



# *Education for Ministry*

## *Prospectus 2017*

### ***Why Education for Ministry?***

It comes as no surprise that most of the everyday ministry of Christ's church is performed by regular church members and not just by ordained clergy. The modern church upholds the ministry of the laity, emphasising that all baptised people have a ministry. Once we accept that, it is clear we need to be informed and skilled to do that ministry well.

EfM helps us to interpret the richness of the church's faith in our complex world and to express it with confidence, in both words and actions, in our day-to-day lives and in our own communities. EfM can be summed up as Exploring Faith Matters! It is formational and transformational for Christian life and ministry.

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### ***The EfM Heart: all people are called to ministry***

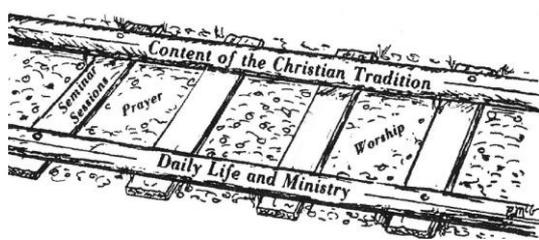
In small learning groups we find out what that means and how we can each be part of God's mission for the world. How can we, as part of the body of Christ who reconciles the world to God, share in that ministry wherever we are – in worship, in service to others and in proclaiming God's Word?

Many people come to EfM wanting more understanding of the Bible and the Church, as well as support in day-to-day ministry. Some want skills training to be better listeners, or to help others to faith or to support those in need. Some want to make connections between their faith and their everyday experience. These are the kinds of individual needs which EfM seeks to meet.

## ***EfM Vision***

We do EfM in small groups led by trained mentors. Through individual study, sharing our discoveries and exploring our faith together, we learn to think theologically. We connect what we come to know of the Christian tradition with our ordinary daily activities.

Imagine a train track! One rail is the content of our Christian tradition, the other our everyday experience. The sleepers are our group sessions to help us connect the two and to facilitate a conversation between them, all based on a solid foundation of prayer and worship in our EfM community.



**EfM gives our Christian life journey a stable track on which to run.**

## ***EfM group seminars***

In EfM we learn in seminar groups of 5 – 10 participants: large enough to stimulate a variety of ideas and perspectives; small enough to ensure each member's voice may be heard. In these groups we consider everyday life alongside the materials being studied. We use various methods of Theological Reflection to help us connect our life experience, our attitudes and beliefs and our culture with the Christian tradition,

### *The EfM story*

*EfM was developed in 1975 by the Anglican School of Theology at the University of the South in Tennessee, and the University continues to update the program, most recently in 2014. EfM has expanded internationally and ecumenically – with groups in Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Mexico, The Bahamas, and Botswana and including people from other denominations. Over the years 80,000 have participated in EfM. EfM began in Australia in 1978 and is now administered, under licence from the University of the South, by The Anglican Diocese of Brisbane as EfM-Australia. In Australia over 2000 people have completed the four-Year program.*

and so discern opportunities for ministry. With the help of the group we consider how best to serve God in our everyday lives.

What EfM does **not do** is teach how to preach, how to lead worship or how to counsel people. Nor does it set out to prepare us for ordination as clergy or for our licensing as authorised lay ministers. EfM can nonetheless provide an excellent formational path towards these and other specific ministry roles.

### ***EfM group mentors***

Each group is led by an accredited “mentor” who guides the group and administers the program, but does not teach the Christian tradition. That’s in the texts for us to read in our own time, though we explore these readings together. The mentor facilitates such group discussions and guides the theological reflections.

Every mentor attends re-accreditation training every year led by qualified and accredited trainers. If you are interested in becoming a mentor you will need to contact the local EfM Coordinator or the National Director.

### ***EfM design***

The program follows core adult learning principles: we decide when and how we learn; set and follow our own learning goals; and have our own styles of learning. Most of us spend 3 to 4 hours each week on reading and reflection in preparation for the group seminar, then share our discoveries and explore matters further. For the majority of groups this takes 2½ –3 hours in a weekly pattern over 36 or so weeks, with scheduled breaks at times the group decides.

