

# RenewalWorks™

## Participant's Workbook

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All workshop products including the Facilitator’s Guide, Workshop Design, Participant’s Workbook, and Templates are the intellectual property of RenewalWorks, a ministry of Forward Movement. This includes sequencing of exercises detailed in the Facilitator’s Guide, all assignments, exercise descriptions and processes outlined or described.

Additional materials can be found online at: [www.renewalworks.org](http://www.renewalworks.org)

# Welcome to RenewalWorks

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the RenewalWorks process on your church's workshop team. RenewalWorks helps congregations focus on spiritual vitality, making spiritual growth a priority in their life and mission. And by spiritual growth, we mean increasing in love of God and love of neighbor. A decade of research exploring key characteristics of vital congregations and involving a great variety of churches provides the foundation for the RenewalWorks process. Along the way, that work has been adapted to better fit the traditions of The Episcopal Church.

Beginning with a congregation-wide Spiritual Life Inventory and followed by four workshops, we believe this process will encourage, inspire, and challenge your congregation and its leadership to get moving on their spiritual journeys and to grow in love of God and neighbor. This Participant's Workbook is designed to help you participate fully in the four workshop sessions.

Welcome to this powerful conversation. We are grateful for you and your workshop teammates. Our prayers are with you.

The Rev. Jay Sidebotham  
Director, RenewalWorks

## INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

As you add the four RenewalWorks workshops to your calendar, you may be wondering what you've gotten yourself into. It's a fair question. So often in our life in the church, a simple "yes" takes us into new territory. And that's a good thing. It's one of the ways we're called to learn and grow.

The territory you'll explore in the RenewalWorks process is spiritual growth—your own and the congregation's. Your workshop team represents a cross section of your church community. Selected by your church's leadership, you are all entrusted with a significant ministry of discernment. While your rector or clergy leader is on the team, this is a group process, guided and managed by the facilitator. It will call equally on the faith, hope, and creativity of every participant.

This workbook takes you through the four workshops, providing a quick look at the plan and purpose for each session, texts for prayers and scripture, homework assignments, and a few written exercises. You have space to take notes, and you'll find some of your reading assignments in the Appendix.

Each workshop builds on previous sessions as your team explores where your congregation has been, where you are now, where you're going, and how to get there. A good deal of the work is based on data collected from your congregation and ideas and observations generated by the workshop team. The process is collaborative, so come prepared to listen with an open heart and to share your own ideas and observations freely.

### A few basics

With just four sessions, there's a lot to do. Your general responsibilities are to:

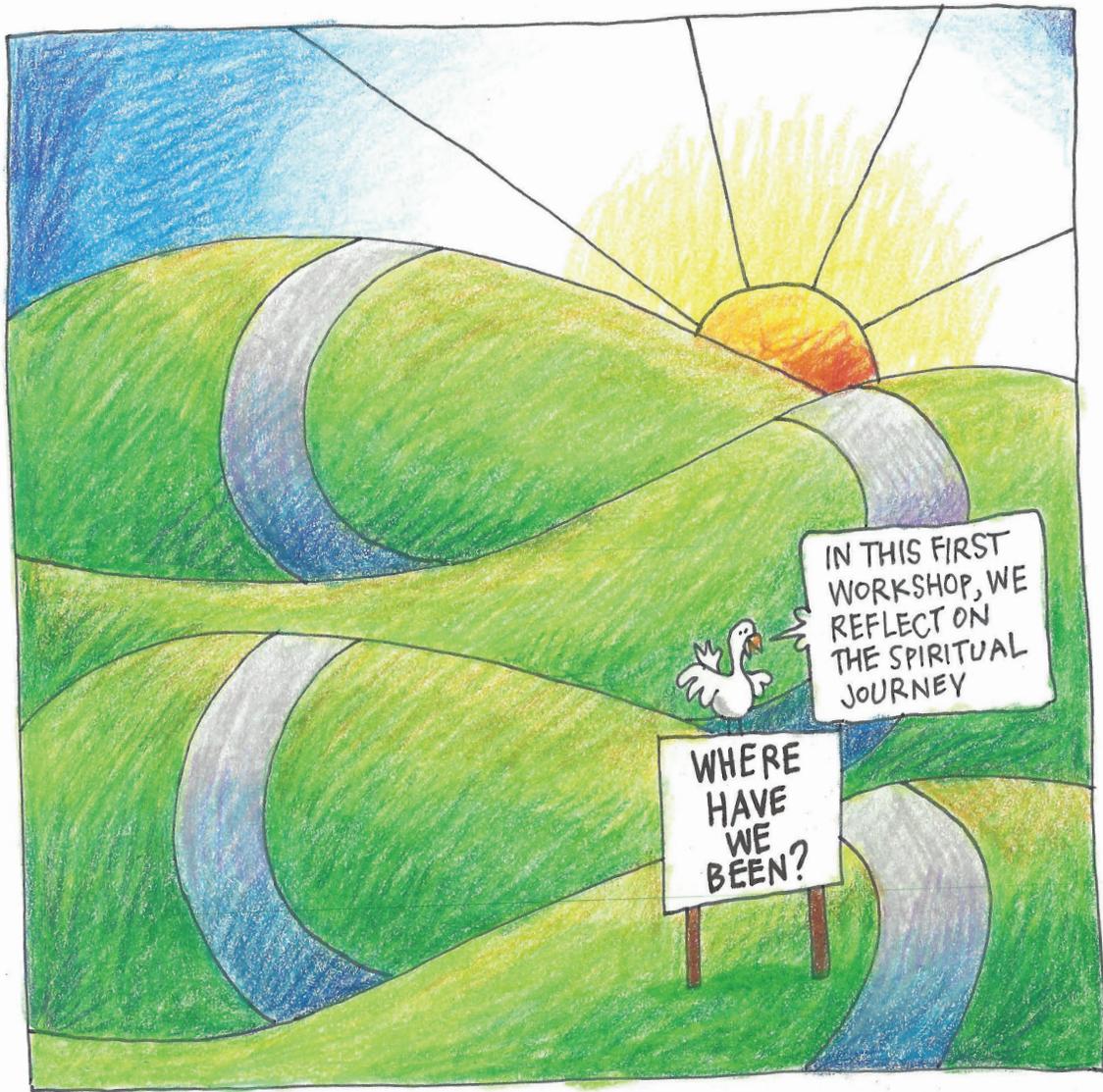
- Show up and participate actively in each of the four workshops
- Arrive on time, with this workbook and any other materials you are asked to bring in hand
- Complete the assigned homework
- Hear and respect the experiences, opinions, and ideas shared by your teammates
- Pray for this process

Your deeper requirement is to be open to the RenewalWorks process, your teammates, and the Spirit.

### Homework for Workshop 1

Read *Footsteps* by the Rev. Jay Sidebotham before the first session (your facilitator will provide this). It provides valuable background on the thinking and research behind RenewalWorks. It's a quick read—worth reading twice, in fact.





# Workshop 1

## Where have we been?

At this gathering, you take your first steps in getting acquainted with your workshop team and with what's ahead—sharing stories, learning together, building trust in the RenewalWorks process and each other.

The main topic for discussion is spiritual growth. The basic research presented in *Footsteps* is introduced along with key terms: spiritual continuum and spiritual growth catalyst. Workshop exercises help everyone reflect on the dynamic nature of their own faith and the role played by the church and clergy in supporting and encouraging spiritual growth.

# GETTING READY FOR WORKSHOP 1

Read *Footsteps* by the Rev. Jay Sidebotham (your facilitator will provide this)

## WELCOME AND WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The session begins with introductions and a discussion of some basic ground rules for your team's work together. The facilitator offers a brief description of this session and the RenewalWorks process.

As with any journey, it helps to know what's ahead. Here's a brief run-through of the four workshops:

### Workshop 1: Where have we been?

This workshop explores the spiritual journey. Team members discuss their individual spiritual journeys and the role the church has played. Empirical findings discussed in *Footsteps* are reviewed. The spiritual continuum with its four distinct stages is described, along with the catalysts that get us moving toward a deeper spiritual life. Together, they serve as a basis for understanding the inventory findings in upcoming workshops.

### Workshop 2: Where are we now?

This workshop addresses the first half of the report from your church's Spiritual Life Inventory. The data is summarized several ways and benchmarked against more than 1,600 churches that have also taken the online survey. The resulting profile of your church's spiritual health and vitality provides a clear picture of where the congregation is now and a baseline for planning future growth initiatives. Exercises are designed to help the team begin to chart next steps. Episcopal beliefs and practices are reviewed, and the team identifies those they care most about and where they'd like to grow.

