



The Way of Pilgrimage

The WAY of PILGRIMAGE

AN ADVENTURE IN SPIRITUAL FORMATION
FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

SAMPLER

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Welcome to a new adventure in spiritual formation for the next generation!

Upper Room Books proudly presents the newest resource in our Companions in Christ® series, *The Way of Pilgrimage*. In this Sampler we offer a glimpse into this five-part resource for senior-high youth and college freshmen, a spiritual formation program that offers a challenging call to a daily walk with Christ: living with the eyes of the heart wide open, looking for the presence of God in each moment.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE AS A PILGRIM?

There is a difference between being a tourist and being a pilgrim.

While tourists take snapshots and buy souvenirs, a pilgrim seeks reminders of holy moments – photos or symbols that mark a special place or experience on the pilgrimage. This resource helps young people begin to look at the Christian spiritual life as a pilgrim adventure.

Companions are essential to pilgrimage.

Though sometimes we feel as though we walk alone, the Bible tells us that we are surrounded by a “great cloud of witnesses,” those who have lived the Christian life faithfully through the ages. The weekly group gatherings reinforce this sense of spiritual companionship.



Each weekly gathering is a stop along the way.

Each session offers space carved out of our week and made holy. When we gather together, we feel a sense of peace and God’s presence. The Leader’s Guide provides all the instructions you need to lead these gatherings.

Rhythm is part of our daily routine as pilgrims.

In medieval times, pilgrims would start their journey in exactly the same way. The repetition and rhythm of the daily exercises and readings are essential parts of this routine. The Leader’s Guide sets the rhythm for the meetings through a repeating liturgy.

Pilgrimage is about being present in the present.

This pilgrimage is about waking up and paying attention to our lives and to God’s presence in each moment. The “Noticing” portion of the weekly meeting helps us to practice being present to God in our lives.

This is a journey of the heart, as well as the head.

In this journey, prayer, conversation, listening, reading, noticing, and looking are transformed from activities of the mind to practices of the heart. The group practice in weekly gatherings called “Moving from Head2Heart” names this movement.



You can lead your group into this adventure in spiritual formation, *The Way of Pilgrimage*. May you and your group journey faithfully!

Robin Pippin
Editorial Director
Upper Room Books

Photos by Sally Chambers

USING THE RESOURCE

One of the most appealing qualities about *The Way of Pilgrimage* is its diversity. The volumes can be used together as a series, or one can be selected for a particular event. It works well in small or larger group settings, for Sunday school classes, various youth group settings, or in camp and retreat settings. It can even be used to prepare the hearts and minds of young people before a mission trip or pilgrimage. Also, the Leader's Guide provides content in a user-friendly layout, enabling volunteers, youth leaders, college chaplains, and/or students to lead the weekly gatherings.



Participant's Books:

Each six-week volume includes scripture, daily exercises, and readings on the following topics:

1. Choosing Pilgrimage
2. The Bible: Pilgrimage Travel Guide
3. Prayer: Heart of the Pilgrimage
4. Companions on the Pilgrimage
5. Stepping into the World

Leader's Guide:

Sessions include a weekly rhythm of Welcoming, Noticing, Moving from Head2Heart, Naming, Blessing and Sending Forth, and all the help that leaders need to guide the weekly one-and-a-quarter-hour experiences.

In the following pages you will find a sample daily exercise, reading, and a general outline for weekly meetings. Please take the time to experience this selection from *The Way of Pilgrimage* and what it has to offer young people.

HISTORY OF PILGRIMAGE

The word pilgrim literally comes from the Latin word meaning "resident alien." As we walk as pilgrims in this world, seeking God as our true home, we sometimes feel alien to the culture around us.

Pilgrimage is not the sole domain of Christians; pilgrimages have been made to holy sites since ancient times by practitioners of many religions. The most popular pilgrimages since early Christian

times have been to Jerusalem, Rome, Santiago, and Canterbury.

Thankfully, we don't have to go far away to an exotic locale to experience pilgrimage. In fact, *The Way of Pilgrimage* leads young people to view every day as a pilgrimage with and to God through daily exercises, readings, prayer practices, and a weekly pilgrim's gathering. Pilgrimage is not only about the destination but the journey to get there; it is not only about where you travel but how you travel.

