



Discernment: Next Steps after Exploring the Church

The Exploring the Church process should be completed & a report submitted both to your presenting priest and to the diocesan Vocations Minister before you take steps forward to consider a Discernment Committee. Working thoughtfully to expand your perspective of the Church should take some months to complete. Once you, the seeker, feel you have completed this work and have reflected your thoughts in the form of a report, schedule a conversation with your presenting priest to share together about what you have discovered, and submit your report along with your “Church Resume” (see guidelines) to our diocesan Vocations Minister, the Rev. Sarah Kye Price sprice@episcopalvirginia.org who will offer you feedback on your Exploring the Church process and report.

Following this step, you and your presenting priest will discern together, integrating any recommendations that you receive about the Exploring the Church process, if the time is right for you to begin the next phase of discernment: the parish discernment committee.

Once your presenting priest feels it is appropriate for you to take the next steps, your presenting priest should email Vocations Minister Sarah Kye Price sprice@episcopalvirginia.org requesting that you move into the discernment committee portion of the process. At this time, your presenting priest and vocations minister can talk together about any particular needs or concerns about the structure of the committee, especially if it is a smaller parish or you are employed by the parish.

The Vocations Minister then consults with the Committee on Discernment, and a trained Diocesan Discernment Facilitator will be assigned to work with the you and your parish to organize the Discernment Committee. Generally, the initial meeting to plan for the committee includes the Seeker, Presenting Priest and Senior Warden or other member of the Vestry. All discernment committees in the Diocese of Virginia are organized and facilitated by a trained Diocesan Discernment Facilitator.

The role of the Discernment Committee is to engage in spiritual discernment with the Seeker and is not evaluative in nature. The discernment committee will meet over a period of months until the group comes to consensus with the Seeker about their next steps. No recommendations are provided from the committee to the presenting priest. Following the work of the discernment committee, the Seeker and the presenting priest may meet and talk about whether a pathway to lay ministry leadership or a pathway to nomination for Holy Orders is the next, best step forward. Please refer to the Vocation and Call website pages for more information on nomination processes for Deacons and Priests.