

3 Navigating Disagreement

Bible passage

The Woman Who Washes Jesus' Feet
(Luke 7:36–50)

Before

Reflect

In the face of disagreement, our natural instinct may be to withdraw and not to rock the boat. Or our tendency may be the opposite – to charge towards the other.

At best, either of these responses will just keep us stuck where we are. But imagine what could happen in our world if every person involved in conflict sought to understand their enemy better, enabling them to disagree well.

Jesus isn't threatened by differing views, as we see in his meeting with Simon the Pharisee and the woman who washes his feet. He is not afraid of the conflict that will arise by honouring the woman: rather he names the conflict and expresses his view with respect and through storytelling. The woman who washes Jesus' feet would have been in no doubt about the conflict that her actions would spark, but she finds a way to express her conviction both openly and with deep humility.

Being a reconciler is not about ignoring difference. It is about finding ways of hearing one another, generously and honestly, in both the things we have in common and where we differ enormously. On this foundation, trust can be built when we disagree.

Heads Up

Think about a disagreement you have with someone which you would be prepared to explore further in this session.

During

Story



Mariam's story

What does this story say to you about navigating disagreement?

 Write your notes in these spaces...



The Woman Who Washes Jesus' Feet

(Luke 7:36–50)

What do you learn about Jesus in this story?

In the film and the Bible passage, how do the three habits help people navigate disagreement?

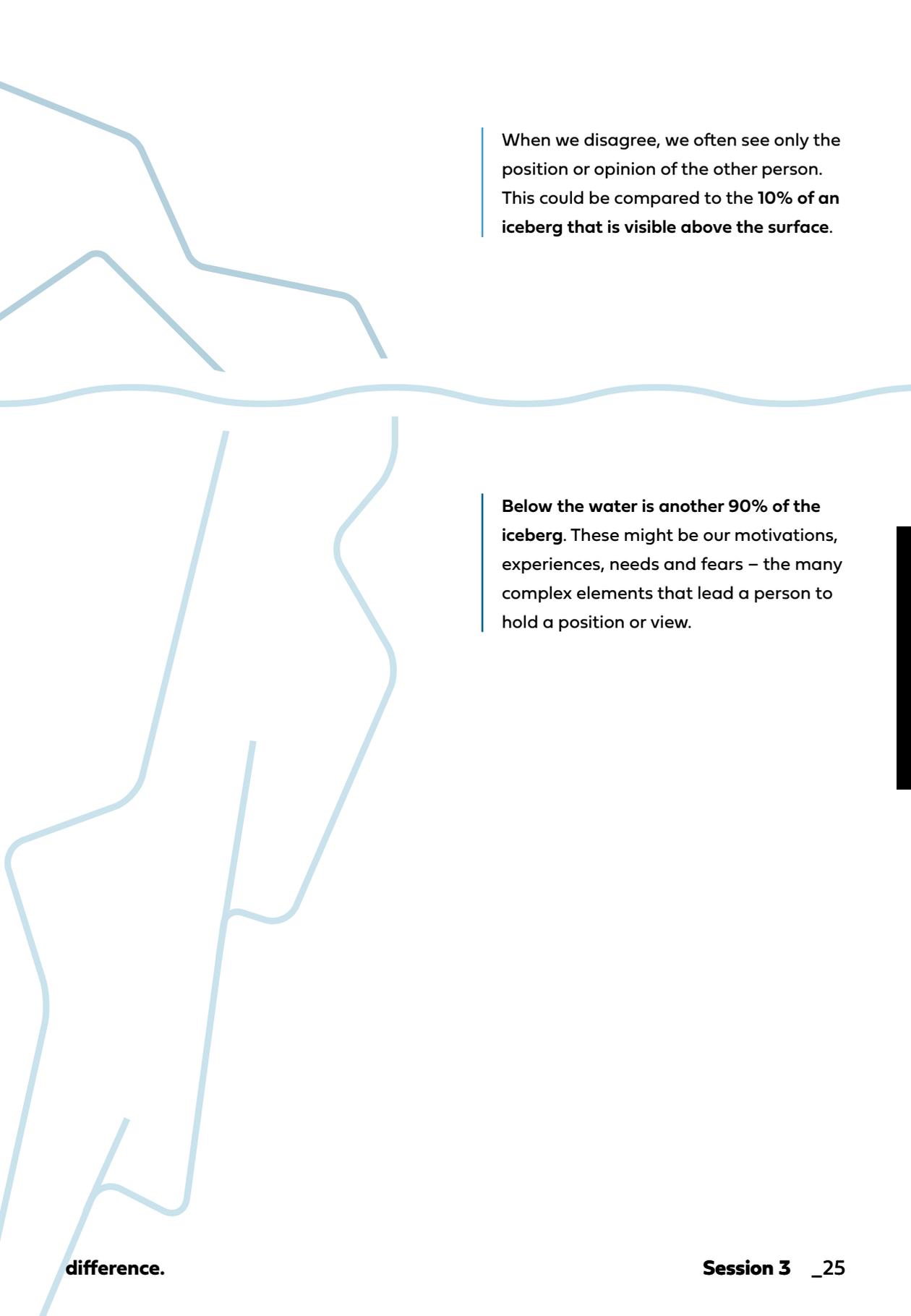
Space

The Iceberg

Use the space below to write or draw your responses during the Space activity.

When you disagree with someone, can you see beyond the surface?



A diagram illustrating the iceberg metaphor for disagreement. A horizontal wavy line represents the water surface. Above the surface, a small, jagged blue shape represents the visible tip of an iceberg. Below the surface, a much larger, more complex blue shape represents the submerged part of the iceberg. The text is placed to the right of the diagram, with a vertical blue line separating it from the text.

When we disagree, we often see only the position or opinion of the other person. This could be compared to the **10% of an iceberg that is visible above the surface.**

Below the water is another 90% of the iceberg. These might be our motivations, experiences, needs and fears – the many complex elements that lead a person to hold a position or view.

Sanctuary



The path of our lives will bring us into contact with conflict and disagreement.
But we have an opportunity to reimagine our response.

After →

Top Takeaway

Write or draw one thing you want to take away from this session.

Act

God is with us as we face the challenge of disagreement, which can become an opportunity for stronger relationships if handled well.

Be Curious_

How could I be a better listener?

 **Try** seeking to understand something new about a person or an opinion you disagree with.

Be Present_

Where am I showing up and sticking around?
Who could I have better encounters with?

 **Try** noticing your physical responses in disagreements. How could your body language show an openness to the other person?

Reimagine_

Where am I in need of hope?
How could I act on the hopes I already have?

 **Try** looking to strengthen your relationship with someone you disagree with when you next encounter them, rather than to win the argument.

End

difference.