

Ministry of All the Baptized

Facilitator Guide



A curriculum developed by the Lay Committee of the Commission on Ministry



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Introduction

This facilitator guide is designed for a four-session series of about an hour per session. It can also be delivered in sequence as a half-day retreat. Additional components in this curriculum include: [Ministry of All the Baptized Handouts](#), [Ministry of All the Baptized Slides](#), and [Spiritual Gifts Inventory](#).

This four-part exploration of the Ministry of All the Baptized grows out of Bishop Singh's vision that all members of the Diocese—both lay and ordained—discover their spiritual gifts, discern where their gifts can grow into ministry, and actively pursue ministry as an integral part of a life lived with Christ. At Baptism, each new Christian is gifted with grace and forgiveness. We are called to respond to this gift with a life of prayer, study, worship and service that participates actively in Christ's work of healing, reconciliation and transformation.

This exploration focuses specifically on the ministry of the laity. As the most numerous members of the Diocese, the laity has tremendous power to be God's eyes, ears, hands, voice and heart in the world. With an eye toward building up the ministry of the laity, this exploration has two goals: First to enliven lay ministry within the diocese, and second to move lay ministry from a center within the church, to a primary focus in the world.



Session 1: How are we called to ministry?

Participants are asked to explore the notion of ministry. For many lay people, ministry is the job of ordained members of the Church. Lay people may “help out”, “volunteer” or otherwise participate, but this is somehow different from the work of ordained people. The first session explores the definition of ministry and highlights that Scripture is clear that ministry is for all members of the Family of God.



Session 2: What gifts has God given us for ministry?

Provides a vehicle for participants to begin identifying the gifts each has been given for ministry. It uses a gifts inventory that focuses on 20 spiritual gifts that are described in Scripture. These are certainly not the only gifts for ministry and each has many subtle shades. However, the inventory will stimulate thinking, discussion and further exploration.

Session 3: Where are we ministering today?

Asks where we are currently ministering. It begins by exploring the Episcopal call to ministry in the Baptismal Covenant and the focus of lay ministry in the World as outlined in our Catechism. Both of these uniquely Episcopal perspectives focus us out of ourselves, out of the Church and toward the World. The lesson goes on to charge participants to consider those things they do that they see as ministry.

Session 4: What changes when you see your life as ministry?

Challenges participants to re-envision ministry. Ministry is not just another item to add to our long list of things-to-do. Rather, it is a spiritual discipline and way of life that can transform even the most mundane tasks into works of reconciliation and transformation when they are done in the name of Christ.

Each session has five parts: Gathering > Exploring > Concluding > Preparing > Closing.





Session 1: How are we called to ministry?

In this session, we explore the idea of ministry. What is it? Who is called to it? What do we believe about ministry? What did Jesus and the early church believe about ministry?

Gathering

The Lord be with you. *And also with you.* Let us pray...Gracious God, you have called us in baptism to ministry and you have endowed us all with the necessary gifts to carry out your mission in the world. We pray now for the guidance of your Holy Spirit as we embark on a journey to discover our own unique gifts. Help us to discern thereby, the focus of our individual ministries in our church, our families, our workplace and the world beyond our doorstep. This we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Exploring

Break congregation into small groups of three or four. Pose the following question and allow five to ten minutes of discussion. Following the small-group discussion, invite each group to share the elements of their definition. If the group prefers larger group discussions, pose the question to everyone and allow people to contribute. In this case, try to hear from everyone.

Question: What comes to mind when you hear the word "ministry?" Who comes to mind when I hear the word "ministry?"



As the facilitator records the elements of definitions, question speakers about whether these are aspects of the ordained or lay roles in the church. The goal here is to draw from the discussion the idea that lay folk have a role in ministry as well.

Next consider what the Bible says about ministry. Choose two to four versus upon which to focus. Assign each small group a Bible verse (or read verses in turn with the whole group) from the list below. Look up, read and discuss its assigned verse toward addressing the following question. When group discussion concludes, have each group share their verse (read it aloud for the whole) and their reflections on it. Be sure that each group shares an answer to the question posed.

