



Episcopal Worship

SEGMENT 1: THE ROOTS OF MINISTRY

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

The Episcopal Church is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Lay ministers and ordained ministers are two kinds of ministers in the Church. Governance in the Episcopal Church closely mirrors that of the United States government.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP 256)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What do we mean by liturgy?

What is a minister?

Who are ministers?

How is the church governed?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Anglican Communion

Liturgy

Ministry of the Baptized

Ministry of the Laity

Ministry of the Ordained

Bishops

Priests

Deacons

Church Governance

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

Facilitator reads the questions and participants respond.

Pages 302-305, Holy Baptism, ending with five promises on page 305

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What do the following scriptures say to us about ministry?

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (varieties of gifts, but same Spirit)

Ephesians 4:1-16 (unity in the Body of Christ)

Romans 12:1-21 (traits of the true Christian)

Luke 22:27 (one who serves)

2. Which of the five baptismal promises that were read in the whole group work section are applicable to this segment? (First through fifth promise)

S M A L L G R O U P D I S C U S S I O N , c o n t i n u e d

3. If possible, have a clergy person come to the group to talk about the different articles of clothing worn by the priest and the symbolism of each.

4. How is the ministry of the baptized carried out as a layperson? As a bishop? As a priest? As a deacon?

5. Who are the vestry/bishop's committee members of your congregation?

6. Who are your elected diocesan convention representatives?

7. Who serves on the Altar Guild in your congregation? Who reads the lessons? Who teaches in your congregation?

W R A P - U P

We all have a ministry. Some of us have a ministry that is connected specifically to the church, i.e. priest, deacon, bishop. Most of us have a ministry that has secular connections in addition to our ministries we may have at church. We may teach in the public school and sing in the church choir. We may work in industry during the week and serve as a lay reader at church. Or we might work construction during the week and serve in a soup kitchen as our ministry. This is the ministry of the baptized.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The 1982 Hymnal

#554 - 'Tis the gift to be simple

#606 - Where true charity and love dwell

#610 - Lord, whose love through humble service

Wonder, Love and Praise

#764 - Taste and see

#778 - We are all one in mission

#831 - Ubi caritas

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#160 - This little light of mine

#216 - In my life, Lord, be glorified



Episcopal Worship

SEGMENT 2: EPISCOPAL WORSHIP

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

The Book of Common Prayer is our guide to worship. The two Great Sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion form the basis of our worship in the Episcopal Church.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.
(BCP 215)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is in *The Book of Common Prayer*?

What are the sacraments of the Church?

How do Episcopalians worship?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



Episcopal Worship

The Book of Common Prayer

Sacraments

USING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The Calendar and Church Seasons

The Daily Offices

The Great Litany

The Collects

Special Day Liturgies

Holy Baptism

Holy Eucharist

Pastoral Offices

Episcopal Services

The Psalms

Prayers and Thanksgivings

Catechism

Historical Documents of the Church

Tables for Finding Date of Easter and other Holy Days

The Lectionary

Daily Office Lectionary

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Look at the Table of Contents in the front of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Depending on the amount of class time, you might want to simply thumb through the book, noting the various sections. The amount of material for this class may be given as a reference for further study or could be spread out over several classes.

The Calendar and Church Seasons, page 15

The moveable date of Easter and the fixed date of Christmas determine the Church year. The Church Year reflects what God has done in Christ Jesus for all the people of all ages. We believe every Sunday is a “little Easter” and so our liturgy reflects Christ’s life and teachings.

The Church year begins with the first Sunday in Advent, which is the Sunday closest to November 30, St. Andrew’s Day. The four weeks of Advent serve as a time to prepare for the birth of our Savior. It is also a time of expectation and anticipation. The color for the season is either purple (royalty and kingship) or blue (reminding us of Jesus’ mother Mary and her faith and trust in God). The Catechism on page 849 tells us “the Messiah is the one sent by God to free us from the power of sin, so that with the help of God we may live in harmony with God, within ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation.”

During Advent, we will find other changes in our church as well. You might have an Advent Wreath near the altar. The round evergreen wreath reminds us that God is eternal – never beginning, never ending. The four candles remind us of the four weeks of Advent. Each week an additional candle is lit. On Christmas we would light a white candle in the center of the wreath – the Christ Candle, representing Christ as the Light of the World.

The *Gloria* might not be sung but the *Trisagion* (Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us) may be sung or said. The readings will reflect the prophecies of the Old Testament, the ministry of John the Baptist, and the New Testament readings concerning Jesus’ coming again.

The second season of the Church Year is also the shortest. The season of Christmas begins on Christmas Eve, December 24 and continues for twelve days until January 6. The color for the season is white for joy and celebration. Your church might have a Festival of Lessons and Carols, a traditional English Christmas service in which Old Testament prophecies and New Testament stories surrounding the birth of Jesus (along with carols from the hymnal or

anthems by a choir) tell the wonderful story of God's gift to us – his only son. This season ends with a celebration of the coming of the Magi (Wise men) and their gifts on January 6.

The Season of Epiphany begins on January 7 and continues until Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. Since Easter is a moveable feast day, the season of Epiphany can be as short as four weeks or as long as nine weeks. The color for the day of Epiphany and up to the Sunday after Epiphany (when we remember Jesus' baptism) is white – the festival color. For the rest of the season, the color is green. Green reminds us of growth. During the Epiphany season we will hear about the growth of the early church, Jesus' ministry – the calling of the disciples, healing and the other miracles, Jesus' ministry and teaching. Great emphasis is placed on mission during this time and the living out of our baptismal promises. It is a time to think about our own gifts for ministry. The season ends with Shrove Tuesday, a day of great celebration before the penitential season of Lent begins the following day.

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and continues for forty days, ending with Holy Saturday. The color for Lent is purple, for penitence and royalty, or something called "Lenten Array," burlap or cream-colored, austere fabric to remind us of the sackcloth of Old Testament times of mourning. The crosses might have veils or coverings over them. On Ash Wednesday, we gather in church to have ashes placed on our foreheads in the shape of the cross to remind us of our mortality and sorrow for our sins. The *Alleluias*, the *Gloria* and other festive music disappear from our worship for Lent. Some churches will not have flowers on the altar during this season. We will hear readings detailing Jesus' temptation in the desert, his last days of ministry and events in the Old Testament that parallel Jesus' suffering and sacrifice.

The last week of Lent, Holy Week, begins with the Sunday of the Passion, (also known as Palm Sunday). During this week, the church dramatizes the events leading up to Jesus' trial and crucifixion. The Palm Sunday liturgy begins with palms and processions, joyful music and ends with the Passion Gospel and Jesus' death. The color for Palm Sunday can either be red (used in the church to symbolize a martyr's death or on the day of Pentecost when we remember the coming of the Holy Spirit) or purple.

On Maundy Thursday in Holy Week, we remember Jesus' command to eat the bread, to drink the wine, to remember him and to love and serve one

another. In many churches, foot washing may be a part of this service. After the service a solemn vigil may be held to remember Jesus' asking his disciples to wait and watch with him in the Garden of Gethsemane right before the Roman soldiers came to arrest him. The altar may be stripped of hangings. Flowers, candles, banners, Gospel books and other items are reverently removed. The altar may be washed with wine and water to remind us of Jesus' death. We leave the church in silence. Bishops often bless a supply of holy oil on this day for congregations to use during the coming year.

Good Friday is the day we remember Jesus' death. There is usually no Eucharist on this day, and if there is, it is given from the reserved sacrament (bread and wine consecrated at an earlier service and put in a special place for a future communion). Some churches may have services between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., the time Jesus hung on the cross.

On Holy Saturday, there is no Eucharist before sundown. Many churches have an Easter Vigil, a tradition that goes back to the earliest days of the Church. Converts to the faith were required to undergo several years of instruction in the faith before they were invited to be baptized. At that point, they were baptized and then received Communion. This event took place on the Saturday before Easter, beginning that evening and continuing until dawn on Easter morning, reminding us all of Jesus' resurrection appearance to the women on Sunday morning. Today, the service customarily begins in darkness and the new Paschal Candle, representing Christ as the Light of the World, is brought into the church. Worshipers may light small candles from this large candle. An ancient chant, The *Exultet* is sung or said and as many as nine Old Testament lessons, recalling God's saving acts in history, are read. There may be baptisms and the Eucharist celebrated. The service is a vivid reminder of Jesus' appearing to Mary and the disciples on Easter morning.

