

THE ADULT JOURNEY OVERVIEW AND SAMPLE PAGES

SUMMARY OF THE CURRICULUM

The Adult Journey is divided into 25 one-hour sessions. It was originally developed for use in ten evening sessions, each lasting about two to two-and-a-half hours. (Either of these session formats may be expanded or shrunk, both in numbers and time, depending on the congregation's agenda. We found with a group at St. Philip's that they wanted to keep meeting—even after the course ended!) The one-hour sessions can be combined into the original evening sessions using the general topics outlined below.

The question sometimes gets asked if the one-hour sessions can be completed in less time. While space limitations and time constraints can be restrictive to education programs offered by a congregation, it is *not* recommended that these sessions be completed in less than 50 minutes per session. To do so will compromise the intent and quality of the program material.

Nor can the program be offered in a “drop-in” group format. Regular attendance is strongly encouraged, as each session builds towards the next. More importantly, participants tend to build a sense of community as they meet together regularly.

Sessions 1-3: Our Story—The Living Gospel

These sessions introduce the course, introduces the participants to each other, and begins the process of juxtaposing their spiritual journeys against that of Jesus Christ. The activities are as follows:

- Introduction—getting to know each other
- Sharing our Story with “a stranger” (sitting down one-on-one with someone we don't know very well and each sharing a part of their life story)
- Drawing a time line of our life story, the ups and the downs—and the times when there were simultaneous ups and downs
- Jesus' Life Story—drawing a time line for Jesus' story using the Gospel of Mark, and comparing it with our story. This will take two sessions to complete, even in the longer format (three in the shorter format). A good preparation would be to have the participants read the Gospel of Mark *in its entirety*, preferably in one sitting. Encourage the participants to simply *read* the story and not get bogged down in details.

Sessions 4-8 Listening Skills Listening to Others and to the Self

The purpose of these sessions is to enable participants to develop their listening skills. Much of this is based in the listening skills exercise in J2A. The group activities are:

- Learning about the five levels of listening
- Using the J2A Listening Skills exercise; do the drawings

- Exploring the Johari Window, which enables us to begin the process of listening to ourselves

How much self-listening do we do—both for good and bad? Am I listening to you, or am I listening to my own thoughts?

What are the limitations of language in the listening-skills exercise? Language stems from a presumed knowledge base. Sometimes our listening is limited by our unwillingness to admit ignorance.

How can we tease out the points of congruence between our story and the Gospel so that we have an assurance that we *are* living the Gospel, our own story of Good News?

Prayer: Listening to the Self and to God

In these sessions, the participants explore their prayer lives and examine the connection between listening to the self and listening to God. This is more of a teaching session, but a good leader will allow participants the freedom to share their experiences in prayer.

- Reflection on listening to the self (review). In what ways do we process our lives? (journaling, dreams, storytelling to friends and family, humor and jokes, etc.)
- Four forms of prayer: *lectio/meditatio/oratio/contemplatio*; the five types of prayer: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, intercession, and petition
- Prayer environments and the creation of sacred space. Sacred space appeals to all five senses: sight, sound, smell, taste, and feel.
- Prayer postures—kneeling, standing, sitting, walking; eyes open, eyes closed

Sessions 9-11: Gifts

In these sessions the participants will review some of the things they've learned, and identify the gifts they bring with them.

- Game: Fun Farm
- Each participant tells a story about something they have done that they are *really* proud of. At the end of all the storytelling, attach a sheet of paper to each participant's back. The group members write what the story has revealed about that person's gifts, and give the finished lists to the leaders for a later session.
- The members of the group list all the things they need for a healthy congregation (gifts, skills, etc.)
- The participants receive the lists that were on their backs and read the comments aloud to the group, ending by saying, "These are the gifts I bring to the Body of Christ."
- Do the exercise, "My Purpose Statement"

Sessions 12-14: Assertion The Ground on Which I Stand

In these sessions, participants examine the role of assertion in their interpersonal relationships

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and in their relationship with God. The groundwork begins with reflecting on what the group has learned.

- Spend a fair amount of time with the group revisiting all that has been done so far. (How does this process define the ground on which we stand? How does knowing our own story prepare us to assert ourselves? How can we integrate our prayer life with our lives in the world?)
- Discussion: What is assertion? What does it mean to be an assertive Christian?
- The “Assertiveness Inventory” exercise offers insight into different perceptions of assertiveness
- Discussion: Styles of Communication
- There is a dynamic tension between the self and God which is shown in: action/contemplation; discipline/compassion; negotiation/knowing; sharing the story; relationships/partnerships; life/suffering/joy.

Session 15-17: Negotiation

In these sessions, the participants examine negotiation in their everyday as well as their spiritual lives. Much of this stems from the earlier session on prayer.

- What does God want/intend for us?
- What are you willing to do in response to God’s intention?
- How do we get to “Yes”? (Understanding the position of the other person is central.) What is God’s position? Knowing God’s position allowed Abraham and Moses to negotiate with God.
- Do the exercise on Abraham Maslow and the hierarchy of needs. (What do I need at this point in my life? What am I negotiating for? Which of the levels of need is at play in my negotiating?)
- How do we get to “Yes” with unsavory folks? (What do you do with people who really do lack integrity? Can you negotiate with them? Sometimes we just have to trust the greater purposes of God. The stories of Joseph and of Jesus and Pharisees are study points.)

Sessions 18-20: Partnership

These sessions examine what it takes to be a partner.

