

Reading the Bible Together: Focus on Women, Children and Youth

Introduction

As United Methodist Women, we have a historical and continuing commitment to work on behalf of women, children and youth. Like all church organizations, we are committed to the Gospel-based work of mission. At the same time, holding a particular focus on women, children and youth means that we sometimes bring different questions, concerns and approaches to decision-making — whether in the ministry of the church or in mission to the world. We look at the same situations, understand the same facts and talk to the same people, but we are able to see differently because we bring this special perspective to our mission work, whether globally or in our own backyards. It is like we're wearing special women-, children- and youth-seeing eyeglasses in a world where women, children and youth are too often treated as either invisible or expendable.

What happens when we allow that same focus — those special women-, children- and youth-seeing eyeglasses — to inform our approach to Bible study? What happens when we bring a set of “glasses” to our study which considers not only women, children and youth, but also the perspectives of other communities and individuals who are often harmed, ignored or forgotten by others in the biblical world and in today's world? How might such a perspective let us see afresh both familiar and less familiar Scriptures? This Bible study series provides a brief introduction to what we might discover with such an approach to Scripture.

Learning Objectives

- Grow and deepen our relationship with God and one another.
- Build our skills as disciples by learning a new approach to Bible study.
- Strengthen our advocacy for children and youth with a firm, scriptural foundation.

How to Engage These Study Materials

We all find ourselves in different contexts and communities with different gifts, graces and educational needs. There is no single “right way” to approach this study, and one size most definitely does not fit all. This learning experience is meant to be modified.



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

As you prepare for this study, carefully consider the prior experience and understanding of your group as well as the practical possibilities and limitations for your time together. Review the materials before you outline your study plan. Some units may be more appropriate or useful for some groups than others. Some units may be so full that you'd like to spread them out over several sessions. You may want to walk through all the questions for each Scripture passage, or you may want to select just a few. Be discerning.

A small group that meets for an hour per week for 12 weeks will require a different approach than a large group gathering that happens just once for a two-hour block of time. This study is designed to be adaptable. For that reason, there are no recommended time guidelines within the study materials. However, it is strongly encouraged that you map out a time plan before your group gathers. As always, it is important to facilitate with thoughtfulness, care and grace, ensuring that all voices are valued and all participants are respected. For more on establishing group guidelines, see "[Sisterhood of Grace](#)."

Here are some ways you might consider using this resource.

- Option 1: Use this Bible study as a series for ongoing study in your small group, circle or unit. Choose all or some of the units. Complete all parts of each unit in one long session or spread the multipart units over several shorter sessions.
- Option 2: Mix and match units to approach specific topics or questions. Offer study units as stand-alone experiences at district or annual meetings *or* in combination with a panel, informational video or worship service.
- Option 3: Bring the Bible study series outside of your United Methodist Women unit and offer it to your local church, community or ecumenical fellowship.

Whichever option you choose, may your study together be blessed!