



EBN charter

The European Bibliodrama Network was founded in 2004 at the European Bibliodrama Congress in Lidingo and has functioned as a real network since. In this context, a first charter was created. This new EBN Charter was drawn up in 2025.

1. What is Bibliodrama?

Bibliodrama is an open-ended interaction process between the individual, the group as a whole and a text. Biblical and sometimes other sacred texts are a source of inspiration, and an existential and hermeneutic dialogue takes place between the world of the participants and the world of the text. By identifying with people and situations from the text through embodying a character or non-personal perspective of the story, the participants gain a deeper understanding of the text, their lives and beliefs. After the play there is room for sharing, reflection and spiritual processing.

There is a verbal and non-verbal exchange between the participants emerging from the cultural and religious backgrounds they bring to the process. Varied aesthetic forms of expression fulfil an important function in this creative process, which strengthens interconnectedness between the participants and counteracts polarization.

Bibliodrama workshops require the leadership of a trained facilitator. In a typical Bibliodrama session the leader facilitates the warm-up, play and sharing. So members of the EBN do not offer Bibliodrama workshops without following or having completed an appropriately approved Bibliodrama training program or equivalent. The individual national associations may be subject to different professional requirements, or none at all, in establishing a training course hence it is only possible to refer to «appropriately approved» courses. The focus has to be on the determination to provide the best quality of training possible.

The use of Bibliodrama in community life, in religious contexts and especially adult education and in many other settings helps people to understand the fullness of life afresh and to put it into words.

2. The value of Bibliodrama within European diversity

Bibliodrama fundamentally respects the otherness, diversity and dignity of the other (including the text) in the interaction process. Bibliodrama therefore also has potential as an exercise in peace building: people from the most diverse backgrounds deal with existential issues and interpersonal questions in a group. They respect each other in their diversity and do not try to convince others of their own opinions. There are deep insights to be gained in building relationships between different faith traditions and cultures through Bibliodrama. These could contribute more widely to creating peace between peoples in Europe.

3. Current challenges for the EBN

- In the 1970s, from the founding period to the turn of the millennium, Bibliodrama was trialed as an intercultural method between different Christian denominations, particularly between the Protestant and the Catholic churches. Since the EBN was founded, more and more denominations have joined in. Additionally, in today's Bibliodrama many experiments are being made within the interfaith field. By Interfaith we are referring to relations between Christian and non-Christian traditions, for example between Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and others. More and more research is being done in this field.
- The cultural differences in dealing with sacred texts, with the human body and with aesthetic and spiritual forms of expression must be carefully considered.
- What was no longer conceivable at the beginning of this century has once again become reality: War is being waged in the centre of Europe. We want to consciously utilise the peace-making potential of Bibliodrama to play a part in ending strife by the building up of trust within Europe.
- The Christian churches in Europe are in crisis and are undergoing profound change. We are trying to use Bibliodrama to create new places of encounter and homecoming for spiritual seekers.
- Digitization does not stop at Bibliodrama. The EBN is therefore experimenting with new digital forms of play.

4. Structure of the network

4.1. The idea of a network

By «network» we mean a non-hierarchical form of organisation. The standards listed below are understood by the members (Bibliodrama leaders and Bibliodrama organisations) as a self-commitment; there are no controlling bodies. We want to further develop our Bibliodrama work in collegial counselling and professional exchange beyond the borders of our countries. The network is responsible for the frame of doing Bibliodrama in a European context.

Membership of the network is not by a formal process of application. All those with an involvement or interest in Bibliodrama are in a sense members by association and over 200 people have asked to receive the newsletter. So the concept of membership is broad and there is no membership fee, but it is hoped that those who feel a close identification with the EBN will contribute financially to its work.

4.2. Regular meetings

European Bibliodrama Workshop (EBW): We endeavour to ensure that a different member country organises a training course each year. This usually lasts four days. It includes innovative Bibliodrama workshops which appeal to all our senses and strengthen our empathy and pleasure in interactive role-playing on the one hand and exchange meetings in the sense of collegial support and further development of the network on the other.