- Review and discuss the Bible stories on partnership. What does it mean to be in partnership with God’s action in the world?
- Discuss the concepts of commitment, accountability and partnership.
- Reflect on ways participants honor and respect current partnerships.
- How are we interdependent? How do we show that? The Scriptures say we have been “knit together in love.” How do we demonstrate that? (By praying for one another. Fasting for compassion. Speaking the truth in love. “Whatever you do, do it with all your might.” Working hard at the tasks we have been given. The role of *tangible* works. Compassion and discipline. Mutual accountability.)
- Write individual collects for partnership.

Relationships provide us with:

- Access to clarity—“In an abundance of counselors there is safety.” (*Proverbs 11:14b*)
- A way of knowing God’s love and care for us. There is no other place to find the Risen Christ other than in one another and in the sacraments of his Church. Remember John’s words in his Epistle, “Love one another; Love one another; Love one another.”
- Partnership in the Body of Christ (Presence ministry).
- Common memory. We use people to aid our memories to hold on to the center of our experience.

Session 21-23: Leadership

In these sessions, the participants examine the qualities of leadership that Jesus showed in his ministry.

- Review the homework assignment. Leadership exists in a context, history and story. In what context do we see Jesus in this gospel?
- Discuss the temptations of leadership.
- What is the change in Jesus’ status in the community between the child Jesus in the temple and the time when, four chapters later, he comes back as an adult with authority—and they don’t like him anymore. He has become a leader *and he has become dangerous*.
- How do we exercise leadership in our church community? (It may be useful to go back and look at the sessions on Gifts.)
- Break into small groups and, using the general format of Paul’s letters to the various churches, write a love letter to the congregation.

Leadership is not personality based, it is about character. Leadership is strengthened in a Christian community when individual members know what they have to offer and carefully assess the best use of their skills and abilities. A recent calendar with daily sayings for smart women said, “A smart woman knows what she has to offer and doesn’t offer it too quickly.” We may laugh at that saying, but in fact, the Gospel sheds important light on that truth. Jesus reminds us to assess, to consider and reflect. Do not cast your pearls before swine. If a house won’t receive you, shake the dust from your feet. But before we get too pompous in our assessments, we are also challenged by our Lord and Savior’s model life to remember the poor, feed the sick, clothe the naked, visit prisoners, in effect, answer the most pressing and tangible needs, recognizing the face of Jesus in the needy. And secondly, we are reminded endlessly in the Gospels that to be a leader is to be a servant. We are called to carve out time and means to serve. Sacrifice is a true hallmark of spiritual leadership. When our lives are balanced between work and play, prayer/contemplation and action, sacrificial giving and an open-hearted willingness to receive from one another, we walk the path of Jesus. It is not simply that we must carry torches and banners and “boldly go” in order to be leaders; true leadership can be subtle, quiet, almost unrecognizable. True leaders count the cost, put their hands to the plow and live lives of obedience to the mandate for justice and peace given to us in the Scriptures.

Next-to-Last Session—What Did the Last Supper Look Like?

In this session, the participants will gather to cook and share a meal which will be followed by a Eucharist.

- Offering up our stories and our gifts, our statements, etc.
- Cook and share an *agape* meal
- Celebrate the Eucharist at the table where we've shared the meal

Find a date when *everyone* can be present. Express to people how important it is to *all* to gather in order to come to good closure. Gathering, cooking and being at one in time and place is messy and unpredictable—like the Last Supper. We have pretty thoroughly sterilized the Lord's Table. No catering. No cooking ahead. The leaders do not assign tasks. The members of the group themselves find their own tasks.

The goal in this session is for participants to open their hearts to one another around a dinner table. So often, we take the preparation, serving and sharing of a meal for granted. We forget that the Eucharist is a meal, a celebration, a time for finding true strength for our journeys.

So much of what we experience and are asked to attend to in our daily lives we must do alone, or at least away from our community of faith. The Eucharist cannot be experienced alone. It requires the presence of at least two, gathered in the name of Jesus. We can rest in the promises of our Lord that when two or more are gathered in his name, he will be present with us. We can bring this awareness of the power of the Meal, the family table, home to our daily lives, to our families and friends, as we explore ways to incorporate the Holy Eucharist into the sharing of a simple meal.

In this session, the participants want to model the importance of sharing food and beverage together. We want to remind ourselves again that the Scriptures are true: Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word spoken from the mouth of God. As we sit around our dinner tables, kitchen tables, even the small, plastic-topped tables of a fast-food restaurant, we can experience the presence of Christ and the Word of God coming out of the mouths of our friends and family if we will only turn our attention, listen actively, care for each other's stories, honor the journey, and *eat!*

Renewal and strength come to us in a million forms. Our Lord Jesus presents his living presence to us day after day as we gather at the Table. This sort of intentional awareness not only enhances our everyday meals, but also our gathering at church in the formal celebration of the Holy Eucharist. By sharing an *agape* meal—a meal of friends, family, and loved ones—we open up our understanding of the importance of seeking and finding the Christ in one another each and every day of our lives.

Dessert and Closure

The purpose of this session is simply to bring closure and to get a course evaluation. Again, choose an evening, perhaps at someone's home, when ice cream and lots of other goodies can be served. This is meant to be *fun!* The discussion centers on:

- What does it mean to be a grownup?
- Course evaluation (What worked? What didn't work? What did we leave out? What else could be included?)
- As participants part from one another, suggestions may be made for ways that the group might continue to meet in the coming months and years. Perhaps a dinner group will form that rotates from house to house, once a month for a year. Perhaps individual members will want to meet regularly to pray together or study the Scriptures. Leaders should make suggestions of ways that this group can continue to grow and experience their sense of community. *Living in Community* is an excellent follow-up to *The Adult Journey*. (Call LeaderResources at 800-941-2218 for more information.)

