



YEAR OF VOCATION 2019



LIVING CHRIST

DIOCESAN LENT COURSE 2019

What does it mean for us to discover life in all its fullness (John 10.10) – to hear and respond to the call of God in our lives?

In the 2019 Year of Vocation Lent Course – Living Christ – we encounter Christians across Sussex exploring what it means to live out their vocation to know, love and follow Jesus, and invite participants in the course to ponder how they are living out their own baptism.

With video contributions from a farmer, an artist, a mental-health campaigner, a carer and many others, the course consists of five sessions exploring: our life's work; family, friendship and community; a good childhood; health and vulnerability; and how we draw close to Christ at the end of our lives. Along with Scripture, prayer and discussion, it is hoped that Living Christ will be an engaging resource for small groups across the Diocese in the Year of Vocation.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This format is simple and adaptable

BEGIN WITH SILENCE AND PRAYER

We need to ready ourselves for this time of reflection together. Allow a moment of silence to take place before the session leader leads the Opening Prayer.

LISTEN TO THE SCRIPTURES

A passage of Scripture has been selected for each session. Each week the group will be asked to discuss why they think it has been chosen for that week's theme, and what immediate thoughts it prompts.

WATCH THE LENT VIDEO

Each session includes a video with Christians talking about their daily lives, and how they try to live in Christ. These videos are the basis of the discussion questions which follow.

The session leader will need to ensure that the appropriate video file is downloaded and ready to use for each session. These will be available on the Diocesan website (www.chichester.anglican.org) and the Diocesan YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/DioceseofChichester>). If you'd like a DVD of the videos, please email Zoe. Smith@chichester.anglican.org

ENTER INTO CONVERSATION

A series of questions for conversation is included for further reflection among the group. These questions might also be used by those using this resource on their own. You do not need to answer all the questions.

Drawing on the Liturgy for Baptism
The beginning of our life in Christ is marked by baptism. Each week includes a section from the Baptism service, and this gives the group the opportunity to take a closer look at the words of this life-giving service, and reflect on how we are living it out now. This can be followed by a discussion on the words of liturgy, and how they fit with the week's theme.

INTERACTION

Each week a suggestion for a non-verbal element has been included; this is to help make the course inclusive of all learning styles and abilities. The session leader is encouraged to include an interaction to suit the needs of the participants and the tradition of the group. Please note that some of these activities require preparation, so session leaders should read ahead to the next week's interaction.

Whilst an activity has been suggested, session leaders could choose to include something

FINISH IN PRAYER

When the group time has drawn to a close, give the participants a moment of silence to reflect on what has been discussed, and then finish with the closing prayer.

1: OUR LIFE'S WORK

OPENING PRAYER

God of mercy,
by whose grace alone we are accepted
and equipped for your service:
stir up in us the gifts of your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
that we may bring forth the fruit of the
Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

READ THE SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

Matthew 9:35-38

QUESTION

Why do you think this passage was chosen for the theme of 'Our Life's Work'?

VIDEOS

Watch one or all of the videos featuring Tom, John and Christine



QUESTIONS:

- Which video portrait spoke to you the most and why?
- How have you brought your faith in Christ into your work?
- How does being a Christian change the way you approach work?
- How does your creativity 'feed your inner life'?
- What demands do you face in life? Have they changed over time and how can they be balanced?
- How do you find space within your week to consider the big questions of life and engage with God? When is your Sabbath?
- Is there a difference between work and vocation?

FROM THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM – SIGNING WITH THE CROSS

Christ claims you for his own.
Receive the sign of his cross.

Do not be ashamed to confess the faith
of Christ crucified.

All:
**Fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ
against sin, the world and the devil,
and remain faithful to Christ to the end
of your life.**

May almighty God deliver you from the
powers of darkness,
restore in you the image of his glory,
and lead you in the light and obedience
of Christ. Amen.

What do these words mean to you?
What do they say about 'Our Life's
Work'?

INTERACTION:

SYMBOL OF BAPTISM: HOLY OILS

Anointing with oil is mentioned in the Old Testament, and in the Baptism service a candidate is marked on the forehead, with oil, with the sign of the Cross at the Decision. This marks the turning towards Christ, and the prayer finishes with words of protection and direction from God.

Using the Oil of Baptism (from the Chrism Eucharist during Holy Week) or a simple olive oil, as the group reflects on the words from the Baptism service, make the sign of the cross on your forehead, or within the group, sign each other.

CLOSING PRAYER

**God of grace and life,
in your love you have given us
a place among your people;
keep us faithful to our baptism,
and prepare us for that glorious day
when the whole creation will be made
perfect
in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

2: FAMILY, FRIENDSHIP AND RELATIONSHIPS

OPENING PRAYER

God of mercy,
by whose grace alone we are accepted
and equipped for your service:
stir up in us the gifts of your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
that we may bring forth the fruit of the
Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

READ THE SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Then Jesus' mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.' And he replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'

Mark 3:31-35

QUESTION:

Why do you think this passage was chosen for the theme of 'Family, Friendship and Relationships'?

