



Grounded in God Retreats

Learning to Conduct Meetings Using a Discernment Approach

Overview

A Grounded in God Retreat teaches a decision-making body to incorporate spiritual discernment into its meetings. In the course of the retreat the group learns experientially how to conduct business in a way that enables its members to grow closer to God and one another, even when wrestling with controversial issues. It cultivates deep prayerful listening that can open meetings to the transforming power of the Spirit. It moves the group away from the secular model of doing business and draws it into a mode of seeking God's guidance through an extended spiritual encounter.

Intended Audience

This retreat is for faith-based decision-making groups (such as vestries, sessions, boards of deacons, parish councils, church committees or commissions, religious non-profit boards) or groups of clergy that want to learn how to conduct meetings and resolve group issues in ways that are God-centered and spiritually nourishing. A sponsor (For example: a congregation, diocese, clergy association, retreat center, or seminary) recruits participants, arranges for the retreat facility with food and lodging, and assumes financial responsibility.

Also, specialized workshops are available for ad hoc groups such as search committees.

Summary of Content

The workshop begins by delving beneath the surface of the Discernment Listening Guidelines. After that it leads participants to consider how important it is for every member of the group to help maintain the practice of spiritual discernment at its meetings. Then the group enters into spiritual discernment around a difficult issue that it faces. It puts it in the form of a question addressed to God, assembles relevant information related to the issue, develops ideas, and imaginatively explores Scripture. It next submits all of this to God by engaging in a creative meditation exercise. Finally it looks for signs of the Spirit in search of spiritual consensus. Upon arriving at such consensus, the group sketches out a plan of action.