The Season of Easter begins after sundown on Holy Saturday and ends with the Day of Pentecost. It is referred to as "The Great Fifty Days." The date for Easter is determined by the secular calendar – the first Sunday after the first full moon that falls on or after March 21. It is the principal feast of the church year. The color for the season is white for festival and joy. We celebrate the Risen Christ. The new Paschal Candle is brought into the church during the Easter Vigil on Saturday night or in the service on Easter Sunday. It reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the World. It also reminds us of the light in creation, the pillar of flame that led the Israelites out of Egypt through the

desert and the fire of Pentecost. The year's date may appear on the candle to remind us that the Good News is for every year. The Paschal Candle will remain near the altar until Pentecost. After that, it will be present at every baptism and at every funeral in the church.

Ascension Day is forty days after Easter, always on Thursday. It is a major feast day in the church's calendar. On this day, we remember Jesus' return to heaven and his promise to be with his disciples forever.

Ten days later, we celebrate the birthday of the church, Pentecost. The disciples had gathered in Jerusalem for the Jewish festival of Pentecost, which was a harvest festival that occurred fifty days after Passover. After Easter, Pentecost is the most important day in the Church calendar. It is the first event in the church's history. On this day, the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit in the form of flames of fire on their heads. They went out into the streets and began preaching to all the people who realized, that no matter their language, they could understand the disciples. The color for Pentecost is red, reminding us of the flames that signify the Holy Spirit. Baptisms and confirmations are traditionally done on this day.

Following the Day of Pentecost, we enter the long season after Pentecost. The color is green – again reminding us of growth and new life. The season after Pentecost touches on four broad themes: being God's children, our relationship with Jesus and others, our relationship with the Holy Spirit and the Church's mission. The season can be as long as 29 weeks, depending on the date of Easter. The season ends on the Saturday before the first Sunday in Advent.

On page 15 of *The Book of Common Prayer*, we find that the Principal Feasts observed in the church are Easter Day, Ascension Day, The Day of Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, All Saints' Day, Christmas Day and The Epiphany. These feasts take precedence over any other day or observance, but all Sundays of the year are feasts of Jesus.

The Daily Office, page 37

The Daily Offices are to be read by lay people or clergy, for personal prayer or corporate prayer. The readings and Psalm for each day can be found in the Daily Lectionary, beginning on page 934, which provides a two-year cycle of readings. One of the lessons is from the Gospel and it is always read last. The readings are followed by Canticles, hymns whose words are taken from the Bible, which may be sung or said.

The Book of Common Prayer provides two settings for Daily Morning Prayer—one has more formal language, the other more contemporary language. Noonday prayers and two settings for Daily Evening Prayer follow. An Order of Worship for the Evening (page 109) is a shortened form. The Service of Compline is the last service of the day. It too can be read alone, by lay people, clergy or in a group.

The Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families can be found on pages 136-140. These are especially suitable for families and, because the Scripture is written out, can be said using the Prayer Book alone.

The Great Litany and the Collects, page 148

The Great Litany is read during Lent and other penitential times. The Collects are prayers for the seasons of the year, holy days, saints, and various occasions. The Collect ('kah-likht), in traditional language or contemporary language, is read in the Daily Office and in the Eucharist at the designated place. The prayer serves to tie together the readings for the day and help us collect our thoughts to better understand the readings. These collects have been used extensively in The Discovery Series printed materials.

Proper Liturgies for Special Days, page 264

Services are located in this section for Ash Wednesday (the first day of the season of Lent), for the Liturgy of the Palms (Palm Sunday), Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday (the day before Easter) and The Great Vigil of Easter.

Holy Baptism, page 299

Baptism is one of the main sacraments of the Church; it is a sacrament instituted by Christ.

The service for Holy Baptism begins on page 209. We believe Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body, the Church. It is appropriate for baptisms to occur on Sunday within the Eucharist. The Church sets aside five great occasions for baptism – the Easter Vigil, Day of Pentecost, All Saints' Day or the Sunday after All Saints' Day and on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord (the first Sunday after Epiphany) and the visit of the bishop. Either a bishop or a priest can baptize, but in an emergency, a layperson can baptize. The bishop ordained the priest and blessed the holy oil, so the bishop is in some way present even if not physically there.

In the Episcopal Church, we baptize infants, children and adults. Young children and infants should have sponsors who will make the promises for them. The service begins with a hymn, readings from the Bible, a sermon and then the actual presentation and examination of the candidates, followed by the Baptismal Covenant. At this point, the entire congregation joins in and renews their own baptism by reciting the Apostles' Creed and making the five promises.

The Thanksgiving Over the Water recalls our biblical story – our history. The second portion of the prayer reminds us of what we do, and the last part of the prayer invokes the blessing of the Holy Spirit on the water, making the common holy. The person is baptized and then sealed with the chrism (holy oil). The priest or bishop may mark the forehead of the person baptized with this oil saying, _____ "Name," you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever."

The congregation welcomes the newly baptized into the household of faith. The Eucharist follows, beginning with the Passing of the Peace.

The Holy Eucharist, Rites I and II, pages 323 and 355

There are two main settings for the Holy Eucharist, Rite I or Rite II. An outline form for the Eucharist can be found on page 400 and is helpful to see the format of the service. Rite I is more penitential and traditional in language, Rite II is more contemporary. We begin with the Service of the Word in which we hear the Word of God read and preached. We profess our beliefs in the Nicene Creed, pray for the world, ask forgiveness of our sins and greet one another in the Name of the Lord.

The second half of the service is the Service of Holy Communion, or the Service of the Table. We obey Jesus' commandment to remember him and to serve. We come together offering our gifts – our oblations - the gifts of bread and wine and our alms (offering of money). We offer our thanksgiving to God, singing or saying an ancient hymn of praise. The priest continues with prayers remembering Jesus' suffering and death. Always included are the words of Jesus himself in which we remember the night he was handed over to suffering and death, how he took the bread and wine, blessed both and gave them to his disciples asking them to do this to remember him. We make a profession of faith in the death, resurrection, and coming again of Christ. We pray the Lord's Prayer, and the bread is broken and shared. We give God thanks for this meal and we receive our task for the coming week – to go and serve.

The family has come together, heard its story, prayed for one another, eaten and then is sent out to do the work it has been given to do.

The third segment of this course is an Instructed Eucharist which includes more detail.

The Pastoral Offices, page 413

The Pastoral offices begin with Confirmation. Confirmation is the sacramental rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage begins on page 423. In the Episcopal Church, marriage is one of the sacramental rites and therefore, a worship service of the church. The priest gives God's blessing to the couple.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

The Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child provides an opportunity for the community to welcome a new baby or child into the family and to give thanks to God.

The Reconciliation of a Penitent is the sacramental rite in which those who repent of their sins may confess them to God in the presence of a priest and receive the assurance of pardon and the grace of absolution. It is available for any who want it. It is not restricted to times of illness. Confession can be arranged with your clergy person at any time and is always private and confidential.

Ministration to the Sick, or Unction, can be done in hospital, at home or wherever the sick person is. Anointing with holy oil (Unction) may be done as well.

Lay or clergy can lead ministration at the time of death, as well as Prayers for a Vigil.

There are two rites for the Burial Office, traditional or contemporary language. Baptized Christians are properly buried from the church at a time when the congregation can be present. The casket is always closed and covered with a special cloth, called a pall, signifying our equality in the eyes of God. And, while floral arrangements may be used at the graveside, they are not present in the church. The casket is brought into the church preceded by the cross. The Paschal candle is placed at the head of the casket. The service opens with the words Jesus spoke to Mary and Martha when their brother Lazarus died. "I am Resurrection and I am Life, says the Lord. Whoever has faith in me shall have life, even though he die." A brief homily is usually part of the service; however eulogies are not. The service may conclude with the Eucharist.

Episcopal Services, page 511

The Episcopal Services contain services for the Ordination of a bishop, priest and deacon, the Celebration of a New Ministry and the Dedication and Consecration of a Church.

In the ordination of a Bishop, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church or a bishop appointed by the Presiding Bishop presides and serves as chief consecrator. At least two other bishops serve as co-consecrators (BCP 511). Lay representatives are also present. The presence of three bishops required for consecration of another bishop is part of our apostolic work of leading, supervising and uniting the Church. Although tradition claims apostolic succession means tracing the lineage back to the Apostle Peter in Rome, we believe it to mean also the church's teaching and focus on Christ and his ministry, death and resurrection – the Good News. A bishop presides at the ordination of a priest, with at least two other clergy present.