Matthew 5:13-16	We are salt of the Earth and light of the world
Matthew 20:26-28	Servant of all
Romans 12:3-21	Many members, one body
Ephesians 2:10	Created for good works
James 2:14-26	Faith without works is dead

Question: Based on the readings, how did the biblical writers think about ministry?



Scribe thoughts about the Biblical meaning of ministry on newsprint. When each small group has spoken, as the group as a whole what overall image of ministry emerges from this study? If answers are slow to come, ask what words or phrases stand out in the contributions of each small group. Use these as a starting point.

If there's time, compare and contrast the group definitions and Biblical themes.



Concluding

When discussion wanes or time grows short, ask individuals to reflect on any insights or important learnings from the session.



Preparing

Use the synthesis of learnings to segue into the idea that one way to identify the unique ministry that God has prepared for each one of us is to look at the gifts we have been given.



Closing

Close with extemporaneous prayer that summarizes the insights and learnings.





Session 2: What gifts has God given us for ministry?

In this session, we explore the idea that God has given us gifts with the hope that we will use them for ministry. What are they? How might they be used?



Gathering

The Lord be with you. *And also with you.* Let us pray. Holy Father, strengthen us each in our vocation and ministry. Help us to see how we need each other, and to share the talents and abilities you give to us. Guide us to recognize our skills and talents as gifts from you. And make us willing to offer them freely for your work in the world. **Amen.**



Exploring

Read aloud 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 or Ephesians 4:11-14 or both.

For some people, gifts are clear and easy to identify. For others, gifts are subtle. Some people recognize their gifts easily. Others may not realize that they have gifts to offer. We will explore the gifts we have as individuals today using a modified version of *Finding Your Spiritual Gifts*, an inventory instrument created by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.



Distribute the [Spiritual Gifts Inventory](#). Provide instructions for completing and scoring it. Remind participants that this is personal and can be private. Invite participants to be honest. Note that there are three questions associated with each gift. The first focuses on how we see ourselves. The second addresses how we share with others because a gift that we are not ready to share cannot yet be part of our ministry. And the third reflects on how others respond to us. All three elements—self-perception, sharing, and community—are important to discernment of gifts.

When the inventory task is complete, invite individuals to share any confirmations or surprises that emerged from their results. Scribe some of the gifts that are shared.



Be sure to emphasize that there are many more gifts and each of these gifts has many subtle shades (see [Appendix A: 20 Spiritual Gifts and their Biblical References](#)). By necessity, a survey instrument is a coarse filter. It is meant to start a reflection that continues throughout our lives.

If time allows, invite the group to brainstorm about the gifts present in the congregation as a whole. Steer away from things that are centered on high-profile individuals (e.g., we have great music because we have a talented and energetic choir director, or we have a great study program because our priest is very knowledgeable, or we have a great outreach to the hungry because we have a deacon who is a great cook). Instead, push toward things that emerge from the culture of the congregation (e.g., we are welcoming because we all commit to wearing name tags so that newcomers can get to know us easily or we have a great study program because all ages have committed to participating and sharing in leadership). Scribe the corporate gifts.





Concluding

When the discussion wanes, invite the group to look at the lists of gifts that were identified and pick out areas of particular strength among those gathered.



Preparing

Invite the group to think about how these strengths can be applied toward doing God's work both in the church but with special emphasis in the wider world—where most people actually spend most of their time.



Closing

Close with extemporaneous prayer that highlights the gifts offered both individually and as a group. Pray that they may be put to work in the world.





Session 3: Where are we ministering today?

In this session, we inventory the places that we already know we are doing God’s work in the church and—more importantly—in the world.



Gathering

Pray Romans 12:6-8



Exploring

At our baptism, we are welcomed into the Family of God. In that welcome, we are gifted with grace and forgiveness. We are also called to be God’s representatives in the world and to help carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation.



Introduce the Baptismal Covenant (*Book of Common Prayer*, pages 304-305).

