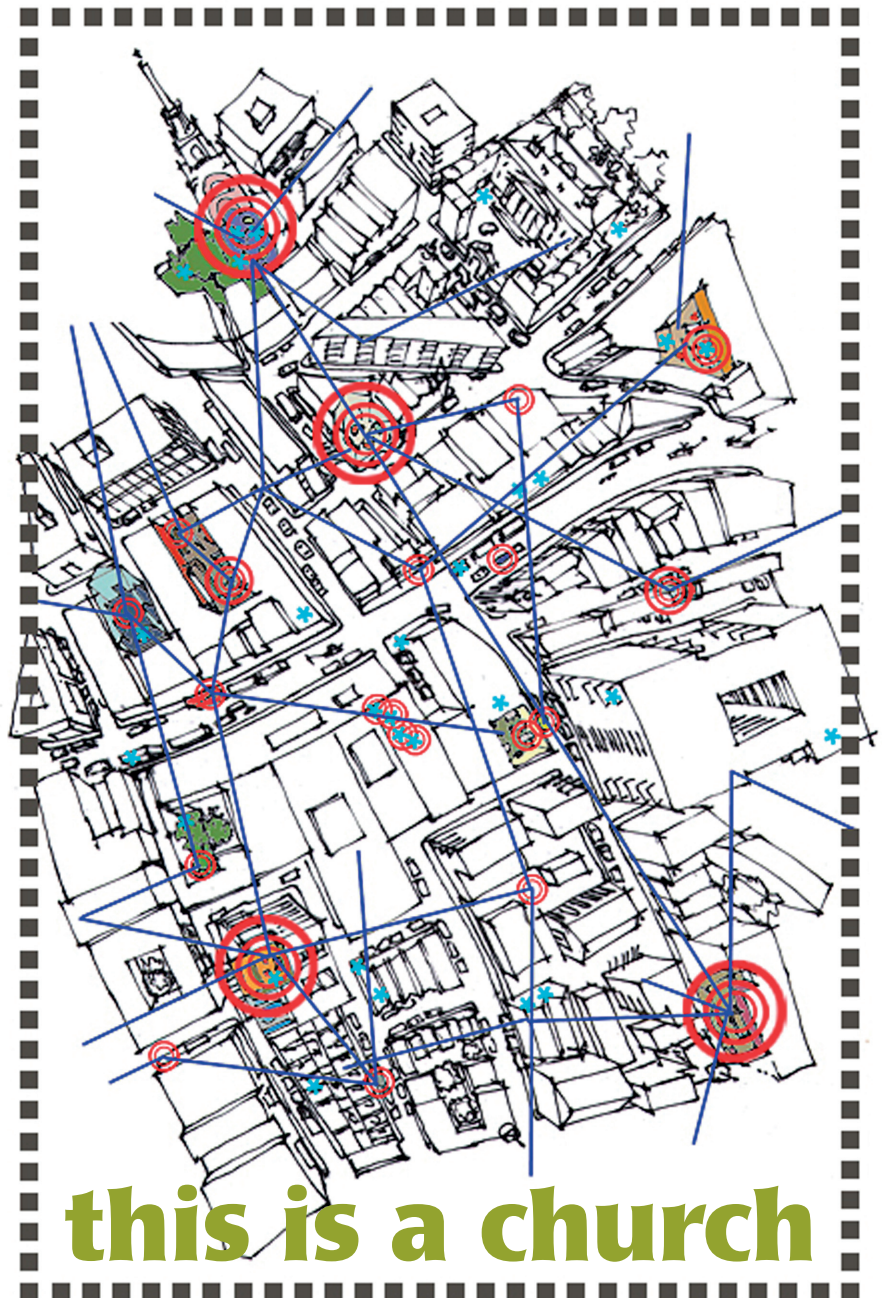


# What Do You *Expect?*

this is  
not a  
church



An Advent  
Bible Study  
for the  
Diocese of  
California



this is a church





# *Introduction:*

# Beginning Your Study

What Do You *Expect?*

Introduction

**A**dvent is the temporal season of early dusk, of faint winter light. In the weeks preceding Christmas, we remember the light of Christ—not as the blazing bonfire of the Easter vigil but rather as a dimly seen flash of dawn, as a flickering candle in the deep gloom of night. In a season of diminished light, we are called to wait in joyful *expectation* for its return. For Christians, Jesus Christ is the light and the way, the goal and the path to the goal, the end and the means to that end.

