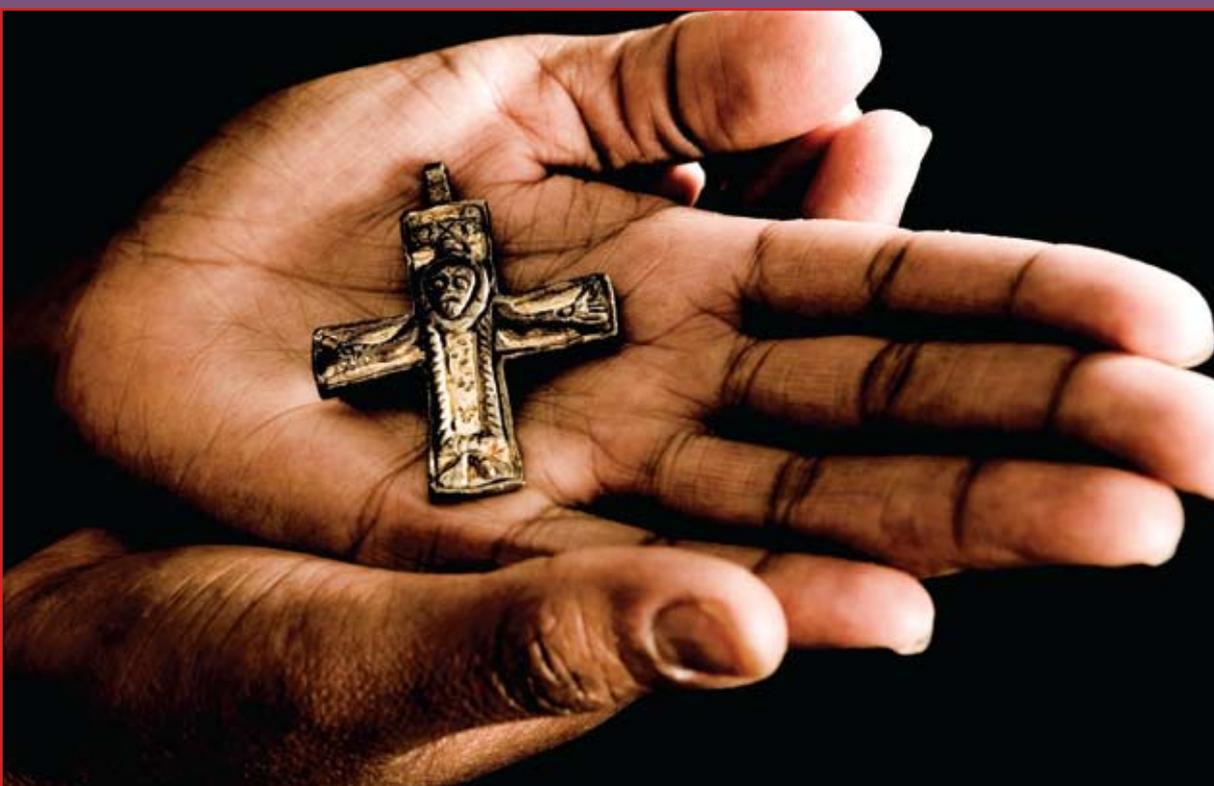


TRAINERS GUIDE



OneBody

North-South Reflections
in the face of HIV and AIDS



Churches in Southern Africa and the Nordic
European countries in dialogue on the issues :

-  Stigmatization
-  Human Sexuality and Gender
-  The Church as an Inclusive Community
-  Images of God

The use of OneBody

This Trainer's Guide is meant as a source of inspiration for clergy, religious and lay-people working with 'One Body'. There are many ways you can use the material, and this Guide only offers a few ideas. You could form small groups to discuss the topics most relevant to you, or you could establish training sessions with larger groups of people to facilitate the main points of the themes we present. Using your imagination to create role-plays is another very good way of bringing the issues to life - for those performing the plays as well as for audiences.

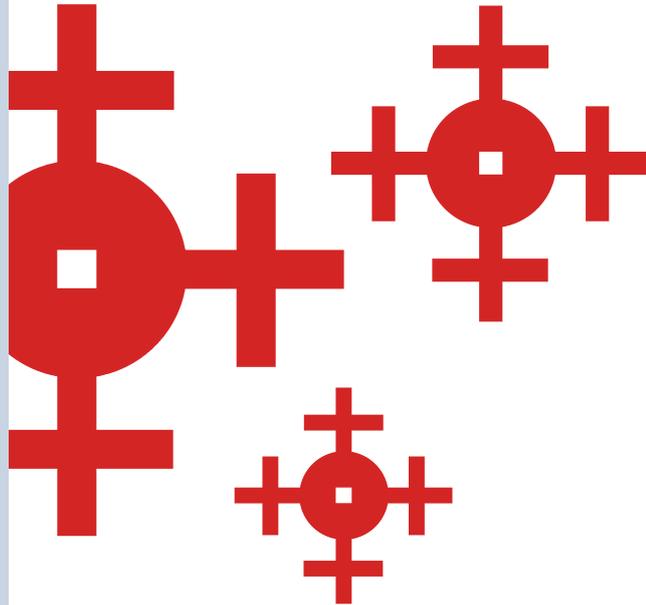
Some groups may only meet once or twice. Other groups may be ongoing. In the final section of this Guide, we share experiences of group formation – primarily self-help and support groups for people living with HIV and AIDS. But the ideas shared in this section could easily be applied to other groups.

You could basically employ several different methods in your discussions of One Body - either on their own or together, depending on your specific needs and the time you have available. In the first part of this Guide, we generally suggest questions you might like to discuss on the basis of the texts in One Body. However, you may find that you have other, much more relevant questions you would like to address. Please feel free to do so! Just use this Guide as a tool to inspire your discussions.

Basic questions:

Read all texts in One Body and all Bible passages contextually, i.e. in relation to your own life and situation and the people you know.

- What surprises you or puzzles you?
- What provokes you?
- What are the most important questions raised in the text ?
- What can we learn from these questions?
- What might these questions mean to people living with HIV and AIDS?
- What effect might this have on your understanding of the world and of the way you act in your community?



One Body is the result of a close and collaborative dialogue between people touched by HIV and AIDS from Southern African and Nordic countries.

This co-operation is based on our belief that we are all, every single one of us, created in the image of God. God created us for one another, and to mirror God's image. Our bodies are the temple of God.

