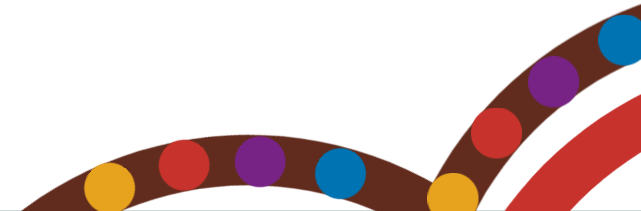


Welcome to POINT Training



PRESBYTERIANS ORGANIZED IN
Nurture & Teaching



Welcome to POINT Training

Our Schedule for the Day

- 12 pm – Welcome and Devotional
- 12:10 pm – Follow Me Overview and A Look Inside *Honor God's Diversity* unit
- 1:05 pm – Feedback and Conversation:
Now and What's Next for Christian Education
- 1:45 pm – New Resources for your congregation
- 3 pm – Presbyterian Mission Agency resources with
Stephanie Fritz from the Office of Christian Formation



Welcome to POINT Training

Announcements

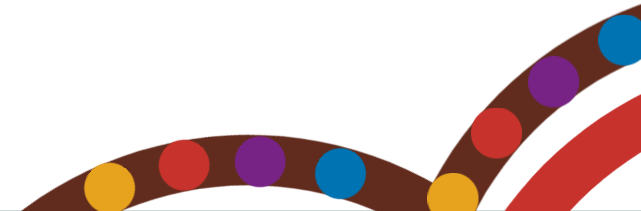
- Take breaks and eat when you need to.
- Slides will be in the POINT Resource Library by the end of this week.
- POINT Summary 2022 is in the POINT Resource Library now. You can take this back to your presbytery.
- This training is being recorded. You can access the recording next week via the POINT Facebook group.
- If you don't know about our Facebook Group or the POINT Resource Library, our POINT FAQ video link is in the chat.



Devotional



PRESBYTERIANS ORGANIZED IN
Nurture & Teaching





Hope

POINT Devotional Time

February 2, 2022

OPENING RITUAL

L: Where do we hear of hope?

P: Those who place their hope in the Lord

L: Will renew their strength and mount up with wings like eagles.

P: Surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,

L: plans for your welfare and not for harm,

P: to give you a future with hope.

L: On this day, let us find ways to hear hope.

Hearing Hope Through Music

- **What songs or hymns give you hope?**
- **What songs help you remember that God is with you and you are not alone?**

Those Who Place Their Hope...

**Those who place their hope in
God
will renew their strength
with joy
they will fly with eagle's wings
and go higher
they will run and not be weary
they will sing and not get tired
Teach me Lord, to always put
my hope in You.**

**Los que esperan en Jehová
nuevas fuerzas tendrán
volarán con poder como
águilas.
//Correrán sin desmayarse
cantarán sin fatigar
Oh Señor enséñame
en Ti a esperar.//**



Closing Litany

One: When we feel lost,

Many: hope is the rope

One: helping us find our way home.

One: When things are beyond our control,

Many: hope is the rope

One: keeping us secure.

One: In the darkness of the night,

Many: hope is the rope

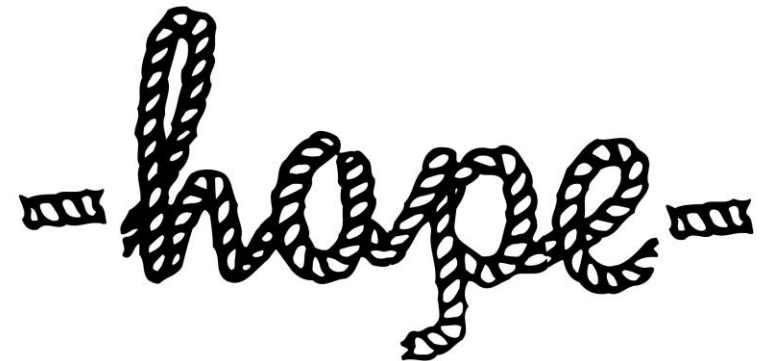
One: giving us something to hold on to.

One: When we feel alone,

Many: hope is the rope,

One: with strands that bind us together,
helping us comfort and strengthen one another.

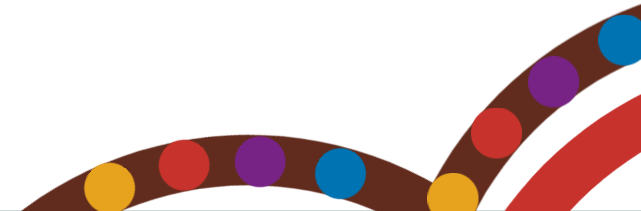
Many: Thank God for the gift of hope.



Follow Me Overview



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A living faith is so much more than simply believing in God. Jesus called all sorts of people to follow him to God, showing concrete ways to love God and one another. When we do these actions together, faith develops, lives change, and communities transform.



- 36 units, over three years, are based on practices Jesus did, embodied, and taught his followers.
- Each session explores an aspect of the practice through Bible study, how it's been practiced through time, and how practiced today.
- Personal, communal, worship, and global practices are included.
- Units are four sessions in length, except for a six-session unit each year, ideal to be used during Lent.

YEAR 1 PRACTICES (2021–2022)	YEAR 2 PRACTICES (2022–2023)	YEAR 3 PRACTICES (2023–2024)
<i>Published July 2021</i> Follow Jesus Welcome All Confess	<i>Available July 2022</i> Honor Sabbath Pray Forgive	<i>Available July 2023</i> Take Up Your Cross Worship God Feed Others
<i>Published October 2021</i> Hope Baptize Live in Community	<i>Available October 2022</i> Go Tell Lament Do Justice	<i>Available October 2023</i> Do Not Fear Overcome Evil with Good Comfort Those Who Mourn
<i>Published January 2022</i> Practice Spiritual Disciplines <i>(six sessions, ideal for Lent)</i> Practice Joy Honor God's Diversity	<i>Available January 2023</i> Love God, Neighbor, Enemy <i>(six sessions, ideal for Lent)</i> Celebrate Communion Cross Borders	<i>Available January 2024</i> Clothe Yourself with Love <i>(six sessions, ideal for Lent)</i> Choose Whom You Will Serve Love Yourself
<i>Available April 2022</i> Sing a New Song Make Peace Practice Generosity	<i>Available April 2023</i> Make Disciples Care for Creation Walk Humbly	<i>Available April 2024</i> Heal the Sick Give Thanks Speak the Truth



Components

- **Congregational Guide**
- Colorful infographic poster (18" x 24") for each unit (set of 12 for each year) and a set of 12 Bible Basic posters (available separately)
- **Young Children Leader's Guide** (ages 3–5)
- **Multiage Children Leader's Guide** (ages 6–10)
- **Youth Leaders Guide** (ages 11–18)
- **Adult Leader's Guide**
- **Adult Reflection Guide**, which can be used alone or in group study





Inside the Congregational Guide

- The Foundational Essay
- Worship Helps
- Café Discussion Guides
- Intergenerational Session
- Curriculum Connections
- Practicing the Practice at Home
- Children's Worship Leaflets



