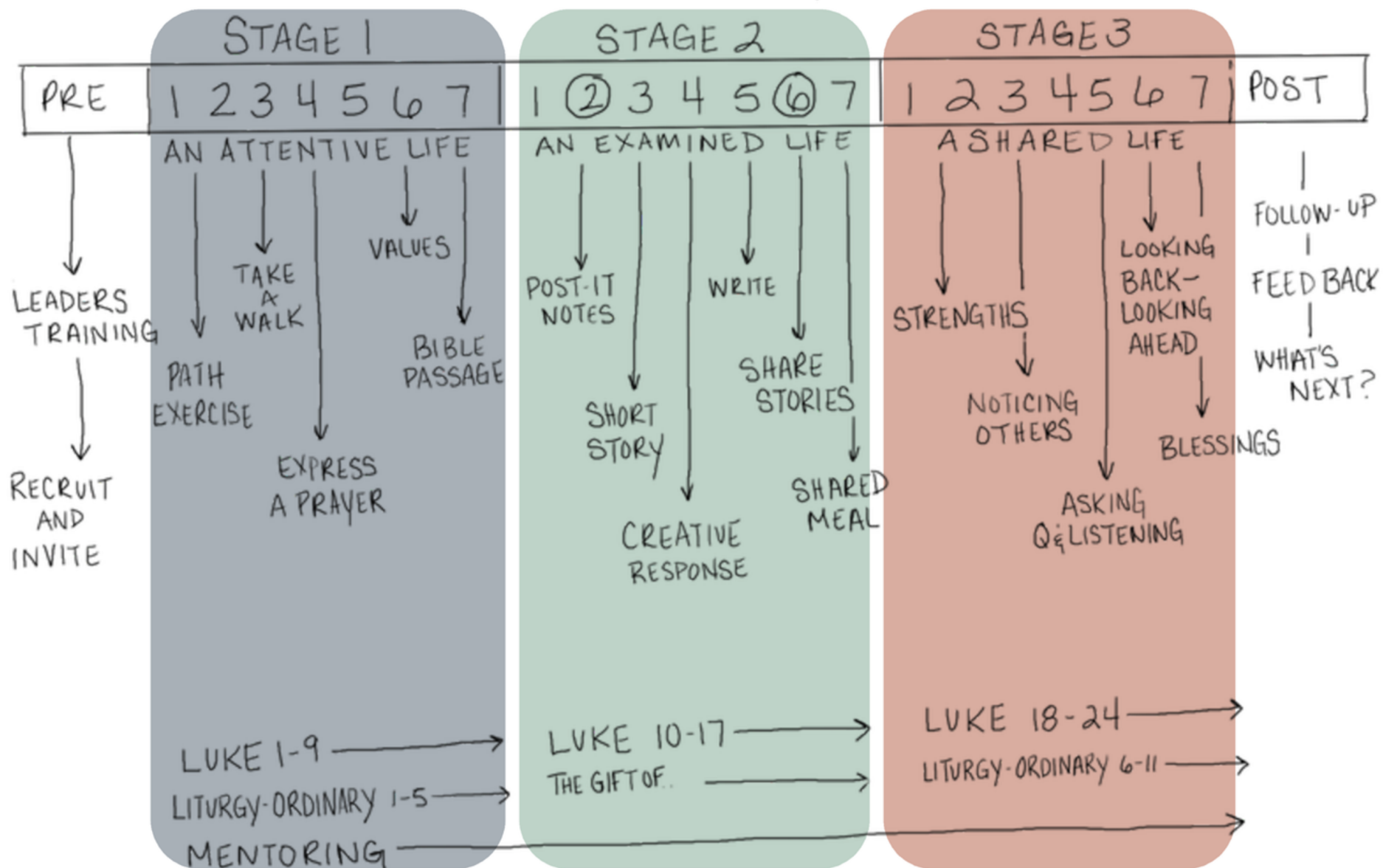


The Journey: 3

A SHARED LIFE FACILITATOR GUIDE

THE JOURNEY



The Journey

Stage 3: A Shared Life

As the leader of *A Shared Life*, you have become much more than a facilitator of this process; you are becoming a guide, mentor, friend, even a pastor, to those in your group.

You have been prayerfully creating conditions in which the Spirit of God might uniquely meet with each participant in just the right ways. This is a privilege. A front row seat to the activity of God.

