



# A Faith for the Future

**VOLUME 3** in the **Church's Teachings for a Changing World** series

## Study Guide for Individuals and Groups

Developed by Jesse Zink



### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

## Mutual Invitation

Series co-editor Eric Law developed a process called Mutual Invitation that ensures everyone in the group will have a voice. Try this process with a group of five to twelve people, especially if you're reading the book as part of a group.

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

- The leader or a designated person will share first.
- After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share. You need not automatically invite the person next to you.
- 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 we will invite you to share later on.
- If you don't want to say anything, simply say "pass" and invite another person to share.

Continue in this manner until everyone has been invited.

# Introduction

1. Theology is thinking about God. What moments in your life have led you to think about God? In other words, in what ways are you already a theologian?
2. What do you make of the concept of “*lex orandi, lex credendi*”? Do you pray, in any way? If so, how does that shape or reflect what you believe about God?
3. How would you summarize the content of the Christian good news in 140 characters or less?

## CHAPTER 1

# God

1. What words, phrases, or images help you understand God?
2. What other gods in the world most frequently compete for your trust?
3. In what ways have your relationships with others helped to teach you something about God? In what ways has your understanding of God taught you something about people around you?

## CHAPTER 2

# Creation, Humanity, and Sin

1. What words come to mind when you hear the word “sin”?
2. Where do you see broken relationship in the world and in your own life?
3. Where have you found glimpses of *shalom* and *hesed*?

## CHAPTER 3

# Jesus of Nazareth

1. What aspects of Jesus's teaching do you find most appealing?
2. How do you understand Jesus's call to repent, or turn around, in your own life?
3. Given the people Jesus paid the most attention to during his life, where would you expect to see him in your community today?
4. What is a situation in the world that you think of as unjust? Does your perspective on it change if you think in terms of mercy? How?

## CHAPTER 4

# Jesus the Christ

1. Where have you seen brokenness and pain turned into reconciliation?
2. Why do many of us find it difficult to experience the intimate love of God?
3. When have you experienced being "far off" from the love of God?

## CHAPTER 5

# The Holy Spirit and the Trinity

1. Have you ever explained the Holy Trinity to someone, or heard it explained by someone else? What makes sense? What still mystifies you?
2. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit?
3. Where do you find wonder in the world?

## CHAPTER 6

# Baptism

1. What areas of your life do you wish you could live differently? In other words, what do you seek to “die” to? In which areas do you wish you were more fully alive?
2. In what ways does the Christian faith challenge our achievement-focused society?
3. Have a look at the Baptismal Covenant on page 305 of the Book of Common Prayer or at [www.bcp.online.org](http://www.bcp.online.org). Which parts most resonate for you?

## CHAPTER 7

# Church

1. When is a time you have found the church to be “holy,” that is, truly distinct and reflecting the life of God into the world around it? In what ways can the church offer a counter-cultural model to the society we live in?
2. Have you ever struggled with someone in the body of Christ? How did you deal with that conflict? Did it lead you into a deeper relationship with God and other Christians, or further away?

## CHAPTER 8

# Eucharist

1. What non-monetary offerings could you make for the work of the church?
2. In what moments of the Eucharist have you felt particularly close to God and the other members of the congregation?
3. What has been your experience of the relationship between baptism and Eucharist? How similar or different is it to what is described in this chapter?

## Mission

1. What do you associate with the words “missionary” and “evangelist”?
2. In what ways can your community take the Eucharist into the world? In what ways can your community listen to what is already present in the communities around you?
3. What obstacles prevent you from taking the good news into the world?

## The End

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “apocalypse”?
2. How does Christian eschatology help shape our lives of faith now?
3. Who have been the saints in your life?

## Conclusion

1. Try again: how would you summarize the gospel or good news in 140 characters, the length of a tweet?
2. Look again at the Nicene Creed: which parts do you see in a new light after reading this book?