This week we look at the obstacles we encounter on pilgrimage. We discover we must let go of some things in order to be ready for pilgrimage. Keep your journal close by to note your thoughts.

SETTING SIGHTS TOO LOW

READ MATTHEW 5:43-48, PART OF JESUS' SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

REFLECT Setting your sights too low – within human reach – can keep the journey from truly transforming you and the world around you. Draw an image of a mountain. This mountain represents the God-adventure for which you were born and to which Jesus calls you. On the lower slopes write “loving those who love me.” On the middle slopes write “loving those who don’t love me or don’t know me.” On the higher, steeper slopes near the peak write “loving my enemies and praying for those who persecute me.” Now at each level write names of persons, groups, or relationships that challenge your ability to love.

PRAY Close your eyes and imagine Jesus inviting you to come and join the group that’s learning to climb this mountain, offering to help you at each point along the way. What do you say to him? Tell him what assistance you feel you’ll need. Take a moment to lift to God in prayer a challenging person you would encounter at each level of your pilgrimage on the mountain of God’s love.

ACT Make a point to encounter someone you prayed for today. Think of yourself as a channel of God’s love when you do, and see what happens.

SPIRITUAL HYPOTHERMIA

I was relieved to unbuckle the straps and finally drop my pack. Time for a break. Now I could collapse in the soft snow and rest from climbing. Exhausted, I did not want to move another muscle for as long as possible.

But I had barely taken a drink of water when our guide hollered, “We need to get moving again.” In a moment my pack was strapped on my back, and we began our climb once more.

Most people begin this climb around midnight. When the sun comes up over the mountain, the snow begins to melt and turn slushy. This condition increases the risk of avalanche and ice fall. It also causes a person to sink into the snow with each step, as opposed to walking on top of its frozen surface. On the journey to the summit, time is crucial and not to be wasted. And while it is critical to rest during a climb, sitting too long can lead to hypothermia.

This medical emergency is marked by a sense of feeling warm and comfortable, so that the person becomes lethargic and doesn’t want to move. Without treatment, hypothermia causes an individual to fall asleep and freeze to death.

Our guide knew when we should climb and when we should rest, when the conditions were right for a certain activity and when they were not.

A state of spiritual hypothermia can overcome us when we do nothing to grow spiritually.

We become apathetic about our faith, and soon we spiritually fall asleep. Faced with thousands of options about how to spend our time, we can easily be pulled between overactivity and inactivity. Time can easily seem to rule our lives – having too much or too little. We may sense our day is crammed with other people’s expectations. At the other extreme, we can easily waste time. How do we keep ourselves from spiritual hypothermia?

A General Outline of Each Group Meeting

THE WEEKLY SESSIONS WILL FOLLOW THE OUTLINE BELOW:

WELCOMING (5 minutes): Each weekly gathering of the pilgrims is a respite on their journey. Just as pilgrims were welcomed into towns, churches, and abbeys, welcome the pilgrims into the meeting and holy space you have created. Before the pilgrims arrive, be attentive to the space: light the candle, have things set out and prepared, have some water for refreshment, perhaps; include anything that says: “Welcome! Welcome to this place along the way.”

NOTICING, Listening to Your Life (10 minutes): Part of the reason for gathering together weekly as pilgrims on the journey is to help each other look back and take notice—of how God was present to us and also of the baggage we have been carrying around with us. In this weekly opening exercise, pilgrims will practice looking back through their week. Together they will symbolically leave their “baggage” in a basket (for the time together), then they will name where they noticed God in their week. This exercise will help them to be more fully present to God, to each other, and to themselves during the time together.

MOVING FROM HEAD2HEART (30 minutes): During this sacred time, the intent is to give space for the message of the daily readings and exercises (weekly lesson for the journey) to move from the mind to the heart. In other words, to move closer to God on this pilgrimage. This segment includes an exercise or practice the group does together.

