

Explore Faith Studies & Devotions for Small Groups

2024-2025

Version: 4/18/2024

Thanks for looking for a new resource! This list is designed for many types of groups – some resources will be a better fit than others. Here is a guide to this resource list.

- *Part 1 – Overview: Featured Resources* – new resources and those popular in the past.
- *Part 2 – Details* on the “featured” resources in the chart.
- *Part 3 – More resources* at Incarnation or on-line or resources to help you design something new.
- *Also* – Check out the **window shopping** and **things to know** sections.

PART 1 - OVERVIEW CHART (featured resources: new & popular)

SPIRITUAL GROWTH and FAITH FORMATION	Format	Comments
<i>From the Inside Out</i> Carolyn Arends and the Renovaré Community	Free streaming videos, excellent study guide, supplemental resources	Reflect on core faith questions for a deeper faith and transformation. Fits with the Inward Outward Journey at Incarnation. Optional homework. No cost.
<i>The Way of Love</i> With Bishop Michael Curry and The Episcopal Church	Free streaming videos, excellent leader resources.	Life and faith practices to follow the way of Jesus and become more centered in Christ. Short videos (10 min); leader guide; participant guide with video summary and discussion questions. No cost.
<i>Wrestling with Doubt: Finding Faith</i> Adam Hamilton	DVD, study guide, (optional book)	Opens conversations about common, hard questions around faith with insights and stories from Adam Hamilton. Optional reading.

LEARNING and BIBLE STUDY		
<p><i>Short Stories by Jesus</i> Amy-Jill Levine</p> <p>Also available: <i>Sermon on the Mount (Beatitudes)</i> and <i>The Gospel of Mark (new)</i>.</p>	DVD, study guide, (optional books)	Good feedback from past groups. Levine approaches this from an academic perspective, as a Jewish scholar, speaker (see next page) and teacher on Jesus and the New Testament. Optional reading.
<p><i>Matthew</i> by Matthew Skinner</p> <p>Also available: <i>Acts of the Apostles</i></p>	DVD, study guide, book	Professor at Luther Seminary. <i>Acts of the Apostles</i> was used in a small group last summer. Content from an academic/teaching perspective.
INSPIRING	Format	Content
<p><i>Undistracted</i> Bob Goff</p> <p>Also available: <i>Love Does, Dream Big, Everybody Always</i></p>	DVD (or video streaming) and study guide	Inspirational, engaging and humorous stories by Bob Goff. Used in many small groups. No homework.
FAITH PRACTICES		
<p><i>Liturgy of the Ordinary</i> Tish Harrison Warren</p>	Book with study guide created by the Renovaré Community.	Lifts up the ordinary parts of everyday life as places that reveal the extraordinary work of God.
<p><i>Creation Care – The Planet You Inherit: Letters to My Grandchildren</i> Larry Rasmussen</p>	Book/discussion guide and other resources available	A growing collection of resources on this climate care are available. Check in with Mike Vant for latest recommendations.
<p><i>The Saint John’s Bible –</i> Two options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Seeing the Word</i> • <i>Incarnation-created study guides</i> 	<p><i>Seeing the Word</i> – short pamphlets with a text, illumination, & reflections.</p> <p><i>Incarnation-created guides</i> can be used as a</p>	<p>Created in connection with Saint John’s University. Single session devotion or across several sessions.</p> <p>Written by Grant Rykken. Single-session devotion (<i>see next page</i>)</p>

	short session or a devotion. No homework.	or series. On-site groups can use the Bible in the Chapel. Off-site groups can check out smaller-size books.
POPULAR		
<i>Incarnation Faith Studies</i>	Available on the website. Print from the website or ask for printed copies.	Easy as a faith study or devotion. Many options are available on the Incarnation website. Used by many groups. No homework.
<i>NOOMA videos</i> Rob Bell	DVDs or video streaming; Incarnation faith studies available	Many groups have returned to NOOMA videos. Easy to use. No homework.
<i>Questions God Asks Us –</i> Trevor Hudson	Book with short chapters; Incarnation study guide	Used in many groups in 2022-23. Thought-provoking. Short chapters to read before gathering.

THINGS TO KNOW...

Previews

- Most resources can be previewed directly on the publisher’s website or on YouTube.
- Samples of resources are available in Adult B.
- Incarnation-created resources are available on the website to view and print.

