

The Discovery Series: *A Christian Journey*

FACILITATOR'S AND PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

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The Discovery Series: *A Christian Journey*

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The Discovery Series: *A Christian Journey*

Introduction

This educational program is as individual as your own church. It is designed to help every Christian – new or lifelong, young or old – discover their own path to a life in Christ.

Like our lives, careers and relationships, our spiritual growth is also a journey. It is one that can lead in many directions. The course is intended to help everyone as they begin their own personal journey in a lifelong relationship with God.

The Facilitator's video will tell you more about The Discovery Series, and help answer many of the questions you may have for conducting your own classes.

The Discovery Series is a very flexible educational resource. You can use the videos and support materials to structure a program that fits the needs of your groups, and you can also use selected parts of the series to enhance your current education offerings, such as Confirmation or Baptism preparation classes, your weekday/weeknight adult educational programs or your Sunday Christian Formation time. The Discovery Series is about reaching all people, whoever they are and wherever they are on their spiritual journey.

The purpose of the series is to respond to the diverse needs of those who are coming to church for many different reasons. Five distinct courses are intended for different stages of spiritual development.

The Discovery Series addresses the spiritual life stage of virtually everyone in your congregation – from the beginner to those seeking more advanced levels of knowledge. It takes a basic look at our faith and the history and beliefs that bring us together as Christians. It is an invitation to spiritual growth. The Discovery series lays the groundwork every individual needs to begin or continue their spiritual journey. It is supportive and positive and will allow you to build a strong community among all those who participate.

Using The Discovery Series: *A Christian Journey*

The Discovery Series materials include a facilitator's video, five courses on video and a printed facilitator's and participants' guide. The *Facilitator's Guide* contains more information than you will need to facilitate the classes. After reading the questions, consider which might work best for your group. Use one, several or all of the questions provided. You may also think of other questions, use the suggested Questions to Think About and/or the relevant Baptismal promises for the Small Group Discussion.

Each course has two to four segments, each of which is intended to be followed by group work. These segments can be led by a local facilitator, using the printed *Facilitator's Guide* with lesson outlines, suggested activities and additional resources. Master copies of all participant pages are included in the guide.

You can schedule the classes to meet your needs.

For example, each course can be conducted in one four-hour session, or divided into four one-hour classes. You may schedule a class for a weekend afternoon, or over several Sunday education hours or evening class periods. You may choose to do several courses over a weekend retreat or expand your reflections on any segment over more than an hour time period.

Episcopal Worship can be used at any time.

You might consider a rotational schedule of classes beginning with Course One: *A Journey of Faith*. You will probably want to repeat the classes on some kind of regular schedule to accommodate new members or those who were unable to attend an earlier class. Keep in mind that some people will want to go straight through the all the courses and others will want some time between courses.

New members and Confirmation

You might use *Episcopal Worship* as a stand-alone piece for a newcomers' class. Combine it with Course One: *A Journey of Faith* for Baptismal instruction. Add Course Two: *A Path to Spiritual Maturity* for a complete confirmation/inquirers' class.

The Discovery Series is intended to be led by lay people.

You don't need any special training to lead this series. You do not need to be ordained.

Course Topics

Episcopal Worship

Focus: history, traditions and unique practices of the Episcopal Church.

Participants will explore who ministers are, the Sacraments, rites and ceremonies of the Church, *The Book of Common Prayer* and Episcopal Church governance.

An instructed Eucharist is part of this course and may be used as a stand alone educational piece for all ages.

Segments in this video:

The Roots of Ministry

Episcopal Worship

An Instructed Eucharist

Course One: A Journey of Faith

Focus: understanding the basics of Christianity – not only what we believe, but why we believe and how we enter the community of faith through Baptism.

Segments in this video:

Your Spiritual Journey

The Great Commandment and The Great Commission

What We Believe – The Creeds

The Baptismal Covenant

Course Two: A Path to Spiritual Maturity

Focus: rule of life and explaining how our faith is a living, growing part of us that changes through our experiences.

Segments in this video:

Spiritual Maturity

Prayer

Bible Study

Action

Course Three: Our Spiritual Gifts

Focus: gaining a perspective for how God wants us to live our lives – looking at our God-given talents, our personality and our experiences. How to use our gifts for ministry.

Segments in this video:

What Does God Want from Me?

Getting in SHAPE for Ministry

Course Four: The Great Commission

Focus: learning how we reach others with God's good news. Participants will experience a variety of exercises designed to help recognize, approach and communicate with those seeking a closer relationship with God.

Segments in this video:

What is Mission?

Spreading the Good News

My Life's Mission

Preparation Before Class Begins

Arrange for childcare if necessary.

Advertising this before the class begins will encourage those with children to come, knowing that their children will be well cared for. Some suggestions for children's study are included in "Let the Children Come" on page ____.

Refreshments or a simple meal are welcome.

Provide appropriate refreshments. It is a good idea to make sure that refreshments or meal fit the time of day and class time.

Provide seating at tables.

Be sure to include a few extra seats.

Seating 4-6 people at a table makes it easier to hold small group discussions. If your group is small you might consider 3-4 people at a table. Have Bibles, prayer books, pens, pencils and blank paper available for each participant. Make sure markers are fresh and choose a color that can be seen clearly for writing questions on the board or large pad. Adjust lighting, window coverings and air conditioning/heat for maximum comfort.

Set up the room.

Preparing your space beforehand is essential for a productive and enjoyable class. Arrive early enough to take care of any last minute details. Test the VCR or DVD player and set the tape to the beginning of the segment you will be watching. Make sure the color settings are correct on your monitor and that the volume is set sufficiently high so that the person farthest from the monitor can hear the video.

Watch the video segment(s).

It is a good idea for the facilitator to watch all five courses ahead of time to become familiar with the material. Read the facilitator's guide section for the particular segment and make notes. Watch the video segment a second time and note any new insights you might have had.

Complete the work assigned in the participants' pages.

Watch the video a third time and work through the questions presented to participants. The segments are designed to include class discussion. Fill out the time schedule for your class. Be sure to allow enough time for discussion and questions.

Materials Checklist

TV/VCR or DVD player (be sure your monitor is large enough for the group to see comfortably)

Extension cord if necessary

The Discovery Series video or DVD

Copies of the participants' pages for each person taking the class

Easel pad or white board and markers

Bible (preferably NRSV) for each participant

The Book of Common Prayer for each participant

The Hymnal 1982

Wonder, Love and Praise

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Pens or pencils

Blank paper for notes

Spiritual Gifts assessment forms for Course Three: Segment 2 (see Resources, page ____ for ordering information)

Resource pages

Preparation

Refer to a course segment in this guide and in participants' pages as you review this summary of the components of each segment. Looking at the actual participants' pages will help you plan your time.

Baptismal Covenant References

The Baptismal Covenant in *The Book of Common Prayer* (pages 304-305) is a profession of faith and reminds us that we have promised to live lives that reflect these statements. The particular questions relevant for each segment of the video are listed in your preparation pages. These may be read responsively or used in Small Group Discussion along with other questions.

Resource Materials

Be sure to have enough Bibles for all attending. Each participant should also have access to *The Book of Common Prayer*. The *1982 Hymnal*, *Wonder, Love & Praise* and *Lift Every Voice and Sing* are three hymnals approved for worship in the Episcopal Church. *Wonder, Love & Praise* and *Lift Every Voice and Sing* are optional resources for this series. Additional resources specific to a segment are noted in the segment preparation.

Other Materials Needed

Art supplies. Each lesson offers an art response as part of the small group work. Standard art supplies such as clay, markers, watercolors, colored pencils, different kinds of drawing paper or construction paper, scissors and glue are nice to have.

Time Schedule

Below is an example of a time schedule for a one-hour class. It is important to plan your class to fit your available time and you may adjust this to fit your situation. Planning this will help keep the class on track and on time.

Opening Prayer	2 Minutes
Introduction.....	5-10 Minutes
Questions to Think About	1 Minute
Video Presentation	15 Minutes
Using the Baptismal Covenant.....	4 Minutes
Small Group Discussion	20-25 Minutes
Wrap-Up	2 Minutes
Closing Prayer/Hymn	4 Minutes

Evaluation

Be sure to take the time to fill out an evaluation for the class period. This will help as you plan the next class or someone else who might teach this after you.

Components of Each Class

Opening Prayer

The opening prayer reflects the theme for the segment. Feel free to use other prayers and certainly encourage intercessory prayer at some point in the class time, either here or at the end of the lesson.

Introduction

It is important to create class rules – an agreement about group behavior. Some rules might include confidentiality, giving everyone the opportunity to speak, the importance of not carrying on conversation with someone while others are speaking and any other rules your group may choose. If it is a continuing class, it is important to provide updates if necessary and to see if there are questions or insights from a previous class.

Questions to Think About

These questions appear in the participants' material as well as in the facilitator's material. Review these questions with the class before watching the video. You might write them on the board or easel pad. These questions will help stimulate Small Group Discussions following the video. Space is provided in the material for notetaking if desired.

Video Presentation

The time of the presentation is noted in your material. Space is provided in the material for notetaking and the key points are reiterated here as well. Watch the video with the class and follow with the Baptismal promises.

Using the Baptismal Covenant

This can be done before breaking into small groups. Each segment of the video is related to certain of the Baptismal promises. Reading and responding to these promises will help the group begin in one place before breaking into small groups for discussion.

