

2019 Affordable Housing Bible Study Series

Three local retired clergy (Mark Pries, Bruce Fischer, John McKinstry) and Habitat's Community Outreach Director, Gabriel Martin, have joined forces to create a Christian Bible Study course relating to Affordable Housing in Johnson County, Iowa. These Bible study resources will be available free from our website beginning February 1, 2019, but you can view a summary of the course below. Use any or all of these sessions for your congregation or group. Join friends and neighbors for fellowship and Bible study which relate faith to local housing barriers/opportunities using a variety of digital resources and local writers.

The written materials and references for seven sessions will be made available to anyone who wants to use them through our website

There is a humorous old story about a man who was marooned alone on a remote island for many years. When he was finally rescued by the crew of a passing freighter who saw smoke from his cooking fire, the rescued man took them on a brief tour of the island before boarding the freighter to go back to civilization. They came to a clearing with three huts and a curious rescuer asked why there were *three* huts. Pointing to the largest hut, the man said "That is my home where I cook, eat, and sleep." Gesturing toward a smaller hut, the survivor said, "That is the church (or similarly synagogue, mosque, etc.) where I worship." When asked what the third hut was for, the man replied, "Oh, that's the church (or similarly synagogue, mosque, etc.) where I used to be a member." We expect the understandings a worshipping community has about its sacred texts to vary from one person to another, from community to community, and over time. We expect and welcome differences of opinion. To engage in Bible study is to join in a continuing conversation between God and the worshipping community that has remained vital and passionate over millennia. The authors hope this Bible study series will serve as a framework for building relationships as people accept the disciplines of study and engage in the continuing conversation which produced the sacred texts and continues to be a means by which we encounter the holy mystery at the center of all our lives.

Basic Format of this Bible Study Series:

Resources Needed:

The creators for each session will list the equipment and materials suggested to be used with the lesson: projector, videos, monitor, homework, Bibles, pencils, paper - whatever needs to be brought to the meeting.

Suggested Gathering Exercise

At the appointed beginning and /or ending times, the group leader(s) may want to lead the group in brief devotions or a prayer or to arrange for a group member to do so. Each session begins with participants relating some part of their personal stories/lives to some aspect of local affordable housing dynamics.

Bible Study

Scriptural texts are presented, followed by some commentary, exegesis and questions to stimulate discussion of the texts in their contexts. Texts will be examined and discussed using at least the materials provided by this curriculum, but of course whoever uses the curriculum will add their own resources.

(Discussion)

Living Our Faith

Local housing facts, trends, and stories will be shared. Implications of the Bible texts for the way we live our lives will be explored, but especially as they relate to actions to benefit affordable housing in Johnson County, Iowa.

(Discussion)

General Suggestions for the Meetings

- + Meetings will begin and end on time.
- + Any personal information or stories shared in the meeting are confidential and will not be shared outside the meeting.
- + Care will be taken to see that all participants are listened to and everyone is encouraged to speak- no hogging the floor.
- + Probing questions and disagreements are acceptable when expressed with care and respect.
- + Participants agree to complete simple preparations for each session they attend.
- + Seating participants in a circle of chairs is best for discussion, but an open space which allows rearrangement of chairs for viewing PowerPoint/Video aids is also helpful.
- + Healthy refreshments are optional but often help create a sense of community.

Closing

Announce the scriptures, passages and topics for the next session and distribute on paper or via email the notes and meeting details for that session.

The group may want to re-read aloud the Scriptural texts for this session, to pray together, to sing a song of blessing and benediction, or participate in some other closing activity.

Content of the Seven Sessions:

Session I – Matthew 25:34-40, Acts 2:42-47 Affordable Housing as a Basic Human Right – God made us all needy for homes for both ourselves and for our neighbors.

Session II- Luke 4- Good News for The Poor- The Fair Housing Act, NAR Video, continuing segregation in our community.

Session III –Home Ownership and Habitat for Humanity theology – Interfaith Build

Session IV- Luke 19:1-10, Jesus goes to Zacchaeus' home, Why Facts Don't Convince People Video, Dispelling Affordable Housing Myths

Session V – Luke 14:12-14 Parable of the Great Banquet- Housing for Persons with Disabilities

Session VI- Luke 10:38-42, Genesis 18:1-15 - Our True Home is God- Christian Hospitality

Session VII - Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Kings 19:11-13, Housing First/Homelessness-flipping the judgement/grace (housing ready) paradigm to grace/responsibility.