



# RenewalWorks™

## Facilitator Guide

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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 as facilitator for 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 for your church's workshop team, 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 Facilitator's Guide gives you an outline and materials for the four workshop sessions. Used in conjunction with the Participant's Workbook, it provides a guided methodology that includes self-reflection, homework, sharing, and workshop discussions to help you and your workshop team discern where God is calling your church to grow.

After reading this guide, we recommend you visit our website [www.renewalworks.org/](http://www.renewalworks.org/) resources for a series of pre-recorded webinars that offer further preparation for the four workshops.

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

The Rev. Jay Sidebotham  
Director, RenewalWorks

## GETTING STARTED

Every journey begins with the proverbial single step, and saying “yes” to your clergy leader was yours. Your second is to explore what’s ahead for you in this guide. It is designed to help you develop a collaborative, caring team and take them through the four RenewalWorks workshop sessions. By now your workshop team members have been named, and you have a schedule for the launch of the Spiritual Life Inventory and the four workshop sessions that follow. Your team of nine to twenty-four members represents a cross section of your church community. The rector or clergy leader is a member and other, selected clergy may participate as well, but they do not lead in this process. It is designed to call equally on the faith, hope, and creativity of every member of the team.

Your role as facilitator is to create a working environment that encourages robust conversation and collaboration. You’re responsible for managing the overall process, introducing material, and moving from one exercise to the next. Breakout groups are self-managed to help the team develop ownership and hold themselves accountable for their work together.

### A few basics

Seek a balance between steering the workshops and welcoming creative ideas and insights from your team. Just like in a jazz combo, a little improvisation opens the door to innovation and fresh ideas.

Do your homework and go through the exercises well in advance of each workshop, so you’ll be familiar with the material and able to guide the group. Use the handy checklist at the back of each workshop to help you keep track as you prepare.

Check in with your clergy leader before the sessions to get his/her insights.

Be clear about when you are speaking in your role as facilitator and when you’re joining in the discussion as a team member.

Have a relentless timekeeper. Stay on schedule.

Don’t act as the scribe but do have someone capture the work on flip charts or templates that can be transcribed and summarized for the group before the next session.

Take ten minutes after each workshop to debrief with key leaders from the breakout groups. Note what went well in their small groups and offer suggestions for improvement where needed.

Model strong spiritual practices. Begin and end each session with a prayer, and encourage all members of the workshop team to pray for this effort.

## Some pre-reading to help orient you to the RenewalWorks process

*Footsteps* by the Rev. Jay Sidebotham outlines the philosophical and empirical basis behind the RenewalWorks understanding of spiritual formation. It's the first homework assignment for your workshop team, and we recommend it for anyone participating in this process. (Please see "Getting ready for Workshop 1" for information on ordering copies from Forward Movement for you and your workshop team.)

Brian Taylor's introduction to *Strength for the Journey* by Renee Miller, found in the Appendix of this guide.

## Practical matters — Room setup, pre-meeting organization, and ambiance

Your workshops can be conducted in just about any room or space. Use the following guidelines to set up your working space:

Have a table and chairs for each breakout group. Breakout groups should consist of three to eight participants, depending on the size of your workshop team. Plan on three groups unless noted. Try to make the groups of equal size, and mix them up so people are not always in the same group.

Find a space with good visibility to display templates during the workshop—a wall at the front of the room, for example, works well. They are available at [RenewalWorks.org/resources](https://renewalworks.org/resources).

Some churches provide a meal before workshops to encourage fellowship and make things easier for people coming directly from work.

Don't be surprised if your team becomes a close-knit group. That's often an unexpected gift in this effort.



## Get the jump on the poster-size templates

Have the poster-size templates needed for each workshop copied and ready to go before Workshop 1. The template files, scaled to size, can be downloaded at [RenewalWorks.org/resources](https://renewalworks.org/resources) and printed at a local copy shop like FedEx Office and UPS Stores. A number of the templates are used again, so don't throw them away at the end of a session. Here's a list of the templates needed. Single copies for each, except for Template 1.4.

