



The Saint John's Bible

What do you see?

The purpose of The Saint John's Bible is to ignite the spiritual imagination of people of all faith journeys all over the world.

Use the questions below to help you see more in this illumination. Try it with a friend or family member. Don't be afraid if you are thinking, "I don't get it." The possible meaning of the illuminations are seldom obvious, and the details can spark further thought. We hope you enjoy the process of igniting your spiritual imagination.

- What do you see? Why might it be there? What might it mean?
- What else do you see? What might it mean?
- How might what you see fit into your understanding of the story?
- What do you think the overall message of this illumination might be?

Volume 1: Pentateuch

Volume 2: Historical Books

Volume 3: Wisdom Books

Volume 4: Psalms

Volume 5: Prophets

Volume 6: Gospels and Acts

Volume 7: Letters and Revelation



Creation

Donald Jackson, artist

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Genesis 1:1 – 2:4 (NRSV)

Read the creation story or recall what you know of it while looking at the details of this illumination. Consider these questions to help you get the most out of the image.

- What do you notice about the illumination? What do you wonder about?
- How do you see the different aspects of the creation story represented in this illumination?
- Where do you see the presence of God in this image? Gold represents the presence of God in the illuminations.
- What ideas about creation are represented differently than how you thought in the past?
- How does the illumination relate to your definition of creation or ongoing creation?
- What do you think the bird in the center represents?
- How are each day of creation shown? Compare the text of each day to the image.



The Beatitudes

Thomas Ingmire, artist

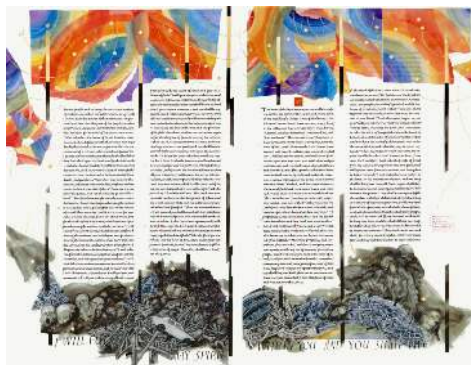
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Matthew 5:1-12 (NRSV)

Volume: Gospels and Acts

Read through the text from Matthew and look at the details of this illumination. Consider the questions below to help you get the most out of the image.

- What do you notice and wonder about the illumination of the Beatitudes?
- What do you make out from the text on the right side? As a whole, what does it look like to you?
- What does this illumination tell you about those who are blessed?
- The Beatitudes are part of the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew makes the connection to the Ten Commandments which Moses brought down from Mount Sinai. What parallels and differences do you see between the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes?
- In Pastor Kai Nilsen's sermon on the Beatitudes (February 12), he offered a set of Beatitudes for each of us today. Can you imagine a beatitude for you being written in gold? How does the gold and the calligraphy change how you hear and respond to the words?



Valley of the Dry Bones

Donald Jackson, artist

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Ezekiel 37:1-14 (NRSV)

Volume: Prophets

Read the verses in Ezekiel. God takes Ezekiel to stand in the valley of bones and tells him, “these bones are the whole house of Israel.” And God asks Ezekiel, “Can these bones live?” Consider the questions below to help you get the most out of this image.

- What do you notice and wonder about this illumination?
- What unusual images do you see in this valley? In what way are they comparable to “dry bones”?
- Where do you see the presence of God in this image? Gold represents the presence of God in the illuminations.
- How can we make sense of the image at the top of the page with the dry bones of the bottom of the page?
- Where do you see the “dry bones” of society?
- Where do you see God’s presence working to restore Creation?



Crucifixion

Donald Jackson, artist

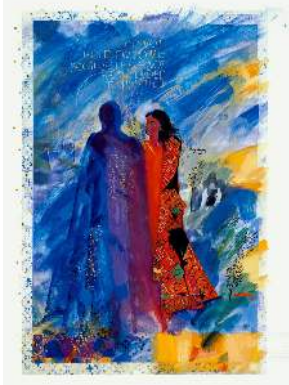
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Luke 23:26-49 (NRSV)

Volume: Gospels and Acts

Read the story of the Crucifixion while looking at the details of this illumination. Consider these questions to help you get the most out of the image.

- What do you see in this illumination? What might it mean related to the story?
- What might be the reasons that the creators of *The Saint John's Bible* chose to illuminate the crucifixion in Luke's gospel?
- Why might they have used so much gold in the illumination?
- What are the similarities and differences between the left half and the right half of this illumination that you see?
- What might the purple represent? What might the blue represent?
- Some have suggested that we see a procession in the lower right corner of the illumination. Where might this procession be going?



Resurrection

Donald Jackson, artist

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John 20:1-23 (NRSV)

Volume: Gospels and Acts

Read the story of the Resurrection in John and at the details of this illumination.
Consider these questions to help you get the most out of the image.

- What do you see in this illumination? What might it mean related to the story?
- How many elements of the passion of Christ (all the events of Holy Week) do you see in this illumination?
- What might be the reason that this illumination was chosen to be the last illumination of all of the Gospels?
- What colors do you see? What might they represent?
- How does this illumination differ from conventional religious depictions of the Resurrection that you know of?



Pentecost

Donald Jackson, artist

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Acts 1:6-11; 2:1-47 (NRSV)

Volume: Gospels and Acts

Read the story of Pentecost while looking at the details of this illumination. Consider these questions to help you get the most out of the image.

- What do you notice? What speaks to you?
- Where do you see the presence of the church?
- Can you see...
 - ...the streaks of flame representing the tongues of fire?
 - ...the apostles preaching at the wall of Jerusalem?
 - ...the moon and the sun?
- Did you know that Pentecost was originally a Jewish harvest festival celebrated 50 days after Passover? The apostles were celebrating this festival when the Holy Spirit descended on them.
- Donald Jackson fashioned this portrayal of Pentecost after a football game he saw on Saint John's University campus.



Calligraphy – Text of the Bible



Scribes:

Sue Hufton, Sally Mae Joseph, Susan Leiper,
Brian Simpson, Angela Swan, Donald Jackson

In The Saint John's Bible's 1150 pages are 163 illuminations. What is on all those other pages? Hand-written script crafted by six calligraphers.

- Donald Jackson created the unique script used in The Saint John's Bible so that it would be easy to read. Many churches read from the Bible each Sunday.
- A two-column page of script takes on average 8 hours for a scribe to create.
- Each scribe cuts their own quill and makes their own ink.
- Facing pages are written by the same scribe, however, you may be able to see differences when you turn a page or two.
- Below are the insignia for each of the scribes that completed the text of The Saint John's Bible. Can you tell which insignia matches each scribe?