Locations

- Groups can be scheduled on-site, by Zoom or as a hybrid, depending on availability. Plan ahead and schedule your group to be sure the building is open and staffed.
- Think about where your group prefers to meet and how to be flexible and adapt, if needed. This might make a difference in the resource you select.

Orders

- Incarnation will order leader resources. We ask group members to order their own copies of books/study guides. Please allow 2-3 weeks before the time that you need a resource to prepare for the group, when ordering through Incarnation.
- If your group is struggling with a resource, consider making a change mid-season.

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PART 2 - MORE DETAILS on MOST FEATURED RESOURCES *(see part 1 chart)*

From the Inside Out – Carolyn Arends and Renovaré Community

How do our answers to basic, core questions about God, Jesus, ourselves, and the Gospel shape our current understanding of our faith? This resource, *From the Inside Out*, is a chance to unpack our own answers, while hearing new perspectives from others in the group and from the Renovaré community. The hope is to move toward a closer relationship with Christ and live a more Christ-centered life.

From the Inside Out was created by Renovaré, an organization where Pastor Kai has studied and taught. The questions and practices resonate with the inward/outward faith journey talked about at Incarnation. The Incarnation staff used this resource during Lent, opening a rich dialogue. There are six 15-minute video sessions (streaming), along with plenty of great questions in a participant guide and a facilitator guide. Both are available to download and print. The video can be watched during the group or ahead of time.

What are the sessions and questions?

- What is my picture of God?
- What is my picture of myself?
- What is my picture of the Gospel?
- How do people change?
- How do I follow Jesus?

The resource is a free offering from Renovaré to spark reflection and conversations. There are also faith practice ideas and supplemental videos to weave in, as it makes sense in your group. The hope is to develop a deeper, more transformative life with God. For groups that used *Questions God Asks Us* some questions may sound familiar – this is an opportunity to see how your responses may have changed over time. Find out more at:

www.renovare.org/courses/io. You will need to register with your email, but there is no cost.

The Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life – Episcopal Church

How do we shape our life in a way that follows Jesus? This video series unpacks seven faith practices that, practiced in an intentional way, lead to a Christ-centered life. For each practice, there is a video story of how it is being lived out in the lives of ordinary people. There are also reflection questions to unpack each video story and explore how it might be

lived out in your life in practical ways. The core practices are: turn (pause, listen and follow Jesus), learn, pray, worship, bless, go (crossing boundaries and deep listening), and rest (Sabbath).

This series was created by the Episcopal Church with Bishop Michael Curry, but easily applies to Lutherans and other faith traditions. It was developed as part of a congregation-wide effort with a variety of supplemental resources to draw on. The primary resources you might use in each session are a short engaging video (10 minutes), easy-to-use participant guide (*Traveling the Way of Love*), and very comprehensive leader guide. There are also short preview videos for each session (3 minutes) and supplemental podcasts to use as makes sense. The videos are engaging and inspiring, in a story-format. The resource is entirely free. When viewing the videos, be sure to note whether you are selecting the longer version or preview version.

For more information, *The Way of Love* videos, and *Traveling the Way of Love* participant guide: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/video/traveling-the-way-of-love-season-one>
Small group facilitator guide: https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/living_the_wol_in_community_english.pdf

Wrestling with Doubt: Finding Faith – Adam Hamilton

Everyone has doubts and hard questions about faith. Adam Hamilton unpacks many hard questions with belief and trust, not certainty; mystery rather than simple answers: Is there a God? When prayers go unanswered. Why do the innocent suffer?... Video is more engaging than other Hamilton resources. Optional book to read. Just released resource.

- DVD and study guide
- Six sessions with 15-minute videos.
- Preview: www.cokesbury.com/wrestling-with-doubt-finding-faith-study

Short Stories by Jesus – Amy-Jill Levine

Also: **The Sermon on the Mount** (new to ILC), **The Gospel of Mark** (new resource)

Look at the timeless stories Jesus told through parables. In *Short Stories by Jesus*, Amy-Jill Levine takes you back in time to explain how the original audiences understood Jesus' parables. Amy-Jill Levine is a professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace with a Jewish background.

- Good responses from two small groups using *Short Stories by Jesus*.
- DVD or steaming video with leader guide and participant guide. Optional book to read.
- Six sessions with 10-minute videos.
- Find out more: www.cokesbury.com/amy-jill-levine. Preview videos under each resource.

