AMC 4-Year plan

*“Irresistibly Drawn”*

Unit descriptions



Year 1:

Digging deeper

*Developing spiritual practices that root us deeply in God and lay the ground for transformation*

**Unit: Preparation (our “John the Baptist” period)**

* Goals
	+ To recognize that Christian growth is a process requiring intentionality and commitment
	+ To prepare our hearts to fully engage the journey
* Topics for exploration
	+ Jan. 12 🡪 “the second call,” going back the beginning as the key to going forward
		- Sermon text—John 21
	+ Jan. 19 🡪 how Christian growth and transformation happens, the importance of intentionality
	+ Jan. 26 🡪 the role of seeking
	+ Feb. 2 🡪 removing major obstacles from life, clearing the way for God’s entrance
		- Sermon text—John the Baptist
	+ Feb. 9 🡪 identifying our hunger, answering the question “What do you want me to do for you?”
		- Sermon text—Mark 10:46-52
* Action ideas
	+ Write down and displaying answers to the question “What do you want me to do for you?”

**Unit: Prayer**

* Goals
	+ To develop regular habits of prayer as individuals
	+ To offer tools for people at all “levels” to take a next step in broadening/deepening their personal prayer practices
	+ To pray together corporately
* Topics for exploration
	+ What to pray for
	+ How to pray, introducing different modes/guides for prayer practice
	+ How to integrate habits of prayer into your life
	+ Counsel for people at different stages: increasing frankness/boldness, talking constantly, interceding for others, asking in faith
	+ How to listen in prayer, make the conversation 2-way
* Action ideas
	+ Stations of the cross during Lent
	+ Praying the divine hours
	+ Weekly church prayer service
	+ Study of Richard Foster’s book *Prayer*
	+ Drawing prayers
	+ Teaching different practices of prayer
	+ Using prayer room
	+ Prayer retreat

**Unit: Scripture**

* Goals
	+ To better understand the nature of Scripture and how God can be engaged through it
	+ To increase comfort in engaging Scripture more deeply and imaginatively
	+ To develop regular habits of Scripture reading
* Topics for exploration
	+ The nature of Scripture—what it is and what went into its development
	+ How to listen for God’s voice while reading Scripture
	+ Ways to engage Scripture with the imagination
	+ Basic tips/skills of interpretation
	+ The role of the community in interpretation
* Action ideas
	+ All-church Bible memory, with prizes
	+ Interpretive workshop, open to PNMC
	+ Congregation assist w/ prep of sermons by engaging texts ahead (SS class?)
	+ Exercise of creating our own Bible together as a church
		- Have people draw, write, or otherwise engage a text meaningful to them, put it together and bind it

**Unit: Other Spiritual Practices**

* Goals
	+ To introduce the basics of diverse spiritual practices which may connect with different spiritual “types”
	+ To encourage individuals to try some new practice
* Topics for exploration
	+ Fasting
	+ Silence/solitude
	+ Journaling
	+ confession
* Action ideas
	+ A silent retreat
	+ Invitation to fast as a church, break fast together
	+ Journaling workshop

**Unit: Hospitality**

* Goals
	+ To create more space in our lives/homes for engagement with God and others
	+ To diversify the company of those we are in relationship with
* Topics for exploration
	+ Why hospitality is a key biblical virtue , how it relates to God’s character and the possibilities it creates for us
	+ How to offer genuine welcome to others
	+ Creating space in our lives for hospitality
	+ The gift of ‘other’ who is different from us
* Action ideas
	+ Have a house-church Sunday where people meet in homes
	+ Christmas caroling/party
	+ Book study on hospitality

Year 2:

Growing upward

*Shaping everyday lives that are faithful to Christ and in step with the Spirit’s movement*

**Unit: Jesus-shaped Existence**

* Goals
	+ To recognize the core values of Jesus and his vision for life
	+ To identify a specific area where we personally are being called to grow in Christlikeness
* Topics for exploration
	+ *(to be taken directly from a close reading of the life/teachings of Jesus)*
	+ Grace and non-judgment
	+ Trust/faith, not worrying
	+ The real meaning of purity
	+ Forgiveness
	+ Relationship with money
	+ Relationship to power, good and bad forms of it
	+ Role of the community
* Action ideas
	+ Read-through of the gospels
	+ Special service where people are invited to offer in any form what it means to them to be a follower of Jesus (song, poem, dance, skit, picture, story, etc)
	+ Show a movie based on the life of Jesus

