



SCHOOL OF MINISTRY
OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Toward a missionary diocese

Some suggestions for facilitators

Ministry in adult Christian formation: Welcome to this opportunity for ministry! Serving as a facilitator as members of your parish reflect together about our calling to engage with one another about matters of faith is a service to the Church. Blessings to you in this role.

Toward a missionary diocese: The theme of this DVD has to do with the saying that we have heard in the Diocese of North Carolina for some years: “*A missionary diocese... living God’s dream by making disciples and making a difference.*” As time passes such phrases sometimes merely become familiar words that have lost their power. And yet, there is deep meaning to this vision, and these DVDs are designed to help us reflect afresh about “living God’s dream.” What do these words mean to *us*? To our congregations? What do we need to do to make this vision a reality?

Participants on the DVD include

Michael Curry
Bishop of North Carolina

Scott Evans Hughes
St. Stephen’s Church, Durham

Lisa G. Fischbeck
Church of the Advocate, Carrboro

Tom Womble
Calvary Church, Tarboro

There are four programs in *Toward a missionary diocese* (with times):

- “*Follow me*” (13:18)
- *Making disciples, making a difference* (9:53)
- *Living into God’s dream: Some stories* (17:32)
- *What would it look like...?* (4:45)

Purpose of the study: Our hope is that this study will

- encourage fresh thought about what it means to be “missionary;”
- help us to understand the imagery of “God’s dream;”
- examine the varied ways to understand discipleship and mission;
- challenge us to commit ourselves and our congregations to the realization of the vision, “Living God’s dream, making disciples and making a difference;”
- contribute to strengthening the sense of community among ourselves;
- affirm the biblical foundations of our faith; and

- challenge us to relate study and reflection to action in the name of Christ.

Facilitation: Please refer to *Doing theology: DVDs for parish study – Some suggestions for facilitators*, which is included in the notebook provided each congregation in the Diocese of North Carolina, for general comments about your role as facilitator. (If a copy is not available, contact the School or visit our website, www.episdioncschool.org.)

Number of sessions: We anticipate that each of these programs could be used successfully in a Sunday morning adult forum, the basics being that you show a program or a portion of it, and then have conversations about it. While more extensive time might be beneficial, this pattern is manageable in a Sunday school setting allowing perhaps 45 minutes. If more extensive time is desired, then obviously times other than Sunday morning provide greater flexibility.

The second and third of these four programs are broken down into sections, and if there is particular energy in your group for one aspect of the theme, you could easily expand the sessions.

Conversations: Three general approaches seem important to us: The first is to provide opportunity for a study group to connect with what people said on the DVD to their own lives – “what experiences have *you* had...?” The second is similar, your seeking to learn what from the DVD resonates with them – “what particular points made on the film lead you to say *yes!* or *no!*” And the third is to help people engage more deeply in theological reflection – recognizing that Scripture *and* commonly used theological terms, such as *mission* and *ministry* and *call*, are there to help us engage deeply and seriously toward the end that our own journeys of faith will be more intentional and committed.

Summary: In the comments on the four programs below, we encourage you to provide a summary at the end of each session. As we suggest in our general facilitation guide, however, note that we are not suggesting a detailed summary of what everyone said. Rather we find it good to somehow tie the conversation together, commending the group for their contribution, and suggesting that the group has engaged in faithful reflection together.

Key Bible passages: Bishop Curry, in his reflection in the first program, cites various passages of Scripture. Other passages may occur to your group on the themes in this DVD, Be open to these possibilities, and encourage participants to read such passages to the group. “Thank you for suggesting those verses; let’s all look at them for a moment....”

Additional study: Reference is made in the DVD to Verna Dozier’s *The Dream of God: A Call to Return* (1991). Contact Education/Liturgy Resources, which serves our diocese, at (919) 693-5547, for copies.

Note that we are able to update our facilitators’ guides on-line, so if you find books that you believe deserve mention here, please contact us.

Comments on each of the four programs follow. Remember that we say more about this program format in our general facilitators’ guide, available on-line or in our DVD notebooks.

Program 1: “Follow me”

In preparation:

- ⇒ Make sure that you have suitable equipment to show the DVD, and that you know how to operate it! Make sure, too, that seating arrangements are conducive both to viewing and to discussion.
- ⇒ Have Bibles available (and encourage people to bring their own next time).

This first session might look like this:

- *Prayer:* We encourage you to open and close all sessions in prayer. One you might wish to use, which appears in our general DVD facilitation guide, is adapted from *Good News: A Congregational Resource for Reconciliation*, by the Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston. It is as follows:

O God, we stand on the border to your Kingdom. We pray that your Holy Spirit will be with us to guide us in our discussions. Grant us an openness to hear you in the words of those around us, and courage to proclaim you in our own words, through the love of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

- *Introductions:* In some of our congregations, everyone will know everyone, but for many of our parishes, that may not be the case, and especially newcomers will appreciate a reminder of who folks are. Take a minute or two for basic introductions. If you find more extended or creative introductions appealing, you could ask participants to answer this question (in one sentence): “What comes to mind when you hear the word *missionary*?”
- *The plan for this program:* Provide an overview of what will happen today. This is simply a courtesy to the group to make it clear how you’ll proceed and what to expect.
- *The DVD program:* Show the first program, which consists entirely of a reflection by Bishop Curry.
- *Conversations:* There are no questions provided for this first program on the DVD (there are questions for the other three programs). We thought it best for the group, under your guidance, to be free to respond to Bishop Curry’s thoughts as they saw fit. You might simply ask, “What did you hear that really connected with you?” (You can follow that up with “Why?” if they don’t elaborate on their own.) “What did you hear that seemed to be a fresh insight to you? Why?” Remember, there is nothing wrong with asking – or freeing people to name – things that they might not embrace as their own or approaches with which they differed. As you view this program in advance, you may develop your own questions. If certain of the Bishop’s phrases really stood out for you, note them, and you may then quote one for the group and invite their comments.
The task is to stimulate conversation, and that requires your discerning where energy lies and drawing out insights from throughout the group. Once the conversation gets going – and we

believe it will! – your task is to keep it focused, and to shift ground when a particular subject seems to have been exhausted.