Final Comments to Leaders

On feedback: As you use these lesson plans, please take careful note of what worked and what didn't work and how you think these materials could be expanded, enhanced, and strengthened. LeaderResources and the authors are excited to hear from you, to listen to your successes and your struggles. (phone LeaderResources: 800-941-2218; email: staff@leaderresources.org)

In addition, as you work with the program, please remember that the authors hope you will consistently work to and with your own strengths. As you read the lesson plans, please consider what your own gifts, abilities and skills may be. Incorporate as much of your own wisdom into the process as you possibly can, and tell us about it. If you design a new exercise to teach some piece of the program, please let us know. As the program evolves, we would be grateful and glad to add your insights to this work. It is in sharing what we each have to offer that we build up the Body of Christ. This program, like the *Journey to Adulthood*, is designed to allow for and encourage your participation and the addition of your signature touch to its implementation. We want you to know how very much we value your expertise and wisdom as you begin and as you end.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARATION

We would never go on a trip without packing at least a few essentials in an overnight bag. *The Adult Journey* is something like a trip, and before you begin, let us make a few suggestions for getting ready and getting started.

Getting Ready

- Establish when and where you are going to meet. Schedule all the meetings in advance, and do your very best to stick to the schedule. Everyone functions better in a group if they can plan ahead and feel secure with the schedule. Last-minute changes, adjustments mid-stream and even relocation of a group from the church parlor to a home living room can cause real discomfort in a group. By setting up a predictable environment and a predictable time slot, participants are assured of a level of safety and security. Remember as you plan that you will need to break into small groups every so often and may want to send people into other rooms for part of a session. You will also need access to the church for Session 7: Listening Skills—Sacred Spaces and Prayer Postures.
- Prepare a schedule for all participants, indicating the times and the subject matter for each session.
- Decide on the size of the group. Between 16 and 20 persons seems ideal for a group like this. We want to be sure we have enough people to have a certain “weight” about it, but we also want to keep it small enough that people really do get to know one another over the course of the program. In choosing your meeting room, remember to consider the determined size of the group. If the room is too large, people will feel lost and distanced from one another; if it’s too small, they will feel cramped and unable to move and breathe. Look for a meeting space which is comfortable. Tables will not be necessary; all of this work could be done on the floor or sitting in chairs in small groups.
- Advertise the program in the church leaflet and/or newsletter. Post a sign-up sheet in the church hall. Announce the program outline, including meeting times and places. Stress the expectation that participants will be present for *all* meetings.
- Personally invite people to attend. Personal invitation is the best way to recruit participants.
- Contact each participant by mail, sending them the schedule and asking them to be sure to bring a small notebook (unless you provide Participant Books with extra blank pages) and a Bible to every session. If they have a Prayer Book, ask them to bring that as well. Always have extra Bibles and prayer books on hand for participants’ use.

Choosing the Number of Sessions

- Read the material carefully and decide what number of sessions best fits your group and congregation’s needs, schedule, etc.

- Short sessions: If you will be using this course as part of your Sunday morning adult education program, you probably can use it “as is.” You will need a full hour, so urge participants to arrive promptly and start at the starting time even if not everyone is present (the later you start, the later they will arrive!). If you only have 50 minutes, you will need to watch your time very closely and trim minutes here and there. Remember the basic principles of timing:
 - Use smaller groups (even one group of three will slow down ten other groups of two so make sure you do not have a group larger than the size indicated).
 - Limit total group size to sixteen; if you have more than that interested in the course, divide into two groups. Two groups of ten will move much quicker than one group of twenty.
 - Make sure all the small groups can meet in the primary meeting room or just around the corner—travel from one room to another is one of the things that adds a great deal of time to a session.

The shorter format makes it harder for participants to engage each other or the material in as great a depth. However, in some churches, it makes it accessible to many more people.
- Longer sessions: If you use the material in longer sessions, simply combine two (or three) sessions into one. Schedule a break between the sessions and eliminate the closing prayer at the end of the first session and the opening prayer at the start of the second session. You will also need to remember to do the homework assignments for all the sessions you plan to cover at the next meeting.

Getting Started

- If possible, have two leaders for each group. Having a male and female leader is highly desirable. It may be useful from time to time to split the group into two smaller groups based on gender.
- The leaders will need newsprint, dark-colored markers (sometimes highlighters), paper, pencils, Bibles and prayer books at every session. Make copies of Leader’s Guides and the Participant materials—either as a book (put into a three-ring binder) or as handouts. Please remember that this is copyrighted material for which your congregation has a license to make copies for your church use only. Remind participants that their materials cannot be duplicated and used elsewhere without permission from the publisher. You can add the worship resources to the participant books or you can photocopy them back-to-back and fold in bulletin format.
- The leaders should meet ahead of time to plan the sessions, using the materials provided as a jumping-off point. It will be the task of one of the leaders to communicate the information given in the lesson plan as introductory material. Review the exercises in advance, making certain that the leaders understand the task. In fact, it would be helpful for the leaders to have tried the exercises to see how they work. By doing all the exercises in advance of meeting with the group, the leaders will be better able to come up with original questions, insights and responses to the process. This will help to facilitate

good discussion and process time. However, leaders should never sit out in the hall while the group works on the exercise. Leaders in this program are partners with the rest of the group, and need to make themselves available to members of the group and stand on equal footing with them as a part of the process. When it is time to do any of the exercises, leaders participate right along with everyone else—even if the person has done the exercise a thousand times before. And in sharing and reflecting after the exercise, leaders are welcome to offer their own experience of the process.

