

**A Prayer, Bible, and Theology Study Guide
for a Congregational Discernment Committee
from the Commission on Ministry
(Adapted from the Diocese of Colorado)**

The following provides a framework for a 12-session study with a Congregational Discernment Committee, using resources in the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) and in Scripture. Following this outline (beginning on page 4) are suggested questions to stimulate discussion for each session.

I. The Church

1. Thanksgiving to God for Parish Life in Christ

Collect	“For the Unity of the Church”	BCP pg. 255
Scripture	Deuteronomy 7:6-8 Colossians 3:12-17 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 Luke 24:13-35	
Reading	An Outline of the Faith (The Catechism) The Church The Sacraments	BCP pg. 854-855 BCP pg. 857-858
Prayer	“A Litany of Thanksgiving”	BCP pg. 836-837

2. The Ministry of the Laity

Collect	The Prayer – Confirmation Service	BCP pg. 418
Scripture	Deuteronomy 10:12-15 1 Corinthians 12:12-28 Ephesians 4:1-16 Matthew 28:16-20	
Reading	The Catechism The Christian Hope	BCP pg. 861-862
Prayer	A Song of Creation	BCP pg. 88

II. The Ordained Ministry

1. The Ordination of a Priest

Collect	For the Ministry II	BCP pg. 256
Scripture	Isaiah 6:1-8 Ephesians 4:7, 11-16 or 1 Peter 5:1-4 or Philippians 4:4-9 Matthew 9:35-38 or John 6:35-38; 10:11-18	
Reading	The Ordination of a Priest The Examination	BCP pg. 531-532
Prayer	The Litany for Ordinations	BCP pg. 548-550

2. The Ordination of a Deacon

Collect	For the Ministry II	BCP pg. 256
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| Scripture | Jeremiah 1:4-9 or Ecclesiasticus. 39:1-8
Psalm 84 or 119:33-40
2 Cor. 4:1-6 or 1 Tim. 3:8-13 or Acts 6:2-7 | |
| Reading | The Ordination of a Deacon
The Examination | BCP pg. 543-544 |
| Prayer | The Litany for Ordinations | BCP pg. 548-550 |
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3. The Pastoral Ministry | | |
| Collect | A Prayer of Self-Dedication | BCP pg. 832 |
| Scripture | Isaiah 55
1 Corinthians 4
1 Peter 5:1-11
Matthew 7:7-12 | |
| Reading | The Celebration of a New Ministry:
The Induction and Prayer | BCP pg. 561-563 |
| Prayer | A Prayer attributed to St. Francis | BCP pg. 833 |
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4. The Priesthood | | |
| Collect | For the Ministry I | BCP pg. 256 |
| Scripture | 1 Samuel 2:35
Hebrews 4:14-5:10
John 15:1-17 | |
| Reading | The Ordination of a Priest
The Consecration | BCP pg. 533-534 |
| Prayer | Christ Our Passover | BCP pg. 83 |
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5. The Diaconate | | |
| Collect | For Social Service
Vocation in Daily Work | BCP pg. 260 or
BCP pg. 261 |
| Scripture | Isaiah 42:1-4 or Isaiah 52:13-53; 12
1 John 4:7-12
Matthew 25:31-46 | |
| Reading | The Ordination of a Deacon:
The Consecration | BCP pg. 545 |
| Prayer | The Song of Simeon | BCP pg. 93 |
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6. The Cost of Ministry | | |
| Collect | Holy Cross Day | BCP pg. 244 |
| Scripture | Revelation 5:6-14
2 Corinthians 5:17-6:16
Matthew 9:35-10:39 | |
| Reading | The Catechism
Sin and Redemption | BCP pg. 848-849 |
| Prayer | A Song of Penitence | BCP pg. 90 |
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7. The Discipline of Ministry | | |

Collect	Second Sunday of Easter	BCP pg. 224
Scripture	Exodus 20:1-20 1 Corinthians 9:16-27 John 21:15-19	
Reading	The Catechism The Ministry	BCP pg. 855-856
Prayer	The Song of Zechariah	BCP pg. 92

III. Prayer and Ministry

1. The Prayer of Union

Collect	Of a Saint III	BCP pg. 250
Scripture	2 Chronicles 6:12-21 John 17	
Reading	The Catechism God the Son	BCP pg. 849-850
Prayer	The Second Song of Isaiah	BCP pg. 86

