

***Mission and ministry through the
Millennium Development Goals***

Some suggestions for facilitators

developed by the Rev. Leon Spencer

Welcome to this opportunity for ministry! Serving as a facilitator as members of your parish reflect together about our calling to a global witness is a service to the Church. Here is a collect for each of us in this role:

*Almighty God, our heavenly father, the only source of light and life;
send down upon our endeavors the rich gift of the good spirit,
that through the studies we lead your truth may be sincerely sought,
effectually received and reverently followed.
Endue those of us who lead with wisdom, zeal and patience,
inspire those who participate with the spirit of truth, honor and humility,
and grant that all may be strengthened in their service to the Body of Christ,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(adapted from a prayer for Bishop Tucker Theological College in Uganda)

Mission and ministry through the Millennium Development Goals

Some suggestions for facilitators

Mission and ministry through the Millennium Development Goals encourages reflection about God's mission on earth and upon God's calling to us. Consistent with resolutions from the Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church, and our own diocese, this resource is designed to help us consider how the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) may relate to mission and ministry, and how we might reach decisions, individually and as a congregation, to engage in global witness by addressing, in some manner, the Millennium Development Goals.

Flexibility: While we hope that the guidance we provide proves helpful to you, we intend for our resources to be flexible and adaptable to your particular needs and wishes. When it seems wise to you to depart from the structure and format we have recommended, you should do so. We note two resources on page 1 of the study – the National Council of the Churches of Christ's *Eradicating Global Poverty* and Sabina Alkire and Edmund Newell's *What Can One Person Do?* – which are also studies of the MDGs. Your obtaining copies of them can help you both in your use of this resource and in your adapting or augmenting this study. If you wish to discuss your plans with us, feel free to contact the School.

Number of sessions: As you will note, we suggest that the course include five sessions. You should review all sessions in advance and decide if that is the way you wish to schedule this study. Since this resource does not take participants through the eight goals one-by-one, you could, for example, expand the study by inserting some or all the specific goals between our third and fourth sessions. You might also add a session or two about activities your parish is already engaged in, and could reflect upon how those involvements relate to the MDGs and to the vision of partnership as presented in this resource.

Facilitation: We consider you to be the facilitator of the group, not its leader. Serving as a facilitator can be tricky, often because members of the group perceive you as the leader who has the answers rather than a peer who is ensuring a good focused conversation among all members. It can still be a very satisfying ministry of service to your congregation, and there's no reason you cannot enjoy the task. Just keep in mind that a successful group is one in which there is broad participation (watch for those who don't say much, and try to encourage them to be a part), and one in which the discussion retains its focus (gently bring folk back to the subject when needed). A successful group is not necessarily one that has or seeks consensus; it is one instead that permits members to share their insights of God at work in their lives as those insights relate to the subject at hand. Your leadership will keep the focus; your respect will set the tone for a meaningful encounter among the children of God.

There is considerable literature on the art of facilitation. The School of Ministry has posted a comment on "The Art of Facilitation" on our website (<http://www.episdionc.org/schoolofministry/>). There is also a copy of it in the notebooks provided each congregation in the Diocese of North Carolina.

Text of the study: The text of this study is available in booklet form and on-line. Not all members may have access to the internet, and some who do may still prefer paper copies. Be sensitive to where various members are technologically.

We certainly have no objections to your printing copies directly from the internet; however, our booklets are, frankly, laid out and bound far more attractively than the internet pages, and we are able to provide copies quickly. Just let us know. We ask for \$2.50 per copy of the booklet.

If you have requested booklets before the study begins, you will be able to distribute them at this introductory class. If you have not, at the introductory class ask who would like to have the study in booklet form. Let us know immediately and we will have copies for you in time for the next session. We are willing to send copies directly to participants if you give us their addresses. If you cannot do it that way, we will send the requested copies to the parish. Participants will then need to read the second session text on-line if you do not have a way to get the copy to them before the week is up.