Components of Each Class

Small Group Work

Break the larger group into small groups of 3-6 people. You might ask people to count off and divide the small groups according to the number of the person. You might divide the group by birthday (everyone with a June birthday). If your group includes newcomers and those who have been in the church for awhile, make sure that each small group is representative of both new and continuing members. It is important for you, the facilitator, to monitor the small groups to make sure that all have a chance to contribute as they desire.

If you have enough small groups, divide the questions among the groups. You may use the Questions to Think About or the Baptismal promises for Small Group Discussion or you may write your own. If you don't have enough small groups, choose as many of the questions as you need. One of the questions is always an art response. You may either choose new small groups for each segment or keep the same groups. Base your decision on the desires of the group and your assessment of how the individual groups work.

Wrap Up

Have each group share a summary of their small group work to the whole class. If there are outstanding questions, perhaps a time could be set for more discussion. If you choose to use Catechesis of the Good Shepherd or Godly Play presentations, this is a good place to do so, unless otherwise noted in individual segments. Adjust your time schedule accordingly.

Closing Prayer/Hymn

The selections from the three hymnals can either be sung or prayed. The selections reflect the theme for each segment. Choose one. This might also be a good time for intercessory prayers.

Be prepared, keep things moving and positive.

The Discovery Series is meant to be a fun, enjoyable and memorable experience for everyone involved, including you. Sometimes the material and discussions can evoke emotional responses from participants. Make sure the class ends on a positive note.



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Janie Stevens



Episcopal Worship

SEGMENT 1: THE ROOTS OF MINISTRY

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

Anglican Communion
Kinds of Ministers
Lay
Ordained
Church Governance

SYNOPSIS

The Episcopal Church is a part of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The word “Anglican” means English. Christians have been present in Britain since the year 200, probably earlier. Christianity became the dominant religion through the melding of Celtic Christianity and the direct missionary endeavors of St. Augustine, sent from Rome in 597. English civil authority and the Church’s wealth and ties to Rome became sources of contention, coming to a head in the 1530s. Ultimately, King Henry VIII proclaimed himself Supreme Head of the Church of England and the Church separated itself from Rome. It is important to note that its bishops have continued to be consecrated in the same unbroken succession from St. Peter. The Church of England simplified the liturgy, ensured that it was said in English and set it out in *The Book of Common Prayer*, designed to give the people a common pattern of worship.

The Protestant Reformation swept through Europe in the sixteenth century in response to the people's intellectual inquiry into the roots of Christianity. Reformers found within the Bible a way of belief that relied more on the grace of God than on human attempts to earn God's favor, the belief also held by the Church of England.

Missionaries and the expansive British Empire helped spread the Anglican Church throughout the world. Today the Anglican Communion numbers more than 70 million worshipers. One of the distinctions in the Anglican expression of worship is that the congregation takes an active role in the worship services. Our worship is called "liturgy" a word that means "the work of the people" – both lay and ordained.

In our baptism we are all called to actively represent Christ. We make promises or renew these promises at every baptism of which we are a part. We promise by our prayers and witness to help the person being baptized "grow in the full stature of Christ" (BCP 302). We join in with the person being baptized, or their sponsors in the case of a child, to reaffirm our own belief in the Trinity by reciting the Apostles' Creed and we also promise to continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers; to persevere in resisting evil, and to repent and return to the Lord when we do sin. We promise to proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves. And, we promise to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being (BCP 304-305).

We take seriously the ministry of the baptized. We can live out this baptismal ministry either as a layperson or as an ordained person. Lay ministers are those baptized persons who are not ordained. They can take on a variety of ministries in the church in worship, teaching or governance.

The ordained ministers are those who have a special calling to attend seminary and become ordained – and there are three orders in this ministry – bishops, priests and deacons.

SYNOPSIS, continued

The word “Episcopal” comes from the Greek word *episcopoi*, which means bishops. Bishops are the chief missionaries, evangelists, teachers, pastors and visionaries of the church. They also confirm those who wish to receive this sacrament in the church. Priests are the second order of ordained ministry. Priests assist the bishop in overseeing the church, leading congregations, teaching, celebrating the sacraments, proclaiming God’s forgiveness and blessings.

Deacons are the third order and can either be permanent deacons or transitional deacons (those intending become a priest). The deacon’s main responsibility is one of service – either in the worship or programs of the church.

All three orders of ordained ministers wear special clothing.

The Eucharistic liturgy begins with a procession of those who will take a more visible, active role in the worship. Acolytes, vergers, choir, clergy and other lay ministers may process in during the singing of a hymn. Some wear special clothing to denote their specific role. But the majority of people who participate in the liturgy are those people sitting in the pews.

Church governance in the Episcopal Church shares many traits with the United States government, as the two began at the same time. This form of governance reflects our understanding that authority in the church is shared by clergy and laity.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	14:35
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305

The entire Service of Holy Baptism (BCP 302-304), ending with the five promises.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this course)

The Hymnal 1982

Wonder, Love & Praise

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The Book of Common Prayer

Other materials needed for this session as noted on page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

If you are using only this course, allow extra time to set norms, give an overview of *Episcopal Worship* and the format for breaking into small groups. Please refer to page _____ for more information. If you are using this in conjunction with the other four courses, give the overview, do the normal check-in questions and allow time for comments as seen in the segments of each of the other four courses.

Begin the introductions by introducing yourself. Invite the group to join in. Nametags are very helpful for the class.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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)

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Episcopal Worship

SEGMENT 2: EPISCOPAL WORSHIP

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



Preparation

KEY POINTS

What is in *The Book of Common Prayer*?
Importance of Sacraments

SYNOPSIS

Worship in the Episcopal Church is one of the reasons so many people are attracted to the Church. Our worship is filled with mystery, dignity, symbolism and reverence, signifying God's presence among us.

When we worship we come to understand in a more profound way who we are and *whose* we are. It changes the way we understand God, ourselves, our families and the world around us. It is through liturgy that we are formed, informed and transformed.

The guide for our worship is found in *The Book of Common Prayer*. This book defines the identity of all those who are members of the Anglican Communion. No matter which church in the Anglican Communion you might attend, the basic order of service will always be the same. "Common Prayer" indicates that the language of our worship is in the vernacular of the country. We worship in the language we speak. Common prayer also refers to the fact that Anglicans the world over use the same prayers and liturgies no matter where they are.

SYNOPSIS, continued

The Book of Common Prayer contains services that can be said alone or together, by clergy or bishops or by lay people. There are prayers for every occasion. There are liturgies for special days, such as Ash Wednesday or Palm Sunday. The Psalms are printed in their entirety in the book. The Catechism, an outline of the faith, and other historical documents of the church appear in the book as well. The Lectionary, a calendar of Scripture readings for each Sunday in the current church year, and the Daily Office readings that set out the scripture to be read daily can be found in the book as well.

We believe the two great sacraments of the church are those instituted by Christ, Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist. They form the core of our beliefs and figure prominently in the liturgies of the church. The importance of Sacraments in the Episcopal Church and what each does is defined in the Catechism section of the book. The actual services themselves can be found using the Table of Contents.

Episcopal worship is an expression of our faith.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	8:22
Using <i>The Book of Common Prayer</i>	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The entire book – please see details in “Using *The Book of Common Prayer* in the “For Class” section of the facilitator’s pages.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this series)

The Hymnal 1982

Wonder, Love & Praise

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The Book of Common Prayer

EXTRA MATERIALS NEEDED

Sacramental items – bowl of water, chalice with wine, paten with wafer, holy oil, wedding ring, Paschal candle and pall

Priest’s stoles for each season of the church year

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates, responses/insights from last time

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

The Gospel is always read at the Eucharist. The other readings are optional. Over the course of three years, one attending services in the Episcopal Church would hear most of the Bible read. During the season of Easter, the Old Testament lesson is replaced with a reading from The Acts of the Apostles. There is a special set of readings for Holy Days, Saints' Days and for Various Occasions. These readings would be used in services other than Sunday services.

The Daily Office Lectionary is arranged in a two-year cycle. Year One begins with the First Sunday of Advent preceding odd-numbered years and Year Two begins on the First Sunday of Advent preceding even-numbered years. In 2003, the Daily Office Lectionary uses Year One readings. Three readings are provided for every day. Two may be used in the morning and one in the evening.

1. What do we mean by Common Prayer?
2. Episcopalians are often referred to as “people of the book.” What does this mean to you?
3. What is the benefit of having a prescribed order of worship, readings and prayers?

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Episcopal Worship

SEGMENT 3: AN INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

An instructed Eucharist

SYNOPSIS

This segment is an instructed Eucharist. You will hear an explanation of what is happening at each moment in the Eucharist, see portions of the Eucharist, and follow the service as it appears in Rite II of the Holy Eucharist in *The Book of Common Prayer*. It is always a good idea to watch the segment beforehand. In this instance you may want to pay particular attention to the differences between this particular service and the service in your own congregation. If you use a printed leaflet with all the service printed on that, have copies of that available for the participants. Encourage them to look at the leaflet, or prayer book, along with the printed participants' guide materials. You might want to stop the video for discussion or questions and answers. You may want to point out differences in the filmed Eucharist and your own church's Eucharist.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	23:26
Using <i>The Book of Common Prayer</i>	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The Holy Eucharist: Rite II, Pages 355-366

RESOURCE MATERIALS

- Bible (New Revised Standard Version is used in this course)
- The Hymnal 1982*
- Wonder, Love & Praise*
- Lift Every Voice and Sing*
- The Book of Common Prayer*

EXTRA MATERIALS NEEDED

Service leaflet for your particular service

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates, and responses/insights from previous class

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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 verger 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.