**We share the understanding that
God is our Creator,
he embraces us with love, kindness and grace
suffers with us,
is with us in life and in death.**

We believe the Church has a responsibility to address and combat HIV and AIDS-related stigma. So we're working together to create different spaces where persons living with HIV and AIDS can experience a presence of love and inclusion. We want to strengthen the voices of all those affected and all people living with HIV and AIDS by using their wisdom and experience as a crucial resource in fighting HIV and AIDS.

THIS PROJECT IS PART OF THE NORDIC-FOCCISA CHURCH COOPERATION ON HIV AND AIDS | FOCCISA IS A FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCH COUNCILS FROM THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: ANGOLA, BOTSWANA, LESOTHO, NAMIBIA, MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE, SOUTH AFRICA, SWAZILAND, TANZANIA, ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE | NORDIC PARTNERS ARE FROM DENMARK, FINLAND, ICELAND, NORWAY AND SWEDEN.



The notion of One Body

'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it'.

1 CORINTHIANS 12: 12-27

Questions and reflections:

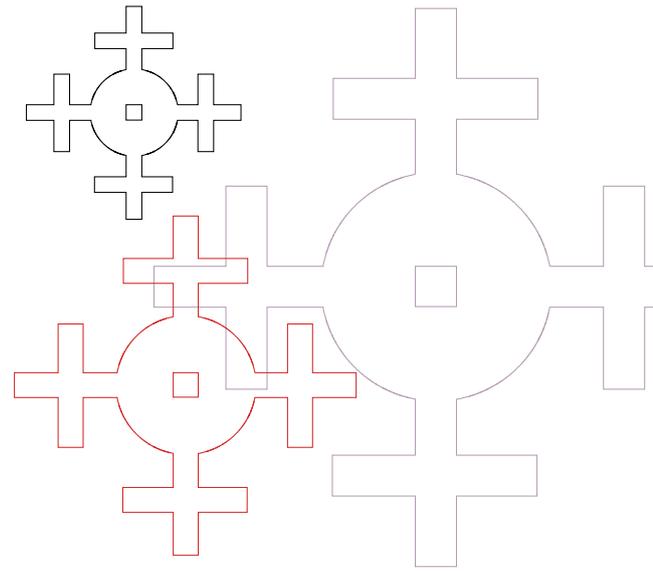
- How does this notion of One Body influence your views of people living with HIV and AIDS?
- Are some members of the One Body more worthy and dignified than others?
- Why are some, according to the text, more "presentable" than others?
- What does the text say about the so-called "weaker" members?
- What happens to those members we hide away and feel ashamed of?
- How does this strengthen our mutual responsibilities towards one another?
- How does this help us reflect on the theological notion "Unity in Christ"?
- What does this say about the role of the Church?
- What is your own experience in your community and/or in the Church?
- Is it really possible to live and work together as One Body?

REFERENCES TO RELEVANT ARTICLES IN ONE BODY: "THE BODY OF CHRIST", PAGES 34-35, VOL. 1 | "NO FEAR", PAGES 40-41, VOL. 1 | "SHAME", PAGES 56-57, VOL. 1 | "BEING ONE BODY", PAGES 26-29, VOL. 2 | "THE HEALING ACTS OF JESUS", PAGES 44-45, VOL. 2 | "ON NEARNESS", PAGES 58-59, VOL. 2
ABOUT CONTEXTUAL BIBLE-STUDY, SEE PAGE 14-18, VOL. 2.



In Jesus, holiness' healing touch was the touch of inclusion and participation: the touch that said: "you belong"... Jesus brought an image of holiness, defined not by its distance from what was considered to be unclean, but by its proximity to it. Into a world so divided and separated within itself came Jesus who, with the touch of a hand, restored human community.

JAPHET NDHLOVU



Stigmatization

Stigma is an ancient greek word that means "wound", "scar" or "brand". Today, stigmatizing often happens on the basis of gender, sexuality, disease, race and social status. Many people who live with HIV and AIDS experience stigmatization, becoming "outcasts" in their own community. Stigma is often expressed in the language we use, creating a situation and sense of "us" and "them". This is not an inclusive way of being, but a way of treating people that reinforces stigmatization. This often leads to discrimination.

Stigmatized people are often viewed as unworthy, unacceptable, and as a threat to a group, community, congregation or family. Stigma arises from negative communal norms, prejudices and taboos. Stigma generally arises from fear and ignorance. We fear the unknown and things we don't understand. Many taboos are related to gender, sexuality, ethnic identity, disease, and death. Sadly, these concepts are also often related to HIV and AIDS.

People living with HIV and AIDS may be seen as sinners, leading immoral lives. Their presence in churches may sometimes disturb and challenge the image people have of the Church. This stigmatization doesn't happen because of any special personal characteristics in the people living with HIV and AIDS. It happens because of the fear that HIV and AIDS creates. In the worst cases people touched by HIV and AIDS may even be demonized by people in their communities. In this way stigma becomes part of people's identity at the deepest level.

Stigmatized people may internalize these negative social responses to their situation by taking on feelings of shame

and unworthiness. This in turn leads people to experience loneliness, fear, feelings of guilt, self-loathing, abandonment, ostracism, anger, secrecy and indignity. This human mechanism of "taking on" other people's negative social responses becomes a stigmatization of the self – or self-stigmatization. In some cases this may lead to suicidal feelings, or even worse, may result in actual suicide.