### Workshop 3: Where do we feel called to go?

Best practice principles based on vital congregations from around the country are described, and Part 2 of the Data Findings Report, which corresponds to those principles, is discussed. The last phase of this intensive workshop is about imagining what your church could look like.

### Workshop 4: How do we get there?

This workshop is about priorities and specific plans—both for the church and the workshop team. It includes an opportunity for participants to reflect on the ways they hope to move forward in the spiritual journey. In the end, a clear plan and action steps should emerge, ready to share with the vestry and ultimately, the congregation. This planning is not so much about new programming or ministries as it is about a cultural shift that refocuses your church's life and ministry on spiritual growth.

## Prayer and reflection

Time spent on prayer and reflection before each session's main tasks helps everyone center as a group and invites God into your work. This session uses the prayer and texts below.

### Prayer of Self-Dedication from *The Book of Common Prayer* (p. 832):

*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.*

## Readings from scripture

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it.*  
—Genesis 2:15

*What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?  
Yet you have made them a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor.*  
—Psalm 8:4-5

*For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.*  
—Ephesians 2:10

*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*  
—1 Corinthians 12:27

*Nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*  
—Romans 8:39b

After the scripture is read, your facilitator asks:

What words or phrases in these readings resonate with you?

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## Exercise 1: Personal experience discussion

This discussion begins with an exercise on our spiritual journeys.

Following the instructions below, complete the Life-line Exercise on the next page. Your facilitator will give you five minutes to work on this.

### Life-Line Exercise

1) Take some time to think back over your life. Select five to ten key events and people that have had an impact on you, for better or worse, and place a word or symbol for each in the appropriate place on the drawing found on the next page. The middle line divides your life-line into segments by age and represents the middle ground or status quo in your satisfaction with it. If an event or person brought growth and positive movement in your life, put its word or symbol somewhere above the line at the appropriate age range. If the opposite is true, if it had a negative impact, place that word or symbol below the line. Once you have indicated the most important five to ten events in your life, connect the events with a line.

Notice the path the line takes in relation to the middle line.

2) Look at the life-line again and consider your relationship to God over the course of your life. Take a different color marker and draw a new line that represents the story of your relationship with God. It should move above the midline to mark the times when you were growing closer to God and below it when God (or perhaps you) seemed distant or absent.

Take a moment to note where key events and people on the first line are related to your experience of the nearness or absence of God.

After five minutes, team members are divided into small groups. The groups are asked to:

- Focus on where you were five years ago. Share a description of your life at that time with the group, including major events and the way your faith journey weaves through them (two-three minutes for each person).
- Listen for common drivers in the ways faith grows or diminishes as each person speaks.

When everyone has spoken, the groups consider these questions:

- Is anyone in the same place they were five years ago?
- Find a word or two to describe the difference in your faith today compared to five years ago.

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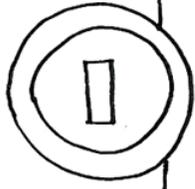
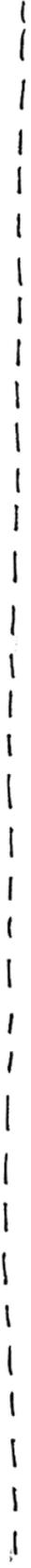
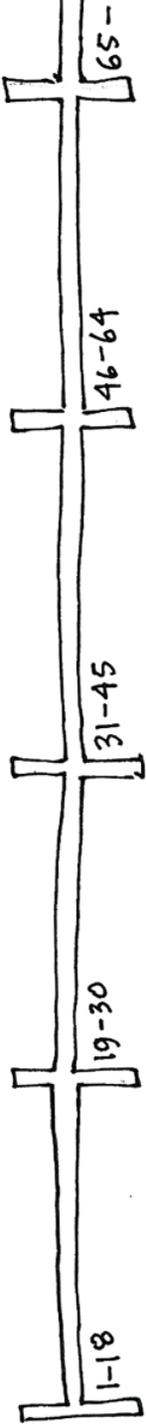
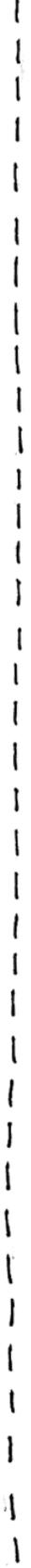
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I like it up here!



Not so much

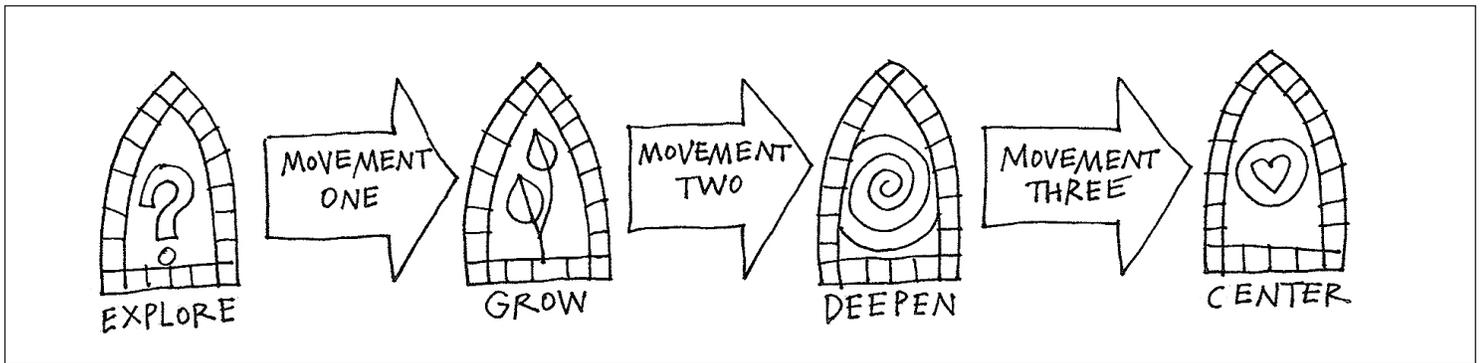


LINE ONE: KEY EVENTS AND PEOPLE ALONG YOUR JOURNEY : Satisfaction with your life in the world  
Use one color to indicate

LINE TWO: YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD / YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY: Satisfaction with your life with God  
Use another color

## Exercise 2: Spiritual life continuum

The facilitator offers a short introduction to the spiritual continuum described in the third chapter of *Footsteps*.



### The four stages on the spiritual continuum are:

#### Exploring a Life with God (about 19% of Episcopalians surveyed)\*

In this first stage, people are taking their first steps in an intentional spiritual journey, exploring basic beliefs and practices in the Episcopal tradition. They believe in God but may not be sure who Jesus is for them. Their faith is probably not yet a significant part of their life.

#### Growing a Life with God (about 54% of Episcopalians surveyed)\*

The people in this group are more committed to their Christian faith, but still have a lot of questions. (No surprise there—Episcopalians love questions). They believe in Jesus and are working on what it means to follow him. Their faith is closely linked to their church community.

#### Deepening in Life with God (about 23% of Episcopalians surveyed)\*

This group is more dedicated to personal spiritual practices outside of the church (reading the Bible at home, taking time in prayer and solitude). They feel close to God and depend on God's power and presence in their lives.

#### Life with God in the Center (about 4% of Episcopalians surveyed)\*

For people in this fourth stage, faith is at the center of life and guides everything they do. They may talk about giving their life to Christ or becoming his disciple.

*\*Percentages as of December 2018 data*

Then in small groups or the team as a whole, discuss the ways in which the spiritual continuum describes your own experiences of spiritual growth.

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### Exercise 3: Spiritual growth catalysts

The facilitator introduces spiritual growth catalysts that get people moving from one stage to the next on the spiritual continuum. After the introduction the team returns to the small groups to discuss these questions:

- Do the catalysts make sense, based on your experience?
- What do the four stages along the spiritual life continuum and the catalysts that get people moving tell you about spiritual growth? What fosters it? What gets in the way?

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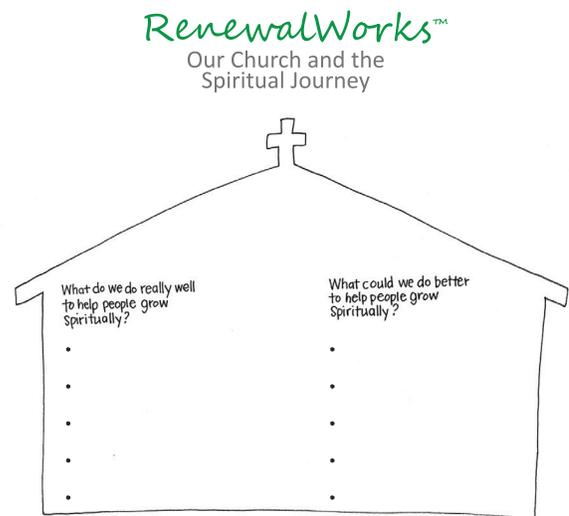
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### Exercise 4: Role of the church

This last exercise looks at how your church is doing at supporting and encouraging spiritual growth. The team is divided into three new breakout groups for a 20-minute discussion on the questions below. Each group notes its conclusions on a copy of Template 1.4, “Our Church and The Spiritual Journey.”