Advent is not a season of privation, but rather a pause to watch for the signs of the times and to await our call. It is a time to notice where the Spirit is pulling us, to listen to God's Word, to seek the signs of God's will in the world, to tell of the light we see, and to recommit ourselves to serve God's reign of justice and peace. These practices—discernment, study, evangelism, and doing justice—are how the church renews itself.

This Advent, Episcopalians from across the Bay Area are gathering, studying, and praying together to discern God's will for the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of California. Our common sources for reflection are the Biblical texts for Advent and also the sacred stories of our own lives and experiences.

We'll be using Bible study methods common to a number of field-tested small-group Christian formation programs—*LifeCycles*, *Companions in Christ*, and the *Renovaré Spiritual Formation Workbook*—which give us tools to consider the big questions together. What do we really expect of God and each other? How are we to be the Church for our time? How do we understand the Good News of Jesus Christ for ourselves and make it intelligible to our neighbors? How do we embody Christ in our own context? These are the timeless questions of Christian discipleship, and they are the foundational questions of Area Ministry—a new mission strategy for the Diocese of California.

## **Curriculum Features**

The three Bible studies contained within the scope of this curriculum are designed to be facilitated in small groups of 8 to 12 people; ideally, the same group members will meet for all three sessions in order to experience the formation of Christian community. Each session is designed to be conducted in a meeting of roughly 90 minutes, and suggestions for timing are integrated into the guidelines for leaders.

The structure of the curriculum is liturgical, in that each session is organized as an office (prayer service), and the scriptures for study are drawn from the lessons appointed for reading in church during Sundays in Advent.

# What Do You *Expect?*

## Introduction

In addition, content derived from other Christian formation programs is integrated into each session, in order to offer experiences of the formation resources recommended for Area Ministry. Citations and bibliographic resources are provided for each of these programs, and Advent Bible study groups are welcome—encouraged—to use these resources to continue to meet for ongoing fellowship and study after the initial three sessions.

### Leadership

Although leadership training may be available, nobody should be shy about jumping in and giving “What do you Expect?” a try. Guidelines for group leaders are integrated throughout the provided text, and anyone experienced in adult education or group facilitation will find these sessions easy to lead.

Flexibility and openness is a foundational principle of small group leadership; adults bring their own rich experience to every learning experience and “What do you Expect?” is designed to build upon and integrate every participant’s life stories and perspectives. Because of this, facilitators should be prepared (and prepare their group) to modify and adapt timing and content according to the rhythms of their particular group. The *Companions in Christ* curriculum graciously observes that:

*Leading a group for spiritual formation differs in many ways from teaching a class. The most obvious difference comes in your basic goal as a group leader. In class, you have particular information (facts, theories, ways of doing things) that you want to convey. In a group for spiritual formation, your goal is to enable spiritual growth in each participant. You work in partnership with the Holy Spirit, who alone can bring about transformation of the human heart.<sup>1</sup>*

In addition, it is the responsibility of the group leader to:

- **Pray for participants** before, during and after session.
- Provide for a **hospitable meeting space**, which includes adequate lighting and comfortable chairs arranged in a circle or around a table, seminar style.
- Consider a “**multiple intelligences**” learning context by bringing in elements with sound, color or smell (as sensitivities permit). Some ways to accomplish this include beginning or ending with song or recorded music, and/or creating a devotional altar within the meeting space.

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1 Stephen D. Bryant, *Companions in Christ: A Small-Group Experience in Spiritual Formation: Leader’s Guide* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2006), 16.

# What Do You *Expect?*

## Introduction

- Introduce **the agenda and timing** for each session, giving people permission for self-care.
- Make sure that **introductions are made** (and made again if new people enter the group during the second and third sessions) and make nametags available in order to relieve the anxiety of having to remember unfamiliar names and faces.
- Establish appropriate **norms for group life** (sample provided on page 25 in the Appendix) and review these as needed, especially when new participants enter the group.



