

THE GIFT OF SCRIPTURE

Adult Faith Formation in the Diocese of Galloway

- Pages 1-3 below are information for participants and to give an overview of the sessions. Pages 4-14 are materials for the introductory session and for the four specific sessions. All participants when invited to sign up for the programme should be asked to prepare for the introductory session by reading pages 1-3 below and paragraphs 1-12 in the document.

A facilitator is required for each session and may be one person or shared throughout the sessions.

The Vision

- Bishop Frank has asked us to pray during 2026 for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we prepare for the Great Jubilee of 2033. One way of encountering the Spirit is to take adult faith formation seriously. What follows is an invitation to engage with the teaching document from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland, called *The Gift of Scripture*. This document can be found at <https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Scripture/GoS.pdf>
- Since the document is a pastoral text and not an academic textbook, the invitation to use it is not simply to learn about Sacred Scripture but to encounter Christ in the Word. It is an opportunity to go beyond seeking information and instead strive for transformation and conversion.
- The programme is not designed solely to make us better educated or knowledgeable but to help us become better witnesses of our faith. It is a safe place that recognises that adults learn in different ways, and it encourages different learning styles to be appreciated and acknowledged.

- Among the various learning styles which the programme welcomes are reflection, visual, auditory, practical, relational and contemplative.
- It is hoped that by participating in the programme an individual will encounter, explore, experience and embody Christ in the Word, and be facilitated to a deeper encounter with the spiritual, cognitive, interpersonal and practical dimensions of their individual faith experience.
- The programme promotes self-directed learning for adult participants and invites individuals and parishes to consider using the material for an in-person meeting, an online meeting, or a blend of the two. No one should feel pressurised to speak or to share if they do not feel comfortable, but there should be an atmosphere of genuine listening and an openness to authentic conversation.

The Format of the Sessions

- The programme should last five weeks: an introductory session and four separate meetings.
- It is suggested that the meetings do not take place during Advent or Lent as these liturgical seasons are already full and active.
- Each meeting should be prepared for by reading specific paragraphs in the document and should end with an invitation to participants to think of a practical step which they might make as a consequence of what they have just heard.
- For face-to-face meetings, the seating arrangement might be either in a C-shape or in a circle to face each other and the facilitator is part of the group rather than 'teaching'. A table with a 'focal point' can be arranged with a bible or other visual image.
- For online meetings the designated facilitator should send the necessary link to participants prior to the meeting each week.

Possible Visual Aids to the Sessions

- An open Bible
- A large candle
- A cross
- A plant, a bowl of seeds (connects with the parable of the Sower)
- Scripture Cards: A card inviting participants to consider: **What kind of soil is my heart today?** Give everyone three small cards. Ask them to choose the card that speaks most strongly to them. They can take the card home.
- Card 1 - **Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.** 1 Samuel 3:10
- Card 2 - **Were not our hearts burning within us?** Luke 24:32
- Card 3 - **You must do what the word tells you.** James 1:22

The Introductory session – Paragraphs 1-12

- Opening Prayer

God our Father, we thank you for your presence with us, and we thank you for the opportunity to reflect on the gift of our faith and to explore the gift of the Scriptures. Give us the grace to truly listen to you and to listen to one another. May we allow your Spirit to lead us and guide us. Speak your Word deep within our hearts and direct us to grow in love for you and for one another. May this time together be an experience of faith, hope and love. We ask this in the power of the Spirit, and through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

- The participants should be reminded of the information contained in the vision outlined on pages 1-2 above.
- The meeting will then begin with a Scripture reading followed by a period of silence.
- The Scripture Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

- After the silence participants should be invited to share anything that struck them from the scripture reading
- Participants should then be invited to share on the reading from the document which they had done to prepare for the meeting (Paragraphs 1-12).

- Possible starter questions:

What was the most useful thing for you from the document?

What did you find challenging from the document?

What do you understand of the relationship of Scripture and Tradition?

- Participants are invited to suggest a practical step in light of what has been shared which might support their journey of discipleship.
- Participants should be reminded to prepare for the next session by reading paragraphs 13-23 of the document.
- Closing Prayer (Diocesan Prayer to the Holy Spirit)



**THE DIOCESE
of GALLOWAY**

**Prayer to the
Holy Spirit**

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful and
kindle in us the first of your love.
Send forth your Spirit
and we shall be created and you
shall renew the face of the earth.