- What do we do really well to help people grow spiritually?
- What could do better to help people grow spiritually?



Workshop 1.4 Template

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### Small group sharing

Breakout groups report back to the whole team. The facilitator notes common themes and emerging issues on a flip chart.

## GROUP REFLECTION AND CLOSING PRAYER

The facilitator invites you to reflect on what you've learned this evening about RenewalWorks, your own spiritual journey, and the journeys of others. Use the space below to write down three takeaways, or learnings, from this first workshop.

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Next you'll be asked to read the passage below and reflect on the questions that follow:

*Therefore my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and work for his good pleasure.*

—Philippians 2:12-13

- *How does this passage intersect with your life?*
  - *Think of an example for the ways God calls you to “work out your own salvation.”*
  - *Think of an example that shows how God has been “at work in you.”*
  - *What are the challenges in your life of faith? What can you do to overcome those?*
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The session ends with the Lord's Prayer.

## Homework for Workshop 2

Materials marked with an asterisk will be distributed to you before Workshop 2. You'll need these materials for the workshop, so remember to bring them.

- Read your church's demographic, community, and ten-year trend profiles \*
- Read Part One of the Data Findings Report for your church's Spiritual Life Inventory \*
- Read Brian Taylor's Introduction to *Strength for the Journey* by Renée Miller, which begins on page 29 of this workbook.
- Read the Episcopal Beliefs and Practices document, which begins on page 33 of this workbook.



# Workshop 2

## Where are we now?

In this second session, your team takes a first look at the Spiritual Inventory data, along with the information contained in the Community Profile, Parish Profile: 10-Year Trend Data, and Parish Demographic Profile. This helps determine where the church is now. Working with the Data Findings Report: Part One, you discuss what the Spiritual Life Inventory reveals about the congregation's spiritual health and vitality. You also look at Episcopal beliefs and practices that support and encourage their spiritual growth.

At the end of this session, your workshop team should have a clear picture of where the congregation is now, a snapshot to use in the last two sessions as you dream and plan new ways to help your church grow in love of God and neighbor.

## GETTING READY FOR WORKSHOP 2

Materials marked with an asterisk will be distributed to you before Workshop 2. You'll need these materials for this workshop, so remember to bring them.

- Read your church's demographic, community, and ten-year trend profiles \*
- Read Part One of the Data Findings Report for your church's Spiritual Life Inventory \*
- Read Brian Taylor's Introduction to *Strength for the Journey* by Renée Miller, which begins on page 29 of this workbook.
- Read the Episcopal Beliefs and Practices document, which begins on page 33 of this workbook.

### Welcome and workshop overview

The session begins with another round of introductions and a different question or two to help everyone become better acquainted. After refreshing the group's understanding of the workshop ground rules, the facilitator offers a brief description of this session's focus on developing a clear picture of where the congregation is now.

### Prayer and reflection

The prayer and texts below are used for this workshop's prayer and reflection.

#### Prayer for the Church from *The Book of Common Prayer* (p. 816):

*Gracious Father, we pray for thy holy catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it. Where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Savior. Amen.*

#### Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-16

*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, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as*

*each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.*

### Questions for reflection:

- What word or phrase strikes you from this passage? (Just the word or phrase.)
- What does this passage tell us about spiritual growth?
- What does this passage tell us about the work we are doing in this process?

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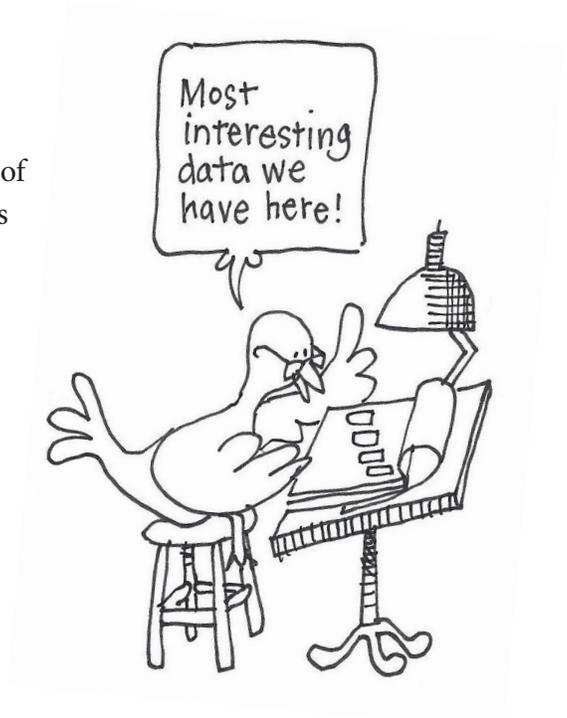
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### Exercise 1: Parish and community profiles

This first exercise looks at the Parish Profile: 10-Year Trend Data, Parish Demographic Profile, and Community Profile to identify basic trends in your church and community. The facilitator takes notes on the group's findings and observations. They will be helpful as you look ahead and plan in Workshops 3 and 4.

### Data Findings Report: Part One

The facilitator takes you through a discussion of the sections of the Data Findings Report concerned with your congregation's demographics, composition on the spiritual continuum, beliefs and spiritual practices, church activities, and level of satisfaction with spiritual growth and the church's support.



## Exercise 2: Breakout groups explore Data Findings Report: Part One

The team breaks into three groups. Each is assigned to discuss one of the following questions using information from *Footsteps*, the profiles discussed earlier, and the Data Findings Report: Part One. Each group designates a reporter to share its findings with the team as a whole.



- What have we learned about the current beliefs of the congregation?
- What have we learned about current practices of the congregation?
- What have we learned about current church activities of the congregation?

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### Breakout groups report

Reporters from each group provide a review of their group's discussion. Group findings are noted on Template 2.2, along with key takeaways for each area.

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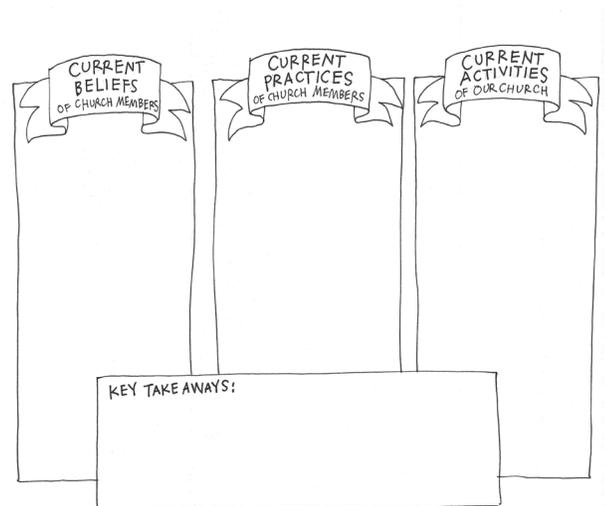
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RenewalWorks™  
Key Takeaways



## Episcopal beliefs and practices dot exercise

This exercise provides a way to consider the core tenets of our faith and life as Episcopalians. Posters around the meeting room display the items compiled in “Episcopal Beliefs and Practices,” assigned as homework for this session. Before the exercise, five red and five green stickers are distributed to each person. The facilitator asks everyone to read back over “Episcopal Beliefs and Practices” in silence and then to select the five beliefs or practices they care most about and five in which they would like to grow. At the end of that time, team members place red stickers on those beliefs and practices they care most about and green stickers on those where they wish to grow deeper.

After the stickers have been placed, the facilitator asks everyone to consider the following questions, noting their observations on a flipchart.

- Are there predominant beliefs or practices that are important or that call us to go deeper?
- What themes or trends do we see?
- How do our results for this exercise correlate with Data Findings Report?

