

Guide for Inquirers Groups Diocese of El Camino Real Commission on Ministry (COM)

Introduction to Inquirers Groups

After attending the Discovery Day, those who wish to continue in the formal discernment process in the Diocese of El Camino Real are invited to sign up for an Inquirers Group in their deanery. It is a twelve week program, which meets three times and is led by one or two conveners who are members of COM. Inquirers Groups are open to all interested lay people who have attended Day of Discovery, but are required for individuals considering Holy Orders.

This document is a guide for those who will be convening and attending the Inquirers Groups.

The three meetings over the 12-week period will ideally be scheduled four, eight, and twelve weeks after Discovery Day. The conveners will contact each person in the group to determine the dates, times, and locations of the three meetings.

Goals of Inquirers Groups:

- Emphasize the community aspect of discernment.
- Help Inquirers begin to articulate their sense of call in a new community.
- Help Inquirers both to feel safe and to stretch a little.
- Give Inquirers an opportunity to hear others' stories.
- Give Inquirers an opportunity to do a ministry project in their home parish.
- Give Inquirers a broader view of discernment and the process toward ordination or licensing.

Homework before the first meeting:

Inquirers will have been given copies of the "Spiritual Gifts Assessment" and "Qualities to Consider in the Discernment of God's Call" at the Day of Discovery. Please do the following before the first meeting:

1. Take the "Spiritual Gifts Assessment" and read the accompanying materials.
 - What did you find out about yourself?
 - What pleased you? Surprised you? Annoyed you?
 - Do you identify more with a gift that was not scored among your highest? Do you think it is a true gift or one you *wish* were yours?
 - Did you have any insights about your call to ministry?

2. Take the time to read "Qualities to Consider in the Discernment of God's Call" thoroughly. These are the attributes the COM is looking for in those who will continue toward ordination.
 - Reflect on how you see your "Gifts" from the Assessment in relation to these Qualities.
 - Each day, choose one of the "Qualities" and ponder it throughout the day, observing if and how it is reflected in your daily life.
 - Which Qualities seem perfectly clear to you and easy to articulate and which ones are concepts you have never considered?
 - Are there any Qualities you might wish to discuss with your rector or Spiritual Director?

3. Several times each week, read the Baptismal Covenant (pp.304-305, BCP) and the questions which are posed to the candidates (pp.302-303). Each time:
 - Choose a word or phrase that seems significant to you that day.
 - Pray with the word or phrase, using it as a guide to some brief and specific action you wish to take that day.
 - How does this help to expand and define your sense of call?

4. Read Mark 1-8:21
 - John the Baptist
 - The Baptism of Jesus
 - Calling the Disciples
 - Ministry of Jesus in and Around Galilee

When you reach a passage or story that touches you deeply, take the time to reflect on it as follows. (Or mark it to come back to later.)

- Re-read the passage and note the situation, actions, or words which call to you.
- With whom do you identify most in the passage?
- What themes or concerns stand out for you?
- How do these reflections affect your prayer? Your discernment?
- Are there any insights you wish to note?
- Are there any actions you wish to take as a result?

Repeat this exercise with subsequent passages as you continue to read from the Gospel of Mark.

Of course, please continue to discern in the ways you have been, with whatever methods are natural and helpful to you.

Inquirers Group, Meeting #1

Opening Prayer

Introductions

- Names and Churches
- How did you come to attend Discovery Day?

Lectio Divina - Call of Moses - Exodus 3:1-12a (p. 6)

Discernment Discussion for Inquirers

- Is this new for you? Going on for some time?
- How are you going about discerning God's will for you at this time in your life?
- Is your discernment mostly between you & God or are you discerning in community?
- Have you had a good, long conversation with your rector concerning your discernment?
- Have you had a good, long conversation with your significant other concerning your discernment?

Spiritual Gifts Assessment - Discussion

- What did you find out about yourself?
- What pleased you? Surprised you? Annoyed you?
- Do you identify more with a gift that was not scored among your highest? Do you think it is a true gift or one you *wish* were yours?
- How do you see your "Gifts" in relationship to the "Qualities to Consider in the Discernment of God's Call"?
- Did you have any insights about your call to ministry?

"Qualities to Consider in the Discernment of God's Call" - Discussion

- Which Qualities seemed perfectly clear to you and easy to articulate?
- Which Qualities were concepts you have never considered?
- What insights did you have as you pondered the Qualities and observed how they are reflected in your daily life?
- Which Qualities might you wish to discuss with your rector or Spiritual Director?

Baptismal Covenant

- How has frequent reading of and praying with the Baptismal Covenant expanded or helped to define your sense of call?

Introduce Concept of Ministry Project

- The Project should be of your own choosing.
- Your rector needs to approve your project.
- It should reflect the mission and goals of the Church.
- It should help you further explore your sense of call.
- The Project should be of short duration and have a definite end. It is not meant to become a permanent program of the parish.

Discussion of Mark 1-8:21

John the Baptist

The Baptism of Jesus

Calling the Disciples

Ministry of Jesus in and Around Galilee

- What themes or concerns have particularly caught your attention?
- Which person or people do you find yourself identifying with as you read this Gospel?
- Have you noted any particular insights or actions you wish to take as a result of your reading?

