

Information Sheet: Making Good Sense of the Bible Together



Reading the Bible is not always easy. Some passages can appear confusing and difficult to understand; so what do we do when we can't make sense of them? In the first report of the *Bible in the Life of the Church* work – 'Deeper Engagement; Fresh Discovery' – a course from The British and Foreign Bible Society [BFBS] entitled *h+* was commended as a way of better understanding *how* we engage with and understand the Bible. Since the

publication of this report BFBS has re-written this course which is now available in a small book entitled [*Making Good Sense of the Bible together*](#) written by Paula Gooder.

This six-session course offers an introduction to biblical interpretation that is ideal for small group participation as together the group can dig deeper and explore the Scriptures. The sessions will help a group read the Bible with greater understanding, examine the authors' original meaning, engage with the biblical message and discover what it means today.

Summary of the course

Session 1 – Making Good Sense of the Bible: Why do we need to?

This session explores some of the reasons why it is so important to make good sense of the Bible and looks at ways in which we go about making sense of things generally in our daily lives.

Session 2 – Making Good Sense of the World of the Author

This session looks at the history that lies behind the text of the Bible and asks what difference it makes for us to understand the world of the author and what happens when scholars don't agree.

Session 3 – Making Good Sense of the Text

This session explores the text itself and asks how understanding the style of writing and the context in which the passage is set can help us to understand the passage.

Session 4 – Making Good Sense of Translations

This session looks at the question of translation, the principles that lie behind the translations we use to read the Bible and asks how this helps us to understand what we are reading better.

Session 5 – Making Good Sense of the Reader

This session thinks about ourselves as we come to the text and the importance of understanding the lenses through which we read the Bible.

Session 6 – Making Good Sense of Ourselves: How can the Bible help?

This session turns full circle and asks how it is that making good sense of the Bible actually helps us to make good sense of ourselves.



The approach of each session

The course consists of six sessions each designed to last for approximately an hour. Each session is structured around the acrostic SENSE

S – Start out – beginning with a prayer and followed by a way into the subject, and usually some opening discussion questions.

E – Explore – this section raises the big issues of the session. There may be an exercise to do or questions for discussion.

N – Notice – here there is some teaching to absorb.

S – Study – this offers the chance to take the teaching principles and apply them to a Bible passage.

E – Engage – each session ends with a chance to recap the key points and think about how they might be applied, along with prompts for prayer.

There is a very helpful [Leaders'/Group Facilitators' Guide](#) that can be downloaded.

For further details and to order [Making Good Sense of the Bible Together](#)