Matthew: The Gospel of Promised Blessings – Matthew Skinner

Also: **Acts of the Apostles**

Matthew Skinner, Luther Seminary Professor, unpacks the Gospel of Matthew and the messages of Jesus that are full of tender compassion and urgent warning. This resource is designed for a group that would like to dive into the Bible to learn. The video is a teaching, academic approach with lots of great content.

- 6 session DVD and Leader Guide with optional book
- Best for groups interested in study/learning.
- Find out more: www.abingdonpress.com/product/9781791030148
- Acts of the Apostles is also available and was used in a small group in summer 2023, corresponding with the summer sermon series.

Undistracted: Capture Your Purpose, Rediscover Your Joy – Bob Goff

How to move back from all the busy, all the crazy to find purpose in a less distracted life. Bob Goff brings his inspirational, engaging and humorous stories to show how to live a more focused and attentive life.

- Used in several small groups.
- Check out the promo at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9ZhFimxL1Y>
- Preview session one at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcVcOSZVR7o>
- Five sessions with 15-minute videos and a study guide.
- Easy to use and upbeat. No homework.

Liturgy of the Ordinary – Tish Harrison Warren

In the overlooked moments and routines of our day, we can become aware of God's presence in surprising ways. How do we embrace the sacred in the ordinary and the ordinary in the sacred?

- Read short chapters ahead of time or as part of the group.
- Study guide by Renovaré available.
- Used by Pastor Joel Vander Wal's small group in 2023-24.

The Saint John's Bible

Two options: *Seeing the Word* and *Incarnation-created study guides*

Reflect on Biblical texts and engage your spiritual imagination with illuminations from *The Saint John's Bible*. Incarnation is incredibly blessed to have a Heritage Edition of the Bible to view on-site or check out the "coffee table" size books to use in other settings.

(see next page)

- Can be short or long, depending on time available.
- Can be a devotion, a single-session, or series.

Options:

- *Seeing the Word* - short pamphlets with a text, illumination, and reflections, created in connection with Saint John's University. No cost.
- *Incarnation-created sessions* are available, written by Grant Rykken. No cost.
- Grant Rykken or others from The Saint John's Bible Action Group can also visit your small group for an introductory session.

Incarnation Faith Studies

Easy to use and available on the website. No homework. Used by many, many small groups. Print-outs available by request. Options: *A Jesus' Shaped Life, Engage in Lent, Renew Your Life, Caring for One Another, Our Story, Be Loved, Your Life Matters, Connecting in Grace: Radical Gifts, Radical Grace and Energized*. Go to: <https://www.incarnationmn.org/ministries/small-groups/faith-studies-for-small-groups>

NOOMA Videos – Rob Bell

Short, creative, thought-provoking videos. Available on DVD or by purchasing a streaming option (\$2/video). Incarnation faith studies available for most sessions. Easy to use. More than 20 sessions available. Many groups have returned to using these videos for one or more sessions. Available in Adult B with additional copies also on-site. Preview at: www.christianbook.com/page/dvds/featured-dvds/nooma/nooma-downloads

Questions God Asks Us – Trevor Hudson

We often go to the Bible looking for answers, but in the Biblical stories we find that God asks us questions too! This faith study is based on Trevor Hudson's book, *Questions God Asks Us*. The chapters are fast and easy to read.

- Used in many small groups in 2022-23 and beyond.
- Incarnation faith study available. Book cost: approximately \$12.
- For no homework, read selections from the chapters OR summaries from Brentwood Hills Church at: <https://brentwoodhills.org/event-items/questions-god-asks-us>

WINDOW SHOPPING & CREATE YOUR OWN

More resources are available in Adult Room B and listed in Part 3 of this handout. If you like “window shopping” or if you enjoy designing your own resource, check out these websites where you might find other resources or a unique fit for your small group:

Building Faith

This is an excellent place to begin. In the “Curriculum Center” there are articles on how to choose the “right” curriculum along with “top picks” for adults.