Present Homework for second meeting (see p. 7)

Closing Prayer

Homework for the Second Meeting

1. Begin to plan your Ministry Project. Please note that a Ministry Project is required for individuals considering Holy Orders.

- The Project should be of your own choosing.
- Your rector needs to approve your project.
- It should reflect the mission and goals of the Church.
- It should help you further explore your sense of call.
- The Project should be of short duration and have a definite end. It is not meant to become a permanent program of the parish.

2. Keep studying "Qualities to Consider in the Discernment of God's Call," the attributes the COM is looking for in those who will continue toward ordination.

- Continue to choose one of the Qualities each day and ponder it throughout the day, observing how it is reflected in your daily life.
- Note any Qualities you wish to discuss with your rector or another person.
- Continue to reflect on how you see your "Gifts" from the Assessment in relation to these qualities.

3. Read Mark 8:22-10:52

Jesus Teaches the Way of the Cross on the Road to Jerusalem..

When you reach a passage or story that touches you deeply, take the time to reflect on it as follows. (Or mark it to come back to later.)

- Re-read the passage and note the situations, actions, or words which call to you.
- With whom do you identify most in the passage?
- What themes or concerns stand out for you?
- How do these reflections affect your prayer? Your discernment?
- Are there any insights you wish to note?
- Are there any actions you wish to take as a result?

Repeat this exercise with subsequent passages as you continue to read from the Gospel of Mark.

Inquirers Group, Meeting #2

Opening prayer

Checking in: Highs and Lows

Lectio Divina twice (see pp. 9-10)

1. Deacon Ordination Service, Bishop's address at Examination, BCP p. 543
2. Priest Ordination Service, Bishop's address at Examination, BCP p.531

Discuss Lay Ministry Licenses for those whose call may be to a special lay ministry.

Inquirers discuss specifics of their Ministry Projects

"Qualities to Consider in the Discernment of God's Call" - Discussion

- What insights did you have as you pondered the Qualities and observed how they are reflected in your daily life?
- Which Qualities might you wish to discuss with your rector or Spiritual Director?

Discussion of Mark 8:22-10:52

Jesus Teaches the Way of the Cross on the Road to Jerusalem..

- What themes or concerns have particularly caught your attention?
- Which person or people do you find yourself identifying with as you read this Gospel?
- Have you noted any particular insights or actions you wish to take as a result of your reading?

Discussion of tools for discerning:

- "Qualities to Consider in the Discernment of God's Call"
- Spiritual Direction
- Journaling
- Bible Reading/Daily Office
- Prayer and meditation
- Ignatian Guidelines for Discernment
- Develop awareness of tools on the internet

Information on the Process Toward Ordination:

Discerning Paths of Ministry and Steps Toward Ordination.

They may be found on the Diocesan Website: <http://www.realepiscopal.org/>
Under "Resources" (top right), choose "Leadership," and then under "Leadership Section Menu," choose "Commission on Ministry." Scroll down to find these documents.

Introduce homework for the third meeting (p.12)

Closing Prayer

Homework for the Third Meeting

1. Continue planning/implementation of Ministry Project.
2. Read ordination of a Deacon (pp. 537-547, BCP) several times each week, with particular emphasis on ordinations vows, (pp. 543-544). Pray with these vows.
3. Read ordination of a Priest (pp. 525-535, BCP) several times each week, with particular emphasis on ordinations vows, (pp. 531-532). Pray with these vows
3. Mark 10:53-16:20
 - Jesus' Ministry in Jerusalem
 - The Passion
 - The Resurrection

When you reach a passage or story that touches you deeply, take the time to reflect on it as follows. (Or mark it to come back to later.)

- Re-read the passage and note the situations, actions, or words which call to you.
- With whom do you identify most in the passage?
- What themes or concerns stand out for you?
- How do these reflections affect your prayer? Your discernment?
- Are there any insights you wish to note?
- Are there any actions you wish to take as a result?

Repeat this exercise with subsequent passages as you continue to read from the Gospel of Mark.

4. You will be given an opportunity at our last meeting to tell your call story.

Inquirers Group, Meeting #3

Opening Prayer

Inquirers discuss the status of their Ministry Projects

Note: must be completed before DDC can be formed

Discussion of Mark 10:53-16:20

Jesus' Ministry in Jerusalem

The Passion

The Resurrection

- What themes or concerns have particularly caught your attention?
- Which person or people do you find yourself identifying with as you read this Gospel?
- Have you noted any particular insights or actions you wish to take as a result of your reading?

Call Stories

Each person will have an opportunity to tell his/her call story

Next steps for those wishing to enter the process toward ordination

- Conveners distribute "Deanery Discernment Committee" sheet.
- Finish Ministry project, if not complete.
- Seek information on the process in *Discerning Paths of Ministry and Steps Toward Ordination*, found on ECR Website: <http://www.realepiscopal.org/> (see page 9 of this Guide).
- Have intentional conversation with rector, if not done already.
- If your rector supports your call, ask him/her to send a short letter of introduction to the Bishop.
- Make appointment to talk with Bishop.

Close with worship:

Holy Communion if a convener is a priest, otherwise Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer or Compline.