



Exploring Faith Matters

Education for Ministry - Australia

Prospectus 2020

- ✚ Today's church upholds the ministry of the laity: all baptised people have a ministry.
- ✚ To effectively exercise this ministry we need to be informed and skilled.
- ✚ *EfM* helps us to interpret the richness of the church's faith in our complex world and to express it with confidence, in both words and actions, in our day-to-day lives and in our own communities.
- ✚ *EfM* can be summed up as ***Exploring faith Matters***.
- ✚ *EfM* is formational and transformational for Christian life and ministry.

The heart of EfM

We are the body of Christ who reconciles the world to God. How do we share in that ministry – in worship, in service and in proclaiming God's Word?

***all people
are called to
ministry***

In small learning groups we find out what it means to be called to ministry and how we can each be part of God's mission for the world.

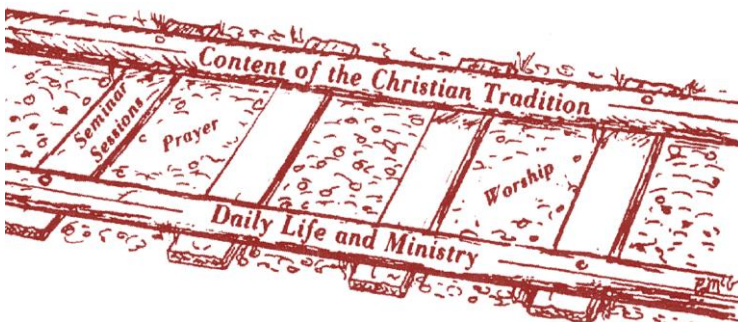
Many people come to EfM wanting more understanding of the Bible and the Church, as well as support in day-to-day ministry. Some want skills training to be better listeners, or to help others to faith or to support those in need. Some want to make connections between their faith and their everyday experience.

These are the kinds of individual needs which EfM seeks to meet.

EfM Vision

We do EfM in small groups 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.

Imagine a train track. One rail is the content of our Christian tradition, the other our everyday experience. The sleepers are our group sessions to help us connect the two and to facilitate a conversation between them, all based on a solid foundation of prayer and worship in our EfM community.



***EfM gives our Christian life journey
a stable track on which to run.***

The EfM story

EfM was developed in 1975 by the Anglican School of Theology at the University of the South in Tennessee, and the University continues to update the program, most recently in 2014. EfM has expanded internationally and ecumenically – with groups in Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Mexico, The Bahamas, and Botswana and including people from other denominations. Over the years 80,000 have participated in EfM.

EfM began in Australia in 1978 and is now administered, under licence from the University of the South, by The Anglican Diocese of Brisbane as EfM-Australia.

In Australia over 2000 people have completed the four-year program.

EfM group seminars

In *EfM* we learn in seminar groups of 5 – 10 participants: large enough to stimulate a variety of ideas and perspectives; small enough to ensure each member's voice may be heard. In these groups we consider everyday life alongside the materials being studied. We use various methods of Theological Reflection to help us connect our life experience, our attitudes and beliefs and our culture with the Christian tradition, and so discern opportunities for ministry. With the help of the group we consider how best to serve God in our everyday lives.

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.

Every mentor attends re-accreditation training every year led by qualified and accredited trainers. If you are interested in becoming a mentor you will need to contact the local *EfM* Coordinator or the National Director.

EfM design

The program follows core adult learning principles:

- we decide when and how we learn
- we set and follow our own learning goals
- we have our own styles of learning.

Most people spend 3 to 4 hours each week on reading and reflection in preparation for the group seminar, then share their discoveries and explore matters further. For the majority of groups this takes 2½ –3 hours in a weekly pattern over 36 or so weeks, with scheduled breaks at times the group decides.

EfM has a four-year curriculum and participants enrol one year at a time. In lots of our groups there are participants working at different year levels. Participants are awarded a certificate upon completion.

What *EfM* does **not do** is teach how to preach, how to lead worship or how to counsel people.

Nor does it set out to prepare us for ordination as clergy or for our licensing as authorised lay ministers.

EfM can nonetheless provide an excellent formational path towards these and other specific ministry roles.

***It is essential to the quality of EfM
and to the life of the group
that every participant understands clearly the commitment
of time and energy that the program requires.***

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.

We learn how to read the Bible and make sense of it, how we understand God, ethics, ways of worshipping and praying, our spirituality and current theological issues.

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

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 2020 the theme of the Reading and Reflection Guide is ***Living faithfully in a multi-cultural world.***

This 2020 guide includes sections on:

- Sharing Spiritual Autobiographies and Listening
- Thinking Theologically
- Developing a Sustaining Spirituality
- Integrating Belief, Behavior, and Doctrine in a Multicultural World
- Hearing and Responding to God's Call

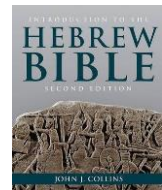
In addition there are also sections for two interlude units which support the theme of the year and bring additional voices into the study.

