


# GOD WELCOMES ALL

How faith informs  
safeguarding





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# Introduction

*Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. It is integral to the mission of the Methodist Church and a part of its response and witness to the love of God in Christ. ('Theology of Safeguarding', 1.2)*

## Safeguarding policy statement

It is the Methodist Church's intention to value every human being as part of God's creation and the whole people of God. At the heart of the Methodist community is a deep sense of welcome, hospitality and openness, which demonstrates the nature of God's grace and love for all.

Our church communities are called to be places where the transformational love of God is embodied, and life in all its fullness is a gift offered to all people, regardless of gender, race, disability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion/belief, pregnancy or gender reassignment.

Everyone has the right to protection from abuse and to be treated no less favourably than others, irrespective of any personal or protected characteristic.

Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will:

- promote the welfare of children, young people and adults
- work to prevent abuse from occurring
- seek to protect and respond well to those that have been abused.

We will take care to identify where a person may pose a risk to others, and offer support to them while taking steps to reduce such risks. The Methodist Church affirms that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Everyone associated with the Church who comes into contact with children, young people and adults who may be vulnerable has a role to play, supported by consistent policies promoting good practice across the whole Church.

The Church and its individual members will undertake all appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment. It will practise fully and positively Christ's ministry towards children, young people and adults who are vulnerable and respond sensitively and compassionately to help keep them safe from harm.

The 'Theology of Safeguarding' report was adopted by the 2021 Methodist Conference and is therefore an important report in the life of the Methodist Church. The report stresses that safeguarding is not something we do because we have to, but because it relates to the heart of Christian faith. All Methodists are encouraged to read and discuss the report as they continue

to think about how they live out their beliefs in their ways of relating, working and worshipping. The report can be found at [methodist.org.uk/TheologyOfSafeguarding](https://methodist.org.uk/TheologyOfSafeguarding)

The Methodist Conference gave instructions for resources to be produced to help all members of the Methodist Church engage with the contents of the 'Theology of Safeguarding' report and continue to explore the issues and questions it raises. This study guide has been created with this in mind.

We will be using the word 'survivor' to describe a person who has experienced abuse. We recognise there are a variety of terms people may choose to use when describing themselves, eg victim, overcomer, lived experience etc. We recommend, if appropriate, you ask any person who has experienced any type of abuse how they define themselves.

**Please note:** If you have downloaded this study guide to go through the sessions on your own, please also download the Facilitators' Guide which will provide you with additional support.



## Looking after yourself

When someone experiences abuse the impact on the individual can be devastating. When this abuse takes place within a church setting, the aftermath affects both the family of the person who has been abused and the person who carried out the abuse, as well as the whole church congregation and local community.

Research indicates that when abuse has taken place in a church setting – a setting considered to be a ‘safe place’, the house of God – the impact can be much more severe and the betrayal and damage of this ‘safe space’ can leave survivors rejecting everything to do with religion and the Church.

During these sessions you will be studying areas that you may find difficult. If this happens, please do take time out from the session and share this with your local minister or someone else you trust.

# Session

# 1

## All are Welcome: Hearing and responding to the word



God, we come to you and you welcome us.  
Some of us are tired and others are bristling  
with energy.  
Your love upholds each one of us.

God, we come to you and you welcome us.  
Some of us exploring doubts, and others  
filled with certainty.  
Your love inspires each one of us.

God, we come to you and you welcome us.  
Some of us at peace, and others itching  
with anxiety.  
Your love calms each one of us.

God, we come to you and you welcome us.  
Some of us knowing joy, and others in pain.  
Your love reaches out to each one of us.



God, we come to you and you welcome us.  
You search us, and you know us.  
Each of us fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Each of us bearing your image.  
Each of us celebrating your love!  
Thank you God. Amen.

(Liam Dacre-Davies, 'Justice, Dignity and Solidarity User Guide')



## Setting the scene

When we say all are welcome, what do we actually mean? How can we show that everyone really is welcome, and make this clear in what we say and do? This session will help explore these questions.