EfM has a four-Year curriculum and participants enrol one year at a time. In lots of our groups there are participants working at different year levels. Participants are awarded a certificate upon completion.

**It is essential to the quality of EfM and to the life of the group that every participant understands clearly the commitment of time and energy that the program requires.**

### ***EfM content***

EfM is a significant program.

However, while it requires some commitment of time to read, reflect on the reading, share thoughts and experiences and pray together, it can be completed by anyone. It

is based on books that cover the beginnings of the Christian tradition to this present time.

We learn how to read the Bible and make sense of it, how we understand God, ethics, ways of worshipping and praying, our spirituality and current theological issues.

The books we use are up-to-date and represent well recognised scholarship. Except for the EfM Guide, participants purchase their own copies of the text books from suppliers of our own choosing. Both hard copy and e-book versions of the texts are available. The Reading & Reflection Guide will be supplied by EfM when you enrol.

### ***EfM Reading and Reflection Guide***

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 Our World,” works with the contexts of a person’s life; Volume B builds on “Living Faithfully in an Intercultural World”; Volumes C and D explore “Living as Spiritually Mature Christians” and “Living our Journey into God,” respectively.
- Each volume contains Part I, the reading and reflection assignments, and Part II, supporting materials, such as methods of spiritual autobiography and theological reflection.
- Five primary units in each volume have six sessions each.
- Two interlude units in each volume have two sessions each.
- An organization session at the beginning and a closing session at the end bring the total to thirty-six sessions in a year.

#### *Focus of the Reading and Reflection Guide Units*

The first session of each primary unit is either an essay or other material for all in the group to read to help set the stage for the focus of the unit:

- Unit One—identity and meaning (individual, corporate, and historical);
- Unit Two—theological reflection as a life skill; orientation to attitudes to prayer, worship, and spirituality;
- First Interlude—a spirituality of liberation;
- Unit Three—spirituality, prayer, and worship;
- Unit Four—integrating behavior and belief into a congruency that supports faithful living;
- Second Interlude—ecclesiology: knowing who we are;
- Unit Five—vocation: hearing the call and passion of our lives in relation to God.

## ***Year Texts***

Each Year level has a different focus, so a different Year Level Text.

### Year One: The Hebrew Bible

*A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* by John Collins. (Fortress Press, 2007)

### Year Two: The New Testament

*Introducing the New Testament* by Mark Allen Powell. (Baker Academic, 2009)

### Year Three: Church History

*Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* by Diarmaid MacCulloch. (Penguin Books, 2009)

### Year Four: Theology, Ethics, and Interfaith Encounter

*Theology for a Troubled Believer: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* by Diogenes Allen. (Westminster John Knox, 2010)

*The Christian Moral Life: Practices of Piety* by Timothy F. Sedgwick. (Seabury Books, 2008)

*My Neighbor's Faith: Stories of Interreligious Encounter, Growth, and Transformation* by Peace, Rose, and Mobley. (Orbis Books, 2012)

All participants will require a copy of the Bible. The *New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha [NRSV]* is recommended.

### *Interlude texts*

Two extra books that are read by all Year levels together are called Interlude Texts. Every year there are different Interlude Texts.

For 2017 they are:

*Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman

*We are Theologians: Strengthening the People of God* by Fredrica Harris Thompsett

## ***EfM startup***

Local EfM groups contain at least five and no more than ten members. Usually they are located in parishes and readily welcome people from neighbouring parishes and towns if there is space. Local starting dates are established at the convenience of each seminar group but usually not during the months of December and January.



No prior qualifications beyond an ability to read discerningly are required for enrolment. Quite a few of us in EfM have had no previous formal study in either theology or other fields.

All newcomers to an EfM group start with Year One and do their own study whilst working at the pace set by the group.

Only currently accredited mentors can enrol people in a registered EfM group. Auditing is not possible. Each person enrolling in EfM makes a commitment to the group to participate in one full year of study and to share in its costs.

