

Discussion Questions

Lesson One: Grateful Enjoyment

1. The Bible says that God has made us rulers of creation. Yet we also recognize that creation is a gift from God that we are asked to care for -- to be stewards of -- so that those who come after us can enjoy it as well. How do you understand the differences between ownership (dominion) and stewardship?
2. Does it change the way you think about your actions if you see care of creation as a spiritual practice instead of environmentalism, which is purely goal-oriented? How so? Or, why not?
3. What are some specific actions you can take to be a better steward of God's creation? What are some things your church community can do?

Lesson Two: Wonderfully Restored

1. How do you experience Christ's presence in the sacraments? How do you experience Christ's presence in the people you encounter? How are these two things related?
2. Incarnation is a messy business. The incarnate Jesus cried and bled and got dusty and tired, just like all of us. How does Jesus' incarnation challenge you to get your hands dirty in ministry?
3. Our culture tends to treat the poor and marginalized as people to avoid and diminish, and yet the teaching of the church says just the opposite. How does the church's understanding shape your life as a Christian and a citizen?

Lesson Three: Strengthened For Your Service

1. We are accustomed to praying to God the Father or God the Son. Do you often invoke the Holy Spirit in your prayers? Why or why not?
2. Some people say "The Holy Spirit was here" when we are pleased with the outcome or a situation. How can we tell our own emotions or feelings apart from the presence of God's Spirit? When might they be the same or different?
3. What spiritual gifts do you think God has given you? Are there any that you wish you had?

Lesson Four: Proclaim to All People

1. Who was the first person to share the good news of Jesus Christ with you? How did they do this? What was it like for you?
2. Have you ever shared the Good News of God in Christ with someone else? How did you do it? What was it like?
3. What are some barriers to sharing the good news? How can we overcome those barriers?

The Takeaway

Lesson One: Grateful Enjoyment

Belief in the Trinity is fundamental to Christianity. We profess that God is three in one: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Though it's hard to wrap our brains around this concept, shouldn't try to oversimplify it, because when we do, we make mistakes -- we deny the three persons that make God, or we try to make God into three separate gods. The Trinity is a mystery to be explored and engaged; not a math problem that we can solve. Belief in the Trinity has implications for how we live. We proclaim that the Trinity was present in creation: God the creator created the world; Jesus, the eternal Word, was present, and the Holy Spirit hovered over the waters. In the creation story, God says after each step in creating the world, "It was good." This earth and everything in it is good. Humanity's role in creation is to tend and to keep it. We have abused our power, exploiting the world for our use. When we treat creation as disposable, we neglect what God has called us to do. We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. When we use resources that are meant to be shared -- when we live every person for themselves, not giving thought to those who live around us or who will come after us -- we fail in our ordained role. Awareness of our role as stewards and of the impact of our actions on others should shape our daily living: what we buy; how far we drive; whether we buy reusable things. The BCP includes prayers for the right use of creation -- reminders that we're responsible for tending creation.

Lesson Two: Wonderfully Restored

Incarnation: a theological term from a Latin word for "enfleshed." 1 John: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Jesus was present from the moment of creation. The Message: "And the Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood." God has become human in Jesus Christ and has known every part of the human experience except that he never sinned. As a result of the incarnation, we understand that the material world is good. God would not have become human if the material world was evil. God loves our world and loves us, including our bodies. In our baptismal vows, we promise to "Seek and serve Christ in all persons." We say *all* persons, not just people we like, know, aren't scared of, etc.. Humanity is special to God; Jesus became human. We want to treasure other humans and treat them well. We understand incarnation in the following way: "If we can't see Jesus in the beggar at the door of the church, we won't see Jesus in the golden chalice." The reverse is true: seeing and knowing Jesus through the sacraments helps us experience Jesus in the world around us. This is the consequence of Jesus' becoming human, sharing our human experience, and dying and rising for us. God loves us so much that he wanted to move into our neighborhood.

Lesson Three: Strengthened For Your Service

The story of Jesus continues beyond his resurrection. After Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples, they became able to proclaim the faith in a way that the whole world could understand. The Holy Spirit is God's abiding presence with us, continues and abides in the church and in the world. The Holy Spirit is with the disciples of Jesus here and now, and that it gives us spiritual gifts. We hear in Romans and Ephesians about different ways in which the Holy Spirit can empower us to act in the world in new and different ways (e.g. leadership, generosity, prophesy, etc..) The Holy Spirit empowers us to serve God. **Continued on the reverse side.**

The Takeaway (Continued)

Lesson Three continued: Remember the following things about spiritual gifts: 1. Everyone gets them, and these gifts are not just for us, but for the common good. We are empowered to succeed to build up the kingdom of God. 2. All spiritual gifts are equal. You might aspire to a different gift, but none are better or worse than others. 3. They are free from God. We can't earn them. We can't get ones we'd like better instead. We can, however, learn about them. We can listen to one another, scripture, God speaking in our lives in order to learn how to exercise these gifts. We need to decide how we will use our gifts to serve God in God's kingdom. There's a process of discernment and resources by which we may discover how to use our spiritual gifts more fully. To use them properly, we need to examine them fully.

Lesson Four: Proclaim to All People

We enjoy our faith because others have shared their faith with us. The process of sharing Jesus' gospel started with the Apostles, and eventually, someone shared it with us. We have all received the good news of God in Christ, and we are commanded to share it. That's called evangelism. How do we understand what this good news is? 1. Steep ourselves in scripture so that we learn it well, through time. 2. Pray our community's prayers. This is a way to steep ourselves in the good news of God. 3. Ask ourselves at the end of each day: "What is the good news of Jesus that has been given to us?" Listen for God's presence in our daily lives in order to recognize God's good news for us. Once we understand the good news of Jesus in our lives, our next step is to share that story. We do this because we want other people to know this joy, and because the scriptures command us to do it. Episcopal church is trying to change our approach to evangelism. One reason that some people avoid evangelism is because others have done it badly: "X is an evangelist and he or she told people they were going to hell because they didn't believe Y!" Just because other people have done it badly doesn't mean we shouldn't do it. It just means that we should do it well; be particularly loving as we share the good news. Evangelism gets easier with practice. The more we do it, the easier it gets. What are some good ways to share our faith? Invite people to come to church with us (without being pushy). Another way is to do good work in the world, or refuse to participate in wrongdoing, and to tell people why act as we do, We can offer to pray for/with people (and then do it!) Fortunately, our job is not to convert people. The Holy Spirit works in people's hearts to do tht. Our job is to proclaim the good news of God in Jesus Christ – to bear Christ's love for us and for others in the world.

Walk in Love 5:

The Trinitarian Life

With Scott Gunn and Melody Shobe

Participant's Guide

Welcome!

What makes Episcopalians unique among other Christians?

The basics may be similar, scripture, tradition, practice, etc., but there are certain nuances that make Anglican Christians different. Episcopal priests Scott Gunn and Melody Shobe unpack them in these four insightful video presentations:

- 1) Grateful Enjoyment (God the Father and Creation Care)
- 2) Wonderfully Restored (God the Son and Incarnation)
- 3) Strengthened for Your Service (God the Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts)
- 4) Proclaim to All People (Spiritual Practices, Knowing Your Story, Telling Your Story)

This course is ideal for those who are new to the Episcopal faith as well as veterans looking to brush up on their knowledge.

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