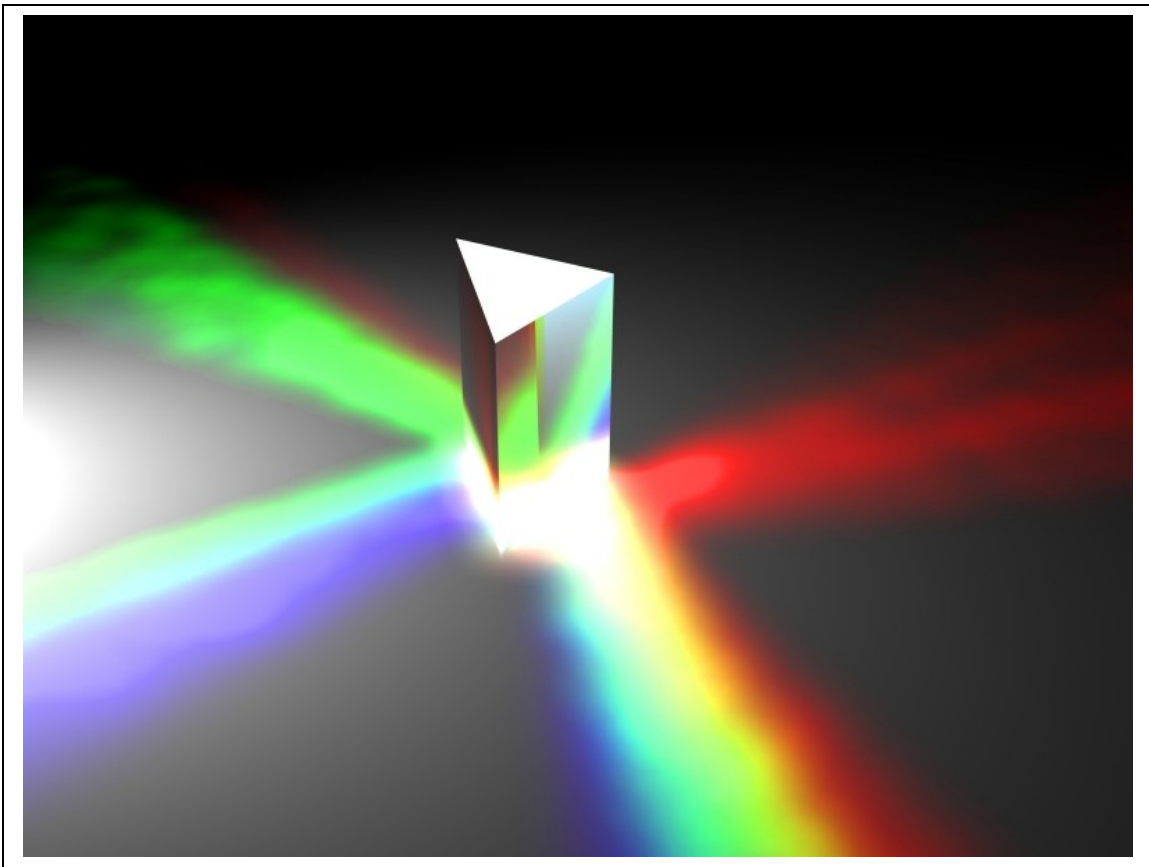


Calling Leaders for a Changing World

Programs and Retreats on Vocation for Young Adults



Project Connect of the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries

www.projectconnect.org

Calling Leaders for a Changing World

Programs and Retreats on Vocation for Young Adults

A Discernment Resource of *Project Connect*, Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries (Gettysburg, Southern, and Philadelphia) 2005

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The planners are indebted to those who designed and led similar vocational discernment events in Region 9 of the ELCA. The retreats are *Career Crossroads* led by Harvey Huntley, Jr. and Sue Setzer from 1994 through 2005, and *Life Directions for Young Adults* led by Tom Henderson, Sandra Holland, Louise Johnson, Harvey Huntley, Jr., and Sue Setzer in May 2005. Appreciation is also expressed for the assistance of Peter Setzer and Kristin Johnston Largen.

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“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 34:7

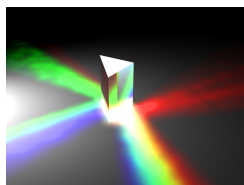
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HOW GOOD TO CENTER DOWN

How good it is to center down!
To sit quietly and see one's self pass by!
The streets of our minds seethe with endless traffic;
Our spirits resound with clashings, with noisy silences,
While something deep within hungers and thirsts for the still moment and
the resting lull.
With full intensity we seek, ere the quiet passes, a fresh sense of order in
our
living;
A direction, a strong sure purpose that will structure our confusion and
bring
meaning in our chaos.
We look at ourselves in this waiting moment — the kinds of people we
are.
The questions persist: what are we doing with our lives? — what are
the
motives that order our days?
What is the end of our doings? Where are we trying to go?
Where do we put the emphasis and where are our values focused?
For what end do we make sacrifices? Where is my treasure and what do I
love most in life?
What do I hate most in life and to what am I true?
Over and over the questions beat in upon the waiting moment.
As we listen, floating up through all the jangling echoes of our turbulence,
there is a sound of another kind —
A deeper note which only the stillness of the heart makes clear.
It moves directly to the core of our being. Our questions are answered,
Our spirits refreshed, and we move back into the traffic of our daily round
with the peace of the Eternal in our step.
How good it is to center down!

Howard Thurman, "How Good to Center Down," *Meditations of the Heart*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1976: 28. Thurman (1900-1981) was the theologian, pastor, poet, and author who served as mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr.
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Introduction

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1st Peter 2: 9–10 NRSV).

God has been calling leaders for a changing world since at least the time of Abram and Sarai. Today God continues to call diverse leaders to proclaim the good news of the Resurrected Christ in a variety of ways to a darkened world. You are reading this guidebook because you are one of these leaders. We hope these pages will encourage you to challenge and nurture young adults as they discern how God’s call to the church is also a call to them to live and lead as members of Christ’s body. This resource at its core is about vocation.

Target Audience

This guidebook is designed primarily to help you connect with young adults who have demonstrated potential and/or interest in leadership in the church. Some may be struggling with a call to public ministry as a pastor, deaconess, diaconal minister, or associate in ministry. Others are seeking to live out their call to faithful discipleship in occupations beyond the church. They may sense God’s call to lead within the church as lay members. Still others are confused about the very nature and concept of God’s call.

The programs and retreats suggest ways you may help them take time to learn how to discern God’s call to be faithful disciples and leaders in every aspect of their lives, specifically in their occupations. Young adults need to hear the grace-filled word that God’s call comes to them at different times and in different ways throughout the course of their lives. There is no one single right way to serve God faithfully. They do not need to make one career choice for the rest of their lives. People discern God’s will in their work-life differently over time.

Core Convictions of Guidebook

Vocation. Vocation is the Triune God’s call to all creation to become what God has created it to be. As human beings, we receive our vocation in our baptism and it encompasses every dimension of our lives. The God who created us with love and for love is continually calling us back to that original relationship of grace. Jesus Christ has broken through all barriers to establish the reign of God for the present and future. Jesus’ call to love God and neighbor, to come to him and follow him is not a one-time message, but an ongoing invitation. Vocation is nothing less than the call to live in the justice and

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mercy of the reign of God now and forever.

We often think of vocation in individual terms, yet God’s call is given fundamentally to God’s people, the church. What this means is that first and foremost individuals both receive and live out their call in the larger context of the body of Christ, the church.

The term “call” is used several ways in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The primary call is to faith in Jesus Christ. This call is given to the church as the body of Christ and to individuals at baptism. All other uses of “call” flow out of this call. At baptism, God calls people into the family of God and “consecrates us all without exception, and makes us all priests,” according to Luther [“An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality” in *Martin Luther. Selections from his writings*, ed. John Dillenberger. (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Anchor Books, 1961) pp. 408.]

By grace through faith, Christians are called and empowered to share the ministry of Jesus Christ in every aspect of daily life—family, work, state, service to the neighbor, care of creation. Every member of the church shares the responsibility both of asking themselves how God wants them to lead now and in the future, and also identifying and encouraging potential leaders in the church.

While all Christians are ministers and public representatives of the church, God calls some Christians to serve as public ministers. This resource uses the term “public ministers” for those whom the church has prepared, examined, certified, and called to serve on its roster: pastors, deaconesses, diaconal ministers, associates in ministry. God’s call to public ministry comes both internally and externally. Individuals sense an internal pull or push toward public ministry that needs to be met and supported by an affirmation or confirmation of the church. The call process culminates in a “letter of call” to serve in a congregation or appropriate entity as a public minister.

The programs and retreats in this resource focus on the ways young adults live out their baptismal vocation in their occupations. Some may think that God has chosen one specific occupation or career for them, and that they must figure out the holy secret. Others may make career decisions based on income and job availability with little attention to God’s will. In contrast to both these extremes, this resource maintains that a number of occupations fall within God’s will for each person, yet some types of work are

more faithful expressions of God's call than others. The process we propose to teach individuals vocational reflection is called discernment.

Discernment. Discernment by definition involves coming to know or detect something that already exists. Unlike decision-making that relies on lists of pros and cons or costs and benefits, discernment means taking time to discover the will of God in one's life at any given time and place. Discernment calls for listening for the voice of God and expecting to hear it in various ways—in the silence of our hearts, words of other people, words of scripture and faithful Christians, worship in community, and voices from the world.

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Discernment means understanding ourselves as created in God's image, blessed with manifold and diverse God-given gifts. Moreover, as we seek to know God, we come to know ourselves; as we seek to know ourselves, we are driven to know God. Identifying our spiritual gifts, talents, and skills is an important dimension of discerning how to live out God's call in our lifework, but it is not a formula. Scripture is filled with examples of unlikely people whom God has called and gifted for specific ministries. In the same way, all of us unlikely people are called to be good stewards of our gifts and talents in our ministry. This is a vital part of discipleship.

Discernment cannot be compressed into the timetable of a few programs or retreats. Discernment takes the time it takes. It requires significant opportunities for reflection individually, with a mentor, with peers, and with the church and others. Anxiety is inevitable and can lead the discernor to rely more fully on God. The process that young adults experience in this resource can be repeated many times throughout their lives, because new situations evoke new responses to God's call.

Young Adults. More than a dozen young adults of different ethnic backgrounds field-tested some of the learning experiences in this resource. They were excited to be invited to speak out about their convictions and doubts about the church in a safe place where their views were valued. They were passionate about the need for excellent, gifted leaders for the church in the twenty-first century. When given time to voice their dreams and their disappointments, they demonstrated eager willingness to take leadership in solving some of the problems they identified in their church. Some began to consider more seriously that God might be calling them to prepare for public ministry.

These young people wanted to learn how God's will connected with their preparation for future jobs and careers. They were eager to study God's Word and wrestle with its challenges to them. Some were particularly drawn to learn more about their gifts and talents, interests and values as clues to living out their calling in their work, whether or not as public leaders in the church.