In both the consecration of a bishop and the ordination of a priest, both persons state their belief in Holy Scripture and the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church. The bishop receives a crozier, a special staff symbolizing the authority of the bishop and may receive a cope and miter. The cope is a colorful cloak with biblical origins recalling the special vestments Aaron wore, Jesus' seamless robe for which the Roman soldiers cast lots at his crucifixion, and the symbol of authority that such a covering denotes. The miter is similar to a crown, denoting position. A bishop removes the miter for prayers, preaching and celebrating. A Bible is also presented. A priest receives a Bible and a stole, representing the yoke of Christ and a symbol of the priest's authority. The Bible is the Word of God.

In both a consecration and an ordination, hands are placed on the bishop or priest by other bishops and/or priests. In the ordination of a deacon, a layperson and a priest can present the ordinand. Questions are asked to ascertain belief in Holy Scriptures and the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church. The Eucharist follows in all ordination services.

The Celebration of a New Ministry institutes or inducts a priest as rector of a parish, or dean or canon of a cathedral, or a vicar of mission or as an assistant minister. A stole, a Bible, water, a Prayer Book, holy oil, keys to the church, a copy of the Canons (laws of the church), bread and wine and any other symbols of ministry are presented to the priest by the congregation.

The Consecration of a Church can be adapted, using portions of the service that are applicable. The bishop presides. The service begins with the bishop knocking on the door of the church with the crozier and making the sign of the cross with the crozier upon the threshold. The Eucharist is a part of the celebration.

The Psalter, page 585

The Psalter, or body of liturgical poetry, were the hymns of Judaism – the hymns Jesus would have sung. Portions of the Psalter are suggested for use in every service. The suggested reading of the Psalms is found in both the Daily Office lectionary and in the Eucharistic lectionary. The Psalms may be read, prayed or sung. Some Psalms are songs of praise, others are lamentations. Some deal with personal struggles, others with historical events.

Prayers and Thanksgivings, page 810

Here one will find prayers for the world, for the church, for national life, for the social and natural orders, for family and personal life, thanksgivings, and other prayers. These prayers were used extensively in the printed material of The Discovery Series: *A Christian Journey*.

An Outline of the Faith, page 845

Commonly called the Catechism, this portion of the prayer book is intended for use in instruction of matters of the faith. It is in a question and answer format and may serve as a starting point for discussion or to provide a brief summary of the church's beliefs.

Historical Documents of the Church, page 864

The Athanasian Creed, the Articles of Religion and other historical documents are also part of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The Lectionary, page 888

The Lectionary for Sunday is arranged in a three-year cycle. Year A, in which we read mainly from the Gospel of Matthew, begins on the First Sunday of Advent in years evenly divisible by three. In Year B, we read mainly from the Gospel of Mark and in Year C, we read mainly from the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of John is read in all three years on important fast and feast days, especially during the season of Lent, Holy Week and during Easter every year.

W R A P - U P

Jeffrey Lee wrote in *Opening the Prayer Book*, “Anglicans are people of a book. The words and form of *The Book of Common Prayer* define our corporate identity perhaps to a degree not true of any other churches – even those with strong liturgical traditions. And not only are the words important for us, the book itself has a tremendous influence on our sense of who we are. There was a time when many church members had their own personal copies of the prayer book and brought them to use in church on Sunday mornings. Walk into any Episcopal Church and you will most likely find a congregation worshipping according to *The Book of Common Prayer*. You will also probably see some individual members of the congregation holding copies of the prayer book as they worship. In the backs of pews the prayer books sit next to hymnals.”

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The Hymnal 1982

Because this is such an extensive amount of material, the hymns are broken into sections of the prayer book and are taken from only *The Hymnal 1982*.

Daily Morning Prayer

#9 - Awake, awake to love and work

Order of Service for Noonday

#18 - As now the sun shines down at noon

Order of Worship for Evening and Daily Evening Prayer

#24 - The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended

Compline

#43 - All praise to thee, my God, this night

The Church Calendar

Advent

#67 - Comfort, comfort ye my people

Christmas

#109 - The First Nowell the angel did say

Epiphany

#135 - Songs of thankfulness and praise

Lent

#150 - Forty days and forty nights

Holy Week

#158 - Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended

Easter

#207 - Jesus Christ is risen today

Ascension

#217 - A hymn of glory let us sing

Pentecost

#225 - Hail thee, festival day!

Season of Pentecost

#400 - All Creatures of our God and King

Baptism

#297 - Descend O Spirit, purging flame

Eucharist

#304 - I come with joy to meet my Lord

Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

#351 - May the grace of Christ our Savior

Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child

#416 - For the beauty of the earth

Confirmation, Reception or Reaffirmation

#347 - Go forth for God; go to the world in peace

Ministration to the sick

#635 - If thou but trust in God to guide thee

Burial of the Dead

#355 - Give rest, O Christ

Ordination

#370 - I bind unto myself today

Celebration of a New Ministry

#517 - How lovely is thy dwelling place

Consecration of a Church

#518 - Christ is made the sure foundation

Psalms

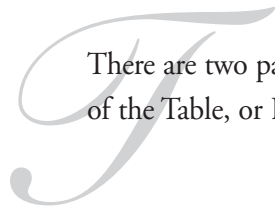
#680 - O God our help in ages past



Episcopal Worship

SEGMENT 3: AN INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE



There are two parts to the Eucharist, the Service of the Word and the Service of the Table, or Holy Communion.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it the spirit of grace and of supplication: Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 833)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What are the two parts of the Eucharist?

What is my role in the Eucharist?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Instructed Eucharist

The Word of God (Liturgy of the Word)

Gather in the Lord's Name

Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God

Pray for the World and the Church

Exchange the Peace

Holy Communion (Liturgy of the Table)

Prepare the Table

Make Eucharist

Break the Bread

Share the Gifts of God

Dismissal

USING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The Holy Eucharist: Rite II, pages 355-366

INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST

The first thing we do when we come to the service is to gather in the Lord's Name. Each part of the gathering prepares us to enter fully into the service. As you enter the church building, you may be given a service leaflet. Many churches position the baptismal font or other receptacle to hold blessed water near the entrance of the church. You may see people touching the water and making the sign of the cross on themselves. We do this as a reminder of our baptism and our preparation for worship.

You may see people bowing slightly toward the altar as they take their seat, in respect and acknowledgement of Christ's presence symbolized by the altar. In some churches you may find a red lamp burning either near the main altar or in a side chapel, a reminder of the Reserved Sacrament. The Reserved Sacrament is bread and wine not consumed at a previous service kept to take to the sick or shut-ins, or for small services during the week. You may see some people genuflecting (bowing down on one knee) in the presence of this red light in respect for the Reserved Sacrament.

You may see people crossing themselves as they kneel, sit or stand for a moment of quiet reflection and prayer. The time before the service begins is a quiet time for people to say prayers, center themselves and prepare for worship. It is not a time for talking and visiting – out of respect for the worship and other people present.

Worship in the Episcopal Church is filled with dignity, beauty, deep traditions, with honest integrity and with a sense of God's presence. The styles of worship vary from congregation to congregation. Some services are quiet and introspective. Others are extroverted and lively. There are formal or casual styles of worship, contemporary or traditional. And yet, within this great diversity there is one common thread that runs through all of our worship: transformation. Some churches print out the Scriptures in the leaflet or have an insert that contains the readings. Some churches have Bibles in the pews next to the hymnals. (And, you may bring your own.)

The readings for each day are indicated in the Lectionary for the current year of the three-year cycle. The readings reflect a cycle of celebrations and seasons surrounding the Easter commemoration of Jesus' death and resurrection, and the Christmas commemoration of Jesus' birth and presence in the world. If you attend worship services at an Episcopal Church regularly over the course of three years, you will hear most of the Bible read. Hymns are chosen to

INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST

correspond with the readings and the season of the church year. Colors of the vestments and altar hangings also reflect the season of the church year.

We expect to meet God when we worship. We are invited to transformation every time we come for worship. The word “Eucharist” comes from a Greek word that means thanksgiving. The Eucharist is a celebration of the good things that God has given us, and a way of offering ourselves, in thanks, to God. At the heart of this thanksgiving service, we find the proclamation of the Word and the meal given by Jesus to the church on the night before he suffered and died. Gathered at Christ’s table, we receive a little bread and wine – simple substances that are transformed by God’s grace into the body and blood of Christ.

This transformation is not magic – it is received by faith. In the Eucharist, we believe that we too are transformed by God’s love and grace. Through offering of ourselves at the Eucharist, and through receiving what God shares with us at Christ’s table, our lives are changed. We become what we receive. Just as we call the bread and wine of the Eucharist “holy food,” so we come to know ourselves as “holy people.”