## All are Welcome video

[methodist.org.uk/TheologyOfSafeguarding](https://methodist.org.uk/TheologyOfSafeguarding)

Pause video when instructed.



## Reflection

All are welcome – it is part of our DNA as Christians, and runs deep in our identity as Methodists. We draw on rich seams of theology throughout the Bible that tell us that people are made in God's image, and that humanity was created to be in a loving relationship with God, others and the whole of creation.



We also hold that the Church is a community called into being by God to share God's love and to be a sign of grace and hope in all communities. We understand that to do this means being a community marked by love and care for one another and for all whom we encounter. This is played out in churches and communities across the country, although it is much easier said than done.

We recognise all too well the reality of the human condition, the depths of wickedness that people are capable of, and the potential we all have to cause damage and to abuse trust and power. To be a genuinely welcoming church requires wisdom, commitment and hard work. We need to make choices as to where we put time and energy to ensure that the church works for justice and prioritises the welfare of vulnerable people in all aspects of its life. We need wisdom to set boundaries that ensure the activities of a few do not result in others being hurt.



## Questions for discussion

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Consider these words of Jesus in Luke 17:1-3, remembering that Jesus sometimes referred to his followers of all ages as little children:

*Jesus said to his disciples, 'Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! It would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble. Be on your guard!*

- Jesus warns us about the danger of causing other people to stumble. It serves as a warning that others might do this, perhaps even in church. How then can we, as the Church, do our best to provide a safe place for all? How can we ensure that we are faithful in both our welcome and our safeguarding practice?
- As churches, we try to be welcoming to all. However, unconditional love does not mean unquestioning acceptance – a safe, welcoming space requires boundaries. How can we learn to recognise when acceptable boundaries are being broken?



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## Break

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## All are Welcome video

Continue video at [Good and Bad Welcomes](#).



## Discussion and reflection

The Church faces unique challenges as it looks to welcome and create a safe space for all. Within our church communities different groups of people all share a rightful place:



children and young people; adults who may be vulnerable; those who have experienced abuse; those who may be a risk to others because they have previously perpetrated abuse; church leaders, staff and volunteers; people with diverse characteristics (race, gender, sexuality, disability etc) who attend worship and other activities.

- What do we mean when we say 'All are welcome'?
- Having watched the video, think about who we welcome into our church life. How do we welcome them? Why do we welcome them?
- Are there people who have already left because they did not feel welcome? What might have been the cause of this feeling?
- Who experiences a conditional welcome in church life? How and why are they welcomed conditionally? Are there people who are more welcome than others?
- *The Church aims to provide pastoral care for all its members, including those who are suspected of causing harm or have caused harm to others. However, in this context, such care must be provided in a way that puts the safety of other church members first, while enabling the person who poses a risk to worship and be a part of the church community.*

(‘Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance for the Methodist Church’, 4.7)

What are the implications of this for your local church?



## Putting it into practice

Taking into account what you have heard and discussed, think about what a warm and respectful welcome looks like. How can you ensure that each and every person in your church community receives such a welcome?

Consider why you and/or others might give a warm and respectful welcome to some and not others. How could such a welcome be given to all? There may be others who can help you to explore these areas further.



## Scripture

*Surely God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might;  
he has become my salvation.*

*With joy you will draw water from the wells of  
salvation. And you will say on that day:*

*Give thanks to the LORD,  
call on his name;  
make known his deeds among the nations;  
proclaim that his name is exalted.  
(Isaiah 12:2-4)*

God offers freedom from fear. How can we, in God's strength, offer places of safety?

# Session

# 2

## Language, Listening and Hearing



Wherever you go,  
whatever you do,  
the paths you take,  
the decisions you make,  
the learning you have,  
the awareness you gain,

just when you think you are alone  
and it is all up to you –

open your eyes,  
listen carefully,  
and feel my presence.  
For I have been there throughout.

Whichever way you choose to go,  
I am there before you.

Now.  
Before.  
After.

Amen.