2. Prayer for One Another

Collect	Proper 22	BCP pg. 234
Scripture	Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-19 Philippians 1:3-11 Colossians 1:9-23 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12	
Reading	The Catechism The Holy Spirit Prayer and Worship	BCP pg. 852-853 BCP pg. 856-857
Prayer	The Solemn Collects: Good Friday	BCP pg. 277-280

3. The Faithfulness of God

Collect	For Quiet Confidence	BCP pg. 832
Scripture	Lamentations 3:21-33 Romans 8:31-39 Matthew 5:1-12; 6:19-34	
Reading	The Catechism Human Nature God the Father	BCP pg. 845-846 BCP pg. 846
Prayer	You are God	BCP pg. 95

A Suggested Outline for Study and Discussion Sessions in the Congregational Discernment Process

Commission on Ministry, Diocese of Hawai'i
(Adapted from the Diocese of Colorado)

The following questions may be helpful for each of the sections. They are intended to assist in opening possible areas of consideration. Most do not have any “right” answers, but are only meant to stimulate thought and discussion.

I. The Church

1. Thanksgiving to God for Parish Life in Christ

- What does it mean to be God’s chosen people? Chosen for what?
- How does a group of people become “bound together in love by the one Spirit?” What does this mean?
- What is the relationship of individual and communal discernment of God’s will for our lives?
- Why did the disciples on the road to Emmaus not recognize Jesus? What may have gotten in the way? What gets in the way for us?

2. The Ministry of the Laity

- How have we discerned God’s will for us in our own present vocations?
- What are our responsibilities as Christians in our present vocations?
- What gifts do we have that could add to the unity and wholeness of the Body of Christ?
- How can we be more open to Christ’s presence with us?

II The Ordained Ministry

1. The ordination of a Deacon and a Priest

- In what way do the ministries of all the baptized, the diaconate and the priesthood differ from one another?
- What are some indications of being “called” to any particular vocation? To the ordained ministry?
- What kind of leader is a shepherd? What qualities are needed to be a dictator? To be an example?

2. The Pastoral Ministry

- What are “pastoral “responsibilities”?”
- How can one’s image of God and relationship with God affect pastoral ministry?
- Is there a difference in the call to pastoral ministry for the laity and the ordained ministry? If so, what is it?

3. The Priesthood

- What makes a priest? What can we learn from Jesus as High Priest about the role of priest?
- Is there a role for priest in areas other than specific “parish work” and if

so, in what ways?

- What does it mean, and what difference does it make that it is Christ who chooses us first and not we who first choose Christ?

4. The Diaconate

- What makes a deacon? What can we learn from Jesus as Servant Lord about the ministry of a deacon?
- If we are all called to be engaged in serving others (*diakonia*), why should deacons be ordained?
- How do deacons carry on Christ's Servant Ministry?

5. The Cost of Ministry

- How can we differentiate "taking up your cross" versus being a self-styled martyr (developing a martyr syndrome)? What are the differences in attitude?
- How are Christ's instructions to the apostles related to taking up one's cross, surrendering one's willfulness?
- In what way does the news that we are reconciled make us a new creation? How in our own lives does this good news relate to taking up our own crosses?
- What is the relationship of "taking up your cross" to self-examination and increased self-awareness?

6. The Discipline of Ministry

- In what way do our lives reflect the new covenant of reconciliation?
- How do we reflect God's place in our lives? How do we feed Christ's sheep?
- In what way can we prepare ourselves and nourish ourselves for being ministers of the new covenant?

III Prayer and Ministry

1. The Prayer of Union

- With whom (or what) do we desire to become united in prayer of union?
- What are some ways we can open ourselves to, or increase our awareness of, the presence of God, Christ, within us?
- In what way can the prayer of silence, non-verbal or listening prayer be a prayer of union – with God – with others?

2. Prayer for One Another

- What are some ways we recognize the Holy Spirit within others, within creation, within ourselves?
- How can we increase our awareness of the needs of others, rather than our own projections of what we think they need?
- What are various types of intercessions used in your own verbal or non-verbal prayer for others, and for yourself? What has been most helpful?

3. The Faithfulness of God

- In what way can “sitting in solitude and silence” increase awareness of God’s faithfulness, God’s love?
- What are some of the ways we learn how to trust in God?
- What are some of the experiences you have had which have increased your faith and trust in God?