As the people of Jesus Christ, we gather each Sunday to share this holy meal, hear the story of the faith, make our common prayer and offer our lives to God. We are transformed in worship. We renew our hope and reaffirm our core values.

Sometimes another word is used to describe our worship. It is the word “liturgy” which comes from the Greek word that means “common labor for the common good.” That is what our worship is about – working together to offer praise to God, to lift up the discouraged and to gain understanding of God’s word. Liturgy is the work of the people and so we all have an active part in worship in the Episcopal Church by singing the hymns, listening to the readings, participating in the prayers and making the responses throughout the liturgy.

Music has always been the most powerful way to participate in worship and to experience renewal, so our worship uses music from many different traditions. Some of the music that is offered in praise to God comes from traditional sources. More and more music is finding its way into our worship from other cultures and parts of the world. It is not unusual to worship with African freedom marches and German chorales in the same service.

INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST

Every time we come for worship, it is a celebration. When we celebrate in our homes, we may use special dishes, put flowers and candles on the table, use linen napkins and serve the best we have. When we celebrate the Eucharist we use special dishes. Instead of an everyday plate, we put the bread or wafers on a plate called a paten. Instead of an everyday cup, we put the wine in a chalice. We put flowers and candles on the table and cover the altar or table with a fine linen cloth. The table for the Eucharist is the symbol of Jesus' presence among us. We treat the table reverently and with great care.

When we celebrate in our homes, we tell stories – family stories, who we are, *whose* we are, how we impact one another. Many of these stories are told for the sake of newcomers so that they can learn who we are. Sometimes these stories are told so that long-time family members can reaffirm and celebrate who they are. When we gather for worship we do the same thing. We gather for a meal. We tell stories and hear stories. We talk about the way our relationship to God and each other impacts us. We celebrate.

And who can come to this meal? All people – young and old, wise and uninformed, those who have been close to God their whole lives and those who are only now realizing who God is in their lives. Although baptism is a prerequisite for receiving Communion, really no preparation can make us worthy of coming to the Eucharistic table. Instead, the Eucharist makes us worthy. We come, knowing that we don't understand everything. But we come in faith knowing that we are strengthened.

The Word of God

We Gather in the Lord's Name

The service typically begins with an opening hymn and the procession. The procession may include the acolytes, choir members, lay ministers, and clergy who will take part in the service. You might see people bowing as the cross passes them. If the Bishop is present, she or he will be the last person in the procession and will either be holding the crozier or will be preceded by a person selected as the bishop's chaplain holding the crozier (a staff symbolizing a shepherd's crook, reminding us that the bishop is the shepherd of the flock). Some churches use a vergier who directs the service. It is appropriate to bow as the processional cross passes and to join in the singing of the opening hymn.

The Hymnal 1982 #410 (Praise my soul the King of Heaven) is used in this instructed Eucharist.

The service begins with the Opening Acclamation in which we acknowledge our own place in God's blessing.

*Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be his kingdom; now and forever. Amen*

There are two other choices of opening acclamations – one for penitential seasons and one for the Easter season. You may see people making the sign of the cross during this acclamation.

A prayer known as the Collect for Purity is said next. The priest reads the Collect and the people respond with "Amen." This Collect ('kah - likt) helps us collectively focus on worship.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A song of praise follows. Giving praise to God is another way of saying that we prize God above everything else. Praising God also allows us to more easily step out of ourselves and our sometimes-limited view of things so that we might catch a glimpse of God's desire for us.

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people
on earth.*

*Lord God, heavenly King,
Almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory . . .*

The priest then prays the Collect of the Day, a prayer that reflects the assigned readings and season of the church year. The congregation remains standing for the Collect. The following Collect was used in the video:

*O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your
people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know
him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads;
who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one
God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Proclaim and Respond to the Word of God

Following the Collect, we sit for the readings. These may include an Old Testament lesson – stories of God's love for his chosen people, the Israelites or Hebrews; a Psalm – early pieces of poetry written over centuries which have been included in worship since ancient times; and a New Testament reading from the Epistles – stories of the first apostles and the early church or sections of pastoral letters written to early churches. Lay people may serve as readers. For this instructed Eucharist, readings were taken from Ezekiel 34:11-22, Psalm 23, Hebrews 13:20-21.

A reading from Ezekiel:

*For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my
sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their
flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will
seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to
which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and
thick darkness . . .*

Psalm 23

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters . . .*

A reading from Hebrews:

*Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the
dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the
blood of the eternal covenant make you complete in
everything good so that you may do his . . .*

A hymn reflecting the readings often follows.

The hymn used in the video is #664 (My shepherd will supply my need) *The Hymnal 1982*.

The congregation stands for the reading of the Gospel out of respect for Jesus and the stories of his ministry. The Gospels contain the good news of God's kingdom coming to us in Jesus Christ. They contain the teachings of Jesus as well as stories about his ministry.

The three-year series of readings would have Gospel readings from Matthew one year, Mark the next and Luke the last. The Gospel of John would be read at Easter and other special days. Some people make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips and heart to signify their desire to keep these words in their minds, on their lips and in their hearts. The Gospel may be read amidst the congregation, symbolizing the bringing of the Gospel message out into the world. This may be done in a procession with cross, torches and the Gospel book. The Gospel read in the Instructed Eucharist can be found in John 10:11-17.

The priest or deacon reads the Gospel, saying:
The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to
_____.

The people respond with:
Glory to you, Lord Christ.

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

Following the Gospel, the priest delivers the sermon based on the readings. This helps us understand how the Scripture impacts our lives today. In the Episcopal Church we believe that the Word of God is a living thing. This Word lives in our lives and in our experiences; it finds its way into our own stories. The sermon suggests how this might happen. In the coming week, we are invited to reflect on the scriptures and make our own response to them.

Sermon.

Upon conclusion of the sermon, the priest and congregation stand to recite the Nicene Creed, which is an ancient statement of beliefs fashioned by early church councils. It is found in the prayer book on page 358.

*We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen . . .*

Pray for the World and the Church

Next we offer prayers known as the Prayers of the People. These prayers may be led by a designated lay person and allow the congregation the opportunity to add their own petitions and intercessions. This Instructed Eucharist in the video uses Form 6 of the Prayers found on page 392. This Form includes a Confession of Sin.

*. . . For this community, the nation, and the world;
For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.
For the just and proper use of your creation;
For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and
oppression . . .*

If a different form of the Prayers of the People is used, we would follow it with a communal confession of sin, reciting the General Confession. In this prayer, we admit our sins and ask God's forgiveness. We receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the priest who represents Christ. Another form of Confession can be found on page 360. People may either kneel or stand for the confession and absolution.

*We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins
Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;
in your compassion forgive us our sins,
known and unknown . . .*

The Absolution by the priest, representing God.

*Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins
through our Lord Jesus Christ; strengthen you in all
goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in
eternal life. Amen.*

Exchange the Peace

The Liturgy of the Word joins the Liturgy of the Table at the exchange of the Peace. In preparation to join in the prayer of thanksgiving at the altar, we pause in the liturgy to greet one another with the peace of Christ. This is much more than simply shaking hands in greeting. The Peace is a time, not for exchanging pleasantries, but for greeting one another in the name of the Lord, and for seeing Christ in others.

Priest:

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People:

And also with you.

Holy Communion

Prepare the Table

After the Peace, we begin the Liturgy of the Table – the Holy Communion. The deacon, if one is present, or the priest prepares the table or altar. Representatives from the congregation present the gifts of bread and wine, as well offerings for the relief of the poor and the missionary work of the church. The choir may present their gift of music at this time. The priest ceremoniously washes his or her hands representing the fact that no one comes to this table without sin. The chalice and paten, the bread and wine are placed on the altar. The priest pours wine into the chalice and adds a little water. The wine and bread represent Christ's body and blood. The water represents us. Once the wine and water are combined, they cannot be separated, symbolizing that we are one with Christ, just as Christ is one with the Father. The priest then leads the congregation in the Great Thanksgiving. A "Proper Preface" is said or sung for that particular Sunday or other occasion.

In the video, we use Eucharistic Prayer A, found on page 361. This Eucharistic Prayer is the most general of all four. Eucharistic Prayer B is particularly suitable for use during Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and on saint's days. Eucharistic Prayer C involves more congregational response and has more emphasis on creation than the others. It is also the newest Eucharistic Prayer. Prayer D provides for intercessions, and is adapted from the early fourth century. The people remain standing.

Make Eucharist

The Celebrant, the priest who will preside at the Eucharist faces the people and says:

The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. (Proper Preface is here.)