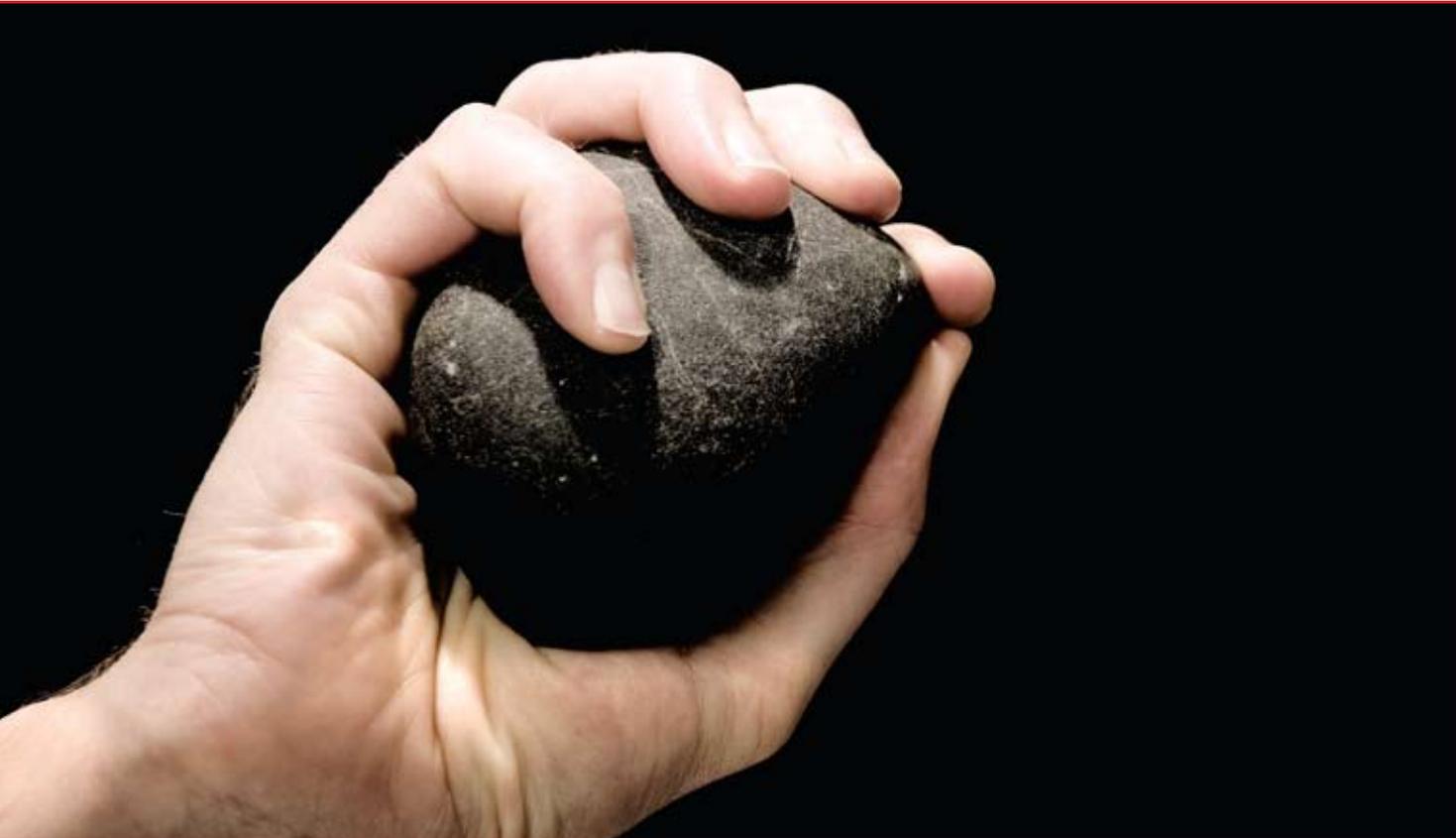
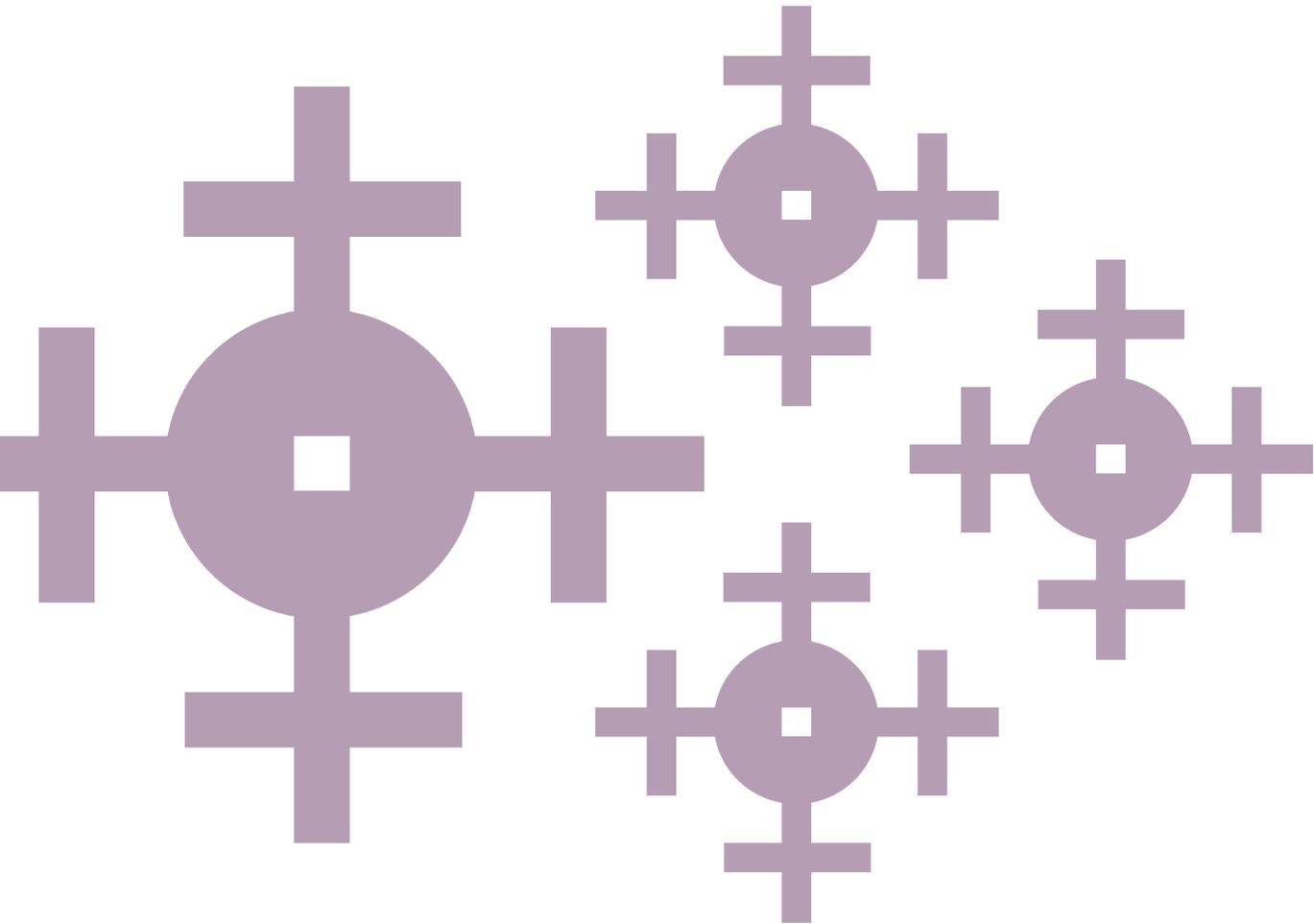
Stigma in the Bible

In the Bible we meet many examples of stigmatization, of stigmatizers and the stigmatized. So many people came to Jesus, crying out for compassion, longing to be healed, to be included in the community. In a deep way everyone Jesus met, longed for their dignity to be restored.