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.

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.

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.

Sermon.

*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

Both *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* and *Godly Play* have a presentation on the Good Shepherd and the World Communion. It is necessary to have those materials for the presentation. It is a most fitting and devotional way to end this time together.

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course One: *A Journey of Faith*

SEGMENT 1: YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

Foundations of the Christian faith

The Trinity

The Bible

SYNOPSIS

This video series is about the continuing process of discovering God at work in our lives. Each of us taking this course is doing so for many different reasons, but most of us are searching for significance, for a community and for meaning in our lives.

In this portion of the video, we will begin our journey of discovery – we will learn about transformation. We will learn about the Trinity – God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and we will consider what Jesus meant when he spoke of the Kingdom of God.

Transformation is basic to life. Without transformation, we cannot grow to our fullest potential. Spiritually we are transformed when we encounter the divine power or focus on results of divine power. We are on a journey of transformation. Nearly 2,000 years ago, a handful of ordinary men and women set out on a journey with one extraordinary man, Jesus Christ. Their experience transformed their lives and changed the entire world.

Our journey is a personal journey, yet not isolated. It is a continuous journey that brings spiritual growth and a better understanding of God's presence in our lives. Our journey is about transformation.

SYNOPSIS, continued

We believe that the Holy Trinity – the way that Christians name God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a way of expressing the three faces of God. Each face of God shows us something real and particular about God, but they are all parts of the One God. St. Patrick, an early Irish saint, used the shamrock to explain the Trinity – one leaf with three distinct parts. A modern explanation could use a particular woman who is a doctor, a mother and a daughter. She shows a different face as doctor, mother and daughter, but she is still one person.

We often refer to God as our parent. We are created in God's image. We are children of God. We have been given the gift of free will to make choices about what kind of relationship we want to have with God. Throughout the Bible we read stories of God's many attempts to bring people back into a relationship of love and trust. Faith is the decision to accept the love God wants to give us. Faith lets us use our minds, our hearts and our experiences to trust in God. God is always inviting us back to the circle of the divine influence.

Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. As Christians, we believe that Jesus was born more than 2,000 years ago – a real person. He was sent into the world by God to fulfill a specific mission: to show all people the actions and intentions of God in His actions and intentions. Jesus gathered a small band of disciples and taught them about God's plan for us all and about the Kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit came to some of Jesus' followers as they were sitting in a room in Jerusalem after his resurrection and return to heaven. The sound of a mighty rushing wind and the sight of small flames resting on top of their heads signaled the coming of the Holy Spirit. This fulfilled Jesus' promise to his disciples that God would be with us always. The Holy Spirit is the power of God running through each of us.

To live in the Kingdom of God means to live fully in the presence of God. Jesus told us that the choice to enter the Kingdom is ours and living a life of faith and love for one another is part of that choice. In this sense, we give God permission to enter our everyday lives. This is how we begin an active relationship with God.

The life and teachings of Jesus and God's promises for each of us are found in the Bible, a collection of stories spanning thousands of years. It is our history. We believe that the Bible is the word of God, that God inspired its many authors and that God is revealed to us today through its pages.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	17:10
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305
First, second and third promises

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version was used in video)
The Hymnal 1982
Wonder, Love & Praise
Lift Every Voice and Sing
The Book of Common Prayer
Other materials as listed, see page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

For this first segment, allow extra time to set norms and establish the format for small groups. Refer to pages 6-7 of this manual. Begin by introducing yourself, telling your name and how you got this name. Invite the group to do the same.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

Go over the key points and questions to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

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

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

If time allows address any lingering questions with the group. Facilitator may wish to share the following text.

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course One: *A Journey of Faith*

SEGMENT 2: THE GREAT COMMANDMENT AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

The Ten Commandments
The Great Commandment
The Great Commission

SYNOPSIS

The Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses to help the Israelites become a unified nation. They were rules by which to live. The Israelites were transformed with the giving of these rules. The commandments were given to them while they were on a journey. (Exodus 20:1-17)

Four commandments speak of duty to God; six commandments speak of duty to neighbor.

Duty to God –

You shall have no other gods but me.

You shall not make for yourself any idol.

You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

Duty to Neighbor –

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not commit murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not be a false witness.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Jesus' authority was challenged by the lawmakers of the day when they asked him which of the Ten Commandments was the greatest. He summarized all ten of them into the concept of love; and added a new commandment – to love our neighbors - the human community. Jesus' authority caused change and transformation for the people of that time. Jesus' summary of the law shifted the emphasis from a list of things people should not do to an invitation to be lovingly involved in the lives of all people.

The Summary of the Law

In Mark, Jesus repeated the scripture from Deuteronomy in which Moses summarized into one statement for the Israelites the laws God had given him in The Ten Commandments.

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. Mark 12:29-30

(Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

The New Commandment

Jesus' summary of the Law and the New Commandment together are called The Great Commandment.

The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. Mark 12:31

The Great Commission

Jesus also gave his disciples a commission – a job to do – a ministry, and that was to go out, make disciples, teach them and baptize them. And he promised that he would always be with them.

All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. Matthew 28:19-20

As we attempt to live out this commission, we know that we are all in different places on the path of our spiritual journey. Some of us may have little or no commitment to a faith community or church. Some of us may have had a bad experience with church and come only rarely. Some of us have a minimal commitment, attending worship reasonably regularly but not participating in other activities in the congregation. Some of us may have made a commitment

SYNOPSIS, continued

to God and to the church and attend services regularly and take part in the social activities of the congregation. Others of us may be strongly committed to growing as more mature Christians and attend services and participate in spiritual growth opportunities. And some of us may be very actively involved in the leadership and in continuing education. We may have a strong commitment to ministry.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction.....	_____
Questions to Think About.....	_____
Video Presentation	9:52
Using the Baptismal Covenant.....	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion.....	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305

First, third and fourth promises

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version was used in video)

The Hymnal 1982

Wonder, Love & Praise

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The Book of Common Prayer

Enlarged copies of Nicene Creed and Apostles' Creed

Other materials as listed, see page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Time for check-ins, announcements, updates. Ask if there are any questions or comments, responses or insights from the last session.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

1. Pair up with another person in your group. Spend two minutes “interviewing each other” and then tell the whole group one thing you have learned about your “neighbor.”

2. Read the Ten Commandments either from *The Book of Common Prayer* (page 317 or 350) or the Bible (Exodus 20:1-17). In what way do you think of them as gifts or challenges? What impact do these laws have on you, on society?

3. Read the Great Commandment, including the Summary of the Law either from *The Book of Common Prayer* (page 851) or the Bible (Mark 12:29-31). (Also Deuteronomy 6:4-5) In what way do you think of this Great Commandment as a gift or challenge? What impact does it have on you, on society?

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course One: *A Journey of Faith*

SEGMENT 3: WHAT WE BELIEVE

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

The Apostles' Creed
The Nicene Creed

SYNOPSIS

When we truly believe in something, we make an investment with our minds and our hearts. Believing in Jesus Christ means that we are willing to carry out his Great Commandment of love and his Great Commission of discipleship. We are agreeing to be active participants, not just observers. One of the ways our beliefs are informed is through the Creeds of the Church.

These Creeds have come down to us from the early church and have been the accepted statements of Christian faith for centuries. In the Episcopal Church, we use two creeds—the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. In both creeds we affirm our belief in the Trinity – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

The Apostles' Creed is the older of the two and is used as a personal statement of faith. It is used in the Church's daily worship to recall our Baptismal Covenant (BCP page 852). It is also used at Baptisms and Confirmations. The Apostles' Creed is traditionally attributed to the apostles of the early church. Persons being baptized would be asked if they believed in God, would respond and be immersed in the water. Then they would be asked if they believed in the Son of God. Again, the response and immersion. They would then be asked if they believed in the Holy Spirit. They would respond affirmatively and be immersed the third time.

The Nicene Creed is a community statement of faith and used at the Eucharist. The Nicene Creed was written in A.D. 325 when Constantine was emperor of the Roman Empire and Christianity had been legalized. The early Christians had been persecuted and made to renounce their faith. Christianity became the state religion during Constantine's reign. Factions within the Church caused Constantine to convene a council of church leaders in Nicea (in present day Turkey) to discuss statements of belief about the Trinity. The church leaders were commissioned to produce a statement of belief that would settle many of the arguments about the nature of God. This creed was written and accepted by a majority of the bishops. In A.D. 381 a second council met in Constantinople. It adopted a revised and expanded form of the earlier creed. This revised form is now known as the Nicene Creed. Many Protestant churches, along with Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches use this creed with some variation.

James E. Griffis, writes in *Anglican Believing*, "Many people come to a relationship with God in Christ because they begin to recognize their own story in the stories they hear about God. They experience Christ's love, acceptance, forgiveness and healing in some way for themselves. When we can relate our personal story to the story of faith, we are better able to respond to the call of God. It is this relationship we affirm in the Creeds."