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

People join in singing or saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Celebrant continues:

You may hear bells or a gong rung three times during the Sanctus and Words of Institution. This sound is a reminder to us that something important is happening in the service – the “Holy, holy, holy Lord” is the song sung by angels praising God as we read in Isaiah. The bell may also be rung when the bread is blessed and the wine is blessed. In early times, the worshipers either couldn’t hear the priest because his back was turned to them or he was speaking in Latin and they couldn’t understand so the bells drew their attention to what was happening. And, for those who were working in their fields, the sound of the bells reminded them that the Eucharist was being celebrated. Often they would stop for prayer at this time.

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

At the following words concerning the bread, the celebrant holds it or lays a hand upon it. At the words concerning the cup, the celebrant holds or places a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated. Recalling the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, the celebrant says the Words of Institution, then the Holy Spirit is invoked to make the common bread and wine holy and to be present with God's people.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

The priest says:

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Here the congregation joins the priest in repeating the following three lines:

*Christ has died.
Christ has risen.
Christ will come again.*

The celebrant continues:

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom. All this we ask through you Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. AMEN.

The Eucharistic Prayer ends with the great AMEN (the only thing in the Prayer Book in capital italics).

The Lord's Prayer, the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, follows. In the Lord's Prayer we say what we believe most deeply about God, we call on God as a loving parent, assuring ourselves that God's sovereignty keeps us secure. We ask that God's desire for us come about and acknowledge that God's sovereignty maintains all things. We ask for what we need to sustain ourselves, and ask to be forgiven for our sins and also that we may forgive others in the same way. We admit that there will be difficult times in our own lives and ask God to help us when we fall. And we conclude by praising God and admitting that we need God's help.

Priest:

And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Break the Bread

Following the prayer, the bread is broken in order to share it, so that all may receive a just portion. The celebrant will hold up the large wafer or bread so all can see and break it in half. A special anthem called the Fraction Anthem may be sung. The Fraction Anthem was sung in the Instructed Eucharist. Or the celebrant may say:

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People:

Therefore let us keep the feast.

Share the Gifts of God

The congregation then comes forward to receive the bread and wine. Some may genuflect or bow as they step in the aisle to come forward to the altar. We may receive standing or kneeling. Some may make the sign of the cross before receiving the bread and wine. This is done as a reminder that Christ died for us by touching our forehead, chest, and left and right shoulders. It is acceptable to drink from the chalice or dip the bread/wafer into the wine (called “intinction”). To receive the bread or wafer, we hold out our hands, crossed, with palms up. It is all right to receive only the bread. To do this, simply cross your arms across your chest as a signal that you do not wish to receive the wine. The priest will give you a blessing instead. To drink the wine, take the base of the chalice in your right hand and guide it to your lips, while the priest or Lay Eucharistic Minister tips the cup slightly. As we return to our seats, we may kneel for a time of silent prayer. Hymns may be sung during this time.

When everyone has received communion, we say a prayer thanking God for the gift of His Son and asking for God’s presence in our daily lives. In the video, we use the first prayer.

*Eternal God, heavenly Father,
You have graciously accepted us as living members of your
Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
And grant us strength and courage
To love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

A closing hymn may be sung. The priests and other ministers depart led by the cross.

In the video, the closing hymn is *The Hymnal 1982* #390 (Praise to the Lord).

The Dismissal

The Eucharist concludes with the Dismissal – our charge to go forth into the world to do ministry in the Lord’s name. Just as the simple bread and wine we receive at Christ’s table is transformed by God’s grace, we too, are transformed by God’s love and grace. By taking the holy food of the Eucharist, we come to know ourselves as holy people. The Eucharist joins all of God’s people from all times and all places. As one people, the family of Christ, we share the holy meal, hear the story of our faith, make our common prayer, and offer ourselves and our lives to God.

The deacon, if present, or the priest concludes the service with these words:

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People:

Thanks be to God.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Where is it that you feel closest to God?
2. In your community, how do you feed each other?
3. How do you share the love of Christ with others?

W R A P - U P

We sometimes refer to the Eucharist as the Holy Mysteries. We don't fully understand what happens and at what exact moment it occurs, but we believe that Jesus is present in the bread and wine, just as he promised.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

Hymnal 1982

#51 - We the Lord's people

#306 - Come, risen Lord, and deign to be our guest

#312 - Strengthen for service, Lord

#314 - Humbly I adore thee

#488 - Be Thou my vision

#525 - The Church's one foundation

Wonder, Love and Praise

#763 - As we gather at your table

#766 - You're called by name, forever loved

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#146 - Break thou the bread of life



Course One: *A Journey of Faith*

SEGMENT 1: YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

The foundations of the Christian faith can be expressed in our belief in the Trinity – the way we as Christians name God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The life and teachings of Jesus and God's promises for each of us can be found in the Bible.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, you prepared your disciples for the coming of the Spirit through the teaching of your Son Jesus Christ: Make the hearts and minds of your servants ready to receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit, that they may be filled with the strength of his presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 819)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

Do you think about God? About Jesus? About the Holy Spirit?

What is your image of God? Of Jesus? Of the Holy Spirit?

What is Christianity?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



Our purpose in life and God's plan for us – transformation

The Trinity

God

Jesus

Holy Spirit

What is Christianity?

Human Nature

The Kingdom of God

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class the first, second and third promises are particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. When you look for God in your life, you will find God in your life. How is this idea reflected in the following scripture?

Genesis 12:1-7 (Call of Abram)

Exodus 3:1-6 (Moses and the Burning Bush)

Luke 1:26-38 (The Annunciation)

When have you encountered God or when have you felt the presence of God?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

2. In the video, you saw artwork depicting Adam and Eve and the serpent, the woman touching Jesus' robe and Pentecost. Each represents a person of the Trinity. Read the following scripture to see how.

Genesis 3 (Adam & Eve and the serpent)

Matthew 9: 20-22 (Woman touching Jesus' robe)

Acts 2:1-12 (Gift of the Holy Spirit)

3. How is your idea of the Kingdom of God influenced or changed after reading these passages?

Matthew 13:24-30 (Parable of Wheat and Weeds)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

Matthew 13:31-32 (Parable of the Mustard Seed)

Matthew 13:33 (Parable of the Leaven)

Matthew 13:45 (Parable of the Pearl of Great Value)

Matthew 13:1-9 (Parable of the Sower)

4. How do you see yourself in God's image? You may like to draw a picture capturing your concept of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit or the Kingdom of God. Give your drawing to someone else in the group and have them share what they see in it.

W R A P - U P

We have begun a journey in faith today. We may become aware of God's presence in our lives. We will make this journey together in a community of faith. We have examined scripture to help us begin to be better informed about the nature of the Trinity – God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We examined scripture to help us also begin to understand the Kingdom of God. We can share among ourselves; we can be a community.

The following is an excerpt from a sermon by the Rev. Andrew Parker:

I'm sure you all know why we're here today. We've come here because we are hungry, and we are thirsty. We've come because God freed us from something inside and led us out to an open place, where we never before thought we could live. We've come because God healed us of our sickness, or of our ego. Or because we hope and pray that God will heal us yet. We come to this place week in and week out, with a whole bundle of needs. We come to join with the strangers and friends God has chosen for us. So we open our hands, and pray with each other, "God, give us this day our daily bread." And, you know, God continues to hear our prayer and feed us and give us strength.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The Hymnal 1982

#370 - I bind unto myself today the strong name of the Trinity

#401 - The God of Abraham praise

#482 - Lord of all hopefulness

#507 - Praise the Spirit in creation

#647 - I know not where the road may lead

Wonder, Love & Praise

#753 - When from bondage we are summoned

#757 - Will you come and follow me

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#194 - Lead me, guide me, along the way



Course One: *A Journey of Faith*

SEGMENT 2: THE GREAT COMMANDMENT AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

The Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses to help the Israelites become a unified nation. Jesus summarized these Ten Commandments in the Great Commandment, one which stressed love for God and for our neighbor. Jesus also gave his followers a commission – a task to do. We call this the Great Commandment.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, you have taught us to keep all your commandments by loving you and our neighbor: Grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that we may be devoted to you with our whole heart, and united to one another with pure affection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 231)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites while they were on a journey to the Promised Land. How was God revealed to them through these commandments? What impact on their journey did these commandments have?

What is the Great Commandment that Jesus gave? What does this reveal about Jesus?

