



LAMBETH CALL BIBLE STUDY INTER FAITH

INTRODUCTION

These Bible Study materials have been prepared as part of Phase 3 of the Lambeth Conference and the Lambeth Calls. This Bible Study is about the Lambeth Call on Inter Faith. You can read the Lambeth Call [here](#)

How to use this study

'Call and Response' – The Bible Study Format

Each of the Lambeth Calls are offered to the Anglican Communion – inviting response. The Bible Study is based on a format of 'Call and Response'. This Bible Study on Inter Faith relationships will invite you to take three steps:

1. Hear the Call

Read the Lambeth Call and especially its Affirmation (Section 3) about changing contexts in which we live and the increasing challenges to Christian communities in countries where they are in a minority. Also read and hear the Specific Requests (Section 4).

2. Listen to Scripture

Turn to Scripture to anchor and enrich this reflection, especially to John 4 verses 1 to 30, an account which shows Jesus talking with a person of another faith, the Samaritan woman, and witnessing to the gospel. What can we learn from this passage about how we relate to those of other faiths?

3. Make a Response

Discuss how you and your church community might reach out to those of other faiths in your local context in the light of what you have learnt from scripture.

Get Started

1. Hear the Call (15 minutes)

Read the Lambeth Call on Inter Faith. You can read the Lambeth Call [here](#)

Reflect especially on its Affirmation (Section 3) about the changing contexts in which we live and the increasing challenges to Christian communities in countries where they are in a minority. Also read the Specific Requests (Section 4) especially the first (4.1), the call to witness to our neighbours of other religious traditions, in word and deed, and through humble service.

- How does all this speak to you?
- How do you already witness to those of other faiths through your words, actions and through serving them?
- If you live in a context where Christians are in a minority, what restrictions and pressures do you face – equally what opportunities nevertheless remain?

2. Listen to Scripture (25 minutes)

Turn to Scripture to inspire and guide this reflection. Begin by reading John 4 verses 1 to 30, which shows Jesus talking with a person of another faith, the Samaritan woman, and witnessing to the gospel. What can we learn from this passage about how we relate to those of other faiths?

It is important to note that while the Jews and the Samaritans shared a common ancestry in the faith Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Moses and the Exodus, ever since the Assyrian Empire had invaded and destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and its capital Samaria in 722 BC (before Christ), the peoples of that country and the Jews of Galilee and Judah had developed separate and increasingly different faiths and cultures. Furthermore, in Jesus' time they had become hostile to each other (see, for example, Luke 9.51-6, where a Samaritan village refuses to welcome Jesus and the disciples).

Notice that

- the conversation and friendship between Jesus and the Samaritan woman began because Jesus was tired and thirsty. She will have recognised his vulnerability and human need and so becomes open to having a conversation with him.
- The woman came to draw water at noon, which means at the hottest time of day when other women were not around. This suggests she was something of an outcast from respectable society and therefore also vulnerable.

- Culturally, as a male Jew, Jesus should not have spoken to a female Samaritan, yet he was willing to break this cultural taboo. He could do this because he was vulnerable and therefore not imposing himself on the woman, though she still understandably questions his right to do so (v.9).
- Out of this vulnerability Jesus is then able to bear witness to what he wants to share with her, which is the living water (v.10).
- The woman shows here intelligence and curiosity by challenging Jesus about how he is going to give her water when, as a Jew, he has no rights to draw from this well.
- Jesus then jumps from talking about physical water to talking about the spiritual living water that he can give and the woman responds with enthusiasm to this offer, even though she is still thinking in terms of physical water. This shows a relationship of trust is growing between them.
- Afterwards Jesus then moves the conversation to the state of her own life and its multiple marriages. With deep theological insight the woman then lifts the conversation to another level with her comment, which is really a question, about which of their faiths, of the Samaritans and the Jews, is the true one.
- This allows Jesus then to bear witness to the truth he has come to share with her and others, about a new faith which transcends those of both Samaritans and Jews.
- This allows the woman to testify to her own faith in the Messiah who is coming and will proclaim 'all things' (v.25). This, in turn, allows Jesus to reply with his own testimony, that *he* is that Messiah (v.26);
- Out of this relationship of mutual vulnerability, trust and sharing comes the woman's wonderful evangelistic journey back to her city and her people to tell them about this prophet and the possibility that he might be the Messiah!

What, can we learn from this passage about how we might relate to those of other faiths?

3. Make a Response (20 minutes)

How does the passage from John's gospel help and encourage you to enter into and take forward relationships with those of other faiths?

How can you and your church community respond to the Lambeth Call, especially the first Specific Request (4.1), to witness to our neighbours of other religious traditions, in word and deed, and through humble service?

How could you help this to happen? What is needed?

How could you respond to the third specific request, 'To invite leaders of other faith communities, to join with us in exploring how we can enable more effective collaborative

work on tackling climate change and other challenges to our shared environment, alleviating poverty and care for the vulnerable' (4.3)?

How could you respond to the sixth Specific Request, 'To all of us who are disciples of Christ, to commit to pray for the suffering persecuted church in its efforts to continuing to be a gentle and faithful witnessing presence even in the face of hostility and the struggle to form strong relationships with neighbours of other faiths.'

What simple steps can you and your church community take to take these things forward?

Concluding Prayer

God of all people, open our hearts to understanding other faith traditions. We are all made in your image and seek to know and follow your ways, to praise you, and to be instruments of your Holy presence. May we respect those who are different from us, who follow a different faith tradition than us. May we seek to know the truth of your Word and find common ground among the many faith traditions and recognize that we share a common humanity. Help us to be people of compassion and understanding, creating a path to peaceful coexistence among all people. Amen.

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