

Ideas for How to Use the *Body, Mind and Soul Study Resource*

In congregations, the guide could be used in

- session meetings (or adapted as session studies over months or the year)
- Bible studies
- small discussion groups
- youth group meetings
- in intergenerational gatherings

The study guide can be used

- as a whole study over the course of multiple weeks (e.g. eight sessions)
- as independent sections – in stand-alone studies or in a series

Particularly if groups are pressed for time, users should feel free to draw on whatever parts of the resource are most helpful in their own contexts. For example,

- some congregations and presbyteries may be struggling with biblical interpretation of particular texts and may find the *Scripture* chapter the most helpful in their situation.
- others congregations may struggle with a way to share experiences in an honest and authentic way and might find the *Experience* chapter the most helpful.

The following are three sample Study Plans for those who elect to use only parts of the study, but want to meet more than once. These plans are not prescriptive. Also, it is possible that one gathering may cover the material of more than one session; or that the material for one session may continue into the next gathering(s). Often this depends on the time the group wishes to spend on the content and discussion. In planning and conducting the study, consider the needs and dynamics of the group, consulting with and asking for feedback from group members on an ongoing basis.

Study Plan One

e.g. for Bible study groups or sessions, where people meet regularly but may not know one another very well.

Group preparation: At the first gathering begin by reading together “Listening Circle Group Guidelines” (pages 12-13 in the *Study Guide* or pages 87-88 of the *Supplemental Handouts*). Invite comments and questions for clarification. Invite additions. Reach a consensus for guidelines for the group. Display them and draw attention to them at the beginning of each gathering and whenever it is helpful during discussions.

Session 1, *Tradition* (pages 51-54): Read the chapter together. The objective of this chapter is to learn about the current position of the PCC on issues of homosexuality, ordination standards, membership and same-sex marriage. Refer to the “Note about the acronym LGBTQ” on page 9.)

Session 2, *Scripture* (pages 14-37): Ask participants to read pages 14-23? at home before they arrive. Start with inviting questions and reactions about these pages. Together examine the specific scriptures, using Section 2 (pages 23-32). If helpful refer to “The Necessity and Problem of Language” located at www.presbyterian.ca/sexuality in the section entitled “Open for resources to help support educational events.”

Session 3, *Theology* (pages 38-50): Ask participants to read pages 38-40 at home. Start with inviting questions and reactions about these pages. Read together the sections “Genesis 1 and 2” on page 41 and continue through to the end of the section “Sin and Grace” on page 45. Then focus on “Flow Chart: Tracing Different Pathways” on page 45-46. According to group interest, select sections from pages 47-50 to focus on together.

Session 4, *Biological and Psychological Studies* (pages 55-61): Ask participants to read “Church and Culture” and “Science and Faith” on pages 55-56 at home. Start with inviting questions and reactions about these pages. Read together “A Note about Sexuality and Identity” on page 57 and discuss it. Then read through and discuss the rest of the chapter.

Session 5, *Experience* (pages 62-67): Ask participants to read “Putting a Face on the ‘Issue’” and “Face-to Face Conversation” on pages 62-63 at home. Start with inviting questions and reactions about these pages. Do the exercise “Garden Metaphor” (page 65-66).

Study Plan Two

e.g. for a small home group, Session, or regular gathering of the congregation where people already know each other and trust each other.

Group preparation: At the first gathering begin by reading together “Listening Circle Group Guidelines” (pages 12-13 in the *Study Guide* or pages 87-88 of the *Supplemental Handouts*). Invite comments and questions for clarification. Invite additions. Reach a consensus for guidelines for the group. Display them and draw attention to them at the beginning of each gathering and whenever it is helpful during discussions.

Session 1, *Experience* (pages 62-67): Do the first activity “Listening and Praying Circles” (pages 63-64). Save the prayers that you write for use in other sessions.

Session 2, *Theology* (pages 38-50): Read together pages 38-42 and discuss.

Session 3, *Scripture* (pages 14-37): Ask participants to read pages 14-23 at home. Start with inviting questions and reactions about these pages. Together examine the specific scriptures, using Section 2 (pages 23-32). If helpful refer to “The Necessity and Problem of Language” located at www.presbyterian.ca/sexuality in the section entitled “Open for resources to help support educational events.”

Session 4, *Theology* (pages 38-50): Read together the sections “Covenant” (page 43) and “Baptism” (page 47) and use the discussion questions that follow each section.

Session 5, *Tradition* (pages 51-54): Read the chapter together. The objective of this chapter is to learn about the current position of The Presbyterian Church in Canada on issues of homosexuality, ordination standards, membership and same-sex marriage. Discuss. Refer to “Note about the acronym LGBTQ” on page 9.)

End these gatherings with a time of worship. Use the prayers from the 141st General Assembly and the prayers that you wrote together in first session. Include prayers for The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Study Plan Three

e.g. for people who wish to focus on the unity of the church in the face of differences.

Group preparation: At the first gathering begin by reading together “Listening Circle Group Guidelines” (pages 12-13 in the *Study Guide* or pages 87-88 of the *Supplemental Handouts*). Invite comments and questions for clarification. Invite additions. Reach a consensus for guidelines for the group. Display them and draw attention to them at the beginning of each gathering and whenever it is helpful during discussions.

Session 1, *Scripture* (pages 14-37) and *Theology* (pages 38-50): Ask participants to read the chapter *Scripture* and pages 38-42 in the chapter *Theology*; and invite them to come with their own questions and comments. Recognize the diversity of opinion in the group. If helpful refer to “The Necessity and Problem of Language” located at www.presbyterian.ca/sexuality in the section “Open for resources to help support educational events.”

Session 2, *Theology* (pages 38-50): Read the section “The Church (Ecclesiology).” Use the discussion questions that follow it.

Session 3, *Experience* (pages 62-67): Use the third activity “Continuums of Difference” (pages 66-67). Share reactions and discuss.

Session 4, *Tradition* (pages 51-54): Read the chapter together. The objective of this chapter is to learn about the current position of the PCC on issues of homosexuality, ordination standards, membership and same-sex marriage. Discuss. Refer to “Note about the acronym LGBTQ” on page 9.)

Session 5, *Theology* (pages 38-50): Read “Flow Chart: Tracing Different Pathways” and do this activity – individually at first. Then invite participants to share their pathways and talk about differences.

Session 6, *Biological and Psychological Studies* (pages 55-61): Read together this chapter, using the discussion questions after each section.

Session 7, *Theology* (pages 38-50): Read the section “Baptism” (page 47) and use the discussion questions.

Session 8, *Appendix A: Listening to our Neighbours* (pages 68-73): Take turns reading aloud the sections in this chapter. Pause after each to comment and discuss. To see what other denominations are saying and doing, look at “Other denomination’s documents” at www.presbyterian.ca/sexuality .

Before closing these sessions with prayer, give the group an opportunity to discuss their ideas about how The Presbyterian Church in Canada could move forward while recognizing and honouring the different perspectives and opinions and preserving the peace and unity of the church.