Like many other young adults, most were far more interested in talking about important questions rather than finding answers. They appreciated the open-ended, long-term discernment process of seeking God's will in multiple ways. At the same time, a few were less patient and wanted clear answers soon, particularly in terms of careers. Others

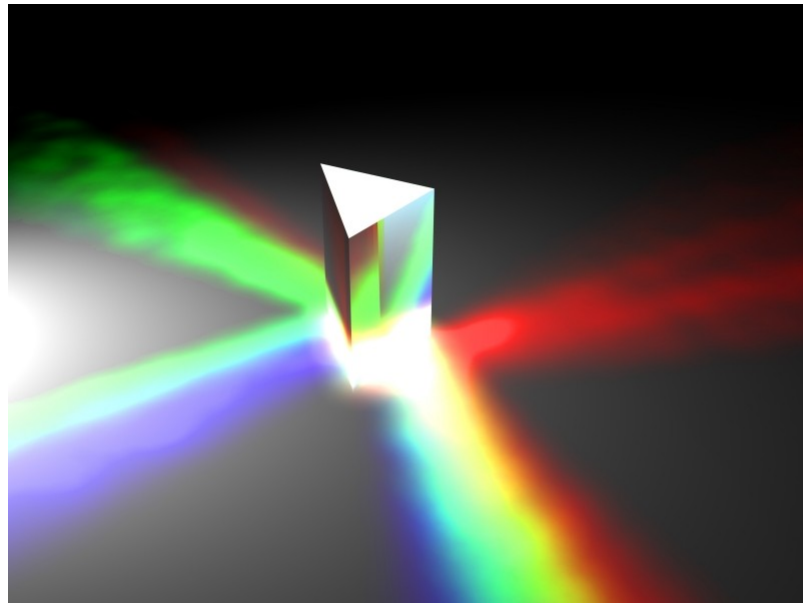
were somewhere on the continuum in between these extremes, as might be expected in any group.

Leaders. The greatest gift you as a leader can give to young adults is yourself. God works through people; that's the way of incarnation. Begin your preparation in prayer, not only alone but also with other public ministers you can invite to join you. Take time to reflect on the readings and reflection questions yourselves before determining what to offer to the young adults with whom you minister.

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The more you can include young adults in planning, adapting, and leading the resources suggested here, the more invested they will be in the outcome. You can encourage their leadership in the process, furthermore. Their input will greatly strengthen the selection of resources that may speak to their peers.

The guidebook is designed to be flexible and adaptable in numerous settings. We encourage you to trust the Holy Spirit to use your own gifts and style as you address the specific interests and needs of the young adults you know.



Our Central Image

A prism provides a metaphor of how God's call pierces through each of us and refracts into a rainbow of colors that can light up the world with the love of Jesus Christ. The light comes from God, not from the prism. Just as prisms of different shapes refract light into various patterns, so too God's light shines through each uniquely gifted member of the body of Christ into the darkened world. The cross-shaped reflections from this prism point to the sacrificial reality of God's call to discipleship and ministry. Vocation is a

gift of God both to the church and to individuals. The purpose is not for self-fulfillment, although in the deepest sense the faithful are filled full. The purpose of vocation is to bring the love and light of Christ in every facet of life in God's world.

Meaning of "Call" in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

"Call can be rightly understood in several senses.

- 1) God calls all persons through the Gospel to faith in Jesus Christ. The Gospel is the call of God in Jesus Christ to justification and forgiveness of sins for all people. Through the Gospel God calls people to be Christians, and to a life of faith, salvation, and service. Living in the fellowship of all Christians in the Church, their life is nourished by the "means of grace" (the Word and Sacraments) and identified with Christ's own call to the cross and resurrection.
- 2) God calls all Christians to share the ministry of Jesus Christ. Through baptism God calls and empowers all Christians to share the ministry of Jesus Christ. This ministry is committed to all Christians, who are to proclaim what God has accomplished in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Equipped with a variety of spiritual gifts, Christians carry the Gospel, in many ways, to each other and to the world.
- 3) God calls all Christians to a life of vocation. To have a "vocation" means to live out one's call. For Christians that call is answered in the structures of daily life—family, work, state, service to the neighbor, care of creation—as the setting in which to live out their identity in the Gospel.
- 4) God calls some Christians into the office of ministry. Lutherans teach that the Gospel is proclaimed through the means of grace which the Augsburg Confession calls the office of ministry. Through these means the Holy Spirit imparts to sinners the reality of the Gospel – justification by grace through faith apart from human effort or works. The means of grace require that there be persons to speak the Word and administer the Sacraments. God calls such persons through the Church to fill the office of ministry. In the language of the Augsburg Confession (article 14) a "regular call" is mandated. Presupposed are an "inner call" from God to the office of ministry and an "external call" working through the assembly of all believers and the regular ecclesiastical procedures of this church. Requiring these persons to be "regularly called" is a way to comfort and

encourage both the officeholders and the laity that it is the Gospel and not something else that will be served.

5) The office of ministry, divinely instituted can be humanly structured in various ways. Christians are free to order the office of ministry in ways that creatively reflect commitment to God's mission through the Church and the centrality of God's ministry to all people through the means of grace. It is the right of the Church to call pastors whose exercise of the office is the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. It is the right of the Church to call other persons who exercise the office in ways that enhance and support this foundational ministry of the means of grace.

6) The word "call" is also used for a document attesting the decision by a congregation or

other appropriate entity, in accord with the procedures of this church, to appoint a person to a specific field of labor in the office of ministry. All persons serving in officially recognized ministries of this church, lay or ordained, will be called by an appropriate expression of this church and be issued letters of call by that expression."

~ *Together for Ministry. Final Report and Actions on the Study of Ministry 1988-1993*,
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Overview of Calling Leaders for a Changing World

The programs and retreat are designed to be adapted to the interests, culture, and expectations of the young adults with whom you work. Materials in the *Appendix* offer songs and hymns, recommended resources, and directions for creating a sacred space for a variety of prayer opportunities during the retreat.

What Leaders Will the Church Need To Thrive in the 21st Century? A One-Hour Introductory Program

Young adults are challenged with the responsibility and opportunity to identify the kind of leaders they think the church needs in the future. They discover God's call to the church in 1st Peter 2 and consider who will lead the church next.

Unplug to Reboot: Where Is God Calling You Now? A Weekend Retreat for Discernment

Young adults are invited to take time away to be with God in the community of other seekers to discern the possibility that God may be calling them to some leadership role in the church. In a quiet, prayerful setting, a variety of learning experiences will teach young adults to know God and know themselves more fully. They may leave the retreat with more questions than answers, but they will know better how to discern God's presence and call in their lives.

The retreat design assumes that the young adults participating have attended the first session, "What Leaders Will the Church Need to Thrive in the 21st Century?" If not, then use that session on the first evening and abbreviate or omit other sections during the weekend.

Two retreat formats are suggested. The second outline includes a service component. Infinite variations on these two retreat models are possible and are encouraged. In addition, supplementary material is available in the *Appendix*.

What Voices Are Calling You? Retreat Session #1

This session builds on “What Leaders Will the Church Need to Thrive in the 21st Century?” and the study of God’s call to the church in 1st Peter 2. Young adults begin to discern God’s voice by identifying the varied voices already telling them what to do with their lives. A *lectio divina* approach to John 15:12–17 provides a foundation for the retreat.

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What Kind of People Does God Call? Retreat Session #2

Young adults learn how to discern the voice of God from among the many voices they hear within and without. They examine ways the term “call” is used and learn more about the God who calls by studying two seemingly unqualified candidates for ministry, Mary and Thomas.

What Does Your Life Tell You? Retreat Session #3

Young adults learn about spiritual gifts given by God for the purpose of building up the body of Christ to spread the Good News in the world. They will examine meaningful experiences in their own lives to identify skills that may be clues to God-given gifts. These gifts shed light on how God may be calling them to serve in ministry.

What Does Your Life Say about Your Gifts? Retreat Session #4

Young adults take time to reflect on what their lives are beginning to tell them about their vocation, specifically as a leader in the church and world. Prayerful time visiting The Well is encouraged after the session ends.

How May God Be Calling You to Lead? Retreat Session #5

Young adults experience a guided meditation to help them listen to the voice of Jesus saying, “Follow me.” They face various needs in the world that call for different gifts from the body of Christ. Finally, they determine what they need to go forward with their own discernment journey.

What Is Distinctive about ELCA Public Ministers? A One-Hour Follow-up Program

Young adults learn that the church prepares, certifies, and calls public ministers to speak and serve on its behalf as the body of Christ in a wide range of settings. They examine the common and distinctive marks of ELCA pastors, deaconesses, diaconal ministers, and associates in ministry, then compare and contrast them with other church members. A panel representing these public ministers is encouraged.

What Leaders Will the Church Need To Thrive in the 21st Century? A One-Hour Introductory Program

Young adults are challenged with the responsibility and opportunity to identify the kind of leaders they think the church needs in the future. They discover God's call to the church in 1st Peter 2 and consider who will lead the church next.

Overview for Leaders

**Minimum time for 60-minute session.
Adjust times for suggested experiences to
the interests of the group.**

Informal gathering with food and
conversations

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. Pray together and state the purpose. | 5 minutes |
| 2. Introduce group members. | 10 minutes |
| 3. Develop a group vision for future church leaders. | 15 minutes |
| 4. Prayerfully reflect on the mission of the church and its leaders in the first century. | 15 minutes |
| 5. Identify clues from 1 Peter on church leadership. | 5 minutes |
| 6. Where will the church find such leaders for the future? | 5 minutes |
| 7. Pray together. | 5 minutes |

Preparation

* Prayerfully work through the learning experiences and reflection questions for yourself, making notes on ways to adapt the content for your group.

* Make copies of *A First Century Letter for the Twenty-first Century* in the NRSV and/or *The Message* or other versions, and the *Questions for Reflection* for each person.

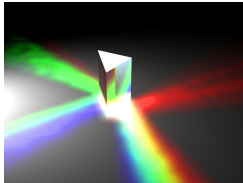
* Organize markers, newsprint, chalk, colored and regular pencils, and other supplies for the session.

* Write these questions where all can read them:

What is the mission of the church?

What kind of leaders need to carry out the mission in the twenty-first century?
(Save their responses to compare with what the church requires of public leaders,
studied in the follow-up session called “What Is Distinctive about ELCA Public
Ministers?”)

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A FIRST CENTURY LETTER FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time....

18 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish....

2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1st Peter 1: 2b-5; 1:18-19; 2:9-10 *NRSV*).

Eugene H. Peterson paraphrases the same text in *The Message: The New Testament in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, Navpress, 1993),

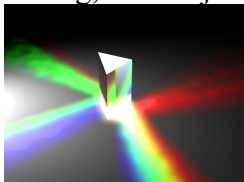
pp. 573, 575-576.

May everything good from God be yours!

What a God we have! And how fortunate we are to have him, this Father of our Master Jesus! Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we've been given a brand new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven—and the future starts now. ...

Your life is a journey you must travel with a deep consciousness of God. It cost God plenty to get you out of that dead-end, empty-headed life you grew up in. He paid with Christ's sacred blood, you know. ...

But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted.



What Leaders Will the Church Need To Thrive in the 21st Century?

Questions for Reflection

* What do you think the mission of the church is today? If there were no church in the 21st century, what would be lost?

* What kind of leaders do you think the church needs to thrive in the twenty-first century? What qualities, gifts, beliefs, or mission should they embody?

Exploring Deeper

Consider these words of Paul, a key leader in the first century church:

11 Now the Scripture says, No one who believes on Him will be put to shame, *12* for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, since the same Lord of all is rich to all who call on Him. *13* For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

14 But how can they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher?

15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How welcome are the feet of those who announce the gospel of good things! 16 But all did not obey the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? 17 So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.” Romans 10: 11–17 *The Message*

* Who do you know who might have the potential to develop into a leader in the future church, either as a preacher or other public minister, or as a lay leader?

* How might God be calling you to help people hear the gospel of good things through service in the world or as a public minister?

Suggestions for Leaders

1. Pray together and state the purpose.

Invite the group to join you in a time of silent prayer, then a verbal prayer. Sing a hymn such as one listed in the *Appendix*. In your own words, state the purpose of this session.

