Attitudes towards disease and difference

Why use this Bible study?
This Bible study can help us explore some of our prejudices towards people who are different to us – whether they are unwell, disabled or of a different gender, age or ethnicity to us.

Unclean, or accepted and loved?
Read Luke 8:42b-48. Since Old Testament times, women were believed to be unclean at the time of their monthly bleeding. As a result they stayed away from the temple during this time. According to the law of Moses (Leviticus 15), if Jesus was touched by a woman with bleeding it would make him unclean.

Questions for discussion
- Why did Jesus not tell the woman off for touching him?
- This woman would have felt unclean for 12 years. How did Jesus respond to her?
- Do we sometimes make people living with HIV feel ‘unclean’ or rejected? Why? How can we change this?
- Why did Jesus make the woman come forward and admit she had touched him? What can we learn from this?
- How should we treat people who are different to us?
- Can you take time now to pray and think about someone who you don’t get along with? Is this because they are a different gender, class, caste, religion, age, ability or temperament than you?
- What could you do to reconcile yourself with this person?

Key points
- Jesus accepts all of us as we are.
- We should help the church and society to accept and love people who suffer from diseases, live with disabilities or are different from us in any way.
Related tools
- A2 – Understanding vulnerability and disability [A2: Discrimination & inclusion-1]
- A2 – HIV counselling and testing [A2: Health & HIV-1]
- A2 – How HIV spreads [A2: Health & HIV-2]
- A2 – My supporters: tackling HIV stigma [A2: Health & HIV-3]
- B – Loving the outcast (Bible study) [B: Discrimination & inclusion-2]
- B – Caring for widows and orphans (Bible study) [B: Discrimination & inclusion-3]
- B – Disabilities – knowing our true value (Bible study) [B: Discrimination & inclusion-4]
- B – HIV and AIDS and the glory of God (Bible study) [B: Health & HIV-1]