What is the Great Commission? How can it be lived out today?
The video speaks of levels of commitment. Where are you on this journey?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Ten Commandments

The Great Commandment

The Great Commission

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class the following promises are particularly relevant:

First, third and fourth promises

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

4. After hearing this new commandment, one of the lawyers asked Jesus to tell him who his neighbor was. Jesus responded with the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Read this parable in Luke 10:5-37. Who is our neighbor? How can we be a good Samaritan today?

5. What is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)? The Great Commission is our commission, too. What does it mean to be a disciple today?

6. Choose the Ten Commandments, the Great Commandment or the Great Commission and depict in a drawing.

W R A P - U P

Through Christ's Great Commandment and Great Commission, we can more clearly understand the path God wants us to follow in our lives. Because we are members of a faith community, the church itself is an important part of our journey. Within the church, we develop strong relationships with others. Through our Christian family, we can more effectively put into practice the love and devotion God desires. This is not an easy task, and it is a lifelong journey.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The Hymnal 1982

#528 - Lord you give the Great Commission

#529 - In Christ there is no east or west

#564 - He who would valiant be

Wonder Love and Praise

#778 - We all are one in mission

#779 - The church of Christ in every age

Lift Every Voice and Sing

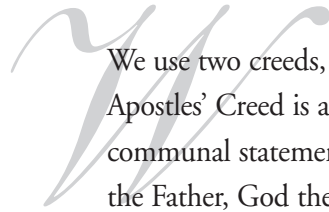
#74 - Jesu, Jesu



Course One: *A Journey of Faith*

SEGMENT 3: WHAT WE BELIEVE

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE



We use two creeds, statements of belief, in the Episcopal Church. The Apostles' Creed is a personal statement of belief and the Nicene Creed is a communal statement of belief. In both we affirm our belief in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, you have revealed to your Church your eternal Being of glorious majesty and perfect love as one God in Trinity of Persons: Give us grace to continue steadfast in the confession of this faith, and constant in our worship of you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; for you live and reign, one God, now and forever. Amen. (BCP 251)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is a creed?

What is the Apostles' Creed?

What is the Nicene Creed?

How does reciting these creeds help define your worship experience?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord

I believe in the Holy Spirit

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty

We believe in one lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class the first and third promises are particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

You might find it helpful to review pages 6-7 for facilitating tips.

1. What things do you believe in that you cannot see?

2. How did you first learn about God? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?

3. The group may want to refer to the Apostles' Creed on page 96 and the Nicene Creed on pages 358-59. Or use the large sized copies placed side by side and highlight the similarities in one color and the differences in another.

4. Refer to the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed on page ___ or in *The Book of Common Prayer* (page 96 or 358-359) as you discuss the following questions.

What do we mean when we say we believe in God the Father Almighty?

What do we mean when we say we believe in Jesus Christ?

What do we mean when we say we believe in the Holy Spirit?

Apostles' Creed (BCP 96)

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

*He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.*

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.*

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

*He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

Nicene Creed (BCP 358-59)

*We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.*

*We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.*

*For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.*

*For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.*

*On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven*

*and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.*

*With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.*

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins,

*We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

5. Think about other creeds you might know, such as the Pledge of Allegiance, scout oaths, 4-H Club Motto, etc. How are they like church creeds? Different from church creeds?

6. Look in your church for various symbols of the Trinity. You might look at some of the reference books listed in this section that deal with the Trinity. What element does each share?

7. Draw your own symbol for the Trinity or the Kingdom of God.

W R A P - U P

We affirm our relationship to “The Story” in the Creeds. We say that we believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ cross symbolizes for us the process by which we also grow, both individually and by giving ourselves to others. As we challenge and stretch ourselves in pursuit of goals, we grow. The crucifixion of Jesus did not end his interaction with us. The resurrected Christ lives among us.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The Hymnal 1982

#366 - Holy God, we praise Thy Name

#368 - Holy Father, Great Creator

Wonder Love and Praise

#743 - O threefold God of tender unity

#752 - There’s a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place

Lift Every Voice and Sing

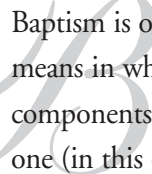
#198 - Love lifted me



Course One: *A Journey of Faith*

SEGMENT 4: THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

 Baptism is one of two main sacraments in the Episcopal Church. It is the means in which we become part of the family of God. There are two components to a sacrament – a visible one (in this case water) and an invisible one (in this case forgiveness of sins and a new life in Christ.) The Baptismal Covenant includes a statement of belief and promises made to God and the Christian family to live into the teachings of Jesus and our call to ministry in the Great Commandment and Great Commission.

OPENING PRAYER

All praise and thanks to you, most merciful Father, for adopting us as your own children, for incorporating us into your holy Church, and for making us worthy to share in the inheritance of the saints in light; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 311)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is baptism?

What is a covenant?

What is a sacrament?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



Baptism

Baptismal Covenant

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class all the promises are particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Using a dictionary, look up the meaning of “covenant.” What kinds of covenants do we make in our daily lives?

2. The Prayer of Thanksgiving over the Water on page 306 of *The Book of Common Prayer* references several Bible stories. Look up the references listed under each section of the prayer and answer these questions: (You might want to give each small group section one of the scripture passages.)

What is the importance of water in each story?

What is the resurrection/new birth that occurred in each story?

Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Genesis 1:1-2

Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. Exodus 14:21-22

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit. Matthew 3:13-17

In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Romans 6:3-11

Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Acts 10:44-48

Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:18-20

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

3. The Baptismal Covenant has five promises following the affirmation of faith in the Trinity (the Creed–BCP 304-05). Look at each promise and answer the following questions:

What are we being asked to do?

What insights does the video provide for you in living into this promise?

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin repent and return to the Lord?

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

W R A P - U P

We affirm our relationship to “The Story” in the Creeds. We say that we believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ cross symbolizes for us the process by which we also grow, both individually and by giving ourselves to others. As we challenge and stretch ourselves in pursuit of goals, we grow. The crucifixion of Jesus did not end his interaction with us. The resurrected Christ lives among us. This is the last segment of the first course. In this course, we have explored what it means to be on a spiritual journey, and we have begun that journey. We learned the Great Commandment and Great Commission – Jesus’ teaching on loving our neighbors as ourselves and His call to mission to go out and make disciples. We studied the two creeds used in the Episcopal Church – the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed. And, we carefully examined the sacrament of Baptism and the covenant promises we make and reaffirm at every baptism.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon us your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have raised us to the new life of grace. Sustain us, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give us an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen. (BCP 308)

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The Hymnal 1982

#296 - We know that Christ is raised and dies no more

#490 - I want to walk as a child of the Light

Wonder, Love, and Praise

#767 - Baptized in water

Lift Every Voice and Sing

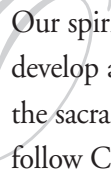
#134 - Take me to the water



Course Two: *A Path to Spiritual Maturity*

SEGMENT 1: SPIRITUAL MATURITY

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE



Our spiritual maturity leads us into ministry as a result of our baptism. We develop a rule of life which includes prayer, study and action. Confirmation is the sacramental rite of the church in which we make a mature commitment to follow Christ. We all share in ministry.

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP 231)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is spiritual maturity?

What are some tools we use to deepen our spirituality?

What is ministry?

What is confirmation?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



Paul and the Epistles

Spiritual Maturity

Confirmation

Ministry

Rule of Life

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class the first, third and fifth promises are particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read 1 Corinthians 13:11-12. What does Paul say are some characteristics of a spiritually mature person?
2. St. Benedict wrote a rule of life. See page ____ for information on Benedict. Write a rule of life for yourself.
3. The video showed an anchor and talked about spiritual maturity anchoring us to Christ. The early church used the symbol of the anchor to represent this thought. What are your anchors today?
4. You might like to draw something depicting your anchor.

W R A P - U P

In the next video segments we will examine spiritual maturity habits of prayer, study and action. This introduction sets the theme for these next segments. In Confirmation, we say we are ready to accept a mature commitment to Christ and His Church. We learned about Paul and other apostles and their travels all over the known world as they spread the good news of the Gospel message – their own spiritual commitment was maturing. And, we have examined the meaning of ministry and how we can be ministers as we grow in our spiritual maturity.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The Hymnal 1982

#348 - Lord, we have come at your own invitation

#349 - Holy Spirit, Lord of love

Wonder Love and Praise

#765 - You're called by name, forever loved

#782 - Gracious Spirit, give your servants

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#115 - Spirit of the living God

#118 - Spirit song



Course Two: *A Path to Spiritual Maturity*

SEGMENT 2: PRAYER

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

Prayer is our communication with God. Jesus gave his disciples the Lord's Prayer in response to their asking him to teach them how to pray. Prayer is an integral part of our rule of life. *The Book of Common Prayer*, written in the common language of the people contains daily devotions, services and prayers that all Episcopalians and Anglicans use.

