

What is EfM?

Education for Ministry is a four year course of study intending to provide God's people with a depth of understanding of Scripture and Church History that will enable them to have a full spiritual life. You study in turn the Old Testament, the New Testament, Church History from the Apostolic Fathers to about 1830, and Religious History from then to the present. I sometimes call this *university level confirmation classes*.

A class of 8-12 people meets weekly, having read a chapter of the text. The first page of the Guide has a Chapter Summary, Learning Objectives (terms, people, or events of particular interest), Deepening Your Understanding (a set of assignments of which you are to do the one most suited to you), and Preparing for Your Seminar (which is the topic you will discuss during the seminar.) This is the heart of the program where you talk about spiritual and religious topics at length with other people who also want to talk seriously about such things.

The purpose is not to convert to a specific point of view, but to enlarge and deepen your understanding of God.

Along with the *Parallel Guides* touched on above, you also get a heavy binder entitled *Common Lessons and Supporting Materials*. Herein lay the mysteries of theological thinking. Yes they want us to interpret our daily lives by applying Scripture to them.

The contents are divided into Years A, B, C, and D and rejoice in these titles:

A – Developing Your Personal Faith

B – Focusing on Tradition and Beliefs

C – Our Faith in the World

D – The Moral and Ethical Life: Responding to our Call.

Also included are materials on Prayer and Liturgy.

The chief value of this course for me was the freedom to talk about important spiritual matters with others who also thought they were important. As we read the material, (the first two years included reading big chunks of the Bible) we discovered things we didn't know, even about the familiar bible stories because we were reading the whole story not just a few select verses. The early Church History revealed the struggles to explain who Jesus was, and what had happened.

The process was soul-satisfying.

Written by: Victoria Perry, EfM Graduate – May 1, 2011