

Writers' Challenges

Veronica Bright – Plymouth Christian Writers

We sometimes end the meetings with the following '3 words challenge'. Here are three unrelated words, e.g. egg, park and limelight. You have seven minutes to write something using all three words. (Laughter is guaranteed!)

Bobbie Ann Cole – Historical and Biblical Fiction Christian Writers Online (FABCHOW)

Next meeting of my local Atlantic Canada Writers Group we are all going to bring our favourite/most useful writing resource and tell the others why.

George Hill – Cheshire East Christian Writers

Write a sketch or an account of a **conversation between a Christian and a non-Christian** (on any subject) that you would like to have been part of.

Group Homework given (Cheshire East Christian Writers meetings, 2020-23)

[This includes writing done both before and at meetings. It includes items both for members who are avid writers and for members who are unable or unwilling to write much.]]

- 1) Write on the theme of **'Buried Treasure'** – developing that theme in any way you like.
- 2) Write on the theme of **'Night and Day'** – developing that theme in any way you like.
- 3) Either: invent a **brilliant opening sentence** for your next novel; or tell us what your favourite opening line is in any published novel.
- 4) Write the Good News about Jesus Christ into a single **Twitter** (280 characters)!
- 5) Recommend a book about the **art of writing**.
- 6) Write a piece on the theme of **'Behind the mask'**, or **'Taking off the mask'**. Although not, of course, a coronavirus face-mask!
- 7) Tell the **Easter story on Twitter** (280 characters).
- 8) Write the **first verse of a new hymn** or worship song. Singing it is optional!
- 9) Write a piece on the theme of **'Choosing the right road'**. For a perspective, consider the famous lines that close the Robert Frost poem entitled 'The road not taken': *'Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— / I took the one less traveled by, / And that has made all the difference.'*
- 10) Write a **haiku** which contains the name of either Jesus or Christ.
- 11) Suggest a Bible verse that inspires you not only for spiritual reasons but also because of its **literary beauty** – and explain why it does that.
- 12) Tell us what your **favourite poem** is and read out your two favourite lines from it.
- 13) Write a story on the theme of **'How to be stubborn well'**.
- 14) Write a piece a theme based on this title: **'It was a voice I recognized'**.

- 15) Write the **LAST sentence of a short story**; and at the meeting we will swap everyone's contribution around the group so that for the following meeting you must read to us the previous (up to) 500 words of that story.
- 16) Give us up to three sentences from your **favourite quotation(s)**.
- 17) Write a **sonnet about Christmas**.
- 18) Write a piece about **'something precious that you lost and may never recover'**.
- 19) Use something **that you see on the day** you start your homework as the inspiration for the piece that you will write and bring.
- 20) Write a (respectful!) **limerick** about a Bible character.
- 21) Choose and read out a Bible verse that speaks to you about **'Spring'**, or about **'Hope springing up'**.
- 22) **'Create a character from a name'**: invent an interesting name for a character. Bring your name to the meeting—we will swap around our invented names and for the following meeting you must write a description of your 'given' person.
- 23) Write the **first 400 words of a novel** and circulate it round before the meeting for everyone to suggest how they think your story could develop.
- 24) Tell us of a **parable that has meant a lot to you** or sticks in your mind; and write a modern-day version of it' (of not more than, say, three times the length of the original).
- 25) Write a piece **'from the viewpoint of someone you profoundly disagree with'**. (We'll let you add a few words at the end to say what's wrong with their view - if you feel you must!).
- 26) Write a sketch or an account of a **conversation between a Christian and a non-Christian** (on any subject) that you would like to have been part of.
- 27) Tell us who your **favourite Bible character** is, along with something he or she said that assists your writing.
- 28) Write something that celebrates **'the beauty of colours'**, e.g., in Creation.
- 29) With a completely open interpretation - prose or poem, funny or serious, religious or secular, write on the theme of **'Circles'**. (Could be anything from wedding rings and knitting circles to circumnavigation of the globe.)
- 30) Pick any **human author of any Bible book(s)** and say how their writing style enhances your love for their book.
- 31) Write something about **'Water'** or **'Fire'**, perhaps on how God speaks through either.
- 32) Choose (a few verses from) a **favourite psalm** and tell us how you would use that psalm to encourage someone else.
- 33) With a completely open interpretation - prose or poem, funny or serious, religious or secular, write on the theme of **'Power'**. (That could be any of electricity generation, or political leverage, or miraculous healing....)
- 34) Write on the theme of **'Humility'**.
- 35) Choose a **less well-known thing that Jesus said** and tell us why you like it.
- 36) Write a piece on the theme of **'Neighbours'**.
- 37) Write something on the theme of **'Thirst'**.
- 38) Choose a **verse or verses from the Book of Proverbs** and say how they speak to you.