# Session One: Lift Up Your Voice

What Do You **Expect?**

Session One Materials

## Introduction

From the beginning, the Christian tradition spread through stories. Hearts were opened to the love of God upon hearing the stories of Jesus' life, works, passion, and resurrection. The fact that we have four Gospels—four different accounts of the life of Jesus, told from the very different perspectives of four authors—points to the importance of the individual story: the singular relationship each of us has with God. Evangelism, which undergirds our common mission, is about sharing the truth of our lives with God in open, honest, and respectful ways.

In this introductory session, we'll get to know one another by telling our own sacred stories, employing a story telling technique from the *Life Cycles*<sup>1</sup> curriculum, and making the connections between our personal narratives and a familiar Advent story.

*The leader reads the introduction.*

*Leave sufficient time for everyone to become comfortable and ask them to introduce themselves by name. Extended introductions are not necessary at the beginning, because this week's study is an exercise in personal storytelling.*

## Gathering

*(20 minutes)*

### The Gathering Prayer

*Said by the leader*

God of timeless grace,  
You fill us with joyful expectation.  
Make us ready for the message that prepares the way,  
That with uprightness of heart and holy joy  
We may eagerly await the kingdom of your son, Jesus Christ,  
Who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**<sup>2</sup>

### The Gathering Hymn of Praise

*Said in unison*

**O gracious Light, pure brightness  
of the ever-living Father in heaven,  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!  
Now as we come to the setting  
of the sun, and our eyes  
behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises O God:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
You are worthy at all times  
to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.**

1 The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan, *LifeCycles: Christian Transformation in Community* (Leeds: Leader Resources, 2007)

2 The Consultation on Common Texts, *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 30.

# What Do You *Expect?*

## Session One Materials

*(40 minutes)*

*This is the first of several journaling exercises. The individual work is designed to give people time to meditate, and also to decide what parts of their own story they want to share with the group.*

*Do not be afraid of silence if individuals are reluctant to share; also give people the freedom to pass.*

*(20 minutes)*

*Leader chooses a reader.*

## Telling Our Own Stories

### Journal

Take 15 or so minutes to think about your life as a kind of story that has been unfolding in different stages over the years. It is common for stories to have chapters. Each chapter often has a title or heading, which describes the chapter's contents. If you were to imagine your life as a story still unfolding, how might you describe the chapters of your life? Focus on some significant years in your life; these might go something like ages 5, 10, 16, 21, 30, 40, 50, 65. Use your journal to record what your chapter headings might be for these different phases of life. Let your final chapter heading be a description of where you see your story being today.

Think about God in each of your life's chapters. For each make a note of who God was to you. What did God seem like in each chapter? (Some might have seen God as a loving parent, others as a harsh judge, others still as a great cosmic force, and others as a subtle, quiet voice.) How did God speak to you in each chapter? (To some God may have spoken through the love of another, to others through silence. Others still may have heard God through the sacraments of the Church, or through a longing that couldn't be satisfied. For others God may have spoken through the beauty of the world, through a quest for truth, through a vision of justice or the pull of the conscience.) Was God calling you to do something specific in each chapter?<sup>3</sup>

### Discuss

Within your group, take a few minutes to describe a significant or surprising transformation in your relationship with God that emerges from this exercise.

### Scripture

#### Isaiah 40:3-11

A voice cries out:  
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.



# What Do You *Expect?*

## Session One Materials

Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!”  
And I said, “What shall I cry?”  
All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.  
The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.  
The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.  
Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
“Here is your God!”  
See, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.  
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

### Respond

Is there an image of God in this passage that challenges or enriches your own?

*Group members respond to this question out loud, as they feel moved.*

### Closing

*(10 minutes)*

### Closing Collect

*Said by the leader*

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Officiant: Let us pray.

# What Do You *Expect?*

## Session One Materials

*Said in unison*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

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, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

*Thank everyone for attending, remind people of the following week's meeting location and time, makes note of any planned absences, and point out the recommended reading.*

### **Looking Ahead**

Before the next meeting, read "Informational and Formational Reading,"<sup>4</sup> found on page 25 in the Appendix, and make note in your journal of any questions it raises for you.

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4 Gerrit Scott Dawson et al., *Companions in Christ: A Small-Group Experience in Spiritual Formation* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2006), 294.

