

*Beginnings: Introduction to Christian Faith*

What: A 12 session, small-group spiritual journey.

Goal: To invite seekers to begin an intentional journey with Jesus Christ.

Audience: Inquirers who are beginning an exploration of Christianity. Long-time members have also enjoyed the study. *Beginnings* has now been used by 30,000 people in dozens of denominations.

Relationship to Disciple Bible Study: *Beginnings* may be a first step for persons before they take Disciple. Disciple is longer and requires daily preparation. *Beginnings* intentionally provides a broad overview of Christianity that then invites persons to a deeper walk with Jesus that includes Disciple.

Length of Sessions: 2 hours including a meal or fellowship time.

Model: One hour of fellowship, followed by 20 minute video, followed by 40 minutes of small-group discussion.

Session Titles:

- So Is This All There Is? (Introduction)
- Who Is Jesus and Why Should I Care? (Jesus Christ)
- Why Am I Not Where I Want to Be? (Sin and the Cross)
- What Happens When I Die? (Death and the Resurrection)
- Can I Trust God? (Suffering and Providence)
- How Does God Speak to Me? (The Bible)
- If I Don't Feel Lost, Why Do I Need to Be Found? (Salvation and Conversion)
- Can I Start Again? (Forgiveness and Wholeness)
- How Do I Speak to God? (Prayer)
- How Can I Make A Life and Not Just a Living? (The Good Life)
- Why Should I Join Any Group That Will Have Me as a Member? (Church Membership)
- Love Feast! (Conclusion)

Participant Expectations: Participants may read a companion book – Along the Way -- through the course, but the reading is not required. Low-level of commitment, except for weekly attendance, responds to the life-style of seekers early in their Christian journey.

Training: None required, but on-line resources are available. All the information needed to run the program is found in the Director's Guide.

Cost: Planning Kit (# 0687062802) \$125 includes a Director's Manual for the program leader, Small Group Leader's Guide, Participant Manual, Along the Way participant's companion book, and one Video/DVD Set of the 12 sessions that includes both VHS and DVD formats). Multiple copies of all the above resources are available. Additional publicity resources are also available.

## Theological Perspectives:

Evangelical focus on Jesus Christ, post-modern perspective, focus on spiritual journey, simple but not simplistic, centered on 12 core biblical stories, open-ended questions, main-line Protestant theology, inclusive language, global and historical illustrations, classical theological questions addressed in fresh ways.

## Additional *Beginnings* Resources:

*Beginnings: The Spiritual Life* (now in print)

Ten key characteristics of Christian disciples.

*Beginnings: Living in Community* (May 2008)

Ten central aspects of Christian community.

*Beginnings: Sharing the New Creation* (May 2010)

Ten ways the Church reconciles the world to God.

## Authors:

Andy Langford (United Methodist pastor in North Carolina)

Mark Ralls (United Methodist pastor in North Carolina)

Rob Weber (United Methodist pastor in Louisiana).

## Reviews:

“A masterful resource to engage people who are not yet part of the church in a dialogue that will truly hold their attention and point them toward Jesus Christ and his church ways that we’ve never done before.” Mark Keys, United Methodist pastor

“*Beginnings* is a lively and thoughtful tool that enables both Christian and non-Christian to think about Christian faith afresh.” David Renwick, Presbyterian pastor

“Non-fundamentalist outreach; . . . while contemporary in its references, *Beginnings* also embraces classical forms of belief.” *The Christian Century* (April 5, 2005).

For More Information: See our website at [www.beginnings.cokesbury.com](http://www.beginnings.cokesbury.com).