### Workshop 1

- *Template 1.1, RenewalWorks: An Overview of the Process*
- *Template 1.2, Life-line Exercise*
- *Template 1.3, Spiritual Growth Framework*
- *Template 1.4, Our Church and the Spiritual Journey (four copies)*

### Workshop 2

- *Template 2.1, Parish & Community Demographics*
- *Template 2.2, Key Takeaways*
- *Templates for the Episcopal Beliefs and Practices Dot Exercise (4-up so they need to be cut at the copy shop)*

### Workshop 3

- *Template 3.1, Best Practice Principles*
- *Template 3.2, Get People Moving*
- *Template 3.3, Embed the Bible*
- *Template 3.4, Create Ownership*
- *Template 3.5, Pastor the Community*
- *Template 3.6, Overall Priorities*

### Workshop 4

- *Template 4.1, Next Steps*



## An assistant or two can make this easier

There's quite a bit of preparation and set up for this workshop series, as well as the need to keep each session moving smoothly. Inviting someone (or a couple of people) to serve as administrative assistant/s can be a great help. Among the tasks that person or persons might do are:

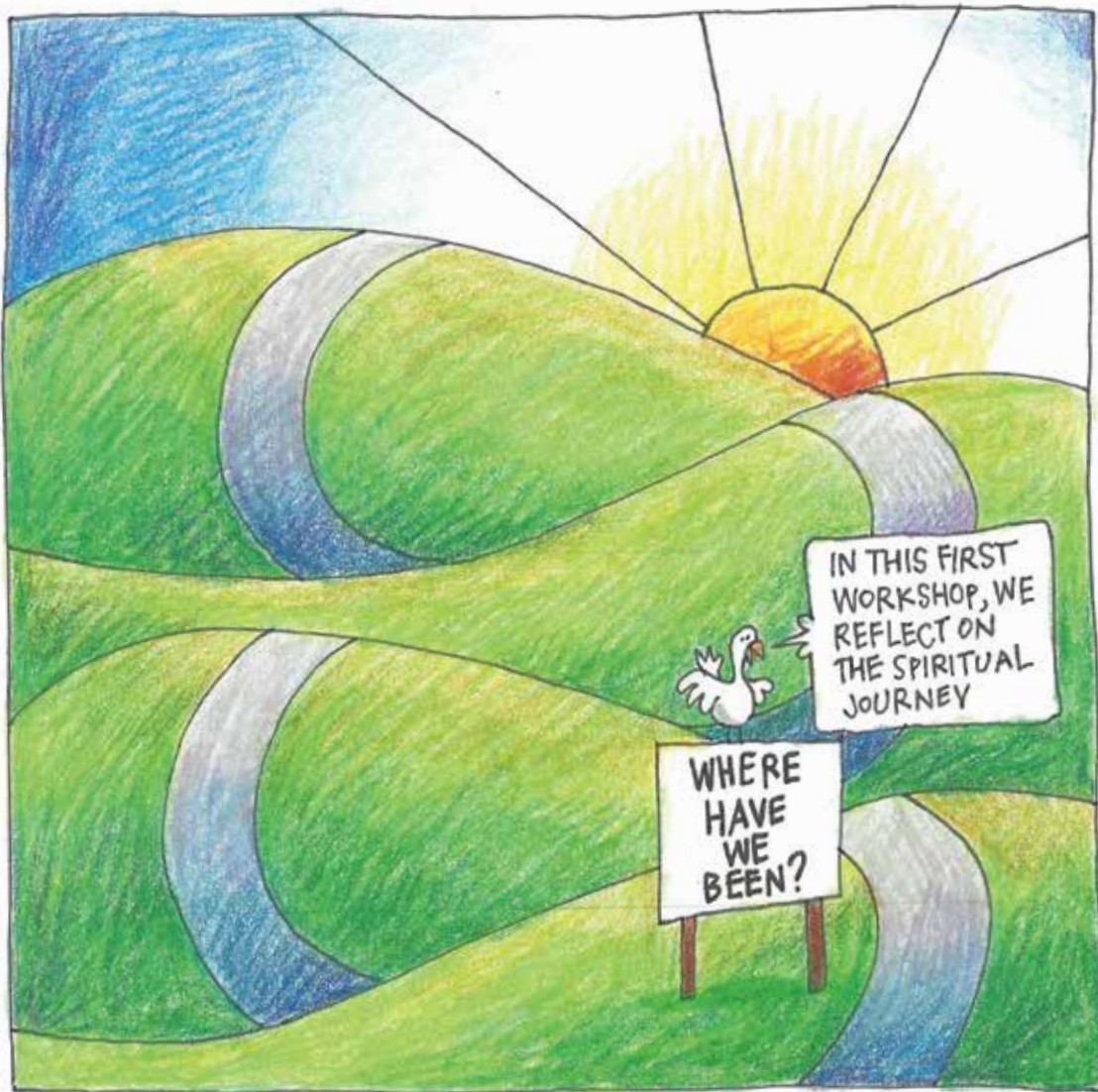
- Work with church staff to arrange for meeting rooms and setup
- Make any copies needed for each workshop
- Provide supplies—markers, newsprint pads, pencils and pens, etc.
- Arrange for refreshments
- Serve as a timekeeper
- Take notes during discussion
- Other support as needed

## Your workshop team has a job to do, too

Your team has been selected by your church's leadership and entrusted with a significant ministry of discernment. The basic requirements for them are to:

- Show up and participate actively in each of the four workshops
- Arrive on time
- Complete the assigned homework
- Hear and respect the experiences, opinions, and ideas shared by teammates
- Pray for this process

Your team's deeper requirement is to bring their hearts and best selves to this work. Remember to thank them at each and every workshop session.



