

IMAGES OF GOD

STUDY GUIDE

CONFRONT

Let's start with what we know... or what we think we know... by examining what we currently believe and what our personal experience has been. What was the most present image of God that you carried in your mind growing up? Has that changed? One of the most common images of God in western culture is that of an older white man. Has the image of God as a white man impacted your life? How do you think the image of God as a white man has impacted our culture?



DECONSTRUCT

Let's deconstruct where our imagery of God comes from. We've created a resource guide to help kick off your research. Our abrahamic sibling religions of Judaism and Islam both claim to be aniconistic (without imagery for God). Is that true? Can language and text create imagery without visual representation? When did images of God begin to permeate our culture? How does white male God imagery from the Renaissance continue to impact our culture today?



REFRAME

Let's reframe things with an exercise! Imagine God looks like a 9-year-old Syrian refugee girl. To help you with this, check out this video of Darine called Edge of the Valley (<https://www.nrc.no/shorthand/stories/edge-of-the-valley/index.html>). If we imagine God looks like Darine, how would our language and ideas about God change? Would we see more of a celebration of youth, femininity, and diversity in our churches and culture? How does this reimagining reveal biases about how we view God that we may not have realized before?



REBUILD

With the goal of placing love at the center of our topic, let's rebuild how we view our understanding of and obligation to the image of God. How have our thoughts on imagery of God changed over the course of this series? With the understanding that the pervasive white male God image of western culture often promotes power over love, what is our obligation to this imagery? How can love + imagery of God be used to transform us personally and our society at large?