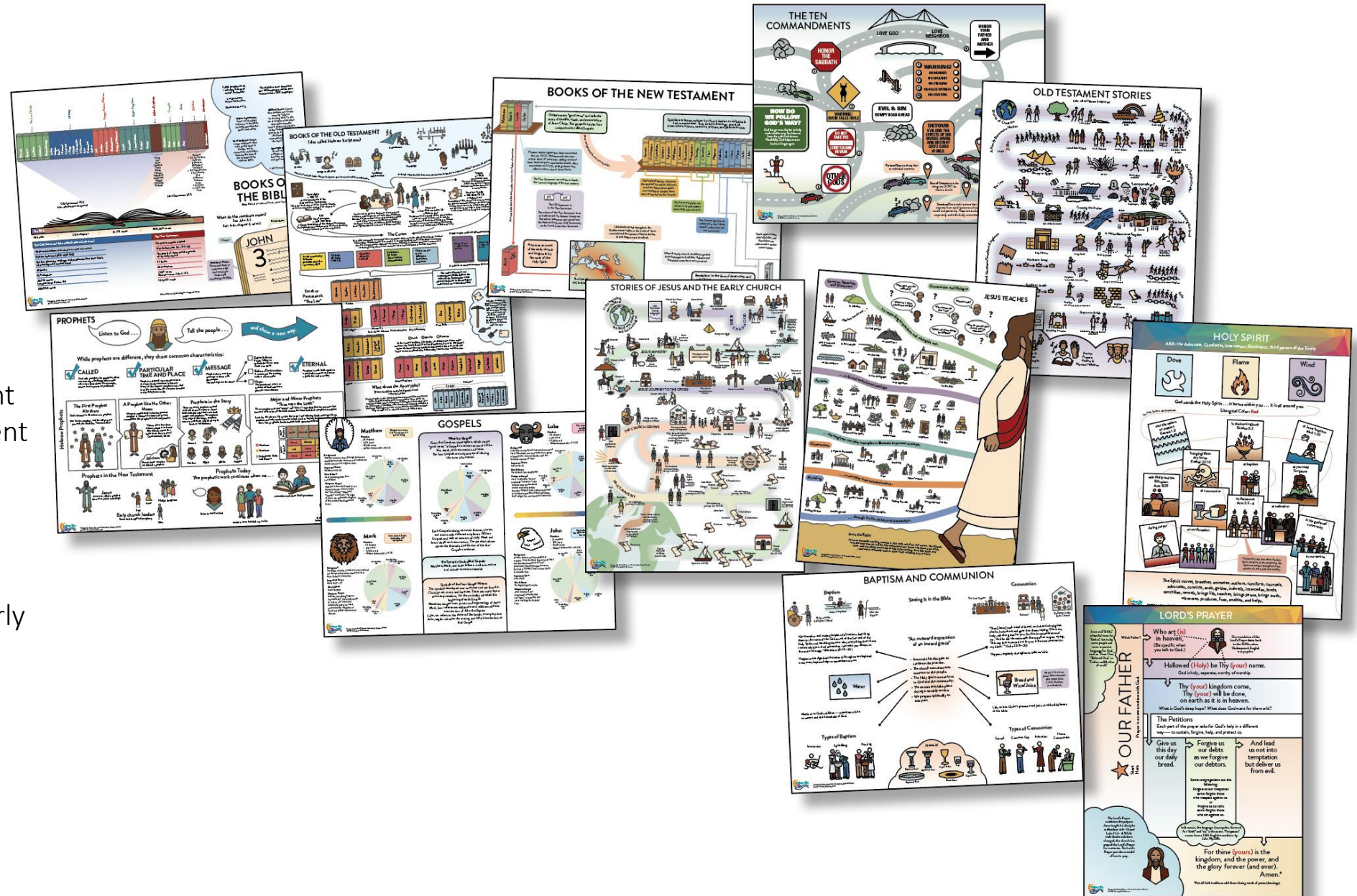
Year 1 Infographic Poster Set

- Follow Jesus
- Welcome All
- Confess
- Hope
- Baptize
- Live in Community
- Practice Spiritual Disciplines
- Practice Joy
- Honor God's Diversity
- Sing a New Song
- Make Peace
- Practice Generosity



Bible Basics Infographic Poster Set

- Books of the Bible
- Books of the Old Testament
- Books of the New Testament
- The Ten Commandments
- Old Testament Stories
- Prophets
- Gospels
- Stores of Jesus and the Early Church
- Jesus Teaches
- Holy Spirit
- Baptism and Communion
- Lord's Prayer





Let's take a look at
a session. . .

All age levels:

Young Children,
Multiage Children,
Youth,
Adult,

and the
Intergenerational
session in the
Congregational
Guide

follow the same
format.





The **Adult Reflection Guide** may be used in an adult study group along with the **Adult Leader's Guide**.

The **Adult Reflection Guide** is also a great resource for individuals who wish to learn about a practice as a self-study or who are unable to attend group meetings.

Short introductory videos for each practice with the Foundational Essay author!





How to Order

1. Check out the special size packages for small scale or large scale use, as well as our individually-priced guides.

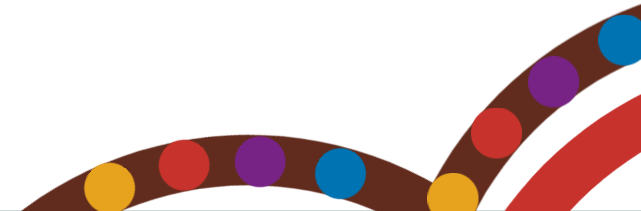
Order additional Adult Reflection Guides and the Infographic Posters or Poster Sets, as needed.
2. Choose your format: print or download.
3. Place your order! Go to www.pcusastore.com/curriculum or call 1-800-533-4371, Monday–Friday, 9:00 am–5:00 pm EST.

Small-Scale Package Includes: 1 Congregational Guide 1 Multiage Children Leader's Guide 1 Adult Leader's Guide 5 Adult Reflection Guides (print only) Small-Scale Package: \$120 \$100D	Large-Scale Package Includes: 1 Congregational Guide 1 Young Children Leader's Guide 1 Multiage Children Leader's Guide 1 Youth Leader's Guide 1 Adult Leader's Guide 10 Adult Reflection Guides (print only) Large-Scale Package: \$220 \$200D	Individual Guides: Congregational Guide \$45 \$40D Young Children \$35 \$30D Leader's Guide Multiage Children \$35 \$30D Leader's Guide Youth Leader's Guide \$35 \$30D Adult Leader's Guide \$15 \$12D Adult Reflection Guide \$8 N/A (print only)
Adult Reflection Guides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These can be ordered individually. Order one <i>Adult Reflection Guide</i> for each adult participant • Bulk pricing is available: 10 or more for \$7/guide, or 25 or more for \$6.50/guide. • E-book version of the <i>Adult Reflection Guides</i> maybe be purchased individually or in bulk from Amazon.com. 		
Infographic Poster Sets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one infographic poster for each unit (practice) available in a year (12 posters) \$80 (P) \$70 (D). • Poster sets for each year (Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3) can be purchased in print or download format. • Individual infographic posters are available only in download format \$10 (D only). • A helpful Bible Basics infographic poster set is also available (twelve posters) \$80 (P) \$70 (D). • Bulk pricing is available for poster sets 2 or more for \$70/set. 		
Print Curriculum Print pieces will be shipped to you once the curriculum is published and your order is processed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual unit posters are available only in download format. 	Download Curriculum Download pieces will be available immediately when the item is published. To download your product, go to your account page, click on the Products and Downloads section, and then click on the title of the resource you want to download. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adult Reflection Guides</i> are available only in print form. 	

Hearing How Congregations are Using Follow Me



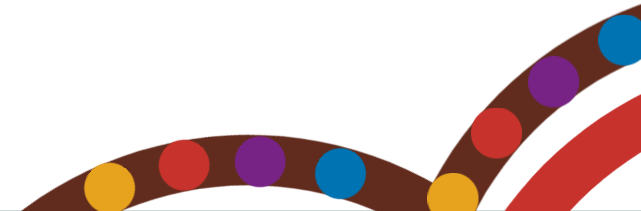
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A Look Inside *Honor God's Diversity*



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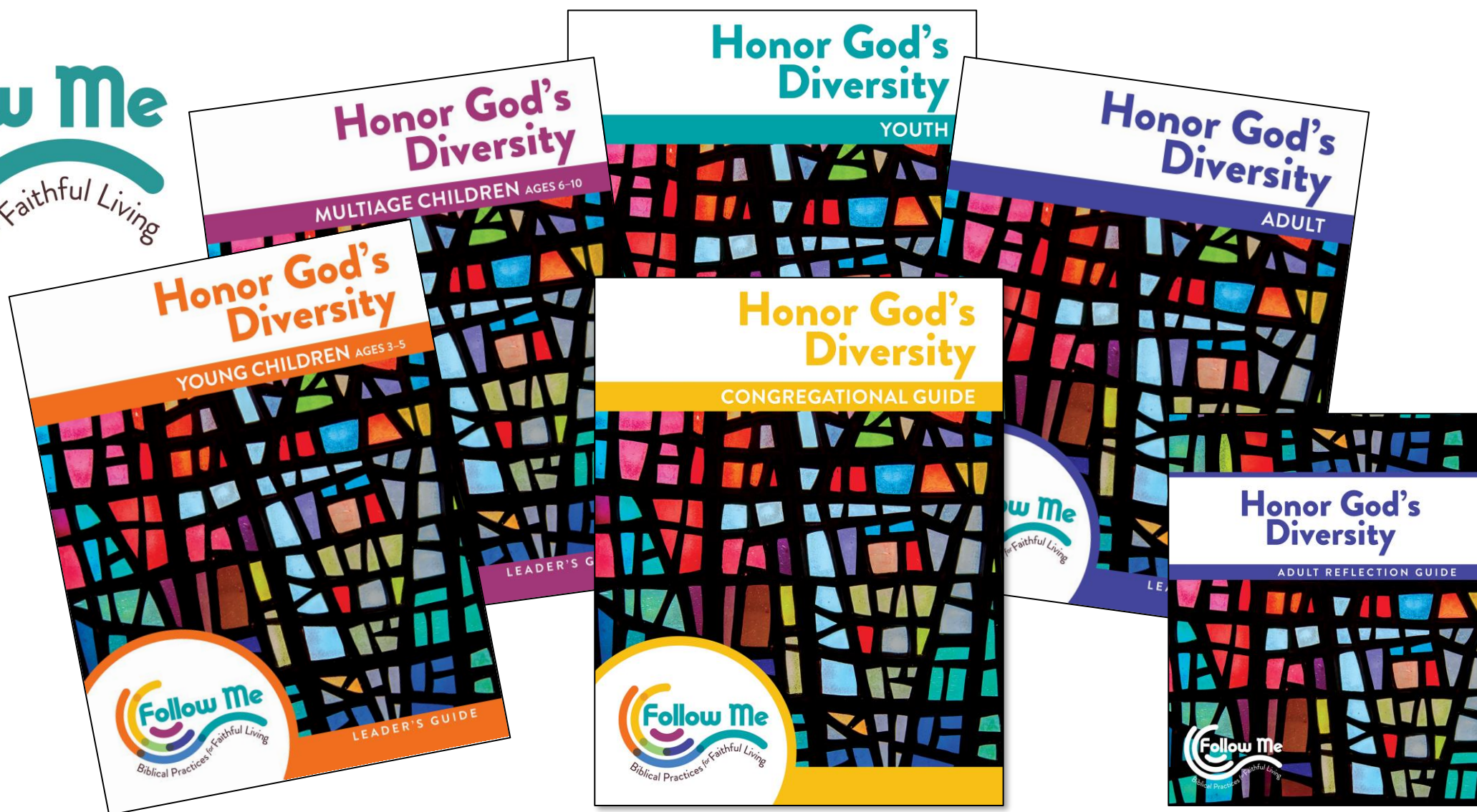