- All sessions should open and close with prayer, as suggested. Seek volunteers from the group to lead these opening and closing devotions.
- Sometimes it is helpful for leaders to use reflective listening techniques—repeating verbatim the comments of the group as they transcribe the sayings onto newsprint. The repetition of ideas will be good for the group and will also help to assure the speakers that they have been heard. A faithful recording of things said builds trust and confidence.
- Transcribe everything (or at least as much as possible) on newsprint. Have the leader who is not presenting be the recorder. It is helpful for the participants to see what has been said, and to have these transcriptions available to leaders as they prepare to review week to week.
- Leaders must learn the names of all the participants as quickly as possible. Name tags will help. Prepare them in advance! Have the first name in LARGE type and the second smaller as shown below:

SALLY
Smith

KEVIN
Williams

- The first name should be large enough to read from across the room. Leaders should call people by name as often as they can. This helps the whole group get to know one another. In addition, it helps to teach us that we are known. When God speaks to us as individuals, God calls us by name!
- As the days and weeks pass in preparation, we encourage leaders to begin incorporating the participants in their own prayer disciplines. Pray for one another and pray for the group that God will meet you in this task. We can only do as much as we can do; the rest of the work belongs to God.
- If you are using the longer sessions, make provision for a snack of some kind at every session. Have the participants share this responsibility. This is hard work, and people will need nourishment along the way.

- Investigate a date for the next-to-final session which will allow you to have clergy present for the meeting. Remember there will be a celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and you will need a clergyperson for the celebration.
- Finally, remember to breathe. It may seem a strange thing to suggest at this point, but coming into this sort of work all breathless and worried is unnecessary. There will be a lot of collective wisdom in the room with you. As leaders, it is never our job to *know everything*. We are called to facilitate the process. Breathe. Remember, once again, that God is in this process too, hard at work, right by your side.

The Adult Journey: Story

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SESSION THREE

JESUS' LIFE STORY

Purpose

This session continues the process of juxtaposing the participants' spiritual journeys against that of Jesus Christ.

Preparation

For this session, you will need the following:

- Name tags
- Newsprint, markers, tape
- Participants' time lines (returned with their name tag)
- Bibles

Opening Prayer

Use the following prayer, or some other suitable one, to begin the session:

Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

(BCP, p. 100)

Review the last session, recap highlights or say the things you wished you had said in last week's introduction but forgot! Ask participants about their experience of reading the Gospel of Mark. What was that experience like for you? Had you ever read a gospel book in one sitting before? How was that different from hearing segments read in church on Sundays?

Exercise—Jesus' Life Story (50 minutes)

Divide into groups of four. Give each group a *large* piece of paper (newsprint on rolls works well) and colored markers. See that each member of each group has a Bible to work with. They are to open the Bible to the Gospel of Mark and construct a time line for Jesus, from his Baptism to the Resurrection, marking the discontinuities, the peaks and the valleys.

Of course, this will be difficult for many of the participants and will take quite a bit of time. We don't really know the life of Jesus all that well. We carry around snippets of stories we remember from our childhood and bits and pieces we remember from the lectionary readings we hear every Sunday, but most of us aren't all that sure of what happened to Jesus between the birth narrative of Christmas and the Passion of Holy Week, much less what happened after that! It will be a challenge, and it will be worth it to struggle through the text to find the line. When

did Jesus appear to feel good? Bad? Happy? Afraid? When was he surrounded by people and when was he alone?

Discussion

About halfway through the session (or when you can see they are finished), have the participants come together and share their findings. Have an open discussion. What were their surprises? The following list of questions may be helpful:

- Why does the Gospel of Mark begin with a quote from the prophet Isaiah? (Jesus' life made sense in the context of the ongoing story of God's action in history.)
- How does Jesus' ministry flow from public works to private times with his disciples and in prayer? Compare Chapter 1:35-39 and Chapter 14:32-42. In Chapter 1:35-39, Jesus is trying to find a quiet time to be alone with God, and no one will leave him alone. When this passage is compared with the scene in Gethsemane, Chapter 14:32-42, where no one will stay with him, the possibility of understanding Jesus as a man, just like us, is enhanced. Are there times when you have wanted to be alone and couldn't be? Are there times when you wanted someone to be with you, and no one seemed able to stay long enough?

With all the time lines constructed for the life of Jesus pinned where all can see, ask the participants to spend a few moments comparing their own time line with the life of Jesus. Most of us have lived lives longer than the 33 years that our Lord was alive on the earth, but still there are things worth noting:

- When did we begin to understand our role, our place in the work which God has to do in the world? At about the age of thirty, Jesus began his ministry—what were we doing at thirty? What do we hope to do at thirty?
- What sacrifices have we had to make along the way? What sacrifices did Jesus make?
- When have we been asked to do more than we felt able to do? When did Jesus give more than it seemed he had? What can we learn from Jesus' experience with the loaves and fishes? Is the key to living lives of faith caught in that story—we give what we have, the little that it is, and hope that God will multiply the offering to be enough, and even more than enough?
- In the story of Jesus healing the blind man, the man says, "I see people, they look like trees walking around." Have we ever had moments in our lives when the world around us seemed suddenly so very clear and so very strange? The healing of the blind man is twofold: first he sees, and then he sees clearly. Is it possible that we have been understanding our lives like the blind man in Mark: 8.24; we see, but we do not understand? Does Jesus want to touch us once more, so that we can see clearly?