# Workshop 1

## Where have we been?

With Workshop 1, your work as facilitator begins in earnest. Your group takes its first steps toward becoming a strong team—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 participants reflect on the dynamic nature of their own faith and the role played by their church and clergy in supporting and encouraging spiritual growth.



# GETTING READY FOR WORKSHOP 1

*Use the checklist at the end of this workshop to help you prepare.*

## Before the workshop:

- Obtain copies of *Footsteps* for each member of your workshop team from Forward Movement ([www.forwardmovement.org](http://www.forwardmovement.org)). Your church's participation in RenewalWorks means that the first three are free, and copies after that are available at a discount when you use the special code at checkout.
- Distribute *Footsteps* to your workshop team, and ask them to read it before the first session. The booklet provides valuable background on the thinking and research behind RenewalWorks. It's a quick read—worth reading twice, in fact.

## For this workshop session, you'll need to provide:

- One poster-size copy each of Templates 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 (before the workshop, fill in an example or two from your own life on Template 1.2 to help the team understand the Life-line Exercise)
- Four poster-size copies of Template 1.4, three for the breakout groups and one to post
- Two or three flipcharts on easels for taking notes
- Markers in different colors
- Masking tape

## Workshop 1 agenda

*In fifteen-minute segments, except where noted*

- Welcome and workshop overview
- Prayer and reflection
- Exercise 1: Personal experience discussion
- Exercise 2: Spiritual life continuum
- Exercise 3: Spiritual growth catalysts
- Small group sharing
- Exercise 4: Role of the church (20 minutes)
- Small group sharing
- Group reflection, homework, and closing prayer (10 minutes)



## Welcome and workshop overview (15 minutes)

Welcome your team members. Thank them for their presence and their willingness to take part in this RenewalWorks process at the church. Ask them to give their names and to answer two questions:

*How long have you been a part of our church?*

*What did you have to leave (or flee) to join us today?*

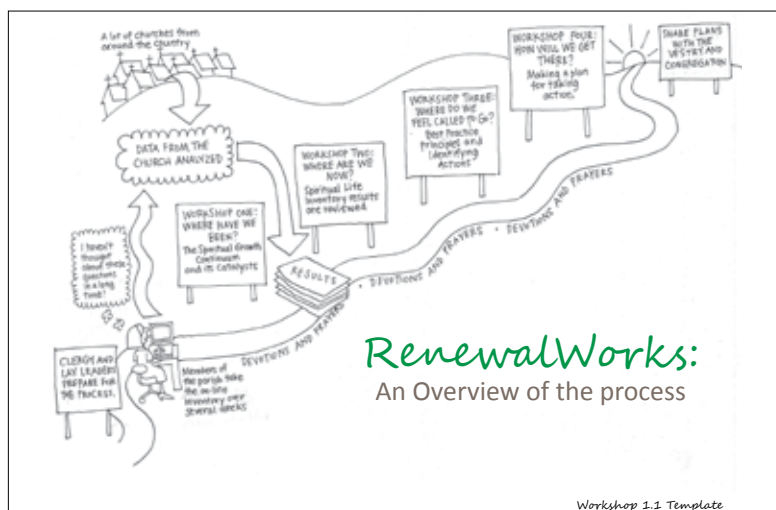
Even when team members seem to know one another, this simple introduction tells everyone that their voice and presence matter to the group.

Explain that as facilitator, you will guide the process but the outcome will be collaborative. Point out that the ideas, experiences, and reflections of every member will be important, from those who come barreling in with an armload of ideas to the folks who need time to sift through what is said before contributing their thoughts. You're in this together.

There's a lot to do in four meetings, and a few ground rules can ensure that each person's time and contributions are valued. Your team may have some additions, but we suggest that your list include:

- Smartphones off
- Stick to the schedule
- Focus on the work at hand (no working ahead)
- Listen carefully to others, fully present to what they have to say
- Respect the uniqueness of everyone's spiritual journey
- Share what you are learning about RenewalWorks and spiritual growth outside the workshops, but keep the personal stories and views of your team members confidential

Offer a short introduction to the four workshops using Template 1.1 to help the team visualize the process. Point out that the road we're on may curve, but it keeps moving forward and does not stop. Finishing the tasks of each workshop is vital, as they build on each other.



## 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 1,800 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 the second chapter of the Spiritual Life Inventory 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 for 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.