Focus specifically on the vows that we take as we make and renew this covenant. Specifically, we promise “To seek and serve Christ in all persons loving your neighbor as yourself and [striving] for justice and peace among all people and [respecting] the dignity of every human being.”

In small groups (or as a whole), invite individuals to make two lists of their current activities that they recognize as ministries. One list will be those things that they do within the context of the church. The second list will be those things that they do in the world. After a period of small group discussion, invite people to share the contents of their lists. Scribe.



Introduce the Catechism teachings on ministry (*Book of Common Prayer*, pages 855-856).

Consider the balance between “church” ministries and “world” ministries for the laity in the group. How does this balance seem to fit with the understanding about ministry that we developed from scripture? From the teaching of the church (catechism)? Discuss.



Next, ask each individual in turn (go around the room) to list one activity that s/he does regularly but that doesn’t seem like a ministry. Now ask the whole group to reflect on why some things feel like ministry and others don’t.



Scribe the attributes that make an activity ministry. How well do these ideas conform to our Biblical theology of ministry? Make sure to note which of these ministries are directly linked to the church (for example, lay reader, pastoral visitor, choir, and altar guild) and those that are in the world (for example, paid work, volunteer work, and caring for others).



Save or transcribe the lists of ministries and not-ministries for the next session.



Concluding

As discussion wanes, ask individuals to share insights or learnings.

Preparing

There are things we do which are clearly ministries. They fit into the familiar categories we have from scripture. There are many other things we do in our daily lives which we don't recognize as ministry. In fact, we may spend most of our time doing things which don't feel like ministry. Next week we will reflect on how some of these works can be transformed into the ministry of God's love in the world.

Closing

Close with extemporaneous prayer that celebrates the ministries to the World that were highlighted and asks for renewed strength to be God's eyes, ears, hands and heart in the world.





Session 4: What changes when you see your life as ministry?

In this session, we explore the idea that ministry isn't just a set of church-approved or Bible-approved activities, it is a spiritual attitude and discipline.



Gathering

Gracious God, you call us to new life in Jesus Christ and you give us gifts to use in the service of your whole world. Fill our minds and hearts with your Holy Spirit so that we may see our lives as opportunities to be your agents of love in a broken world. **Amen.**



Exploring

Post the list of ministries and not-ministries from last time.

Read aloud James 2:14-26 or Mark 4:30-32 or both.

One way to think about ministry is that ministry is another item we have to add to our over-committed lives. An alternative is that ministry—service to God—is a way of life and a spiritual discipline that we choose to adopt in response to God's gift of grace and forgiveness.



Invite people to think about one of the ministries that they identified in the last session and consider in what ways it is "just another thing to do" or part of a spiritual discipline that includes intention, prayer, reflection and Sabbath (rest and self-care). For most people, most ministries will have elements of both attitudes. Encourage people to explore both sides and share reflections.



Now return to the lists of not-ministries from Session 3. Encourage people to choose one of the not-ministries that they listed and ask how it would be transformed if it became part of an intentional spiritual attitude of service to God and to our neighbors.



Process note: Encourage discussion to be as concrete and specific as possible. What would you do differently? How would you interact with people differently? How would the parameters of your activity change? How would the activity be transformed? Share learnings.

Concluding

As discussion wanes, ask individuals identify an activity that they already do (e.g., a job, a hobby, a task at home or in the community—but NOT something in church) that they don't now consider a ministry but might become ministry. Have individuals reflect on how they might adjust the activity to transform it into ministry. Finally, ask what roadblocks hold individuals back from making this transformation. Invite anyone who is willing to share an insight or example.



Closing

Holy One, you have called us in Baptism to be your children and gave us work to do in the Church and in the World. Help us to recognize and give thanks for the gifts you have given us. Help us also to identify those places and times where we may use our gifts to spread your love in the World. **Amen**





Appendix A: 20 Spiritual Gifts and their Biblical References

Administration: the gift that enables a believer to formulate, direct, and carry out plans necessary to fulfill a purpose. Biblical References: I Corinthians 12:28, Acts 14:23.