O God,
who has taught the hearts of your faithful by
the light of the Holy Spirit; grant that by the gift
of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise
and ever rejoice in his consolation.
Through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Saint Ninian, Pray for us.



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Session One – Paragraphs 13-23

- To set the scene music such as “**Our God Reigns**” might be appropriate, or “**Seek ye First.**”

- Opening Prayer

As we open Your Word today, we quiet the noise and distractions of the world around us. Please calm our minds and still our hearts. Grant us spiritual ears to hear Your voice and open eyes to seek Your truth. Speak, Lord, for Your servants are listening. Transform our lives by Your Word and give us grace and courage to follow your will. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

- A Scripture reading followed by a period of silence.

Romans 10:14-18

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”

- Participants are invited to share anything as a result of the scripture reading and anything from the practical step taken following the last meeting.
- Participants should then be invited to share on paragraphs 13-23 of the document.

- Possible starter questions:

What was the most useful thing for you from the document?

What did you find challenging from the document?

What do you understand by the truth of Scripture and the Inspiration of Scripture?

- Participants are invited to suggest a practical step in light of what has been shared which might support their journey of discipleship.
- Finish by inviting people to reflect on the invitation of Christ to know Him through His Word as shown in **The Light of the World** painting by William Holman Hunt, perhaps with the quote from psalms 'your Word is a lamp for my feet a light for my path' (Ps 119:105; and/or read Revelation 3:20 'Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone heard my voice and opens the door then I will enter his house and dine with him and he with me.' Useful information on the painting can be found at <https://www.stpauls.co.uk/light-of-world-by-william-holman-hunt>
- Participants should be reminded to prepare for the next session by reading paragraphs 24-41 of the document.
- Closing Prayer (Diocesan Prayer to the Holy Spirit)

Session Two – Paragraphs 24-41

- To set the scene:

One of Rembrandt van Rijn's Old Testament paintings, such as 'The Angel stopping Abraham from sacrificing Isaac' (1635) could be put up on the screen of a laptop for the duration of the session. This artwork is there to illustrate the connection between Christ's sacrifice and the many parallels between the Old and the New Covenant, as well as the history of reception of the Bible throughout two millennia of European history.

https://www.wga.hu/html_m/r/rembrand/15oldtes/06oldtes.html

Traditional Jewish music arranged for the 10-stringed lyre of the Levites may be used in the background, to set the tone at the start of the session or during quiet times.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GpuYfuaM2Y> (this is all instrumental).

- An Opening Prayer from St John Chrysostom (4th century., Bishop of Constantinople).

"O Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart, that I may hear your word and understand and do your will, for I am a sojourner upon the earth. Hide not your commandments from me, but open my eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of your law. Speak unto me the hidden secret things of your wisdom. On You I set my hope, O my God, that You will enlighten my mind and understanding with the light of your knowledge, not only to cherish those things which are written, but do them; that in reading lives and sayings of the saints I may not sin, but that such may serve for my restoration, enlightenment and sanctification, for the salvation of my soul, and the inheritance of life everlasting. For You are the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and from You comes every good deed and every gift. Amen."

- There should be a period of silence after the prayer.
- A Scripture reading followed by a period of silence:

Psalm 119:129-136

129 Your statutes are wonderful;

therefore I obey them.

130 The unfolding of your words gives light;

it gives understanding to the simple.

131 I open my mouth and pant,

longing for your commands.

132 Turn to me and have mercy on me,

as you always do to those who love your name.

133 Direct my footsteps according to your word;

let no sin rule over me.

134 Redeem me from human oppression,

that I may obey your precepts.

135 Make your face shine on your servant

and teach me your decrees.

136 Streams of tears flow from my eyes,

for your law is not obeyed.