(Taken from [inbetweenthewords.co.uk](http://inbetweenthewords.co.uk))



## Setting the scene

During session one, we explored how we can ensure everyone is welcome in our church communities. Before we move on, do you have any thoughts, comments or feedback on the 'Putting it into practice' from the first session? This session examines the importance of listening so that what is spoken is fully heard and responded to in a kind, non-judgemental and suitable manner. What we say can be extremely powerful and have a positive, negative or even harmful impact on a person.



## Language, Listening and Hearing video

[methodist.org.uk/TheologyOfSafeguarding](https://methodist.org.uk/TheologyOfSafeguarding)

Pause video when instructed.



## Reflection

In session one, we were reminded of the central theme of the Bible – that people are made in God's image and that God seeks a loving relationship with humanity. However, the Bible also contains many stories of abuse, some of which are even carried out by people who may be regarded as heroes of faith. Even one of the biblical creation stories can be viewed as giving priority to men, providing a pretext for gender discrimination throughout history.



How are we to respond to this dilemma as ‘people of the word’? There are, of course many ways to approach the Bible, and none of its various books are intended to be read as scientific texts. Perhaps the biblical texts provide us with an honest portrayal of how low humanity can sink, while God still remains faithful. The prophets make it quite clear that God will not tolerate exploitation or abuse. But also, that the opportunity for repentance and the possibility of redemption are always available. God’s grace ultimately prevails.



## Questions for discussion

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The Bible contains many stories of people behaving in ways that we find offensive today – for example the mistreatment of Hagar by Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 16 and 21 (you might like to take some time to read these chapters). How can we come to terms with these stories while holding to our values of social justice and safeguarding?

- Reflecting on the language we use and how our choice of words might not always be helpful or appropriate, share with each other some words or phrases that irritate you.
- In groups, or on your own, write down as many names or titles for God that that you can think of. Now imagine yourself as a survivor of abuse in the congregation. Think about how each of these words sounds to you. Do you think these words would help or get in the way of your worship?





## Break



## Language, Listening and Hearing video

Continue video at [Good Communication](#).



## Discussion and reflection

Thinking about language, listening and hearing, what did you notice in the video that you were uncomfortable with?

Many of those who have experienced abuse will not share this widely. How do we listen and speak so that we do not offend or silence others? How can we hold space for people so that we listen well?

- Without going into detail, think about a time you were not listened to. Say out loud one word to describe how it felt eg hurtful, rude etc.

It is important to be mindful of the language we use and remember that every experience of abuse is very individual; it may relate to a one-off event, or have happened many times; it may relate to abuse as a child or as an adult; occurring within the church or elsewhere;



support may have been sought and found or they may have experienced a negative response.

*Perhaps the most important thing that, as Christians, we can do – perhaps what we most hope for as a consequence of this Report – is to listen, so that the voice of survivors will be heard. As we listen so we give value, worth and respect to the one who speaks, to the one for whom the abuse has denied each of these things and so much more.*

(‘Tracing Rainbows Through the Rain: The Report of the Time for Action Monitoring Group to the Methodist Conference 2006’, Section 2, p. 6)

- How do we change our language and listening so that we give value, worth and respect to all, including survivors?



## Putting it into practice

When you are involved in conversations, think about what you say and consider whether anything could be misunderstood. Could you have communicated differently and/or in a more sensitive way?

Think about how you listen. For example, do you tend to listen while concentrating on your response, or do you listen, think about what the person has said and form an appropriate response?

When there is a silent pause during your conversations, consider how you might use this as a time to think or give the other person the time and space to do so, instead of trying to fill the gap. Silences can sometimes feel uncomfortable but they can also be helpful.



## Scripture

*O LORD, you have searched me and known me.  
Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning,  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me  
and the light around me become night,"  
even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.*

(Psalm 139:1, 7-12)

*Take a moment to appreciate the presence of God.*

# Session

# 3

## Power



Loving God, help us to remember that all people are made in your image and are worthy of care, love and respect.

When we have ignored the needs of the most vulnerable people, forgive us.

When we have believed the powerful and disregarded the cries of the voiceless, forgive us.