**Unit: Walking with Spirit**

* Goals
	+ To recognize the movement and nudging of the Spirit
	+ To practice ethical “improvisation” in applying the principles of Scripture and Jesus’ character to the sorts of real-life situations
	+ To become attuned to ways we can cooperate with God’s work in the world in the midst of our everyday lives
* Topics for exploration
	+ Introducing the Holy Spirit and what the Spirit does
	+ How to stay listen for and respond to the Spirit’s leading in everyday life, opportunities and possibilities
	+ Becoming sensitive to conviction and quick to change course
	+ Performing ethical improv, discerning what’s right in diverse situations not explicitly addressed by Scripture
	+ Fruit of the Spirit, character of one the Spirit leads
* Action ideas
	+ Study of the Holy Spirit or of prophesy
		- Ex. Heidi Bakers bio testifying to how has seen God move
	+ Series—“What Would Jesus Do?”
		- Create real-life situations and invite people to imagine responses by applying principles and understanding of Spirit

**Unit: Discernment**

* Goals
	+ To embrace on-going discernment as a fundamental Christian task
	+ To understand a healthy process/model of discernment, individual or corporate
* Topics for exploration
	+ Distinguishing the voice/presence of God from other voices
	+ Recognizing that there are other voices speaking (‘discerning the spirits’)
	+ Individual discernment of the will of God
	+ Principles and procedures of corporate discernment
	+ Good kind of judgment and wrong kind of judgment
		- Discerning the world
* Action ideas
	+ Have a moderated congregational discussion of a controversial issue

**Unit: The Body**

* Goals
	+ To recognize and celebrate the goodness of our physicality in light of the incarnation
	+ To identify how our faith impacts our experience of embodiment
* Topics for exploration
	+ Ethics of eating, food choices
	+ Body image
	+ Care for the body—diet, exercise, etc
	+ Sexuality and physical intimacy
	+ How to interact with experiences of aging, frailty, or disability
	+ The redemption of our bodies/creation
* Action ideas
	+ Have a cooking class or a potluck where everyone brings a healthy dish
	+ Host an exercise class
	+ Marcus Smucker study on aging and what the failing of our bodies/minds teach us spiritually
	+ Study of Barbara Brown Taylor’s *An Altar in the World*

Year 3:

Stretching outward

*Bringing the life-giving power of God’s alternative kingdom to bear in a broken world*

**Unit: Church**

* Goals
	+ To shift understanding of Christianity from a fundamentally individual to a fundamentally corporate phenomenon
	+ To recognize what actually makes the church the church in a time of shifting forms
	+ To facilitate deeper bonds of fellowship and service
* Topics for exploration
	+ The changing shape of the church, distinguishing what can change from what is definitional
	+ Why the church exists, it’s mission
		- Church as a continuation of Israel, it’s corporate mission
	+ Why no one is fully Christian without the church, the difference between the Christian as an individual and who they are as part of the body
	+ Gifts of community—fellowship, accountability, discernment, mutual care, etc
	+ What to do when church (and leadership) lets us down
* Action ideas
	+ Hold an alternative/emergent church service
		- Or have a Sunday of worshipping in houses
	+ Emphasis on fellowship events, playing together
	+ All-church service project or day of service in groups

**Unit: Kingdom Economics**

* Goals
	+ To recognize God’s revolutionary vision for economics and the way it differs from our customary way of functioning
	+ To increase awareness of how people live in other parts of the globe
	+ To take a concrete step somewhere in our material lives to align ourselves more closely with God’s vision
* Topics for exploration
	+ Jubilee as a way of life
	+ Environmental stewardship
	+ The practice of simple living—it’s merits and how to start simplifying
	+ What it means to be a part of the global family of God, living as a member of this broader family
	+ Financial planning for the kingdom, investing in light of the kingdom/future we’re expecting
	+ The role of Christian businesspeople and their business practices
* Action ideas
	+ Each Sunday give a short presentation and focus prayer on a different country
	+ Adult mission trip, possibly to Mexico
	+ Do a reverse offering (take from the plate)
	+ Tell stories of Christian businesspeople making a difference (use Everence resources?)
	+ Financial planning workshop