Reaffirming our beliefs is a never-ending process just like our spiritual journey. Through the statements expressed in the Creeds, we continually renew our commitment to God.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	10:22
Using <i>The Book of Common Prayer</i>	_____
Break	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

Apostles' Creed page 96
Nicene Creed pages 358-59

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305
First, and third promises

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version was used in video)
The Hymnal 1982
Wonder, Love & Praise
Lift Every Voice and Sing
The Book of Common Prayer
Enlarged copies of Nicene Creed (BCP 358-59) and Apostles' Creed (BCP 96)
Other materials as listed, see page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates, responses/insights from last time.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course One: *A Journey of Faith*

SEGMENT 4: THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

Baptismal Covenant
Sacrament

SYNOPSIS

We are born into or adopted by our families. Baptism is our entrance into the Family of God. Through Baptism we make an investment in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Whether this happens as an infant, child or adult, we are given a new life in which we accept a loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ and turn away from sin and evil. It is our response to God's call to us to be his children.

The Baptismal Covenant begins with the Apostles' Creed, broken down into its three parts (The Trinity). In the early church, the person being baptized responded to each part of the Creed and was immersed in the water. (Note that immersion doesn't mean submersion.)

Today in the Episcopal Church these questions are asked of the whole congregation as well as the person(s) being baptized. We are reaffirming our own baptisms and promise to support the newly baptized in their Christian life.

Following the Creed, a series of five questions are asked of everyone in the congregation, not just the person being baptized or their sponsors. Again, we are reaffirming our own baptisms at this point. These five questions reflect the teachings of Jesus and serve as an outline for our life and ministry.

SYNOPSIS, continued

Verna Dozier writes, in *The Dream of God*, “Just like Jesus, our ministry is to serve the world, to bring reconciliation and restoration to the world God loves. We, the people of God, are sent to love the world – the people of the world. We are called to be ambassadors. We are called to witness to another way that governments can relate to one another, that money can be earned and spent, that doctors and caregivers and engineers and lawyers and teachers can serve those around them, that wordsmiths and musicians and artists and philosophers can give us new vision of the human condition. But, we need the support system of the Church, the resting place where the Story is treasured and passed on in liturgy and education – the refuge where the wounded find healing, the confused light, the fearful courage, the lonely community, the alienated acceptance, the strong thanks. God the most patient parent still waits.”

In the Baptismal service, the persons being baptized, the families, priest and others gather around the font. At the point in which the water is poured, a prayer is said to bless the water – to claim a common thing as set apart or holy. After the baptism, the priest makes the sign of the cross with holy oil on the forehead of the person who was baptized, saying, “_____ (Name), you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ’s own forever.”

The water will dry up, the oil will go away, but there is an indelible sign on us – we have a new last name – “Christian.” We are children of God.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	16:55
Using <i>The Book of Common Prayer</i>	_____
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

Baptismal Service, pages 299-308

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305

All promises are appropriate for this class

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version was used in video)

The Hymnal 1982

Wonder, Love & Praise

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The Book of Common Prayer

Dictionary

Clear glass bowl with small clear glass stones (one stone for each person)

Water

Small table covered with white cloth

White pillar candle and matches

Small white candle or votive for every person

Other materials as listed, see page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates and responses/insights from last time.

On a small table covered with a white cloth, the facilitator places a bowl of water and puts the glass stones in the bowl. A pillar candle is placed on the table as well. Have the group gather around the bowl, light the candle and then read the Prayer Over the Water from the Baptismal service.

We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.

We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. 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. (BCP 306)

The facilitator invites participants to hold their hands, palms up, over the bowl. The facilitator then scoops some of the water and one of the glass stones into their hands and says,

“_____(Name) receive this symbol of your baptism.” Leave the stone in their palm.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

You might find it helpful to review pages 6-7 of the Facilitators Manual for facilitating tips.

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.

If your church uses *Godly Play* or *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* curricula in the education program, invite one of the catechists to give a baptismal presentation as a wrap up. Children would be a most welcome addition to this closing. If you do not use these curricula, you can lead the following presentation yourself.

Gather the group in a circle. Lower the lights in the room if possible. Light a large white pillar candle and place it on a small table in the center of the circle of people. Tell the story of Jesus telling the disciples, “I am the Light of the world,” (John 8:12). Then the facilitator says, “*We receive our own light at our baptism.*”

Light a small candle for each person from the large one and hand out, saying, “_____ *(Name) receive the Light of Christ.*”

After all have received a candle, continue by saying, “*At first there was one light and now there are many. We were one light and now we are a room filled with light. We are called to take that light out together. We end our services in the Episcopal Church with the admonition to love and serve—in other words, to be a light to the world.*”

W R A P - U P , c o n t i n u e d

Continue with following prayer:

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)

Quietly enjoy the light for a minute and then extinguish the candles.

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course Two: *A Path to Spiritual Maturity*

SEGMENT 1: SPIRITUAL MATURITY

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

Spiritual maturity
Confirmation
Ministry

SYNOPSIS

Jesus' words and deeds had a stunning and extraordinary effect on the people who knew him and witnessed his ministry. Their lives were changed, they brought more people to believe in Jesus' teachings and soon Christianity was spreading throughout the known world. The Apostles, chosen by Jesus or by other disciples, set about carrying the message of Good News and God's transformative power – in other words, they were living into the Great Commission given to us all by Jesus. Because of the distances involved and hardships of travel and possible persecution, the apostles wrote letters to the outlying churches. These missives served as a means to keep in touch, to praise the people's steadfastness, to correct their errors, to teach, to direct and thank them and to share the news of what God was doing in the other communities. These letters are called "Epistles," and they make up a large portion of the New Testament.

Our spiritual maturity leads us into ministry as a result of our baptism. When we become more spiritually mature, we are being developed in the love of God. We see the importance of living the Great Commission. We become more apostolic ourselves. The Catechism says that the Church is apostolic because it continues in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles and is sent to carry out Christ's mission to all people. It is the mission of the Church to

restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. The Church does this through prayer and worship, proclaiming the Gospel and promoting justice, peace and love. And, it is each person's ministries to do this. (See BCP 854-55.)

In the Episcopal Church, we believe that if a person has been baptized in the name of the Trinity with water, no matter what denomination, they are baptized and do not need to be re-baptized to join the church. The sacrament of Confirmation indicates a person's willingness to make a mature commitment to Christ. This spiritual maturity is a way of being as we commit ourselves more fully to God through the study of scripture and regular participation in a community of faith.

In the Episcopal Church the Bishop confirms. The service begins as a service of Holy Baptism, leaving out the actual baptism if there is none and continues with this prayer:

Almighty God, we thank you that by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you have overcome sin and brought us to yourself, and that by the sealing of your Holy Spirit, you have bound us to your service. Renew in these your servants the covenant you made with them at their Baptism. Send them forth in the power of that Spirit to perform the service you set before them; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP 309)

When we grow in maturity in Christ, three habits come together to create what we call a Rule of Life. These habits are prayer, study and action. Some people might know about St. Benedict's Rule of Life. These three components will be discussed in depth in the next three segments of this course. St. Benedict was a fifth century monk who lived in Italy. He was sent to Rome by his parents to be educated and then went on to a monastery to serve as abbot. His Rule of Life centers on a life in which one may seek God in prayer, study and action (work and helping others). And all this is done in community.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	9:18
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer pages 304-305
First, third and fifth promises

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this series)
The Hymnal 1982
Wonder, Love & Praise
Lift Every Voice and Sing
The Book of Common Prayer
Other materials as listed, see page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates, responses/insights from last time

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

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

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course Two: *A Path to Spiritual Maturity*

SEGMENT 2: PRAYER

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

Prayer
The Lord's Prayer
The Book of Common Prayer

SYNOPSIS

God is always waiting to hear our prayers. Our spiritual maturity leads us into ministry as a result of our baptism. Three habits come together to create a rule of life. These habits are prayer, study and action.

Prayer is our communication with God. It is also a time for listening as well. Communication lets us know where we are in a relationship. The relationship is healthy when there is two-way communication.

We can pray alone, with others, silently or aloud, or our prayers can be written or sung. Benedict's Rule of Life called for specific times of prayer. In this busy world, experience teaches us that if something is not scheduled it won't happen. Keeping a prayer list or prayer journal helps us spend this time with God in a productive way.

There are prayers of adoration, which express love for God. There are prayers of confession in which we admit our mistakes and ask God's forgiveness. There are prayers of thanksgiving in which we remember ways God has blessed us, and there are prayers of supplication or offering ourselves to God. It is helpful to remember these four kinds of prayers so that our prayer time reflects all rather than just one kind of prayer.

SYNOPSIS, continued

Jesus' disciples watched him pray and wanted to pray as Jesus did, and so he taught them the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer incorporates all these.

Our Father, who art in Heaven,

We begin by calling on God as a loving parent, which reminds us that God's love is like that of a parent to a child.

Hallowed be thy Name,

God's name is holy; therefore, he deserves our respect, admiration, love and devotion.

Thy kingdom come,

We pray that we will embrace the Kingdom of God in every aspect of our lives, expecting Christ's return.

Thy will be done,

We ask that we may live our lives as God's people. It is God's will, not our own desires that we pray for.

on earth as it is in heaven.

We are to live with heaven in mind while we are here on earth.

Give us this day our daily bread.

We are asking God to give us what we need to live both spiritually and physically.

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

We pray for forgiveness, generosity and love among all people everywhere. But we must be willing to forgive others in the same way we ask God's forgiveness for ourselves.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

In our lives there will be times of trial and we pray for God's protection and for strength.

SYNOPSIS, continued

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
We praise God and ask for God's help in our lives.

Amen.

May it be so in accordance with the will of God.

