

Welcome to Education for Ministry 2020

“Education for Ministry is a program designed for laity to provide theological study and reflection rooted in the Scriptures and traditions of the Church.

Education for Ministry (EfM) is a distance learning programme of theological education for lay people. There are four years but participants commit for one year at a time, meeting in small groups for study and practice to aid them in discovering and nurturing their call to Christian service. EfM helps the faithful encounter the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition and bring it into conversation with their experiences of the world as they study, worship, and engage in theological reflection together. Participants take what they learn about scripture, church history, theology, inter-faith studies and ethics into their own lives and hearts, in order to support them in living out a vibrant baptismal ministry in the church and in the world.” (<http://www.efmcanada.ca/>)

As a grad of the program, I want to add that I found myself growing in ways I did not believe through these weekly interactions over the 4-year program. As the webpage states, you get from the program, what you put into it. I found that sometimes I did not participate as much as I should, but found that gap filled in with the discussion and theological reflection that occurred each week. The expectation is that the prescribed readings for each week, laid out in the Reading and Reflection Guide, will be completed and responses posted to an online discussion board where students are encouraged to interact and discuss the readings with their peers. I found that to read and reflect took about 3 hours per week. The on-line classroom runs for 2 hours per week from the beginning of September to the middle of May (generally 36 weeks). There are presently 3 on-line groups accepting registrations.

I completed the program via the internet as during my time, September 2013 – June 2017, there was no “face-to-face” group available in Kamloops. In this time of uncertainty, I expect that all participants will be all completing their education via the internet for the coming year.

A brief explanation of the program is below:

Each year is designated as Year A, B, C, D. This fall, 2020-2021, we will be entering Year D, with its accompanying readings and reflections. As participants can enter the program at any time, this designation of year by letter becomes only a means to ensure that participants cover all of the material in the training program.

Each year has its own flavour that adds to the discussion group:

- First year of study focusses on the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible
- Second year focuses on the New Testament

- Third year is the history of the church
- Fourth year focuses on putting all of the previous learnings to work within your own personal spiritual growth and life in community

The general program consists of:

- *The **Reading and Reflection Guide** provides weekly reading assignments, reflection questions, and additional supportive resources for the group.*
- *The entire group uses the same Guide each year—Volume A, B, C, or D.*
- *Each Volume has a particular focus:*
 - *Volume A, “Living Faithfully in Your World,” works with the contexts of a person’s life;*
 - *Volume B builds on “Living Faithfully in the Global Village;”*
 - *Volume C “Living as Spiritually Mature Christians” works with the contexts of our personal spiritual lives.*
 - *Volume D is about our “Our Journey into God”.*
- *Each Volume contains Part One, the reading and reflection directions and;*
- *Part Two, has the supportive materials, such as methods of spiritual autobiography and theological reflection.*

All years share common books during breaks from the texts that draw the group together and enhances their learnings.

The core value of EfM is Theological Reflection¹ and continuous learning about how to live what we believe in our daily life and work. There will be Theological Reflection in most sessions, and other common lessons and exercises, all done in a small group study format, once per week, with a mentor or mentors, Mentors will receive regular training to deepen their skills in group leadership and theological reflection. EfM, we are confident, will be transformational for participants.

For further information regarding the program and its on-line iteration, please check <http://www.efmcanada.ca/onlinecourse.html>

Any questions or comments can be forwarded to me or to the EfM Office

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Blessings as you seek God’s guidance on your continuing journey as the People of God and a Royal Priesthood called to live out the promises made in our Baptism.

¹ Theological reflection (TR) is basically a process of theological study that starts from the experiences of life and leads to searching in faith, for deeper meaning, and for the living God. The crux of TR is deciding how to live out of this reflective search after the discussions and reflections are finished.