Help us to transform our church into a place of safety  
where we can tell our stories,  
where we can choose to show the scars of wounded bodies, hearts and minds,  
where there is the possibility of healing and a willingness to stand as pain bearers for one another.

God who bears all things, help us,  
and bless the people. Amen.

(Taken from the Survivor's Prayer Card)



## Setting the scene

During session two, we looked at the impact and importance of language and listening. Do you have any thoughts, comments or feedback on 'Putting it into practice' from session two?

The focus of this session is power. Ask people if they are powerful and many will say no, however, there are still those who have more power than others do. This session will explore what this means and what effect it can have.



## Power video

[methodist.org.uk/TheologyOfSafeguarding](https://methodist.org.uk/TheologyOfSafeguarding)

Pause video when instructed.



## Reflection

Power can be an uncomfortable word for Christians, yet power is an important part of human relationships. Carried out faithfully and in accountability to others, power can achieve great things. Without accountability and safeguards, power can quickly cause untold harm to others. There are plenty of examples of Christian leaders who have misused their power to abuse others. It is helpful to reflect on the power that each one of us has in the life of the church, whether or not



we realise it, and how we exercise it. The way we introduce ourselves to a newcomer at church may be welcoming or threatening; an invitation to come for coffee may be given as a friendly gesture, but can be a scary request to someone not comfortable with groups of strangers.

The way we express our faith can be unintentionally very unhelpful to those we seek to welcome. The language of suffering and sacrifice is threaded throughout the Bible, but if used out of context and without explanation, it can provoke strong reactions in those who have suffered. Even the way we explain the central events of our faith, such as the Cross, can be problematic.

Worse still, such language can be used by those who carry out abuse to justify their inhumane and abusive treatment of others. Let us watch out for the way power is exercised in our churches and communities, and seek to ensure that it is used well for the benefit of all.



## Questions for discussion

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- Over the centuries, Christians have understood the meaning of the Cross in many different ways. Some feel that approaches to the Cross which emphasise suffering, punishment and sacrifice may support teaching that it is right for people to endure suffering and to stay in their suffering. Think about how these approaches might sound to a survivor of abuse, whose abuser tried to belittle them and remove their

sense of self-worth. Could there be other ways of understanding the Cross that may be more helpful for survivors? Share your thoughts with the group.

- Jesus reserved some of his most critical teaching for religious leaders who imposed heavy burdens on the people they led, for example Matthew 23:4:

*They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them.*

In what ways do we as a church make it difficult for people to find a welcome and a safe place among us? How do we unintentionally place burdens of expectation on people?



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**Break**  
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**Power video**

Continue video at **[Who is the Most Powerful?](#)**



## Discussion and reflection

The abuse of power is a principal dimension of any kind of abuse. All abuse relies on the misuse of power imbalances; churches can be communities where such imbalances are evident and also, surprisingly, hard to define. Human life and community depend on the responsible exercise of power by those trusted with it.

- In a church community, people often do not recognise the power that they have and therefore, may be unaware of the impact of their behaviour on others.
- There needs to be an awareness of where power exists and how it is exercised. This is essential in any healthy community, including church communities.
- People may have power because of their role, personality, expertise, skin colour, age, gender, socio-economic status and many other factors.
- The key question is whether power is being exercised responsibly, wisely and lovingly.
- There is an inbuilt power in being ordained. Ministers of the Church have a representative role, not just within the Church but in relation to God and the wider community.
- All Christians are encouraged to consider the issues of power involved in their engagement in church life.
- God's power should not be thought of as intimidating and authoritative.



On a sheet of paper draw an image to represent your church, then around it draw or write all the different roles, people or groups that are part of this church.

- Look together at this and ask:
  - Who holds power? How and why do they hold power? How is this power exercised?
  - What enables some of these people to have more power than others?
  - What impact (positive and negative) does it have when specific people or groups hold power?
  - Read these verses from Matthew 20:20-28.

*Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him. And he said to her, 'What do you want?' She said to him, 'Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.' But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.' He said to them, 'You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'*

*When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever*



*wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many*

What do you notice about the use of power in these verses? What insights does this offer to how the Church and individuals should handle power?