One of the surprises along the way at this juncture in *The Journey* process is the profound creativity God has orchestrated in putting together your unique group of adults. It's almost as if God knew that we needed each other. May you continue to trust the process.

In these seven sessions, we hope to cultivate:

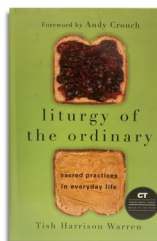
- a relational approach to life in Christ versus an individualistic “lone ranger” faith.
- a way of life marked by giving and receiving mentoring and companionship.
- an exploration of the talents God has given and is developing in us for kingdom purposes.
- a horizon for our next steps in kingdom servanthood, leadership, and growth.

BIBLE READING & JOURNALING

Luke’s Gospel and the Story of Jesus—chapters 18 - 24

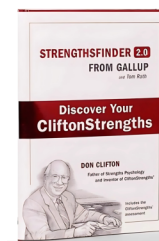
Throughout each session of *The Journey*, we will read a chapter from Luke’s Gospel.

TEXT



Liturgy of the Ordinary

Tish Harrison Warren
InterVarsity Press, 2016



StrengthsFinder 2.0

Gallup, 2021



CONTENTS

Session 1: A Shared Way of Life

Session 2: Jesus’ Relational Way with Others

Session 3: Companionship Others

Session 4: Exploring our Strengths

Session 5: Embracing a Sense of Calling

Session 6: Next Steps on the Journey

Session 7: A Time of Blessing

Exploring Further

Stage Three Specific Questions

Building trust, vulnerability, and connection

- Share a joy and a sorrow that you have recently experienced.
- On a scale of 1-10, how are you? (1= really struggling, 10= doing great)
- When does God feel close to you? When does he feel far away?
- How is the rhythm of attending your *Journey* group each week affecting your prayer life?

Stage manual/Scripture discussion questions

- What do you find yourself thinking about? Tell me more....
- What excites you about ...? What concerns you?
- Share examples of how God is using your strengths to bless others.
- How is seeing all of God's people as image bearers changing you?
- How is Jesus' way of being hospitable, particularizing, deepening, and patient influencing your day-to-day life?
- How has Jesus modeled spiritual companionship to you personally?

Accountability questions:

- What spiritual practice has been helping you keep company with God?
- Is there something God is asking of you that you are resisting?
- How has God shown his love for you recently? How are you showing this love back?

Mentoring check-in questions:

- How is your mentoring experience going?
- What is something you are learning about yourself/God in this mentoring process?
- What has been most/least valuable about the time spent with your mentor so far?
- What are your thoughts about being a mentor yourself?

Adults retain what they discover for themselves. This is true for each of us. Therefore, ask questions!

A Mentoring Guide: Christ. Conversation. Companionship,
VantagePoint3, 2019, p. 56

Stage Three Facilitating Considerations

As the guide for your group, Stage 3 picks up after the sharing of life story narratives by everyone. You have experienced something very unique together. There is likely an increased appreciation for each other.

The primary focus of Stage 3 is to cultivate the conditions for living a shared life with others. You have become more than a facilitator, you are becoming a guide, a mentor, a minister of sorts, to those in your group.

In Session 2: *Exploring our Strengths*, the CliftonStrengths™ assessment is assigned. We provide ample resources to facilitate this assessment well in the session and through Leaders+. That said, many facilitators do seek a trained CliftonStrengths™ consultant to help them with this session. In some settings with multiple groups, a combined workshop is held. The workshop can also include other interested adults. This can be a subtle introduction to *The Journey*. Some consultants simply lead the group during the regular session meeting time. You will have to plan in advance for this kind of support.

We encourage you to have your eye out for those in the group that may be showing “facilitator giftedness.” Who is really enthusiastic about the process? Who is respected among the group for their contributions but also for their questions and listening? Sometimes these facilitators-in-development don’t see themselves as having what it takes to lead a group. Plant the seed. Meet with them. Invite them to consider co-leading the next group. Utilize VP3 facilitator training options to plan for your next group.

Finishing well is also a primary goal for this final stage of the *Journey* process. Every group is unique, so consider what that will look like for your group. Plan ahead and discuss the desire for any additional gatherings or celebrations. Every group has those anxious to finish, and those disappointed that the end is coming, and everything in between. Be sensitive to this variety. Leaders+ includes a video around the topic of finishing well.

SESSION ONE:

Our Need for Others

Overview:

Following Jesus is not a solitary endeavor. We grow, heal, and mature as we share life with others in meaningful, prayerful, and discerning relationships. This session invites us to consider how God uses people and community to shape our lives and faith.

