

## Ask Bigger Questions Study Guide

### 1. Theme: Make the world a better place

Answers the question – How can Theological Education (TE) equip me to participate in (lead) God’s work in the world?

Answered from a:

- ‘Liberal’ viewpoint (someone who wants to build the Anglican Church)
- Social justice viewpoint (someone who’s commitment to social justice is rooted in their Christian faith)
- Vocation viewpoint (someone who is answering a personal ‘call’)

Audience: potential clergy

Supplemental Questions for video:

- How does TE help me SEE God’s work in the world?
- How does TE help me to teach others how to see God’s work in the world?
- How does TE help me to build a local parish?
- Can TE inspire? How has TE inspired me?
- Does TE always have to be about God?

### Study Guide Questions:

1. What we learn as children can have a profound impact throughout our lives. What did you learn about God as a child? How has your understanding changed over the years, and how has it stayed the same?
2. At some point in your life, have you ever felt a personal ‘calling’ or ‘inner drive’ to be or do something? What happened? Did you do anything about it?
3. In looking back on your life, can you identify any particularly profound and important experiences or relationships that helped to shape you in a lasting way? How would you describe God's presence in that experience?
4. Do you think humans are born with a built-in ‘God receptor’, or is this something we have to learn?
5. Have you ever spoken to your children, grandchildren, relatives or friends about God? What was the situation? Did you learn anything yourself from it? Would you do it differently today?
6. Young adults often have a clear desire to ‘make the world a better place’. For some people this desire returns at different times, and for others it never leaves. How do you think theological education could help someone make the world a better place? At what points in one’s life could theological education be helpful?

## 2. Theme: Academic Study

Answers the question – What does God have to do with the world today? ... With my life today?

Answered from a:

- Questioning viewpoint (a seeker who is perhaps not even Anglican)
- Committed viewpoint (a firm believer who wants to learn more about their faith)

Audience: broad (social media) and academic

Supplemental Questions for video:

- How does TE help us understand the changing belief in God?
- How does TE help us understand the role religion plays in world politics?
- How does TE give me a framework to understand my life? ...my purpose in life?

### Study Guide Questions:

1. Would you say that 'God mindfulness' - an awareness of God throughout one's daily activities – has increased or decreased in North America? Do you think this is different elsewhere in the world?
2. Can you describe the similarities and differences in the major world religions, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism? Is this something that you ever learned?
3. Are there reasons why we do things in Canada that are based on religion? Would you say that this relationship between religion and culture is changing? Do you think this is the same in other countries?
4. What role would you say that religion plays in major world conflicts? What else plays a role? Does Christianity - through the Bible or Church teaching – say anything about these other causes?
5. If you wanted to learn more about the social justice teachings of the Anglican Church, where would you go?

### 3. Theme: Church Leadership

Answers the question – How can my church be relevant today?

Answered from a:

- Ministry skills development viewpoint (someone who wants to lead change)
- Missional viewpoint (someone who wants to make disciples and engage community)
- Interdisciplinary viewpoint

Audience: people in parishes and potential clergy

Supplemental Questions for video:

- How does an understanding of Church history help Church leaders address 21<sup>st</sup> century concerns such as medical assistance in dying or climate change?
- Can belonging to a local Church community help me raise my children? ...make my town/city better?
- How is the role of the Deacon changing in today's parishes?

#### Study Guide Questions

1. Can you recall a parish priest who you thought was really “with it”? What was it about them that made you think this way?
2. If there was one thing that your parish could do to be more relevant, what would it be?
3. Name one Myth about the Anglican Church, and the corresponding Fact. (This doesn't need to be from an official source; it can be from your own experience.)
4. How can the Bible be relevant today? (This question can be answered in a number of ways.)
5. How do you feel when someone other than your parish priest quotes scripture to you? Why do you suppose you have these feelings?
6. If you were being encouraged to become a deacon, what education or training would you want to receive in order to do well in this ministry?

#### 4. Theme: Equality/Justice

Answers the question: Is religion the cause of gender, sexual and socio-economic inequality, or the solution?

Answered from a:

- Historical viewpoint (Canadian Church history context)
- Biblical viewpoint (Biblical Studies context)
- Evangelical viewpoint (Religion and society context)

Audience: broad (social media, parishioners)

Supplemental Questions for video:

- What is the relationship between Church teaching and Canadian law?
- How does Biblical studies change the way the Old and New Testaments are understood?
- Can the Bible be used to justify anything? Can you learn morality from the Bible?
- How can TE help me tell the difference between right and wrong?

#### Study Guide Questions

1. Can you name one or more Church teaching or law that has changed in your lifetime?  
Would you say that the change was brought on because of a theological shift, or a cultural one?
2. As these changes took place, did your understanding of God, the Bible or the Church change? If so, how?
3. True or False: Religion in general, and the Anglican Church in particular, exerts less influence in our society today than in the past.  
Is this a good or bad thing?
4. What role do you see the Anglican Church playing in terms of challenging the status quo in matters of equality and justice?  
What role do you see your parish playing?  
How do you see yourself participating in this?
5. Are there equality and justice issues that you personally find challenging (i.e. where your daily actions don't align with your beliefs)?