

## BOOK REVIEW:

### *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again*

by  
**Rachel Held Evans**

Reviewed by: **Caroline Guy**

Reading and interpreting the Bible is often presented as working through the scientific method or reading a User's Manual, but author Rachel Held Evans proposes a different way of engaging scripture: through the art of storytelling. Drawing on her experience as a journalist, storyteller, and explorer of what it means to live as a Christian, Evans makes the often-academic work of Biblical interpretation accessible for the everyday person.

No matter the level of seminary education, or lack thereof, Evans believes that everyone is inspired by stories. Readers of *Inspired* are presented with eight categories of Biblical stories, each one offering different perspectives and avenues for engaging scripture. Readers drawn to Origin Stories will be invited to question how the Bible helps us understand who we are and where we come from. Readers drawn to Fish Stories will be invited to reflect on healing and compassion in our society. And there is plenty more to explore in Deliverance Stories, War Stories, Wisdom Stories, Resistance Stories, Gospel Stories, and Church Stories. The Bible, Evans asserts, contains stories for everyone.

By taking Biblical stories and engaging them as literary works rather than an instructional manual, Rachel Held Evans manages to approach a daunting subject in a way that is approachable and often fun. She encourages readers to dig deep, get creative, and ask questions, and in doing so, opens the pages of scripture to all people of all ages and education levels. Teachers of Bible Study and Sunday School may worry that encouraging questions may lead to doubts or unanswerable moments, and that may be true. But Evans encourages us to sit with those moments and use them as opportunities to dive deeper into our faith. Because of this, *Inspired* would be an excellent choice for a book club, Bible Study, or youth group, with room to discuss Evans writings and to connect stories of your own.

Many people may not be excited to read a book about Biblical interpretation, but Rachel Held Evans' *Inspired* is a must-read for faith leaders and anyone looking to deepen their understanding of the Bible. It sparks a more personal connection to scripture and encourages readers to see themselves in the stories they encounter. Though challenging at first, Evans proves a gracious and humorous guide through the eight kinds of stories she presents and ensures readers leave with tools and ideas to embark on their own journey of interpretation.

Caroline Guy serves as the Coordinator of Communications and Technology for the Northwestern Ohio Synod, ELCA, working to connect and collaborate with 160 parishes and their communities. When she is not at the theater or choreographing a new show, she can be found cultivating her patio garden.

Looking for a reading guide with discussion questions? Go to [Inspired+Reading+Guide.pdf](#) ([niagaraanglican.ca](#)) for a discussion guide by the author.

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