Focusing Question:

What part has friendship played in your spiritual growth and development over time?

Crafting My Group Time:

Dialogue • Discovery • Application

- **An Invitation to Discover.** Imagine yourself at the table with Jesus. What do you notice? What are you feeling? Thinking? (p. 11)
- On a scale of 1 to 10, what number reflects where you are today? Question in the margin. (p. 12)
- Discuss the **Reflect and Respond** questions. (p. 16)
- Read out loud *Liturgy of the Ordinary*, pages 85-86. How is seeking peace with those closest to us connected to living a shared life? How do our closest relationships form us for life with those outside our home?

Pay attention:

- To each participant's comfort with sharing life with others.
- Listen for stories surfacing loneliness or relational loss or pain.
- Living a shared life is a process. Allow for growth over time. Trust the process.
- Listen for how participants articulate God's presence through others.

Moving on to Session 2→

- Session 2 requires participants to complete CliftonStrengths™ in advance.
- Share expectations for how results will be shared with each other and what to expect when together.
- Some facilitators will invite a trained CliftonStrengths™ facilitator to lead this session.
- Encourage the sharing of their CliftonStrengths™ with their mentor or a friend before next week.
- Looking ahead, consider cultivating more shared leadership and responsibility among group members. For example, leading prayer, starting or closing the group time, or co-leading a session in the future.

What I Notice About the Group:**Prayers for Those in the Group:**

SESSION TWO:

Exploring Our Strengths

Overview:

God has created each of us with a unique blend of talents, experiences, and capacities that enable us to serve others in meaningful ways. This session invites us to become familiar with our strengths and consider how they may be developed over time for the flourishing of others.

Focusing Question:

How has God uniquely designed me, and how might my strengths contribute to others?

Crafting My Group Time:

Dialogue • Discovery • Application

- A Romans 12 Horizon. Discuss the questions on page 28.
- Group processing of CliftonStrengths™. Follow the guide on page 33. Leaders+ holds the documents mentioned here for great discussion.
- Close the session with liturgy on page 36. Read prayerfully 2-3 times.

Pay attention:

- Some will gravitate toward this exercise—it just makes sense to them. Others will be suspicious or disappointed in their assessment. Some may feel hesitant to share their strengths.
- Model sharing your strengths first. Set an expectation for how and for how long each person will share.
- Consider posting strengths for everyone to see.
- The heart of this exercise is to affirm the uniqueness of each other and the application of strengths for kingdom purposes.

Moving on to Session 3→

- The next session will explore the significant people who have noticed us over time. It's possible some in your group have never felt noticed by others. Pay attention.
- There are more elements in this process than you have time to discuss... *Liturgy of the Ordinary*, Bible reading, relationship with a mentor. Pay attention to what the group needs and what you sense are the best places to spend your time. You can't do it wrong.

What I Notice About the Group:**Prayers for Those in the Group:**

SESSION THREE:

The Power of Being Seen

Overview:

To be seen, known, and understood is one of the deepest longings of the human heart. This session explores how Jesus truly sees people and provides a model for us to truly see others.

Focusing Question:

Jesus sees all people uniquely. How have you come to believe that Jesus sees you and others particularly?

Crafting My Group Time:

Dialogue • Discovery • Application

- Discuss the **Reflect and Respond** question on page 41.
- **Noticing Others: An Exercise.** Discuss this exercise with each other. (pp. 45-46)
- Discuss each other's relational network. Choose among the questions on pages 49-51. Consider doing this in smaller groups of twos or threes.
- Close the session listening together to **We Need People.** (p. 50)

Pay attention:

- This session invites more personal stories. Honor and affirm vulnerability.
- Some adults struggle to believe God sees them. Be sensitive to this feeling among those who are quieter.
- Manage talk time! If you need to even out the talk time, perhaps bring back the Listener-Talker Continuum for discussion.
- You are likely noticing someone in your group who could facilitate *The Journey*. Now is a good time to talk with them about what you see. Set up a time to have coffee or lunch to particularize a potential leader for the future.
- Modeling your own relational network by talking about a significant person who saw you, and/or a person you are seeing uniquely yourself will be helpful to everyone.