## Putting it into practice

Think about your church setting, or another area of your life (eg family) and consider what power you have and how you can use it in a positive way.



## Scripture

*Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my spirit upon him;  
and he will bring forth justice to the nations.  
He will not cry or lift up his voice,  
or make it heard in the street;  
a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;  
he will faithfully bring forth justice.  
He will not grow faint or be crushed  
until he has established justice in the earth;  
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.*

(Isaiah 42:1-4)

When Isaiah catches this vision of God's promise, he sees a passion for justice and a commitment to care for all, including those who are bruised and vulnerable. How can we catch Isaiah's vision of God's purposes for the church?

### **Important note for session four**

In session four, we will be discussing the impact of abuse and the way the symbols and liturgy we use in worship may be difficult for many.

If discussing this in the next session, or reflecting on it afterwards, is difficult for you or raises painful issues, please look after yourself. Take time out during the session if you need to and share this with your local minister or someone else you trust.

# Session

# 4

## The Impact of Abuse: Symbols and liturgy in worship



Loving and compassionate God,

You know our pain and our brokenness, and you shelter us under the shadow of your wings.

You know every tear that has been shed, and all those unable to be shed. You've heard every gut-wrenching cry and every silent, frightened plea for healing from shattered childhoods, deep-rooted hurt, doubt, fear and heart-breaking memories.

You know and understand our frustrations; how we wrestle with lack of belief in our own abilities, value and worth; how we struggle to trust and deal with the resentment for lost years. You understand the questioning of your love. Why did this happen? Could you not have stepped in?

You understand the self-questioning of what I did wrong, and the self-blame.

Help us, loving God, to see through any platitudes that have been offered by others, the careless words, the minimizing of experience, and even the weaponising of Scripture.

Bathe us in your light and love. Guide us to those who can help heal our wounds and listen to our pain. Help us to accept ourselves as you do, and help us and others to see beauty in brokenness.

Thank you, Jesus, that you can empathise with us fully. You have been broken and you have felt utter desolation; you were rejected, despised, betrayed, and wounded by those you came to save.

You were deserted by friends, and you carry scars – both externally and internally.

Enable us to turn to you when we are in pain or distress. You, too, were an innocent victim. Stand with us in our pain and confusion. Help us to accept your peace and your hope.

By the power of your Holy Spirit, let us weave our stories of trauma into yours, and in doing so know your renewal and resurrection. Enable us to feel that wholeness of body, mind and spirit that only you can offer. We thank you that when tears flow you collect each one and use them to cultivate your love within us. As we weep, you weep with us. You stand in the gap, praying for us, holding us, encouraging us, loving us and waiting to wipe the tears away.

Loving God, give us the strength and determination we need to face each day, no matter how light or dark it seems, knowing that we are not alone. Give us the assurance that you love us fully and unconditionally, and although healing may be slow and complicated each small step is a victory won. Amen.

(Vivien Almond and Anonymous)



## Setting the scene

During session three, we looked at the issue of power. Do you have any thoughts, comments or feedback on the 'Putting it into practice' from session three?

Those who abuse do so using the power that they have. In this final session we will be looking at the impact of abuse, particularly in a church setting. We will explore how symbols and liturgy in worship can worsen the impact on survivors of abuse.

**Remember to look after yourself.**



## The Impact of Abuse video

[methodist.org.uk/TheologyOfSafeguarding](https://methodist.org.uk/TheologyOfSafeguarding)

Pause video when instructed.



## Reflection

Words, symbols and images are all used as powerful expressions of our faith. Their origin is often lost in time, yet they remain because of their ability to convey deep meaning. However, some particular ways of expressing worship may be problematic for some, especially if they remain unexplained. We may have experienced the

confusion that comes when witnessing unfamiliar practices in other churches which local people assume are normal.

Furthermore, we are aware that some of our best-loved celebrations can be problematic: there are those who stay away from Mothering Sunday services because of painful associations of loss, or broken family relationships.

