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# Introduction

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The difference between *knowing about God* and *being in a relationship with God* has been compared to the difference between reading a menu and eating the meal. The same can be said about our church work.

Busily working for the church does not necessarily mean we are being nourished by the life-empowering feast of faith. Being actively involved in the church does not automatically mean we are spiritually growing. Our church work is a loving response of stewardship to serve God's kingdom as a follower of Jesus. The work, however, can become so overwhelming that we miss the most precious gift the church has to offer. A relationship with God, framed by Jesus' teachings, is the most transformative gift the church can give our long-serving, dedicated servants of Christ.

But how do we find time for this gift? Buildings, budgets, social needs, changing demographics and staffing leave little space for God. Who can find space for the spiritual when there are so many urgent and immediate physical concerns? The sad truth is that we will never be the people—or the church—God is calling us to be if we rely solely on our own strength, merit, and effort. In fact, our self-sufficiency will only leave us feeling depleted, overwhelmed, and disillusioned.

Jesus did not come into the world so that we would have a church job; he came so we might know the freedom and full life that is found in a close, intimate relationship with the One who loves us beyond imagining.

## Introduction

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Jesus told us to make disciples and to be the light of the world, and that the empowerment of the Holy Spirit would help us accomplish more than we can ask for or dream of.

How do we go from doing ministry for the church to being in a relationship with this life-giving empowering God? We quite simply have to stop. Stop the frantic busyness. Stop the intellectual analysis. Stop the self-reliance. Stop the anxious worrying, and let God renew and revive our hearts and minds. Being in a relationship with God, as with every other healthy relationship we experience, takes time and attention in order for it to grow and deepen. Otherwise, as with other relationships, our connection with God can shrivel and even die if it is left to languish. *Revive* aims to provide a supportive structure and community to help that relationship reignite and come alive!

*Revive* is offered as a gift of thanks for the dedicated service of people who have worked so hard for the church yet feel they do not know God as deeply as they desire. By accepting this opportunity, participants will grow in confidence as spiritual leaders who yearn to live a Jesus-shaped life.

Archbishop Moon Hing of West Malaysia wrote in the 2016 Lambeth report *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making*: “To follow Jesus of Nazareth ... is simply the most challenging, the most beautiful, the most costly, the most rewarding journey we could ever choose to begin.” Welcome to this journey! It is the most important and transforming gift the church has to offer.

# Course Overview

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*Revive* is a small-group discipleship program. Lay leaders join their minister in a safe setting, where they find words to describe their spiritual experiences and grow in intimacy with God as a follower of Christ. In ten months, this small-group program can help transform leaders of practical church ministry into confident spiritual leaders who desire to find new life in service and ministry.

*Revive* comprises an opening and closing retreat and three six-week modules:

- Module 1: Communicating with God
- Module 2: Engaging in Scripture
- Module 3: Called for Ministry

The program can be run over a year beginning in the fall or the new year, or the modules can serve as separate workshops. The program is most effective when there is consistent membership in the small group for a ten-month period.

## WHO IS A LAY LEADER?

A lay leader is anyone who holds a church office, oversees a ministry, or has fiduciary responsibility for finance, property, or human resources. Usually a leader holds a medium or high level of screening associated with safe church protocols. Leaders include wardens, vestry members, property and finance officers, committee chairs, church school teachers, youth ministers, pastoral visitors, and liturgical ministers.

## WHO IS THE FACILITATOR?

The facilitator of the program is a minister of the church who is leading the small-group sessions. We have purposefully used the word minister as a signal that the person can be ordained or lay. The facilitators do not have to be a spiritual saint or a master spiritual director but they must be intentional about their own spiritual growth and open to a relational connection with God. It is advantageous for a minister to have a spiritual director (or be one) as it serves as a model for commitment to spiritual growth.

## VIDEO OR LIVE PRESENTATIONS

Each session takes two hours and includes at least one presentation from a prepared video or a live talk from the facilitator. Notes are available to help guide the facilitator's talk. The videos are optional and only available to help provide the content and make the program easy to lead so that the facilitator can attend to hospitality, group dynamics, and facilitating discussions.



## PARTICIPANTS:

- Learn about themselves and discern their life's calling
- Explore their faith journey and enter into a relationship with God
- Enjoy a sense of community and deepened relationships with peers
- Gain confidence with prayer, scripture, and spiritual leadership
- Discern gifts for their calling to serve God's world

## Course Overview

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### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Participants observe the facilitator model a spiritual practice and are then given practical, hands-on experience with the practice. They then reflect on their experience of the new practice within the supportive small group. Each week participants are encouraged to continue experimenting with the new concepts and journal about their reflections.