Moving on to Session 4→

- The next session is pretty straight forward. For those familiar with the previous versions of *The Journey*, this is a refreshed session on “imitating Jesus’ way” with others.
- All versions of *The Journey* process, as well as the text, *Deep Mentoring* by Randy Reese and Rob Loane, have focused on four qualities of Jesus’ character that have real sticking power for all believers: a hospitable, particularizing, deepening, and patient way with others. If each participant took those away from this process that would be a good thing.

What I Notice About the Group:

Prayers for Those in the Group:

SESSION FOUR:

Jesus' Relational Way with Others

Overview:

This session invites us to learn from Jesus' examples and interactions throughout the Gospels. His posture reveals a relational way marked by a hospitable, particularizing, deepening, and patient way with others. He meets people as they are, yet never leaves them there—drawing out what is true and calling forth what is possible.

Focusing Question:

What are the values and character qualities you see in Jesus' way of life?

Crafting My Group Time:

Dialogue • Discovery • Application

- **Reflect and Respond** questions on Jesus' way with others. (p. 65-66)
- Seek to facilitate a "collective" conversation with the **Reflect and Respond** question on page 67.
As a group, what are you discovering about Jesus' "but not so with you" challenges?
- Luke 22, the Bible reading for this session. Pay attention to Peter's character. (p. 70)
- *Liturgy of the Ordinary*, chapter 9, focuses on congregation and community. This entire stage is about living a shared life. How is your Christian community helping or hindering your connecting with others?

Pay attention:

- Do your best to cultivate conversation that focuses on the “who” we follow...Jesus. Every part of our followership is about a person...Jesus.
- On page 69, in the margin, there is an encouragement to watch an episode of *The Chosen*. Point this out and perhaps decide as a group if you will all seek to do this.
- How’s it going with mentoring relationships among the group? What part are these relationships playing in the process overall?

Moving on to Session 5→

- In the next session we discuss all kinds of spiritual friendships and mentoring relationships. We chose the word “companioning” as an umbrella term.
- There will be an IN-SESSION exercise in Session 5 on pages 86-87. You may want to tip the group off about this so they understand what to do when they get to that portion of their reading.

What I Notice About the Group:**Prayers for Those in the Group:**

SESSION FIVE:

Companioning Others

Overview:

Companioning is the sacred practice of walking alongside another person. This session helps us explore what it means to companion others well and how we might offer ourselves more fully in spiritual friendships.

Focusing Question:

How have other people best helped you pay attention to God's activity in your life?

Crafting My Group Time:

Dialogue • Discovery • Application

- **Reverencing the Mystery...** On page 79, beginning with the paragraph "Over the past 150 years..." read out loud with the group to the end of the section on page 80. Discuss the section and explore the **Reflect and Respond** question.
- In smaller groups of two or three, discuss the terms "diminishers" and "illuminators" from page 82 quote in the margin. Who do you see illuminating well? What do they do?
- **In-Session Exercise** (pp. 86-87). Prepare in advance for facilitating this within the group.

Pay attention:

- The discussion on chasms or distance in relationships (p. 80) could be another layer of vulnerability. Beware that the group does not try to fix the relationship; but rather listens, asks questions, and prays.
- You are only two sessions away from completing *The Journey* process. Facilitate a discussion around, “How are you feeling about almost being done with our group?” Perhaps use a continuum... 1 = definitely ready to be done. 10 = I don’t want to stop. This helps everyone see the variety of feelings among the group.

Moving on to Session 6→

- Session 6 can be a pivotal session in the life of a participant because it creates space to name and declare what God is doing within their life and how God is asking them to contribute. We have found that about 50% of the group will have a pretty clear “next step.” Less than that will be unsure, and about 10% will have no idea what that would even look like. Keep those percentages to yourself, but watch and be prayerful for each participant.
- You have options on how intensely you dive into Session 6. In **Exploring Further** there is an exercise, *Writing a Personal Vision*. Consider if this fits your group and if you want to point it out in advance.
- After completing the Session 6 readings and questions, look ahead to page 100 and the invitation to select an object that symbolically helps you express how you sense God is inviting you to contribute or offer your life going forward. Perhaps share an example of your own.

What I Notice About the Group:

Prayers for Those in the Group:

SESSION SIX:

Offering Our Lives to God

Overview:

This session invites us to look back over our *Journey* process to identify the many ways God has shaped us through this process and may be calling us to offer our lives in this season to kingdom contribution. It is a session designed to reflect on growth, name desires, and open ourselves to God's ongoing work.

Focusing Question:

What action step(s) or growth in character development is the Spirit inviting me to offer to God at this stage of life?

