



Living Local: Joining God

Introduction to Step 1 for the CLERGY Cohort

1. Introduction

- a. Reviewing *Living Local: Joining God*
- b. The Steps (pg. 2)
 - i. Listening to Learn
 - ii. Reflecting and Discerning
 - iii. Engaging in New Behaviors
 - iv. Reflecting
 - v. Deciding
- c. Clergy Learning Community (pg. 3)

2. Reviewing Roles

- i. GT Role (pg. 4)
- ii. Coaches Role (pg. 5-6)

3. Clergy Cohort

The clergy cohort usually meets at least every other month for two and one-half hours.

Setting date for first meeting:

Date _____ Time _____

Clergy Activities

Step 1: LISTENING to LEARN

Using the following resources, form a Clergy Learning Community.

As part of the Clergy Learning Community:

- Identify common ways to support the work of your GT and congregation in the process.
- Engage the Guiding Team through an interview process.
- Do your own neighborhood listening work.
- Engage spiritual practices.
- Begin initial reflection on your GT listening interviews.

Step 2: REFLECTING and DISCERNING

In your Clergy Learning Community:

- Reflect together on your interview learning to identify common and specific themes.
- Name one or two leadership new behaviors based on learning in Step 1.
- Reflect upon and continue your neighborhood engagement. Identify one experiment you can do in your neighborhood.
- Engage spiritual practices.

Step 3: ENGAGING IN NEW BEHAVIORS

In your Clergy Learning Community:

- Engage in new behaviors named in Step 2.
- Continue engagement with spiritual practices.
- Design what and how you want to communicate your learning in the congregation.

Steps 4 and 5: REFLECTING & DECIDING

In your Clergy Learning Community:

- Reflect upon your new behaviors in terms of what you are learning.
- Reflect upon your new behaviors in neighborhood engagement; both your own and those that your guiding team has done.
- Identify the biblical and theological implications of your learning for your leadership in the congregation.
- On the basis of this learning, name the 'next step' actions you will take.
- Decide together what you will report to the diocese in terms of implications for the formation and development of clergy.



What is a Clergy Learning Community?

A Clergy Learning Community is a group that focuses on action-based learning. It is more than a peer support group and it is more than a “classroom” where content is delivered.

1. Common focus

Address the common question: *What are the skills and capacities I need to assist my Guiding Team and congregation in taking a journey to discern what God is doing in our local context and joining with God there?*

2. Action-oriented

The Clergy Learning Community is focused on developing a set of practical specific, accountable actions each can take during this process.

3. Actively collaborate

We will assist each other to frame action plans and provide support on the journey.

4. Atmosphere of accountability and trust

We will utilize accountability in achieving shared commitments and cultivating trust.

5. Diversity of perspectives

We will deepen our understanding by welcoming a range of perspectives in the group.

6. Guided process

The Clergy Learning Community is guided by a facilitator who encourages reflection among the group.

7. Focus on learning by doing

The focus is on action learning in order to develop new practices and behaviors.

The Guiding Team

The *Guiding Team* leads the overall process in your congregation.

1. Each Guiding Team works with an external coach who assists them along every step of the journey.
2. Comprised of lay people but not clergy. When clergy are members, invariably, the team defaults to their expertise or advice and the process ceases to be genuinely lay-based.
3. The pastor will meet with each Guiding Team **outside of GT planning meetings** in order to carry out the GT Interviews. The purpose of the GT interviews is to:
 - a. Inform your own learning by listening for what the GT is learning and how that might shape your actions as clergy.
 - b. Assess how to best support and encourage your GT
4. Clergy do not:
 - a. Participate in GT meetings
 - b. Take on any GT work
 - c. Provide coaching for the GT
5. The GT is generally not composed of the same people as the vestry. Usually it consists of lay people not currently serving on vestry. Vestry has its own important work to do and doesn't have time to focus on Guiding Team work. There may be one or two vestry members on the team.
6. The GT reports to the vestry so that the vestry knows what's happening.
7. The GT is comprised of 5-7 people (depending on church size: 3-5 in smaller churches).
8. Characteristics of members:
 - i. Deep, genuine commitment to the church and its people
 - ii. Support the leadership and this process.
 - iii. Caught a vision for joining with God in the local.
 - iv. Can realistically implement processes.
 - v. Good relational skills
 - vi. Sense of how to effectively communicate across the church.
 - vii. Aware of opportunities and barriers to change
 - viii. Able to effectively bridge differences.

What Does a Congregation Coach Do?

The role of the congregation coach is to accompany and support the Guiding Team as they guide the work of *Living Local: Joining God* in their congregation. The congregation coach will fulfill this role by learning, guiding, listening, encouraging and reflecting with their Guiding Team and the broader team of coaches. Coaches are supported through regular guided conversations, as a group, as well as on an individual basis as needed.

Learning

- Become familiar with the resources provided to the Guiding Teams.
- Develop collegial relationships with other coaches and be willing to learn from one another and alongside each other on the journey.

Guiding

- Guide the Guiding Team through the process. The work of the congregation team is to work through the assigned tasks outlined in the *Living Local: Joining God* resources.
- Be flexible and aware of what the Guiding Team needs as time goes on
 - The Coach will tend to be more directive in the beginning, clarifying information, suggesting process and helping the group to form as a team and understand one another's gifts.
 - As time goes on, the Coach will often become less directive, inviting the Guiding Team to dig deeper, asking questions that elicit shifts in perspective and new understanding.
- Remain substantively neutral, without a stake in particular outcomes.
- Help the Guiding Team to assume responsibility for the process.
- Make sure that each meeting ends with clarification of assignments and next steps. Help the Guiding Team identify measures of accountability.

Listening

- Help the Guiding Team listen for how God might be leading them.
- Maintain awareness of content and process, and the participation and interaction of Guiding Team members.
- Assess when the Guiding Team is struggling and determine when additional support is needed.

- Focus on listening to others fully – both what is being said and what is not being said.
- Ask open questions in order to draw out someone and more clearly understand their perspectives and desires.
- Listen to get clarity about the “whole situation” rather than focusing on details.
- Use question-based conversation.

Encouraging

- Affirm that stepping into new behaviors can be difficult. Celebrate with the Guiding Team as they courageously try new behaviors and approaches.
- Support the Guiding Team as they engage *Dwelling in the Word* each time they gather.
- Create an atmosphere of trust and safety among the Guiding Team members. Accept disagreement, conflict, and evaluation as normal and natural.
- Engage people in finding their own solutions rather than providing counsel on what they should do.
- Create space for others to define options, recommendations, and drive solutions.
- Help people see the benefits of collaborating/partnering with others.

Reflecting

- Help the Guiding Team to reflect on what they are learning about themselves, their congregation and where God might be at work ahead of them.