



## Study Guide

for

### Synod of Alberta and the Territories 2016 Convention Mission Priorities Videos

---

We are promised that when two or three gather in his name, Jesus is in our midst (Matt 18:20). This guide is intended to begin conversations in groups of all sizes to hear our Synod's story and to search together to discern where the Spirit is leading God's people today.

The videos may be shared in a variety of ways; for example, prior to or after worship, as a small group study, or during council meetings. You are encouraged to adapt this guide to fit your local context.

**Opening prayer** might be your own, or using the following words:

*Gracious God, we thank you for your gift of love in Christ Jesus. The hope and freedom we have in His life, death, resurrection and ascension astounds us, embraces us and compels us forward. Inspire our thoughts, open our eyes and ears to hear you as we celebrate your Holy Spirit at work in all the world. Amen.*

**Dwelling in the Word** is a discernment practice for listening to God's voice through scripture and one another. In this practice everyone's voice is important and there are no right or wrong comments. The intent is not to "correctly interpret" the text but to listen for the movement of the Holy Spirit. This is a time to allow people to simply share what they heard.

---

## Spirit-Led Leadership

1. Opening Prayer

2. Dwelling in the Word (15 min)     **1 Corinthians 12: 4-11**

Introduce with "As you hear the Word the first time, listen for what surprises you and notice what catches your imagination."

- Have someone read the scripture passage.
- Allow for a minute of silence.
- Ask "What did you hear for the first time? What surprised you? What caught your imagination?"
- Say "As you hear this text for the second time, listen to where and how the Holy Spirit leads."
- Have a different voice read the scripture passage.
- Allow for a minute of silence.
- Ask "In what ways does this reading reveal how the Holy Spirit impacts leadership?"

3. View video: Synod Mission Priority - Spirit-Led Leadership (12 min)

4. What did you hear for the first time? What surprised you? What caught your imagination?

5. Here are some quotes from the video followed by a question to share.

- a. "We wonder how we faithfully lead in this changing culture." ***What might it look like for us to be aware of the work of the Holy Spirit?***
- b. "I see God at work in the many ways God develops leaders here at camp." ***Where have you seen God develop leaders?***
- c. "God is alive and present in our church and providing for our future." ***Share about a time when you experienced God providing for the future.***
- d. "It was encouraging to have time together, spending time sharing our stories." "We began to talk about doing it together." ***Share a story of a time when gathering together encouraged you or inspired you to use your Spirit given gifts.***
- e. ***What might the Synod look like if we lead together with the gifts the Spirit has given?***

6. Close with The Lord's Prayer.

---

## Hope-filled Discipleship

1. Opening Prayer

2. Dwelling in the Word (15 mins)     **Romans 5:1-5**

- Introduce with "As you hear the Word the first time, listen for what surprises you and notice what catches your imagination."
- Have someone read the scripture passage. Allow for a minute of silence.
- Ask "What did you hear for the first time? What surprised you? What caught your imagination?"
- Say "As you hear this text for the second time, listen to where and how the Holy Spirit brings hope."
- Have a different voice read the scripture passage.
- Allow for a minute of silence.
- Ask "In what ways does this reading reveal how the Holy Spirit brings hope?"

3. View video: Synod Mission Priority - Hope-Filled Discipleship (13 min)

4. What did you hear for the first time? What surprised you? What caught your imagination?

5. Here are some quotes from the video followed by a question to share.
  - a. “We get to be part of the journey and to see that seed blossom is really a gift.”...“I remember seeing God through the leaders and how much they cared for the kids . . . and tried to answer their questions” **Share about a time when a follower of Jesus brought hope into your life.**
  - b. “Where I see God working in the lives of students is us meeting the students where they are at . . . being present for them. It’s about God’s presence right where we are; in spite of our brokenness that God is meeting us where we are at.” ...“I matter at camp, I am allowed to be who I am as God has created me to be, amidst a wonderful community.” **Tell about a situation when you were encouraged to be who you really were.**
  - c. “Camp is a really solid rock I am able to come back to each year and it really grounded me in many ways.” ...“Camp is such a safe space that kids can actually question things about their lives, their friends, God.” **Explain how being in a safe place has contributed to your faith formation.**
  - d. “Forgiveness is a gift I want to receive from God. Forgiveness is something I have to give.” **In what ways has forgiving and being forgiven impacted your life?**
  - e. **What might the Synod look like as we join in God’s mission in the world with hope?**
6. Close with the Lord’s Prayer

