

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VERMONT

USING LIFECYCLES AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR COVENANT GROUP FORMATION

LifeCycles is the foundation for initial as well as lifelong formation of the Covenant Group (and Ministry Support Team). The Ministry Developers of the Diocese of Vermont offer the following process as the standard progression through initial Covenant Group formation process leading to Commissioning and Ordination. Steps 1 through 8 include a maximum of 48 sessions (averaging 6 sessions per step). A Covenant Group may complete this initial stage of formation, as well as the group psychological, and be ready for commissioning and ordination, within a 2 to 3 year framework, depending on how often the Group chooses to meet.

COVENANT GROUP FORMATION PROCESS

1. *LifeCycles*, Cycle 1, Unit 1, *Encountering Our Story*
2. *LifeCycles*, Cycle I, Unit 6, *Celebrate & Serve the Reign of God*
3. *LifeCycles*, Cycle 1, Unit 2, *Gathered by the Spirit*
4. *LifeCycles*, Focus Unit – *Liturgy, Baptism, Eucharist: The Book of Common Prayer*
Resources:
 - *The New Church's Teaching Series, Volume Seven: Opening the Prayer Book* and *Volume Twelve: A Theology of Worship*.
 - *A Dictionary for Episcopalians* by John Wall.
 - The current editions of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* and *The Book of Occasional Services*.
5. *LifeCycles*, Cycle 1, Unit 3, *Sent Forth by the Spirit*
6. *LifeCycles*, Focus Unit -- OVERVIEW OF THE SCRIPTURES
Possible Options:
 - *The New Church's Teaching Series, Volume Two: Opening the Bible* and *Volume Three: Engaging the Word for Biblical Studies*.
 - *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*, by Marcus Borg
 - *And God Spoke: The Authority of the Bible for the Church Today*, Christopher Bryan
 - *Don't Know Much About the Bible*, Kenneth C. DavisResources:
 - *The Access Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical*, Gerald R. O'Day, David Peterson
 - *Oxford Bible Atlas*, Herbert Gordon May

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7. *LifeCycles*, Cycle 1, Unit 4, *Washed and Renewed*

8. *LifeCycles*, Focus Unit -- INTRODUCTION TO SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY

Resource:

- *The New Church's Teaching Series, Volume One: The Anglican Vision*

The following areas are integral to the Covenant Group's formation process leading to commissioning and ordination. They are enacted through resources, workshops, and mentoring on the congregational, regional, and diocesan levels.

1. SAFE CHURCH TRAINING

- Diocesan sponsored workshops

2. ANTI-RACISM TRAINING

- Diocesan sponsored workshops

3. PREACHING TRAINING

- Regional/diocesan workshops
- "Preaching the Lectionary" workshops and/or on-line preaching course offered by Episcopal Divinity School
- Seminars and classes from the eMinistry Network:
www.eministry.org
- Internet resources: Sermon preparation materials available on the web:
www.textweek.com
www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons_that_work.htm
www.lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/
www.montreal.anglican.org/comments/

4. PRIEST/DEACON LITURGICAL TRAINING

- Mentoring with clergy
- Regional/diocesan workshops; on-line courses offered by Episcopal Divinity School
- *Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded*, by Byron Stuhlman
- *Strong, Loving and Wise, Presiding in Liturgy*, by Robert Hovda
- *The Ceremonies of the Eucharist, A Guide to Celebration*, by Howard E. Galley
- *Lent, Holy Week, Easter and the Great Fifty Days*, by Leonel Mitchell

5. SYSTEMS OF THE CHURCH

- Church canons
- Diocesan canons

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- Rubrics

ONGOING FORMATION FOLLOWING COMMISSIONING AND ORDINATION

LifeCycles continues as the ongoing formation process of the Local Ministry Support Team. Within Cycles II, III, and IV are resources and opportunities for developing Leadership Skills (such as group facilitation, decision-making, mutual or pastoral care, and introducing the “new” into communities) and Spiritual Practices (such as hospitality, confession, discernment, healing, thanksgiving, celebration).

RECOMMENDED COVENANT GROUP READING LIST

From *The New Church's Teaching Series*:

Volume 1: *The Anglican Vision*

Volume 2: *Opening the Bible*

Volume 3: *Engaging the Word*

Volume 7: *Opening the Prayer Book*

Volume 12: *A Theology of Worship*

The Access Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical,
Gerald R. O'Day and David Peterson

Oxford Bible Atlas, Herbert Gordon May

Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded, Byron Stuhlman

Strong, Loving and Wise, Presiding in Liturgy, Robert Hovda

Living on the Border of the Holy, L. William Countryman

The Ceremonies of the Eucharist, A Guide to Celebration, Howard E. Galley

Lent, Holy Week, Easter and the Great Fifty Days, Leonel Mitchell

A Dictionary for Episcopalians, John Wall

Lesser Feasts and Fasts

The Book of Occasional Services

Reading the Bible Again for the First Time, Marcus Borg

Other resources are available in the bibliography *Baptismal Ministry Resource List for Personal and Congregational Study*, available from the diocese.

The Ministry Development Group
Episcopal Diocese of Vermont