NAMING, Reflections on the Head2Heart Experience (15 minutes): Following the Head2Heart portion is a time of “naming,” where each pilgrim is given space to articulate and name his or her experience of God through the Head2Heart exercise alongside the other companions. Naming is an essential part of the spiritual formation and growth of each pilgrim. Here dots are connected, light bulbs come on, struggles are affirmed, and journeys intersect.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH (10 minutes): This is the time for pilgrims to pack their bags, gather blessings they have received from this holy space, and move out to continue their journey. The sending forth to continue their journeys is as important as the welcome.

MEET THE WRITERS

PARTICIPANT'S BOOK VOLUME 1



Kyle Dugan is the Executive Director of Immeasurably More, a Christian non-profit organization based in Austin, TX. He is a graduate of Lubbock Christian University and The Upper Room Academy for Spiritual Formation. He enjoys hiking, fly-fishing, mountain biking and all kinds of outdoor activities.



Craig Mitchell is Lecturer in Lay Ministry Studies at the Adelaide College of Divinity and Flinders University, South Australia. He has worked in youth ministry and Christian Education for over 25 years with the United Methodist Church in Australia and has authored numerous youth study books and articles on youth ministry. He is married with three daughters.

PARTICIPANT'S BOOK VOLUME 2



Ciona Rouse lives in Nashville, TN, and is a freelance writer for a number of United Methodist publications and groups. Formerly a director of The United Methodist Church's Shared Mission Focus on Young People, Ciona attends Belmont United Methodist Church and volunteers with the youth there.

PARTICIPANT'S BOOK VOLUME 3



Jenny Youngman edits resources for youth and youth workers for The United Methodist Publishing House in Nashville, TN. She has been a youth pastor, Sunday school teacher, youth group volunteer, or mentor for about ten years now and probably will be forever. Her favorite pastime is family time with her 3-year-old daughter Gracie, infant son Myles, and husband Mark.

PARTICIPANT'S BOOK VOLUME 4



Steve Matthews has served as a youth minister for 13 years and presently works at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Richmond, VA. He has an M.Div. from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, an M.A. in Clinical Psychology from Western Carolina University, and a diploma in Spiritual Direction from the San Francisco Theological Seminary.

PARTICIPANT'S BOOK VOLUME 5



Kara Lassen Oliver is currently a stay-at-home mom and freelance writer. She has previously served as a full-time youth minister at Belmont United Methodist Church in Nashville and worked at the United Methodist Youth Organization while completing her M.Div. degree at Vanderbilt Divinity School. She, her husband Jeff, and their two young children live in Nashville.

LEADER'S GUIDE WRITING TEAM



Sally Chambers was born in England but moved to Ohio at the age of 10. She received her B.S. in Human Development and Social Policy from Northwestern University and her Masters in Clinical Social Work from Ohio State University. Sally has been involved with youth ministry for the past 16 years and is now the youth minister at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Franklin, TN.



Jonathon Norman is minister to/with youth at Hermitage United Methodist Church in Nashville and the author of *Worship Feast: 100 Readings, Rituals, Prayers and Guided Meditations*. He is also the co-founder/worship leader for the InSearchOf worship community, a missional worship group rooted in contemplative styles of worship and prayer.



Gavin Richardson is currently youth minister at First United Methodist Church in Hendersonville, TN. During his 12 years of youth ministry, he has worked in camps and churches in the South and Northeast, sits on the board of The Edge Ministries, and is co-founder of InSearchOf worship community.

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR



Robin Pippin is Editorial Director of Upper Room Books and was the founding editor of *devozine* in 1996. She has 24 years of experience in Christian publishing. She is a wife and mother of three children.

“As an organization completely dedicated to the art of pilgrimage, we are overjoyed with The Way of Pilgrimage resources. The Way of Pilgrimage is a comprehensive and passionate guide that brings us back to our ancient heritage of pilgrimage through modern eyes and practical application. Utilize these resources to teach your youth God’s unique design of our lives as journeys of exploration and adventure. There is no better resource available to date that prepares your teens as lifelong pilgrims.”

Shawn Small - Executive Director of Wonder Voyage Pilgrimages
www.wondervoyage.com

“This pilgrimage can be an excellent adventure—sometimes an extreme sport, sometimes a dark tunnel, sometimes a quiet waterfall, sometimes a dry valley—and always a road worth traveling.”

From *The Way of Pilgrimage*, Participant’s Book module 1, week 1

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