Jesus' answer to all those who condemned and excluded others was radical and clear. He was on the side of anyone who suffered, and his whole mission was a reminder that healing and reconciliation is possible, and that this requires love, compassion and an open, non-judgmental mind and heart.

Theologically, stigma refers to the wounds of Jesus on the Cross, the so-called stigmata. Jesus was stigmatized by lots of people who rejected and condemned him, who feared his interpretations of the old scriptures and the ways he challenged tradition. In the end he was stigmatized in death on the Cross because the scholars of his day feared his influence and claimed he was blasphemous.

Stigmatizing denies a person's human dignity and value. Stigmatization in a Church is a violation of its own body – "the Body of Christ".



'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'

He also told them a parable: 'Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbour, "Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye", when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbour's eye'.

LUKE 6: 37-42

Questions and reflections:

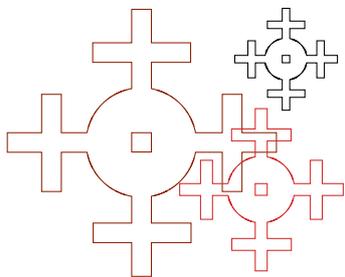
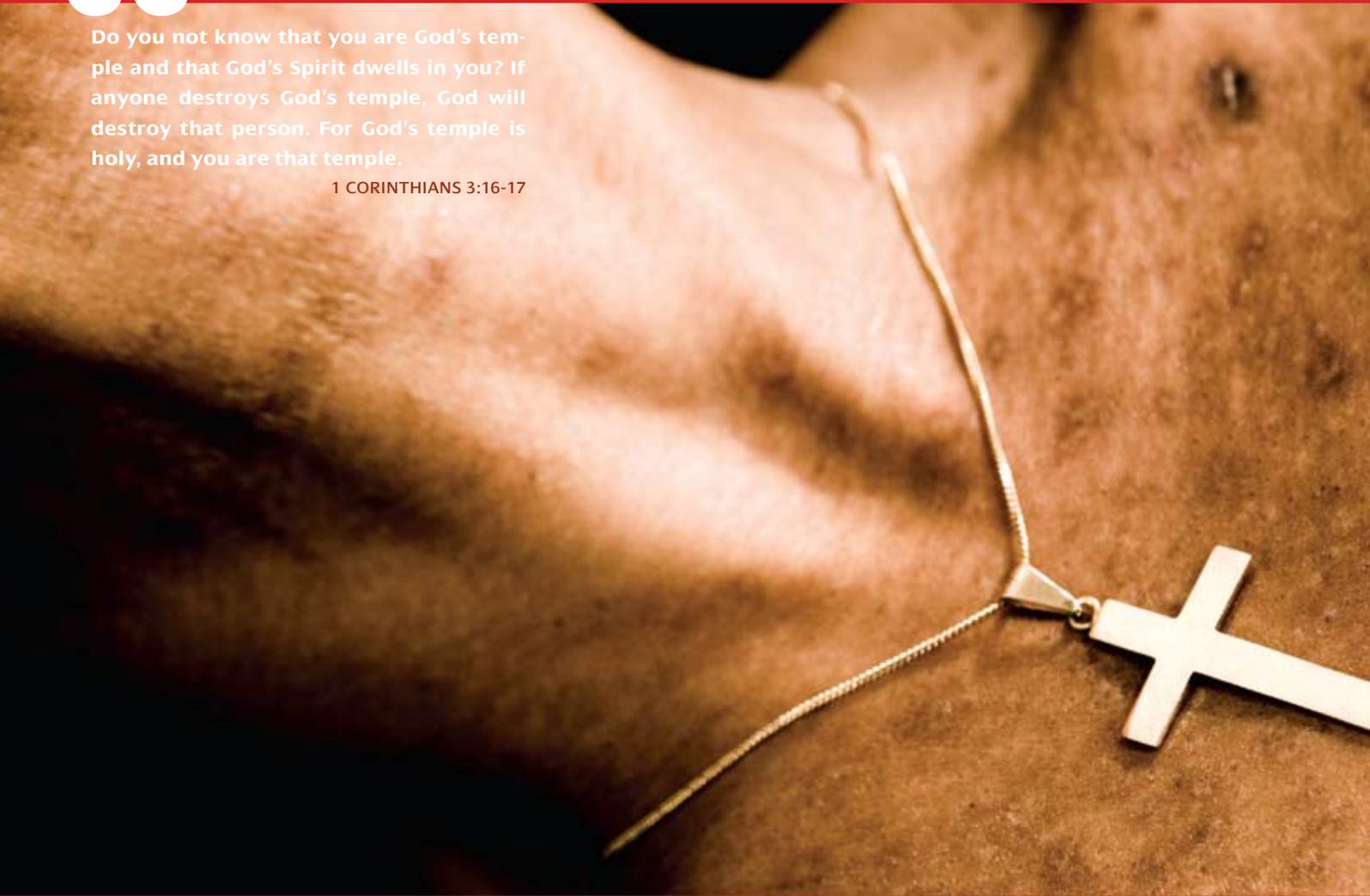
- Why was Jesus ostracized? And what was his reaction?
- Have you ever experienced being stigmatized?
- How does it feel?
- What can we do if someone we know and care for is stigmatized?
- Do we stigmatize others to protect ourselves from something we fear? And what is this fear about?
- Why does HIV and AIDS cause so much silence, tension and shame?
- Why is it so easy to condemn others?
- What can the Church and local communities do to prevent stigmatization?
- What can we as individuals do?
- What can you do to restore hope and bring light into the dark and lonely places that people living with HIV and AIDS have to walk through?