## Homework and closing prayer

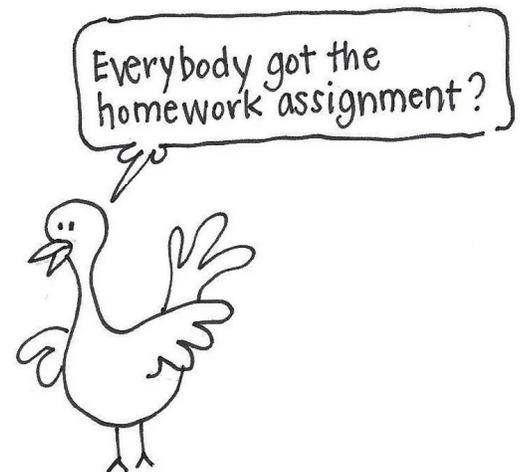
The workshop closes with the Ephesians passage and the Prayer for the Church read earlier.

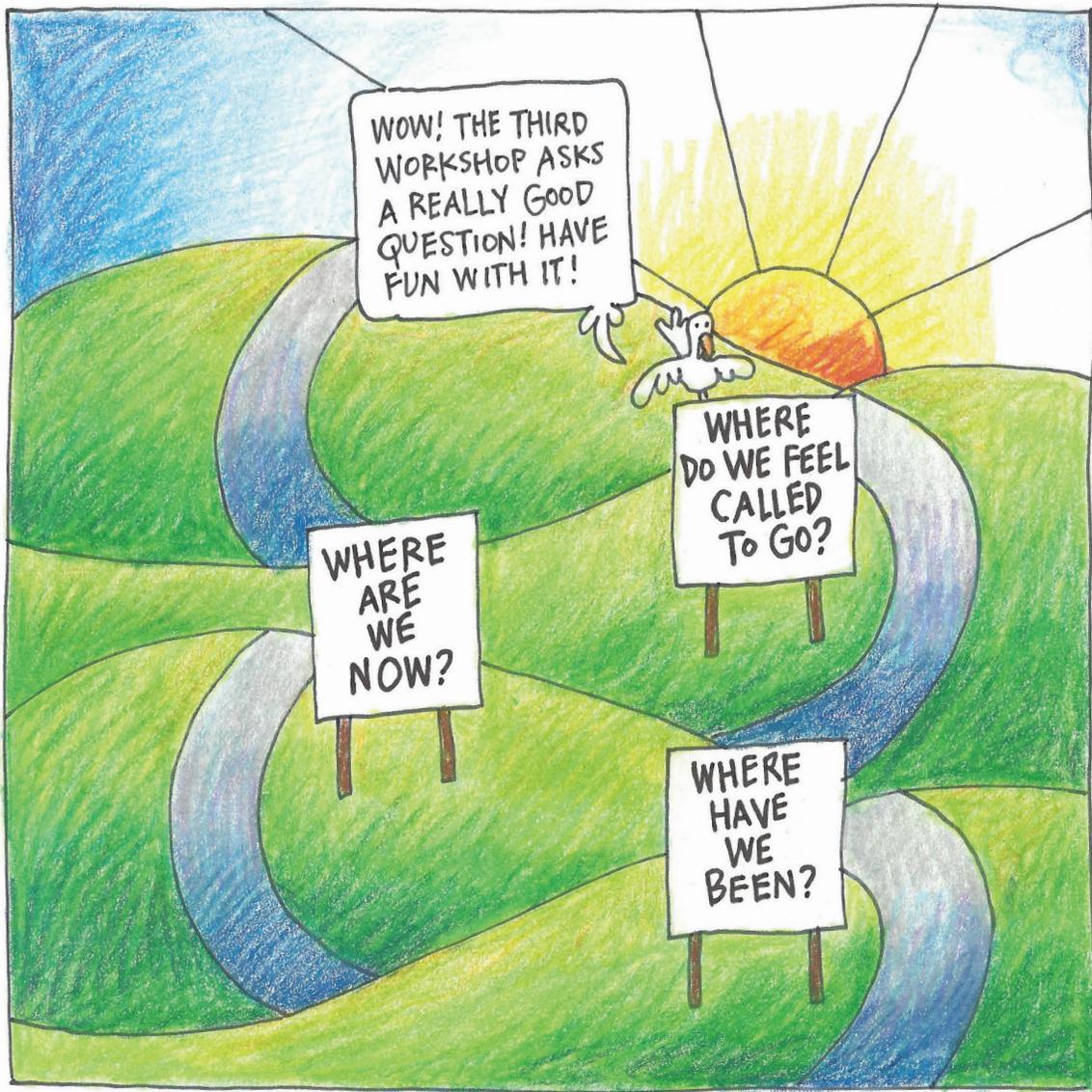
The session ends with the Lord’s Prayer.

## Homework for Workshop 3

Materials marked with an asterisk will be distributed to you before Workshop 3. You’ll use those materials in the workshop, so remember to bring them.

- Review the notes from Workshop 2\*
- Read Part Two of the Data Findings Report, “Church Profile”\*
- Read “Spiritually Vital Churches: Best Practice Principles”, which can be found in the appendix.





# Workshop 3

## Where do we feel called to go?

Building on what was learned in Workshop 2, this session looks at what RenewalWorks research and your congregation's data tells you about how your church can encourage and support spiritual growth. Turning to Part Two of the Data Findings Report, your team explores five best practice principles found in the top five percent of spiritually vital churches and considers how those principles can be applied in the congregation. By the end of the workshop, you will have explored one to three (maybe four) of those principles as pathways to increased spiritual growth as a congregation and as individuals. You'll also learn about the subgroup that will begin drafting the team's report to the vestry.

## GETTING READY FOR WORKSHOP 3

Materials marked with an asterisk will be distributed to you before Workshop 3. You'll use those materials in the session, so remember to bring them.

- Review the notes from Workshop 2\*
- Read Part Two of the Data Findings Report
- Read “Spiritually Vital Churches: Best Practice Principles”, which can be found in the appendix

### Welcome, review, and overview

After the by now familiar welcome and introduction, your team's facilitator provides a brief review of the information from Workshop 2 that was part of your homework:

- Congregation's composition on the spiritual continuum
- Observations and trends in the church and community noted during the profiles discussion
- Takeaways from the breakout groups' work with the Data Findings Report: Part One
- Beliefs and Practices Dot Exercise results

The facilitator explains the evening's focus on Best Practice Principles and what your church's data indicates about where the congregation wants to grow.

### Prayer and reflection

The prayer and texts below are used for this workshop's prayer and reflection.

#### Collect for the Parish from *The Book of Common Prayer* (p. 817):

*Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this 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.*

#### Scripture: James 1:22-25

*But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.*

## Small groups consider these questions:

- What word or phrase strikes you?
- What makes a church a “hearers only” church?
- How can we become a church that is more responsive, one that takes action?
- What does this passage mean in light of the findings in the second workshop, specifically, the data emerging from the inventory?

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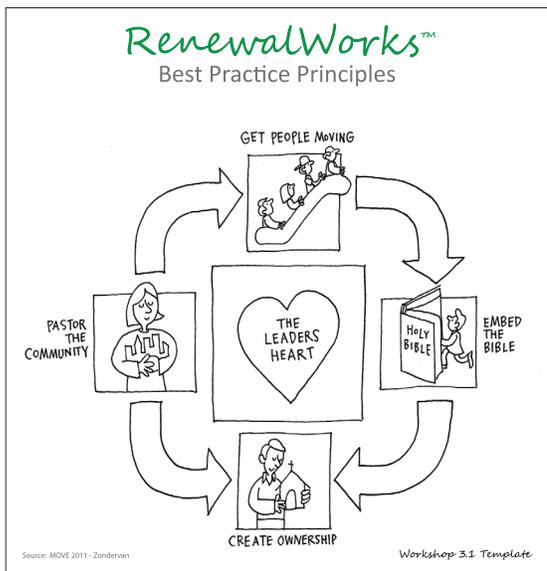
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## Best practice principles: What are they?

The team learns about five best practice principles found in the top five percent of spiritually vital congregations and then turns to the Data Findings Report: Part Two to explore what your congregation’s data says about how the church is doing in each practice area. You’ll also look back at what was learned in Workshop 2 before considering the best practice principles that can help your church make spiritual growth a priority in its life and mission.

## Breakout groups on best practice principles

Your team divides into two, three, or four breakout groups to consider the best practice areas that would be most fruitful for initiatives to encourage and support spiritual growth. Join the group working with the best practice principle in which you’re most experienced or interested.

As your group brainstorms ways the best practice principle could be put to work in the congregation, note ideas on the poster provided. Ideas need not be programmatic. Culture shifts that have no impact on



## Closing Prayer and Reflection

This workshop touches on each team member's deep hope and desire for his or her life in the church. Your facilitator may invite you to spend some time in silence to help transition to this time of reflection and prayer.

The facilitator then introduces the scripture and invites the group to spend some time in silent reflection, noting their thoughts below.