2. Introduce group members.

Take time to become better acquainted as this group begins to develop into a Christian community. Ask questions such as the following and share your own answers. Suggest that each person speak for one minute.

- * What is your name and where do you live?
- * What do you do with your time during a typical week, in thirty seconds or less?
- * What motivated you to come to this gathering?

3. Develop a group vision for future church leaders.

Acknowledge that those attending are already invested in the future of the church by virtue of their call into Christ’s church through their baptism. Each one can play some role in the leadership of the future church.

Distribute the *Questions for Reflection* and ask group members to respond to the first two questions. After several minutes, encourage the group to develop a group definition of the mission of the church. Ask them to move beyond their individual experiences with congregations and dream of new possibilities. Establish a safe environment for creative

thinking without fear of being judged. Write the comments as they brainstorm their replies. Repeat the process for the second question.

4. Prayerfully reflect on the mission of the church and its leaders in the first century.

Listen deeply to God's Word by using an adaptation of the African Bible Study method that was introduced by the African Delegation to the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church in 1998. The complete process is found in the *Appendix*.

Distribute regular or colored pencils and copies of 1st Peter 1: 2b-5; 1:18-19; 2:9-10 in any translation you prefer. (Note that the verses are excerpted from the complete text in order to focus on the central message.)

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Begin the study of 1st Peter with prayer.

- a. Ask one person to read the passage slowly to the entire group twice.
- b. Invite each person to share with the small group the word or phrase about the mission of the church that caught his or her attention. Explain that the task is to listen to one another and not elaborate on the brief responses or discuss them.
- c. Ask another person to read the passage slowly once. This time, ask the group to identify any clues that might enhance the original description of the kind of leaders the church needs in the twenty-first century. The responses need to be brief and will not be discussed.
- d. If time allows, ask a third person to read the same passage to the entire group. Invite each person to share additional clues that enhance the original description of the kind of leaders the church needs in the future. Again, group members are to listen to one another with no discussion.
- e. Lead the group in a prayer to bless the reading and hearing of God's Word.

5. Add clues on the mission of the church and its leaders from 1st Peter.

Refer the group back to the description of church leaders for the twenty-first century that they developed before the Bible study. Ask what they would add or subtract now to describe twenty-first century church leaders. Add comments of your own.

6. Where will the church find such leaders for the future?

Point the group to the final questions on the reflection sheet and invite their responses.

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7. Pray together.

Ask a participant to read the following quotation by Oscar Romero, who was an archbishop in El Salvador and an outspoken critic of the military. A proponent of justice for the poor, Archbishop Romero was assassinated while saying Mass in 1980.

The great need today
is for Christians who are active and critical,
who don't accept situations without analyzing them
inwardly and deeply.

We no longer want masses of people
like those who have been trifled with for so long.

We want persons like fruitful fig trees,
who can say yes to justice and no to injustice
and can make use of the precious gift of life,
regardless of the circumstances.

Oscar Romero

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Invite group members to participate in an in-depth retreat entitled *Unplug to Reboot: Where Is God Calling You Now?* to continue discerning God's call in their lives. Ask volunteers to help plan and facilitate the retreat.

Request that a group member lead the group in a prayer for the church to be faithful to God's call and for qualified leaders to proclaim the mighty acts of God who called us out of darkness into marvelous light.

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Unplug to Reboot: Where Is God Calling You Now? A Weekend Retreat for Discernment

Young adults are invited to take time away to be with God in the community of other seekers to discern the possibility that God may be calling them to some leadership role in the church. In a quiet, prayerful setting, a variety of learning experiences will teach young adults to know God and know themselves more fully. They may leave the retreat with more questions than answers, but they will know better how to discern God's presence and call in their lives.

The retreat design assumes that the young adults participating have attended the first session, "What Leaders Will the Church Need to Thrive in the 21st Century?" If not, then use that session on the first evening and abbreviate or omit other sections during the weekend.

Two retreat formats are suggested. The second outline includes a service component. Infinite variations on these two retreat models are possible and are encouraged. In addition, supplementary material is available in the *Appendix*.

Suggested Retreat Format to Follow the Introductory Program

Friday

6:00 pm

Welcome

Housekeeping information. Invitation to visit The Well for prayer

Dinner

7:00 pm Community Worship
7:30 pm #1) What Voices Are Calling You?
9:30 pm Prayer
Community Time

Saturday

8:00 am Breakfast
9:00 am Matins
9:30 am #2) What Kind of People Does God Call?
12 noon Lunch
1:00 pm Prayerful Walking and Resting or Visiting The Well
2:00 pm #3) What Does Your Life Tell You?
4:00 pm Break
6:00 pm Dinner
7:00 pm #4) What Does Your Life Say About Your Gifts?
9:00 pm Vespers. Option: Community remains in prayerful silence for discernment until breakfast. Spend time at The Well.

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Sunday

8:00 am Breakfast
9:00 am #5) How May God Be Calling You to Lead?
11:00 am Eucharist
12 noon Lunch

The following alternative retreat design draws from the same sessions described above.

Work and Pray: A Service-oriented Weekend Retreat Design

Many young adults prefer to be active as they reflect on their lives. This design incorporates dimensions of the contemplative retreat while focusing energy on serving others in some tangible, meaningful way. The rhythm of the weekend is inspired by a day in the life of monks at the Benedictine community at St. Andrew's Abbey. The daily schedule at Valeremo is a modern adaptation of the cycle of prayer and work (*ora et labora*) prescribed by St. Benedict in his Rule. Each day includes *lectio divina*, a slow meditative reading of the Scriptures which allows the Word of God to serve as a means for consciously entering into the presence of God. Periods of common and private prayer, manual labor, and study are intertwined, so that the entire day is one of praise.

Any service activity for the retreat needs to have meaning to the young adults who are participating. Their input in planning is critical. Here are examples of short-term projects to consider: environmental preservation, such as adopting a highway or cleaning a stream; assisting in a community project for the homeless, such as serving in a soup

kitchen or working in a clothing or furniture bank; cleaning up an infirm person's home or yard; or clearing trails at a church camp.

Friday

6:00 pm Dinner
7:00 pm Community Worship
7:30 pm What Voices Are Calling You? Retreat Session #1
9:00 pm Prayer
Community Time

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Saturday

8:00 am Breakfast
9:00 am Matins
9:30 am What Does Your Life Tell You? Retreat Session #3
Lunch
1:30 pm Service Project
6:00 pm Dinner
7:00 pm Reflection on Service Project
7:30 pm What Does Your Life Tell You about Your Gifts? Retreat Session #4
9:30 pm Vespers
Option: Community remains in prayerful silence for discernment until breakfast.

Sunday

8:00 am Breakfast
9:00 am How May God Be Telling You to Lead? Retreat Session #5
11:00 am Eucharist
12 noon Lunch

What Voices Are Calling You? Retreat Session #1

This session builds on *What Leaders Will the Church Need to Thrive in the 21st Century?* and the study of God's call to the church in 1st Peter 2. Young adults begin to discern God's voice by identifying the varied voices already telling them what to do with their lives. A *lectio divina* approach to John 15: 12–17 provides a foundation for the retreat.

Overview for Leaders

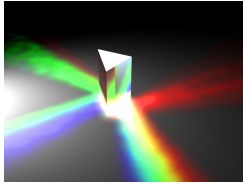
**Minimum time for 90-minute session.
Adjust times for suggested experiences to
the interests of the group.**

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. State the purpose of the retreat and this session. | 10 minutes |
| 2. Introduce the reflection questions and allow time for written responses. | 15 minutes |
| 3. Divide the group into trios or quartets to share responses. | 30 minutes |
| 4. Invite small groups to tell others what they discovered. | 15 minutes |
| 5. Lead the group in <i>lectio divina</i> (prayerful reading) of John 15: 12–17. | 20 minutes |

Suggested Preparation

* Prayerfully work through the learning experiences and reflection questions for yourself, making notes on ways to adapt the content for your group.

- * Create a sacred space in a separate room called The Well. Refer to instructions in the *Appendix*.
- * Invite several young adults to help you plan and lead the worship and sessions.
- * Develop the opening worship service based on 1st Peter 2: 9–10. See relevant hymns and songs in the *Appendix*.
- * Prepare a worship center with a lighted candle in the middle of the meeting room. Bring at least one prism to place on a table as a unifying symbol. You might provide a variety of prisms so each young adult can have his or her own.
- * Make copies of “What Voices Are Calling You?” and “The Voice of Jesus,” if you want the text to be seen, for each participant.
- * Provide folders or three-ring binders for handouts and journaling. Punch holes in handouts if binders are used.
- * Include about six pages of blank paper for journaling.
- * Organize markers, newsprint, chalk, pencils, and other supplies.



What Voices Are Calling You?

#1a

“Life is full of all sorts of voices calling [us] in all sorts of directions. Some of them are voices from inside and some of them are voices from outside.... Which do we listen to? What kind of voice do we listen for?...”

*To Isaiah, the voice said, ‘Go,’ and for each of us there are many voices that say it, but the question is which one will we obey with our lives, which of the voices that call is to be the one that we answer.” ~Frederick Buechner, *The Hungering Dark* (New York: HarperCollins, 1969, 1985), pp. 27, 31.*

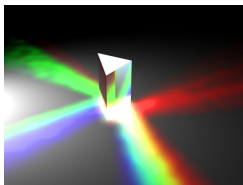
Questions for Reflection

- * What voices do you hear telling you what you ought to do with your life, specifically in your work? What do you hear from relatives, friends, schools, organizations, businesses, church, TV, movies, music, and other voices?

* To which of these voices are you paying the most attention now, based on your recent actions?

Exploring Deeper

* What do you hear when you tune out the noise and listen for God's voice?



The Voice of Jesus

#1b

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another" (John 15: 12–17 NRSV).

Eugene H. Peterson paraphrases the same text in *The Message: The New Testament in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, Navpress, 1993), pp. 260-261.

“This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I’m no longer calling you servants because servants don’t understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I’ve named you friends because I’ve let you in on everything I’ve heard from the Father.

You didn’t choose me, remember; I chose you and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won’t spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you. But remember the root command: Love one another.”

Suggestions for Leaders for Retreat Session #1

1. State the purpose of the “Unplug to Reboot” retreat and this session in your own words.

Assure group members that they may share as much or as little as they wish with others. Ask if everyone can commit to respecting each other by holding everything shared in sacred confidence, not talking about anyone in the group. When we talk about vocation, we are speaking of holy things.

2. Introduce the reflection questions and allow time for written responses.

Ask a group member to read aloud the Buechner quotation on the handout. Ask for initial responses to the first question. After the group has identified a variety of voices, suggest that they now write their own answers in silence.

3. Divide the group into trios or quartets to share responses.

When most have stopped writing, divide the group into trios or quartets and direct them to places to talk. Monitor their conversations to keep them focused. Tell them the time

frame available and remind them to complete the discussion several minutes before that time ends. Be flexible with the schedule to allow for the Holy Spirit's promptings.

4. Invite small groups to tell others what they discovered.

5. Lead the group in *lectio divina* (prayerful reading) of John 15: 12–17.

Introduce this classic approach to prayer by explaining that *lectio divina*, or prayerful reading, involves being open to hearing a personal, enlivening word from God in the passage being read. The process was developed by Ignatius of Loyola in his *Spiritual Exercises*. Born in Spain only eight years after Martin Luther's birth in Germany, Ignatius formed the order of the Jesuits.