Our prayers may be corporate (with others) or alone. Our corporate prayers are often associated with our worship services. Episcopalians use *The Book of Common Prayer* for private, family and corporate prayer. The Lectionary, found in *The Book of Common Prayer*, is a listing of assigned daily Bible readings offering a planned approach to Scripture. It is a powerful notion that on any given day we are all reading and considering the same Scripture.

The Book of Common Prayer is a guide to worship and study, as well as a handbook of faith and action. Traditional and contemporary prayers for almost any occasion or need can be found in this book. Daily devotions are designed to be experienced alone or with others. *The Book of Common Prayer* allows us all to participate in the worship.

Prayer comes from God and it is time we spend with God – it is one of the single most important things we can do to grow in spiritual maturity.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	11:03
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer pages 304-305

All promises are particularly appropriate for this class

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this series)

The Hymnal 1982

Wonder, Love & Praise

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The Book of Common Prayer

Other materials listed on page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates, and responses/insights from last time.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

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

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course Two: *A Path to Spiritual Maturity*

SEGMENT 3: BIBLE STUDY

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

The Bible
Old Testament (39 books)
New Testament (27 books)
Apocrypha (19 books)
Bible Study
Rule of Life

SYNOPSIS

The Bible is the living word of God given to all people. It is probably the most quoted book in the world. No other book has been translated into as many languages or been more widely read. Nor has any other book survived the test of time with such power and relevance. How did it come to us? What are its components? How do we learn and study this book? What is it? Why read it?

Studying the Bible can provide inspiration, but more importantly, it puts events and lessons into perspective and allows us to better understand what the Scriptures mean today and how Scripture can impact our lives. Through Bible study we maintain contact with our spiritual tradition. Bible study should be done in community to gain the fullest benefits.

Spiritual disciplines have been developed to help us in our formation and transformation. Through daily practices of prayer and study, we are, formed, informed and transformed. We can become part of “The Story” – God’s story – when we are familiar with it. We can read it, mark it and inwardly digest it as the opening prayer of this class says. We learn how others tried to live lives of faith and can adopt these lessons for our own.

SYNOPSIS, continued

The Bible is a library, a collection of stories. It is the Word of God. The first part of the Bible, The Old Testament, came from an oral storytelling tradition. Later it was written in Hebrew, so that the stories would not be lost. Many components of the various stories overlapped. The people in the stories represented many different cultures and many different points of view.

The Bible is the story of how the people of God understood and responded to God in their particular time and circumstances. Their stories reflected the anecdotes and wisdom of the times.

The New Testament was written after the birth of the Church and it, too, took the oral traditions and put them in writing – the Gospels. The Epistles, or letters, were in fact letters written by the apostles to the various churches and communities of the faith.

The Bible contains sacred writings, biographies of kings, warriors, patriots and heroines: history books, law books, poetry, wisdom literature, letters, love stories, stories of gory battles, miracles, prophecies, tales of heroism and cowardice, dangerous journeys, accounts of weddings, births and deaths.

Until the invention of the printing press, these versions were hand written. The printing press allowed this book to become more unified and more available. At various times and in various places, owning a Bible was an offense punishable by death.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	7:30 _____
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305

First and third promises are relevant to this segment

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this series)

The Hymnal 1982

Wonder, Love & Praise

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The Book of Common Prayer

Other materials listed on page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates, responses/insights from last time.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

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

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course Two: *A Path to Spiritual Maturity*

SEGMENT 4: ACTION

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

Putting our beliefs, prayers and knowledge to work

Recognizing gifts from God

Stewardship – our time, talent and treasure

SYNOPSIS

Christianity is a combination of being and doing - following Christ's teachings and doing His work as well. How do we put our beliefs, our prayers and our knowledge to work? As spiritually mature Christians we give our help, our support and our love. We are the people who will carry out Christ's mission and ministry on earth.

As Christians, we are called not only to follow Christ's teachings, but also to do his work. Our stewardship of time, talent and treasure is how we make this happen. When we give, we step out of ourselves and into the lives of others. Stewardship doesn't just mean giving money to the church. It is a way of life. It is a life lived for God.

Our stewardship of time is indeed a precious gift – both in our giving of our time and the gift of time itself. We are called as the Body of Christ to value the gifts of ministry we all have.

SYNOPSIS, continued

Our stewardship of talent is truly giving of ourselves. It is all right to be humble about our talents, but being humble doesn't mean ignoring them. As a member of the Body of Christ, each of our gifts and talents is needed for the Body to be whole. We can help one another discover talents we were not aware we had or were somewhat hesitant to use.

Our stewardship of treasure is our monetary contributions. The biblical standard for stewardship is ten percent of our earnings. This tithe is a goal to be achieved, perhaps over a period of time. Whatever we give, it needs to be enough to help us remember *Whose* we are and that everything we have comes from God. Proportionate giving is a response to stewardship of treasure that does help us remember God's goodness to us.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	13:34
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305

First and third promises are relevant to this segment

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this series)

The Hymnal 1982

Wonder, Love & Praise

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The Book of Common Prayer

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates, responses/insights from last time

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

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

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course Three: *Our Spiritual Gifts*

SEGMENT 1: WHAT DOES GOD WANT FROM ME?

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

What is ministry?
Importance of knowing oneself
Five basic steps to determine our ministry

SYNOPSIS

In almost every aspect of our lives, what we do is determined by who we are. God has blessed each of us with a unique personality. God has blessed each of us with a set of skills for dealing with life's everyday challenges.

Discovering your ministry is looking inside yourself, recognizing your best skills and putting them to work for God's purpose. Ministry is simply making God's work part of your life, in whatever way you can, by calling on the values we have received as Christians to make the world a better place for everyone. Whatever role we have – co-worker, parent, friend, family member or acquaintance is, in fact, a ministry.

Jesus taught by example. His entire life was a ministry communicated by deeds, not just words. We communicate the good news of God's love and mercy best when we follow Jesus' example in our everyday lives. How we go about our life every day is ministry when we live in awareness of the presence of God.

How do we know what God wants us to do as a minister? As a result of discernment, we might take on a particular ministry within the church such as teaching Sunday School, participating in outreach programs or offering pastoral care.

SYNOPSIS, continued

We might develop a ministry in which our special gifts and talents are used. Sometimes this takes time to figure out and we need to be prepared to change course if need be. We begin by asking ourselves what we really love to do.

It is important to take care of oneself and one's family first before beginning a ministry. After that determination has been made, there are five basic steps to start on a path to ministry:

Dedicate yourself to a ministry – give God full attention.

Eliminate distractions – take a good look at current commitments and eliminate the unnecessary ones.

Evaluate your strengths – be honest.

Cooperate with others – ministry doesn't happen in a vacuum.

Put the gifts God has given you to work.

The first step in choosing a ministry is finding a place where our skills and interests meet the needs presented us. Another kind of ministry is helping out where we are needed, remembering that ministry also happens outside the church.

God has given us a unique combination of abilities with which to help others. God has called us to serve.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	9:37
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305
First, third, fourth and fifth promises

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this series)
The Hymnal 1982
Wonder, Love & Praise
Lift Every Voice and Sing
The Book of Common Prayer
Other materials as listed on page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates and responses/insights from last time

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

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

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course Three: *Our Spiritual Gifts*

SEGMENT 2: GETTING IN SHAPE FOR MINISTRY

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

SHAPE

Spiritual Gifts Profiles

Personality Traits

SYNOPSIS

Our ministry is just as unique as we are, so it must honestly reflect who we are. Our experiences will be relevant to our ministry – our spiritual experiences, our painful experiences, our educational experiences and our ministry experiences.

A spiritual gifts profile can help us determine our gifts and the ministry areas in which these gifts are needed. There are no right or wrong answers in such a profile. In this video, we show portions of the SHAPE profile spiritual gifts assessment (please refer to page _____ for information). SHAPE is the acronym for the spiritual gifts assessment written by Rick Warren. It is used here with permission. There are many other such profiles and a listing of them can be found on page _____

Spiritual Gifts

Missionary, healer, intercessor, craftsman, administrator, leader, helper, server, encourager, communicator, teacher, pastor, evangelist, prophet or apostle, also those with gifts of hospitality, faith, discernment, mercy, giving and knowledge. As we might expect, no one has just one spiritual gift. We can make choices, and we can use more than one of our gifts for a particular ministry.

Heart

That which motivates us, the place where we make our plans, the place that guides us to do what we love

Abilities

The skills we use every day are our abilities.

Personality

Extraverted or introverted?

Thinking or feeling ?

Routine or variety?

Self-controlled or self-expressive?

Cooperative or competitive?

Experience

Experience is the greatest teacher of all. We learn from our experiences, both good ones and bad ones, and these experiences help us minister to others.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	16:10
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305
Fourth promise

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this series)
The Hymnal 1982
Wonder, Love & Praise
Lift Every Voice and Sing
The Book of Common Prayer
Spiritual Gifts Assessments forms (see page ____ for suggestions)
Other materials as listed on page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates, responses/insights from last time.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

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

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

The sermon on page _____ is from the Rev. Jim Nutter, Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas. You may use it as either a wrap up or part of the extended study portion of this material.

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?

S E R M O N

The Rev. Jim Nutter, Rector of Palmer Memorial Church, Houston Texas

On the day before we left Maine, I got to do one of my least favorite chores: clean the garage. Besides the animal contributions mixed in with all the broken, discarded, and moldy things, I noticed that a bag of children's toys had exploded in the back corner. Tinker toys, broken crayons, soldiers, one blue Keds sneaker, and sitting on top of the whole heap was a doll – a headless, armless, legless doll.