## ***EfM fees***

Group registration fees for each year are calculated on the basis of a general group fee and an enrolment fee for each individual member. Some parishes are able to pay the group fee as part of their contribution to adult education in the Parish. If this is not possible then the group fee is either divided between group members or they may undertake some fundraising.

For registrations in 2017 the annual group fee is \$1050 and the individual enrolment fee is \$185 - both include GST. The individual enrolment fee is paid by participants. The Group Registration fee is generously paid by the parish of Christ Church South Yarra.

Each participant is expected to pay their share of the full year's fees even if he or she later discontinues. The question of any fee refund is the responsibility of the mentor and the group. If a member leaves the group his or her place cannot simply be passed to another person.

Participants may transfer to other EfM groups within or even outside Australia if there is a group available and able to admit them. People may return to EfM after a break in participation and resume work at the point completed if the texts remain the

same. Normally those repeating will repeat the whole Year. Changes such as these require the agreement of the group as well as the mentor. Repeating, returning and transferring group members contribute to the payment of the group registration fees.

### ***EfM support***

EfM in Australia depends on willing group members and capable volunteer mentors. Everyone in EfM supports and encourages each other especially the mentors.

Each Diocesan Coordinator promotes EfM, links local groups, organises regional training events and schedules mentor training. Mentor Trainers (also volunteers) are first accredited and then appointed by the National Director to conduct training sessions in line with EfM requirements. They maintain the quality of the program and provide ongoing support for mentors.

The EfM National Office processes registration, dispatches materials, prepares certificates and manages overall administration.

The EfM National Director has oversight of the program and in consultation makes necessary policy, content and procedural changes in line with Australian needs.

There is a small group comprising of trainers, co-ordinators and mentors that acts as a reference/advisory group to assist the National Director in developing and growing *Education for Ministry* within our Australian church.

Anyone with concerns about how the EfM program is being conducted by co-ordinators, trainers or mentors, is welcome to contact the National Director who will attempt to respond in a manner which is satisfying to all involved.

### ***EfM too much fun to stop***

The learning, growth and reflection experienced in EfM and the sense of community which participants develop has led to the emergence of EfM Alumni Groups across the country. Once we have completed the four-Year EfM program, we do not need to stop gathering, reflecting and learning together! The world of the Alumni awaits us.

EfM Alumni groups usually meet less frequently, share in theological reflections, and work with some of the new texts. For Alumni, EfM means “Equipped for Ministry”.



Currently Alumni groups operate in Adelaide, Canberra, Sydney and Shepparton. If any would like to explore starting or joining an Alumni group, see the contacts at the end of this page.

### ***EfM far out! EfM on-line!***

For any of us in small, remote communities, or where there are too few people for an EfM group, the program can also occur online. Online mentors will help us master the necessary computer and internet skills. We find that the same adult learning principles and small group interaction lead to warm and supportive communities of learning with some interesting opportunities offered by being online. Contact the National EfM Office for information about undertaking EfM on-line in 2017.

### ***EfM contacts***

Whilst this brochure will answer many of your questions about EfM, a really good way for learning more about EfM is to talk with participants or mentors who are involved with the Program and perhaps visit a group. Your Parish Office can put you in touch with local mentors or tell you how to contact your EfM Diocesan Coordinator. The EfM web site will be useful.

If you wish to know of EfM groups near you or have any other questions you are welcome to contact the EfM National Office. The contact details are below:

*The Rev'd Greg Davies*  
*National Director*  
*Education for Ministry,*  
*PO Box 325 Gisborne Vic 3437*

*Phone: 03 5428 4038*

*Email: [efm@efma.info](mailto:efm@efma.info) Web: [www.efmaustralia.org](http://www.efmaustralia.org)*

### ***EfM at Christ Church South Yarra***

**CCSY EfM Mentor:**     **Jamie Miller, Obl OSB**  
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                                  **[e] [ccoffice@ccsy.org.au](mailto:ccoffice@ccsy.org.au)**