*When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part, then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

—1 Corinthians 13:11-12

In the silence, consider how your first childlike faith has grown and changed and how you hope to continue to grow. Write down your reflections.

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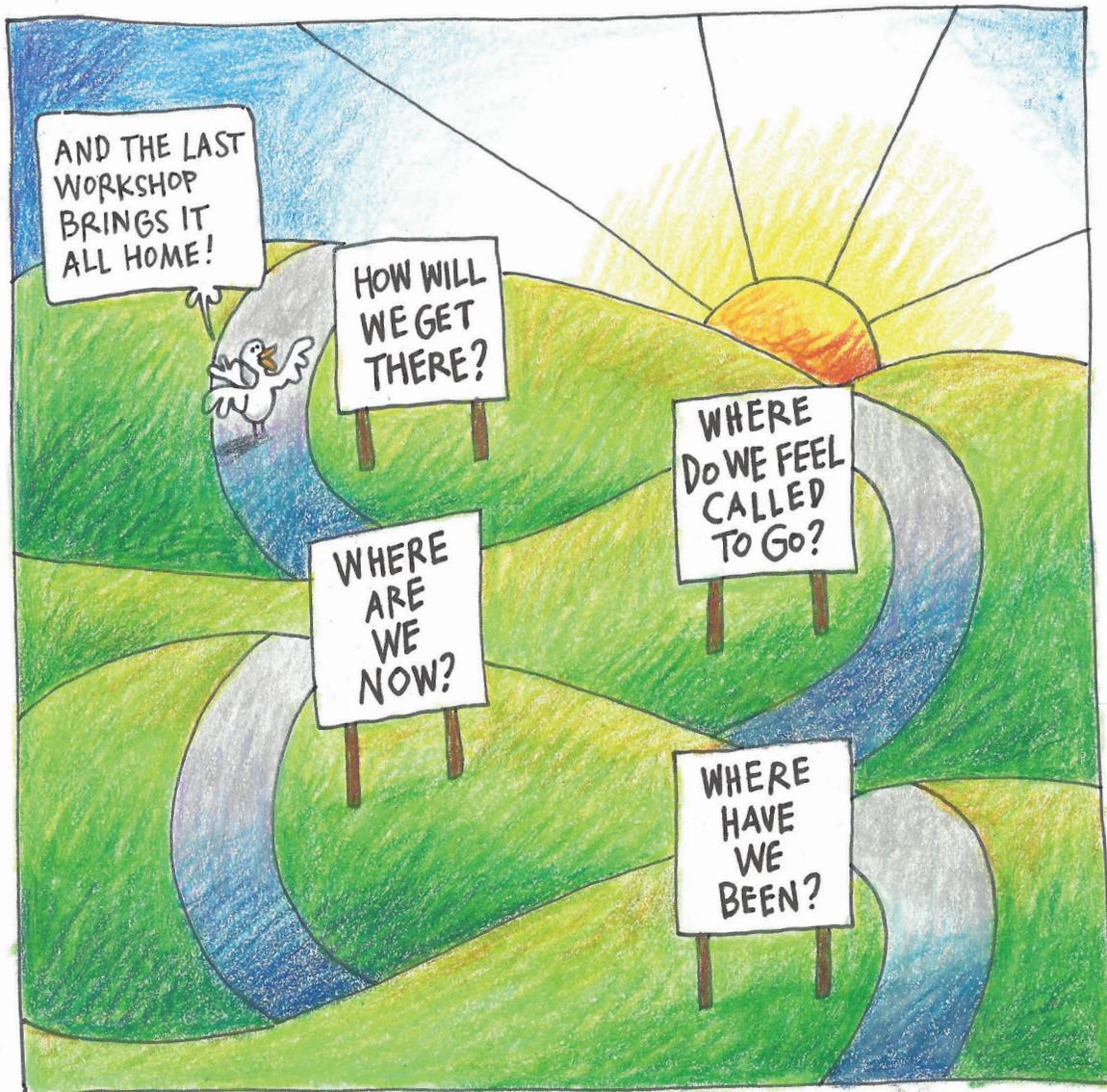
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When you've had some time to do this, the facilitator calls the group back together or divides the team into small groups to share their thoughts with one another.

Before the session ends, the facilitator introduces a subgroup that will create a beginning draft for your team's report to the vestry and congregation. The draft will outline what the team has learned and the basic priorities and possibilities that have been identified for making spiritual growth the focus of your church's life and mission. The team will receive copies of the draft to read as homework, and it will be discussed in Workshop 4, which is focused on next steps.

## Homework for Workshop 4

- Read the beginning draft report to the vestry, which will be distributed to team members before the session.
- Remember to bring it to the session.



# Workshop 4

## How will we get there?

Workshop 4 brings you to the final gathering in this process to help your congregation make spiritual growth a priority in its life and mission. In this session, you hear a review of what you've all learned about spiritual growth and your congregation. Together, you develop concrete next steps for refocusing on spiritual growth and work on a report for the vestry and congregation. Team members take a look at their individual commitments to spiritual growth. The workshop ends with thanksgiving to God for this time and work together and with hope for its impact on your church's future.

## GETTING READY FOR WORKSHOP 4

Read the beginning draft report to the vestry, which you will receive before the session. Remember to bring it to Workshop 4, as it provides the focus for the first discussion.

### Welcome, review, and workshop overview

After a brief introductory discussion, your facilitator explains the workshop's focus on determining a few steps your church can take to refocus on spiritual growth. To do that, the group will build on what has been done so far.

To prepare for that task, the facilitator offers a review of the spiritual continuum described in Workshop 1, the key takeaways and notes from the Episcopal Beliefs and Practices discussion in Workshop 2, and reports from the Best Practice Principle groups in Workshop 3. These are building blocks for your work toward recommended next steps.

### Prayer and reflection

Before beginning work on next steps, the team offers the prayer said in the first workshop and considers some words from scripture on trust and wisdom.

#### Prayer of Self-Dedication from *The Book of Common Prayer* (p. 832)

*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 unto 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.*

#### Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

#### Talk about trust:

- What does it mean for us to trust in the Lord in this process?
  - Where do you sense the need for trust?
  - Where have you sensed that need in your own life?
  - How can we acknowledge God in this process?
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## Scripture: Proverbs 24:3-34

*By wisdom a house is built and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*

### Discuss wisdom:

- How does wisdom differ from knowledge?
  - We've all gained some knowledge from the data we've received. What will it take to apply that knowledge wisely?
  - What does wise planning look like for our church at this point in the process?
  - What will be needed to help us move forward?
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### Group discussion: Overall priorities

The facilitator leads this discussion centered on what your team has learned and where the group sees the greatest potential for moving forward. The discussion begins with the draft of the vestry report, which outlines key learnings and identifies areas for refocusing on spiritual growth. Then your clergy leader reports on the Heart of the Leader conversation, and the Best Practice Principles groups from Workshop 3 recap their discussions.

Before turning to next steps, the team addresses these questions.

- What have we learned from this study of spiritual growth and our congregation? Does this beginning draft cover our most important and relevant learnings? What is missing?
  - Are we comfortable with the overall priorities, based on the best practice principles identified in Workshop 3? Do they represent the areas with the greatest potential for supporting and encouraging spiritual growth in our church?
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## Group discussion: Recommended next steps

In this exercise, the goal is to develop three to five specific, attainable next steps in the form of program initiatives and culture changes that address the key priorities discussed and agreed upon in the previous exercise. Using what they have learned from the Data Findings Report about where the congregation wants to grow, team members brainstorm about how these steps might be implemented.

Depending on the size of your team, this work is done by the group as a whole or in small groups organized around each of the priorities or best practice areas.

The steps identified and agreed upon by the team will be incorporated as recommendations in the next draft of the team's report to the vestry. That work is done by a small group and circulated to the team for comments before it is finalized.

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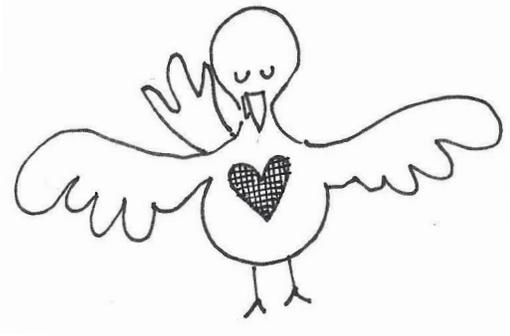
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## The Leader's Heart Exercise

As a leader in this congregation, you have been called to model discipleship. Using as many of the questions below as you wish, consider the next steps for your own spiritual journey. Jot them down in the space provided.