The Foundational Essay

- Authors & Assignments
- Approaches and Aspects

Year 1 Units	Year 2 Units	Year 3 Units
Follow Jesus Michelle Barthel	Honor Sabbath Jason Santos	Take Up Your Cross Denise Anderson
Welcome All Lynne Baab	Pray Marcus Hong	Worship God Jen Lord
Confess Cynthia Campbell	Forgive Cynthia Campbell	Feed Others Ruben Rosario
Hope Charlene Jin Lee	Go Tell Tom Long	Do Not Fear MaryAnn McKibbin Dana
Baptize David Gambrell	Lament James Taneti	Overcome Evil with Good Angela Cowser
Live in Community Kathy Dawson	Do Justice Laurie Lyter Bright	Comfort those who Mourn Cynthia Campbell
Practice Spiritual Disciplines Lynne Baab	Love God, Neighbor, Enemies MaryAnn McKibbin Dana	Clothe Yourselves with Love Marcus Hong
Practice Joy Chris Chakoian	Celebrate Communion Kim Long	Choose Whom You Will Serve Kerri Allen
Honor God's Diversity Justin Reed	Cross Borders Laurie Lyter Bright	Love Yourself Kate Ott
Sing a New Song David Gambrell	Make Disciples Lynne Baab	Heal the Sick Ruben Rosario
Make Peace Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty	Care for Creation Henry Brinton	Give Thanks James Taneti
Practice Generosity Bridgett Green	Walk Humbly Amy Platinga Paw	Speak the Truth So Jung Kim







Four Aspects of Honor God's Diversity:

The challenge of four age groups

Youth and Adult:

1. **Celebrate and Respect God's Diversity**
Genesis 1:1–2:1a
2. **Center Voices from the Margins**
Matthew 15:21–28
3. **Work for Liberation While Challenging Oppression**
(Numbers 27:1 – 11 added in adult)
Luke 6:21–30 (1 Timothy 2:11– 15 added in Youth)
4. **Use Advantages to Overturn Inequality**
Mark 10:17–31
(Luke 19:1 – 10 added in Youth)

Multiage Children

1. **See the Image of God in All**
Genesis 1:27
2. **Center the Ones Left Out**
Matthew 15:21–28
3. **Pull Weeds of Oppression, Plant Seeds of Justice**
1 Timothy 2:11–15
4. **Use Your Advantage for Justice!**
Mark 10:17–22, 31

Younger Children

1. **See Differences and Similarities**
Genesis 1:1–27
2. **Listen to Ones Left Out**
Matthew 15:21–28
3. **Love Your Neighbor**
Luke 10:25–37
4. **Make it Right**
Luke 19:1–10




Highlights in Adult

Adult Leader's Guide and Adult Reflection Guide

FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

ADVANTAGE



Many of the people in the Bible had plenty of disadvantages, but they also had some advantages and used these to save lives.

- Moses, a Hebrew brought up in Pharaoh's court, used his connections to negotiate with Pharaoh and let his people go.
- The book of Esther tells of Esther, a Jewish wife of a powerful Persian king, and her cousin Mordecai. Esther used her status to persuade the king to cancel an order to kill all the Jews in the empire.
- Nehemiah, a Jew living in exile serving the king, used his advantage to convince the king to make reparations and pay for the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem that had been destroyed.

Jesus, a poor Jew living in occupied Palestine, was not privileged, but he did address inequality and challenge those with advantage to help those without. Two stories offer a glimpse of today's aspect.

Session FOUR—Use Advantages to Overturn Inequality

37

FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Most Christian churches and communities have always been good at showing kindness to others through charitable acts. Today's practice pushes us to drill down a little deeper and consider how our actions are helping to change conditions that create inequality and marginalization of some. It challenges each of us to realize we have some advantages, no matter how hard we work for what we have, that might be used to transform the world into one where all are truly equal. We explore these efforts in the early church communities and in one current effort to address health care access.

HOLDING EVERYTHING IN COMMON

Even the earliest days of the church were marked by redistribution of material advantages. We see it in the book of Acts in ways the early followers of Jesus organized themselves as a community of faith. Acts 4 describes the early believers sharing everything with one another. This commitment to share resources was taken very seriously as we read about a member couple, Ananias and Sapphira, who held back resources (Acts 5:1–11).

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.

—Acts 4:32

One of the earliest church documents, the Didache, outlines practical orders for early church life. Among the rules for fasting, communion, and baptism, the Didache outlines how church communities should welcome travelers and honor the prophets that come into their midst. Using language of sacrifice that echoes Old Testament law, the Didache implores early believers to take the first part of all their possessions to give to prophets and the poor.

The Didache is an ancient document that scholars believe pre-dates even some of the books of the New Testament. While it ultimately was not included in the biblical canon, there are strong parallels between the teachings in the Didache and the teachings in the Gospels. It also gives us a glimpse into the lives and practices of the earliest Christians.

Where do you see signs of Christians sharing resources like this?

Follow Me—Honor God's Diversity

40



Highlights in Adult

Overview video for the unit and each session by the foundational essay author, Justin Reed.

Adult Leader's Guide and Adult Reflection Guide

Session 1: Celebrate and Respect God's Diversity

- **Defining Diversity**
Adults work to define "diversity", "inclusion," and "equity".
- **Getting Beyond the Binary**
Adults discuss the literary purpose of merism and find merisms in Genesis 1.
- **Affirming Those Who Are Marginalized**
Adults identify words or actions that speak to affirming people on the margins.

Session 2: Center Voices from the Margins

- **Making the Invisible Visible**
Adults watch a YouTube video about a church that listened to the community and changed its mission focus accordingly.
- **Praying Beyond Ourselves**
Adults pray from the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Prayer Circle, using a pray from another country.

Session 3: Work for Liberation While Challenging Oppression

- **Barmen/Belhar Confessions**
Adults discuss two church confessions that challenge oppression.
- **Growing Up in the #MeToo Movement**
Adults watch a video of young girls talking about experiences of mistreatment by boys.

Session 4: Use Advantages to Overturn Inequality

- **What is Privilege?**
Adults watch a video about privilege and identify advantages and disadvantages they have.
- **Using Advantage**
Adults brainstorm ways they might use advantages to overturn inequality.



Highlights in Youth

Youth Leader's Guide

Session 1: Celebrate and Respect God's Diversity

- **Listing Species**
Youth list or draw as many species of animals they can and talk about God's diverse world.
- **It's All Good**
Youth identify all that God saw as good in Genesis 1.
- **Celebrating Our Diversity**
Youth discuss ways their community does and can honor diversity.

Session 2: Center Voices from the Margins

- **Centering Another**
Youth practice listening carefully to one another and introduce one another to the group.
- **The Roving Listener**
Youth learn about a church that listens to the community around it and consider modeling that.

Session 3: Work for Liberation While Challenging Oppression

- **Jesus Blesses and Warns**
Youth list blessings and woes said by Jesus in Luke 6:20–31 and talk about current implications.
- **Fighting Climate Change**
Youth watch Greta Thunberg's speech to world leaders and discuss ways they can have an impact.

Session 4: Use Advantages to Overturn Inequality

- **Self-Development of People**
Youth read about this program that helps redirect financial resources to organizations led by marginalized groups.



Highlights in Youth





Highlights in Multiage Children

Getting Started

Celebrating God's Diversity: The opening ritual in each session is a litany prompting the children to:

- name something in creation and a characteristic about it, giving thanks to God, and
- be named and invited to describe something about themselves, giving thanks to God.

Following Jesus

God's Circle: The song "Draw the Circle Wide" with a different video is used in each session.

Multiage Children Leader's Guide (ages 6 – 10)

1. Session 1: See the Image of God in All

- **All the Hands Before Yours:** Children investigate clothing, toys, and food labels to find out where items come from and imagine all the people who have had a hand in them, each created in God's image.
- **Words about God Data:** Children investigate a church worship service to find data about the types of words used to describe God.
- **Central Command:** Children play a game to determine who is inside and who is outside the circle based on different characteristics, learning that all are included as children of God.

Session 2: Center the Ones Left Out

- **Where Is the Center?:** With concentric circles on the floor, children use medieval characters to determine who is in the center, with power, and who are on the margins, with no power, and what it might be like if those dynamics change.
- **A World without Left-Outs:** Children play a reverse musical chairs game to remove the circles and include all.