VIDEO

Watch one or both of the videos featuring Trevor and Ros



QUESTIONS:

- What communities do you belong to, and how do they each relate to your faith in Christ?
- When you think of 'family', who do you think of? Why?
- What examples from your church and local community can you think of that demonstrate Christ's love in daily life?
- What does it mean to 'make a difference'?
- Where do you find 'care, love and joy' in the communities to which you belong?
- If you have a Church School in your area, how do you support it?

FROM THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM – FELLOWSHIP OF FAITH

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism: by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.

All:
We welcome you into the fellowship of faith;
we are children of the same heavenly Father;
we welcome you.

What do these words mean to you?
What do they say about 'Family, Friends and Relationships'?

INTERACTION:

SYMBOL OF BAPTISM: THE WELCOME

During the Welcome, the people of God enfold the baptism candidate into the fellowship of faith by greeting them and sharing the Peace. It is a moment of connection and reminds us that we do not make this journey alone.

Take a moment to think about what it means to be a part of the household of God, and then share the Peace with the group using the words below:

We are all one in Christ Jesus.
We belong to him through faith,
heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

and also with you.

We offer one another a sign of peace.

CLOSING PRAYER

God of grace and life,
in your love you have given us
a place among your people;
keep us faithful to our baptism,
and prepare us for that glorious day
when the whole creation will be made perfect
in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

3: CHILDHOOD

OPENING PRAYER

God of mercy,
by whose grace alone we are accepted
and equipped for your service:
stir up in us the gifts of your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
that we may bring forth the fruit of the
Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

READ THE SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

John 3.1-20

QUESTION

Why do you think this passage was chosen for the theme of 'Childhood'?

VIDEO

Watch one or both of the videos featuring Adam and Sisi



QUESTIONS:

- Were you conscious of experiencing God in your childhood and teenage years, and how? When did you first know that God was real?
- What can children teach us about living the Christian life more fully?
- How do you talk to God? Has it changed from when you first came to faith?
- Have you felt pressure from other people about your faith? How did you deal with it? Do you have advice for others?
- God often seems to come to people when life is difficult and they feel they have no strength in themselves. Why are we more open to hearing God when we feel weak?
- What are the particular challenges that people face today in their families and relationships, and how can the church support them?

FROM THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM - CHILDREN OF GOD

Our Lord Jesus Christ has told us that to enter the kingdom of heaven we must be born again of water and the Spirit,

and has given us baptism as the sign and seal of this new birth.

Here we are washed by the Holy Spirit and made clean.

Here we are clothed with Christ, dying to sin that we may live his risen life.

As children of God, we have a new dignity and God calls us to fullness of life.

DISCUSSION

What do these words mean to you?
What do they say about 'Childhood'?

INTERACTION:

SYMBOL OF BAPTISM: NEW BIRTH

The Baptism service reminds us that we die to sin and live Christ's risen life. It is a new beginning. In baptism this is often shown by the newly baptised putting on a white robe.

Participants are invited to bring with them their baptism certificate or a photograph of themselves on their baptism day, and share them with each other.

CLOSING PRAYER

**God of grace and life,
in your love you have given us
a place among your people;
keep us faithful to our baptism,
and prepare us for that glorious day
when the whole creation will be made
perfect
in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

4: HEALTH & VULNERABILITY

OPENING PRAYER

God of mercy,
by whose grace alone we are accepted
and equipped for your service:
stir up in us the gifts of your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
that we may bring forth the fruit of the
Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

READ THE SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?' The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.' Jesus said to him, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.' At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

John 5:1-9a

QUESTION

Why do you think this passage was chosen for the theme of 'Health & Vulnerability'?

VIDEO

Watch one or both of the videos featuring Julie and Laura



QUESTIONS:

- How easy is it to be open with people and with God about issues we feel vulnerable about? How do you feel your vulnerability may have helped others?
- What has helped you 'find your voice' when talking about your faith?
- How have the difficulties you have experienced brought you to a new understanding of God's calling and purpose for your life?
- How does our faith make sense when prayer seems unanswered or issues are unresolved?
- How can the church be a place that nurtures wholeness of mind, body and spirit?
- Do you feel God is calling you to a vocation, lay or ordained? Would you like to explore this further?

FROM THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM - PRAYER OVER THE WATER

We praise you, loving Father,
for the gift of your Son Jesus.
He was baptized in the River Jordan,
where your Spirit came upon him
and revealed him as the Son you love.
He sent his followers
to baptize all who turn to him.
Now, Father, we ask you to bless this
water,
that those who are baptized in it
may be cleansed in the water of life,
and, filled with your Spirit,
may know that they are loved as your
children,
safe in Christ for ever.
Amen.