# What Do You *Expect?*

Session One Journal

# What Do You *Expect?*

Session One Journal

# Session Two: Greatly Rejoice <sup>in</sup> the Lord

What Do You **Expect?**

Session Two Materials

## Introduction

In the first week of study, we heard the prophet Isaiah call us to declare the presence of God in our midst, and we practiced telling our own sacred stories. This week we will focus on expectation—what do we expect from ourselves, what does God expect of us, what do we expect from each other, and how might we begin to discern our calling in community? Entering more deeply into the Biblical narrative, we will practice a Group Lectio Divina exercise as adapted from the *Companions in Christ*<sup>1</sup> Small Group Spiritual Formation Program.

*The leader reads the introduction.*

*Greet everyone by name. Pay special attention to people who may be joining the group this week; ask other group members to explain what took place the previous week.*

## Gathering

*(20 minutes)*

### The Gathering Prayer

*Said by the leader*

O God of the exiles and the lost,  
You promise restoration and wholeness  
Through the power of Jesus Christ.  
Give us faith to live joyfully  
Sustained by your promises  
As we eagerly await the day when they will be fulfilled  
For all the world to see  
Through the coming of your son, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**<sup>2</sup>

### The Gathering Hymn of Praise

*Said in unison*

**O gracious Light, pure brightness  
of the ever-living Father in heaven,  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!  
Now as we come to the setting  
of the sun, and our eyes  
behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises O God:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
You are worthy at all times  
to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.**

<sup>1</sup> Dawson, *Companions in Christ*.

<sup>2</sup> Consultation on Common Texts, *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers*, 33.

# What Do You *Expect?*

## Session Two Materials

*(60 minutes)*

*Leader chooses a reader.*

### **Encountering God's Story in Scripture**

#### **Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
to provide for those who mourn in Zion  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.  
They shall build up the ancient ruins,  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.

For I the LORD love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.  
I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

### Respond: Group Lectio Divina

Take a moment to come fully into the present. Sit comfortably alert, close your eyes, and center yourself with breathing.

**1. Hear the word that is addressed to you.**

First reading. Listen for the word or phrase from the passage that attracts you. Repeat it softly to yourself during a one-minute silence. When the leader gives the signal, say aloud only that word or phrase (without elaboration).

**2. Ask, “How is my life touched?”**

Second reading. Listen to discover how this passage touches your life today. Consider the possibilities, or receive a sensory impression during the two minutes of silence. When the leader gives the signal, speak a sentence or two describing your sensory or emotional response.

**3. Ask, “Is there an invitation here?”**

Third reading. Listen to discover a possible invitation to see things in new ways or act in response to the passage. Ponder the call during a few minutes of silence. When the leader gives the signal, speak your sense of invitation or call to action.

**4. Pray for one another’s empowerment to respond.**

Fourth reading. Pray silently for God to help you—or others in your group whose words have moved you—to respond faithfully to the invitation they sense.<sup>3</sup>

### Closing

#### Closing Collect

O God, you manifest in your servants the signs of your presence: Send forth upon us the Spirit of love, that in companionship with one another your abounding grace may increase among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Officiant: The Lord be with you.  
**People: And also with you.**  
Officiant: Let us pray.

*Review “Informational and Formational Reading” and ask if questions came up during the week. This meditation is an invitation — but not a mandate — to share personal responses with the group. Remind people that they are always free to pass.*

*Invite summary responses as time permits.*

*(10 minutes)*

*Said by the leader*

# What Do You *Expect?*

## Session Two Materials

*Said in unison*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**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.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.  
Amen.**

*Thank everyone for attending, remind people of the following week's meeting location and time, make note of any planned absences, and point out the recommended reading.*

### **Looking Ahead**

Before the next meeting, review "Six Movements in the History of the Church,"<sup>4</sup> found on page 26 in the Appendix, and make note in your journal of any questions it raises for you.

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4 James Bryan Smith and Lynda Graybeal, *A Spiritual Formation Workbook: Small Group Resources for Nurturing Christian Growth: A Renovaré Resource for Spiritual Renewal* (Engelwood: Harper One, 1999). 27-28.