Session 3: Pull Weeds of Oppression, Plant Seeds of Justice

- **Pull Weeds of Oppression, Plant Seeds of Justice:** Throughout the session, children use the metaphor of weeds of oppression and seeds of justice as they explore a difficult Bible text that has been used to oppress women. By naming and figuratively pulling weeds, the children name injustices. They hear stories of children working for justice in a variety of ways and consider how they, too, can be planters of justice, supporting one another in their efforts.

Session 4: Use Your Advantage for Justice!

- **Advantage Trading Cards:** Children create a set of cards highlighting the advantages they have and how they could be used to help others.
- **Hungry No More!** Children learn about food insecurity and food pantries. They use their advantage of knowledge gained to create posters to educate their congregation regarding food donations



Highlights in Multiage Children

Multiage Children Leader's Guide (ages 6 – 10)

- 1 The force field protects explorers who have shoes that have shoelaces.
- 2 The force field protects explorers who have curly hair.
- 3 The force field protects explorers who are wearing red.
- 4 The force field protects explorers who like broccoli.

5

6

7

8

9

10

Food Pantry Donation Tips

Donating to a local food pantry helps anyone experiencing food insecurity. Food pantries can always use donations, but some are better than others. Consider these tips when donating food and personal care items.

Check with your local food pantry: Find out the hours when they accept donations. Ask if they accept refrigerated foods and produce if you are interested in donating those items. They will also give you a list of what they need most at that time.

Do donate:

- For healthy food options, look for low or reduced sodium, no salt added, and/or low or no sugar added, when applicable.
- **Fruits and vegetables:** canned vegetables, canned fruits, applesauce, dried fruit, canned or boxed 100% fruit juice, canned tomato or pasta sauce
- **Whole grains:** hot or cold cereals, brown or wild rice, pasta, crackers, rice cakes
- **Protein:** canned meat and fish; canned beans; dried beans, lentils, and peas; nuts and seeds; nut and seed butters, protein bars
- **Dairy:** shelf-stable, low-fat powdered or evaporated milk
- **Staples:** flour, spices, salt and pepper, vegetable or olive oil (no glass), broth
- **Meals and mixes:** boxed meals; canned or boxed stews, chili, soups; mixes that need only water
- **Snack items:** 100% fruit rolls, raisins, graham crackers, pretzels, granola bars
- **Baby items:** baby food, formula, diapers, wipes
- **Personal care items:** toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, disposable razors, tampons/pads, hand and body lotion

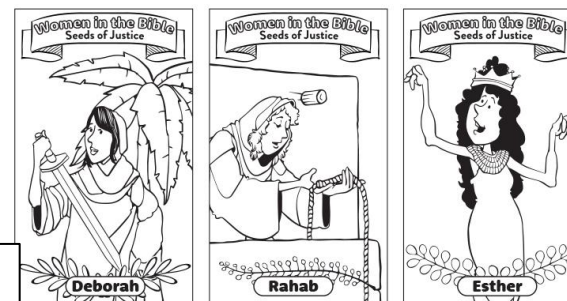
Do not donate:

- Opened, dented, or punctured items
- Expired items
- Refrigerated or frozen items (unless you have checked first)
- Glass containers
- Fruits and vegetables (unless you have checked first)—if donations are accepted, they should be simple to prepare, able to be used in many different ways, able to be stored at least one or two days without refrigeration, and be familiar to most people
- Homemade goods
- Unlabeled items
- Specialty or gourmet items



Multiage Children: Session 4—Use Your Advantage for Justice!
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Resource Page 6 61



Resource Page 1



Multiage Children: Session 3—Pull Weeds of Oppression, Plant Seeds of Justice
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Rahab

Joshua 2; 6

Grow Facts:

- Rahab is an ancestor of Jesus (see Matthew 1:5).
- She took big risks to help God's people.
- She had faith and acted on it.
- She risked her life for others.



Esther

The book of Esther

Grow Facts:

- She and her cousin Mordecai saved the king from being killed.
- Esther risked her life to speak truth to the king.
- With persistence, bravery, and intelligence, Esther saved her people.



Mary Magdalene

John 20:1-18

Grow Facts:

- She was one of Jesus' closest friends.
- She used her money to support Jesus' ministry.
- She was named in all four Gospels.
- She is the first woman named in the Bible.

her by name (16).



Lydia of Thyatira

Acts 16:11-15

Grow Facts:

- Lydia had a successful business selling purple cloth.
- She listened well to God and Paul.
- She is the first documented convert to Christianity in Europe.
- Lydia offered hospitality to Paul and his team.



Multiage Children: Session 3—Pull Weeds of Oppression, Plant Seeds of Justice
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Resource Page 2 41



Highlights in Younger Children

Getting Started

Celebrating God's Diversity: The opening ritual in each session is a litany prompting the children to:

- name something in creation and a characteristic about it, giving thanks to God, and
- be named and invited to describe something about themselves, giving thanks to God.

Younger Children Leader's Guide (ages 3 – 5)

1. Session 1: See Differences and Similarities

- **Matching Game:** Children play a matching game to see how God's creation and people are similar and different.
- **God Made Everything:** After hearing the adapted Bible story from Genesis 1:1-27, children explore the *Honor God's Diversity* infographic poster to discover things God created, and "even more!"
- **Pronouns:** Children explore diversity through pronouns as they hear a story and dance in many different ways.

Session 2: Listen to Ones Left Out

- **The Importance of Listening:** Children hear a story about listening and hearing the needs of another.
- **Listening to Needs:** Children look at pictures of people in need and imagine how they might help.

Session 3: Love Your Neighbor

- **Bee Kind:** Children make bees for a mural as they consider who they can be kind to in their interactions.
- **Yellow and Blue:** Children hear the story *Who Is My Neighbor?* by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (Flyway Books, 2019) and create pictures of inclusion.
- **Something for Everyone Snack Mix:** Children make their own sweet and salty snack mix representing similarities and differences.

Session 4: Make it Right

- **Fair vs. Equal:** Children learn about the difference between equality and fairness, the first giving everyone the same and the second giving people what they need.
- **Being a Purple Person:** Children hear the story *The World Needs More Purple People* by Kristin Bell and Benjamin Hart (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2020) and learn five steps to being a person who cares about others.

Younger Children Leader's Guide (ages 3 – 5)



Highlights in Younger Children



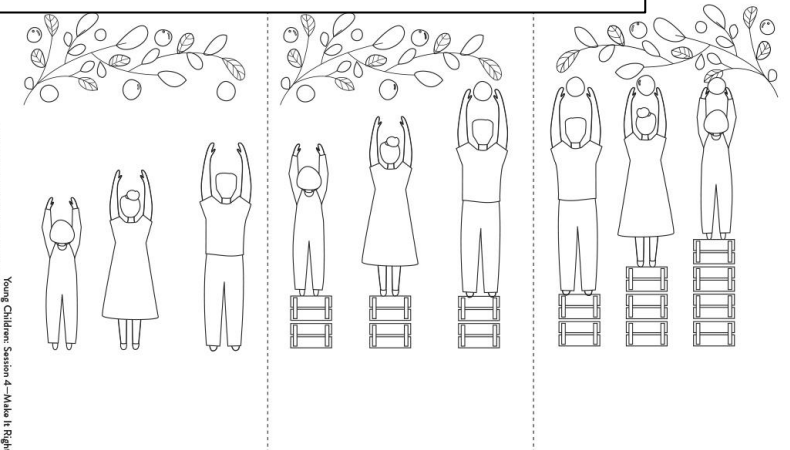
Young Children: Session 1—See Differences
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Young Children: Session 1—See Differences and Similarities
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Resource Page 2 15

