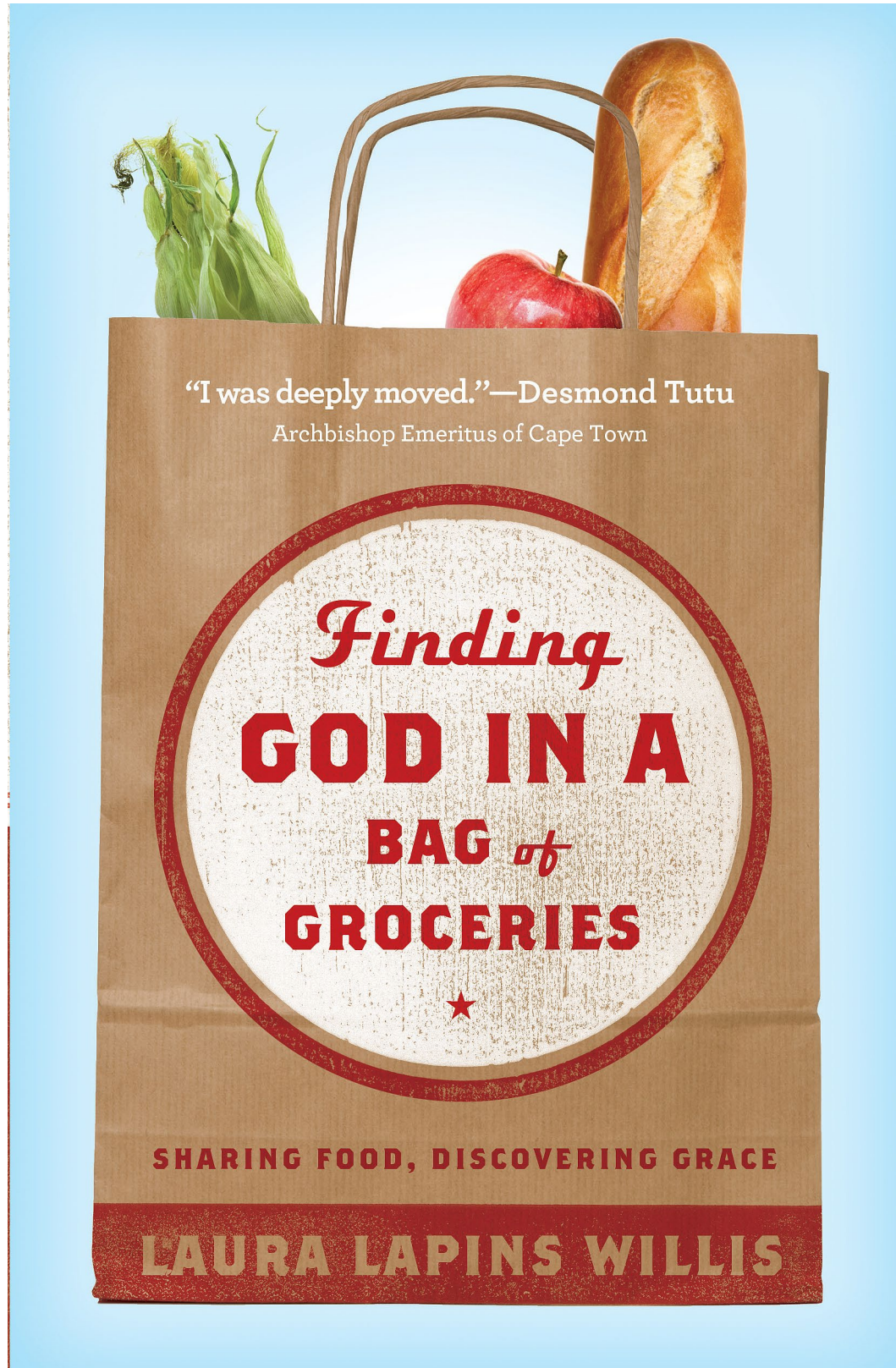


*Online Study Guide for General Interest Reading Groups*



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## Finding God in a Bag of Groceries

1. Laura begins the book with a story about rule breaking. Why do you think she began this way, and why is rule breaking the best introduction to this story? Consider how certain organizations have strict rules and what these rules mean. Discuss the rule breaking of people involved in civil rights, humanitarian issues, and religion and how their actions have changed the world.

2. *Finding God in a Bag of Groceries* describes many people whose lives are foreign to Laura. How does this story compare to stories about poverty in other countries, places where people's lives are unfamiliar? Does rural Tennessee feel like a foreign place to you? Do you think there is poverty hiding in your own community?

3. Carter and Frances are important people in Laura's story. Consider how Laura learned about poverty firsthand from them. How does the story of their new house help you understand the hidden traps of power in trying to help those in need? Are there instances in your life when you thought you were helping someone but were really trying to control them?

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## Finding God in a Bag of Groceries

4. Chapter 4 is called, “My Calling Card.” In it, Laura describes how that bag of groceries was her calling card. What are the symbols you carry to show your passions or your vocation? How do we acknowledge the calling cards of others?

5. Laura describes the “margins of society.” Have you experienced living on the margins (see Laura’s list at the bottom of page 99)? How do your experiences help you understand the people described in the book? Did this book change your perspective on your experiences or on your community’s response to the people on the margins where you live?

6. Consider the extreme hunger of Karin and her children. CAC answered their need at that moment, but imagine the depths of hunger they must experience on a regular basis? What role do food pantries play in long-term, systemic poverty? What are other solutions, locally and nationally?

7. In chapter 7, the story of Nell and the matching dishes undoes a college student. Are there places in your life where you have abundance and yet still crave more? Are there things you should give away or let go of to feel more at peace?

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## Finding God in a Bag of Groceries

8. Quiet and contemplation are important ways for Laura to process what she saw and experienced. How did you react to the horrors she saw? The joys she experienced? How does quiet fit into your spiritual life?

9. The funeral in chapter 12 examines significant socioeconomic, cultural, and religious differences between Laura and the people in attendance. Are there places in your life where you encounter such differences? How do communities bridge these gaps? What can we learn from sharing in such experiences?

10. Chapter 14 begins with the quote “What does love look like?” from St. Augustine. What do you think looked like love in this story? What does love look like in your own life?