There are also other network offerings such as opportunities for online Bibliodrama, interfaith workshops, working groups (which usually meet online) and much more.

4.3. Secretariat

The secretariat comprises 5 to 8 people, especially those responsible for past and planned EBWs. This ensures continuity of the annual meetings. The committee is confirmed or supplemented at each EBN meeting during the annual workshop. It has no authoritative function but serves the network.

Tasks:

- Ensuring annual EBWs
- Maintain the website www.bibliodrama-ebn.eu as an information and exchange platform for members and maintain a mailing list and arrange occasional newsletter mailings
- Coordinate European working groups (interreligious Bibliodrama, EBO...)
- Take care of overarching topics in the network
- Collect financial contributions at the EBW for the operation of the website and to support the participation of individuals in international Bibliodrama workshops

To this end, it meets regularly online (usually every 2 months) and organises itself internally (coordination, minutes, finances, website, etc.).

5. Ethical principles and guidelines for leading Bibliodrama

Bibliodramatic methods can have powerful effects. They can also be misused to manipulate people. That is why the ethical demands placed on Bibliodrama leaders are high. So members of the EBN do not offer Bibliodrama workshops without following or having completed a Bibliodrama training program or equivalent that has been appropriately approved within the countries where they take place. They commit themselves to adhere to the following principles and guidelines when leading Bibliodrama:

- **Respect:**
We respect all people regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, appearance and conviction. We show the same respect to all participants and do not try to convince anyone of our own opinions. We do not pass judgement on the contributions of other group members. We make sure that participants treat each other with the same respect.
- **Equal rights:**
We ensure that all participants are equally involved in the Bibliodrama process, especially in the interpretation of the text.
- **Leadership:**
We organise the group process in such a way that all participants have a wide range of decision-making options. The leader serves the group with his/her theological, pedagogical, psychological and human competences. In leading Bibliodrama processes, we are more facilitators than leaders. As facilitators we create an open and safe space for the group.
- **Discretion/confidentiality:**
We protect the personal space of the participants within the safe spaces. We make sure that any conflicts that arise are discussed within the group, but not outside of it.

- **Globe:**
People and human beings live in a concrete world reality, which they always bring into the group work. We organise Bibliodrama processes in such a way that they are always open to the environment, major world events and political reality.
- **Process-orientation:**
We design Bibliodrama as a text-, group- and individual-orientated process.
- **Holistic approach:**
We cultivate a didactic approach that takes into account the mind-soul-body unity of the human being. In the role-playing games, intuition, emotion, interaction, cognition and imagination play an equal role.
- **Spirituality:**
We seek to cultivate an attitude of spiritual accompaniment («I walk with you») rather than spiritual guidance («I show you the - right - way»).
- **Reflection:**
We regularly undergo further training in supervision, peer supervision and appropriate continuous professional development.

6. Structure for Bibliodrama training

Training in the 9 basic attitudes listed in section 5 above is part of every Bibliodrama training programme.

The «Common concept for further training to lead Bibliodrama» of the first EBN Charter of 2004 continues to provide very good guidelines for the organisation of training courses. However, these must now be increasingly adapted to national circumstances. For example, the requirements for participation in a Bibliodrama course must be defined differently.

The quality assurance of the courses continues to be promoted through international exchange among the trainers. Networking within the EBN is also helpful in this respect, in the absence of a quality control body.

A training programme that wishes to rely on the EBN must fulfil the following minimum structural requirements:

- It should cover a total period of at least 1 ½ years and comprise at least 200 teaching hours over this period or a corresponding arrangement.
- The optimal arrangements are that the training takes place in an ongoing learning group but it can also be arranged in new constellations, as long they are approved by EBN.
- The course leaders will be trained Bibliodrama leaders with additional adult education expertise.
- The course will include elements of self-awareness, practising leadership in the learning group and the application of what has been learnt in the participants' practical field.
- The course will include peer support, along with supervision in small groups.
- The course will include hermeneutical reflection and basic training in textual analysis to ensure that the text, in its integrity and otherness, forms an equal part of the process and is not objectified.
- Getting to know Bibliodrama literature and creating a written practice report are part of the course.