- What steps will you take in the coming year to grow spiritually?
- What Episcopal beliefs do you connect with?
- What Episcopal beliefs do you wish to grow in?
- What personal spiritual practices do you want to strengthen?
- What ways can you serve in the church?
- What ways can you serve outside the church?



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## Sharing of individual plans and reflections on this work

The facilitator invites you to share your personal next steps and your reflections on this work. This may be done in the full team or in smaller groups.

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## Closing prayer, reflection and next steps

As this final workshop ends, it's time to celebrate and give thanks for the presence and participation of every member of your workshop team. It's time, too, to ask God to bless this work going forward. Some groups will end with a eucharist and others take time for each member of the group to share what this process has been like for him or her.

In the weeks and months ahead, remember that the work of renewal is just beginning. Change takes time in the life of a congregation and may come slowly. As you read in *Footsteps*, "Episcopal congregations are both rooted and restless, but often mostly rooted." So be hopeful, encourage one another, and pray daily for the fruitfulness of this work.



# Appendix

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## Brian Taylor's Introduction to *Strength for the Journey: A Guide to Spiritual Practice*

by Renée Miller

This guide to spiritual practice offers a diverse and extensive view of spiritual discipline. But before diving in, perhaps it might be helpful to remember why we practice disciplines in the first place. After all, we can undertake religious activities for all sorts of reasons: to satisfy an inner critic who says “You’re not spiritual enough”; to pursue emotional highs; or just to feel less stress. What is the context for spiritual discipline within the Christian life of faith?

Let’s begin with the word “spirituality.” Locate this category on the shelves in any major bookstore and you’ll find hundreds of titles: Jewish, Buddhist, Christian, Sufi, Hindu, self-help, recovery from addiction, and the spirituality of business, baking and baseball—it’s all out there. But what do we mean by this word?

For some, “spirituality” is the doing of spiritual practice such as those suggested in this guide: prayer and meditation, worship, study, yoga, ministry, movement. But there’s obviously a problem with this. When we don’t practice, we believe that we’re not being very spiritual. Even worse, when we do practice, we believe that we are! We all know pious, disciplined people who we wouldn’t call “spiritual” at all. Jesus certainly came across some of those folk.

For others, “spirituality” means certain kinds of inner experiences, often characterized as calm, spacious, alert, loving, and non-anxious, with a sense of connection with everything and everyone. As accurately as these words might describe some of our experience, they are really the fruit of a spiritual life, not the thing itself. When calmness or a sense of being connected becomes our definition of spirituality, we run the risk of

making these experiences into idols. We seek these experiences rather than seeking God. When we don’t feel these things, we assume that we are not “spiritual” or that God is absent.

So if spirituality is not *practice*, and it is not the hoped for fruit, what is it?

It is *relationship*. Spirituality is how we are in relationship to God, to other people and the world around us, and to ourselves. Spirituality is the process of staying engaged in these relationships, what intention we bring to them, and how willing we are to evolve as the relationship affects us.

### Our relationship with God

Our tradition claims that while God is ultimately a mystery and beyond all of our definitions, God is also personal. While God cannot be reduced to a person (like us, only perfect and much bigger!), God is in relationship with us personally. The Creator of heaven and earth, the Spirit of all wisdom and harmony, the connective force of renewing life in the universe—this One hears our prayers, counts the hairs on our head, and responds to the particularities of our situation.

We say that God loves us, and that we are called to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. In this relationship, we pray, we struggle with our demons, we do our best to trust, and we give thanks. As in any intimate affinity, we are comforted, encouraged, challenged, exposed, forgiven, gifted, empowered, and sent.

And also as in every other relationship, we cannot control the outcome of our relationship with God. We may like to think that we know where it will take us—into greater peace of mind, more

patience, kindness and wisdom. In fact, these qualities are promised in scripture and in the lives of the saints to all those who love God. But along the way, our relationship with God may take us through some landscape that's not so pretty! We may need to get a lot angrier before we can find peace. We may need to move through a dark night of despair before we get to the light of God.

We are in relationship to the living God, who has a character, will, and methods that are not our own. Spirituality is our ongoing, evolving relationship with this living God. This is why it is so important to not confuse spiritual fruits or disciplines with spirituality itself, making an expected emotional state or the fulfillment of religious activity into something more than they are.

For Christians, Jesus is central to our relationship with God. He may be to us a friend, an enigmatic presence, or the very face of God. Our relationship to Jesus may change over time, just as our other relationships in life change.

And it is a relationship that Jesus always asks, nothing more, really. Sometimes I talk to seekers who are worried that they aren't "real" Christians because they don't hold to particular beliefs strongly enough. They think that unless they can resolve the place of Christ in the Trinity or the paradox of his full humanity and divinity (as if!), they can't genuinely claim to be a Christian.

My response is to ask them to read quickly through the synoptic gospels, asking themselves what Jesus expected of his disciples. Usually what these seekers discover is that Jesus said "Follow me. Come and see." He didn't demand moral perfection or theological certainty. He wanted people to be in relationship with him. In relationship, they would hear him, watch him in action, be questioned by him, and come to know his love for them. We might be in relationship with Jesus mystically, intellectually, sacramentally, or as

a companion. What matters is that as Christians, we somehow stay in an evolving relationship to Jesus Christ. He will affect us over time.

### **Our relationships with other people**

How do we treat the waiter at the restaurant or the person checking out our groceries? How do we respond when the man at coffee hour makes a comment that opens to us, by just a crack, the door of his suffering? How do we tell people how much they mean to us? What kind of feelings do we cultivate towards people who are unkind or unfair to us? How do we exercise our gifts in the local church or social communities in which we live? And what kind of relationship do we have with people who don't share the privileges we enjoy?

When we bring our faith, our prayer, our questions, our scriptures and our sacraments into these relationships, they are affected. The answers to the questions above will change as we see them in light of the gospel. Our behavior in these relationships will change as we pray, as we offer them in the Eucharist, as we puzzle over them with God. The application of our faith traditions to our relationships with others is what makes them "spiritual." It is also how we participate in the incarnation. For when we take our faith seriously enough to apply it directly to all of our relationships, God takes on human flesh.

### **Our relationship with the rest of creation**

Spirituality is how we honor the earth and treat it with loving devotion, as God's own precious handiwork. It is how we stop and wonder at the color of the sky, the force of wind, the miracle of flying birds. It is how we live our daily life as consumers of the earth's resources. Creation is God's body, and our spirituality is, in part, our intentional relationship with this magnificent, fragile, interconnected body.

## Our relationship with ourselves

With just a little bit of reflection, this can seem very strange: how can “I” be in relationship with “myself?” Aren’t I one, not two? And yet we frequently say things like “I feel good about myself...I’ve not really been myself lately...I feel the need to change myself...I’m learning to accept myself...I really saw myself yesterday.” An important question arises—who is the subject of the feeling good, changing, accepting, or seeing, and who is the object?

Without stepping too far into a metaphysical swamp in this brief introduction, suffice it to say that we humans are gifted with the unique capacity for self-reflection, for self-awareness. Different traditions explain this in different ways. Through the contemplative stream of our Christian tradition, we can understand it as the Spirit within us relating to our conditioned self.

We are born with genetic determinates and predispositions. As we develop, we are influenced by our circumstances and the people that surround us. We adopt responsive strategies that help us survive and progress. Along the way, some of these conditioned habits of mind, emotion, and behavior become helpful, and some become harmful. Some are our virtues, some are our sins. This is the conditioned self.

Meanwhile, we are also created in the image of God. We are like a seed that contains great potential to fully become the person God intends us to become. The Spirit is given to help us evolve. As spiritual beings, we activate and affirm this Spirit through baptism and other sacraments, faith, devotion, and spiritual practice. Living through us, the Spirit becomes more and more part of our consciousness.

This makes it possible, at times, to see our conditioned self with God’s eyes. As Meister Eckhart said in a sermon, “The eye with which we

see ourselves is the same eye with which God sees us.” So it is “the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit” (Romans 8:16). And we can boldly say that as Christians—along with our sinful and limited humanity—“We have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16).

In the course of our faith journey, the Spirit, the Christ within us, the image of God given to us in potential form – this true self rises up and relates to the conditioned self. Gradually, in the dance between God’s grace and our effort, we evolve. We “work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). Jesus and Paul go so far as to say that in the process, the [false] self dies, and “it is no longer I [the conditioned self] who lives, but Christ within me” (Galatians 2:20). And yet we remain uniquely ourselves, a particularly “Brian-shaped” (in my case) version of Christ, or image of God.

