



Exploring Faith Matters
Education for Ministry - Australia

In 2023

Explore the Christian faith
Connect faith and daily life
Discover the treasures in the Hebrew
Scriptures, the New Testament
& Church History
Develop new insights through discussion

Be challenged! Be inspired!

The heart of EfM

The title **Exploring Faith Matters** goes to the heart of EfM in that it challenges us



- to begin a journey of exploration of the Christian faith
- to make sense of our own faith journey with that of the Christian tradition
- to build a coherent theology or understanding of God
- to reflect theologically
- to discern what it means to follow Christ.

How does it work?

We do EfM in small reading and discussion groups [face to face or on-line] led by trained mentors. Through individual study, sharing our discoveries and exploring our faith together, we learn to think theologically. We connect what we come to know of the Christian tradition with our ordinary daily activities.

EfM offers a four-year program where participants enrol for only one year at a time.

Participants commit themselves to:

- Reading and reflection in preparation for the weekly seminar (approx. 2-3hours)
- Attendance and participation in the seminars
- Preparedness to share experiences, ideas and questions in a small learning group where norms of confidentiality, respect, diversity and trust are observed

Most groups develop through discussion and shared fellowship.

Where does EfM come from?

EfM was developed in 1975 by the Anglican School of Theology at the University of the South in Tennessee, USA. It began in Australia in 1978 and is now administered in Australia, under licence from the University of the South, by The Anglican Diocese of Brisbane. The Rev'd Greg Davies is the National Director and administers the program with the assistance of a small group of trainers.

EfM group mentors

Each group is led by an accredited “mentor” who guides the group and administers the program, but does not teach the Christian tradition. That’s in the texts for us to read in our own time, though we explore these readings together. The mentor facilitates such group discussions and guides the theological reflections.

EfM content

EfM is a significant program. It requires commitment of time to read, reflect on the reading, share thoughts and experiences and pray together, but it can be completed by anyone. It is based on books that cover the beginnings of the Christian tradition to this present time.

The books we use are contemporary and represent well recognised scholarship. Except for the EfM Reading & Reflection Guide, participants purchase their own copies of the text books from suppliers of their own choosing. Both hard copy and e-book versions of the texts are available.

EfM is ecumenical in its content and welcomes participants of any faith tradition who are open to a journey of exploration and discovery.

EfM Reading and Reflection Guide

Upon enrolment each participant is supplied with the EfM Reading and Reflection Guide for the year. Each year's study follows a common theme. For 2023 the theme of the Reading and Reflection Guide is ***Living faithfully in a multi-cultural world.***

This 2023 guide includes sections on:

- Sharing spiritual autobiographies and listening
- Thinking theologically
- Developing a sustaining spirituality
- Integrating belief, behavior, and doctrine
- Vocation - hearing and responding to God's call

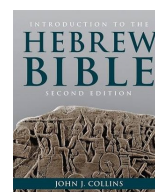
In addition, there are optional interlude units which support the theme of the year and bring additional voices into the study.

Year Texts

Each Year level has a different focus, so a different Year Level Text.

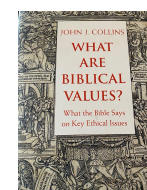
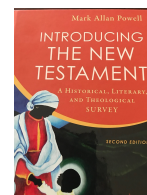
Year One: The Hebrew Bible – Two texts

- *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, 3rd ed.*
by John J. Collins.
- *The Hebrew Bible: Feminist and Intersectional Perspectives*,
edited by Gale Yee.



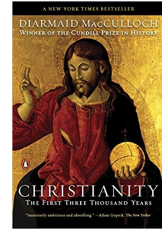
Year Two: The New Testament – Two texts

- *Introducing the New Testament*
by Mark Allen Powell.
- *What are biblical values? What the bible says on key ethical issues*,
by John J. Collins.



