

An Overview

Pilgrim is a course for the Christian journey. The aim of the course is to help people become disciples of Jesus Christ.

A pilgrim is a person on a journey. The Bible is a book full of journeys. God's people are always traveling. God's call to Abraham was to leave his own land for a great journey of faith. God's call to Moses was to lead God's people on a journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the promised land. Jesus took his first disciples on a journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. One of the earliest names for the people called Christians was followers of the Way.

Pilgrim is designed to help every local church to invite others to join the people of God on our great journey of faith. Its purpose is to help you to draw together a small group of people who are inquiring about Christian faith or are new to faith and to help them learn about the faith together.

This leader's guide is for clergy and church leaders who are thinking about introducing *Pilgrim* into the life of their church and is also a short handbook for those who will lead the groups.

Why *Pilgrim*?

Lifelong Christian faith formation in The Episcopal Church is lifelong growth in the knowledge, service, and love of God as followers of Christ and is informed by Scripture, tradition, and reason. As stated in the Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation, God invites all people:

- To enter into a prayerful life of worship, continuous learning, intentional outreach, advocacy, and service
- To hear the Word of God through Scripture, to honor church teachings, and continually to embrace the joy of Baptism and

Eucharist, spreading the Good News of the risen Christ and minister to all

- To respond to the needs of our constantly changing communities, as Jesus calls us, in ways that reflect our diversity and cultures as we seek, wonder, and discover together
- To hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people, placing ourselves in the stories of our faith, thereby empowering us to proclaim the Gospel message.

Pilgrim has been developed to help make new disciples and strengthen the understanding of discipleship to all who choose to deepen their understanding of the Christian journey and where they are on their own faith journey.

The structure of *Pilgrim*

There are many different aspects to helping people learn about the Christian faith.

We have taken as our starting point Jesus' summary of the commandments. We are called to offer our lives to God through loving God with all our mind, soul, strength, and heart and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Learning about Christian faith and growing in Christian faith is about more than what we believe. It's also about the ways in which we pray and develop our relationship with God, about the way we live our lives, and about living in God's vision for the Church and for the world.

We offer two stages of material in *Pilgrim*. There are four short *Pilgrim* books (each comprising a course of six or seven sessions) in the Follow Stage, designed for those who are inquirers and very new to the faith. Then there are four short *Pilgrim* books (each comprising a six-session course) in the Grow Stage, designed for those who want to go further and learn more.

The structure of *Pilgrim* is set out in the diagram.

PILGRIM				
A Course for the Christian Journey				
	What do Christians believe?	How do Christians know and worship God?	How do Christians live?	What is the Christian vision for the world?
FOLLOW STAGE <i>"Do you turn to Jesus Christ?"</i>	1 TURNING TO CHRIST	2 THE LORD'S PRAYER	3 THE COMMANDMENTS	4 THE BEATITUDES
GROW STAGE <i>"Will you continue in the Apostles teaching and fellowship?"</i>	5 THE CREEDS	6 THE EUCHARIST	7 THE BIBLE	8 CHURCH AND KINGDOM
	Doctrine	Spirituality	Ethics	Lifestyle

Each short course consists of six or seven sessions. The courses in the Follow Stage are designed to be led by someone who is further on in their Christian faith and who is a skilled teacher. The courses in the Grow Stage are designed so that the group can lead and guide themselves with some external help and support.

In the Follow Stage, each of the four courses is structured around one of four key texts:

- the Baptismal Covenant
- the Lord's Prayer
- the Commandments
- the Beatitudes

These four texts have been important in helping people in the early stages of their Christian journey since the earliest days of the Christian faith.

In the Grow Stage, each of the four courses is structured around a major theme of the Christian life:

- the Creeds
- the Sacraments
- the Scriptures
- living in God's Church and in God's world

Each session of each course is rooted in shared prayer. Each session begins with the group exploring the Scriptures together and continues with a more sustained reflection on the theme and opportunity for questions and discussion.

The short courses in the four Follow Stage books can be approached in any order. Together, we believe they offer a balanced introduction to the Christian life and journey. Our hope and prayer is that *Pilgrim* will help to introduce people to the Christian Way and also equip them to live their whole lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.