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP 231)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is prayer?

Why use written prayers?

How do you use *The Book of Common Prayer*?

Where did you first learn to pray? Who taught you?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Lord's Prayer

Prayers of Adoration

Prayers of Confession

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Prayers of Supplication or offering ourselves to God

Private Prayer and Corporate Prayer

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class all the promises are relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4. Why did Jesus teach this prayer? Why do we still teach this prayer today? How did you learn this prayer?

2. Choose either the traditional version or the contemporary version of the Lord's Prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer* to answer these questions:

Who is God to you?

Do you believe that evil exists?

How do you forgive?

What helps you feel reconciled?

What is your definition of “trespass”?

Traditional version

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (BCP 133)

Contemporary Version

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. (BCP 133)

3. Illustrate the Lord’s Prayer, or a specific petition.

Our work is prayer. Cooking the evening meal can be a time for offering up to God prayers for the family, the day and its concerns and blessings. Even buckling your seatbelt as you begin a drive can be a time for prayer for safe journey or other concerns. Our work as prayer can also be seen as a time to pray for those with whom we work, for situations in the workplace or job in which we would ask for God's interaction and help. Our prayers can be private or corporate. Corporate prayers are prayed in community.

Episcopalians all over the United States use *The Book of Common Prayer* and many of the prayers are similar to, if not exactly like, those used in the Anglican Communion all over the world. The larger community of faith is praying the same prayers all over the world.

Our worship is also prayer. *The Book of Common Prayer* has services or daily offices for the morning, noon, evening and night. There is a whole section of Collects ('kal-ikts), prayers said at the beginning of each service, that help us collect our thoughts and center us around the worship theme for the day. There is also a whole section on prayers for different aspects of our lives.

We can use icons, prayer beads, statues, candles, quiet music or quiet places to help us in our prayer lives. We can keep a prayer journal to help us collect our prayer requests and thoughts and to look back to see how God has answered prayers, perhaps without our knowing it. Our music can be prayer, too.

CLOSING PRAYER / HYMN

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The 1982 Hymnal

#24 - The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended

#397 - Now thank we all our God

#635 - If thou but trust in God to guide thee

#674 - Forgive our sins as we forgive

#693 - Just as I am

#698 - Eternal Spirit of the Living Christ

Wonder, Love and Praise

#812 - I the Lord of sea and sky

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#83 - Just a little talk with Jesus



Course Two: *A Path to Spiritual Maturity*

SEGMENT 3: BIBLE STUDY

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

The Bible is the living word of God. It is divided into three sections, Old Testament, New Testament and Apocrypha. Through Bible study we maintain contact with our spiritual tradition. Bible study is an integral part of our rule of life.

OPENING PRAYER

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 236)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is the Bible?

What tools are available to help you study the Bible?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Bible

Old Testament

New Testament

Apocrypha

Bible Study

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. First and third promises are relevant to this segment.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read these Bible stories using different translations such as *King James*, *New Revised Standard Version*, *The Good News Bible*, *The New International Bible* etc. Is one version more familiar to you than another? Try your hand at rewriting one of these passages, as you would expect to hear it today.

Psalm 23 (Good Shepherd)

Isaiah 40:1-5 (Comfort, comfort)

John 3:16 (For God so loved)

2. Do you have a favorite Bible story? What is it? Why is it your favorite?

3. Illustrate or discuss one of your favorite Bible stories. Where are you in this story?

It is important that we listen to the biblical story in its entirety. The Holy Spirit does not open the meaning of the Scriptures for us easily in a kind of lightening flash. It happens through years of study. Bible study involves looking at the historical, literary and theological settings of the text. It involves asking questions about the meaning of words and explaining the cultural context in which it was written to better grasp what the original hearers understood. The Bible is the story of God's people, not one person. The text needs to be approached with community in mind.

The Bible is the story of how the people of faith understood and responded to God who acted in history. It can be the same for us. We must take these stories and compare them to our own times. The Bible doesn't tell us what to do, it tells us who we are – children of God. By studying what others did in particular situations in history, we can help frame our responses to situations today in the best way. Some of the biblical stories of people's responses show that they did not make the best choice they could have made. We can look at the Bible as our family story. In sharing and learning our family story, we know who we are and how we should live our lives as part of that family.

The Episcopal Church is a biblical church. Besides the appointed readings, the words used in our worship services are often taken directly from scripture. Over a three-year period we read most of the Bible in our services. At every Eucharist, we retell the basic part of our story and celebrate who we are. This memory of our spiritual community is important.

And, the story of the people of God does not end with the last book of the Bible. We are people of God, and our story continues as we continue to live lives in faith. Our own stories are sacred, too. The story is not over – God is still with us.

CLOSING PRAYER / HYMN

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The Hymnal 1982

#536 - God has spoken

#630 - Thanks to God whose Word was spoken

#631 - Book of Books

Wonder Love and Praise

#788 - As newborn stars were stirred to song

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#64 - I love to tell the Story



Course Two: *A Path to Spiritual Maturity*

SEGMENT 4: ACTION

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

The third part of our rule of life is action, putting our beliefs to work. We, as Christians, are called to follow Christ's teachings and to do his work as well. Our stewardship of time, talent and treasure is how we make this happen.

OPENING PRAYER

Grant us Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 234)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What are some of the gifts God has given us?

What is stewardship?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



Doing and Being

Attitude of giving

Stewardship

Stewardship of Time

Stewardship of Talent

Stewardship of Treasure

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class the first and third promises are particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What are the forces at work in your life that make you decide how to spend your time or your money?

2. How does your checkbook reflect your priorities?

3. Choose one of the following scriptures:

Matthew 6:21 (Where your heart is)

Romans 12:1-13 (Your bodies as living sacrifice)

James 1:17-27 (Every perfect gift)

Mark 10:17-31 (The rich young man)

Mark 12:38-44 (Widow's mite)

What do these scriptures say to you about stewardship?

Giving to the glory of God?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

Holding one another accountable?

Upholding one another?

4. What talents do you have in your work that you could use to build up the Body of Christ?

5. How do you give your time to the glory of God?

6. Make a stewardship collage.

W R A P - U P

It is the covenant love in Jesus that gives us the gift of the spirit of commitment and action. It is always love put into action. It is more than a path – it is an attitude of the heart.

We are now at the end of the second course. As we spend some time reflecting on the four segments of this course, look back over your notes from the segment on prayer. What is your assessment of where you are in your prayer life? Look at your notes from the segment on Bible study. Has this segment changed your method of Bible study? How will this segment impact your stewardship?

To truly mature as a disciple of Christ, we must make the commitment and the effort. We must remember that developing the Christian habits we have learned in this course doesn't mean we have reached maturity, nor can these habits be adopted instantly. We are on a journey, a gradual process for which there is no short cut.

Ministry is for everyone, but not necessarily in the ways you might think.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The Hymnal 1982

#9 - Not here for high and holy things – esp. vs. 6

#293 - I sing a song of the saints of God

#605 - What does the Lord require for praise and offering

#688 - A mighty fortress

Wonder, Love and Praise

#806 - If you believe and I believe

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#158 - Out in the highways and byways of life



Course Three: *Our Spiritual Gifts*

SEGMENT 1: WHAT DOES GOD WANT FROM ME?

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

*M*inistry is looking inside yourself, recognizing your best skills and putting them to work for God's purpose.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (BCP 832-33)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is ministry?

How do you discover your own ministry?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



What is ministry?

Ministry within the church

Ministry outside the church

Personal Inventory List

Evaluate your physical health

Evaluate your mental health

Evaluate your spiritual health

Appraise your circumstances

What is your energy level?

Five Basic Steps to begin a ministry

Dedicate yourself

Eliminate distractions

Evaluate strengths

Cooperate with others

Put God-given gifts to work

Choosing a ministry where our skills and interests meet the needs presented

Helping out where needed

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class the first, third, fourth and fifth promises are particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Jesus taught by example. What is he teaching in these scriptures?

Matthew 6:7-15 (Lord's Prayer)

Matthew 13:44-51 (Kingdom of God parables)

Matthew 26:26-29 (This is my Body)

Luke 10:25-37 (Good Samaritan)

Luke 19:1-10 (Zaccheus)

Matthew 25:31-46 (Sheep and goats)

Mark 10:13-16 (Jesus and the children)

2. What are some of the ministry areas in your church in which you could help?

What do you love to do that you could see as a ministry?

