



## Exploring Your Spiritual Journey

### WHAT EXPLORING YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY (EYSJ) DOES...

The Exploring Your Spiritual Journey (EYSJ) Program is for any person who is seeking to understand God's work in their life. If you feel there is more to life than day-to-day living, then EYSJ may help you discern how God is calling you to live.

Exploring Your Spiritual Journey (EYSJ) offers a discernment process for responding to the Holy Spirit's call, which arises for all baptized people, lay and ordained, in ministry. The program offers an opportunity for discernment by those people discerning holy orders as well as those discerning lay ministry in the world. This combination enriches the process for everyone, as a diverse cohort supports all who seek a focused and deepened ministry to serve as Jesus taught.

During the Exploring Your Spiritual Journey (EYSJ) year, in the midst of a Christian community, you will walk with a group of fellow seekers reflecting on God's call and on what it means to keep covenant with God. Reflection and prayer lie at the heart of this program, through which all are led to a closer walk with God, in quietness to hear what God is asking. In this community you will share a common life of discernment and exploration. You will reflect on your spiritual journey, identify your spiritual gifts and determine the resources, training and experience you will need to effectively carry out the unique ministry you have discerned. Throughout, you will have the support and guidance of facilitators (both lay and ordained) and a spiritual director. Most important of all, you will have the affirmation of this community of students who are walking with you on this journey. Participants are also expected to have the support of their rector, vicar or priest-in-charge.

### HOW EXPLORING YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY (EYSJ) WORKS...

The EYSJ Program begins with an orientation retreat session. During this session you will begin to get to know one another, agree to the set dates for the fifteen (15) sessions and choose a meeting place, which will be ONLINE during the pandemic of 2020. This first session brings the class together as a group, building community and offering support as each participant is encouraged to reflect on where you have come from and where you are going.

The EYSJ group meets approximately every two weeks. It is expected that all participants will attend all sessions, with minimal planned absences. Each session opens and explores diverse and creative ways of worship. Following worship, time is taken for each member to "check-in" and to share with the others what has been happening in his or her life since the previous meeting.

The sessions programmatic topics include prayer and journaling, creating, reflection papers, calling, covenanting, suffering and hope, images of Jesus, sharing my journey, exploring spiritual gifts, and dreaming and visioning. There will be opportunities to speak with others who are serving in the laity and in ordained orders, and to explore one's spiritual journey through scripture, tradition, stories and prayer.

Within the first month you will select a spiritual director. You will be guided in determining what to look for in a spiritual director and how to find one during the retreat. This is a vital personal relationship within the EYSJ Program. The Whitaker Institute provides a list of approved spiritual directors but does not supervise this personal relationship. The student and the spiritual director will agree on a (customary) per-session or hourly fee, which is not included in the EYSJ tuition.

You will be required to do assigned reading, write reflection papers, share with the group the story of your spiritual journey, conduct interviews of a priest, deacon and lay minister and prepare a learning plan. You are encouraged to take no other classes during the year so that you have time for reading assignments, prayer, journaling, reflection and for developing a personal spiritual discipline.

At the end of the year you will have a better understanding of what God is calling you to do. You will have developed the beginning of a learning plan which will include an assessment of what you already bring to ministry, as well as describe the tools and skills you will need to develop and how that might be accomplished. You will meet with the Whitaker staff and together you will make a decision whether continuing education should take place within Whitaker or in other ways.

### **HOW TO APPLY...**

Applications are accepted throughout the year. The application form must be submitted with a \$50 non-refundable application fee. This fee will be applied to the student's tuition once the student is accepted. An interview with the Director of the Whitaker Institute will be arranged before the Opening Retreat, usually within one month of submitting the application.

### **HOW TO PAY...**

The tuition for the Exploring Your Spiritual Journey program is \$900 for the 2020-2021 year, a discounted rate from other years as we will not have an in-person retreat.

The fee includes the program costs, the EYSJ peer group meetings, administrative services, the Opening Retreat (currently planned to be held online) and the Whitaker Celebration, the end of year gathering in early June. This fee does not cover mandatory spiritual direction. The student is responsible for any fees contracted with their spiritual director.

Your \$50 refundable deposit is due with the application and will be applied to your tuition. This confirms your place in the retreat. By the start of the retreat in August, 50% of the full year's tuition is due. By January, the remaining 50% must be paid in full. If you need financial help, we can: 1) spread out the payments over the course of the year and 2) provide scholarship assistance.

**Payment Plan:**

For those with demonstrated financial need, payment plans can be arranged by contacting Mark Miliotto at [mmiliotto@edomi.org](mailto:mmiliotto@edomi.org) or 313-833-4427.

**Scholarship Information:**

Our philosophy is that lack of funding shall not be a stumbling block for attending EYSJ. There are limited scholarship funds available from our generous donors and we offer this through a sharing approach: "1/3, 1/3, 1/3." This means your congregation will be asked to fund 1/3, you will fund 1/3 and Whitaker Scholarship Fund will fund 1/3. To apply, contact The Rev. Vicki Hesse at [vhesse@edomi.org](mailto:vhesse@edomi.org) and complete the Scholarship Application for your program. Again, our philosophy is that lack of funding shall not be a stumbling block for attending a course.

**Cancellation Policy:**

Tuition deposits for EYSJ are fully refundable before the retreat. After the retreat, the maximum refund will be 50% of the tuition amount.

Students are expected to make financial arrangements by the end of the Opening Retreat. If a student is unable to make a payment due to changed financial circumstances, that student is expected to contact the office **immediately** to discuss the situation. New arrangements will then be put in writing and the student will be expected to fulfill those obligations.

**IMPORTANT:** Students whose accounts are not current will be ineligible for the services of the school and participation in Celebration until those accounts are paid in full. This includes class work, peer group meetings, administrative services and continuation in any of the other diocesan programs.

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