

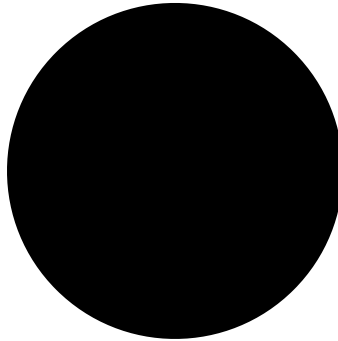
**“I sing a song of the saints of God... and I want to be one too”
aka - Inquirers Class; aka - Episcopal 101
Guided by Fr. John Jenkins**

ORIENTATION MEETING

Greetings and introductions

Overview:

Why?



The purpose of this class is to provide information about Christianity from an Episcopalian perspective and about The Episcopal Church. We do this in community, building new relationships, and holding one another in prayer throughout the journey. At the ends of this work, you will know new things about The Episcopal Church and how to practice Christianity. You will be prepared to choose whether to participate in one of the post-baptismal rites of initiation: Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirmation.

As mentioned further down this document, I'm recommending a very fine video series of a traditional Inquirer's Class to undergird your formation. What I intend to focus on first are the questions and topics you raise and second on conversations about Julia Gatta's *Life in Christ*. Her book reflects on orthopraxy (right-practice) rooted in an Anglican orthodoxy (right-belief). Since the Enlightenment, Christians have been obscenely focused on the latter to the exclusion of the former, but The Episcopal Church has a unique orientation to draws us to “preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary use words” (St. Francis of Assisi).

RESPECTful Communication Guidelines for our meetings:

R = take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel without blaming others.

E = use EMPATHETIC listening.

S = be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles.

P = PONDER what you hear and feel before you speak.

E = EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions.

C = keep CONFIDENTIALITY.

T = TRUST ambiguity because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong.

Mutual Invitation Communication tool:

In order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak, we will proceed in the following way when prompted:

The leader or a designated person will share first. After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share.

If you are not ready to share yet, say “I pass for now” and invite the next speaker. We will invite you to share after everyone has been invited. Or, if on]. If you don’t want to say anything at all, simply say “pass” and proceed to invite another person to share. We will do this until everyone has been invited.

Listen to everyone’s responses before speaking again. There will be time to respond and to ask clarifying questions after everyone has had an opportunity to share.

—from *The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lamb* by Eric H. F. Law, Kaleidoscope Institute.

Key assumptions about maturing as Christians:

- We all have a spiritual life.
- It is a significant act of spiritual growth when we accept responsibility for our spiritual life.
- A healthy spiritual life assumes engagement rather than escape.
- We seek spiritual practices and to cultivate proficiency and competence in them.
- We need resilient and solid spirituality.
- Our spiritual life and practices evolve as our lives change.
- An engaging spiritual life requires regular time and attention.
- The *parish church*’s primary task is the spiritual formation of its people.

—from *In Your Holy Spirit: Traditional Spiritual Practices in Today’s Christian Life* by Michelle Heyne, Ascension Press, 2011.

SCHEDULE

Week 1	Orientation
Week 2	Life in Christ, Chapter 1, p. 1 -19
Week 3	Life in Christ, Chapter 1, 19 - 36
Week 4	Life in Christ, Chapter 2, p. 37 - 58
Week 5	Life in Christ, Chapter 2, p. 58 - 85
Week 6	Life in Christ, Chapter 3, p. 87 - 108
Week 7	Life in Christ, Chapter 3, p. 109 - 127
Week 8	Life in Christ, Chapter 4, p. 128 - 151
Week 9	Life in Christ, Chapter 4, p. 151 - 178
Week 10	Life in Christ, Chapter 5, p. 179 - 207

RESOURCES

Inquirer's Class resources:

I found a very thorough Inquirer's Class produced last January by an acquaintance, The Rev. David Meginniss, at Christ Episcopal Church, Tuscaloosa, in The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama. It's a very fine resource that you can dig into on your own schedule, and I recommend that you do. There are seven videos, each of about 45 minutes: <https://www.christchurch1828.org/inquirers>

The topics are:

Who is God?

The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion

Sacraments **video missing :- (but see Chapter Nine in Your Faith, Your Life

Church History

Holy Scriptures

What Episcopalians Believe

The Prayer Book and the Calendar

Instructed Eucharist and Roles in the Service

Principal Resources:

The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites, and Ceremonies of the Church, Together with The Psalter or Psalms of David, According to the use of The Episcopal Church. Church Publishing, 1979 (Certificate, January 2016).

The New Oxford Annotated Study Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Oxford University Press, 5th Ed. 2018.

Life in Christ: Practicing Christian Spirituality by The Reverend Dr. Julia Gatta, Church Publishing, 2018.

Your Faith, Your Life: An Invitation to the Episcopal Church by Jenifer Gamber and Bill Lewellis. Church Publishing, 2017.

Inquirers Class: <https://www.christchurch1828.org/inquirers> video series at Christ Episcopal Church, Tuscaloosa, The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama, 2020.

Secondary Resources

Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer by Rowan Williams, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014.

Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life by Rowan Williams, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2016.