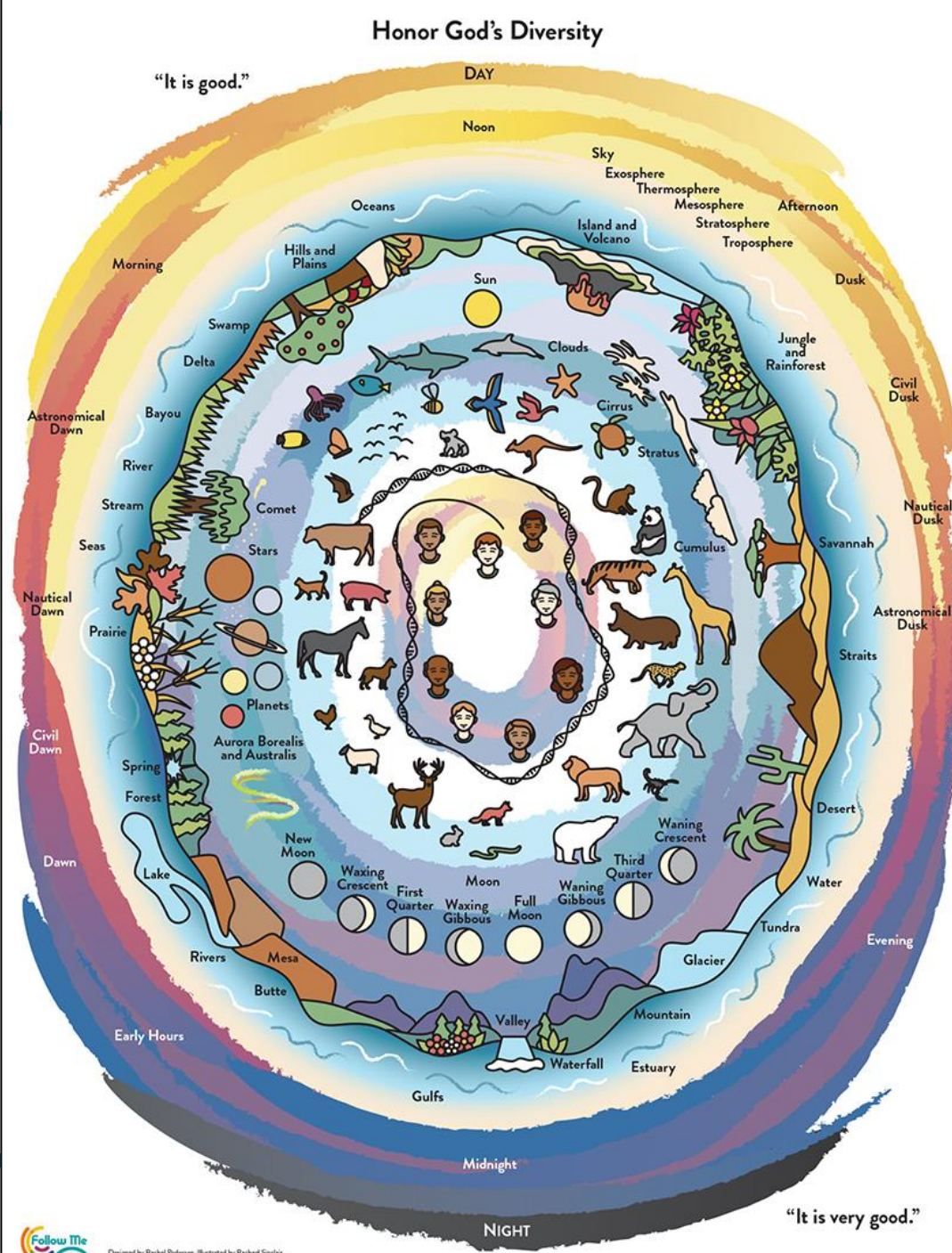
Young Children: Session 2—Listen to One's Left Out
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Young Children: Session 4—Make It Right
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Honor God's Diversity Infographic Poster





Highlights in the Café Discussion Guide

- A two-sided, self-guided, informal group study.
- One side of the page has information about the aspect of the practice.
- One side of the page has numbered order of discussion questions and activities.

Congregational Guide

Use Advantages to Overturn Inequality

MARK 10:17-31; LUKE 19:1-10

4

As you gather, read the other side of this page about the topic for today. Once gathered, spend a few minutes introducing everyone. Pray this prayer or one of your choosing:
Living God, who comes to us in many and varied ways, open our hearts to recognize your image in every person. Open our minds to experience you in stories that are not our own. Give us courage to challenge the forces of evil that harm your people, and inspire us to use what we have been given for the flourishing of all. Amen.

2

Read and discuss reactions to "Summary of the Practice" on the other side of this page.

3

Watch and briefly discuss the YouTube video "Video: What Is Privilege?" (bit.ly/FMPriilege, 9:56). The Privilege Walk activity is a helpful way to see that most everyone has some advantages and some disadvantages, but certain groups tend to have more of each.

4

Take a few minutes individually and imagine a continuum between disadvantage and advantage in the table that follows. Draw a dot along that continuum for each of the characteristics listed, depending on where you think you are. As a group, discuss one way you believe a disadvantage or advantage affects your life.

5

Read "Finding the Practice in the Bible" and "Finding the Practice Then and Now" on the other side of this page. Discuss:

- What are ways your community uses advantages to overturn inequality?
- What would you like to see happen that has not been done?

6

Spend a moment individually and jot down some you might use some of your advantages to overturn inequality.

7

CLOSING PRAYER
Read this charge aloud in unison as an inviting challenge for you to honor God's diversity:
Go out into the world in peace;
have courage;
hold on to what is good;
return no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive

Congregational Guide

Café Discussion Guide 4—Use Advantages to Overturn Inequality
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SUMMARY OF THE PRACTICE

It's important to note that advantages are simply that: advantages. They do not mean someone is inherently good or evil. The advantages we have do not negate our hard work, and naming advantages is not meant to make anyone feel guilty for the hand they have been dealt in life. Most of us have both advantages and disadvantages in our own lives. Taking an honest look at them helps us realize what ground we're standing on as we work together to make an even playing field.

FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

In the story in Mark, the rich man comes to Jesus and asks, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus tells him that he lacks one thing: "Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions" (Mark 10:17, 21-22). The story must be important as it is found in two other Gospels (Matthew 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30). This is an extremely difficult calling for the rich man because he has great wealth; of course, it is also unsettling for any of us who are comfortable today.

By challenging the rich man to redistribute his wealth among the poor, Jesus critiques the systemic inequality in his society. He suggests that the primary benefactors of the unjust system redistribute their resources in ways that benefit those at the opposite end of the spectrum. For an alternative response by a rich man to the call of Jesus, read Luke 19:1-10.

FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

- Practicing the forgiveness of debt has long been a part of the expectations for the people of God. Laws set out in Deuteronomy 15 specifically required all debts within the Israelite community to be canceled every seven years. There's even an exhortation to still lend generously when you know the seventh year is coming up and you might not see your money returned!
- The earliest days of the church were marked by redistribution of material advantages. We see it in the book of Acts in ways those early followers of Jesus organized themselves as a community of faith. Acts 4 describes the early believers sharing everything with one another. This commitment to share resources was taken very seriously as we read about a member couple, Ananias and Sapphira, who held back resources (Acts 5:1-11).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THIS GUIDE

If possible, distribute this sheet to participants before gathering. Be prepared to summarize the information on this page. Bring extra copies, some pens, and a Bible.

Follow Me—Honor God's Diversity
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Highlights in the Worship Helps

- Hymn suggestions
- Liturgical actions
- Liturgies

Congregational Guide

1. Session 1: Affirm People Who Are Marginalized

- **Many hymn texts use binary language** (man/ woman) in a way that can leave out those who do not fall neatly into either category. Take time in worship to **reframe this language**, so what when you sing these hymns, you sing these binary categories as evocative of a spectrum of gender instead of two distinct categories.
- **Display or project images of people and stories in Scripture that come from different cultures**, showing a wide range of races, symbols, and artistic styles. A wide range of art is available free of charge through the Vanderbilt Divinity Library's Art in the Christian Tradition website at bit.ly/FMArtLibrary

Session 2: Center Voices from the Margins

- **Let the stories of those in your community come to the forefront.** Ask someone to share a testimony during the invitation to discipleship, or engage their stories as part of the sermon, or invite them to write a prayer.
- **Incorporate the voices of those who are outside your community** by reading or showing their work as part of your worship service. Read a poem or story, share a video clip, or listen to a recording from those who might not otherwise have a voice in your service

Session 3: Work for Liberation While Challenging Oppression

- **Worship and action do not have to be separate;** as part of the response to the word, bring a service project into worship. Packing lunches for hungry neighbors, writing letters to those in prison, or putting together kits for those experiencing homelessness are simple projects that can be incorporated into (or directly after) your service of worship, reminding everyone that we are called to live out our faith in the world.
- To do the work of standing up to oppression, we need to be rooted in what we believe. Set up a large piece of fabric with permanent markers and invite worshipers to write their own belief statements about God's call to work for justice to **create a visual, communal affirmation of faith.** Display this in the worship space or use it to cover the communion table.

Session 4: Use Advantages to Overturn Inequality

- **In the bulletin or digital display, print a list of "action items"**—ways to put the message into action— connected to the day's sermon, to give worshipers immediate ideas of how to live out their faith.



Congregational Guide

Celebrating God's Diversity

Leader: God made . . . (a participant suggests an item of creation, such as the moon or mountains, or a particular body of water or land form, or a particular plant or animal).
 Leader: Let's describe (repeat the item of creation named above).
 Various participants: (Describe the item of creation named above).
 All: Thank you, God, for (repeat the item of creation named above).

Example:

Leader: God made the sun.
 Leader: Let's describe the sun.
 Various participants: It's big. It's hot. It has solar flares. It makes me sweaty. It provides warmth for the earth.
 All: Thank you, God, for the sun.

This will be repeated several times, with different suggestions of God's creation. Then, at your tables, continue with each person at the table:

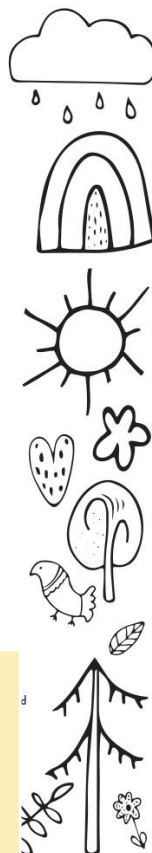
Tablemates: (Name), you are made in God's image.
 Individual: (The named person says a sentence that describes something about themselves, such as "I am tall," or "I have green eyes," or "I like to draw.")
 Tablemates: Thank you, God, for (name of person named above).