Explain that you will read the text slowly twice with a long silence in between the readings for reflection. Follow these adapted instructions offered on the Spiritual Practices page of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Spiritual Formation website at <http://www.pcusa.org/spiritualformation/practices.htm> MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor http://www.pcusa.org/spiritualformation/practices.htm, or use another approach. Some prefer to read the text without handing out the words to emphasize the power of the spoken word.

1. Read the text slowly, letting your awareness rest in turn upon each word, savoring it. As you read, be alert for any particular word or phrase that draws your attention in a special way.
2. Tell the group to meditate on this word or phrase, allowing it to engage them fully. As they hold this word or phrase in their hearts, they can become aware of any answering words, images, or memories that arise inside.

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3. After the second reading and a time of silence, invite the group to respond to the word or phrase they have heard, simply and directly. Their response may be one of thanks, or praise, or joy. It also may be one of regret, or anger, or supplication.
4. Invite the group to rest in God's presence, content simply to be with God in silence.
5. Bring the meditation to a close with a prayer. Invite the group to join in community time and to visit The Well for prayer.

What Kind of People Does God Call? Retreat Session #2

Young adults learn how to discern the voice of God from among the many voices they hear within and without. They examine ways the term “call” is used and learn more about the God who calls by studying two seemingly unqualified candidates for ministry, Mary and Thomas.

Overview

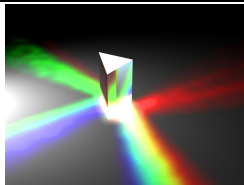
Minimum time for 2-hour session. Adjust times for suggested experiences to the interests of the group.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. State the purpose of this session. | 5 minutes |
| 2. Give True/False quiz to stimulate discussion. | 10 minutes |
| 3. Explore how the ELCA understands the word “call.” | 15 minutes |
| 4. Tell how you have experienced God’s call throughout your life. | 15 minutes |
| 5. Break | 30 minutes |
| 6. Examine two people whom God called: Mary and Thomas | 30 minutes |
| 7. Note what these stories tell about God and whom God calls. | 10 minutes |
| 8. Give suggestions for prayerful reflection after lunch. | 5 minutes |

Preparation

- * Prayerfully work through the learning experiences and reflection questions for yourself, making notes on ways to adapt the content for your group.
- * Select a call story from scripture as the text for matins from the *Appendix*.
- * Make copies of handouts on Mary and Thomas.
- * Organize markers, newsprint, chalk, pencils, and other supplies.

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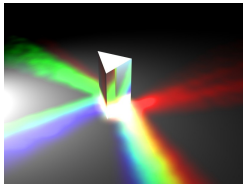
Your assignment is to determine whether or not Mary is the best choice for God to call to bear the son of God. Half the members of your group will advocate in favor and half against her selection.

#2a

Here's what we know about Mary from Lk. 1–2 and Mt. 1–2, unless otherwise noted.

- * Virgin/young girl from small town in Galilee called Nazareth.
- * Engaged to a man named Joseph, whose genealogy traced back to King David (Matt. 1-16, Lk. 3:23-38).
- * Related to the priestly line of Aaron through kinswoman Elizabeth, who was married to Zachariah, a priest. Both were “righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord.” They were “getting on in years” and had prayed for a child for a long time.
- * Told by an angel that God had found favor with her and she would conceive by the Holy Spirit and give birth to a son named Jesus, the Son of God (Lk. 1: 26-31).

- * Was “much perplexed” by the angel’s words and “pondered what kind of message this could be.”
- * Asked, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”
- * Told angel, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord: let it be with me according to your word.”
- * Spent three months in a Judean town in the hill country visiting kinswoman Elizabeth, who was then pregnant with John the Baptist. Mary greeted her with words now called “The Magnificat:” “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and Holy is his name.”
- * Was told by Joseph that he would “dismiss her quietly” because he was “a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace.” An angel appeared to him in a dream, and he then “took her as his wife, but they had no marital relations until she had borne a son, and he named him Jesus” like the angel told him to do.
- * Made long trip to Bethlehem to be registered for the census. Gave birth to a baby and “laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn.”
- * Fled with Joseph to Egypt to protect Jesus from Herod’s attack on male infants.
- * Followed the Jewish rites for circumcision and took him to the Temple at twelve.
- * Likely was with her family when they “went out to restrain [Jesus], for people were saying, ‘He has gone out of his mind’” after he appointed the apostles and crowds followed him (Mk. 19–21).
- * Prompted Jesus’ first miracle at the wedding in Cana (Jn. 2:1-11). Was present while Jesus preached (Mk 3:31-35). Stood at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified (Mt. 27: 50–56, Jn. 19: 22–27). Joined other women in telling apostles that Jesus was risen, but they did not believe them (Lk 24: 10-11). Was with the apostles as they devoted themselves to constant prayer (Acts 1: 12–14).



Your assignment is to determine whether or not Thomas is the best choice for Jesus to call as one of the twelve apostles. Half the members of your group will advocate in favor and half against his selection.

#2b

Here’s what we know about Thomas from the Gospels and Acts.

- * Called by Jesus to follow him at same time Jesus called others (Mt 10:3, Mk 3:18, Lk. 6:15).
- * Appointed as one of twelve Jesus wanted and named apostles “to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons” (Mk. 3: 13-19).
- * Spoke out against disciples’ fear and said, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” Jesus had heard that Lazarus, whom he loved along with his sisters Mary and Martha,

was dead. He planned to leave the safe place he was staying across the Jordan to walk to Bethany near Jerusalem. Other disciples warned Jesus not to go there because the Jews had tried to stone him just a short time before when he had proclaimed that he was one with the Father, which they interpreted as blasphemy. Thomas alone wanted to go with Jesus to die (Jn 11:1-16).

* Asked the questions other disciples wanted to ask but didn't. Following their last supper together, Jesus told his disciples farewell. They did not understand what he meant when he said he was going to prepare a place for them. Only Thomas dared to ask: "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus then replied, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (Jn 14:3-7).

* Missed seeing Jesus on the evening of his resurrection when he appeared to the other disciples in a locked room. When they told Thomas they had seen the Lord, he replied, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe" (Jn. 20: 19–25).

* Saw Jesus appear to the disciples in the same house a week later. Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas did not touch him, but immediately answered, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" (Jn. 20:26-31).

* Went fishing with Simon and other apostles. Fished all night and caught nothing until a voice from the shore told them to try again on the other side of the boat. They knew it was Jesus as they ate the breakfast he prepared for them on the shore (Jn. 21:1-14).

* After Jesus' resurrection, Thomas remained in an upstairs room in Jerusalem where the disciples, Mary, and certain others were constantly devoting themselves to prayer (Acts 1:12-14).

Suggestions for Leaders for Retreat Session #2

- 1. State the purpose of this session in your own words.**
- 2. Give true/false quiz to stimulate discussion.**

Quickly read each question and ask young adults to give a "thumbs up" for true and "thumbs down" for false. Wait until you have asked all five questions before eliciting comments on each. Do not work for resolution at this point. Simply let the "trick questions" highlight some of the issues for this session.

* Most public ministers hear God's call in some clear way that comes at a specific

listens and determines on the basis of the arguments whether or not Thomas is a viable candidate for apostleship.

Give copies of “What We Know about Mary” to one group and “What We Know about Thomas” to the other. Tell each “committee” to divide itself in half so that an equal number will advocate for and against their person’s ability to become the bearer of Jesus or an apostle. Give the Mary Committee and the Thomas Committee time and space to read through their information before presenting the cases for and against their candidates for the call at hand.

7. Note what these stories tell about God and whom God calls.

When the Mary Committee has covered the most important points for and against Mary bearing the Christ Child, stop the discussion. Ask the listeners to vote whether Mary should be chosen, based strictly on the presentations they have heard. Repeat the same process for the Thomas Committee with the Mary group voting on Thomas as the choice for one of the twelve apostles.

When the presentations have ended, ask the total group to reflect on what they are discovering about how God calls people. Ask how these insights might shed light on the participants’ own discernment of God’s call. Probe deeper to elicit insights into the nature of God, who works through imperfect people to get the Good News to the world.

8. Give suggestions for prayerful reflection after lunch.

Suggest that the group take advantage of the two hours before the next session by eating lunch, then taking a prayerful walk or hike or run to listen to the voice of God. Some may prefer to take a nap. If so, suggest they pray for God’s voice in a dream as they fall asleep. Remind young adults to spend time in prayer at The Well. Tell them the time to gather again. Lead the group in a prayer of thanksgiving for the food they are about to receive.

What Does Your Life Tell You? Retreat Session # 3

Young adults learn about spiritual gifts given by God for the purpose of building up the body of Christ to spread the Good News in the world. They will examine meaningful experiences in their own lives to identify skills that may be clues to God-given gifts. These gifts shed light on how God may be calling them to serve in ministry.

Overview

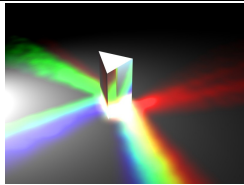
Minimum time for 2 ½ hour session. Adjust times or suggested experiences to the interests of the group.

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| 1. Pray together and state the purpose of this session. | 5 minutes |
| 2. Reflect on biblical passages about gifts. | 20 minutes |
| 3. Help young adults remember and write significant stories from their lives. | 40 minutes |
| 5. Break | 20 minutes |

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 6. Demonstrate the storytelling process in total group. | 15 minutes |
| 7. Divide into trios to listen for gifts in the stories. | 45 minutes |
| 8. Reconvene for prayer before dinner. | 5 minutes |

Preparation

- * Prayerfully work through the learning experiences and reflection questions for yourself, making notes on ways to adapt the content for your group. The story-telling section and identifying of gifts is much easier to lead after you have worked through it yourself.
- * Make copies of *What Are Spiritual Gifts?*, *What Does Your Life Tell You?*, and *How to Tell Stories to Each Other* for each person.
- * Make arrangements for quiet spaces where trios can tell each other their stories.
- * Organize pencils, four half-sheets of paper for each person, and other supplies for the session.



What Are Spiritual Gifts?

#3a

Prayerfully read these verses, preferably including the entire chapters from which they come.

"1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. . . .4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the

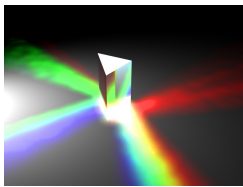
one Spirit, *10* to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. *11* All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. *12* 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” (1 Cor. 12: 1, 4-12).

“*11* The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, *12* to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, *13* 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: 11–13).

“*4* For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, *5* so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. *6* We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; *7* ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; *8* the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness” (Romans 12: 4 – 8). [Exhorters may comfort, instruct, warn, correct, encourage, or strengthen others.]

Questions for Reflection

- * What purposes do spiritual gifts serve in these passages?
- * Name any of the gifts listed above that God might have already given you. They may not be well developed now, but you or others can glimpse their potential.



What Does Your Life Tell You?

#3b

“From the beginning, our lives lay down clues to selfhood and vocation, though the clues may be hard to decode. But trying to interpret them is profoundly worthwhile—especially when we are in our twenties or thirties or forties, feeling profoundly lost, having wandered, or been dragged, far away from our birthright gifts.”

~Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), p. 15

Storytelling Guide

Remember experiences and activities that have meant the most to you during your life. Think about activities that you particularly enjoyed doing and that gave you energy and a sense of “Yes!” You may have acted alone or as part of a group. Given your age and experience at the time, you did the activities fairly well. The accomplishments may not have been notable to others, but they were significant to you at the time. Recall stories from your whole life—playtime, school work, jobs, volunteer activities, church work, things you just did for fun. Consider these factors as you recall stories in your life:

* Focus on experiences that energized you, even if they were difficult, time-consuming, or went unnoticed.