The possibilities for discussion are endless. In leading the discussion, listen carefully to the concerns of the group and continue to return the group to considering their own lives and the life of Jesus. Use the Bible. Read passages aloud as needed. We do not need to have a deep theological base to explore this correlation. We can look at The Story and our own story and then return to the Gospel story to find strength and courage to live our own lives.

Our story and God's story as found in the gospels of our Lord Jesus Christ are in concert with one another. As we explore our own lives and examine the life of Jesus, we can begin to embrace God's love and mercy in new and exciting ways. In addition, as we look with the full intention of better understanding our own lives and the life of Jesus, we will be empowered to live lives which are hallmarked by the qualities of our Lord. Jesus, because he was a rabbi, knew the history of his people. He also knew his own life story. In the midst of all that he did, Jesus understood himself in light of the Hebrew Scriptures. He saw himself, as did his followers, in the light of the prophet Isaiah and the other writers whose words and prophecies fill the whole Old Testament. Throughout the Gospel of Mark, Jesus makes reference to the history behind him. We, too, as we live our lives, can make use of the history of Jesus as we find him in the Bible. We can enter the richness of the heritage of his story and incorporate it into our own. But only if we know the stories. God's story. Our story.

Preparation for the next session

Make time to tell your life story to someone you care about this week. Write a letter to an old friend. Sit down with your spouse or partner and ask for an hour of their time. Take your child for a long walk and ask her or him to listen to you as you recount your life story.

Closing Prayer

Use the following Litany of Thanksgiving (BCP, p.836). The group says the words in italics:

Let us give thanks to God our Father for all his gifts so freely bestowed upon us.

For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea,
We thank you, Lord.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women, revealing the image of Christ,
We thank you, Lord.

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends,
We thank you, Lord.

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,
We thank you, Lord.

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,
We thank you, Lord.

For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering and faithful in adversity,
We thank you, Lord.

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice,
We thank you, Lord.

For the communion of saints, in all times and places,
We thank you, Lord.

Above all, we give you thanks for the great mercies and promises given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord;
To him be praise and glory, with you, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

SESSION ELEVEN

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Purpose

In this session, participants identify the gifts that God has given us corporately as the Body of Christ.

Preparation

- Parable of the Talents/Gifts handout (from last week—you may want to have extra copies on hand in case some participants forget to bring theirs)
- Paper and pens, 3 x 5 index cards
- Newsprint with the words participants will use at the end of the session (“These are the gifts I bring. . .” and “Go in peace. . .”).
- This session may extend beyond the time limit of an hour. No time limits are provided for this reason.

Opening Prayer

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

(BCP, p. 827)

Introduction

At Baptism, God gives each person at least one spiritual gift that becomes that person’s primary way of being Christ to another person. The purpose of spiritual gifts is to enable us to help carry out the mission of the Church to “restore people to unity with God and each other in Christ.” These gifts are often more difficult for people to understand or embrace than the gifts of intelligence, personality, or talent. Yet they are vital to the life of the Church. Each congregation has a particular work God has given it to do—a particular way in which that congregation is called to fulfill the mission of the Church. And the gifts needed to accomplish that work are found in the members of the congregation. So it is important that every member identify and use his or her gifts because that is how Christ’s mission of reconciliation will be accomplished in this particular gathering of God’s people in this time and place.

Exercise 1—Corporate Gifts

1. Ask the group to identify all the things a healthy congregation needs. List these on newsprint.
 - Gifts, skills, etc.
2. Hand out a copy of St. Paul’s lists of the Gifts of the Spirit (Romans 12:1-18).
3. Ask the group to explore what each of the following words from the *1 Corinthians* passage

means:

- Utterance of wisdom
- Utterance of knowledge
- Faith
- Working of miracles
- Gifts of healing
- Gifts of prophecy
- Discernment of spirits
- Various kinds of tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

4. Ask who in our community of faith has these gifts and how they are being used to build up the Body of Christ. How are they experienced as part of our common life?

5. A similar exploration may take place with the list from *Romans*:

- Prophecy
- Faith
- Ministry
- Teaching
- Preaching
- Exhortation
- Giving
- Leading
- Compassion (What does it mean to have the gift of compassion? Where do we see it demonstrated?)
- Does someone in our community have the gift of faith? What does that mean? How does it show itself?

The challenge here is to identify the ways in which God is already working in our church community and to align that working with the model of the Scripture. We all know individuals who seem to possess a stronger sense of faith or who consistently show compassion to people in times of sorrow and suffering. How can we make better use of those gifts? How can we honor them in one another?

One possible reading of the passage from Romans may be that having been given gifts that differ, there are still a great many things that we all are able to do. With Paul, we can all learn to “Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.” (*Romans 12:9-10; 12-13*) And when we find it difficult to do so, we ought to let it be known. If we freely admit this, then the Body of Christ with all its many gifts may care for us and support us in our weakness. It is possible that one path to living peaceably with one another, as these verses admonish us to do, is thereby uncovered. But we must acknowledge both our strengths and our weaknesses, our giftedness, and our need for the giftedness of others.

6. Consider the selected readings from Thomas Merton and Martin Smith.

- How does Merton recommend/suggest that we use our gifts? Do you agree?
- How does Martin Smith suggest our gifts should be used? Do you agree?