3. Discuss how the five steps to begin a ministry as detailed in the video differ from how we normally operate.

4. We heard in the video that ministry doesn't necessarily have anything to do with preaching. It is simply making God's work a part of our life, in whatever way we can, by calling on the values we have received as Christians to make the world a better place for everyone. Whatever role we have becomes a ministry. How do you experience this in your own life?

W R A P - U P

We are called in our Baptismal Covenant to be ministers. Ministers can work with those in need, can offer a listening ear, and can be a spiritual peer. In sharing our gifts and talents, we tell others we have a personal faith, we have a faith community; we think that faith community is healthy and a good place to be. We are messengers.

There are those ministries for which we need special skills – singing in the choir, or teaching. There are those ministries which fulfill the servanthood aspect of being a Christian – emptying trash, cleaning up after coffee hour, welcoming visitors, working in the church yard.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The 1982 Hymnal

#347 - Go forth for God

#348 - Lord, we have come

#359 - God of the prophets

Wonder, Love and Praise

#757 - Will you come and follow Me?

#807 - Put down your nets and follow Me

Lift Every Voice and Sing

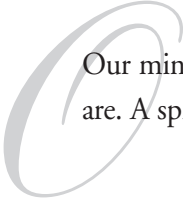
#129 - I am Thine O Lord



Course Three: *Our Spiritual Gifts*

SEGMENT 2: GETTING IN SHAPE FOR MINISTRY

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE



Our ministry is as unique as we are, therefore it must honestly reflect who we are. A spiritual gifts assessment can help us determine our gifts for ministry.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, whose loving hand has given us all that we possess: Grant us grace that we may honor you with our substance, and remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 827)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What are spiritual gifts?

What do we need in addition to spiritual gifts to minister?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



SHAPE

Spiritual Gifts

Missionary, Healing, Intercession, Craftsmanship, Hospitality, Faith, Discernment, Mercy, Giving, Administration, Leadership, Helps, Serving, Knowledge, Wisdom, Encouragement, Miraculous Gifts, Creative Communication, Teacher, Pastor, Evangelist, Prophet, Apostle

Heart

What fulfills your soul

Abilities

Skills we use everyday

Personality

Extraverted or introverted

Thinker or feeler

Routine or variety

Self-controlled or self-expressive

Cooperative or competitive

Experience

Good and bad

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class the fourth promise is particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What unique gifts did you experience as a child? Adolescent? Adult?
2. What are some gifts of famous people such as your favorite singer, artist, actor, etc.?
3. Read Romans 8:26-28. (All things work together for the good) What does this say to you?
4. Take the spiritual gifts assessment selected for your class.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

5. After the test, spend some personal reflection time (you can share your thoughts with others as you desire). What are your spiritual gifts? What does the assessment reflect about your heart – about that you love? What does the assessment reflect about your abilities? Your personality? Your experiences? Any surprises? Any confirmations?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 and discuss the variety of gifts.

W R A P - U P

This course on Spiritual Gifts has come to a close. We have looked at the things we need to take into consideration when discovering our ministries. In our baptismal covenant we promise to be involved in the life and ministry of the church and as a part of the Body of Christ, we seek out and use those gifts we have been given.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The 1982 Hymnal

#61 - Sleepers, wake

#525 - The Church's one foundation

Wonder, Love and Praise

#758 - Tu has venido a la orilla (You have come down to the lakeshore)

#808 - Thuma mina (Send me Lord)

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#115 - Spirit of the living God

#126 - Here am I, send me

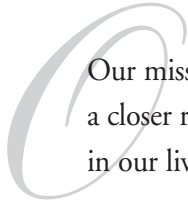
#135 - Is your all on the altar?



Course Four: *The Great Commission*

SEGMENT 1: WHAT IS MISSION?

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE



Our mission is about offering others the transformation we experience through a closer relationship with God. The Good News is God's continued presence in our lives and it is important for us to share this good news with others.

OPENING PRAYER

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 215)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What is the Great Commission?

What is mission?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Great Commission

Our Mission

Importance of telling our stories

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class the first and third promises are particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

You might find it helpful to review pages 6-7 for facilitating tips.

1. *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.* Matthew 28:19-20

What does this passage mean to you? What do you think it meant in the time of Jesus?

2. What is the “Good News?” What relationship do the following scriptures have to the Good News?

Mark 16:15

Luke 24:47

John 20:21

Acts 1:8

3. You might like to do an art response to depict the Good News, using clay, watercolors, or colored pencils for a change.

W R A P - U P

Think about the time spent together, in remembering the stories, recalling Jesus' Great Commission, and in recalling the Baptismal Covenant. How are you better equipped, more comfortable in telling your faith stories?

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The 1982 Hymnal

- #205 - Good Christians all, rejoice and sing
- #506 - Praise the Spirit in creation
- #528 - Lord, You give the Great Commission
- #534 - God is working His purpose out

Wonder, Love and Praise

- #757 - Will you come and follow me
- #778 - We all are one in mission

Lift Every Voice and Sing

- #21 - Go tell it on the mountain
- #64 - I love to tell the story
- #160 - This little light of mine



Course Four: *The Great Commission*

SEGMENT 2: SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

The stories in the Bible tell of God's interaction with His children at that time. Our stories today tell of God's interaction with us, His children.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (BCP 100)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What does our faith story have to do with mission?

What faith stories do you think the Samaritan woman and Zaccheus told?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



The Samaritan Woman

Zaccheus

Telling your own story

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class the first and third promises are particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the stories you heard as a young person from your family?

2. What are the God moments of your family's life?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

3. Read the stories of the Samaritan woman or Zaccheus

John 4:1-30

Luke 19:1-10

What is the message of the story?

What was the woman's life, or Zaccheus' life, like before they met Jesus?

How did they know Jesus had something to offer them?

How were their lives different after meeting Jesus?

4. Use symbols to draw your faith story.

W R A P - U P

Following Christ means stepping out of our own boundaries and sharing our stories, to help transform the lives of others. We are called to seek out those who need to hear the good news of God's love and invite them to join us in a relationship with Christ. This is a lifelong commitment and is a most important part of our Christian journey.

The Bible tells us of God's people and their response to God's action in their lives. As God's people today, our lives need to reflect God's action in our lives. We said earlier that God's story did not end with the last book in the Bible. God's story continues to live today in the lives of the faithful. And so the story continues. It is very important that we remember that our stories are just as important and just as sacred as the stories we read in the Bible. God is with us still today.

Telling our stories makes us more real. We can all identify with certain people in the biblical stories – stories of how God brought someone closer, stories of how people in exile were returned to the love of God. The stories shared make us closer to one another.

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The 1982 Hymnal

#539 - O Zion, haste

#659 - O Master, let me walk with Thee

#679 - Surely it is God who saves me

Wonder, Love and Praise

#781 - Now let us rise and hymn the grace

Lift Every Voice and Sing


#64 - I love to tell the story



Course Four: *The Great Commission*

SEGMENT 3: MY LIFE'S MISSION

PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE



Our part in making disciples is to connect our stories of faith with friends and family who are seeking answers. These stories of faith can help those who are searching for God in their lives.

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and ever living God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for our parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP 817)

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

How can we “go make disciples?”

How would you share your faith story in your daily life?

VIDEO PRESENTATION



Our mission

Sharing our faith stories

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class all the promises are particularly relevant.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How receptive are you to hearing other people's faith stories?
2. Do you know people for whom this is difficult?
3. Under what circumstances could you share your story with them?
4. Name the most exciting experience you have ever had. Where was God in it?
5. How do we spend time with our loved ones and how much of that time includes conversations and stories about God?
6. What kind of God language do you hear in the news?

W R A P - U P

We are now at the end of the Discovery series. Our journey of spiritual awareness and growth goes on. It is a journey, an awakening, and a mission that began with one remarkable person more than 2,000 years ago and continues today through us.

What are the changes you have observed in your own life?

What are some of your revelations?

What concept did you like best?

Was there anything presented with which you don't agree?

Where does the journey take you next?

What kind of prayer and study would benefit your journey following the Discovery Series?

What is one thing you could do in the coming week to remind you to continue your journey of spiritual growth?

How has this video series affected your relationships with others? With God?

Is there a portion of the video you would like to see again?

C L O S I N G P R A Y E R / H Y M N

The following selections can help us reflect on our discussions today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray your selection(s).

The 1982 Hymnal

#370 - I bind unto myself today

#694 - God be in my head

#488 - Be Thou my vision

Wonder, Love and Praise

#752 - There's a sweet, sweet spirit in this place

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#216 - In my life, Lord, be glorified