Even the importance of forgiveness in our worship – a central and necessary element of Christian faith – can be challenging for someone who has been deeply hurt. There are a number of different questions that this might raise for people: Are we supposed to forgive everyone? Are we just supposed to forget and move on? How does repentance of the person who carried out the abuse factor in this? What if this person doesn't own up to what they have done?

Forgiveness, repentance and new life in Jesus Christ are central to the gospel but there are many different understandings within the Church of what forgiveness means. Forgiveness is complex, and perhaps it lies at the heart of Jesus' teaching precisely because it is so difficult and looks different in every situation.

Forgiveness can be a part of a process in the journey towards healing, but it mainly centres on a person's relationship with God. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting. It does not cancel the effects of the past nor does it cancel obligations or remove the responsibility for consequences from the person who carried out the abuse, but

it may slowly enable people to start to take tiny steps towards wholeness.

While it is true that forgiveness is a call to a life radically different from the old, and Christians believe that God can and does change lives, we cannot always know or judge if that change has happened. All of which influences the way we ensure that all are welcome, but all are also safe from harm.

- In the video at the start of the session, Nicola Price-Tebbutt highlights phrases like “losing ourselves in God, drowning in God’s love, giving up oneself” which appear in our worship music and spoken words. How can we ensure a balance between the value of these words, and the effect they may have on people with low self-esteem or those trapped in a cycle of abuse?
- The sharing of the Peace has long been a pivotal moment in the Holy Communion service (Eucharist). However, for some people it is a moment of dread – when personal space is invaded. People who decline to participate can feel excluded and be seen as remote. Is there a place in a safe and inclusive church for such practices, and if so, how can we make sure everyone’s needs are satisfied?
- C S Lewis once wrote: “Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive” (*Mere Christianity*, p.52). Forgiveness needs to be accepted, as well as given, before it is complete. How can we live lives of forgiveness while recognising the complex and difficult issues arising from abuse and violence?





## The Impact of Abuse video

Continue video at **Symbols, Liturgy and the Ongoing Impact of Abuse**.



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## Break

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## Discussion and reflection

Reflecting on all that you have heard, discussed and seen during this session, pause and imagine yourself in the worship setting you are normally in.

- What do you notice about the worship and the space that might be difficult for someone who has experienced abuse?
- What could be changed or done in a different way to help make this less distressing for someone who has been abused?
- Is there anything you could do differently, or change, to make others feel less side-lined in worship?

To discover more ideas about how you can make the worship experience as inclusive as possible, please refer to the Unconscious Bias and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training: [methodist.org.uk/inclusive-church/training](https://methodist.org.uk/inclusive-church/training)



## Putting it into practice

Notice how symbols and liturgy in worship may affect those who have experienced abuse and consider discussing this area in more detail with others.



## Scripture

*And Mary said,*

*'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of  
his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me  
blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of  
their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their  
thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our  
ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'*

(Luke 1:46-55)

A person who has experienced abuse notes that:

*How power is reflected in the songs and hymns of the church is therefore very important to survivors of sexual abuse. One of my favourite hymns is 'Tell out my soul' which is based on Mary's song, The Magnificat. It is a powerful song, sung by Mary, a powerless woman. Believing that God's purposes could be achieved through her she became a woman of power. I believe God still calls women from the margins and empowers them to be agents of transformation in today's world. In the same way God calls and empowers survivors..."*

(‘Tracing Rainbows Through the Rain: The Report of the Time for Action Monitoring Group to the Methodist Conference 2006’, p.8)



In the speaking and in the spaces  
In the unknowing and in the silences  
In the things untold or buried  
Bring wisdom, Holy Spirit  
Bring time, Creator  
Bring the word, beyond words  
Amen.

(Taken from *So What's the Story?* by  
Barbara Glasson and Clive Marsh, Methodist  
Publishing, 2019)





If you have any questions or comments about the God Welcomes All course, please contact [\*\*gwa@methodistchurch.org.uk\*\*](mailto:gwa@methodistchurch.org.uk)

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