Leaders should be advised that people often want “the expert answer” on these things and will appreciate your taking the time to see what the Bible commentaries have to say about these many gifts in the Body of Christ. Your church library or the public library may be of help to you. Look up “Gifts” in a concordance and see what you find. See what the scholars have said and what you can understand, and share what you’ve discovered concerning the “tough questions”:

- Do people really speak in tongues? Where? When? Why? Why not?
- What does it mean to be an apostle? Prophet? Teacher?
- Who are the prophets in our lives? Do we need prophets anymore?

But remember the goal here is not so much to teach as to explore.

- What do we already know, and where might we look for more information?

In many ways, the task is to awaken curiosity in the participants. It is not necessary that we have the answers to all these questions, but it is important that we allow ourselves to be engaged in the dialogue which surrounds them.

Exercise 2

1. Taking the many sheets of newsprint that you should now have spread all over the room, have the group answer the following questions:

- In our congregation, we see the gift of compassion in the following people and ministries:
- In our congregation, we see the gift of prophecy in the following people and ministries:
- In our congregation, we see the gift of evangelism in the following people and ministries:
- In our congregation, we see the gift of teaching in the following people and ministries:
- In our congregation, we see the gift of healing in the following people and ministries:
- And so on.

Exercise 3

1. Having listed all these many gifts, ask participants to spend a few minutes reflecting on their own gifts. Where would they put themselves on these lists? Take a moment to consider what other people heard in your story. What strengths and gifts do you have? What spiritual gifts might these strengths and gifts point toward?

2. Invite each individual to find a comfortable spot to work. Hand out new sheets of paper and a 3 x 5 card to each.

3. Using the following form, participants will create their own personal mission statements. This

process will allow them to see their own gifts and build a statement to strengthen their commitment to use and cherish those gifts.

- On a sheet of paper, describe your ideal world. Some key phrases include: peace, food for all, security, an end to poverty, laughter, etc. If the participants seem to be having trouble, try asking them to list what is wrong with the world as we know it: violence, AIDS, starvation, poverty, war. Once these words are listed, ask them to provide a word with the opposite meaning: “violence” becomes “long life and safety.” “AIDS” becomes “health.” “Starvation” becomes “enough food” or “All are fed.” After they have written this down, ask them to underline the *two or three* most important words or phrases in their vision of the perfect world.
- Ask the participants to list all the things they are good at. Tell them: “Be kind to yourself. Make it a long list!” Have them put the talents and abilities in words ending in “ing”.
Examples: walking, talking, singing, reading, playing, teaching, acting.
Ask them to underline the *three* most important words. Underline the words about which they have the greatest sense of assurance: “Yes, that’s true, that’s me. This gives me pleasure.”
- Have the participants list all the things that matter to them personally and for which they are willing to work.
Examples: non-violence, spending time with family and friends, writing a book, working for justice, prayer, a relationship with Jesus.
Underline the two or three words or phrases that are most important to you, most central to your sense of well-being.
- Using the following fill-in-the-blank sentence, have the participants assemble their purpose statement on a 3 x 5 card. Insert words or phrases from sections 1, 2, and 3 in the appropriate blanks. The resulting statement will help the participants know: This is what I want. This is how I will accomplish it. This is how it will benefit the world.

Purpose Statement

I, _____(name)_____, by _____(3)_____, _____(3)_____, and _____(3)_____, through my _____(2)_____, _____(2)_____, and _____(2)_____, will work so that all may (may have) _____(1)_____ and _____(1)_____.

There are no right or wrong purpose statements. We offer to God who we really are, in all our idiosyncratic joy, and we ask for what we want. These are holy offerings. This is sweet incense to the throne of God.

Exercise 4

1. After the completion of the exercise, ask the members of the group to come together and form a circle. One by one they should read aloud their purpose statements. They should conclude their reading by saying, “These are the gifts I bring to the Body of Christ.” The group responds with, “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.”
2. The rest of the group gives their attention to each one as they share this personal statement. Using all the skills we have learned in the previous sessions, this is a time to pay close attention, and also to pray for one another. We ask God to empower all that we do to his glory in the world.

Closing Prayer

The group prays one or two of these prayers in unison, the leader first saying

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Lord, make us instruments of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon. Where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

(BCP, p. 833)

O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen.

(BCP, p. 833)

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son; Look with compassion on the whole human family; Take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(BCP, p. 815)

HANDOUT

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

As the disciples were listening, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. So he said, “A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, ‘Do business with these until I come back.’ When he returned, having received royal power, he ordered these slaves, to whom he had given the money, to be summoned so that he might find out what they had gained by trading. The first came forward and said, ‘Lord, your pound has made ten more pounds.’ He said to him, ‘Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities.’ Then the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your pound has made five pounds.’ He said to him, ‘And you, rule over five cities.’ Then the other came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your pound. I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’ He said to him, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked slave! You knew, did you, that I was a harsh man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? Why then did you not put my money into the bank? Then when I returned, I could have collected it with interest.’ He said to the bystanders, ‘Take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds.’ ‘I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away’.” (Luke 19:11-27)

GIFTS

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. (Romans 12:1-18)

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.

If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would

not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. (*1 Corinthians 12:4-31a*)

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.)

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. (*Ephesians 4:4-13*)

I must learn to "leave myself" in order to find myself by yielding to the love of God. If I were looking for God, every event and every moment would sow, in my will, grains of His life that would spring up one day in a tremendous harvest.

For it is God's love that warms me in the sun, and God's love that sends the cold rain. It is God's love that feeds me in the bread I eat, and God that feeds me also by hunger and fasting. It is the love of God that sends the winter days when I am cold and sick, and the hot summer when I labor and my clothes are full of sweat: but it is God Who breathes on me with light winds off the river and in the breezes out of the wood. His love spreads the shade of the sycamore over my head, and sends the water-boy along the edge of the wheat field with a bucket from the spring, while the laborers are resting and the mules stand under the tree.

