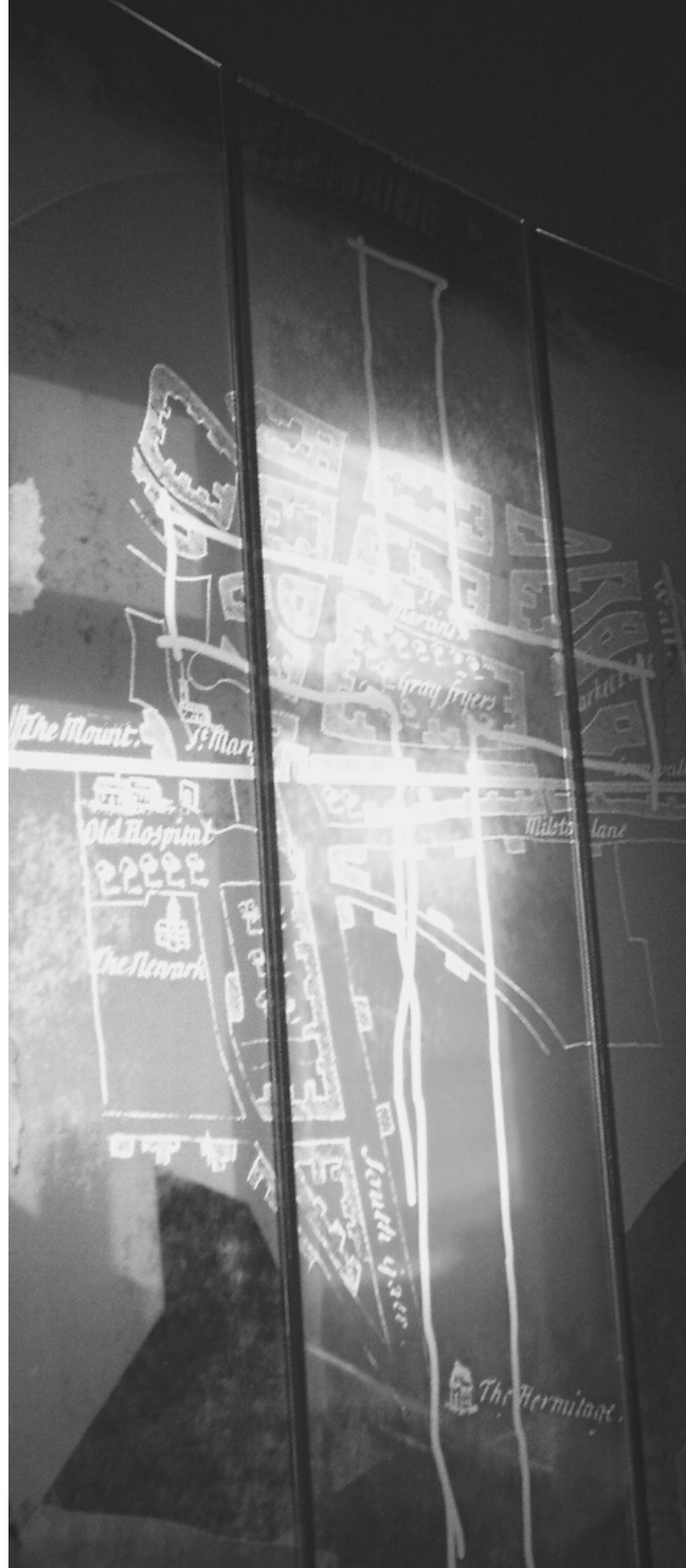




HOLY HABITS.



RESOURCES
& USER GUIDE

User Guide

Introduction

What are Holy Habits?

Holy Habits are simple ways to approach spiritual disciplines, such as prayer and reading the Bible.

Who can practice Holy Habits?

Anyone can practice Holy Habits, individually or with others. Try using Holy Habits with children in school, at home with family over a cup of tea or with friends in a coffeeshop. Why not include Holy Habits at the start of a Church meeting or as part of a worship service.

Why we use Holy Habits?

Holy Habits make space to encounter God. They help us slow down and take time to listen to God. Practising Holy Habits regularly, helps deepen our discipleship to Jesus. The more we practice Holy Habits, the more we develop our capacity to hear Gods voice in our everyday faith journey.

Holy Habits also make space for us to deepen our relationship with others. Holy Habits help us listen to and learn from others, encouraging one another and enlarging perspectives. As we embark on significant structural changes in the Diocese, regularly practising Holy Habits, individually and with others, will allow us to be more open to being ***Shaped by God Together.***

The Resources

01 Dwelling in the Word

A simple way to read the Bible together with an emphasis on listening to God and other people.

02 Community Examen

A simple form of contemplative prayer drawn from the Ignatian tradition. It is based around three key questions.

Dwelling in the Word

Introduction

Dwelling in the Word is rooted in the ancient practice of Lectio Divina. We hear a passage of Scripture and, guided by the Holy Spirit, see where our attention is drawn. We dwell in the passage, listen to and share what struck others.

Ways to use Dwelling in the Word

Dwelling in the Word can be a good way to start a PCC, Synod or other church meeting. Use the Dwelling practice in small groups, with children, young people and adults. In school as a tool for spiritual reflection or RE lesson, as a family gathered in the lounge and in church as a sermon or creative reading.

Time

Dwelling in the word is primarily a listening practice, which needs time. Anything from 15 minutes to an hour. If you are short on time, skip the second reading (step 5) and shorten the amount of sharing time (steps 6-8). If you have lots of time, leave long pauses after each reading. Share in pairs, then groups of four and then the whole group. Reflect together on the experience.