Example:

Tablemates: Rosie, you are made in God's image.
 Rosie: I have curly hair.
 Tablemates: Thank you, God, for Rosie.

or

Tablemates: Bennett, you are made in God's image.
 Bennett: I like to sing.
 Tablemates: Thank you, God, for Bennett.



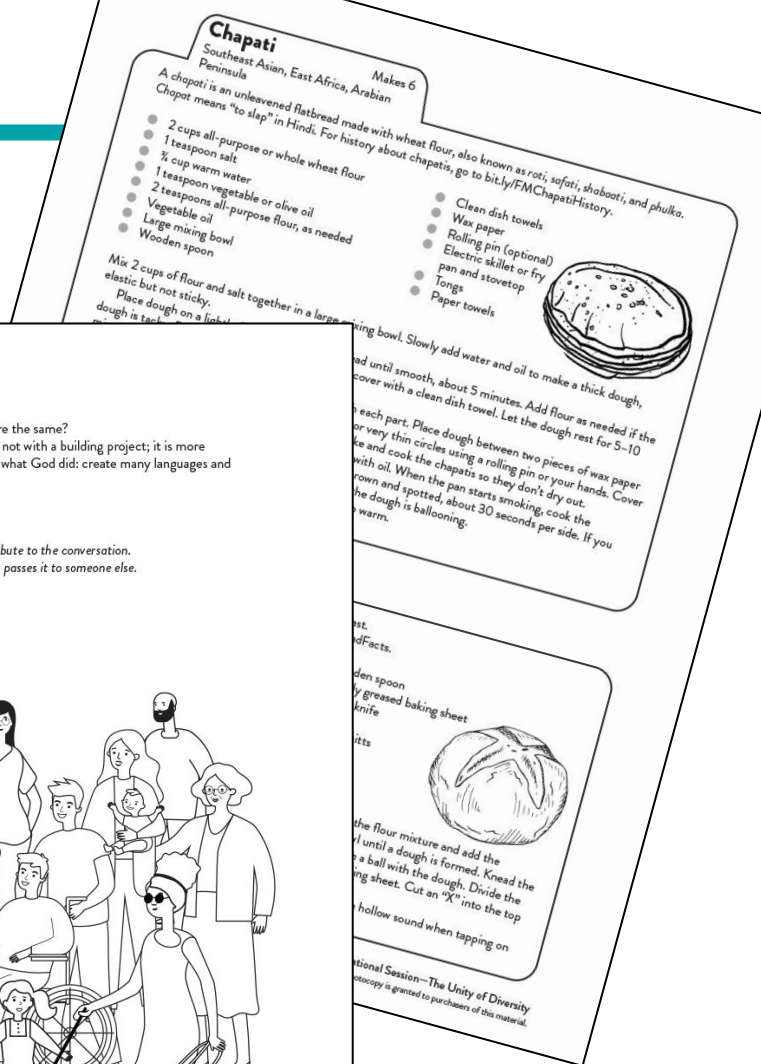
ssion—The Unity of Diversity
 granted to purchasers of this material.

God's Big Plan: The Story of Babel

Questions for conversation:

- What do you think the world would be like if everyone were the same?
- God does not destroy the city or the tower, so the issue is not with a building project; it is more about the reasons for building. Why do you think God did what God did: create many languages and scatter people around the world?
- How might what God did in the story of Babel be a gift?
- How might diversity be a gift?

Make sure that everyone at your table has a chance to contribute to the conversation. Use the "talking stick." The one holding the stick speaks and then passes it to someone else. Everyone gets a turn, and anyone has the option to pass.



The Unity of Diversity

- All Are Welcome:** Participants play rhythm instruments and sing "Let's Build a House (All Are Welcome)"
- God's Big Plan:** Participants hear the story of and talk together about the tower of Babel and how that might have been God's plan for diversity, a gift instead of a punishment.
- Many Grains Brought Together:** Participants bake various kinds of breads.
- Everyone Plays Games:** Participants play different games from around the world.
- Celebrating Communion:** The community celebrates communion together.



Congregational Guide

Highlights in the Practicing the Practice At Home

- Ways to practice the practice at home
- Conversation starters

Highlights in the Children's Worship Leaflets

- Ways to practice the practice at home
- Puzzle
- Adapted Bible story
- Coloring picture

Practicing the Practice at Home

WHAT IS HONOR GOD'S DIVERSITY ABOUT?
When we recognize and celebrate the different gifts, abilities, and voices in all of creation, we honor the diversity in the world that God has created. God embraces our differences as God created all in God's own image. While the Genesis account of creation poetically rocks back and forth between binaries of day and night, land and sea, light and dark, we know that an expansive and diverse world exists where there is also dawn, dusk, marsh, estuary, and shades of every color. This wildly imaginative God who is understood as rock, eagle, mother hen, and tender father cannot be contained in a single anthropomorphic pronoun. To honor the diversity of God, we need to honor the intended diversity of God's creation by affirming all as God's beloved, bringing in those who have been pushed to the margins, working for the liberation of all while challenging oppression, and using advantages to overturn inequalities in the world so that all are seen and treated as full of worth.

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN EVERYONE
Supplies: magazines, scissors, paper, glue
Go through magazines and cut out images that remind you of God. Use your images to make a family collage by gluing them on paper. Share with one another why the images remind you of God. Talk about how, just as you found images of God in these magazines, the image of God can be found in everyone you meet!

RESTAURANT (OR SHOPPING) ROTATION
Supplies: internet-connected device
Does your family ever get in a food rut where you eat the same foods over and over again? Break out of that rut and honor God's diversity with a restaurant or shopping rotation. Go online together and research ethnic and cultural people groups different from your own that have restaurants or groceries in your community. Eat or shop for groceries at places from these communities. What is the same about the food? What is different?

EQUITY VS. EQUALITY
Supplies: internet-connected device
Depending on the age and interest of children in your family, watch one or both of the following YouTube videos to learn about the concepts of equality and equity. Use the picture at bit.ly/FMEquityPicture to talk together about what is equal and what is fair (or equitable) in your experiences at home, family, or community. Wonder together how you can work for more equity in the world.

FOLLOW THE MARGINALIZED GROUP
Supplies: internet-connected device
Talk with your family about a marginalized population that you would like to learn more about and support. Have older children do some online research to find local organizations. Center the voices of the leadership and membership of this organization. Help your family reach out to the organization to get involved.

Practicing the Practice at Home
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FAMILY CONVERSATION STARTERS
What does the word *marginalized* mean to you? Define it in your own words. Who are the marginalized people in your community? Is your here diversity where you go to school or where work? Are there lots of different people, lots different cultures all working and learning together? Why do you think there is or isn't diversity there?
Who is created in God's image and who is not? What does it mean to be created in the image of God? What does it mean to be marginalized? What does it mean to be a family support each other and against oppression when we see it? We do, who can we be so that we're stronger at calling out things that are wrong for marginalized people? Some things, that we didn't know, that make it easier for our family to live? How can we use those things to return inequality and honor God's



1 See God's Image in All

WAYS TO PRACTICE AT HOME

- God is bigger than our language can ever describe. When we limit God, we restrict God's creative expression in the world and who we are made in the image of God. Each person, with all they are, is a reflection of the creative nature of God. Diversity is what creation is all about and is to be celebrated.
- Go to a zoo, aquarium, botanical garden, forest, beach, park, or anywhere you can see the vast diversity of God's creation. Look for the big and small and in between. Notice what's wildly creative in color, shape, size, or other features. Praise God for such an amazing world!
 - Make a list of differences and similarities in your family. Take turns having a family member choose one difference and one similarity to celebrate each day. It might be a favorite food or game to play. It could be that everyone loves the color green and the day is spent celebrating green things! Be creative.
 - Read *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox (Clarion Books, 2006) or watch the YouTube video "Read-Aloud of Whoever You Are by Mem Fox" (bit.ly/FMWhoeverYouAre, 3:07). Talk together about the things that may be different and the things that are the same about people and wonder why differences and similarities are each important in our world.

God of us all, thank you for the gift of creation and the vast diversity you gave the world, its creatures, and us. May we appreciate and celebrate our differences and similarities. Amen.



E has dark fur, A has light fur, B has dark fur, C has light fur, D has dark fur, F has light fur, G has dark fur, H has light fur, I has dark fur, J has light fur, K has dark fur, L has light fur, M has dark fur, N has light fur, O has dark fur, P has light fur, Q has dark fur.

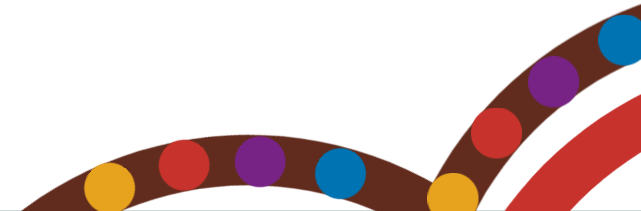
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Now and What's Next for Christian Education



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Feedback

What's happening now?

- How are you using curriculum now in your congregation?
- What would be helpful in a curriculum at this time?
- For those using the *Follow Me* curriculum:
 - How's it going?
 - How are you using it?