Crafting My Group Time:

Dialogue • Discovery • Application

- The final chapter in *Liturgy of the Ordinary* was about sleeping. Consider starting your session with a discussion question around this topic.
- **Reflect and Respond.** (p 95)
- Give the majority of your in-session time to **A Creative Response** and the objects and stories accompanying them that each person will bring. (p. 100)
- Refer to the questions on pages 96-97 at any time in the session discussion to cultivate more clarity or particularly reflection.

Pay attention:

- Be mindful and sensitive to people who do not have a clear sense of how God is calling them to offer their lives. This is an evolving conversation and unfolding understanding for many.
- Do you want to use the exercise in **Exploring Further: Writing a Personal Vision** (p. 118) as a group? This is not necessary or required.
- Some groups do an additional workshop using this exercise and invite interested adults to attend as well. This can be a subtle awareness builder for your next *Journey* group.

Moving on to Session 7→

- What do you want your final session gathering to look like? Some groups meet for a final session assignment and then add an additional final celebration that may include significant people in their lives, as well as the mentors who have walked alongside them during this process. This can also be a subtle way to identify participants for a next *Journey* group.
- Tip group members off about the nature of Session 7...writing blessings to share with each other. Generally speaking, this takes longer than expected to do, so encourage them not to wait until the last minute!
- What, if any, special plans do you want to make for finishing well together?
- Encourage participants to complete the *Journey* feedback experience. (p. 113)
- Note that the next VantagePoint3 process is called *A Way of Life* and a sample of the first chapter is included in **Exploring Further**. (p. 126)

What I Notice About the Group:

Prayers for Those in the Group:

SESSION SEVEN:

A Time of Blessing

Overview:

Blessing one another is a sacred act that acknowledges God's presence in our stories and names the good we see emerging in each other. As we conclude *The Journey*, we pause to reflect on what God has done among us and speak words of encouragement, gratitude, and hope. This session creates space for celebration, honoring the shared life we have cultivated.

Focusing Question:

What does it feel and look like in life to bless another person or to receive a blessing?

Crafting My Group Time:

Dialogue • Discovery • Application

- It may be tempting to begin sharing the blessing cards and thoughts with each other. However, we encourage you to take time to hear out loud the group's reflections in **Naming What We Have Experienced Together.** (pp. 107-109)
- **Share Blessings and Prayer.** (p. 112)

Pay attention:

- Create unhurried space. But provide some guidelines for blessings and prayer.
- Savor this experience. Celebrate God's activity in every life.
- Help the group recognize this session as both an ending and a sending. Celebrate and anticipate what God is up to among you and in you.

What I Notice About the Group:**Prayers for Those in the Group:****Moving on→**

- Take note of anyone in particular you may want or need to reach out to after the group ends. What are you noticing? How do you want to encourage them? Who would you recommend they talk with or see?

Exploring Further: Tips for Facilitating

WRITING OF A PERSONAL VISION

The personal vision planning exercise invites you to reflect deeply on who God has shaped you to be, how your life has unfolded, and where the Spirit may be inviting you to offer your gifts, experiences, and desires in the season ahead. To enter this exercise well:

Begin with prayerful openness.

Ask God to quiet your heart, open your imagination, and help you notice what truly matters. Do not rush this.

Review your journey so far.

Look back over key moments, relationships, strengths, wounds, and insights from all three stages of *The Journey*. Notice themes that keep resurfacing.

Pay attention to your desires.

Desires are often windows into how the Spirit is stirring. What draws you? What energizes you? What feels life-giving?

Honor both joy and ache.

Sometimes calling is shaped by gratitude and passion; other times by compassion or pain. Allow all of your story to speak.

Write freely without editing.

Let yourself brainstorm without pressure to produce something polished. This is not expected to be a final product. Clarity comes over time.

Notice recurring patterns or words.

Review what you've written and highlight themes that connect across your reflections.

Hold your vision with humility.

This exercise is not so much about creating a final mission statement but about listening for God's gentle invitations.

Share with a trusted companion.

Speaking your emerging vision aloud often brings additional clarity, encouragement, and discernment.

Use this exercise as a beginning—not a conclusion—as you continue walking with God in attentiveness and trust.

WRAPPING UP:

The Journey: A Shared Life

As a facilitator completing this third and final stage of *The Journey* process, you have become a minister of sorts to your group, and you have taken them through a significant exercise in spiritual discovery, pursuit, and apprenticeship with Jesus and his stunning character. Well done.

