

### Investigate! Metaphysical poetry: George Herbert, *The Collar*

#### ❖ **Setting the scene:**

- Whom does Herbert seem to be addressing in *The Collar*?

#### ❖ **Going deeper:**

- Does the ending of *The Collar* seem weak or strong?
  - Would you have preferred to have heard Herbert argue it out with God?
- Have you felt similar frustration at what seemed to be unfair constraints put on you?
  - How was the situation resolved?
- What to you seems to be the cause of Herbert's frustration?
  - Pick out words and phrases that illustrate his feelings.

#### ❖ **Themes:**

Consider the themes identified in *The Collar*

- Can you see any other theme of significance in the poem?
  - Which words or phrases draw attention to it?
  - Which words and phrases suggest captivity?
  - Which ones suggest freedom?

#### ❖ **Imagery and symbolism:**

Consider the imagery of *The Collar*

- What do 'bays' and 'garlands gay' represent?

- 'but there is fruit, / And thou hast hands': what sort of image is this?
- Explain the full significance of the image about the rope in ll.22-25.

#### ❖ **Language and tone:**

- 'Only at the end ... are the rhymes gently and unobtrusively patterned'
  - Do you notice any other verbal patterns in *The Collar*?
- How does Herbert achieve the tone of complaint?
- Does the poet's voice sound as if it 'Raved and grew more fierce and wild'?
  - How does he achieve this effect?

#### ❖ **Structure and versification:**

- Look at the sentence structures in *The Collar*
  - Do they coincide with line lengths or rhymes, or any other structural device?
  - How is the poem structured?
- What do you think is particularly successful about the poem?