS HOW WE THINK—IT'S CALLED "EMBODIED COGNITION."



Have each person in the group open the Bible randomly to a passage and read the story or teaching silently. Have group members engage their "faithful imagination" and "live with the words of scripture." Give people a chance to share their reactions. If you have time, consider allowing group members to go find a new place inside or outside your meeting space to read their scripture passage.

- What did you discover about God or yourself?
- What do you feel called to do because of this experience with scripture?
- How often do you feel the Bible moving you to do something? How often do you listen?



THIS ACTIVITY IS A BIT of a high-wire act. It is designed to engage the imagination of your group. Be ready for some strange passages!

SCRIPTURE OFFERS MANY IMAGES OF PEOPLE INTERNALIZING GOD'S WORD. IN EZEKIEL 2:1-4, GOD ACTUALLY TELLS THE PROPHET TO EAT THE SCROLL AND THEN TALK TO THE PEOPLE. IN PSALM 119:11, THE PSALMIST PRAYS, "I HIDE/TREASURE YOUR WORD IN MY HEART SO I MAY NOT SIN AGAINST YOU." AND IN HIS LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS 3:16, PAUL WRITES, "LET THE WORD OF GOD DWELL IN YOU RICHLY."

Many people can quote their favorite scriptures. Other people aren't as familiar with the text. Brainstorm some favorite or well-known Bible verses. Then allow time for group members to decorate their egg with one. Encourage the group to comment on their verses and to make notes around the egg or in their Bibles. Launch them into thinking about which scripture they would pick to take into their bodies and why.

- How do you think a person who has swallowed scripture might behave?

“THIS IS SOMETHING ELSE WE DON'T DO WITH JANE AUSTEN. WE DON'T CARVE PHRASES FROM HER NOVEL INTO A HARDBOILED EGG AND EAT THEM FOR BREAKFAST ... BECAUSE, REALLY, YOU MIGHT LOVE JANE AUSTEN. BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE HER INTO YOURSELF WHOLLY, BODILY, IN QUITE THE SAME WAY AS WE WANT TO FEED ON SCRIPTURE.”

Have fun planning a "dislocated reading" strategy for this week. Work together to create a list of passages you could experience in unusual places. Allow time for your group to throw out ideas. Consider adding some of the following: Genesis 1, Daniel 6, Luke 23, Matthew 6:25-30, Mark 2:1-12 and 11:15-19, John 8:2-11, and Acts 16:25-40. Encourage your group to write a few other passages and ideas about where they might read them in their Journals.

- Where might you read some of these passages? Be creative! Radical, even.
- How do you think people will respond when they see you reading a Bible?
- How would you respond if you saw someone reading a Bible in a public place?

THE BIBLE IS EVERYWHERE. THERE ARE BIBLES IN MOST HOTEL ROOMS ACROSS THE GLOBE, THANKS TO THE MINISTRY OF GIDEON INTERNATIONAL. THE BIBLE HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO OVER 2,000 LANGUAGES. IT IS THE BEST-SELLING BOOK IN HUMAN HISTORY BY A WIDE MARGIN. THE FIRST TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE INTO ENGLISH CAME IN 1382 BY A GUY NAMED JOHN WYCLIF.

Check out the Op-Ed article, "When Truisms are True," at nytimes.com.