### FEEDBACK

We are always looking to grow and so your comments, thoughts, and reflections are invaluable. Please send your feedback to [revive@forwardmovement.org](mailto:revive@forwardmovement.org). You will be helping *Revive* be more effective for others.



### ABOUT FORWARD MOVEMENT

Forward Movement inspires disciples and empowers evangelists. Our mission is to support you in your spiritual journey, to help you grow as a follower of Jesus Christ. We live out our ministry by publishing books, daily reflections, studies for small groups, and online resources, as well as by hosting conferences for formation and mission. Other ministries of Forward Movement include RenewalWorks, which helps transform congregations by inviting them to reflect on their spiritual vitality, and ChurchNext, which offers online courses for spiritual growth for individuals and congregations. Our daily devotional, *Forward Day by Day*, is read by Christians around the world and is also available in Spanish (*Adelante Día a Día*) and Braille, online, as a podcast, and as an app for your smartphones or tablets. We donate nearly 30,000 copies each quarter to prisons, hospitals, and nursing homes. We actively seek partners across the church and look for ways to provide resources that inspire and challenge.

A ministry of the Episcopal Church for more than eighty years, Forward Movement is a nonprofit organization funded by sales of resources and gifts from generous donors.

To learn more about Forward Movement and its resources, please visit [www.ForwardMovement.org](http://www.ForwardMovement.org). We are delighted to be doing this work and invite your prayers and support.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This program was developed by the Rev. Canon Dawn Davis, an Anglican priest with more than thirty years experience in a variety of parish and diocesan leadership positions. For ten years, she was director of ministry resources in the Diocese of Toronto and was a certified human resources professional specializing in training and development. She recently earned her doctorate in ministry from Tyndale College University in spiritual formation.

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# Opening Retreat



“

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel.

- Philippians 1:3-5a

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# Agenda

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## Friday Evening

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SESSION A  
**INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW**

- Welcome and Hospitality
- Opening Prayer
- Presentation A: Introduction and Overview
- Small Group Discussion
- Review Small Group Commitment
- Icebreaker, Getting to Know You
- Small Group Discussion

Break

SESSION B  
**YOUR SPIRITUAL STORY**

- Presentation B: Your Spiritual Story
- Group Discussion
- Making our Spiritual Storyboard

Closing Prayer

## Saturday Morning

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SESSION B  
**YOUR SPIRITUAL STORY**  
*(continued)*

- Welcome and Opening Prayer
- Complete making the Spiritual Storyboard
- Small Group Sharing Spiritual Stories

Lunch

## Saturday Afternoon

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SESSION C  
**YOUR SPIRITUAL PREFERENCES**

- Fill out the Spiritual Preferences Form
- Presentation C: Spiritual Preferences
- Quiet Reflection time
- Learn the *Examen* Prayer Method
- Small Group Discussion
- Feedback & Evaluation

Closing Worship

# Opening Retreat

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## SESSION A

### Introduction and Overview

#### FOCUS OF THE SESSION

- Become familiar with the *Revive* program
- A chance to say thank you
- Get to know your small group
- Discuss the Small Group Commitment

#### WELCOME

**Thank you!** Your dedication and commitment to the church is a gift and is deeply appreciated. *Revive* is offered as a gift to say, “Thank you for all you do!”



#### OPENING PRAYER

*Loving God, we come from many different activities to be here at this moment. Breathe peace and contentment into our hearts so that we may be present to you and to each other. We give thanks to you for gifting the many women and men who serve our church. Let this time together be a sign of your love and renewal as we commit to journey together toward you. Help us to hear you in and through one another and grow in love for you and your world. In Christ and empowered by the Spirit. Amen.*

#### OR

*O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding; Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

- The Book of Common Prayer

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“

I am bone dry,  
refresh me. I  
am care-worn,  
restore me. I am  
heartache, revive  
me. I am outside,  
include me.

”

-Stephen Cottrell  
Bishop, Church of England

## Introduction and Overview

### OBJECTIVE OF REVIVE

- Learn about yourself and discern your life's calling
- Explore your faith journey and grow in your relationship with God
- Enjoy a sense of community and deepened relationships with peers
- Gain confidence with prayer, scripture, and spiritual leadership
- Discern gifts for your calling to serve God's world

### LEADERSHIP

- Can be hard and time-consuming work
- Includes decisions about buildings, worship services, outreach, programs, visits, stewardship, etc.
- Leaders can have a difficult time connecting with God
- Even clergy struggle to find time to pray
- Sometimes we know *about* God and about doing a lot *for* God but we do not necessarily *know* God or how to *grow* spiritually

Congratulations for accepting the invitation to be part of *Revive*! Let your church tend to you for a while. Come and be spiritually fed. Jesus' words are as profound now as they were then: "Come to me all of you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What makes the difference between knowing about God or working for God and having a relationship with God?

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