Pause a moment and remember the stages of the process... *An Attentive Life* set the table for discovering Jesus' stunning character, *An Examined Life*, focused on our unique lives and the story of our lives, and *A Shared Life* explored our collective lives with others.

Pay Attention

- There will likely be mixed emotions about ending your *Journey* process. Trust the relationships that have formed and what that will look like moving forward.
- Normalize those that do not have a clear next step as you wrap up. Encourage ongoing prayer and discernment around where God may be leading.
- Who are you inviting to move toward leading their own *Journey* group?

More Suggestions for Finishing Stage Three

- Celebrate, Celebrate, Celebrate! You have been on sacred ground as you have explored together, Who God is, Who am I, and What is God doing in and through each of your lives.
- Have a conversation about letting the dust settle, so to speak, as everyone transitions away from meeting regularly. It is a beautiful mystery to watch how the Spirit will unfold the seeds that have been planted in your time together over the last several months.
- Share an invitation to continue in the next process, *A Way of Life*, to dive even deeper into what this Jesus way of life looks like in your friendship with God, your mission along the way, and in your community with others.
- Provide resources for your participants to know more about VantagePoint3, provide their own feedback to the organization, and become part of the larger network of VantagePoint3 friends.

Facilitator Self-Reflection Questions

As you conclude *A Shared Life*, take a few moments to reflect on your own experience as a leader.

- In what ways have I seen God at work in me as I've led this group?
- What was especially life-giving or stretching about facilitating this stage of *The Journey*?
- How has God grown your confidence as a leader through this experience?
- What next step is God inviting me to take in my own leadership formation?

We at VantagePoint3 thank you for your YES to walking alongside God's people. We celebrate with you all that God is doing in you, and through you, and trust the Holy Spirit's good work that has taken place through this *Journey* process.

Prayer

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:16-21

VP3's A Mentoring Way

The gospel plays out best in relationships. If you are looking for another resource to guide your more relational ways of life and ministry, we strongly endorse these amentoringway.org resources:



At the
TABLE

Thoughtful words. Meaningful Conversations. Formation that shapes how you live and lead.

At the Table is designed for those eager to grow, deepen, and learn how to be companions for others in creating space for God.

We invite you to subscribe to the *At the Table* blog. Invest in your own formation and the formation of those you walk alongside in Jesus' name.

If you are looking for a quick one-to-three-minute daily read with tips, quotes, short videos, encouragement, and free downloads all on mentoring, then sign up for **30 DAYS OF MENTORING**.



3-2-1: Following Jesus in Threes by Soo-Inn Tan (GraceWorks.sg, 2013)

"Three friends meeting over a meal is an achievable way to experience spiritual friendship. '3-2-1' is a simple summary of the concept— three friends meeting two hours one time a month over a meal.... This short book contains all you need to understand and practise a 3-2-1 approach to spiritual friendship."
— Soo-Inn Tan.

Many *Journey* alumni have found this book to be a valuable model for continuing to cultivate the spiritual companionship they experienced in *The Journey* process.

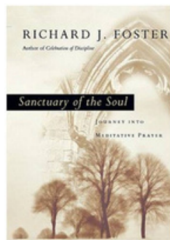
3•2•1 GROUPS

A Way of Life

This sequel to *The Journey* process provides a meaningful next step for those who want to continue growing in their spiritual maturity and leadership development. Unfolded in the stages of *A Way of Life* are sets of disciplines or practices by which we learn to turn toward God and others, and thereby participate with God's compassionate and reconciling way in the world:

- **Stage 1: Friendship with God** will invite us to pay attention to a life of growing intimacy or communion with God. (7 sessions)
- **Stage 2: Community with Others** will invite us to pay attention to a life of being with others as God's people. (7 sessions)
- **Stage 3: Mission on the Way** will invite us to pay attention to a life of being sent by God into the world. (7 sessions)

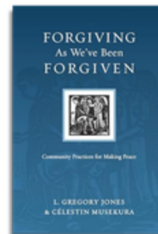
TEXT



Sanctuary of the Soul
InterVarsity Press, 2011



A Mentoring Guide
VantagePoint3, 2019



Forgiving As We've Been Forgiven
InterVarsity Press, 2010



God in the Alley
WaterBrook Press, 2004

TAKE A DEEP DIVE INTO YOUR LIFE IN LIGHT OF THE STUNNING STORY OF JESUS