**Unit: Reconciling all things**

* Goals
	+ To recognize reconciliation as core to our work as Christians
	+ To gain skills for reconciliation and peacemaking in places of conflict
	+ To become a presence of healing and hope in our community
* Topics for exploration
	+ Bringing meaning into our work-life
	+ Undoing racism
	+ Non-violence and pacifism
	+ Conflict mediation
	+ The true meaning of justice and how it relates to mercy
	+ Becoming healers and creating a church culture of healing
	+ Immigration and our identity as an immigrant people of faith
* Action ideas
	+ Conflict mediation training/workshop
	+ Do *The Peacemaker* by Ken Sande again as a Sunday School class
	+ Have Carolyn offer something about trauma healing or walking with those in crisis
		- Offer this as a community-wide event?
	+ Church letter-writing or advocacy campaign
		- Teach how to do letter-writing to government
	+ Vigil for the war or at a prison
	+ Congregation members share stories of ways they’ve been reconcilers

Year 4:

Blooming

*Discovering how our gifts and callings fit within the broader story of God*

**Unit: Dreaming God’s Dreams**

* Goals
	+ To develop an imagination for what we would like to see God do through our lives, for who we want to be
	+ To set concrete goals for growth and risk that are in line with this vision
* Topics for exploration
	+ The promises of God that we stand on
	+ Praying and believing boldly
	+ Stepping out on faith, risk-taking
	+ What sorts of dreams God has, the things they concern
		- Holiness and character a primary concern
* Action ideas
	+ Obituary-writing exercise
	+ Create a congregational mural of our goals/dreams

**Unit: Continual Turnings**

* Goals
	+ To recognize repentance as a lifelong process and turning again and again toward light
	+ To identify the areas in our own lives where we currently need to turn
* Topics for exploration
	+ How to evaluate ourselves, do self-assessment
	+ Broader definition of sin, underlying attitudes and obstacles impeding further growth
		- Discussing sin from the standpoint of a later stage in Christian maturity
	+ Cross-carrying and death as route to life
* Action ideas
	+ Have a “cleansing” ceremony of washing things away (or use fire to burn symbol)
	+ Practice of the daily examen

**Unit: Knowing Your Story**

* Goals
	+ To identify and articulate our own testimonies of where/when we have witnessed God at work in our lives
* Topics for exploration
	+ Meaning of a testimony
	+ Experiences of God’s presence and absence, what we learn from both
	+ Salvation as bigger than a one-time event, something God does over and over
* Action ideas
	+ Workshop writing and giving testimony
		- How to sum it up in a few sentences, identify the core of what God has done
	+ Sharing testimonies on Sunday morning
	+ Pictures with cards saying in one word what God has been for them (ex. healer)

**Unit: Finding Your Place**

* Goals
	+ To understand the unique gifts, inclinations, and life-experiences we each bring and where they fit in the life of the body
	+ To identify our own core calling/vocation that underlies everything we do
* Topics for exploration
	+ The intentionality of God’s design, fearfully and wonderfully made
	+ Spiritual gifts
	+ Personality
	+ The importance of saying ‘no’
	+ Calling and vocation as bigger than work
	+ The reasons we need each other, the wholeness of the body
	+ Relating graciously and cooperatively with those who are quite opposite from us
* Action ideas
	+ Study of *Cure for the Common Life* by Lucado or S.H.A.P.E material
	+ Personality profiles
	+ Church ministries fair
		- Or also include community ministry opportunities
	+ Form groups to sit down with individuals and help discern/identify what have to offer
	+ Campaign to write notes of encouragement, affirmation

**Unit: Making Disciples**

* Goals
	+ To understand and inhabit all of life as mission
	+ To begin investing in someone else not as far along in the faith journey in the process of beginning or deepening Christian discipleship
* Topics for exploration
	+ Summing up the core of the gospel story
	+ “Reproducing” as a core component of discipleship
	+ How to disciple other people
* Action ideas
	+ House-parties where non-church-going friends are deliberately invited
	+ Discipleship training workshop
	+ Create “match-ups” of older and younger members and put together for a “tea” or other set time of conversation

**Unit: Worship**

* Goals
	+ To close our 4 years celebrating God and how we’ve seen God at work
	+ To recall worship and enjoyment of God as the fundamental purpose of the Christian life
* Topics for exploration
	+ Gratitude and giving thanks
	+ Finding strength in joy
	+ Naming who God has been for us
	+ All of life as worship
* Action ideas
	+ Special celebration service—music, food, testimonies