Artistry: the gift that gives the believer the skill of creating artistic expressions that produce a spiritual response of strength and inspiration. Biblical References: Exodus 31:1-11, Psalm 149:3a.

Discernment: the gift that motivates a believer to seek God's will and purpose and apply that understanding to individual and congregational situations. Biblical References: John 16:6-15, Romans 9:1, I Corinthians 2:9-16.

Evangelism: the gift that moves believers to reach nonbelievers in such a way that they are baptized and become active members of the Christian community. Biblical References: Matthew 28:16-20, Ephesians 4:11-16, Acts 2:36-40.

Exhortation: the gift that moves the believer to reach out with Christian love and presence to people in personal conflict of facing a spiritual void. Biblical References: John 14:1, II Timothy 1:16-18, III John 5-8.

Faith: the gift that gives a believer the eyes to see the Spirit at work and the ability to trust the Spirit's leading without indication of where it all might lead. Biblical References: Genesis 12:1-4a, Mark 5:25-34, I Thessalonians 1:8-10.

Giving: the gift that enables a believer to recognize God's blessings and to respond to those blessings by giving generously and sacrificially of one's resources (time, talent, and treasure). Biblical References: II Corinthians 9:6-15, Luke 21:1-4.

Hospitality: the gift that causes a believer to joyfully welcome and receive guests and those in need of food and lodging. Biblical References: Romans 12:13, Romans 16:23a, Luke 10:38.

Intercession: the gift that enables a believer to pray with the certainty that prayer is heard and when requests are made, answers will come. Biblical References: Matthew 6:6-15, Luke 11:1-10, Ephesians 6:18.

Knowledge: the gift that drives a person to learn, analyze and uncover new insights with regard to the Bible and faith. Biblical References: I Corinthians 12:8; I Corinthians 14:6, Romans 12:2.

Leadership: the gift that gives a believer the confidence to step forward, give direction and provide motivation to fulfill a dream or complete a task. Biblical References: Romans 12:8, John 21:15-17, II Timothy 4:1-5.

Mercy: the gift that motivates a believer to feel deeply for those in physical, spiritual, or emotional need and then act to meet that need. Biblical References: Luke 7:12-15, Luke 10:30-37, Matthew 25:34-36.

Music—Vocal: the gift that gives a believer the capability and opportunity to present personal witness and inspiration to others through singing. Biblical References: Psalm 96:1-9, Psalm 100:1-2, Psalm 149:1-2.

Music—Instrumental: the gift that inspires a believer to express personal faith and provide inspiration and comfort through the playing of a musical instrument. Biblical References: Psalm 33:1-5, Psalm 150, I Samuel 16:14-23.

Pastoring (Shepherding): the gift that gives a believer the confidence, capability and compassion to provide spiritual leadership and direction for individuals or groups of believers. Biblical References: I Timothy 4:12-16, I Timothy 3:1-13, II Timothy 4:1-2.



Service (Helps): the gift that enables a believer to work gladly behind the scenes in order that God's work is fulfilled.

Biblical References: Luke 23:50-54, Romans 16:1-16, Philippians 2:19-23.

Skilled Craft: the gift that enables a believer to create, build, maintain or repair items used within the church. Biblical

References: Exodus 30:1-6, Exodus 31:3-5, Ezekiel 27:4-11.

Teaching: the gift that enables a believer to communicate a personal understanding of the Bible and faith in such a way

that it becomes clear and understood by others. Biblical References: I Corinthians 12:28, Matthew 5:1-12, Acts 18:24-48.

Wisdom: the gift that allows the believer to sort through opinions, facts and thoughts in order to determine what

solution would be best for the individual believer or the community of believers. Biblical References: I Corinthians 2:6-

13, James 3:13-18, II Chronicles 1:7-11.

Writing: the gift that gives a believer the ability to express truth in a written form; a form that can edify, instruct and

strengthen the community of believers. Biblical References: I John 2:1-6, 12-14, I Timothy 3:14-15,

Jude 3.