---

## Innovative Tradition

1. Opening Prayer
2. Dwelling in the Word (15 mins)      **Isaiah 43: 18-21**
  - Have someone read the scripture passage.
  - Allow for a minute of silence.
  - Ask “What did you hear for the first time? What surprised you? What caught your imagination?”
  - Say “As you hear this text for the second time, listen to where and how the Holy Spirit brings change.”
  - Have a different voice read the scripture passage.
  - Allow for a minute of silence.
  - Ask “In what ways does this reading reveal how the Holy Spirit transforms or brings change?”
3. View video: Synod Mission Priority - Innovative Tradition (12 min)
4. What did you hear for the first time? What surprised you? What caught your imagination?
5. Here are some quotes from the video followed by a question to share.
  - a. “God has not left. God still remains. God is present in our congregations.” **Share a story about how God’s presence in your life together transforms the congregation.**
  - b. “We meet together . . . it enriches our experiences. We can feel God’s nudging and encouraging as God has gifted us and lifted us into a whole new venture together as God’s people.” ...“There is among the kids a deep spiritual need that is met by doing VBS this way. The Gospel that was relational, is relational continues to be relational for these kids.” **How does God’s relational nature impact what you do each day?**
  - c. “Dwelling in the Word is a moment of power and reflection and offers a place to go . . . where God is the framework.” **In what way is being God-centred different from being church-centred?**
  - d. “The work of God is not about having all the answers . . . leaning not on your own understanding, but on the will of God. Then God shows the way. You try something, risk doing something that might fail, being bold and trying a new way, stumbling through well intentioned experiences.” **Tell about something innovative you have tried together as a ministry.**
  - e. What might risking, experimenting and being innovative, as we join God’s mission in the world, look like?
6. Close with the Lord’s Prayer

## Collaborative Partnerships

1. Opening Prayer
2. Dwelling in the Word (15 mins)      **Ephesians 4: 1-8**
  - Have someone read the scripture passage.
  - Allow for a minute of silence.
  - Ask “What did you hear for the first time? What surprised you? What caught your imagination?”
  - Say “As you hear this text for the second time, listen to where and how the Holy Spirit calls us to live.”
  - Have a different voice read the scripture passage.
  - Allow for a minute of silence.
  - Ask “In what ways does this reading reveal how the Holy Spirit calls us to live?”
3. View video: Synod Mission Priority - Collaborative Partnerships (13 min)
4. What did you hear for the first time? What surprised you? What caught your imagination?
5. Here are some quotes from the video followed by a question to share.
  - a. “How we can support each other . . . to have the presence of the people of the church in Canada with us is very important to be in this relationship.” . . . “Our partnership of a journey together . . . walking with the people of El Salvador.” **Share a story about being in a relationship where just being present was enough.**
  - b. “The thing that was overwhelming for me in some respects was the amount of times people or the inmates there said, ‘We are so happy that someone has attended to us, that you have remembered us.’” **When have you been blessed by someone attending to you (listening, engaging, caring) or remembering you?**
  - c. “God’s time is not our time.” **Share about what happened when you followed God’s timing more than your own.**
  - d. “I want to share a story about collaboration between church and the world.” . . . “It opens up a whole new group of people to be working with, and with that comes new ideas, new ways of doing things and sparks for us new possibilities for the future.” **What have you noticed when your congregation or ministry has collaborated with the world (neighbourhood/ community) around you?**
  - e. What would the Synod look like as ‘us and them’ becomes ‘we’ in ministry and partnerships together?
6. Close with the Lord’s Prayer