REFERENCES TO RELEVANT ARTICLES IN ONE BODY: "THE CHALLENGE OF STIGMA", PAGES 4-9, VOL. 1 | "THE VULNERABLE TABOO", PAGES 18-20, VOL. 1 | "STIGMATIZATION", PAGE 38-39, VOL. 1 | "OVERCOMING ISOLATION", PAGES 42-45, VOL. 1 | "STIGMA AND HUMANITY", PAGES 12-13, VOL. 2 | "EMBRACING THE MARGINALIZED", PAGES 22-23, VOL. 2 | "WHO DARES TO THROW THE FIRST STONE?", PAGES 36-39, VOL. 2 | "THE CRIPPLED WOMAN", PAGES 50-51, VOL. 2 | "NO CONDEMNATION", PAGES 52-53, VOL. 2



Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:16-17



Human Sexuality and Gender

Sexuality is a divine gift, given to humanity through God's Creation. It is a gift to be received graciously. Sexuality is at one and the same time a challenge and a task - an aspect of life that isn't easy to deal with. Being able to talk openly about sexuality and the many emotions connected with it - from ecstatic joy to deep grief and despair - is truly important.

Speaking openly about sexuality has not always been easy in the Church. The existence of HIV and AIDS forces all church communities across the world to face the complex issues of sexuality. Faced by this global health-crisis, we can no longer bury our heads in the sand like ostriches.

Gender issues are closely related to sexuality. In One Body we try to address these issues from many different perspectives. The Christian notion of One Body is in itself a perspective

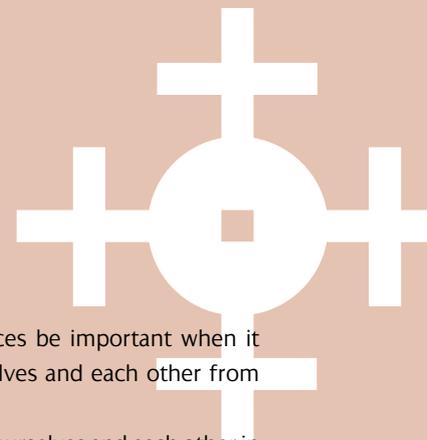
on sexuality, as well as on gender. As individuals, as women and men, as children, youth, middle-aged and old people, as strong and able-bodied, weak or sick, we need to respect each other and ourselves as equal beings. We all share the same dignity and are all created in the image of God. If we are One Body we also need to respect our bodies and each others' bodies, and to treat ourselves and each other with deep tenderness, love and respect.

REFERENCES TO RELEVANT ARTICLES IN ONE BODY: "HUMAN SEXUALITY", PAGE 11, VOL. 1 | "PATRIARCHAL SINS", PAGES 15-17, VOL. 1 | "A DIVINE GIFT AND A HUMAN TASK", PAGE 21, VOL. 1 | "SEXUALITY AND DEATH", PAGES 22-27, VOL. 1 | "PATRIARCHY, GENDER AND JESUS", PAGE 33, VOL. 2 | "SEXUALITY, GIFT AND RESPONSIBILITY", PAGES 34-35, VOL. 2 | "MEANING, DEATH AND LOSS", PAGES 40-41, VOL. 2 | "LIGHTING CANDLES", PAGES 62-63, VOL. 2



Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

GENESIS 1: 26-28



Questions and reflections:

- Why is sexuality so often related to taboo and stigma when it is actually a gift from God?
- How do we honestly feel about sexuality? What have we been brought up to think about sexuality?
- What messages do our cultures and societies give us about sexuality? Most likely, we all have a mixture of feelings and notions. Try to describe these feelings and notions in all their diversity.
- How do we reconcile the fact that HIV is a virus that might lead to our death if we don't receive good medical treatment?
- How does this influence our view of our bodies and our sexuality?
- How does the existence of HIV and AIDS in itself influence our notion of sexuality?
- What differences are there between men and women in relation to sexuality?
- How might these differences be important when it comes to protecting ourselves and each other from HIV?
- How do we learn to protect ourselves and each other in gentle, tender ways? Why is this often not easy to do?
- How does a patriarchal society influence the role of women, also in relation to sexuality and HIV?
- If we are all created in the image of God, how can someone be excluded from the Church, the Body of Christ, because of their sexuality or their gender?
- How do we prevent shame and fear that is related to sexuality, and thereby also to HIV?
- How can those of us who live with HIV and AIDS still trust and believe in Paul's words in the Bible - that our bodies and we ourselves are God's temple...that whatever diagnosis we may have, we are still created in God's image?

'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me'.

JOHN 17, 20-23

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The Church has not always acted as it should have in relation to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. It's time for the Church to take responsibility, globally as well as locally. But how best can the Church approach this issue?

The notion, "Church", did not really exist in the Bible. Rather, Jesus talked about friendship, discipleship, and community. Today, the worldwide Church consists of many different communities and many "bodies". Ecumenically, the Church embodies a huge diversity of people and faith perspectives. And still this amazing diversity is part of One Body, the Body of Christ. As individuals, we are all members of this one universal body.

The Church and its diversity

Often our images of God influence our view of the Church. What is the role of the Church? Is it good or bad? This question can't be answered simply. We have to view the Church in all its diversity. The following statements about the role of the Church in relation to HIV and AIDS, are equally true and part of the same reality:

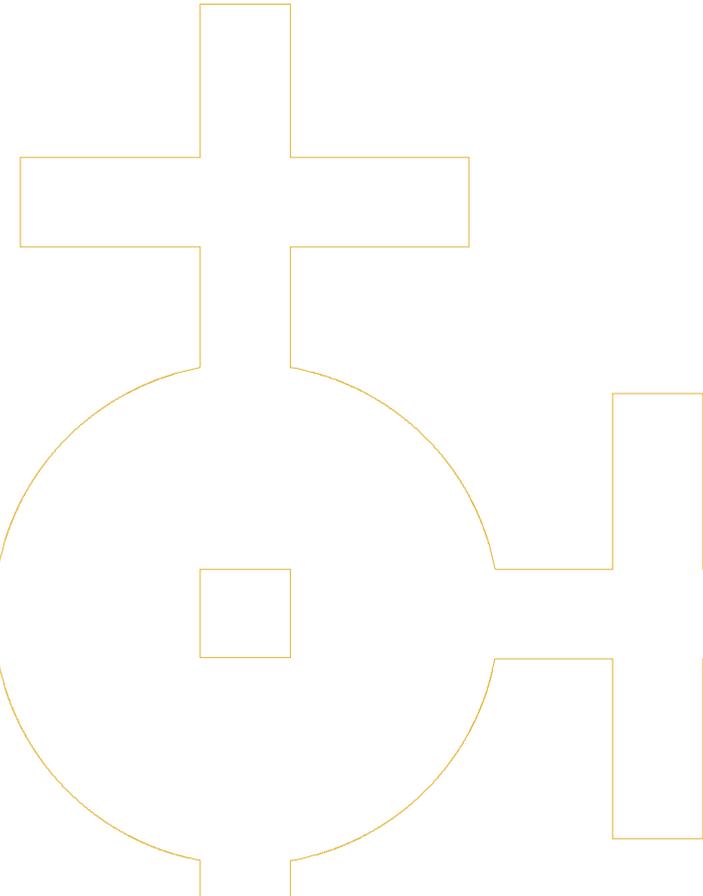
Negative:

- The Church has sinned/not done enough
- The Church stigmatizes people living with HIV and AIDS
- The Church is an exclusive body, not open to all people

Questions and reflections:

In the above Bible passage Jesus shares his last testimony with his disciples. Is this a prophetic vision of the Church as an emerging community of disciples?