- Participants are invited to share anything as a result of the scripture reading and of the practical step following the last meeting.
- Participants should then be invited to share on paragraphs 24-41 of the document.
- Possible starter questions:
 - What was the most useful thing for you from the document?
 - What did you find challenging from the document?
 - How might we engage more deeply with the Old Testament?
- Participants are invited to suggest a practical step in light of what has been shared which might support their journey of discipleship.
- Participants should be reminded to prepare for the next session by reading paragraphs 42-69 of the document.
- Closing Prayer (Diocesan Prayer to the Holy Spirit)

Session Three – Paragraphs 42-69

- To set the scene: **On the Nature of Daylight** by Max Richter could be played. If possible, display a few images of the sculpture 'In the Beginning', also known as 'The Christ Child', by Mike Chapman. The sculpture can be found outside the entrance of St Martin-in-the-Fields Church in Trafalgar Square, London. It was created for the new millennium. It shows a life-size newborn baby emerging from a massive 4.5-tonne block of Portland stone. It is carved with the biblical quote, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word became flesh and lived among us' (John 1:14)."

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_Child_\(sculpture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_Child_(sculpture))

- Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, You who spoke in times past through the prophets, have brought Your word to its fullness in Your Son, Jesus Christ.

As we open the pages of the New Testament, open our minds and hearts to hear Him anew. Grant us the grace to encounter Him as He is – the living Word, our Teacher, Saviour, and Lord.

Send Your Holy Spirit upon us, that we may read these sacred texts not merely as history, but as a living encounter that shapes our daily lives. Help us to hear the Gospel with the courage of the Apostles, the devotion of the early Church, and the living hope of those who await Your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.

- A Scripture reading followed by a period of silence.

John 1:1-5, 9-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive

him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- Participants are invited to share anything as a result of the scripture reading and of the practical step following the last meeting.
- Participants should be invited to share on paragraphs 42-69 of the document.
- Possible starter questions:
 - What was the most useful thing for you from the document?
 - What did you find challenging from the document?
 - How might we be inspired to make more use of the New Testament?
- Participants are invited to suggest a practical step in light of what has been shared which might support their journey of discipleship.
- Participants should be reminded to prepare for the next session by reading paragraphs 70-84 of the document.
- Closing Prayer (Diocesan Prayer to the Holy Spirit)

Session Four – Paragraphs 70-84

- To set the scene: Music – **Christ be our Light** and an image of Caravaggio's **Supper at Emmaus**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supper_at_Emmaus_\(Caravaggio,_London\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supper_at_Emmaus_(Caravaggio,_London))

- Opening Prayer

Risen One, like those disciples on the road to Emmaus, we struggle to recognize you in the everyday journey of our lives. As you opened the scriptures to the disciples and taught them everything, open our eyes to behold you in your Word. Open our eyes, Light of the World, to your work of transformation in and around us. We thank you that you travel with us in our joys and our concerns. Amen

(Link to the full prayer, <http://www.churchnewsireland.org/wp-content/uploads/Easter-3-.pdf>)

- A Scripture reading followed by a period of silence.

Luke 24:13-35 – The Road to Emmaus

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.

He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" "They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

- Participants are invited to share anything as a result of the scripture reading and of the practical step following the last meeting.
- Participants should then be invited to share on paragraphs 70-84 of the document.
- Possible starter questions:
 - What was the most useful thing for you from the document?
 - What did you find challenging from the document?
 - What might we do to encourage our parishes to promote greater use of the Scriptures in daily life?
- Participants are invited to suggest a practical step in light of what has been shared which might support their journey of discipleship.
- As a conclusion to the five sessions invite the participants to share on how they might wish to follow up as individuals and/or as a parish/diocese
- Possible next steps:
 - Come and Pray** A monthly Lectio Divina gathering.
 - Come and Explore** A parish Scripture/Bible group.
 - Come and Serve** An opportunity to put the Gospel into action through parish or outreach / community service.
- A Weekly Challenge: Give participants a **7-day challenge - Seven Days of Living the Word**

- **Day 1:** Read the Gospel slowly.
- **Day 2:** Choose one verse and carry it through the day.
- **Day 3:** Spend ten minutes in silence with God.
- **Day 4:** Ask forgiveness or offer forgiveness.
- **Day 5:** Do one silent/hidden act of kindness.
- **Day 6:** Encourage someone who is struggling.
- **Day 7:** Return to Sunday's Gospel and ask: "*Where did I see God at work this week?*"
- Closing Prayer (Diocesan Prayer to the Holy Spirit)