Please choose a scribe to take notes and drop them in the Chat and/or email them to:
ksnyder@presbypub.com



Conversation

Future thinking:

- What are you seeing as the future of Christian education/formation?
- What types of resources would be helpful in the next five years?



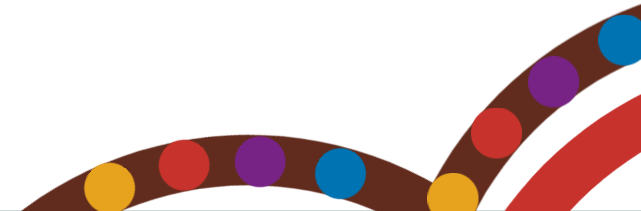
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New Resources for Your Congregation



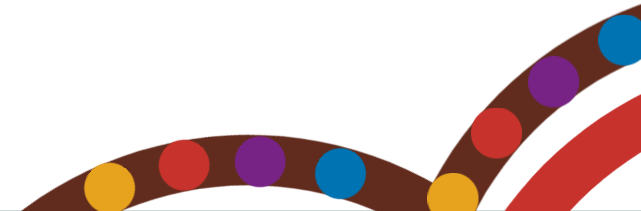
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Korean Language Resources



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KINGDOM LIFE

인도자교재

Leader's guide

요한복음

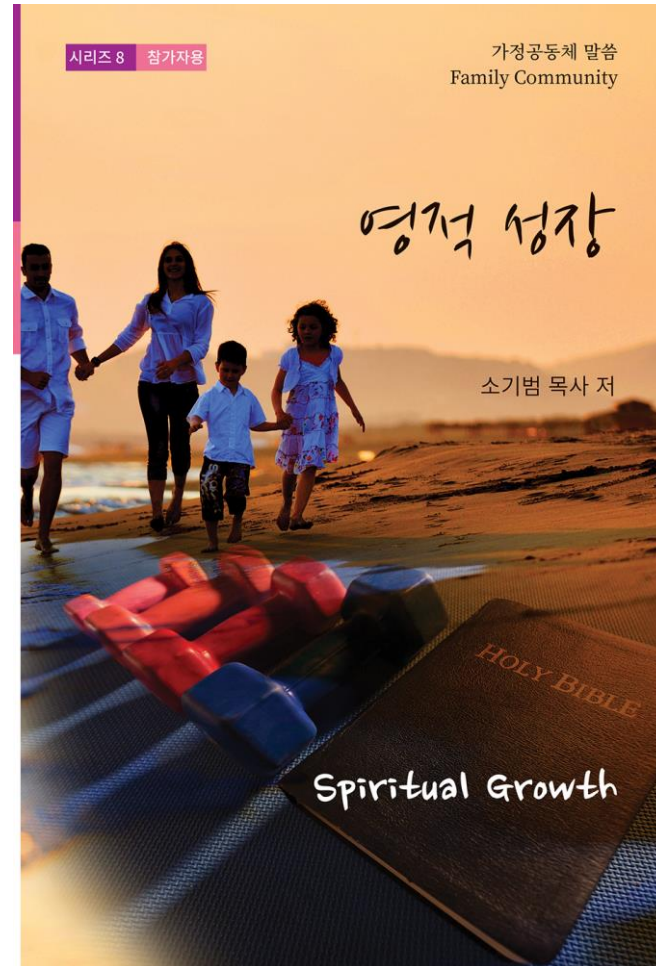
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김도훈 목사 지음



FAMILY COMMUNITY



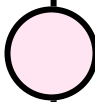
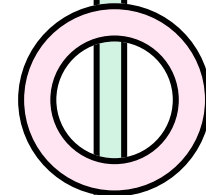
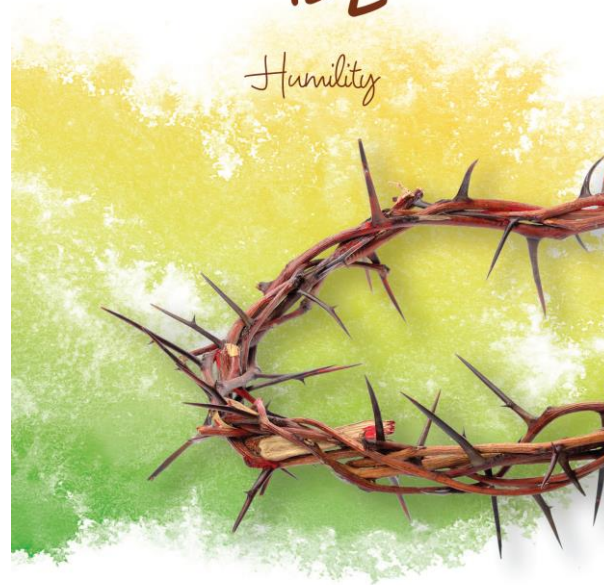
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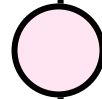
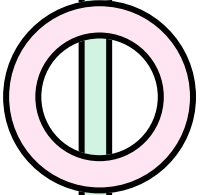
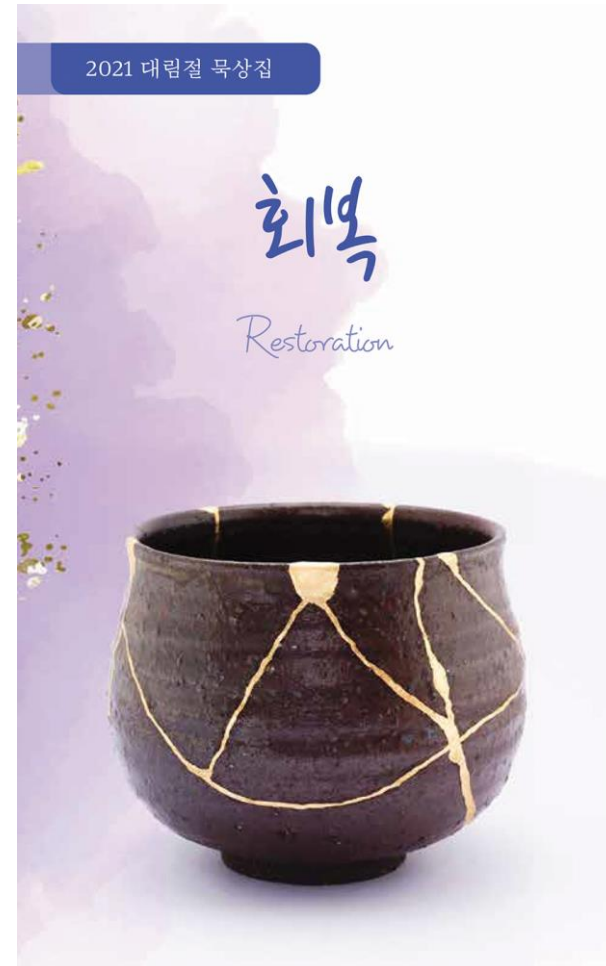
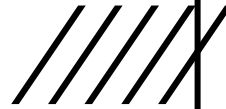
2022 사순절 묵상집