* Choose events that were intrinsically meaningful to you. Passing a course or winning an award may have been accomplishments, but do not include them in this list unless they brought you joy along the way.

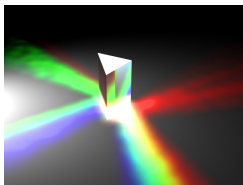
Here are three examples:

“I’ve been known for taking things apart just to see how they work. I love to figure out how the parts fit together and then try to put them back in working order. Unfortunately, I have a big box of pieces that I couldn’t fix!”

“When I was in high school, I helped out when homeless people came to our church in the winter. I like to serve them food, but even more, I was fascinated by the stories they told me about their lives. They needed someone who cared enough to listen to them, and that was easy for me.”

“My favorite memory was the year I was captain of the soccer team. I was far from being the best athlete, but I was able to motivate the team to play well together. We won more games than we ever had in one season and had fun doing it. “

On separate pages, write paragraphs or list key words to describe five or six meaningful experiences in your life.



Storytelling Guide

#3c

In groups of three, group members take turns listening to one another tell two or more stories about activities or experiences that gave them joy and energy.

Each story is filled with clues to the person’s gifts. The listeners’ challenge is to identify the skills embedded in each story because some of them will be God-given gifts. Gifts are things that we cannot *not* do because God has created them into our

very nature. No matter what our circumstances—leisure, work, school, community—we cannot help but use the gifts God has given us for the work of ministry. Discovering and then using these gifts are acts of faithful stewardship.

Each person needs a pen and three sheets of paper for taking notes on skills.

Take turns being the storyteller. Follow this outline. You will be given time-limits.

1. **Storyteller** Tell the others in your group about one of the activities that gave you a sense of meaning and energy. Feel free to refer to your written notes, but do not limit yourself to them.

2. **Listeners** Write down each skill you hear in the story. Do not consider whether or not the skill might be a God-given gift at this point in the process. That discernment comes later.

3. **Listeners** Tell the storyteller what skills you think he or she has used in this single activity. The storyteller only listens. Hand the list of skills to the storyteller for later reflection.

Repeat the process until each person has told one story and received feedback about his or her skills. Then begin again with the second story for each person. If time allows, share other stories that you have written or that come to mind as you listen to others. The more stories you share, the more likely you are to identify themes that may be clues to your gifts.

Finding Your Spiritual Gifts Self-assessment is an on-line tool to help further identify spiritual gifts and use them in the church and community. See <http://www.elca.org/evangelism/assessments/spirtgifts.html>
MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor
www.elca.org/evangelism/assessments/spirtgifts.html.

Suggestions for Leading Retreat Session #3

1. **Pray together and state the purpose of this session.**

This session is divided into two one-hour segments with a break. The first invites young adults to learn about spiritual gifts and recall meaningful experiences in their lives. The second helps them mine the stories for skills that may be clues to their gifts.

Richard Bolles summarizes the focus of this session well: “But we must stay clear on this: our calling is to use the gifts God has given us. The call is in the gifts.” (Richard Bolles. “Myths Some Christians Hold about the Subject of Vocation,” *Newsletter About Life/Work Planning*, 1980, no.6, p.:4.) Created in the image of God, each child of God is given gifts that can be used for God’s glory. God may give gifts before birth, at baptism, and throughout life.

Oswald Chambers offers an important counter to the view expressed by Bolles, Frederick Buechner, and Parker Palmer: “The call of God is not the echo of my nature; my affinities and personal temperament are not considered. As long as I consider my personal temperament and think about what I am fitted for, I shall never hear the call of God. But when I am brought into relationship with God, I am in a condition Isaiah was in. Isaiah’s soul was so attuned to God To be brought into the zone of the call of God is to be profoundly altered.” (Oswald Chambers, “The Voice of the Nature of God,” *My Utmost for His Highest*, January 16.

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In good Lutheran fashion, this resource maintains the truth within both views. The call is in the God-given gifts, and yet, the call that comes from God may transcend and transform those very gifts. Many leaders in scripture seemed to lack the basic skills needed to carry out God’s call and still God equipped them or gave them associates to do what they were unable to do. Even so, knowing oneself and claiming God-given gifts is an important facet for discerning God’s call. This needs to be balanced by the call from the community as well as an internal awareness of call.

2. Reflect on biblical passages about gifts.

Distribute the handout *What are Spiritual Gifts?* Read the introduction and reflection questions together first, then ask three people to read one of the three passages aloud. Encourage others to underline and circle words and phrases that grab their attention, writing question marks and explanation marks where appropriate.

In the total group, confirm that spiritual gifts are given for the purpose of building up the church in unity to live out God’s call as stated in 1st Peter 2: 9-10. Emphasize that “the church” is not a congregation, but the body of Christ in the world. While gifts are used within congregations and other church entities, the primary purpose of gifts is to serve Christ and to invite the world into the reign or kingdom of God.

The lists of gifts in scripture are not exhaustive. This session expands the definition to include any abilities, skills, or character traits that God can use to serve in the name of Jesus Christ. These may include a wide range such as analytical thinking, artistic or

musical ability, or organizational skills. Encourage the group to brainstorm as many skills as they can imagine. This exercise will prepare them when they identify the skills they hear in others' stories.

Refer anyone who wants to explore skill identification more deeply to see *What Color Is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers* by Richard N. Bolles (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2003.). The exercises in this session are adapted from this classic.

3. Help young adults remember and write significant stories from their lives.

Distribute copies of *What Does Your Life Tell You?* Read through the instructions, giving illustrations and clarifying questions. Prepare a story or two from your own life to illustrate the process. Choose a meaningful experience that occurred when you were younger than the youngest participant in the group.

Here's one example from the writer, just to get you started on your journey down memory lane. The significance will be explained in Step 5.

One of my most meaningful experiences in high school was editing the first newsletter for the youth group at my congregation. Three others formed the staff. I particularly enjoyed meeting with the staff to dream up stories to write. The devotional column was my favorite assignment. We won no journalism prizes, but we did increase the communication among the young people and had fun doing it.

Young adults often think they have few if any stories to tell about their lives. Encourage the group to first brainstorm examples of stories from their own lives or from lives of others they know. Keep the focus on the type of meaningful experiences defined in the handout. Take away any pressure to produce great stories. Truth is often found in the most simple stories.

Interrupt the writing process after ten or fifteen minutes. Ask if anyone is having difficulty recalling meaningful experiences. If so, take time in the group or individually to assist with questions from the guide. Friends can often prompt others' memories. Encourage people to continue adding to the list before the next session where stories will be used as sources for finding gifts. Those who finish earlier will have a longer break. Remind them that everyone works at different speeds, just as everyone has different gifts.

4. Break

5. Demonstrate storytelling process in total group.

In this section, use the example you shared from your own life and involve the group in helping you discover skills embedded in the story. Return to the writer's story as an example. Implied or stated in that story are skills such as these: communicating, leading, taking initiative, working as a team member, collaborating, planning, finding resources, organizing, showing creativity, writing, and following through. At the age of sixteen, the writer was already using many of the skills required to write this resource. Not all stories are this relevant to future work, but this one illustrates the principle.

Distribute four large note cards or half sheets of paper to each participant to use throughout the session. Tell your story again as an example of how group members will mine their own stories for skills that may be clues to their God-given gifts. Ask the group to write down all the skills and personal qualities they hear as you re-tell your story.

Next, ask them to "bombard" you with all the implied or stated skills they heard in your story. Invite each person to read one skill he or she identified in the story you read. Go around the group until there are no more skills to be read.

6. Divide into trios to listen for gifts in the stories.

Distribute the *Storytelling Guide*. Read through the procedure and clarify any questions. Emphasize that the purpose is to share the time available so that each person gets to tell at least two stories and hear feedback about the skills involved in each.

Divide the group into trios. Indicate where each group can meet and give a time to return to the total group. Estimate how long each individual will have to speak and hear feedback. You may need to be available to facilitate this process as small groups can become confused here. Monitor each group for time and remind them five minutes before the time ends to conclude their sharing.

The time constraints will be frustrating, but the group is learning a process to repeat often. The more stories a person can generate, the more likely trends in skills will emerge.

7. Reconvene for prayer before lunch.

Refer to the prism as an illustration of gifts that differ. Although all comparisons fall short, the prism may be viewed as an example of how God has created each of us with multiple facets that reflect God's image into the world. The prism itself is not the source of light. The Triune God is. The more we know about how God has shaped us, the better able we are to be instruments that refract God's light with clarity.

Young adults take time to reflect on what their lives are beginning to tell them about their vocation, specifically as a leader in the church and world. Prayerful time visiting The Well is encouraged after the session ends.

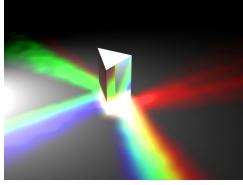
Overview

Minimum time for 1½ hour session. Adjust times of suggested experiences to the interests of the group.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Pray together and state the purpose of this session. | 15 minutes |
| 2. Assess where each person is in the discernment process. | 15 minutes |
| 3. Prayerfully reflect on 1 st Cor. 12: 1, 4–9 with the African Bible Study Method. | 30 minutes |
| 4. Complete and share responses to the Reflection Questions. | 25 minutes |
| 5. Pray Lutheran Book of Worship prayer #251. | 5 minutes |

Preparation

- * Prayerfully work through the learning experiences and reflection questions for yourself, making notes on ways to adapt the content for your group.
- * Make copies of *What Does Your Life Say about Your Gifts?* for each person.
- * Organize pencils, paper for each person, and other supplies for the session.
- * Remind young adults to spend time at The Well.



What Does Your Life Say about Your Gifts?

#4

“Today I understand vocation quite differently—not as a goal to be achieved but as a gift to be received. Discovering vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess..., to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God.”

~Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000) p.10.

Reflection Questions

- * What skills do you recognized from the stories you told?

- * What are other abilities or characteristics that are true to you, but did not emerge in the limited number of stories?

- * What are the skills and characteristics that might be gifts God has given you?

- * What do other people tell you about your skills and characteristics?

Exploring Deeper

- * How might you imagine yourself, with further education and experience, using these abilities and gifts in the church and world?



Suggestions for Leading Retreat Session #4

1. Pray together and state the purpose of this session.

Ask someone to read Parker Palmer's quotation. Encourage reactions to this view of vocation and offer other perspectives.

2. Assess where each person is in the discernment process.

Ask each person to reply to the following question in only a word or a phrase to describe where they are personally in the discernment process: "Right now, I am ____." Some may say they are confused or excited or dead tired. Go around the group quickly to get a sense of what is going on with individuals and with the group. Affirm all responses. Listen carefully for ways you may need to adapt the next sessions to address their needs.

3. Prayerfully reflect on 1st Cor. 12: 1, 4–9 with the African Bible Study Method.

Lead the group in prayerful reflection on 1st Corinthians 12: 1, 4–9 by following the African Bible Study Method used in Session 1 *What Leaders Will the Church Need To Thrive in the 21st Century?* and described in the *Appendix*.

- a. Begin the reading with prayer.
- b. Ask one person to read the passage slowly to the entire group twice.
- c. Invite each person to share the word or phrase that caught his or her attention. Explain that the task is to listen to one another and not elaborate on the brief responses or discuss them.
- d. Ask another person to read the passage slowly once. This time, ask the group to identify words or phrases that shed light on their understanding of their God-given gifts. The responses need to be brief and will not be discussed.
- e. If time allows, ask a third person to read the same passage to the entire group. Invite each person to share how the passage sheds light of their emerging sense of call. Again, group members will listen to one another with no discussion.
- f. Lead the group in a prayer to bless the reading and hearing of God's Word.

