

The Power of Perspective Bible Study Guide

Theme: Embracing diverse voices, perspectives, and stories as part of our call to live faithfully in Christian community.

Key Verse:

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.”

— **Philippians 2:3–4 (NRSV)**

Introduction: Diversity as Gift

God is calling us to be a Church which receives its diversity as the precious gift of the Holy Spirit that it is; a foretaste, sign and instrument of “that reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation” (*The Basis of Union*, par 3).

Reconciliation doesn’t mean everyone being the same. It doesn’t mean one version of being human or being Christian replacing all the others.

It means people and groups that are different and divided from each other being brought together in Christ to respect, value, trust and serve one another – in all our annoying, embarrassing, frustrating and sometimes frightening diversity.

That’s profoundly challenging. It’s sharply counter-cultural. But it is the kind of Church God is calling us to be.

Rev Professor Andrew Dutney (UCA President 2012-2015)

1. Jesus and the Woman at the Well

Scripture: John 4:1–26

Theme: Encountering the “other” with grace and curiosity.

Reflection:

Jesus chooses to engage across cultural, gendered, and theological divides. He listens. He doesn’t dismiss the woman’s questions or her story. In doing so, He models the kind of transformative encounter we, too, are called to seek out.

Discussion Prompts:

- In what ways does Jesus break boundaries here?
- How might this challenge us in our own communities?



- How can we practise curiosity instead of suspicion when we meet someone with a different faith story?

2. The Log and the Speck

Scripture: Matthew 7:1–5

Theme: Self-awareness and humility in our conversations.

Reflection:

In a theologically diverse church, it's easy to fall into judgment or defensiveness. Jesus reminds us to look inward first—to check our own assumptions and pride. This is not about compromising our own beliefs but about approaching one another with humility and openness.

Discussion Prompts:

- What “logs” might we carry in our own theological or cultural worldview?
- What does humility look like in difficult conversations?
- How can we stay true to our faith while still being open to other people’s views?

3. Living in Harmony

Scripture: Romans 12:16–18

Theme: Peaceful coexistence within the body of Christ.

Reflection:

Paul urges the early Church to seek peace—not passive tolerance, but active pursuit of harmony grounded in love. In our context, this might mean listening to someone whose theology challenges us or walking together even when consensus feels out of reach.

Discussion Prompts:

- What does “harmony” mean in the context of disagreement?
- Where have you seen unity and diversity held together well in church life?
- In the context of current global conflicts—such as the situation in Israel and Palestine—what might it look like to engage respectfully with fellow Christians who see things differently? How can we pursue harmony in these difficult and often emotional conversations?



4. The Body of Christ

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27

Theme: Valuing each voice, even when they are unlike our own.

Reflection:

This familiar metaphor reminds us that no part of the body is dispensable—not the quiet, not the radical, not the conservative, not the progressive. We are many, yet one in Christ. This truth lies at the heart of being a “Uniting” Church.

Discussion Prompts:

- Which parts of the “body” are often overlooked or dismissed in your context?
- How does this passage speak into your experience of Church life?

Where to now? Trying to be like Jesus in a Diverse Church

- **Practice deep listening** – with openness, not just to respond, but to understand.
- **Create space for difference** – not every question needs immediate agreement.
- **Affirm shared mission** – focus on what unites us: Christ and his call to love, serve, and seek justice.
- **Pray for discernment** – trust that God speaks through Scripture, community, and experience.
- **Live out reconciliation** – be agents of peace in a fragmented world.

Closing Prayer

*God of wisdom and welcome,
You call us to walk together, even when the path is uneven.
Teach us to listen well—to Your Word, to Your Spirit, and to one another.
Give us courage to embrace difference, not as a threat, but as a gift.
Make us faithful to Your calling: to love, to serve, and to seek peace.
In the name of Christ, who holds all things together, we pray. Amen.*