겸손

Humility



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL



WAYS TO BE A FAITHFUL SERVANT

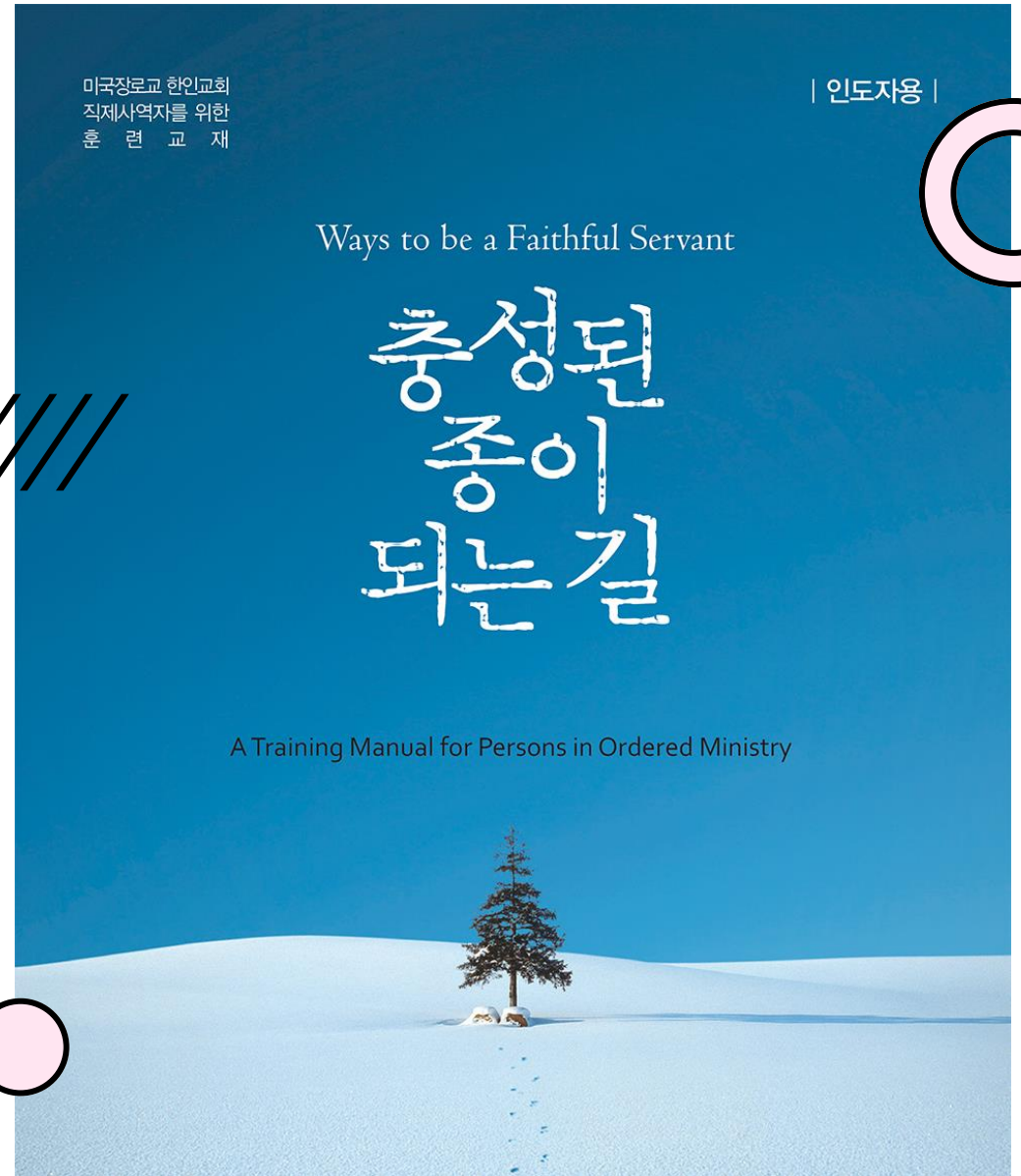
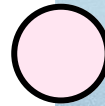
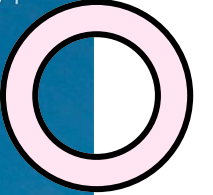
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훈련교재

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Ways to be a Faithful Servant

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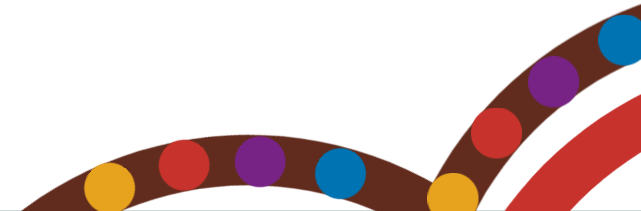
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Spanish Language Resources



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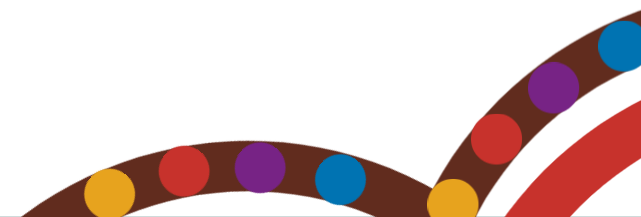
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RESOURCES



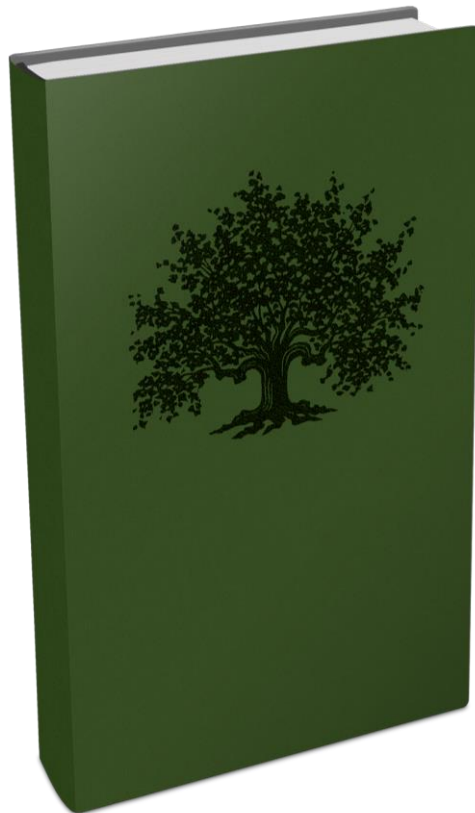
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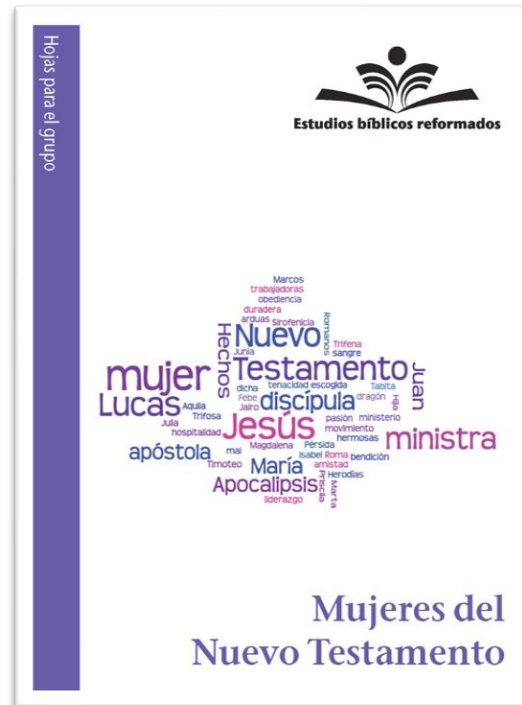


New Resources

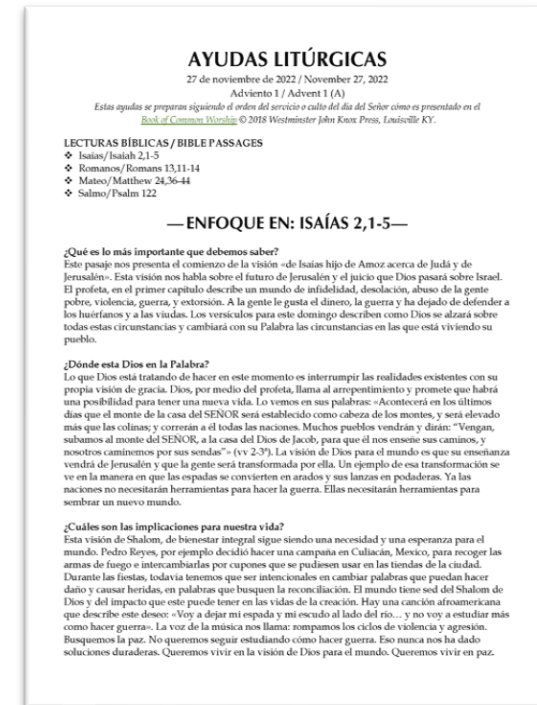
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EBR: Mujeres del NT (Women of the NT)



Ayudas litúrgicas (Liturgical Helps)



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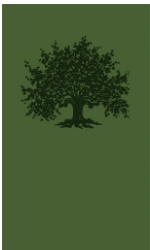
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Learn More about our Curricula

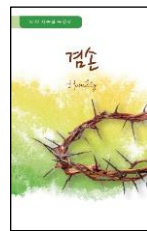
- View our online catalog for 2022-2023 <https://adobe.ly/3r8PP04>
- Follow Me Biblical Practices for Faithful Living <bit.ly/FollowMeCurriculum>
- Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible Curriculum <bit.ly/AStoryBibleCurriculum>
- Big God Big Questions <bit.ly/BGBOinfo>
- Growing in Grace and Gratitude <bit.ly/GGGInfo>
- Feasting on the Word Curriculum <bit.ly/FOWCInfo>
- The Present Word <bit.ly/TPWInfo>
- Being Reformed studies full list <bit.ly/BRInformation>
- Faith Question units full list <bit.ly/FQInformation>

Spanish Resource



[Libro de adoración común](#) Edición pastoral

Korean Resource



Korean Lenten Devotional 2022 [Humility](#)

POINT Training Summary 2022

POINT Resource Library

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Great videos on Growing Faith Resources YouTube Channel

www.youtube.com/c/GrowingFaithResources

- How to Find Curriculum on PC (USA) Store <https://youtu.be/NHg33QwEx1M>
- Big God Big Questions Overview <https://youtu.be/FAaf0TpP-b8>
- What is Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible Curriculum? <https://youtu.be/E4l01p3jU0A>
- How to use the At-home Kit Guides from Growing in God's Love A Story Bible Curriculum <https://youtu.be/DAle8UIdkFw>
- Learn about Follow Me Biblical Practices for Faithful Living with our Follow Me playlist featuring a video overview of the whole curriculum, a trailer, and a video on each component of the curriculum https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLP_kF3ijY-e86maJBeReNyKCTexuu4_w
- View the playlists for each Follow Me unit these videos are used with the curriculum at no cost to you https://www.youtube.com/c/GrowingFaithResources/playlists?view=50&sort=dd&shelf_id=5

[Lent Guide 2022](#) – View all of our Lent resources available for 2022

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