DISCUSSION

What do these words mean to you?
What do they say about 'Health and
Vulnerability'?

INTERACTION

SYMBOL OF BAPTISM: WATER

Water is the symbol of baptism. In the
waters of baptism we are washed clean,
and we drown and die to our old life
before being raised with Christ.

Using a jug, pour water into a bowl (of
the font if you are holding the session in
church), and then each group member
places their hands in it. They could
sign themselves again, or simply let the
waters wash over their hands, reflecting
as they feel the water on their skin of
what it means to be washed clean.

CLOSING PRAYER

**God of grace and life,
in your love you have given us
a place among your people;
keep us faithful to our baptism,
and prepare us for that glorious day
when the whole creation will be made
perfect
in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

5: END OF LIFE

OPENING PRAYER

God of mercy,
by whose grace alone we are accepted
and equipped for your service:
stir up in us the gifts of your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy of our calling;
that we may bring forth the fruit of the
Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

READ THE SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of

many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke 2:25-38

QUESTION

Why do you think this passage was chosen for the theme of 'End of life'?

VIDEOS

Watch the video featuring the Bishop of Chichester



QUESTIONS:

- If we truly believe that this life is preparatory, then what difference does that make to the way we live?
- What resources have you built up during your Christian life to support you in moments of need? What prayers, hymns, readings or objects are important to you?
- How can we ensure people have dignity in vulnerability and death?
- Have you thought about the practicalities of death, for example funeral instructions or writing your will? How will you express your Christian hopes and values?
- How might you describe the Christian hope of heaven to others?
- If you could have more of something, what would you ask God for?

FROM THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM – GIVING OF A LIGHTED CANDLE

God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness
and has given us a place with the saints in light.
You have received the light of Christ;
walk in this light all the days of your life.

All:

**Shine as a light in the world
to the glory of God the Father.**

DISCUSSION

What do these words mean to you?
What do they say about 'the End of Life'?

INTERACTION:

SYMBOL OF BAPTISM: LIGHT

Jesus is the Light of the World, and many newly baptised Christians are given a candle to remind them of their new life. The light of the risen Christ is passed to all disciples as they are sent out in mission.

If participants have their baptism candles, these could be brought to the session; otherwise each person could be provided with a candle. Churches with paschal candles may light the participants' candles from there, or one candle may be lit before lighting the next, creating a chain of light.

CLOSING PRAYER

**God of grace and life,
in your love you have given us
a place among your people;
keep us faithful to our baptism,
and prepare us for that glorious day
when the whole creation will be made
perfect
in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

FURTHER SUPPORT IN EXPLORING YOUR VOCATION

If you feel you would like to spend some more time considering God's call in your life, and perhaps a calling to some form of lay or ordained ministry, there are range of people who can support you in conversation and prayer in the Diocese. For more information, contact the Diocese's Vocations Officer, the Rev Dr Paul Redparth (paul.redparth@chichester.anglican.org).

LIVING FAITH

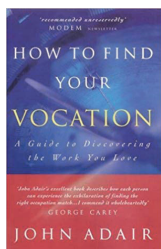
The Diocese also runs a discipleship course, Living Faith, which has a strong emphasis on vocational discernment and is running from January 2018 (and will be run on a regular basis throughout the Diocese).

For more information, see the diocesan website.

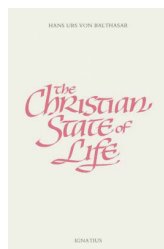
LIFE COACHING

For personal life-coaching from a Christian perspective, Jenny Butter of Epiphany Life Coaching (in mid-Sussex) can provide personal life and/or career coaching, as well as support for churches, and can be contacted at: jennybutter@epiphanylifecoaching.com

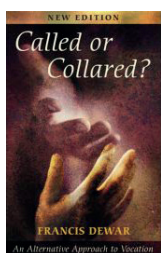
FURTHER READING ON VOCATION



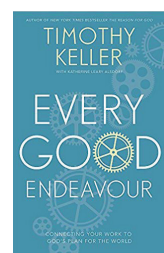
How to find your Vocation
John Adair,
(Canterbury Press, 2000)



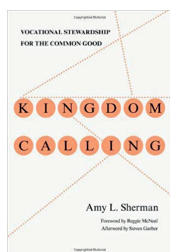
The Christian State of Life
Hans Urs Von Balthasar,
(Ignatius Press, 2012)



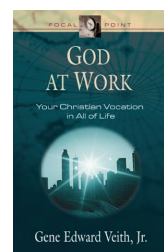
Called or Collared?
Francis Dewar,
(new ed SPCK, 2000)



Every Good Endeavour:
Connecting Your Work to God's
Plan for the World
(Hodder, 2014)



Kingdom Calling:
Vocational Stewardship for the
Common Good
Amy L. Sherman
(IVP, 2012)



God at Work:
Your Vocation in All of Life
Plan for the World
Gene Edward Veith
(Crossway, 2002)



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