- How should Jesus' life influence the life of the Church?
- How has the Church failed to be a "true" Church, a Church that embodies the image of Christ?
- Why isn't it easy for churches across the world to engage in the issues of HIV and AIDS?
- What stumbling blocks do they face in relation to HIV and AIDS?
- What difficulties do you face within your community?
- How can we move forward, locally as well as globally?
- How can the Church become a more inclusive community?
- What is your vision for your church?



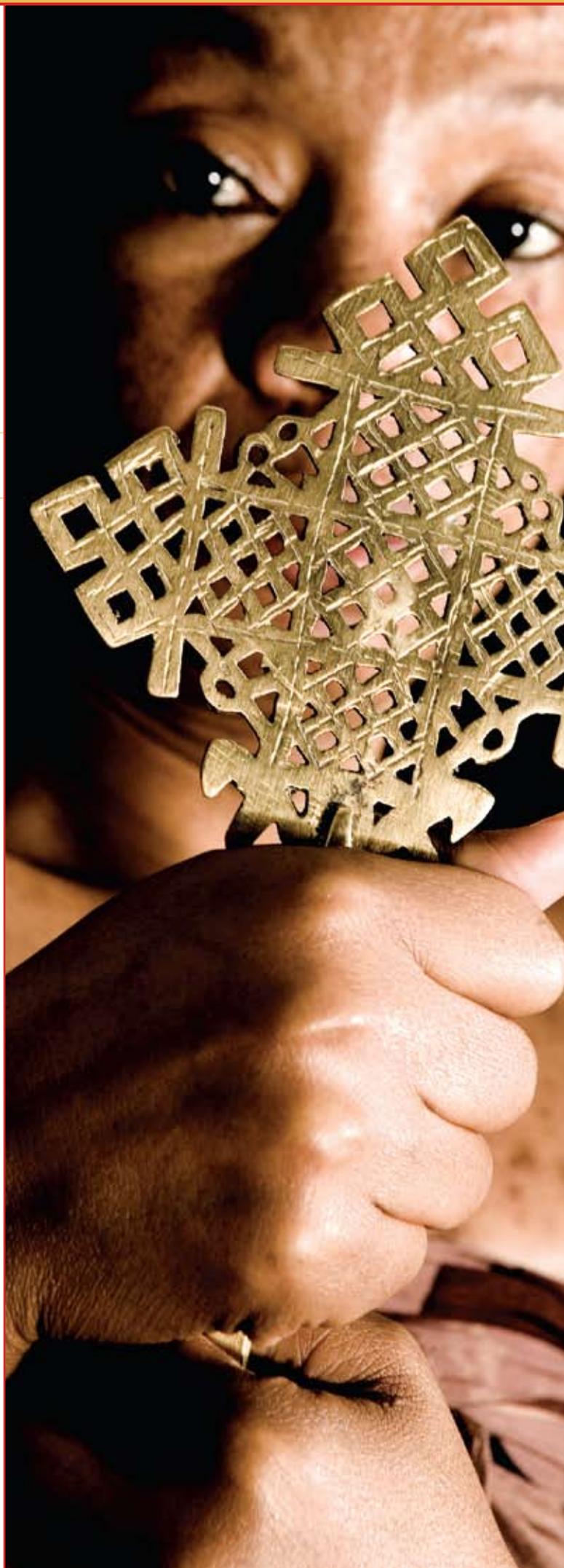
The Church as Inclusive Community

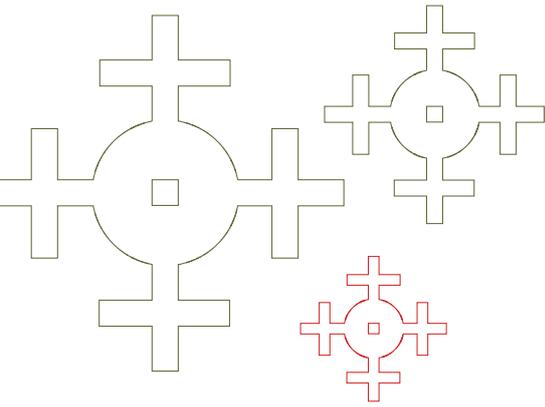
Positive:

- The Church is a compassionate, healing community
- The Church welcomes all people living with HIV and AIDS
- The Church is a loving, inclusive community that embraces all people who suffer

As Martin Luther said, we are all justified and sinners at the same time, "simul justus et peccator". These words describe an existential mystery, a truth that touches all people individually, as well as the Church as a community. But this basic understanding should not give us a false sense of security. It should never be an excuse not to act, to do "nothing" in the face of the crucial questions of both local and global relevance raised by the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

REFERENCES TO RELEVANT ARTICLES IN ONE BODY: "THE CHURCH AND ITS ROLE IN SEXUAL EDUCATION", PAGES 12-13, VOL. 1 | "THE INCLUSIVE CHURCH", PAGES 28-29, VOL. 1 | "THE HEALING CHURCH", PAGES 30-33, VOL. 1 | "BREAKING THE SILENCE AND SHAME", PAGES 10-11, VOL. 2 | "A CHURCH OF COMPASSION", PAGE 21, VOL. 2 | "CREATING A NEW COMMUNITY OF TRUST", PAGES 24-25, VOL. 2 | "RETREATS OF HOPE", PAGES 30-31, VOL. 2 | "LITURGY OF THE STATIONS", PAGES 54-57, VOL. 2





Images of God

Our images of God are crucial. They influence our whole worldview, the way we perceive our life and our identity as human beings. They are also related to our notions of good and evil, and to our understanding of fate. Often our images of God are formed through our upbringing and the people and institutions that have influenced us in our life. These include our parents and families, our schools, our churches and church communities. Sometimes we really have to work with these images, in order to free ourselves from one-sided, painful and destructive notions.