Suggested Bible Passages

The following passages offer food for different stages of your journey towards becoming a Minster Community. You might want to choose one passage and use it throughout or have a more varied diet. As different groups of people meet at different times and in different places, there will be great richness from dwelling in the same scriptures.

Suggested Bible Passage

Mark 4:1-9

Preparation Stage

Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalms 103

John 15:1-17

Forming Stage

Isaiah 35

Psalms 46

Mark 4:26-32

Growing Stage

Isaiah 55

Psalms 67

Mark 12:28-34

Suggested Opening Prayer

Invite participants to join in with the ***Bold Italics... Let's pray.***

God who speaks, hear our prayer.

As we dwell in Your life-giving word,
May we find deep-rooted delight.

As we learn to live inside Your Kingdom story,
May our stories find their meaning.

As we look through the lens of Your love,
May our perspectives be enlarged.

As we let go and listen with ears to hear,
May we be open to hearing God's voice through others.

As we catch wind of Your gentle whisper,
May we find Your comfort and challenge.

Speak God, we are listening.
Amen.

Suggested Closing Prayer

Invite participants to join in with the ***Bold Italics... Let's pray.***

God, we thank you for Your word.
A lamp for our feet, a light for our pathways.

May Your light shine
Restoring Your image in us.

May Your light shine
Reorientating us within Your story.

May Your light shine
Reframing the present.

May Your light shine
Reimagining the future.

May Your light shine
Now and forever.
Amen.

Dwelling in the Word Practice

1.PRAY: Invite God in prayer, to open ears, hearts and minds.

2.PASSAGE: Read your chosen Bible passage aloud, slowly.

3.PERCEIVE: Invite listeners to notice where their attention is drawn. It could be a certain verse, phrase or single word. Something that resonates or something that feels strange or raises questions.

4.PAUSE: Hold silence for a minute or two. Invite listeners to dwell with the place in the passage that stood out for them.

5.PASSAGE: Read the Bible passage again, slowly.

6.PAIRS: Invite listeners to find another person in the group to share their reflections.

7.PRESENT: Invite listeners to share in their pairs what they noticed. Each person should speak without being interrupted and both need time to speak. In the next step, listeners will be asked to report what their partner said, not what they noticed. Some people take notes to help focus and remember.

8.PASS ON: Regather as a whole group or organise into groups of four or six. Invite listeners to take turns to introduce their partner by name and share what they heard them say.

9.PONDER: Spend some time reflecting, as a whole group, on the themes arising. What might God be saying to us? Record what God has been saying to the group.

10. PRAY: Thank God in prayer, for speaking to the group. You may like to take some time to reflect together on the experience.

Community Examen

Introduction

The Examen is a spiritual practise created by priest and theologian St Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th century. It is a prayer of thankful reflection. A tool to walk through the recent past with God, noticing and naming God's presence in joyful and difficult moments, and a way of asking God to help resolve how to live well in the future.

The Community Examen is based around three questions:

1. Where have we seen a glimpse of glory?

This question enables us to see where God is in the present. Our response is thanksgiving

2. What is troubling us?

This question enables us to name our fears, anxieties and the things we lament. Our response is to ask for peace.

3. What are we hoping for?

This question enables us to look to the future in faith. Our response is to seek God's blessing.

Ways to use Community Examen

Community Examen can be a good way to start or close a PCC, Synod or other church meeting. Use the practice in small groups, with children, young people and adults. In school as a tool for spiritual reflection or RE lesson, as a family at home and in church as a sermon.

The Community Examen can form the structure for meetings, using each question as a lens to look at a particular issue - mission, finance, buildings, Diocesan Priorities. For Example...

Where have we seen glimpses of Glory in our local community?

What is troubling us about our building?

What are we hoping for financially?

Time

Community Examen is 'stretchy'. It can take a few minutes at the start or end of a meeting or form the entire structure of a meeting, small group or church service. With more time, there is space for reflection, sharing and conversation between each question.

Suggested Opening Liturgy

In the Bible, there are many references to fire. It is a sign of God's presence. It is where Moses is called, where Daniel and his friends are saved and where Jesus gathers his friends. Fire cleanses and warms, protects and illuminates. It is also beautiful, wild, untameable and mysterious. We are invited to gather around a fire to feel its warmth and watch the flames. God is here, this is Holy Ground.

Suggested Opening Prayer

We meet in the name of God, our maker, redeemer and friend.

(Say together)

In the warmth of the fire may we find peace.
In the flames of the fire may we find mercy.
In the light of the fire may we find blessing.
In the mystery of the fire may we encounter holiness.
As we gather in this place may you bind us together in love.
Amen.

Suggested Closing Prayer

We meet in the name of God, our maker, redeemer and friend.

(Say together)

We thank you for the warmth of Your peace.
the flames of Your Mercy.
the light of Your blessing.
the mystery of Your holiness.
As we leave this place may you send us out together in love.
Amen.

Community Examen Practice

Open in prayer or use the suggested opening liturgy. Ask each question in turn, leaving space in between for silent reflection.

If you have time, invite the group to share a few thoughts before concluding each question with a simple call and response.

1. Where have we seen Glimpses of Glory?

Where have we seen God at work?

Where have we known God's Presence?

What has been good?

Hold Silence

Share brief reflections

Call: Where we see Glimpses of Glory

Response: Lord, we thank you.

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2. What is troubling us?

What is making us fearful?

What is making things difficult?

What risks are we seeing?

Hold Silence

Share brief reflections

Call: Where there is trouble

Response: Lord, bring wisdom and peace

3. What are we hoping for?

What are our hopes and dreams?

What is giving us energy?

What are we wanting from God now?

Hold Silence

Share brief reflections

Call: Where we see hope

Response: Lord, pour out your blessing.

Close in prayer.