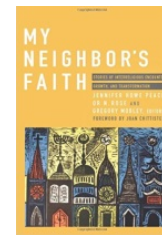
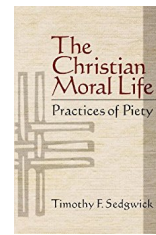
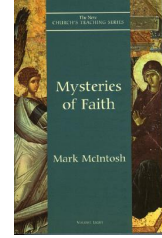
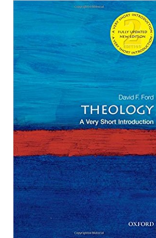
Year Three: Church History – One text

- *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* by Diarmaid MacCulloch.



Year Four: Theology, Ethics, and Interfaith Encounter - Four texts

- *Theology: A Very Short Introduction* by David Ford.
- *Mysteries of Faith* by Mark McIntosh.
- *The Christian Moral Life: Practices of Piety* by Timothy F. Sedgwick.
- *My Neighbor's Faith* edited by Peace, Rose, and Mobley.



Interlude texts

One or two extra books may be read or viewed by all Year levels together. These books bring additional voices into the study and support the theme of the year.

Texts for 2023 are:

Reading the Bible from the Margins by Miguel A. De La Torre

Healing Our Broken Humanity by Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Graham Hill

EfM startup



Local EfM groups contain at least five and no more than ten members. These have been located mostly in local face to face parish settings. However, since Covid-19 has taught us that EfM can be handled on zoom, this is now an effective alternative. Some groups meet mostly on zoom but arrange face to face seminars on an occasional basis.

An on-line zoom EfM group will be available to participants from around the country commencing in February or June of each year. Face to face groups will also continue to be offered where there is sufficient interest. Other on-line groups [with some face to face gatherings throughout the year] may also be available within your diocese.

EfM – What does it cost?

Group registration fees for each year are calculated on the basis of a general group fee and an enrolment fee for each individual member. Some parishes are able to pay the group fee as part of their contribution to adult education and faith development in the Parish. If this is not possible, then the group fee is either divided between group members, or they may undertake some fundraising.

For registrations in 2023 the annual group fee is \$1050 and the individual enrolment fee is \$185 - both include GST. For groups which are entirely online, the individual enrolment fee is \$250.00 with no group fee applicable. In addition, participants will need to purchase the necessary texts.

EfM support

EfM in Australia depends on willing group members and capable volunteer mentors. Everyone in EfM supports and encourages each other in their own learning and faith journey.

The EfM National Office processes registration, dispatches materials, prepares certificates and manages overall administration.

The EfM National Director has oversight of the program and in consultation makes necessary policy, content and procedural changes in line with Australian needs.

EfM on-line

EfM is available on-line using the zoom platform. In the last year this has proven very effective as participants can still see and speak to each other. Online mentors help with mastering the necessary computer and internet skills, as well as mentoring the reading, growth and reflection of participants. On-line groups commence in February or June.



What EfM is NOT

- *EfM is not only Bible study.*

EfM participants study what the Bible says, but they also learn how to understand the Bible within its historical context and literary setting. Biblical studies form the primary work of the first two years. EfM is more than a Bible study in which one reads the Bible, seeks to understand it, and then applies it to daily life. EfM takes seriously God's revelation through all of Christian tradition, from the earliest biblical messages, through the development of liturgy and theology, and even in the context of the challenges we face in our own times.

Expectations

The Participants

You, the participants in an EfM seminar group, are all adults. You set your own learning goals and need the latitude to learn as each individual does best. This requires a certain commitment to the program, but every participant does not need to work in the same way or with the same intensity. EfM has the flexibility for each of you to work in his or her own way.

There are some basic expectations of each participant:

- Attend the seminar sessions or at least maintain the community by letting others know when you will be absent.
- Read the materials and complete the work assigned to the best of your ability.
- Participate in the discussions, reflections, and worship of your seminar group.

EfM contacts

Whilst this brochure will answer many of your questions about EfM, a really good way for learning more about EfM is to talk with participants or mentors who are involved with the Program. You can also view an introductory video on the EfM website www.efmaustralia.org

For more information regarding EfM please contact:

The Rev'd Greg Davies, National Director using the contact details below:

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