# What Do You *Expect?*

Session Two Journal

# What Do You *Expect?*

Session Two Journal

# Session Three: Nothing Will Be Impossible With God

What Do You **Expect?**

Session Three Materials

## Introduction

This week we encounter the startling promise of God appearing in the unlikely guise of a human child. Now that we have had the chance to hear each other's stories (session one) and to embrace the radical expectation of justice and peace that our prophetic tradition attests to (session two), it is time to turn our attention outward to meet God in the guise of the unexpected "other"—the child, the vulnerable poor, the old, the angry, the arrogant, the sorrowful—especially those persons whom we perceive to be unlike ourselves.

*Renovaré*<sup>1</sup> Christian formation resources offer a rich array of possibilities for growing in faith and community through self-awareness, sensitivity to the particular vocation of others in our community, and mutual accountability.

## Gathering

### The Gathering Prayer

Ever-faithful God,  
Through prophets and angels  
You promised to raise up a holy child  
Who would establish a household of peace and justice.  
Open our hearts to receive your Son,  
That we may open our doors  
To welcome all people as sisters and brothers,  
And establish your household in our time.  
**Amen.**<sup>2</sup>

*The leader reads the introduction.*

*Greet everyone by name. Pay special attention to people who may be joining the group this week; ask other group members to explain what took place the previous weeks.*

*(20 minutes)*

*Said by the leader or chosen from group*

1 Renovaré, Inc., "Renovaré: Bringing the Church to the Churches" (<http://www.renovare.org/index.asp>).

2 Consultation on Common Texts, *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers*, 35.

# What Do You *Expect?*

## Session Three Materials

*Said in unison*

### **The Gathering Hymn of Praise**

**O gracious Light, pure brightness  
of the ever-living Father in heaven,  
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!  
Now as we come to the setting  
of the sun, and our eyes  
behold the vesper light,  
we sing your praises O God:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
You are worthy at all times  
to be praised by happy voices,  
O Son of God, O Giver of life,  
and to be glorified through all the worlds.**

*(60 minutes)*

*Before reading the Scripture, ask participants to briefly review “Six Movements in the History of the Church” and mention any questions that may have come up for them. Leader chooses a reader.*

### **Welcoming the Story of the Other Through Scripture**

#### **Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

### Respond

Borrowing from the *Renovaré* categories, which of the “Six Movements in the History of the Church” do you recognize at work within this passage?

How do these movements (or traditions) inform your own spiritual life? Use the scales and/or your journal to describe how you understand and live out each of the traditions.

#### Contemplative

Spending intentional time with God in prayer and meditation

not a priority ←————→ personal priority

#### Holiness

Overcoming temptation and choosing rightness of thought, words and action.

not a priority ←————→ personal priority

#### Charismatic

Welcoming the Holy Spirit while nurturing and exercising spiritual gifts

not a priority ←————→ personal priority

#### Social Justice

Helping vulnerable people and advocating for just social change

not a priority ←————→ personal priority

#### Evangelical

Studying scriptures in community and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ

not a priority ←————→ personal priority

#### Incarnational

Paying attention to the sacred in all aspects of life, and showing forth God’s presence<sup>3</sup>

not a priority ←————→ personal priority

3 Adapted from Smith, *A Spiritual Formation Workbook*, 30.

# What Do You *Expect?*

## Session Three Materials

As you feel moved, discuss in your group which traditions you feel stronger or more comfortable in, and which you feel weaker or less comfortable in. Why might this be? In what ways might you be called to share your strengths, and/or learn from others in your weakness?

*(10 minutes)*

*Said by the leader*

### **Closing**

#### **Closing Collect**

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Officiant: Let us pray.

*Said in unison*

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Eternal Spirit,  
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be.  
Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven.  
The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom  
sustain our hope and come on earth.  
With the bread we need for today, feed us,  
In the hurts we absorb from each other, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.  
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and forever. Amen.<sup>4</sup>**

*Make sure the group has contact information and makes the plans necessary to continue meeting if they wish.*

### **Looking Ahead**

This meeting will be the last for some, but all are invited to continue.

# What Do You *Expect?*

Session Three Journal

# What Do You *Expect?*

Session Three Journal



# Appendix: Additional Resources & Bibliography

What Do You **Expect?**

Appendix

## Sample Group Norms

### We will honor God by:

- coming prepared to encounter Christ in each other.
- listening actively to voices and to silence.
- speaking from the abundance of our hearts and trusting the Holy Spirit in silence.