And so we say that we relate to ourselves. Our spirituality is how we live out this relationship with the self. Are we intentional about it? Lazy? Perfectionist? Do we believe it is all up to us? Are we waiting for God to zap us? Are we willing to go into the empty place of grace that remains when we walk away from conditioned habits of mind, emotion, and behavior? Can we live the tension between being determined to grow and forgiving ourselves for being human?

**Our spirituality, then, is how we are in relationship with God, other people, creation, and ourselves.**

## The place of spiritual discipline

With grace, with faithfulness, these relationships bear fruit. Our tradition tells us that over time, extending into eternity, all these relationships will be redeemed, that they will fulfill God’s intentions: love, forgiveness and reconciliation; compassion, justice and peace; environmental harmony; and for you and me, that we will be filled with the light

of God. All of this redemption is the fruit of our spirituality; it is the result of faithful relationships.

So what is our part in producing this fruit? Ah, this finally brings us to the subject and purpose of this guide: practice. Practices, or “spiritual disciplines,” are the things we do intentionally that strengthen and enliven our relationship with God, others, the world, and the self. Spiritual practices are the things we do that, together with God’s grace, produce the fruit of redemption.

Renée Miller has done a wonderful job of putting the spotlight on a variety of practices, some very traditional and some not so traditional. One gets the feeling that she could have kept going forever, highlighting hundreds more of them, because, after all, how we live in relationship to all of life is spiritual practice. We are to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. In beginning to list spiritual practices, we end up like the author of John’s gospel, when he spoke of the “other things” Jesus did, “If every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25).

Perhaps spiritual discipline, therefore, is just living in an awake, holistic, and faithful way. In a documentary film about the monastic life at Spencer Abbey, a Trappist monk said (and I paraphrase), “Monastic life is just putting a frame around everyday life. We do the same things everyone else does—we eat, we work, we sleep, we live in community. But we do it all with intention towards God, and that makes it holy.”

Some of us are easily geared towards being disciplined. We exercise six days a week, we get up every morning and meditate and read for an hour, we always take our laundry to the cleaners every Friday afternoon. I used to be like this, and my wife called me “the human metronome.”

During this period of my life, regular discipline was important; it was helpful. Like someone who practices scales and exercises on one musical instrument for many years in order to find the depths and beauty of music, the one who is spiritually disciplined might be more able to plumb the depths of their faith. Having searched this territory deeply, it will always then be near, always accessible.

But life changes us, and I’m not so disciplined anymore. My spiritual discipline is now more like what Brother Lawrence described as the “little interior glance.” Others have always been this way, people who don’t really need the regular discipline I needed. This little interior glance can be made while eating a meal, taking a walk, talking to a friend, sitting in a budget meeting, reading a book, surfing the internet, or gazing at the clouds. This is what Renée illustrates as she leads us through her diverse examples.

### A few last words of advice!

Do those practices that enliven you, not the ones you think you should do. As Dom John Chapman said, “Pray as you can, not as you can’t.” It’s about nurturing relationship.

How or when redemption happens is a mystery. For “The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how” (Mark 4:26-27).

Keep in mind what T.S. Eliot wrote: “For us it is just the trying. The rest is not our business” (East Coker, the Four Quartets).

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## Episcopal Beliefs and Practices

*How do we Episcopalians express our faith and describe our practices? This was the question raised by a RenewalWorks pilot group. Working with The Book of Common Prayer and the writings of Leslie Newbegin, Marcus Borg, and Ian Markham, the group's facilitator, the Rev. Canon Clarence Langdon, created a compilation of the beliefs and practices that are foundational for Episcopalians. This work has played a key role in developing the Spiritual Life Inventory used by RenewalWorks.*

*Many of these beliefs and practices are shared by Christians everywhere; others are particular to our church's tradition. This is not the only way to express our faith and practice, but it is a good place to begin exploring what is important and life-giving in our journeys of faith as Episcopalians.*

### Primary sources for our belief and practice

The Bible, church tradition, and human reason provide compelling truth about God and creation.

The Baptismal Covenant and Holy Eucharist serve as the cornerstones of our beliefs and worship.

*The Book of Common Prayer* provides comprehensive resources for an individual, family, and community life of prayer, in the context of the church year.

### Our beliefs

We embrace belief in the Trinity, our understanding of God as one in three persons:

We believe in God the Father. We and all creation are the continuing work of a loving God.

We believe in God the Son. Jesus is the supreme disclosure of the heart of God. His total trust and obedience to God reveals the unconditional trustworthiness of God, who raised Jesus from the dead.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit. We experience the power of the Holy Spirit working in us as we place our trust in Jesus' promises and follow in his ways in the Church and in company with his followers through the centuries.

Jesus reveals to us what constitutes a whole and authentic life. His radical trust in God and freedom to reimagine the traditions of his people call us to follow in his way of trust and freedom.

The Bible contains all things necessary for salvation. It is the story of God's creation and God's people and provides a key for understanding the presence and purposes of God in the midst of nature, history and our personal journeys. Jesus is the lived Word of God.

Every person has freedom and responsibility to discern the truth of God for his or her life through engaging the Bible, in conversation with the historic teachings and liturgy of the church, and human reason. We cherish diverse expressions of belief and practice as people grow into abundant and authentic lives in their time and place.

### Our practices

We embrace the Baptismal Covenant and the Holy Eucharist as the foundation for our belief and practice.

We participate regularly in the Holy Eucharist, bringing the substance of our lives and the fruits of our labors, offering them to God, and having them incorporated into the Risen Body of Christ.

We seek to name and renounce all forces in and around us that corrupt God's purposes of love and unity among all people and with creation.

We turn to Jesus and accept him as savior, putting our trust in his grace and love, and promising to follow and obey him as Lord.

We promise to persevere, and to repent and return when we fall away from God.

We promise by word and example to proclaim our trust in God's reconciling love.

We promise to strive for justice and peace and to respect the dignity of every human being.

We seek to bring values rooted in faith in God to our participation in public life.

We promise to seek and serve Christ in every person and to love our neighbors as our selves.

We express our gratitude and trust in God through tithing, proportional giving, and supporting works of justice and compassion.

We offer regular morning and evening prayers.

We offer prayers of intercession for all who suffer from violence, illness, grief, or abandonment and for all whose lives are closely linked with ours.

We offer prayers of thanksgiving for the gift of life and for the myriad blessings bestowed upon us by God.

We read and meditate on the Bible regularly.

We prepare and participate in The Book of Common Prayer rites for baptism, marriage, confession of sins, and burial of the dead.

We observe the prayers and disciplines provided for the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost.

We participate regularly in the offerings of our congregation for Christian formation for children and adults.

We seek spiritual friendship and accountability through individual and group reflection on our spiritual journeys.

We believe that God is present and active in the whole of creation and that we are called to participate with God through appreciation and care for creation, through the arts, through our daily work, through our relationships with other people, and in our own inner lives.

# Spiritually Vital Congregations

## Best Practice Principles

- *The Heart of the Leader*
- *Get People Moving*
- *Embed scripture in everything*
- *Creating ownership*
- *Pastoring the community*

## What are the Best Practice Principles?

In years of work with congregations, in extensive research with more than 1,800 congregations and almost half a million church-goers, researchers noted a number of churches that seemed to exhibit distinctive vitality. So they gathered a select group of the leaders from these congregations to find out what they were doing. The churches were varied. Some were urban, some suburban, some rural. They were denominational and non-denominational. Some were large. Some small. But despite this diversity, basic themes emerged in these conversations that led researchers to identify five Best Practice Principles common to these congregations:

- *The Heart of the Leader*
- *Get People Moving*
- *Embed the Bible in Everything*
- *Create Ownership*
- *Pastor the Community*

As RenewalWorks seeks to help congregations move forward and go deeper in the spiritual life, we commend these Best Practice Principles. They are not holy writ. You may think of others that are important to your community. You may not think every one is particularly pertinent to your common life. You may feel like you are doing some of these quite well. You may see others as a growth opportunity.

But we invite you to engage with these principles in the RenewalWorks process, to use them as a measure of what you are doing and what you might feel called to do. They can be a kind of checklist. If you feel your congregation is not engaged with one of them, you might ask why and whether it matters. And you can celebrate the ways applying any number of them can help your congregation grow in faith.

As you use these principles as a guide, remember that the next steps for your congregation may well be programmatic initiatives (a new ministry, a new course of study, a new staff person). But they may also be a change in culture, with no impact on staff or calendar or budget, but simply a change of heart and intention. At the heart of RenewalWorks lies the conviction that spiritual growth is about relationship, the deepening of love of God and neighbor. How can you help that love grow in your congregation? How can you do that for yourself?