How does a parent respond to such brutality? First, you wonder how some other child's toys got mixed in with yours. Second, you fear what have we brought into the world? And third, you worry about a psychologist ever seeing what is before you.

During the summer I always catch up with some of my priest friends. Some of them are in communities that are growing and thriving; but some are in communities that resemble that dismembered doll – churches without a head giving direction, without arms doing ministry, without legs doing mission.

How do we need to live so we do not resemble that torso-only doll?

For a church to be healthy, it must be clear about the identity of its Head. The Head of the church is not the rector, the staff, or the vestry; it is not those who have been in it the longest, who give the most money, or who make the most noise. Paul clearly tells us who our one head is in Ephesians: “And he (God) has put all things under his feet and has made him (that is Jesus) the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” (Ephesians 1:22)

When a church is unclear about its Head, it will lack clarity and purpose, or it will be at risk of becoming a 14-headed monster of competing and conflicting agendas. But when a church is clear about its Head, it can begin to grow strong and healthy arms and legs. How does God want these arms and legs to function? We hear His vision just after He has saved the Jews from the Egyptians, “Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:5)

A community grows strong arms and legs when all of the people are involved in priestly work. We dismember the Body when we reserve holy work for a special, elite, or separate caste. Whenever the Jews forgot this vision, they got in trouble. The same is true for us as Christians. That is the reason why this vision is cast again in 1 Peter 2:9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people.”

If all of us are called to be priests, what are the clergy good for? What is our role? Let us look at Paul again in Ephesians: “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-12)

What is our work as clergy? We are here to equip you, the saints, in your ministry. How do we do that? We equip you by helping you to accept that you have an important gift that the Church and the world need you to exercise and offer. So often I hear a false kind of modesty, which says, “Oh, I don’t have anything to give.” That is simply a lie, and God is not glorified when you deny or bury your gift.

After helping you to accept and identify your gifts, we are then called to train, empower and release you to use them. That means that we must refrain from constantly fixing, micromanaging or criticizing how you do it.

The one final thing that we are called to do is to give you some spiritual tools so that you can check in with the Giver of the gifts every day. If we send you out to use your gifts without giving you these spiritual disciplines, we are guilty of spiritual malpractice. If you live into your spiritual gifts without practicing these daily spiritual disciplines, you will be putting your heart and soul at risk.

What are some of the things that maim and cripple the Body of Christ? There are a couple of diseases that I would like to mention. First “Clergyitis.” This is a father or mother knows best community; this is a church where the clergy produce ministry and the laity consume ministry; this is when we are the players on the field and you are the fans or critics in the stands.

Both clergy and laity have contributed to this disease. We have done so because it makes us feel important or needed. You have done so because it is, frankly, in some ways easier to be in the stands than on the playing field taking your licks.

“Clergyitis” is dangerous for all. It is dangerous for us because it sets us up for grandiosity and burnout. It is dangerous for you because it makes you lazy and irresponsible.

One more disease: “Sundayitis.” This disease allows us to think that ministry happens on this day, around this sanctuary, during this time.

Again, both clergy and laity have contributed to its proliferation. We, the clergy, have done so by sometimes conveying that what we do here together on Sunday is more important than all the other moments in your lives. This is simply not the case. My guess is that you, the laity, have contributed to this disease by sometimes separating what you proclaim here on Sunday from what you do out in the world. I don’t deny that making this connection from here to your work and your home is very difficult, but that is your calling – don’t deny it. Our Lord Jesus didn’t come to start a church, but to save the world, and he needs your gifts and your ministry and your priesthood out there to do so.

Some of you may be feeling that you may not be good enough to live into your gifts and ministry. Let me settle that question very simply: you’re not, just like I’m not good enough to do what I do. But let me quickly add that doing ministry is not about being good enough, but about Christ working in and through us. And if any of you are feeling like your gift is too “small” may I clearly say that all the gifts are needed and that no gifts are too small.

Perhaps some of you are sensing that the ministry you are now doing is not connected to your spiritual gifts. If that’s the case, I invite you to leave it and find something else. If you are in this ministry because I or someone else “guilted” you into doing it, please forgive us.

Some of you may be feeling so overburdened already that you cannot imagine ever serving Christ in any way in or from this place. If this describes you, may I gently ask whether your life might be out of balance?

S E R M O N

How are we going to equip you to live into your gifts? This past summer we put together a group of people that we are calling our SHAPE team, who are prepared to connect your spiritual gifts and heart and abilities and personality and experience with the ministries of this community and beyond. They are here on this day, and they are also available for consultation for all the members of this community. Please see them.

Why is living into your priesthood and gifts and ministry important? First, doing so is important to you – to your heart and soul, to your relationship with Jesus, to your faith. You will know his pleasure and peace when you are using your gifts to make a difference for him.

Second, by living into and offering your gifts both here and in the world you will be living into our Lord's call for us to salt and light. The Body of Christ is the hope of the world. Without our ministry and presence and priesthood out there, the world will be in ever more trouble.

Third and finally, by living into our gifts we will not resemble that dismembered doll. By being his hands and legs and heart and lungs and eyes, we will be growing into what Jesus desires us to be, and that as Revelation 19:7-9 says, his bride.

Unlike those brides who want perfection in all things, we must accept that this is not the kind of bride we will ever be for Christ. Our dress will be torn; our tiara will be bent; our underclothes will be ripped; our makeup will be smudged; and we will trip coming into the event. All of that makes no difference to our groom, who has the desire and the capability to make all things new, even us. But he does expect us to show up as whole as we can, with as many working parts as we can manage, with our hearts ready to serve and love him. Living into our gifts, living into the priesthood of all believers, is about getting ready for the consummation of our love for him and his for us. What is all this about? This is about getting ready for our wedding night.

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course Four: *The Great Commission*

SEGMENT 1: WHAT IS MISSION?

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

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 – the Kingdom of God

Importance of telling others about this Good News

SYNOPSIS

Each of us has a mission, to live into Jesus' Great Commission. We have the responsibility of sharing the Good News – God's continued presence in our lives.

In the first course of our journey, "The Journey of Faith" we saw how our community of faith joins us together to do God's work. In the second course, "The Path to Spiritual Maturity" we learned how our growth in Christ strengthens us and prepares us to be faithful followers. And in the third course, "Our Spiritual Gifts" we took a look at ourselves – at our inner lives – at a place where we can discover our gifts for ministry and the ways that God strengthens and motivates us to use our gifts in the service of others.

As Christians following Jesus' Great Commission, we are called to demonstrate to others what a life lived in Christ's presence is like. Our mission is really about offering others the opportunity to experience the life transformation we have through a closer relationship with God. This mission is a critical part of putting our faith into action.

SYNOPSIS, continued

We can do this through our faith stories. We are called in the baptismal covenant to share the good news of God's presence in our lives. We know that Bible study is an important component of our own faith stories, and that the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) contain Jesus' message of salvation. This is the Good News. The Good News continues through us today as we share our stories – stories of how God is present in our lives and how his love is reflected in us. God's interaction with His children did not end with the last book of the Bible. God continues to be present in our lives today

We are messengers, carrying a message of hope and love. Jesus is the incarnation of God's love for us and through his death and resurrection we have been given the promise of eternal life. This is the story we share when we invite others into our own story of living a life through faith in God. This is the story of salvation, the story of God's love.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	8:14
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305
First and third promises

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this series)
The Hymnal 1982
Wonder, Love & Praise
Lift Every Voice and Sing
The Book of Common Prayer
Other materials as listed on page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates and responses/insights from last time
Review previous courses and ask for thoughts and happenings since seeing each particular course.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION, continued

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course Four: *The Great Commission*

SEGMENT 2: SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

Biblical Stories – Story of the Samaritan Woman and the story of Zaccheus
Telling our stories – the importance of storytelling and how to tell your story

SYNOPSIS

When events in our lives touch us deeply, our story has the power to move others. Our stories of faith are important.

The Samaritan woman was so touched by Jesus' interaction with her that she ran back into the town and urged her friends to come meet this amazing man. Her life was transformed by this encounter. No doubt she told her story many times after that.

Zaccheus was a tax collector, and because of this, was held in low esteem by others. Something moved Zaccheus to climb up the tree to watch as Jesus went through the town. Jesus called Zaccheus to come down, and then went to his home and ate with him. Zaccheus was so transformed by this encounter that he began to make restitution to those he had overcharged and changed his ways. No doubt he told his story many times after that.

In the same way, our experiences are our stories of faith, recalling how God has touched our lives. No matter how dramatic or mundane the stories might seem to us, they are holy stories, the stories of God's interaction in our lives today.

SYNOPSIS, continued

When families gather together, stories are told – stories that recall the family history, stories that tell others who we are, and serve to remind who we are. Family stories are told for the benefit of newcomers to help assimilate them into the family, and family stories are told for the benefit of those who have been in the family a long time as a reaffirmation.

Tell your story, be yourself and speak from your heart. Your story may not be dramatic at all, but it is, nonetheless, a holy story. It will serve to encourage others to share their story as well.

Telling our stories is the best way to reach out to others with the news of God's love.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	6:00
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305

First and third promises

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this series)

The Hymnal 1982

Wonder, Love & Praise

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The Book of Common Prayer

Other materials as listed on page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates and responses/insights from last time

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

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

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



Course Four: *The Great Commission*

SEGMENT 3: MY LIFE'S MISSION

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Preparation

KEY POINTS

Resistance to hearing about God
Commitment to sharing our faith
Our journey

SYNOPSIS

We create relationships, we step out of our own boundaries and we share our stories to help transform the lives of others. This is our life's mission.