4. Complete and share responses to the Reflection Questions.

Distribute *What Does Your Life Say about Your Gifts?* Acknowledge that the questions may be difficult. Encourage people to see their answers as tentative, best guesses at this point. Observe that the few stories they have generated are insufficient to generate a comprehensive list of skills or gifts. Suggest that they review the lists of skills their trios gave them in response to the stories they shared. Think beyond these stories.

When most people have finished writing for now, invite them to share the most important thing they have learned or re-learned about themselves today. Give a preview of the closing session tomorrow and pray for the young adults to be open to God's stirrings during the evening. Remind people to spend time at The Well.

5. Pray the *Lutheran Book of Worship* prayer #251.

Lead the group in this or another prayer.

Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

~Lutheran Book of Worship #251

How May God Be Calling You to Lead? Retreat Session #5

Young adults experience a guided meditation to help them listen to the voice of Jesus saying, “Follow me.” They face various needs in the world that call for different gifts from the body of Christ. Finally, they determine what they need to go forward with their own discernment journey.

Overview

Minimum time for 2-hour session. Adjust times of suggested experiences to the interests of the group.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Pray together and state the purpose of this session. | 5 minutes |
| 2. Lead the group in a guided meditation based on Mark 3: 7–16a. | 20 minutes |
| 3. Break and reflect. | 25 minutes |
| 4. Check about degree of clarity about God’s call. | 10 minutes |
| 5. Reflect on the quotation and questions on the handout. | 30 minutes |
| 6. Identify next steps to move closer toward discernment. | 15 minutes |
| 7. Prepare statements, questions, or prayers for offering. | 10 minutes |
| 8. Thank the group. | 5 minutes |

Preparation

- * Prayerfully work through the learning experiences and reflection questions for yourself, making notes on ways to adapt the content for your group.
- * Make copies of *How May God Be Calling You to Lead?* for each person.
- * Write lists of needs in the world on newsprint or invite some young adults to create or cut out pictures for posters that illustrate the needs.
- * Organize pencils, note cards or paper and envelope for each person to use as offerings, and other supplies for the session.



Suggestions for Leading Retreat Session #5

1. Pray together and state the purpose of this session.
2. Lead the group in a guided meditation based on Mark 3: 7–16a.

Invite the young adults to make themselves comfortable in their seats so they can let the Spirit of God use their imaginations. They may close their eyes or focus on a neutral spot that will not distract them. Explain that you will read Mark 3: 7–16a first. Then you will ask them a number of open-ended questions as if they were actually present during the story. Encourage those who have never participated in a guided meditation to suspend judgment and open themselves to this method of hearing God’s Word. Pause after each question to allow for meditative silence.

7 Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed him; 8 hearing all that he was doing, they came to him in great numbers from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon. 9 He told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush him; 10 for he had cured many, so that all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him. 11 Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, "You are the Son of God!" 12 But he sternly ordered them not to make him known.

13 He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, 15 and to have authority to cast out demons. 16 So he appointed the twelve..." (Mark 3: 7–16a NRSV).

Imagine that you were in the crowd from Galilee that was following Jesus that day, hearing all that he was doing, seeing him cure many, and hearing the unclean spirits call him the Son of God. You are now going up the mountain with those Jesus wanted and called to him.

- What do you see as you look around you on the mountain?
- How does the air feel on your face?
- What does Jesus look like as you draw closer to him?
- What is it like for you to be this close to Jesus?

Now imagine that the crowds and apostles are all disappearing. Only you and Jesus remain on the mountain. Jesus is looking directly at you and calling your name.

What do you see in Jesus' eyes?
How does the voice of Jesus sound to you?
How is your heart responding to him?

You hear Jesus say your name again, adding these words: "Follow me."

How do you respond?
What do you want to say to Jesus?
What do you want to hear from Jesus?

Stay with Jesus, soaking in his loving presence. You never need to leave this place. Jesus is always present with you. He has promised to be with you always, and his promise is true.

3. Break and reflect.

Encourage the young adults to spend the next thirty minutes reflecting further on this experience and taking a break. Some may want to write notes about the meditation while others may prefer to take a walk. Still others may find someone with whom they can talk about their guided meditation. Give them a time to return to the group.

4. Check about degree of clarity about God's call.

Ask if participants are experiencing more light and clarity about how God may be calling them now than they saw at the beginning of the retreat. They might show "thumbs up" for more clarity, "thumbs down" for more darkness, and "thumbs sideways" for uncertainty or ambiguity. Acknowledge that discernment is indeed a journey that each person takes at his or her own pace. The community offers comfort and encouragement to continue.

5. Reflect on the quotation and questions on the handout.

To help young adults begin to respond to these difficult questions, suggest they begin with the second question, “Which of the world’s infinite needs interest you most?” Refer the group to the list of needs you have made on newsprint or to the posters of pictures others have created to illustrate needs.

Art, music, drama
Athletics
Care of the earth
Clothing
Communication
Education
Food
Government
Healthcare (physical, emotional, mental)
Housing, buildings
Justice
Multicultural connections
Peace-making
Sharing the Gospel
Social Service
Stewardship of financial resources
Transportation
and many others. . . .

Provide time for young adults to identify their strongest interests from the needs listed and from others the group may suggest. Encourage them to attempt a response to the first and third questions. When most have completed the written work, ask group members to talk about what they are discovering about themselves and God’s call at this point.

6. Identify next steps to move closer toward discernment.

The final question, “What needs to happen before you are able and willing to respond to God’s call?” may evoke responses dealing with faith, courage, or ability to trust God. It may also call forth quite practical concerns that are also important.

Ask each person to choose at least two tasks they will carry out within a timeframe they select following the retreat. Brainstorm possibilities, such as these:

- * Make time and space for daily scripture reading and prayer.
- * Talk with an advisor at school about majors or graduate schools.

- * Interview people who are working in areas of interest to learn what they do and how they prepared themselves for the work.
- * Make an appointment to talk with the pastor, lay rostered leader, or campus minister.
- * Attend the follow-up program entitled, "What Is Distinctive about ELCA Public Ministers?"

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7. Prepare statements, questions, or prayers for offering.

The final task in this retreat is to prepare for worship together. Distribute note cards or paper with envelopes and pens or pencils. Ask each person to write or draw something on the paper to place in the offering plate during the offertory. This could be a question, a promise, a prayer, or an image. No one will see the contents of the envelope. Following the worship, they will all be shredded.

8. Thank the group.

Express any gratitude you have for the group. Allow others to do the same as this particular community leaves this place. Explain that the worship that follows is the most important part of their discernment because they are coming together to glorify God.

Ask a young adult to prepare to read this prayer during the worship service:

The Road Ahead

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself,

and the fact that I think I am following your will

does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you

does in fact please you.

And I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,

though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore, I will trust you always

though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will fear not, for you are with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

~Thomas Merton, "Thoughts in Solitude," © Abbey of Gethsemani

What Is Distinctive about ELCA Public Ministers?

A One-Hour Follow-up Program

Young adults learn that the church prepares, certifies, and calls public ministers to speak and serve on its behalf as the body of Christ in a wide range of settings. They examine the common and distinctive marks of ELCA pastors, deaconesses, diaconal ministers, and associates in ministry, then compare and contrast them with other church members. A panel representing these public ministers is encouraged.

Overview for Leaders

Minimum time for 60-minute session. Adjust times for suggested experiences to the interests of the group.

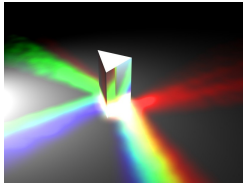
Informal gathering with food and conversation.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. Pray and state the purpose of this session. | 5 minutes |
| 2. Review God's call to the church and varieties of gifts for the common good. | 5 minutes |
| 3. Give "Quick Facts" quiz about the ELCA. | 5 minutes |
| 4. Examine ELCA Standards and Rites for public ministers. | 20 minutes |
| 5. Compare and contrast public ministers with other church leaders' ministries in the world. | 20 minutes |
| 6. Sing and pray for God's guidance in discerning God's call to ministry in the church and world. | 5 minutes |

Recommended option: Follow-up with a one-hour interview with ELCA public ministers on a panel, or prepare people to role play different forms of public ministry.

Preparation

- * Prayerfully work through the learning experiences and reflection questions for yourself, making notes on ways to adapt the content for your group.
- * Bring a copy of the list young adults made as a vision for church leaders in the introductory program, *What Leaders Will the Church Need to Thrive in the 21st Century?*
- * Write "Quick Facts" quiz questions on newsprint.
- * Copy both pages of "*What Does the ELCA Expect from its Public Ministers?*" for each person.
- * Set up the room for the panel discussion or role play.
- * Organize pencils and other supplies for the session.



What Does the ELCA Expect from its Public

Ministers?

Page 1 of 2

Commonalities

All ELCA public ministers are expected to meet and maintain the following basic standards:

- 1) commitment to Christ;
- 2) acceptance of and adherence to the Confession of Faith of this church;
- 3) willingness and ability to serve in response to the needs of this church;
- 4) academic and practical qualifications for the position, including leadership abilities and competence in interpersonal relationships;
- 5) commitment to lead a life worthy of the Gospel of Christ and in so doing to be an example in faithful service and holy living;
- 6) receipt and acceptance of a letter of call; and
- 7) membership in a congregation of this church.

~Constitution of the ELCA 7.31.10 and

7.52.10.

All ELCA public ministers:

* participate in the churchwide candidacy process over several years. Congregations, synods, seminaries, and the ELCA Vocation and Education Unit partner with the candidate in preparation and formation that may lead to approval and call to ministries throughout the ELCA;

* complete a bachelor's degree and some theological education, normally. Diaconal ministers and deaconesses complete a two-year master's degree in theological education. Pastors complete a Master of Divinity degree;

* make these or similar promises during the various rites of ordination, consecration, and commissioning:

- serve in accordance with the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God and the norm

for faith and life, and with the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds;

- be diligent in studying the Holy Scripture and faithful in using the means of

- grace and prayer;
- witness to Jesus Christ in word and deed;
 - encourage God's people in faithful service by their own example of the godly life.

* are accountable to the ELCA to live out these promises by the help of God.

Distinctions between ELCA Public Ministers

Page 2 of 2

The ministry rites for pastors, deaconesses and diaconal ministers, and associates in ministry describe how the church defines their various calls. The three ministry rites in English and Spanish are located at
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http://www.elca.org/dcm/worship/liturgies/ministry.html

Pastors are ordained “to the office of Word and Sacrament by the laying on of hands.” They are asked to “assume this office, believing that the Church’s call is God’s call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.” A prayer asks for God’s blessing on the ordinand’s ability to “proclaim the Word and administer the Sacraments so that the Church may be gathered for praise and strengthened for service; to be a faithful pastor, patient teacher, and wise counselor; and in all things to serve without reproach that God’s people may be renewed and God’s name be glorified.” Pastors are given a stole as a sign of the work, remembering that Jesus said his yoke is easy and his burden light. The assembled congregation welcomes and promises to support the pastor “as a messenger of Jesus Christ sent to serve God’s people with the Gospel of hope and salvation.”

