

# THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN VERMONT

## USING LIFECYCLES AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR COVENANT GROUP FORMATION

*LifeCycles* is the foundation for initial as well as lifelong formation of the Covenant Group and, later, Local Ministry Support Team. The Episcopal Church in Vermont offers the following process as the standard progression through initial Covenant Group formation process leading to installation of a Local Ministry Support Team. Steps 1 through 7 include a maximum of 46 sessions (averaging 6 sessions per step). A Covenant Group may complete this initial stage of formation within a timeline of 18 months through 3 years, depending on how often the Group chooses to meet.

### COVENANT GROUP FORMATION PROCESS

1. *LifeCycles*, Cycle 1, Unit 1, *Encountering Our Story*
2. *LifeCycles*, Cycle I, Unit 6, *Celebrate & Serve the Reign of God*
3. *LifeCycles*, Cycle 1, Unit 2, *Gathered by the Spirit*
4. *LifeCycles*, Focus Unit – *Liturgy, Baptism, Eucharist: The Book of Common Prayer*  
Resources:
  - *The New Church's Teaching Series, Volume Seven: Opening the Prayer Book* and *Volume Twelve: A Theology of Worship*.
  - *A Dictionary for Episcopalians* by John Wall.
  - The current editions of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* and *The Book of Occasional Services*.
5. *LifeCycles*, Cycle 1, Unit 3, *Sent Forth by the Spirit*
6. *LifeCycles*, Focus Unit -- OVERVIEW OF THE SCRIPTURES  
Possible Options:
  - *The New Church's Teaching Series, Volume Two: Opening the Bible* and *Volume Three: Engaging the Word for Biblical Studies*.
  - *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*, by Marcus Borg
  - *And God Spoke: The Authority of the Bible for the Church Today*, Christopher Bryan
  - *Don't Know Much About the Bible*, Kenneth C. DavisResources:
  - *The Access Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical*, Gerald R. O'Day, David Peterson
  - *Oxford Bible Atlas*, Herbert Gordon May

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## 7. *LifeCycles*, Cycle 1, Unit 4, *Washed and Renewed*

The following areas are integral to the Covenant Group's formation process leading to commissioning and ordination. They are enacted through resources, workshops, and mentoring in the congregational, regional, and diocesan circles.

### 1. SAFE CHURCH TRAINING

- Vermont Church sponsored workshops

### 2. ANTI-RACISM TRAINING

- Vermont Church sponsored workshops

### 3. PREACHING TRAINING

- Regional/Vermont Church workshops
- "Preaching the Lectionary" workshops and/or on-line preaching course offered by Episcopal Divinity School or Church Divinity School of the Pacific
- Internet resources: Sermon preparation materials available on the web:  
[www.lectionarypage.net](http://www.lectionarypage.net)  
[www.textweek.com](http://www.textweek.com)  
[www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons that work.htm](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/sermons_that_work.htm)  
[www.lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/](http://www.lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/)  
[www.montreal.anglican.org/comments/](http://www.montreal.anglican.org/comments/)

### 4. PRIEST/DEACON LITURGICAL TRAINING

- Mentoring with clergy
- Regional/diocesan workshops; on-line courses offered by Episcopal Divinity School and Church Divinity School of the Pacific
- *Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded*, by Byron Stuhlman
- *Celebrating the Eucharist: A Practical Ceremonial Guide for Clergy and Other Liturgical Ministers*, Patrick Malloy.
- *Strong, Loving and Wise, Presiding in Liturgy*, by Robert Hovda
- *The Ceremonies of the Eucharist, A Guide to Celebration*, by Howard E. Galley
- *Lent, Holy Week, Easter and the Great Fifty Days*, by Leonel Mitchell

### 5. SYSTEMS OF THE CHURCH

- Church canons
- Diocesan canons
- Rubrics

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## ONGOING FORMATION FOLLOWING COMMISSIONING AND ORDINATION

LifeCycles continues as the ongoing formation process of the Local Ministry Support Team. Within Cycles II, III, and IV are resources and opportunities for developing Leadership Skills (such as group facilitation, decision-making, mutual or pastoral care, and introducing the “new” into communities) and Spiritual Practices (such as hospitality, confession, discernment, healing, thanksgiving, celebration).

## RECOMMENDED COVENANT GROUP READING LIST

From *The New Church’s Teaching Series*:

Volume 1: *The Anglican Vision*

Volume 2: *Opening the Bible*

Volume 3: *Engaging the Word*

Volume 7: *Opening the Prayer Book*

Volume 9: *Ethics after Easter*

Volume 12: *A Theology of Worship*

*The Access Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical*,  
Gerald R. O’Day and David Peterson

*Oxford Bible Atlas*, Herbert Gordon May

*Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded*, Byron Stuhlman

*Celebrating the Eucharist: A Practical Ceremonial Guide for Clergy and Other Liturgical Ministers*, Patrick Malloy

*Strong, Loving and Wise, Presiding in Liturgy*, Robert Hovda

*Living on the Border of the Holy*, L. William Countryman

*The Ceremonies of the Eucharist, A Guide to Celebration*, Howard E. Galley

*Lent, Holy Week, Easter and the Great Fifty Days*, Leonel Mitchell

*A Dictionary for Episcopalians*, John Wall

*Enriching Our Worship*

*Lesser Feasts and Fasts*

*The Book of Occasional Services*

*Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*, Marcus Borg

Other resources are available in *Baptismal Ministry Resource List for Personal and Congregational Study* and *Liturgical Ministries Profiles*, both available from the Canon for Ministry Development.

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The Episcopal Church in Vermont

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