It is God's love that speaks to me in the birds and streams; but also behind the clamor of the city God speaks to me in His judgments, and all these things are seeds sent to me from his will.

If these seeds would take root in my liberty, and if His will would grow from my freedom, I would become the love that He is, and my harvest would be His glory and my own joy.

And I would grow together with thousands and millions of other freedoms into the gold of one huge field, praising God, loaded with increase, loaded with wheat. If in all things I consider only the heat and the cold, the food or the hunger, the sickness or labor, the beauty or pleasure, the success and failure or the material good or evil my works have won for my own will, I will find only emptiness and not happiness. I shall not be fed, I shall not be full. For my food is the will of Him Who made me and made all things in order to give Himself to me through them.

*Thomas Merton
New Seeds of Contemplation*

Teilhard de Chardin once wrote that "my matter," my body is not a bit of the universe that I possess totally. It is the whole of the universe possessed by me partially. This strange thought is the modern equivalent of the ancient doctrine of the human person as microcosm, the world in miniature. Love for matter, for the cosmos of God's making, like charity begins at home. How can I love God's creation if I fail to love that world as it exists summed up in my own body?

When an acquaintance loves someone we do not find attractive, we sometimes express puzzlement in the form of the question: “What does she see in him?” If we asked God: “What do you see in me, in my body?” the answers might amaze us indeed.

God sees in our bodies the sum of countless acts of creation and transformation over aeons of cosmic time. Origen said that we have within us the sun and the moon and also the stars. It is literally true. For instance, every carbon atom in our bodies was formed in a star when three helium nuclei collided in one spot within less than a millionth of a millionth of a second. We are children of the stars.¹ Every constituent of our bodies has had a million other lives in the seas, in plants, in animals. In every cell and organ God reads the history of our evolution over millennia and the links by which we are connected with the entire network of living beings. And God sees everything that he has made—epitomized and summed up in our bodies—and behold, it is very good.

God sees in our bodies the limbs and organs of the Body of Christ. The Word became flesh, and when we are baptized into Christ our flesh is incorporated into his Body, becoming in him a further extension of divine indwelling and transformation. “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?” (*1 Corinthians 6:15*) So in our bodies God sees not only the past but the future of all creation. Our bodies—the concrete realities of our unique lives, our acts and passions, our relationships, memories and achievements—are destined to be taken up into the divine life as part of the final integration of all things through Christ.

*Martin L. Smith
A Season for the Spirit*

End of Sample Pages

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¹Matthew Fox said in a lecture: “Every atom in our bodies was forged in the furnace of a giant star. We are star-stuff.”-DEC

AN ADULT JOURNEY EXPERIENCE AT ONE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

by Wendy Wastcoat Sopkovich

HISTORY & RESULTS

In the fall of 1997 we began our first Adult Journey group with 2 leaders and 18 participants. Ranging in age from 27 to 83, each member of the group brought his or her own unique gifts and experiences. Each year since 1997 a new Journey group has begun, each one as different as the people participating. The groups have ranged in size from 11 to 20 members. The impact these groups have had has been stunning to the parish, the diocese and beyond. Three-quarters of the present vestry and many of those in other parish leadership positions have been, or are still "Adult Journeyers." Many Journeyers have gone on to take leadership positions in the diocese and in outreach programs. One has just finished three years of Seminary, another is in Deacon's School, still others are beginning EFM studies, and many are very comfortable leading worship. At the end of the first year of an Adult Journey group, most participants reaffirm their baptismal vows in a public affirmation celebration. The members of each small group, even after they have stopped meeting on a regular basis, continue to support and pray with one another in tough times.

LEADERSHIP

Choose Carefully

Leaders must be good listeners, be flexible, be able to not just go through a curriculum but be creative, and to stop, get sidetracked by the questions and answers, and meet people where they are. Leaders must be able to easily laugh and pray with others. At our parish we have found wonderful leadership in some of those who have already been Journeyers. When choosing leaders it's important to recognize that while everyone has wonderful gifts which can be used in different parish ministries, not everyone has the gifts for Christian formation leadership. We have found that having two unrelated leaders, a man and a woman, works best. If there are two lay people as leaders it's important that they have good clergy support.

STARTING THE GROUP

Inform & Invite

Each year an article announcing a new Adult Journey group has been placed in the parish newsletter:

"Adulthood has a way of sneaking up on us ... It's kind of like finding oneself on a journey, without a map, without an itinerary, and certainly without enough time to really prepare."

From the course outline for *The Adult Journey*

The Adult Journey program seeks to establish a space for adult members of the Church to ask themselves and each other:

- What does it mean to be an adult?
- What skills, abilities, and graces do I bring to my adult life?
- What have I done with my life so far, and where is God calling me to serve?
- How can I deepen my relationship with God in Christ?

We will start on Wednesday evening, the first week of October, from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Each evening we will begin with a simple meal together and end with a prayer service. The initial commitment is for six weeks. Please call the church for more information."

We have combined this article with Sunday announcements in services, followed by personal invitations to parishioners who have expressed an interest in an ongoing adult Christian formation program. The personal invitations have brought the most participants. A weekday evening meeting has worked best for us, although at the initial meetings we discussed the time and the day of the week to discern if another time would be better for the group. We also passed out calendars for the first six weeks and talked about where we planned on going through the Easter Season although the initial commitment was for six weeks only. For group continuity we have found it important to ask for that initial commitment. A full year Adult Journey runs from early October until Pentecost.