- *Summary, reminder of the next program, task for the week, and prayer:* If one subject or point seemed to dominate the discussion, you might ask participants to reflect further on it during the week; being as specific as you can in this task will be helpful to the group.

One prayer you might wish to use to close this session is also adapted from *Good News* by Bishop Charleston, below. But note the collect for a missionary diocese at the end of this guide, which you might wish to use throughout the study or, as we suggest, at the end.

Dear God, thank you for the presence of your Holy Spirit in this conversation. We ask that the Spirit will go with us as we leave this place to be your ministers. Give us grace to be healers of what hurts us and heralds of what makes us whole. In the blessed name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Session 2: Making disciples, making a difference

In preparation:

⇒ Make sure equipment is set up and seating arrangements are as you wish them to be.

The second session might look like this:

- *Prayer:* See session 1 for a possible text.
- *The plan for this program:* Provide an overview of what will happen today.
- *The DVD program:* Show the entire second program or any segment of it. The sections are (1) A missionary diocese; (2) God’s dream; and 3) Making disciples, making a difference.
- *Conversations:* Two questions are provided on the DVD. You need not use both, or either of them. Feel free to create your own. If you do wish to use one or both, note that you may place them on the screen. After the credits for the program, a page will show the titles for the program you have just seen. At the lower right will be a link, “Discussion questions.” Choose it, and the first question will appear, where there is an option for “Next question.” If you are doing a more extended program and want to break, etc., before turning to the second question, note that you can navigate easily from the Program Menu onward. The questions for this program are these:
 1. What does the call to our being a “missionary diocese” mean to you?
 2. How do you and your congregation make disciples and make a difference in our world? What else needs to be done to fulfill that vision?

The questions for this program presume that few if any will disagree with the notion that “making disciples” and “making a difference” as Christians in our world is part of our life of

faith. Nevertheless, people should feel free to say that these phrases don't connect with them. The intent here is to start the group on the task of making these phrases their own.

- *Summary, reminder of the next program, task for the week, and prayer:* You will know best as to whether the group should be given any task for the week. See session 1 for a possible text for the closing prayer.

Session 3: Living into God's dream: Some stories

In preparation:

⇒ Make sure equipment is set up and seating arrangements are as you wish them to be.

The third session might look like this:

- *Prayer:* See session 1 for a possible text.
- *The plan for this program:* Provide an overview of what will happen today.
- *The DVD program:* Show the entire third program or any segment of it. The sections are (1) "Missionary" congregations; (2) A "missionary" diocese; and 3) Called to be "missionary."
- *Conversations:* Two questions are provided for this program on the DVD. If you are in need of a reminder, we explain how to navigate to the questions on screen in the comments above about the second session.
 1. What is your congregation's "missionary" story?
 2. How do *you* engage in mission and ministry?

The presumption in this third program, "Some stories," is that the stories told on the DVD are *not* there because they are models of what should be done, but are there instead because they remind us that variations on these stories can be told throughout our diocese, from congregation to congregation, and from individual to individual. With the stimulus of the stories told on this DVD, your task as facilitator is to encourage the group to share *your* congregation's stories and the stories told by the individuals in the group. That is a worthy endeavor, affirming and challenging at the same time.

- *Summary, reminder of the next program, task for the week, and prayer:* If there is a task for the week, assign it. See session 1 for a possible text for the closing prayer.

Session 4: What would it look like...?

In preparation:

- ⇒ Make sure equipment is set up and seating arrangements are as you wish them to be.
- ⇒ Photocopy the evaluation of this program which is located after the guide in the notebook.

The fourth and final session might look like this:

- *Prayer:* See session 1 for a possible text.
- *The plan for this program:* Provide an overview of what will happen today.
- *The DVD program:* Show the entire fourth program. It is brief, and there are no segments.
- *Conversations:* Unlike the second and third programs, where you may *choose* to look at the questions on the screen, this final program goes directly to questions, which will come up on the screen immediately after the credits. (You may also navigate to them if you wish the questions to appear on screen later.) The final questions, presented as one, are these:
 1. What would it look like if we were truly a missionary diocese?
 2. What do I need to do?

Having a “nice” study is one thing; having one that challenges us to move forward as a community of faith is another. Our hope is that the brevity of the fourth DVD program will give ample time for the group to be introspective (what would it look like?) and to be inspired to a new or renewed witness (what do *I* need to do?).

- *Evaluation:* Encourage participants to complete the evaluation, and provide time for it. Please share the results with us. It really is helpful to our own ministry as a school.
- *Final summary and closing prayer:* Consider using this collect for a missionary diocese:

Most gracious and loving God: Strengthen the hearts of your people in this Diocese, that loving you with our whole heart, and loving our neighbors as ourselves, we might, in the power of the Spirit, obey the call of Jesus, to go into our world as disciples, making disciples, and making a difference, through your saving love. Amen.