The Bible itself is full of many different descriptions of God, and does not give a clear-cut picture of God, even though we see Christ as a clear reflection of God's image. As we walk the

pilgrimage of life our faith develops and our understanding of God deepens.

REFERENCES TO RELEVANT ARTICLES IN ONE BODY: "IMAGES OF GOD", PAGES 46-47, VOL. 1 | "OUR DEEPEST IDENTITY IS LOVE", PAGES 48-49, VOL. 1 | "CONSTRUCTIVE AND DEFORMED IMAGES", PAGES 50-51, VOL. 1 | "MEANING AND IDENTITY", PAGES 52-53, VOL. 1 | "GUILT AND FORGIVENESS", PAGE 55, VOL. 1 | "THE COMPASSION OF GOD", PAGES 58-61, VOL. 1 | "A JUBILEE VISION FOR THE CHURCH", PAGES 6-9, VOL. 2 | "FAITH", PAGE 43, VOL. 2 | "FOUR IMAGES OF GOD", PAGES 46-47, VOL. 2 | "THE FORGIVING GOD", PAGE 48, VOL. 2 | "THE GOD OF CREATION", PAGE 49, VOL. 2 | "GOD WHO TOUCHES US", PAGE 60-61, VOL. 2



Questions and reflections:

Negative images of God:

- A strict father
- A critical eye
- A condemning judge
- A punishing authority

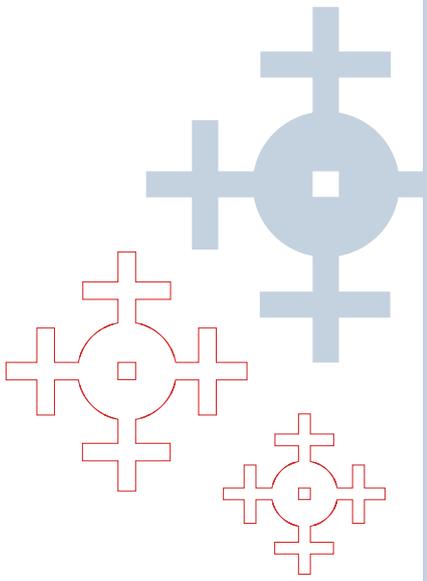
Positive images of God:

- A grace-filled Creator
- A compassionate companion
- One who suffers with us
- One who loves and cares for us



These images show a range of notions that we might carry inside us, consciously or unconsciously.

- Which of these images do you recognize?
- What kind of images were you taught as a child? Which images do you feel familiar with today?
- Why might we feel that illness and suffering is a punishment from God? What does this say about our image(s) of God?
- When we are faced with HIV and AIDS, in our society as well as personally, which of these images are we most often confronted with?
- Which of these images is most healing and comforting?
- Which of these images resonates most with your own personal experience in life?



Nothing for us without us

When forming support groups one of the first things to consider is: Why do we want to get together?

Support groups can be a vehicle for change as they:

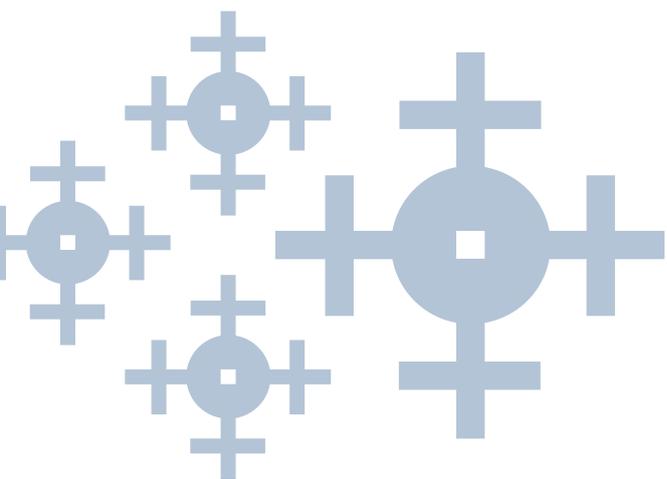
- Help people feel they are not isolated and alone with their problems
- Provide a way to meet people and make friends
- Provide information about HIV, safer sex, positive living
- Make it possible to share common challenges
- Strengthen self-help support action
- Help people become more confident and empowered
- Provide links between people from different backgrounds to increase tolerance and understanding
- Create ways of sharing ideas, resources and information
- Affect change by creating a public voice
- Reduce stigma

Joining a group isn't always easy...

- People may be reluctant to join a support group if they are not yet ready to speak out openly about their HIV-status, or because they feel insecure and ashamed.

Working in groups isn't always easy...

- Sometimes it's difficult to meet people's direct needs and expectations.
- If people join a support group in the hope of financial support the group may not necessarily be able to meet this need.
- Sometimes a few people set up a support group and then when they're no longer involved, the group may lose its way and disintegrate.



Working together...

It's very important to involve participants in the process of setting up the group. This works far better than a top-down approach, with "professionals" setting up groups for others.



Working alone or with other organizations?

Both ways have advantages and disadvantages. Working with other organizations might mean you have more resources at hand. But a disadvantage is your sense of identity when others decide for you. Both alternatives are applicable, depending on what the group participants and leaders decide.



How do we find group members?

- By linking with other organizations, e.g. churches, local health centres etc.
- By talking to people
- By visiting people in their homes
- Through different partners
- Through the Church
- By distributing leaflets, brochures, posters etc.