EAT, DRINK, LAUGH AND PLAY

It's a Matter of Hospitality

When I have introduced the *Journey to Adulthood* program to prospective leaders, I have always said "Don't let the kids get hungry - feed them!" When introducing *The Adult Journey* I suggest that people eat together at the beginning of each session. That's not necessarily because they're hungry, but because in cultures around the world people welcome each other and begin to get to know and trust each other while sharing a meal. Jesus shared meals with people of all kinds - sometimes that was scandalous-but that's how they got to know him and love him. Church groups, whether a Tuesday morning Bible Study group sharing doughnuts & coffee, volunteers gathered for a noontime work project breaking for a bag lunch together, an evening formation group sharing a simple potluck supper, or a full-blown fancy dinner, begin to get to know one another over food.

We have found that those participants in *The Adult Journey* who skip the meal together tend to drop out of the program as they don't feel as much a part of the group. At the first meeting we set and agree upon group norms, one of the most important being the confidentiality of the group. It's not a secret group but it is important to keep confidential that which is not ours to share.

A SAMPLE EVENING

Choose a timekeeper for the evening. Some structure is important or the meetings have a tendency to go on for hours.

- 6:00 p.m. Supper & Prayer Participants sign up ahead of time to indicate what he or she will bring for supper that evening: soup, salad, cheese, bread, beverage. Simplicity and ease are best.
- 6:30 p.m. Episcopal 101 This is the time for all those questions we've always had about the Episcopal Church. Cradle Episcopalians and newcomers to the church all have questions: why do we stand up, sit down, kneel when we do? What's a narthex? What are rubrics? Etc. This can also be a time to take a tour of the church, talk about vestments, vessels, etc. Save leftover questions for the following weeks. If the lay leaders don't feel comfortable answering these questions, then save them for an evening when a clergy person can be present.
- 7:00 p.m. Lessons Present the Gospel reading for the evening as well as part of a session from *The Adult Journey* and its discussion questions. Sometimes we combine that with another source. This is where

	creativity and “meeting people where they are” come in (more on this later.)
7:25 p.m. Small Groups	Break into small groups for deeper discussion and/or "assignments."
8:00 p.m. Re-Gathering	Gather the whole group for further discussion and small group presentations.
8:15 p.m. Prayer	We have learned to be creative in putting together our evening liturgies using parts of the Book of Common Prayer and alternative services such as Taize, Celtic, or the New Zealand Prayer Book. Some participants have found they have the gift of writing new liturgies and are encouraged to do so. Sharing the liturgical rites in prayer and song is a powerful part of this group experience.
8:30 p.m. Close	End with sharing the Peace (it's generally a great time for hugs.)

FLEXIBILITY

The most important parts of the meetings are:

- Sharing food & fellowship
- Sharing Laughter
- "Lectio Divina" or “holy reading”. The goal is praying with scripture, learning how to savor the word of God, encountering God in His Word and becoming changed by it.
- Liturgical Rite—We make up a small worship booklet which we can then use and get to know for a period of time.

Keeping the above components in mind the leaders have a general plan for each 6 week period and then spend some planning time each week in order to meet participants where they are. *Adult Journey: Story* contains wonderful material for small group building. It helps people to get to know and trust one another, to listen to each other and to describe to each other where they are on their spiritual journey, whether it's in the very beginning or somewhere in the middle. It also helps us to know ourselves. *Living in Community* is wonderful for discussions on how people can live in spiritual communities. The idea is not to necessarily get through the lessons but to experience our spiritual journeys together.

We have brought in other readings and studies. We have had a lively six weeks discussing *Salvation History* (a chronological history of salvation in the Bible we developed ourselves); we have discussed parts of Kathleen Norris' *Amazing Grace* (Riverhead Books); we have used *The Church's New Teaching Series* (Cowley Publications); there are many resources that can be woven into the journey.

As part of our group's activities during Lent, we combined John Westerhoff's *Living Our Baptism* (St. Mark's Press) with the experiential *From Ashes to Easter* (The Liturgical Conference). Each week different people led the group through the experiences of *From Ashes to Easter*. We worked on the Baptismal vows together using the Westerhoff material or the catechism from the Book of Common Prayer, learning to understand what is truly meant when we reaffirm our vows. Each year as the newest Journey group prepares to reaffirm their baptismal vows, each member is sponsored by a member of an "older" Journey group.

Each Lent the members of the first year Journey group help to impose the ashes on Ash Wednesday. On Maundy Thursday members of all years' groups help to organize and lead the

Agape Supper and service for the congregation. Some Journeyers set up the meditation room for the all- night watch. Others help the Altar Guild strip the altar in preparation for Good Friday. Still others lead the Stations of the Cross service on Good Friday. All Journey groups together help to plan for The Great Vigil of Easter. First year participants are some of the readers, they help sprinkle the newly blessed water on the congregation and all of the Journeyers host a festive celebration of sweets and rejoicing following the Vigil.

Throughout the year we keep the congregation informed about the *Adult Journey* group. The congregation prays for the Journeyers each week by name during Prayers of the People. During Lent, Holy Week and Easter, the Journeyers become an integral and even more visible part of the parish. The joy that others see as Journeyers take part in the liturgies has convinced many to become a part of the following year's new group.

Journey groups generally meet together regularly for three years [they go through *The Adult Journey* and *Living in Community*], after that participants go on to new leadership or study roles within the church or the diocese. They continue to meet occasionally socially and remain close spiritually.