

Literary Devices In the Bible: Metaphor

This lesson may be used in conjunction with any work of literature where metaphor is employed.

GRADE LEVEL

7-10

TIME REQUIREMENT

1 Period (50 min)

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Understand what a metaphor is
- Identify metaphors in specified passages in the gospel of John
- Unpack (analyze) each of the seven “I Am” metaphors Jesus uses to describe Himself
- Reflect on their own personal needs in relationship to the “I Am” metaphors describing Jesus
- Connect this lesson with metaphor use in the literary work being studied

JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE CONNECTIONS

- Acceptance of God
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Intellectual Development
- Communication Skill
- Personal Management
- Aesthetic Appreciation

MATERIALS

- ✓ Overhead of definition of metaphor with examples
- ✓ John passages where “I Am” metaphors are found (for teacher)
- ✓ Copies of John passages where “I Am” metaphors are found
- ✓ Highlighters (pen/pencil works, too)

PRE-ACTIVITY

Optional: Have students free-write about what they need from God right now in their life. Where are they weak? What are their struggles? Fears? What desires? Encourage them to move beyond surface, materialistic things to needs and desires of the heart and soul

ACTIVITY

Understand

1. Ask if anyone knows what a metaphor is
2. Show definition (overhead) and examples
3. Hand out copies of John passages and instruct students to find and highlight the seven metaphors Jesus uses to describe Himself
4. Review findings together

Analyze

1. In pairs, have students unpack each of the seven "I Am" metaphors and write down under each what Jesus is saying about Himself by using that particular metaphor. Analyze the first one together as a class so that students know how to proceed
2. Review and discuss analyses in class
3. Ask students how these metaphors may have helped Jesus' listeners understand what he is saying about Himself; discuss the effectiveness of using metaphors in general

Reflect

1. Direct students back to the pre-activity assignment of free-writing about their own personal need/s, etc. and ask them to determine which of the 7 "I Am" metaphors promises to meet the need/s
2. If the class "atmosphere" is "emotionally safe," invite students to share the metaphor they selected that speaks most meaningfully to them (and why)

Connect

1. At some point, draw student attention to the use of metaphor in the literary work currently being studied and follow-up with discussion on the effectiveness of the metaphor usage

The Metaphor

...is defined as an indirect comparison between two or more seemingly unrelated subjects that typically uses "is a" to join the first subjects.

Shakespeare:

“All the world’s a stage...”

David:

“God is my fortress...”

Seven “I Am” Metaphors of Jesus

Teacher reference

- John 6:47-51** “I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. *I am the bread of life.* Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever....”
- John 8:12** “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “*I am the light of the world.* Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
- John 10:9** “*I am the gate;* whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.”
- John 10:11-12** “*I am the good shepherd.* The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.”
- John 10:11-12** “Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha answered, ‘I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘*I am the resurrection and the life.* He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’”
- John 14:5-7** “Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’ Jesus answered, ‘*I am the way and the truth and the life.* No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.’”
- John 15:1,4** “*I am the true vine,* and my Father is the gardener.... Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

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