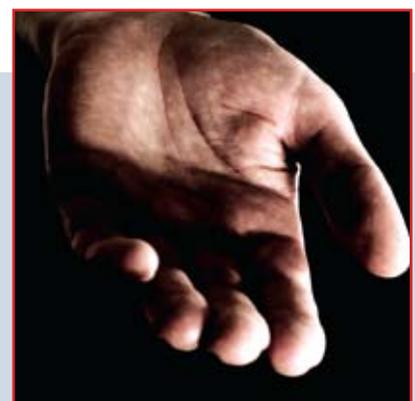
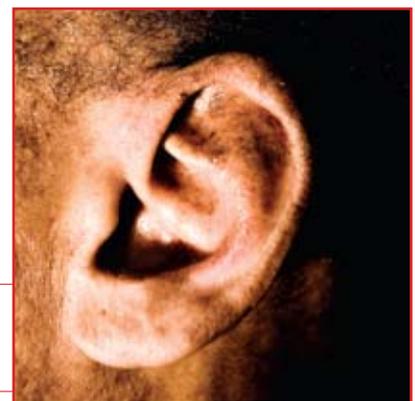
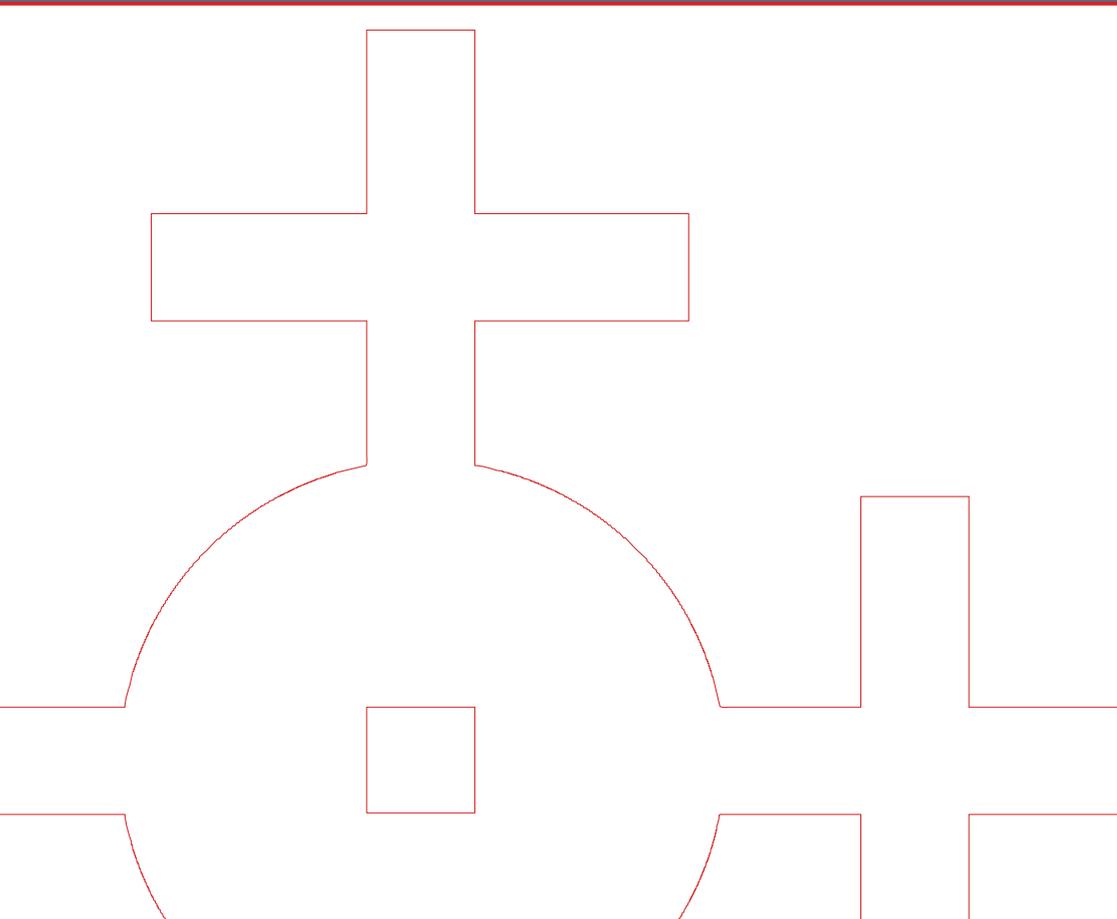


Planning the first meeting

Where is your meeting going to be held? Arrange the room with all you may need. Are you going to provide snacks, drinks and transport facilities? Determine these issues before starting and explain your decisions to the group to avoid false expectations.

Once the group is together:

- Have a session of sharing your expectations.
- Determine the agenda of the meeting. You may already have suggestions, but remember they are only suggestions! A group will only function well if all participants have a say in what you discuss.
- When and how often will you meet? Is this going to be an on-going group or are you only going to have a limited number of meetings?
- Establish the ground rules: Confidentiality, use of inclusive language, non-judgemental attitudes, and listening to each other respectfully and without judgement. Ask the participants if there are any particular rules they want the group to adopt.



Your group will function better if

- The group sets up the aims and activities
- There is open communication and discussion within the group
- Everyone participates
- People attend regularly
- Acceptance of all members is encouraged
- There's a high level of trust in the group
- Conflict and disagreement is open and constructive
- People in the group feel they are learning
- Feedback is encouraged
- All group members have equal status: no one dominates, no one is left out!

... **and remember:** allow your group to grow and change!

Characteristics of group leaders

As a leader:

- Share only your own experiences
- Encourage group members to listen carefully to one another
- Encourage people to ask questions
- Encourage everyone to join in, but don't pressurise anybody
- Try to put your own views aside while listening to other people
- Don't feel you need to have an answer to every question
- Build up trust and respect within the group by encouraging everyone to respect each others' opinions and values

Possible methods

- Brain storming
- Role play
- Picture codes
- Open ended stories
- Group discussion
- Any other methods you may know of

Careful planning

Many groups don't make plans because they feel it's too complicated ... but it's not!!

- What is your current situation?
- What do you want to achieve, and why?
- Which activities are you planning?
- What resources will you need?
- How will you measure your achievements?
- How will you share your experience and knowledge with others and report back to the group?

OneBody

- How does HIV and AIDS influence our experience of God?
- How do we create a generous Church that dares to enter into the overwhelming societal and existential questions raised by HIV and AIDS?
- How do we prevent stigmatization?
- How can we heal feelings of guilt and shame?

These and many other questions are discussed in 'One Body – North-South Reflections in the Face of HIV and AIDS'.

One Body volume 1 and 2 is produced in English, Portuguese, Swahili and Norwegian, with a shorter version in Danish.

VOL. 1: NORTH-SOUTH REFLECTIONS ON HIV-RELATED STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION IN CHURCHES.

VOL. 2: RESOURCES FOR PRAYER, LITURGY, WORSHIP, BIBLE-STUDY AND PERSONAL TESTIMONIES.

This Guide relates directly to One Body. We suggest you use it as a source of inspiration.

ONE BODY VOLUME 1 AND 2 IS PRODUCED IN ENGLISH, PORTUGUESE, SWAHILI AND NORWEGIAN, AND A SHORTER VERSION IN DANISH.

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Stigmatization related to HIV/AIDS is found in a variety of cultural and religious contexts. Our meeting with the other - with what is different from us - must enrich us in our work in our own countries, and is a contribution to the global fight against stigmatization on the grounds of HIV/AIDS.

FROM A COMMON DECLARATION
OF THE CHURCHES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
AND NORDIC EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, AUGUST 2005