For example, this change of heart, this change of culture may be a commitment to prayer before every church gathering or the inclusion of a meditation on scripture in outreach efforts. It may be a call to individuals to set aside a time daily for reflection and prayer. It may be a conversation in ministry groups about why we do what we do. It's as much about culture as it is about program or activity. (Remember the findings discussed in Footsteps: increased church activity does not necessarily mean increased spiritual growth.)

We offer this explanation of the Best Practice Principles as a way to understand what they are, and to consider some ways they might be applied to your congregation. We begin with the Heart of the Leader, which is the most important of these principles. Without committed leadership, the rest won't happen.

# The Heart of the Leader

*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

It's the key, the critical element. The leader—we're talking primarily about the clergy leader (or rector, if you have one), but also other clergy and lay leaders, like wardens, vestry members, and others—must single-mindedly champion spiritual growth as the priority for the parish. The clergy leader is CSO: Chief Spiritual Officer. Modeling discipleship and spiritual sustainability are implicit in this role. How is the leader fed? How does the leader stay in touch with the first love that drove the call to ordination?

## Steps

1. Model discipleship: Leaders make disciples by becoming disciples themselves
2. Exhibit humility: Spiritual growth is God's work. Leaders are instruments of God's power at work.
3. Focus more on transformation than attendance or pledge units

## Examples of Best Practice Principles

1. Clergy make discussing spiritual growth a priority for colleague groups.
2. Clergy make time and arrangements for discipleship training (conferences, retreats, mentor relationships, spiritual direction).
3. Vestry members understand their role as spiritual leaders and employ vestry covenants and other methods to hold themselves accountable. They make use of Forward Movement resources like the *Vestry Resource Guide* and the new book, *God's Grace and Robert's Rules: A Theological Primer for Vestry Members*.
4. The vestry supports and encourages the clergy, providing resources to deepen their spiritual lives and establishing patterns of care for them.

# Get People Moving

*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

—Romans 15:7

This, of course, suggests welcoming and incorporating newcomers. But it means so much more. It's about communicating to everyone in the congregation, new and not so new, that they are on a spiritual journey. It's an invitation, a call, and a challenge to take the next step, wherever they are in that journey. The leader offers guidance, but spiritual growth as an expectation needs to be part of the culture. No one, however stalled or dissatisfied, gets a pass.

## Steps

1. Make the goal of spiritual growth clear
2. Make work toward that goal an expectation for everyone in the congregation, those who are new and those who have worshiped with you for decades
3. Make the leader the champion of that goal

## Examples of Best Practice Principles

1. Use *Transforming Questions* (a new curriculum offered by Forward Movement) or another comparable introductory class.
2. Incorporate instructed eucharists regularly in the Sunday schedule (ideally quarterly), and provide other opportunities to learn more about the eucharist. Our research with Episcopal churches shows that it is a key catalyst for spiritual growth.
3. Have everyone in the parish read a book together, like *Jesus was an Episcopalian* by Chris Yaw or *Being Christian* by Rowan Williams.
4. Provide ways for people to begin to read scripture on their own. Encourage a daily quiet time. *Forward Day by Day* is a good place to start. You may want to encourage people to start with the Gospel of Mark, using *A Journey With Mark* from Forward Movement, or N.T. Wright's, *Mark for Everyone*, or a similar resource.

# Embed the Bible in Everything

*All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.*

—2 Timothy 3:16-17

In the same way that scripture is woven throughout *The Book of Common Prayer*, so the Bible should be woven throughout the life of the congregation, providing guidance, comfort, and challenge. The leader teaches and preaches, but each parishioner is called to discover scripture's rich meaning for his or her own personal spiritual journey. The congregation's life will then be shaped by scripture. For most Episcopal congregations, this means shifting the culture to embed the Bible in meetings, service projects, social events for all groups, and ministries for all ages.

## Steps

1. Keep scripture at the core of preaching and teaching
2. Take away excuses for not engaging with scripture
3. Model ways that scripture can be foundational for the community

## Examples of Best Practice Principles

1. Plan a parish-wide, intergenerational engagement with scripture like *The Story* or *The Bible Challenge*.
2. Encourage *Forward Day by Day* for individual reflection.
3. Make it a parish-wide policy to include scripture reflection in every meeting, service project, and gathering of the church. Begin by modeling this in vestry meetings.
4. Have the leadership read "The Bible and Episcopalians" pamphlet or some other resource about scripture from Forward Movement.

# Create Ownership

*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

—Philippians 2:12b-13

Life in the church is not a spectator sport. It is not entertainment. It is not a product to be consumed. Everyone has “skin in the game.” Everyone has both the freedom and the responsibility to pursue his or her own spiritual growth. Leaders assist this process by establishing the expectation that every individual in the community will grow in their relationship with the church, in their personal spiritual practice, and in service. As one church put it, “If you come here you will grow.”

## Steps

1. Empower people to be the church
2. Equip people to succeed in their ministries—coaching, thanking, encouraging, challenging
3. Hold people accountable. Build relationships in small group or one-on-one connections where people can talk about their own spiritual journeys.

## Examples of Best Practice Principles

1. Articulate the expectation that everyone in leadership needs to grow in his or her own spiritual lives. Dedicate a vestry meeting (or a portion of an annual retreat) to share personal plans for spiritual growth. Form vestry prayer partners so that each member is praying for another member and their spiritual goals.
2. Promote daily devotional practices, like Forward Movement’s daily meditation books with reflections for each day of the year. (In 2016, the series is *Abiding with God Day by Day*).
3. Develop spiritual paths for parishioners. Articulate a Rule of Life for your parish. It can be quite simple. For example, a church in Chicago developed the following Rule of Life:
  - WORSHIP more than you don't
  - SEEK a deeper understanding of your faith
  - SERVE others in the name and manner of Jesus
  - GIVE as generously as God has given to you
4. Create a prayer for the parish that everyone knows and embraces. Offer this prayer as a congregation before sermons and other gatherings.
5. Plan a retreat for the congregation, along the lines of Soulworks from St. John’s, Memphis ([www.stjsoulworks.org](http://www.stjsoulworks.org)).

# Pastor the Community

*The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve.*

—Mark 10:45

Jesus came to serve, and a relationship with him is deepened through commitment to service in the church and the neighborhood. He calls his disciples to go out into the world, proclaiming good news by word and example. A big part of that is knowing what God is up to in the neighborhood already, listening to the voices you encounter there, entering into dialogue with those of other faiths. And it's about working for justice and peace wherever you encounter the suffering and need of others.

## Steps

1. Elevate expectations for participation in service in the church and in the community
2. Build bridges to the local community
3. Make service a platform for sharing faith

## Examples of Best Practice Principles

1. Make it an expectation that everyone in the parish will do some service. Everybody can, even if the act of service is simply to pray for people in need.
2. Explicitly anchor current service projects in the Baptismal Covenant, in prayer, and in scripture. If you have a soup kitchen or a mission trip or a construction project, incorporate scripture and prayer in those gatherings. Ask different members of the service team to offer prayer and scripture.
3. Discover ways to learn what is going on in the neighborhood and around the world. Contact Episcopal Relief & Development to see how your congregation can support global initiatives. Use Episcopal Relief & Development resources in Lent.
4. Develop a partnership with a community of another faith or at least another denomination. Work on a service project together with that community.

## About Forward Movement and RenewalWorks

Forward Movement is committed to inspiring disciples and empowering evangelists. While we produce great resources like books and daily devotionals, Forward Movement is not a publishing company. We are a ministry.

Part of our ministry is carried out through RenewalWorks. Through a guided methodology of self-reflection, sharing, and workshop discussion, RenewalWorks challenges congregations to refocus on spiritual growth and to identify ways that God is calling them to grow.

The mission of RenewalWorks and Forward Movement is to support you in your spiritual journey, to help you grow as a follower of Jesus Christ. Publishing books, daily reflections, studies for small groups, and online resources is an important way that we live out this ministry. More than a half million people read our daily devotions through *Forward Day by Day*, which is also available in Spanish (*Adelante día a día*) and Braille, online, as a podcast, and as an app for your smartphones or tablets. It is mailed to more than fifty countries, and we donate nearly 30,000 copies each quarter to prisons, hospitals, and nursing homes. We actively seek partners across the Church and look for ways to provide resources that inspire and challenge.

A ministry of The Episcopal Church for eighty years, Forward Movement is a nonprofit organization funded by sales of resources and gifts from generous donors. To learn more about Forward Movement, RenewalWorks, and our resources, please visit us at [www.forwardmovement.org](http://www.forwardmovement.org) and [www.renewalworks.org](http://www.renewalworks.org).

We are delighted to be doing this work and invite your prayers and support.