### We will honor each other by:

- being punctual insofar as possible, and unobtrusive if we are late.
- avoiding cross-talk and interruption.
- maintaining confidentiality; which is to say, refraining from sharing identifying personal information outside of the group.

### We will honor ourselves by:

- taking only what we need from this experience, and respectfully leaving behind what we do not need.
- making “I” statements that are truthful to our own feelings.
- saying and doing only what feels right to each of us, and accepting the freedom to “pass” when we are not ready to take part.

## Informational and Formational Reading

Taken from *Companions in Christ: A Small-Group Experience in Spiritual Formation*.<sup>1</sup>

Reading for information is an integral part of teaching and learning. But reading is also concerned with listening for the special guidance, the particular insight, for your relationship with God. What matters is the attitude of mind and heart.

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1 Dawson, *Companions in Christ*, 294.

# What Do You *Expect?*

## Appendix

### Informational Reading

1. Informational reading is concerned with covering as much material as possible and as quickly as possible.
2. Informational reading is linear—seeking an objective meaning, truth, or principle to apply.
3. Informational reading seeks to master the text.
4. In informational reading, the text is an object out there for us to control.
5. Informational reading is analytical, critical, and judgmental.
6. Informational reading is concerned with problem solving.

### Formational Reading

1. Formational reading is concerned with small portions of content rather than quality.
2. Formational reading focuses on depth and seeks multiple layers of meaning in a single passage.
3. Formational reading allows the text to master the student.
4. Formational reading sees the student as the object to be shaped by the text.
5. Formational reading requires a humble, detached, willing, loving approach to the text.
6. Formational reading is open to mystery. Students come to the scripture to stand before the Mystery called God and to let the Mystery address them.

### Six Movements in the History of the Church

Taken from *A Spiritual Formation Workbook: Small Group Resources for Nurturing Christian Growth*.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the Church has been marked by *movements*, a word used to describe how God's Spirit has moved upon individuals and groups of people with a particular mission. Usually such a movement has emphasized one of the six areas mentioned above—often called the Six Traditions—bringing a focused renewal to the Church. When one effort has waned, a new movement stressing another area has emerged. The following examples illustrate one movement in each Tradition:

In the fourth century men and women fled city life to found cloisters

and monasteries where they emphasized the importance of solitude, meditation, and prayer. Antony of Egypt was an early leader of these “Desert Mothers and Fathers.” The Church was strengthened by their emphasis upon intimacy with God, and a *contemplative movement* was born.

In the early eighteenth century John Wesley and his friends formed a group nicknamed the “Holy Club” and began focusing on moral laxity and the need for Christians to overcome sinful habits. They developed a “method,” and the Church once again took sin seriously. The purifying effects of the Methodist effort were dramatic, and it became a *holiness movement*.

In the seventeenth century the Church witnessed a new outbreak of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men and women who were called “Quakers,” led by the ministry of George Fox. The active presence of the Spirit in the lives of believers became the empowering principle behind scores of conversions. The active role of the Spirit was at the center of their worship, and it propelled them into evangelism, missions, and social concern. This is an example of a *charismatic movement*.

In the late twelfth century Francis of Assisi and a group of followers abandoned their former lives and went about the Italian countryside, caring for the sick, the poor, and the lame. Countless men and women followed Francis’s lead, forming the Franciscan and Poor Clare orders. Their impact on disease and poverty was remarkable, and they became an example of a *social justice movement*.

In the sixteenth century Martin Luther and others proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ after discovering its message anew in the Bible. This message of hope and victory was expressed by clergy and laity in sermons, mission efforts, and personal witnessing. In the history of the Church it is a wonderful example of an *evangelical movement*.

In the eighteenth century Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf allowed remnants of the persecuted Moravian Church (Unitas Fratrum) to build the village of Herrnhut on his estate. Initially divided, the group became unified when they experienced a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit after Zinzendorf led them in daily Bible studies and in formulating the “Brotherly Agreement.” The Moravians joyfully served God—praying, evangelizing, and helping others—in the midst of baking, teaching, weaving, and raising families. This is an example of an *incarnational movement*.

There have been other similar movements, both before and after the examples mentioned above, but certainly these stand out as efforts that have had particularly dramatic effects upon the life and history of the Church.

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