

This material in this document is to be used as a guide to lead through the **first session** of the ‘Kindly help’ study, produced by the Methodist Church in Ireland.

Methodist Centenary Church put together a revised Bible Study, taking the material from MCI and making it into a small study. It is our hope that churches and small groups looking to use the MCI material but were having difficulty creating a Bible Study format from it that this resource will give them a helping hand in guiding it. The study material was put together for a small group context of 6 people.



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Bible Study Session 1- Leader's guide

Open in prayer.

Explain the purpose of this study and why we are doing it (use material provided by Methodist Church if necessary).

What are you hoping to learn as we go through this study?

Read quote from Canon Andrew McCroskery:

“Our world asks us to be impatient, to let our anger fly more readily than perhaps we would have allowed in past decades and eras. Our world dismisses others as broken, deluded, unreachable – a lost cause. We have become divided. Our politics are becoming more about specific ideologies and the idea of service and care for the fringes has become passe. Religion throughout the world is increasingly developing at two extremes. Nationalism today is becoming a scourge rather than a healthy sense of identity and belonging. Some are beginning to note that there might be a danger in having no middle ground to anything. The challenge to see the image of God in every person has suddenly become a lot more challenging. “

Scripture Reading: John 13:34-35, John 15:9-17, John 17:20-23.

- Found on the back page of the Bible study material.
 - Ask participants if there is anything that stood out for them in the readings.
- **Read**
 1. New command – love one another Jn. 13:34
 2. 15 times
 3. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. 17:20-21
- **Explore**
 1. Agape is the Greek used here. It means the highest form of love.
 2. Lord, messiah, God, etc, tease out responses as to why we use such terms.
 3. Fruit that lasts:
 - a. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. - **Galatians 5:22-23**

- b. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. - **Philippians 4:8**
- c. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says – **James 1:22**

- **Respond**

1. Praying for unity
 - a. Is one week of marking Christian Unity enough? Can we do more multi-denominational work?
 - b. How might we pray?
 - i. Lord's prayer
2. Christians being ambassadors for Jesus.
 - a. We are God's representatives on Earth, quite often, the only engagement people will have with Jesus is by one of his followers.
 - b. Do we need to change the way in which we share about Jesus? Word/action/deed.
 - c. What about difficult people (particularly difficult Christians!)?
3. Make 'the other' feel welcome
 - a. Is a sign out at the front of the church representative of the church we are?
 - b. What ways can we make it easier for 'the other' to feel more comfortable or welcome in our churches?

Disagreement: Acts 15:36-41 – have passage on screen or a Bible close by

Context:

Barnabas and Paul were partners in ministry.

- Barnabas stood by his side as companion and mentor (Acts 9:26-30). Later, the two
- Both were commissioned for the first intentional missionary enterprise. (Acts 13 -14).
- They convinced the apostles that Gentiles must be admitted to the church without having to keep all the laws of Moses (Acts 15).

Paul suggested a follow-up missionary tour and Barnabas proposed that John Mark should accompany them. Paul adamantly refused, considering Mark to be unreliable because he did not stay the course on their first mission. (Acts 13:13 - **From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem**). Following a heated quarrel, the two partners separated.

Questions arising:

1. In the context of what we have discussed, how do you think Paul and Barnabas handled the disagreement?
 - a. Paul went to Barnabas – it wasn't for everyone to see event.
 - i. Even though they were at the council, this conversation was just for them
 - b. All the account says is they disagreed.
 - i. It doesn't say they argued, called each other names, were disrespectful to each other, shouted at each other.
 - ii. The disagreement was only made public after they had resolved to go their separate ways.
 - iii. They demonstrated their unity to Jesus by their words and following actions.

2. What does it look like when people leave the church for issues such as the time of the service changing or songs/hymns not being to their liking?
 - a. For those inside the church and those on the outside.
3. How should our church leaders respond when there are divisions in the church?
 - a. Look at Acts 15:40 - **commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.**

The resolution of this account was not finished. This is how it ended.

Paul became the famous and predominant church builder. Little is mentioned of Barnabas again but just as he had mentored the converted Saul, Mark now became his protégé. Such was Barnabas's influence, that later Mark would become an invaluable co-worker with Paul (2 Tim 4:11- **Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry**) and it is to Mark that the Church owes its earliest account of Jesus' ministry.

Close in prayer.