



Watching the videos

Links to the three 15–20 minute videos for each of the three sessions are posted at lifeoffaith.info/holy-innovations-project-resources. If you are watching the videos in an in-person meeting, you may want to download the videos and watch or project them from your computer (right-click on the video links to download the files).

If you are watching the videos in an online meeting, you have two options: 1) download the files and then Share them from your computer, or 2) have participants watch the videos on the web on their own computers, then join the online discussion. If you use option 1 and you don't have a very high speed fiber connection, the Shared video will be very jerky and hard to watch, in which case option 2, while more convoluted, will result in a better viewing experience. Experiment ahead of time to figure out what works best for you.

Watching/Conversation pattern

For each of the three sessions, the pattern is to 1) watch the three parts of the video presentation, 2) after each segment, engage your guiding team in discussion using the questions provided below, and 3) join the other guiding teams in a Zoom call to reflect on what was learned in each session.

For 1) and 2), following each video with 15 minutes of conversation will make the sessions about 90 minutes long. If you allow 25 minutes of discussion after each video, the meeting will last about 2 hours.

For 3), the Zoom call, everyone will be invited to engage in an open-ended conversation; while the presenters will be part of the conversation, they will not be providing additional content—you will be in charge of the content (and the length of the gathering). This, then, will depend on you bringing your observations and questions to the Zoom call. So, as you watch the presentations, and especially as you engage in discussion after each segment, write down your observations and questions so that you can bring them to the Zoom call.

Session One Discussion Questions

Session One, Part One

See the separate handout, “On the one hand. . .” for the questions (posted at lifeoffaith.info/holy-innovations-project-resources). Print a copy of the handout for each participant if you're meeting in person, or email a copy of the handout to each participant if you're meeting remotely.

Session One, Part Two

1. How would you define the gap between faith (at church) and life (in the world) in your congregation? What is the primary challenge that you face in order to connect faith and life?
2. What resistance do you anticipate the autoimmune disorder of the Body of Christ will present for your work on this project? (You might start with: What resistance do you feel rising up in yourself?) How might you work through that resistance?
3. What promise do you see in this project? What steps might you consider to bridge the gap between faith and life?

Session One, Part Three

1. The church is not a building, denomination, congregation, or a worship service; according to the Model Constitution for Congregations (C4.01) “The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.” How and when do God’s called and sent people bear witness to God’s creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity? What language would be useful in your congregation in order to clarify this purpose? *
2. How might your congregation redefine *ministry* so that you’re not dependent on people taking time away from their daily lives to do something for or through the congregation?
3. In a few weeks, in the third orientation session, Pastor Jason Van Hunnik will tell you how his congregation worked through the points in this week’s presentation. Not to steal his thunder, but here’s the vision statement that he uses with his congregation:

In Baptism each of us claimed and named as a child of God by God’s grace alone. Second, we are also called to be God’s hands and feet in the world in all the realms of our life. By this we mean that we are called in our life in our family, in our work/retirement/school, as a citizen, as a friend, and neighbor etc. We believe there is no time in which one is not called.

Based on what you heard in this first session, what words and phrases would you want to include in a vision statement for your congregation?

Session Two Discussion Questions

Session Two, Part One

1. “Baptism is our primary ordination into ministry.” What does that mean to you? What light does that shine on your everyday roles and responsibilities?
2. Identify some ways in which ministry has been “churchified” in your congregation, then identify possibilities for refocusing on equipping members for the “universal neighborliness (service) of all believers.”
3. Dr. Nesson’s closing story brought up the tension of supporting ministries of both the gathered and scattered church. What resistance might such a tension bring up in your congregation, and how might you deal with it?

Session Two, Part Two

1. Go through a communion liturgy and/or some hymns and list examples of Dr. Nesson’s claim that “Worship practices are life practices.” For example, a prayer following communion asks, “Send us now as your disciples, announcing peace and proclaiming that the reign of God has come near,” or a prayer petition, “teach us so to honor your creative work that our worship may become seamless with our lives, and our lives with your good purposes.” **
2. Look at your findings from the first question and discuss ways that you could alter this language so that it is more concrete than generic. For instance, the first example in question 1 could be restated, “Send us now as your people, loving everyone we meet as you love us.”

* Note also C4.02.e: “This congregation shall . . . nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.”

** Note to leader: If your congregation uses resources other than the the ELW (namely contemporary songs and alternative liturgies) you may have a hard time finding examples this question is seeking. This would lead to an entirely different second question for your leaders, along the lines of exploring what needs to be done to find worship resources that shape life practices.

Leader also note: read pp. 126–133 of *The Scattering: Imagining a Church that Connects Faith and Life* for ideas that will help with the second and third questions about making worship practices more concrete.

3. How might your congregation adapt and amplify the welcoming and sending rites at worship so that both connect better with the weekly pattern of gathering and scattering, and with our daily lives?

Session Two, Part Three

1. How can your congregation make the Affirmation of Baptism promises more central in your life together?
2. How can you help your members to improve their ability to speak the faith to others in daily life?
3. What are some occasions when your congregation can use the “Affirmation of Christian Vocation” (ELW, page 84) to emphasize their everyday ministries?

Session Three Discussion Questions

Session Three, Part One

1. Spend a few minutes either as a whole group or in pairs discussing your own understanding of your calling in one of your roles (family, work, friend or public service). Answer these questions:
 - What are your joys in this role?
 - What are the challenges?
 - What are ways that your neighbor/the world thrives as a result of you living into this role?
 - How has your faith framed your life in this role?
2. Does the sort of conversation in the first question come naturally for you as a leader? Why or why not? How would your congregation as a whole respond to this kind of conversation? How has your congregation helped or hindered similar conversations?
3. How are the challenges Westwood named in it’s journey (Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism; and the quest for meaning) similar to or different from your context? Begin formulating how you would define the challenges you see in the process of connecting faith and life. How could this stated challenge(s) frame your direction as a congregation for this project?

Session Three, Part Two

1. Spend a few moments discussing the 6 Keys shared in this video.
 - Which of these six keys is either already being done in your context or will be the easiest to do?
 - What will be most challenging?
 - What will be critical for you as a leadership team to be mindful of as you go forward?
2. One of the arguments of the session is that the church is too vague with many of our terms. Clearly defining terms is critical to your movement forward (a couple different definitions of “vocation” or “calling” were given as an example; Pastor DuBois talked about *church*, *ministry*, and *clergy/laity*). What terms will you need to define for the whole congregation as you go forward? What difference will it make in your congregational direction?

Session Three, Part Three

Two examples were given in the session about the worldview challenge in Westwood’s context (the pervasive reality of “busyness” and the college cheating scandal). What examples of worldviews can you name in your context that compete with the gospel’s worldview (that we are claimed in baptism, marked with the cross of Jesus Christ, and called to be God’s hands and feet in the world)? How can you begin to address this challenge as you go forward in this project? (Remember, Westwood leaders identified competing worldviews as the deepest challenge, and that this takes the longest to engage.)