One baptismal promise we make is to tell others about God's presence in our lives. This is our mission and our lifelong commitment. In order to share our story with others we need to create relationships, relationships that might continue in the cycle of discipleship.

Our part in making disciples is to connect our stories of faith with friends, co-workers and family who are seeking answers. People who are seeking answers to questions or solutions to problems could be looking for what God has provided to all of us. At first, some people may be resistant to hearing anything about God. Someone who is becoming more receptive, on the other hand, might ask questions. When they are aware of a spiritual void in their lives, they begin to search for answers to fill that void.

Our stories are important because they provide encounters with the living God. Through our stories, others may begin to see God at work in their lives.

We must share the faith that is in our hearts. The desire to share our faith comes from within each of us. It is another of the places where our desire and God's desire meet. Sharing the faith means being present, real and compassionate with another person. We can bring others to God and put our faith into action through the Great Commission.

TIME SCHEDULE

Opening Prayer	_____
Introduction	_____
Questions to Think About	_____
Video Presentation	13:18
Using the Baptismal Covenant	_____
Break	_____
Small Group Discussion	_____
Wrap-Up	_____
Closing Prayer/Hymn	_____

USING THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

The Book of Common Prayer, pages 304-305

All five promises

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Bible (New Revised Standard Version used in this series)

The Hymnal 1982

Wonder, Love & Praise

Lift Every Voice and Sing

The Book of Common Prayer

Other materials needed for this segment see page 4

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)

INTRODUCTION

Check in time, announcements, updates and responses/insights from last time

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

These questions provide something to think about while viewing video. Write the questions on the board for everyone to see.

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

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

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?

Periodically, the group may enjoy watching a movie together and sharing a meal. A suggested list of appropriate videos is included in the appendix.

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

EVALUATION

What went well?

What would you do differently next time?

Is there anything that needs to be reviewed by the group before the next segment begins?

What was the most important thing you learned in this segment?



RESOURCES



Anglican Prayer Beads

In the course on prayer, Anglican prayer beads are mentioned as a helpful tool for prayer. People in many cultures have used prayer beads, prayer wheels or knotted ropes for centuries to help them center and focus in their prayers. Benedict, in his Rule of Life, required the monks to pray at certain hours of the day. They were required to pray all 150 Psalms each week. This task was daunting for those outside the monastery, some of whom were illiterate. They instead prayed the Lord's Prayer 150 times. Obviously, a means of counting was an important part of these prayers. Beads solved the problem.

Although most people might be familiar with the Roman Catholic rosary, many are not aware that such a prayer tool exists for Anglicans. The Anglican prayer beads have fewer beads than a Roman rosary. Instead of groups of ten beads, the Anglican prayer beads have four groups of seven beads. The cross centers the prayer beads. The invitational bead calls the person praying deeper into prayer. The cruciform beads divide the groups of seven beads into sections called "weeks."

To make your own Anglican prayer beads, you will need a cross or some other type of figure, clear thread, 28 beads for the "weeks," four larger beads to divide the weeks plus two more to serve as the invitation beads. Please refer to the diagram for assembling the prayer beads. You may also purchase prayer beads from the suppliers listed below.

You may use your prayer beads to organize your prayers, by selecting a small, easily repetitive prayer for the larger beads. Then use the smaller beads for your individual prayers. The cross or medal can serve as your starting point in the prayers and then serve as your ending point in the prayers. Some people use hymns with a chorus to serve as the repetitive phrase and the verses to serve as the individual prayers. Some people use the Lord's Prayer as an integral part of the beads.

For more resources on prayer beads, please refer to the Resource List on page ____ of the Facilitator's Guide.



Authority of Generations

Authority of Generations is a theological reflection process that is useful for all ages. It especially lends itself to reflection when the ages within a group are varied. It reflects the wisdom of the older members and the prophecy of the younger members.

Authority can be used for discussion practice in any number of the segments of The Discovery Series and is referenced in several specific segments. The model is one of presenting a question and then allowing those in the group who wish to share do so by telling a faith story that relates to the posed question. Singing an appropriate hymn then follows a period of quiet reflection. At the end of the time together, the leader of the group, referred to as the weaver, brings the elements of all the stories together in response to the previously asked question. Another person serves as the leader of the singing.

Please see page ____ for information on how to learn more about *Authority of Generations*.



“Let the Children Come”

If you have Godly Play or the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd curricula in your parish, consider incorporating these presentations into the adult study or use them as a children’s program running concurrently with The Discovery Series.

Episcopal Worship

Segment 1: Roots of Ministry

Godly Play: The Sacred Furniture

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level I: Synthesis of Altar I, II and III

Level II: The Synthesis of the Eucharist

Level III: The Structure of the Eucharist

Segment 2: Episcopal Worship

See above

Segment 3: An Instructed Eucharist

Godly Play: The Good Shepherd and the World Communion

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: The Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd

Course One: A Journey of Faith

Segment 1: Your Spiritual Journey

Godly Play: Creation

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level I: The Annunciation

Level III: The Holy Bible the Open Book

Segment 2: The Great Commandment and the Great Commission

Godly Play: Parable of the Good Samaritan

The Ten Best Ways to Live

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level II: The Parable of the Good Samaritan, The Summary of the Law

Level III: The Bible and the Sacraments

Segment 3: What We Believe

Godly Play: None

Catechesis: None

Segment 4: The Baptismal Covenant

Godly Play: Holy Baptism

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level I: Synthesis of Baptism I, II, and III

Level II: The Rite of Baptism,

Level III: The Rite of Baptism

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Course Two: A Path to Spiritual Maturity

Segment 1: Spiritual Maturity

Godly Play: The Parable of the Great Pearl

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level II: The True Vine

Level III: The Pearl of Great Price, The Armor of Light

Segment 2: Prayer

Godly Play: Parable Synthesis 1

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level I: The Prayer Table

Level II: The Insistent Friend, The Pharisee and The Publican

Level III: The Wise and Foolish Bridesmaids

Segment 3: Bible Study

Godly Play: The Prophets

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level I: The Bible in the Prayer Corner

Level II: The Holy Bible

Level III: The Prophets: Typology

Segment 4: Action

Godly Play: The Parable of the Good Shepherd

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level I: The Parable of the Good Shepherd

Level II: The Fettuccia

Level III: The Plan of God and My Place In It

Course Three: Our Spiritual Gifts

Segment 1: What Does God Want from Me?

Godly Play: None

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level I: Synthesis of Gestures of the Eucharist

Level II: Moral Parables, Maxims

Level III: Parable of the Talents

Segment 2: Getting in SHAPE for Ministry

Godly Play: Pentecost

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level I: Pentecost celebration

Level II: Pentecost

Level III: Pentecost

Course Four: The Great Commission

Segment 1: What is Mission?

Godly Play: None

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level I: The Cenacle

Level III: The Memorial

Segment 2: Spreading the Good News

Godly Play: None

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:

Level I: The Empty Tomb

Level III: The Memorial

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Celtic Spirituality

The influence of Celtic spirituality on The Discovery Series is found in the music, the artwork and the Anglican tie to Celtic Christianity that dates to Roman occupation in Britain. Some of the Roman soldiers were Christians and they shared their faith with the indigenous peoples. The pagan religion of these indigenous peoples combined with Christianity and Celtic spirituality was born.

After the Romans left Britain, the Celtic Church was found only in isolated pockets of Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland. Years later, Augustine was sent by the Pope to Britain to found a Christian Church. He was surprised to find that Christianity had already come to this beautiful land, but in a slightly different tradition than the Church of Rome.

Others came after Augustine as missionaries to the British Isles. Monasteries were founded all over England, Wales, Scotland and later Ireland. We know some of these missionaries – Patrick, Brigid, Cuthbert, Aidan and Columba. The church grew, but couldn't retain its special identity and the Celtic Church became more westernized – like the Church in Rome. But, Celtic spirituality had left its mark on the Anglican Church.

The Celtic Church valued children and women, feeling that all had an equal part in the spreading of the Gospel. The Celtic Church came out of an oral tradition and we find that they had memorized much of the Bible. Their artistic talents were put to good use later with their illustrations in the Bible. The Lindisfarne Gospels contain beautiful examples of this artwork. Celtic crosses can be found throughout the video, especially in the “End Segment” graphics. Celts preferred to express their spirituality through art, music and poetry.

The Celtic tradition emphasizes the Trinity – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Patrick used the shamrock to teach the Irish about the Trinity, each leaf was separate but part of the same whole. Celtic artwork has many Trinity symbols. Their prayers are based on the Trinity. The Celtic tradition places great emphasis on the earth and the fact that all God created was good.

Please refer to the resource section, page _____ for more Celtic spirituality resources.

Episcopal Governance

The Episcopal Church is organized similarly to the United States government, with two “houses” – the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies (which includes clergy and lay people). The Church is divided nationally into provinces within which are 100 domestic dioceses. Within the dioceses there are parishes and missions, often grouped together in regions called deaneries or convocations. There are more than 7,300 Episcopal congregations in the United States.

A bishop who has been consecrated by other bishops leads each diocese. There may be a bishop suffragan and there may be some assisting bishops in any diocese. A rector leads each parish, sometimes with assistant rectors. Deacons often serve in parishes or in social institutions of a diocese. Missions are those churches that still require major financial support from the diocese. Clergy in charge of a mission are called vicars.