Rosemary Johnson – Essex Group

In the Essex Group in January, we wrote to the prompt 'Puss in Boots' and we had a 300 word limit. The responses were varied including rewriting of the pantomime story... an

animal welfare story... my story (which was published in CafeLit) about a cat taken by its owner into Boots the Chemist.

Iris Lloyd – Pilgrim Pens

Distribute slips of paper and ask everyone to write down an adjective and put it in a pot. On another slip, ask them to write down a concrete noun and put it in another pot. Then everyone takes out a slip (not their own) from each pot and writes something, prose or poetry, about the result. I wrote a poem on the subject of "dusty furniture".

Allison Symes – Flash Fiction Genre Group

Last time, I set some opening lines for people to write a story about and what follows below is one of these.

- *She opened her handbag and tipped the contents onto the floor.*

Hope people have fun with this. The flash group did!

Richard and Eirene Palmer, Café Writers, Derby April 2023

Writing Workshop Exercise - Bible Storytime

It's good to give your group advanced notice of this exercise to allow them to choose their favourite Bible story and prepare ideas on creative angles they could use in their writing.

On the day of the meeting, set a time limit of 30-40 minutes for writing and introduce it thus.

“Please think about the different ways you could tell *a part* of this story – a poem, a reflection, local reporter, innocent bystander, your journal entry, a prayer, a letter to a friend, the rumour mill, a psalm. Use your imagination to conjure up a different viewpoint of the events. Before we start, let's just go round the room and hear which story you have chosen to work with.” Discuss and share ideas.

Pull the group back together after allotted writing time and ask those who wish to, to read their contributions.

We developed this exercise recently for writing on any part of Holy Week/Easter story and had an amazing range of very creative stories and angles. People went away buzzing with new thoughts and ideas from one another's work. Some took their work away to polish and finish it off and a couple of people added drawings and images.

Letitia Mason – Aspiring Writers

As far as writing exercise are concerned, we enjoyed a very simple one at a recent meeting as follows:

I brought a selection of ties and scarves in different styles and from different periods (gleaned from charity shops). I laid them across the table and asked people to select one and say why they liked it. We then spent ten minutes writing about the person who might wear the tie or scarf, their interests, character, appearance, tastes. This simple exercise produced some surprisingly colourful stories.

Melanie Hodges – East London

Using one of the following prompts, write a short piece of memoir based on a smell which evokes something special for either you or one of your characters:

Coffee, Freshly cut grass, Toast, Perfume/aftershave, Baby powder, New car, Crayons

You could choose another prompt if you like, as long as it's a smell.

Carol Purves – Cumbria Writers

Exercise - cut out pictures from magazines and give one to each member. Ask them to write about the picture for 5 minutes and then read out their writing in turn. The same exercise can be done by giving the members a small object (watch, key, notebook etc) and get them to write in the same way.

At each meeting choose a subject for the members to write about at home before the next meeting and then read out.

As members are not keen to comment on other people's writing, I use my own work as an example, explaining how I constructed the work and pointing out where I think I failed.