Year Texts

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

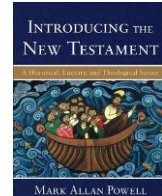
Year One: The Hebrew Bible

- *A Short Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, 2nd Ed.*
by John Collins.



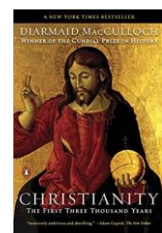
Year Two: The New Testament

- *Introducing the New Testament*
by Mark Allen Powell.



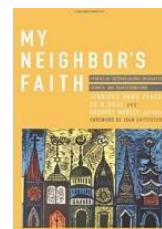
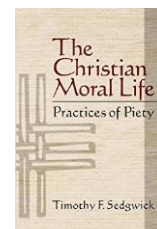
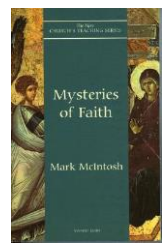
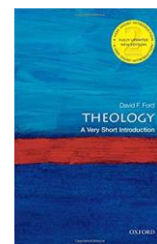
Year Three: Church History

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



Year Four: Theology, Ethics, and Interfaith Encounter

- *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

Two extra books may be read by all Year levels together - called Interlude texts. Every year there are different Interlude Texts. Books for 2020 are still to be determined and will be advised to students in due course.

EfM startup

Local *EfM* groups contain at least five and no more than ten members.

Usually they are located in parishes and readily welcome people from neighbouring parishes and towns if there is space. Local starting dates are established at the convenience of each seminar group but usually not during the months of December and January.

No prior qualifications beyond an ability to read discerningly are required for enrolment. Quite a few in *EfM* have had no previous formal study in either theology or other fields.



Newcomers to an *EfM* group start with Year One and do their own study whilst working at the pace set by the group.

Only currently accredited mentors can enrol people in a registered *EfM* group. Auditing is not possible. Each person enrolling in *EfM* commits to the group to participate in one full year of study and to share in its costs.

EfM fees

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 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 for the Cathedral Group in 2020 fees are \$285.00 incl. GST per student.

Each participant is expected to pay their share of the full year's fees even if he or she later discontinues. The question of any fee refund is the responsibility of the mentor and the group. If a member leaves the group his or her place cannot simply be passed to another person.

Participants may transfer to other *EfM* groups within or even outside Australia if there is a group available and able to admit them. People may return to *EfM* after a break in participation and resume work at the point completed if the texts remain the same. Normally those repeating will repeat the whole Year. Changes such as these require the agreement of the group as well as the mentor. Repeating, returning and transferring group members contribute to the payment of the group registration fees.

EfM support

EfM in Australia depends on willing group members and capable volunteer mentors. Everyone in *EfM* supports and encourages each other especially the mentors.

Each Diocesan Coordinator promotes *EfM*, links local groups, organises regional training events and schedules mentor training. Mentor Trainers (also volunteers) are first accredited and then appointed by the National Director to conduct training sessions in line with *EfM* requirements. They maintain the quality of the program and provide ongoing support for mentors.

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.

There is a small group comprising of trainers, co-ordinators and mentors that acts as a reference/advisory group to assist the National Director in developing and growing *Education for Ministry* within our Australian church.

Anyone with concerns about how the *EfM* program is being conducted by co-ordinators, trainers or mentors, is welcome to contact the National Director who will attempt to respond in a manner which is satisfying to all involved.

EfM too much fun to stop

The learning, growth and reflection experienced in *EfM*, and the sense of community participants develop has led to the emergence of ***EfM Alumni Groups*** across the country. Once the four year program is completed there is no need to stop gathering, reflecting and learning together.

EfM Alumni groups usually meet less frequently, share in theological reflections, and work with some of the new texts.

For Alumni, *EfM* means “*Equipped for Ministry*”. Currently Alumni groups operate in Adelaide, Canberra, Sydney and Shepparton.

If any would like to explore starting or joining an Alumni group, see the contacts at the end of this page.



***The world of the
Alumni group awaits!***

EfM far out! EfM on-line

For those in small, remote communities, or where there are too few people for an *EfM* group, the program is also offered online. Online mentors help with mastering the necessary computer and internet skills as well as mentoring the reading, growth and reflection of participants. The same adult learning principles and small group interactions lead to warm and supportive communities of learning – with some interesting opportunities offered by being online.



Contact the National *EfM* Office for information about undertaking *EfM* on-line in 2020.

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 and perhaps visit a group.

Your Parish Office can put you in touch with local mentors or tell you how to contact your *EfM* Diocesan Coordinator. The *EfM* web site will be useful.

If you wish to know of *EfM* groups near you or have any other questions you are welcome to contact the *EfM* National Office.

Education for Ministry - Adelaide

The Very Rev'd Frank Nelson

St Peter's Cathedral

Phone: 08 8267 4551

Mobile: 0428284345

E-mail: dean@stpeters-cathedral.org.au

Web: www.efmaustralia.org

ABN 32 025 287 736