Each diocese has an annual business meeting or convention. Each congregation sends lay representatives to this meeting, along with their clergy.

Every three years, representatives from each diocese in the country assemble for General Convention. The two houses, House of Bishops (consisting of bishops) and House of Deputies (consisting of lay and clergy) meet to set the course for the next three years. The Presiding Bishop, an equal among the other bishops who has been chosen to represent the church, presides over this meeting.

As part of the Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church in the United States sends its bishops to a meeting held every ten years at Lambeth Palace in London, England. The Archbishop of Canterbury, again an equal among other bishops, convenes this meeting. Bishops from every diocese in the entire Anglican Communion attend this meeting.

Icons and The Discovery Series

“Icons give us a glimpse of heaven,” Henri Nouwen wrote in his book *Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying with Icons*.

Icons, usually associated with the Russian or Greek Orthodox churches, are paintings of biblical people or saints of the church. The word icon is derived from a Greek word “eikon” meaning to resemble. Icons are sometimes called a meeting between heaven and earth, or a window to heaven.

Icons serve as inspiration. They are not meant to be realistic. They are meant to be symbolic. Icons are “written” or “prayed” instead of “drawn” or “painted.” Originally, they were used to teach nonreaders the stories of the faith, picturing sacred people and events. To this end, the people did not, and still do not, worship the icon itself, but venerate the event or person pictured in the icon.

It is said that St. Luke the Apostle was the first iconographer. There is a special technique in “writing” icons. The term “writing” denotes a copying, similar to copying a manuscript. While the technique of “writing” icons goes against our values of creative expression today, the specific colors given to people represented in the icon, the objects they hold all follow a formula. Martyrs wear red. Mary wears blue. Saints have halos. Archangels do not have belly buttons. The icon tells the story of the life of the person or the event. The person represented in the icon usually holds an object. The icon is written on a board that has been covered with a special paint. Gold leaf is carefully applied. The whole process is a meditative process on the part of the iconographer.

The icons in The Discovery Series include modern as well as ancient pieces. Some of the icons are Native American icons, others are Orthodox.

The Labyrinth

The Labyrinth figures prominently in the opening scenes of each video segment. The labyrinth is an ancient spirituality tool, denoting journey. Probably the most famous labyrinth can be found at Chartres Cathedral in Chartres, France. It was put in the cathedral so that pilgrims who were unable to make the pilgrimage to the Holy Land could do so in the safety of the cathedral. A labyrinth is different from a maze in that you can always see across the labyrinth – there are no tricks or dead ends.

Once you begin the path of the labyrinth, you will journey to the center and then back out again. You can always see the center – your destination. Reaching the center is the goal of the labyrinth walker – the center symbolizing heaven or the Spirit. The Chartres labyrinth form has a rose – shaped center that is a traditional symbol for Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Walking the labyrinth can be done in prayer, with quiet music, always silently. But, there is no one correct way to walk it. You don't have to do it like everyone else. But, it is polite to be aware of those who are walking with you.

The Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress writes in her book *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*, “To walk a sacred path is to discover our inner sacred space: that core of feeling that is waiting to have life breathed back into it through symbols, archetypal forms like the labyrinth, rituals, stories and myths. Understanding the invisible world, the world of patterns and process, opens us up to the movement of the Spirit.” (pg. 15)

Your experience in walking the labyrinth will probably be different than others who might walk it, and your successive experiences will undoubtedly be different.

Please refer to the resource list on page ____ for labyrinth resources.



Music in the Series

Be Thou My Vision

The closing hymn for each video course is *Be Thou My Vision* (*The Hymnal 1982* #488)

The words to the hymn are written in the Irish monastic tradition, probably in the 7th century. Mary E. Byrne translated the words into English in 1905. The hymn calls to mind the antiphon in the Service of Compline (BCP 134-35) “Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.”

The hymn tune is *Slane* and comes from an Irish folk song “The Banks of the Bann.” (Slane is the name of the hill about ten miles from Tara hill in County Meath where St. Patrick is said to have lit the Paschal Candle on Easter Eve in defiance of King Loigaire who wanted to light the royal fire first, signaling the start of the celebration of the pagan spring festival.)

I Sing a Song of the Saints of God

Lesbia Scott wrote the popular hymn *I Sing a Song of the Saints of God* in 1929. The hymn tune is Grand Isle, by John Henry Hopkins. It is usually sung in All Saints’ Day services. The children’s choirs of Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas sing the hymn in The Discovery Series. (*The Hymnal 1982* #293)

Who are these saints of whom we sing? Who was the doctor, the queen, the shepherdess, the soldier, the priest and who was slain by a fierce wild beast?

The doctor of whom we sing is Luke, born in the first century A.D., who wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. He was a physician and an iconographer.

The queen of whom we sing is Margaret of Scotland. Margaret married King Malcolm III of Scotland in 1070. She and her husband had eight children. Margaret was a good mother, a force with which to be reckoned in Scotland and helped orphans and poor people.



Music in the Series, continued

The shepherdess was Joan of Arc, born in France in the early 1400's. She felt a calling to help her countrymen and did so, riding with the king of France into battle against the English, whereupon she was captured and beheaded. The soldier of whom we sing is Martin of Tours. He was born in the fourth century and lived in Italy and France. After a brief stint in the army, Martin decided to leave the army and to be a soldier for Christ. He became a priest and later bishop of Tours, France.

John Donne is the priest in the hymn. John was a writer and poet who was urged by King James I of England to become a priest. He served as dean of the Cathedral of St. Paul in London. And who was slain by the fierce wild beast?

Ignatius of Antioch died a hero's death around A.D. 115. He was the bishop of the Christian community at Antioch. He was an inveterate letter-writer and incurred the wrath of the Roman authorities and was sent to his death in the Coliseum in Rome.

And all the rest who love to do Jesus' will are those we know and love who do Jesus' will. And, that might include us!

Ubi Caritas

The Latin hymn *Ubi Caritas* has been associated for many centuries with the special Holy Week liturgy for Maundy Thursday, in which the institution of the Holy Eucharist and Christ's new commandment of love are commemorated. In this liturgy, recalling the events of our Lord's Last Supper with his disciples on the evening before his crucifixion, the ceremonial foot washing symbolizes the essence of Jesus' newly imparted commandment, "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another," recorded in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of John.

Thought to have originated near the beginning of the ninth century, the text of *Ubi Caritas* concisely expresses the nature of the love demonstrated by Jesus when he washed the feet of his twelve disciples during the Last Supper. The hymn can be found in a variety of versions and has been translated many times in the past several centuries. The translation given here conforms most literally to the version heard in this video series.



Music in the Series, continued

Antiphon: (sung before and after each verse)

Where true charity and love dwell, God himself is there.

1. Since the love of Christ has joined us in one body, let us all rejoice and be glad now and always. And as we hear and love our Lord, the living God, so let us in sincerity love all people.
2. As we are all of one body, when we gather let no discord or enmity break our oneness. May all our petty jealousies and hatred cease that Christ the Lord may be with us through all our days.
3. Now we pray that with the blessed you grant us grace to see your exalted glory, O Christ our God, our boundless source of joy and truth, of peace and love, for ever and for evermore, world without end.

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Spiritual Gifts Assessments

The Discovery Series uses with permission the acronym SHAPE. SHAPE was developed by The Rev. Rick Warren at Saddleback Church. You may examine the SHAPE spiritual gifts assessment by contacting info@pastors.com or call 949-829-0300.

Other spiritual gifts assessment forms are available from many sources, including:

Network Classes from Willowcreek Creek Church (www.willowcreek.org)

The Right People...In the Right Places...For the Right Reasons,
Bruce Bugbee, Don Cousins, and Bill Hybels, Zondervan Publishing House
(www.brucebugbee.com)



The Discovery Series: *A Christian Journey*

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The Gospel: Rescue or Recruitment. Episcopal Diocese of Colorado, 1989.

For information on copyright law and licensing for showing videos:

Church Law and Tax Report

Christian Ministry Resources

P. O. Box 2301

Matthews, NC 28106

Some Film Suggestions: If you have time to have extended study, you might find these videos helpful in your course. They are listed by Baptismal Covenant Promise. Please refer to individual lessons in the Using the Book of Common Prayer section for the promise(s) pertinent to each lesson:

Creed

A River Runs Through It

Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?

The Gods Must Be Crazy

Dead Poet's Society

Will you continue in the apostles' teachings
Places in the Heart
Like Water for Chocolate
Terms of Endearment
Chocolat
Babette's Feast

Will you persevere in resisting evil
Dead Man Walking
Silkwood
Mississippi Burning

Will you proclaim the Good News
The Music Box
Fried Green Tomatoes
Driving Miss Daisy

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons
Brother Sun, Sister Moon
Cry, the Beloved Country
Children of a Lesser God

Will you strive for justice and peace
To Kill a Mockingbird
Erin Brockovich
Snow Falling on Cedars
Ghandi
Schindler's List
Saving Private Ryan

Other possibilities
The Matrix
Ghost
American Beauty
Star Wars
Harry Potter
Lord of the Rings

Various Websites useful in this course:

www.epicenter.org

www.ecva.org

<http://www.haverford.edu/relg/mcguire/relg216b.htm>
("Images of Jesus" contains not only images but links and bibliography)

www.anglicancommunion.org

www.ecusa.org

www.spiritualityhealth.com
(reviews movies from a spiritual perspective)