Deaconesses and diaconal ministers are consecrated by the laying on of hands to “a call to public witness and service that exemplifies Christ-like self-giving and leads the Church and all its baptized members to witness to Christ in the world. Diaconal ministry reflects the historic call of deacons to serve those most in need on behalf of the Church.... (They) cross every barrier that stands between the Church and its ministry in the broader world.” Both receive a basin and towel as a sign that they “are to serve as Christ served, humbling himself and taking the form of a servant.” Deaconesses, whose community is rooted in nineteenth-century Germany, also receive a cross. The assembled congregation welcomes and promises to support the deaconess and diaconal minister as one “consecrated to diaconal ministry to serve all people in Christ’s name.”

Associates in ministry are commissioned “to serve in a congregation, synod, churchwide unit, institution, or agency” in an area of specialization. They are “called among us to a ministry which provides leadership and support for the ministries of the

whole people of God. They are called to work in partnership with all the baptized and in special relationships with (other rostered leaders) to serve the mission and ministry of Christ in this church. Through this ministry they are called to provide care and nurture for the people of God in the Christian faith.” They receive the insignia of associates in ministry “as a sign of the calling to serve Christ and a token of the church’s recognition of their ministry among us.” The assembled congregation welcomes and promises to support the associate in ministry, who is called in Christ’s name.

Additional information about what public ministers in the ELCA do and how they prepare for their ministries can be found at
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http://www.elca.org/candidacy/html, and
HREF="http://www.elca.org/candidacy/pdf/whoweare.pdf" MACROBUTTON
HtmlResAnchor http://www.elca.org/candidacy/pdf/whoweare.pdf.

Suggestions for Leaders for Follow-Up Program

- 1. Pray and state the purpose of this session.**
- 2. Review God’s call to the church and varieties of gifts for the common good.**

Ground the session in the theological framework of the Introductory and Retreat sessions. Some young adults may not have participated in any of those events. The ones who have will benefit from a review. Ask a young adult to read each of the following passages and encourage the group to comment on what is most important in each.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1st Peter 2: 9-10 NRSV).

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good (1st Cor. 12: 4-7 NRSV).

- 3. Give Quick Facts Quiz about the ELCA.**

This information points to the wide range of ministry opportunities available to all ELCA public ministers. The numbers also suggest the need for more faithful, qualified public leaders.

Refer to the questions that you have written on newsprint in advance for a thumbnail sketch of the ELCA as of January 2005. Let the group call out their best guesses before telling them the answers. A 1998 ELCA Research study reported that about 20% of pastors serve in settings other than congregations. *Lutheran Partners* noted in its November/December 2000 issue that 74% of all lay rostered leaders were serving in congregations. 43% of deaconesses and diaconal ministers were called to serve in congregations at that time.

ELCA Quick Facts Quiz*

1. How many baptized members belong to the ELCA?
2. How many congregations are in the ELCA?
3. How many pastors are on the roster, or official list, of ordained ministers?
4. How many associates in ministry, deaconesses, and diaconal ministers are on the roster, or official list, of lay leaders?
5. Where do ELCA public ministers serve?

Answers:

1. 4,984,925
2. 10,657
3. 17,703
4. 1,390 (1,239 associates in ministry, 67 deaconesses, 84 diaconal ministers)
5. Most are called to congregations. Others are called to represent the ELCA and its ministry as chaplains in hospitals, retirement homes, colleges, military, prisons, and other institutions; synodical, regional, and churchwide staffs; outdoor ministry staffs; missionaries; teachers, professors, and administrators at schools, colleges, seminaries; pastoral counselors; social service agency staffs; government workers, and many other specialized ministry settings.

* January 2005 statistics are at

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4. Examine ELCA Standards and Rites for public ministers.

Distribute the two-page *What Does the ELCA Expect from its Public Ministers?* You might ask group members to read the commonalities silently and then respond to these questions: Does anything in this list surprise you about what the church expects of its public leaders? Do you disagree with anything listed?

Display a copy of the list young adults made as a vision for church leaders in the Introductory program, *What Leaders Will the Church Need to Thrive in the 21st Century?* Look for similarities and differences in the ELCA expectations and the young adults' vision.

Turn the group's attention to the handout's second page listing distinctions among the forms of public ministry in the ELCA. Quotations from the rites of ordination, consecration, and commissioning are summarized to help young adults capture the distinctive focus of each call. Just as public ministers in the ELCA serve in the same

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variety of settings, so also do their job descriptions overlap in many ways. Pastors alone are called to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The other forms of ministry flow out of this office that is fundamental in the church. Website addresses on the handout direct people to information about the tasks of public ministers.

5. Compare and contrast public ministers with other church leaders' ministries in the world.

Invite a young adult to read the following quotation from Martin Luther, then ask how Luther addressed the question of the distinctiveness of public ministers.

“You will ask, ‘If all who are in the church are priests, how do these whom we now call priests differ from laymen?’ I answer: ...Holy Scripture makes no distinction between them....Although we are all equally priests, we cannot all publicly minister and teach. We ought not do so even if we could. Paul writes accordingly in 1 Cor. 4: 1, ‘This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.’

...Rather ought Christ to be preached to the end that faith in him may be established that he may not only be Christ, but be Christ for you and me, and that what is said of him and is denoted in his name may be effectual in us. Such faith is produced and preserved in us by preaching why Christ came, what he brought and bestowed, what benefit it is to us to accept him.”

~ Martin Luther, "Freedom of a Christian" in *Martin Luther. Selections from his Writings*, ed. John Dillenberger. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1961), pp. 65, 66.

If time allows, read and reflect on this quotation for a deeper perspective.

"For all Christians whatsoever really and truly belong to the religious class, and there is no difference among them except in so far as they do different work. [1 Cor. 12: 12 f.] This applies to us all, because we have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all equally Christian.The fact is that our baptism consecrates us all without exception, and makes us all priests. [1 Peter 2:9]. ...Those who exercise secular authority have been baptized like the rest of us, and have the same faith and the same gospel; therefore we must admit that they are priests and bishops. They discharge their office as an office of the Christian community, and for the benefit of that community. ...All have spiritual status, and all are truly priests, bishops, and popes. But Christians do not all follow the same occupation. Similarly, priests and monks do not all work at the same task." Martin Luther, "An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality," *ibid.*, pp.407, 408, 409.

Draw together themes such as the following as the session ends. The call of God to bring the world back into God's reign comes initially to the church, the body of Christ. All members of the family of God are called to be "workers in the kingdom" as priests. God gifts everyone in various ways to witness in the world in our personal lives, in daily occupations, and in the community, nation, and world. God calls some to serve as public ministers to equip all the baptized for ministry in the world. Encourage young adults who

want to continue discerning God's call in their lives and occupations to talk with you later.

6. Sing and pray for God's guidance in discerning God's call to ministry in the church and world.

Sing or read the words of *We All Are One in Mission* in *With One Voice*, #755.

Recommended Option:

Interview ELCA public ministers on a panel, or prepare people to role play different forms of public ministry.

Provide information about what the young adults have been studying when you invite each person to serve on the panel. Give them a copy of *What Does the ELCA Expect of its Public Ministers?*

If a panel is not possible, prepare young adults to play the roles of ELCA public leaders.

Background material for lay public leaders can be downloaded at these sites:

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HREF="<http://www.elca.org/lutheranpartners/archives/deacones.html>"

MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor

<http://www.elca.org/lutheranpartners/archives/deacones.html> by Carol Burk, an ELCA

deaconess; HREF="<http://www.elca.org/lutheranpartners/archives/diamin.html>"

MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor

<http://www.elca.org/lutheranpartners/archives/diamin.html> by Phillip Deming, a diaconal

minister; HREF="<http://www.elca.org/lutheranpartners/archives/aimin.html>"

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<http://www.elca.org/lutheranpartners/archives/aimin.html> by Phyllis Castens

Wiederhoeft, an associate in ministry. A description of expectations for pastors serving in congregations is described in *C9.01* at

href="http://www.elca.org/secretary/Constitutions/ModelConstitution2005.html"
MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor
http://www.elca.org/secretary/Constitutions/ModelConstitution2005.html.

APPENDIX

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Songs and Hymns

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Songs and Hymns about God’s Call

Lutheran Book of Worship

If You But Trust in God to Guide You	#453
Jesus Calls Us; O’er the Tumult	#494
Lord, as a Pilgrim	#485
Lord, Speak to Us	#403
O Master, Let Me Walk with You	#492
Rise Up, O Saints of God!	#383
Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart	#486
Take My Life, that I May Be	#406
We Give Thee But Thine Own	#410

With One Voice

Great God, Your Love Has Called Us	#666
I Want Jesus to Walk with Me (African American)	#660
Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love (Ghanian)	#765
Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (Jamaican)	#754
Listen, God Is Calling (Tanzanian)	#712
Now We Offer (Nicaraguan)	#761
O Holy Spirit, Root of Life (Hildegard of Bingen)	#688
Oh, Sing to the Lord/Cantad al Senor (Brazilian)	#795
Open Your Ears, O Faithful People (Hasidic)	#715
Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God	#783
Send Me, Lord/Thuma mina (South African)	#773
We All Are One in Mission (Finnish)	#755
Where True Charity and Love Abide (Taizé)	#665
You Are the Seed/Sois la semilla (Spanish)	#753

Renewing Worship: New Hymns and Songs

Bless Now, O God, the Journey (Welsh)	R129
Deep River (African American)	R209
Goodness Is Stronger than Evil (Desmond Tutu)	R239
Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather (Japanese)	R179
Holy, Holy, Holy/Santo, santo, santo (Argentine)	R176
I'm Going on a Journey	R163
Make Me a Channel of Your Peace/Hazme un instrumento de tu paz (Spanish)	R279
Send Me, Jesus/Thuma mina (South African)	R190
Take, Oh Take Me as I Am	R278
To God Our Thanks We Give/Reamo leboga (Botswanan)	R230
Wade in the Water (African American)	R159

We Are an Offering	R232
We Are Called	R251
Where We Are Living/Pues si vivimo (Spanish)	R205
Will You Come and Follow Me (Scottish)	R276
Your Will Be Done/Mayenziwe (South African)	R257



Creating a Sacred Space for Prayer and Service

A separate large room may be set apart for prayerful reflection during a retreat as part of the planned program or during free time. Young adults with creativity can transform an ordinary space with colorful bolts of cloth, large pillows, candles, a portable waterfall, CD player with headphones, arts and craft materials, icons, and pictures. The stations can vary with the interests of the leader and the group members. The page that follows is one example of how a sacred space might be designed. Develop your own introduction to give to each participant.

COME TO *THE WELL* [A Sample]

Throughout the weekend, you are invited to visit a room called The Well. In this place you will find opportunities to be silent, to read, to pray, to serve, and to be served.

Called to Reflect. Come, sit beside living water, listen to music that has fed pilgrims through the ages, and take time to be refreshed.

Called to Prayer. Come, journey through the labyrinth and take peace as your finger “walks in prayer.” “You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy” (Psalm 16:11).

Called to Meditate. Come, join the psalmist who delighted to meditate on God’s Word day and night (Psalm 1). From the resources on this table, select one short section of scripture, a brief reading, or a poem. Slowly “chew” on each word, making it your own.

Called to Serve. Come, take comfort from loving touch. Bring another person and exchange a hand massage as a sign that you are the hands of Christ in the world. If you wish to be the servant, sit in the “massager” chair and offer relaxing touch to another’s hands. If you need healing touch yourself, sit in the “massagee” chair.

Called to Care. Come, light a candle for one or more of your sisters and brothers who are in need of the healing love of Christ in any way—body, mind, spirit. Write your prayer on a card so others may join you.

Called to Listen. Come, lay down your burdens and take solace in a colleague’s listening heart, like David’s friend Jonathan listened to him. Invite another person to come with you. If you wish to offer a listening ear, sit in the “Jonathan” chair. If you need a listening ear, sit in the “David” chair.

