



A SPIRITUAL FORMATION JOURNEY FOR LAY LEADERSHIP SESSION 1



1. **Print out *My Personal Faith Journey* and at the same time work through *Slides for My Personal Faith Journey* using the notes for each slide below.**

SLIDE 1: MY JOURNEY OF FAITH

As baptised and confirmed Anglicans we are all on the same level playing field, even if the position we are playing on the field is different. We all have a journey of faith from the time we were born, or even conceived, to where we are today. So take some time to look back at your life and think about the earliest memory you have of Jesus or God and then use Handout 1 to document (in words or pictures) this. Did a parent, family member or friend introduce you to the concept of God? Was it perhaps in Sunday School that you first heard the word God or Jesus? Everyone's story is different. What is your story?

SLIDE 2: JESUS, THE WATER OF LIFE

Jesus has given us sustenance for our spiritual journey throughout our life which has enabled us to have a relationship with God. At times we might have chosen not to drink of the Water of Life, at times we drank heartily. But at all times God has been with us, in the dry times and the times of rich relationship.

SLIDE 3 & 4: MY JOURNEY OF FAITH DRINKING THE WATER OF LIFE

Sit quietly again and go back in your memory. Continue from that first memory of God through your stages of life and think about your relationship with Jesus through those stages. Document in words or pictures significant events or memories. As a young child it might have been easy to believe in God but what about when you became a teenager? What happened then? Did a significant event as a young adult trigger a better or weaker relationship with Jesus? What happened when you fell in love? Did that person replace God? How was your relationship with God during the very difficult times of your life? How is it now? No answer is right or wrong. Every answer is part of your special story.

SLIDE 5: MY JOURNEY OF FAITH SHARING THE WATER OF LIFE

It will be useful to share what you have discovered about yourself with someone you feel comfortable with. Do not judge yourself and ask no judgement either. Again, this is your story, with all its ups and downs. And that is ok. That is good, because by being part of the journey now, you are indicating that you want your relationship with God to continue.

2. **Discerning our Spiritual Gifts**

Now we are going to do an exercise that will help us discern our spiritual gifts, so that as we journey further, we know where to focus our energies. Print the document *Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire* and follow the instructions in bold below.

Many of us are active in the church. Some are part of the Welcome or Wellness Team, other teach in Sunday School or Confirmation, some serve as parish councillors, lay ministers or church wardens. Still others are sacristans or readers, the list goes on. Each of these ministries is important, whether upfront or behind the scenes and each is



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necessary for a happy healthy effective church. But not everyone is involved. Perhaps some of you are nervous to commit, being concerned whether or not you have the ability to fulfil that ministry/task/service. That's ok, stay on the journey, see where it leads.

You will hopefully find out whether you are doing what God has equipped you to do or be. But the opposite could also happen. For example, if you are part of the Readers Guild and get nervous and sick to your stomach whenever it is your turn to read, perhaps this ministry isn't for you. But you might realise that you feel deeply the pain that Mrs X is experiencing in her life and would love to visit her and pray with her. Wow, you have the gift of compassion. Yes, you might discover that the ministry you are involved in is not actually right for you and that you are better suited to another area of service. You might even discover that for now your time should be used serving God through your immediate family, especially if you have young children or a sick family member.

Print *Spiritual Gifts Questionnaire* and work through the document as follows:

2.1 Work through the 30 questions on **page 1** fairly quickly without thinking too deeply about each question. Mark with an X one of the following answers: 'YES', 'NO' or 'UNSURE'. Put **one answer** only for each question.

2.2 Staying on **page 1**, go to the 'ADD' column and fill in your score for each question as follows:

YES: 3

NO: 1

UNSURE: 2

2.3 Go to **page 2** and fill in your scores on **Table 1**. For example, if you said YES to question 1, fill in the score of '3' in the block on the table marked 1 (top left hand corner). If you said NO to question 2 (the next block along), then you would fill in a score of '1'. If you said UNSURE to question 3, you would fill in the score of '2'. And so on. Do this until you have a score for all 30 questions.

2.4 Still on **page 2**, add up the columns in **Table 1** and put the score under 'total' for columns A to J. Questions 1, 11 and 21 are column A; questions 2, 12 and 22 are column B etc.

2.5 Still on **page 2**, circle the alphabetical letters on **Table 1** that correspond to the three highest scores you have in the 'total' line of the table.

2.6 Now go **Table 2** and circle the same alphabetical letters which had your three highest scores. This will show the gifts that your scores suggest that you may have.



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2.7 On **Table 3**, fill in those three gifts. Think carefully about the definitions for those three gifts. Do you think this is accurate for you? It will be useful to share what you have discovered about yourself with someone you feel comfortable with and knows you well. Do they agree that these three gifts fit your abilities and personality?

3. Revd Tembeka now summarises **Session 1** and introduces us to the last two documents: *Parish Pastoral Standards* and *Guidelines for Growth in the Christian Faith as Anglican Lay Leaders*.

Looking Back: The purpose of this journey was described as a personal spiritual transformation leading to a closer relationship with God, self, and others. The expected outcome is spiritual growth, guiding the service provided in the ministry of each lay leader or parishioner.

Faith Journey exercise: The personal faith journey exercise afforded the participants an opportunity to reflect on their own faith journey from the beginning, through the different stages of life to where they are currently. The different, unique stories made each participant aware of where they are at the commencement of this journey together. For instance, I narrated my own story of how the book of Proverbs became an anchor for all the stages of my spiritual life. As a child of God, I am guided by the do's and don'ts in it.

The Spiritual Gifts exercise: This exercise raised each participant's awareness of the unique spiritual gifts that they have been endowed with. This journey will enable focus and sharpening of these specific gifts to be used for the greater glory of God.

The Parish Pastoral Standards: The Parish Pastoral Standards document was reviewed in order to provide clarity on the expected behaviour and conduct of Lay Leadership in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

Guidelines for Growth in the Christian Faith as Anglican Lay Leaders: This document was also briefly discussed to remind participants of their commitment as Christians generally, and as Anglicans specifically.

It is true that although our faith journeys are different and unique, they have a definite impact on our Spiritual gifts. In order to use these gifts optimally, we need to embrace both the Pastoral Standards, and the Guidelines for Growth in our service to the Parish. The relationship between Self, God, and others is strengthened and guided by all these resources.