

Introducing the Bishop's Certificate

What will we be learning?

By the end of the course, we hope participants will have:

- a clearer overview of the Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament.
- a deeper knowledge of the key themes of scripture.
- a fuller appreciation of the rich variety of Christian experience and expression.
- more awareness of sharing in the life of the Church, gathered in worship and sent out in service.
- a deeper understanding of the ways (such as prayer and the sacraments) in which God strengthens Christians in their discipleship.
- more confidence to live out their faith in daily life and share it with others.
- a clearer recognition that all Christians are called to share Christ's mission to the world.
- a greater ability to discern the particular gifts (in themselves and others) by which God equips Christians to fulfil this calling.

How will we be learning? What will happen in each session?

Each session will include the following elements:

- Some preparation – usually looking at scripture and reflecting on your own experience and day to day life
- The chance to share some of your preparation in the session
- Some input from the leader to help you explore the theme of the week
- Guided Bible study Worship
- Reflection on the implications of the theme for discipleship
- Varied ways of exploring the material so that you are actively involved in your own and other people's learning.

What will be asked of us as participants in the sessions?

No prior knowledge or understanding is expected though the course presumes that you are either a Christian or at least sympathetic to the Christian faith. It is expected that you come to this course because you want to learn more about discipleship. You will need to bring a Bible to sessions, preferably a modern translation. Your leader can give you guidance about translations if you wish.

What preparation will we need to do?

Mainly exploring the Bible and reflecting on your own experience.

It should take on average, between one and two hours.

You will often be asked to take note of and reflect upon what is happening during the week. Part of your preparation will therefore be to keep your eyes, ears and heart open so you begin to make connections between what you are learning and what is happening in your life from day to day.

How will learning be assessed? Will we have to write essays?

You are not going to be assessed against any academic standard. The criteria for saying you have completed The Bishop's Certificate are:

- Have you been present at sessions? (minimum 75%)
- Have you done your best to do the preparatory work?
- Have you grown in your faith or in your understanding of the Christian faith?
- Have you contributed in a positive way to the life of the group?
- Compilation of a portfolio of reflections

You can show you have achieved these in a variety of ways which your leader will explain to you. One way is to keep an ongoing reflective diary or journal on what you are learning. Each week, after a session there will be some questions for reflection or some suggested activities for you to do. If you think you might explore whether God is calling you to any form of ministry, you need to talk with your group leader about what would be best for you to do. It is important that you try to do as much of the preparatory work as you are able since what you will do in the group will often be based on it. You will not be required to write essays and there will be no exams or tests.

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