Called to Share Talents. Come, use your hands and creativity to bring the message of Christ to others in a tangible way. Take some time to tie fleece blankets for the local homeless shelter or make a prayer bracelet for someone in need.

Adapted from the Fourth Diaconal Ministry Gathering in Kansas City, KS, April 2004.

Called to Prayer

Come, journey through the labyrinth and take peace as your finger “walks in prayer.” Labyrinths have long been walked in prayer by Christian pilgrims. This labyrinth is a copy from the floor of the twelfth-century Gothic cathedral at Chartres in France.

There is no single right way to pray as you travel a labyrinth. Essentially, a labyrinth is a “centering” prayer-form. Begin without expectations and God will provide what you need in time. With your finger, follow the single path to the center. Linger there, then follow the same pathway out the threshold. Write a few words after your prayer to read on other journeys.



Called to Prayer. Two Practices for Praying with Scripture

href="http://www.valyermo.com/ld-art.html" macrobutton
htmlresanchor Lectio Divina (**Prayerful Reading**) from

HREF="http://www.pcusa.org/spiritualformation/practices.htm"
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http://www.pcusa.org/spiritualformation/practices.htm

Lectio divina is an ancient method for praying with the Bible, being open to hearing in the words of Scripture a personally enlivening and transforming word from God. Begin by choosing a brief passage of Scripture, and a place where you can be quiet and undisturbed in your prayer time. After you have taken a few minutes to quiet your mind, turn your attention to the passage you have selected.

1. Read a short passage of text that you have decided upon in advance. Read slowly, letting your awareness rest in turn upon each word, savoring it. As you read, be alert for any particular word or phrase that draws your attention in a special way.
2. Meditate on this word or phrase, allowing it to engage you fully. Does the word upon which you are meditating connect with some aspect of your own experience? As you hold this word or phrase in your heart, let yourself become aware of any answering words, images, or memories that arise in you.
3. Respond to the Word you have heard, simply and directly. Your heart may call out in thanks, or praise, or joy. If the Word has been painful, your response might be one of remorse, or anger, or supplication.
4. Rest in God's presence, content simply to be with God.

The African Bible Study Method from
<http://www.takomaparkpc.org/AfricanBibleStudy.html>

This Bible study method was introduced by the African Delegation to the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church. It is known by both names: “Lambeth” and “African.”

Opening Prayer: O Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning, grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

1. One person reads passage slowly.
2. Each person identifies the word or phrase that catches their attention (*1 minute*).
3. Each shares the word or phrase around the group (*3-5 minutes, NO DISCUSSION*).
4. Another person reads the passage slowly (from a different translation, if possible).
5. Each person identifies where this passage touches their life today (*1 minute*).
6. Each shares (*3-5 minutes, NO DISCUSSION*).
7. Passage is read a third time (another reader and translation, if possible).
8. Each person names or writes “From what I’ve heard and shared, what do I believe God wants me to do or be? Is God inviting me to change in any way?” (*5 minutes*)
9. Each person shares their answer (*5-10 minutes, NO DISCUSSION*).
10. Each prays for the person on their right, naming what was shared in the other steps (*5 minutes*). *Can be silent.*

Close with the Our Father and SILENCE.

Abram and Sarai in Genesis 12:1- 7
Moses in Exodus 3 and 4
Ruth in the book of Ruth
Samuel in 1 Samuel 3: 1 – 12
David in 1 Samuel 16: 1 – 13
Esther in the book of Esther
Isaiah in Isaiah 6: 1 - 13
Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1: 1 – 10
Mary in Luke 1:26-38
Jesus in Luke 3: 21 – 22, 4:1-13
Disciples in Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 9:9-13, Matthew 16:24-28
Woman at the Well in John 4:1-30
Paul in Acts 9: 1 – 19

Reflection Questions

1. Who initiates the call in these stories?
2. For what purpose is each person called?
3. How well equipped for the call does each person seem to be?
4. What are you wondering or discerning about God's call to the church and to you from these stories?

Praying His Questions, Hearing Our Hearts: Discernment Exercises

Bill King, Lutheran Campus Pastor at Virginia Tech, has developed a provocative study to help young adults go beyond questions of vocation. His series of exercises helps people wrestle with the big questions Jesus asked:

Who do you say that I am? What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and forfeit life? Who do you say that I am? Do you also wish to go away? Do you want to be healed? Are you sleeping? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? How many loaves have you? Do you love me?

The process of discernment underlying the exercises makes three assumptions: First, the most important questions are timeless and Scripture is interested in those questions. Second, God engages us through the Bible; it is a living document renewed by the Holy Spirit who has the disconcerting habit of opening up interpretive paths we have never noticed before. Third, if we are willing to attend, God will not remain silent. Most of the time the issue is not that God refuses to speak, but that we are too noisy, preoccupied, or prejudiced to really listen. Sometimes the answer to our most perplexing problems is already present in our hearts; it just takes becoming still for God's guidance to slowly rise up into our consciousness.

The goal of each exercise is your entering into prayerful conversation with Jesus around the question in the text. "Deep calls to deep," says the Psalmist. That is the promise which undergirds these exercises. God speaks to our deepest longings out of unfathomable, holy love. As we listen to Jesus' questions and the answering witness of the Spirit in our hearts, the way becomes clearer.

These exercises can be done as either a personal devotional exercise or in a group. You can find helpful suggestions on using *Praying His Questions, Hearing Our Hearts* at <http://www.elca.org/campusministry/resources/prayingquestions.pdf>

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<http://www.elca.org/campusministry/resources/prayingquestions.pdf>.

Recommended Resources

Badcock, Gary D. *The Way of Life: A Theology of Christian Vocation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998. Badcock views vocation's question as "What will I do with my life?" He maintains that God does not act out the details of our lives, even though we are dependent on God, we are free to make choices about our lives.

Buechner, Frederick. *The Sacred Journey*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1982.

_____. *The Hungering Dark*. New York: HarperCollins, 1969, 1985.

Bolles, Richard N. *What Color Is Your Parachute. 2004: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2003. This classic is revised annually and is considered the "bible" for career counseling. The epilogue section entitled "How To Find Your Mission in Life. God and One's Vocation," can help young adults connect their growing self-understanding with their career planning.

Bouman, Walter R. and Sue M. Setzer. *What Shall I Say? Discerning God's Call to Ministry*. Augsburg Fortress: Minneapolis, 1994. Reprinted 1995, 1998, 2000. Spanish translation, *¿Qué debo decir? Discerniendo el llamado de Dios a ministrar*, 1995. This is an official resource of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for guiding and supporting persons who are discerning God's call to ministry. It is the indispensable touchstone book for any Lutheran considering the possibility of a church occupation.

Edwards, Lloyd. *Discerning Your Spiritual Gifts*. Boston: Cowley, 1988. Edwards offers a theological base for the interesting exercises and adaptable session plans in his book.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Macmillan, 1963.

Bonhoeffer focuses on Jesus and his call to us to be disciples. He asks, "If we answer the call to discipleship, where will it lead us? What decisions and partings will it demand?"

Farnham, Hull, and McLean. *Grounded in God. Listening Hearts Discernment for Group Deliberations*. Harrisburg, Pa.: Morehouse Publishing, 1996. This little book explores the themes of call, discernment, and community as they relate to each other. It reminds us that, in responding to God's call, we discover ourselves. See also its *Manual for Discussion Leaders* by Suzanne Farnham, Joseph Gill, Taylor McLean, and Susan Ward.

Halpin, Marlene. *Imagine That*. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Company, Publishers. 1982. Halpin, a Dominican sister, uses guided meditation and dream images in spiritual direction. These can be used well in discernment with young adults.

Job, Rueben P. and Norman Shawchuck. *A Guide to Retreat for All God's Shepherds*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994. The series of day-long retreats with texts and readings focus on the struggles which come with ministry. This would be good for a mentor, and one considering the ministry might benefit from it by "looking over the shoulder" of a minister.

King, Martin Luther. *The Measure of a Man*. Chicago: Augsburg Fortress, 2001. These two meditations by Dr. King show his theological conviction that meditation and action are inseparable elements of life for the children of God, male and female.

Merton, Thomas. *New Seeds of Contemplation*. New York: New Directions, 1972. This classic reflects on humility, obedience, detachment, personal identity, and the contemplative experience.

Nouwen, Henri. *In the Name of Jesus. Reflections of Christian Leadership*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989. This treatment of what the church in the coming years needs from its leaders emphasizes a vigorous Jesus-centered life based on prayer and forgiveness.

Palmer, Parker, *Let Your Life Speak. Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. Palmer invites the reader to the most basic of discernments, listening to the longings and gifts present in our daily lives. It empowers folks to believe that deep in their hearts God has already planted the seeds of the answer they seek.

Parks, Sharon Daloz, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. Parks builds on her classic, *The Critical Years*, and urges thoughtful adults to assume responsibility for providing strategic mentorship during this important decade in life.

_____, *The Critical Years*. New York: Harpercollins, reprint 1991. This excellent book on the developmental needs of young adults suggests that young adults do not need "values clarification" so much as a mentor who communicates both unconditional care and a clear vision for young adults to test.

Peterson, Eugene H., *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992. The author uses the Jonah story to explore the spiritual dimensions of the pastoral calling in contrast to pastors who seek religious careers.

Placher, William, Editor. *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. This anthology gathers select passages on work and vocation from the greatest writers in Christian history with introductions by the editor to each of the four historical sections.

Thurman, Howard. *For the Inward Journey: The Writings of Howard Thurman*. 5th edition. Richmond, VA: Friends United Press, 2002. Drawing on the rich aspects of the black experience in America, this anthology of Thurman's most important writings show the essence of his message of hope, reconciliation, and love.

Yeago, David S., "The Call to the Holy Ministry." Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC. This thoughtful and well laid out paper sets a high standard of accountability for church leaders because they serve in such a public manner.

Websites

Life, Jobs, Career: The Lutheran Understanding of Vocation at
 HREF="<http://www.elca.org/vocation/>" MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor
<http://www.elca.org/vocation/>

This site of the Vocation and Education Unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America offers many links to answer questions related to public ministries and ministries in the world.

Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation at HREF="<http://www.ptev.org/>"
 MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor <http://www.ptev.org/>. Extensive resources for vocation-themed coursework, books, articles, and movies that might inspire vocational reflection.

Real People, Real Ministers at
 HREF="<http://www.exploreministry.org/realpeople/index.cfm>" MACROBUTTON
 HtmlResAnchor <http://www.exploreministry.org/realpeople/index.cfm>. Ministers from different denominations tell about their ministries on this *Explore Ministry* site for The Fund for Theological Education, Inc.

Spiritual Gifts Inventory with suggestions on how to use the results may be taken on-line or printed out. Find this at

HREF="<http://www.elca.org/evangelism/assessments/spiritgifts.html>"

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<http://www.elca.org/evangelism/assessments/spiritgifts.html>.

Together for Ministry. Final Report and Actions on the Study of Ministry 1988-1993,

HREF="http://www.elca.org/leadership/pdf/Together_for_Ministry.pdf"

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www.elca.org/leadership/pdf/Together_for_Ministry.pdf.

Vocation: What is Your Calling? The site includes an 8-session program to help young adults see God working in their lives, the church, and in the world. The Leaders Guide includes sections on God, Scripture, Church, Worship, Baptism, Eucharist, and Vocation.

HREF="<http://www.elca.org/windowsoffaith/vocation8.html>" MACROBUTTON HtmlResAnchor

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