<https://buildfaith.org/choosing-curriculum>

The Ministry Lab

<https://theministrylab.org/faith-formation/> AND

<https://unitedseminary.libguides.com/ml/faithformation/adults>

Incarnation has a membership with the Ministry Lab. Send a message to Emily Meyer with questions or if you are looking for a specific topic at: ministrylab@unitedseminary.edu

Publisher Websites

Cokesbury – www.cokesbury.com

Augsburg Fortress - www.augsburgfortress.org

Small Groups - www.augsburgfortress.org/store/category/286917/Small-Group

Sparkhouse – www.wearesparkhouse.org

Fortress Press - www.fortresspress.com/store/category/287006/Ministry

Broadleaf Press - <https://www.broadleafbooks.com>

The Upper Room – www.upperroom.org (go to “shop”)

Church Publishing Incorporated - www.churchpublishing.org

Zondervan – www.zondervan.com

Christian Book Distributors – www.christianbook.com

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PART 3 - MORE RESOURCES – Available at Incarnation/On-Line

Bible and Bible Themes

On-Line Resources

The Bible Project – www.thebibleproject.com or www.bibleproject.com/bible-studies – book studies/thematic studies on-line.

The Gospel of Matthew: Life in the Way of God - <https://faithlead.org/academy> - Video course from FAITH+LEAD at Luther Seminary. Preview available by creating a log-in.

The Bible for Normal People - <https://thebiblefornormalpeople.com/>

Enter the Bible – www.enterthebible.org – more information below.

Video/DVD/Study Guides

Adam Hamilton – *Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts and Outlaws, Wrestling with Doubt and other Adam Hamilton studies* – *Making Sense of the Bible; The Lord's Prayer* (and many more faith studies).

Matthew Skinner – *Acts: Catching Up with the Spirit* (see parts 1-2 of this document) and *Matthew: The Gospel of Promised Blessings*

Amy Jill-Levine studies – *Short Stories by Jesus, Sermon on the Mount, The Gospel of Mark and more*

Josh Scott – *Bible Studies for Grown-Ups: Reading Scripture with New Eyes and Context Matters*

Matt Rawle – *Jesus Revealed (I Am Statements)*

Book Study

What is the Bible? – Rob Bell – Book/discussion questions

Living Your Faith and Faith Practices

Questions God Asks Us – Trevor Hudson – with Incarnation discussion guide

An Altar in the World – Barbara Brown Taylor – discussion questions available

Renew Your Life – Pastor Kai Nilsen – study guide available

Liturgy of the Ordinary – Tish Harrison Warren

Abide – Randy Frazee and Phil Collins

Get Your Life Back / Resilient – John Eldredge

Care for One Another

Alongside – How to walk with others in difficult times – Sarah Beckman – video/questions
– www.sarahbeckman.org/alongside-book/

Caring for One Another – Incarnation series – Go to:
<https://www.incarnationmn.org/ministries/small-groups/faith-studies-for-small-groups/>

No Cure for Being Human – Kate Bowler – book/discussion questions

Grace

What's So Amazing About Grace – This Philip Yancey classic – now updated.
<https://philipyancey.com/books/whats-so-amazing-about-grace>

Justice

Dear White Peacemakers – Oshetta Moore – book/study guide

Dialogues: On Race – Sparkhouse – DVD/study guide

See also *Dr. Jacqui Lewis* resources below

Other Faith Traditions (*recommended by other leaders*)

Holy Envy – Barbara Brown Taylor – book/discussion questions

Christianity and World Religions – Adam Hamilton – DVD/study guide

Women

12 Tiny Things – Local writers, Ellie Roscher and Heidi Barr, explore 12 essential areas of life where small, doable changes can make a big difference in growth and renewal;

Book/study guide for faith settings; <https://12tinythings.com/>

I Guess I Haven't Learned That Yet – Shauna Niequist – DVD and study guide.

Talk with Denise for other ideas and studies available at *Incarnation*

Podcasts – Blogs – Articles – Books

Church Anew – Genesis study; Blog articles for discussion – A ministry of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Eden Prairie; www.churchanew.org

Enter the Bible – Blog, podcasts, courses from Luther Seminary; Free faith studies; May need to create your own questions; www.enterthebible.org

Living Lutheran – Website for this monthly publication includes articles and study guides at <https://www.livinglutheran.org/category/spiritual-practices-and-resources/>

Fierce Love (book) and podcasts – Dr. Jacqui Lewis – <https://jacquilewis.com/>

Thank you for creating sacred space to connect with God and one another!