Outline for the sessions: Here is what each session might look like:

- Prayer:* We encourage you to open all sessions in prayer. A good one to use is in the *Covenanted listening* document included in the booklet and on-line.
- Plan for the session:* Let the group know what's ahead.
- Conversations:* The text for each session will contain some questions for discussion or some activity, or both. In this resource those questions are usually interspersed throughout the text. Give some thought (in advance!) as to whether you want to cover all questions and how many questions you intend to deal with, then calculate the time available for each question and the number of persons in the group. We need to be cautious in cutting off a stimulating conversation, but it's also useful to keep in mind that some in the group may be looking forward to other questions and will be disappointed if time expires before the group gets there. (They'll know the questions, as they appear in both their paper copies and on-line.)
- Summary:* You need not summarize the discussion at the end, but it's good to somehow tie the conversation together, commending the group for their contribution, and suggesting that the group has engaged in faithful discernment together.
- Reminder of readings for the next session:* Go over the texts for next time. Encourage folks!
- Prayer:* We encourage you to close all sessions in prayer. A good one to use is in the *Covenanted listening* document included in the booklet and on-line.

Here are comments by session:

Session 1: God's mission, the Church's ministry, and our calling

The first session is frequently a challenge, since it is difficult to provide readings in advance, and even when you can, it is an unusual person who actually completes the readings before the first class! For this resource, we have provided only a two-page reading for this first session, the idea being that this brief text be read by participants at the outset. In this way the first session may prove more substantive and more productive than your simply having a general conversation with the group.

This first session might look like this:

- ❑ *Introductions:* In some of our parishes, everyone will know everyone, and introductions seem a bit silly. But for many of our parishes, that may not be the case, and especially newcomers will appreciate a reminder of who folks are. Take a minute or two for basic introductions. If you find more extended or creative introductions appealing, you could use the “share your global stories” suggestion on page 5 of the resource effectively as part of introductions.
- ❑ *Covenanted listening:* At this first session, have a copy of the *Covenanted listening* document available for everyone, and distribute it at the outset of the session. (Copies will not be needed if they all have the booklet.) Ask members to review the covenant, comment on it if they wish, and, hopefully, subscribe to it.
- ❑ *The purpose of the study:* Provide an overview of the study. The opening paragraph of this facilitators document or text from page 1 of the resource itself may help. What we want to emphasize is that ours is an effort to place the Millennium Development Goals firmly in theological context. This first session encourages a good discussion of mission, ministry and call, irrespective of the MDGs; it's only later that the group will consider how the MDGs relate to God's mission in the world. Another session will encourage reflection about a theology of partnership; yet another will examine possible actions in light of our faith. As we write on page 2 of the resource, we hope this study will contribute to strengthening the sense of community; affirm the biblical foundations of our faith; assist in developing practices to live into the new humanity offered to us through Christ; and challenge participants to relate study and reflection to action in the name of Christ. It is a *theological* endeavor we hope groups will undertake.
- ❑ *A reading:* If a booklet is available for each participant, hand them out. If not, copy pages 4-5 in advance and distribute them to the group. Ask that they read those two pages “now.”
- ❑ *Conversations:* The questions we raise in the text of the first session (the three bullets on page 4, the three at the top of page 5, and the one at the bottom of page 5) are probably a bit ambitious for one session. Choose in advance what *you* think is important to accomplish in the first session rather than attempt to deal with all the questions superficially. Your goal, we think, is for participants to come away with either fresh

thinking or a good reminder about mission and ministry, preparing them to examine how they may be called as the Church engages in global mission.

Here are the questions:

(from page 4)

- What does this passage from Luke (4:16-21) say (or imply) about the person of Christ?
- What is Jesus' "agenda"? What, in other words, does this passage reveal about God's mission?
- What do *you* understand mission to mean?

(from the top of page 5)

- What do you understand the ministry (or mission) of the Church to mean?
- Does Prof. Bosch's definition appear to you to capture the essence of Jesus' Nazareth sermon in Luke 4? How? If not, in what way "not"?
- How do the "Marks of Mission" – signs that we have responded to God's mission – connect with the passage from Luke? With the definition of mission?

(from the bottom of page 5)

- Share your "global" stories. What has moved you as, perhaps, you traveled beyond our borders? What has made an impression upon you as you have seen or read about how others live or lived?
- Assignment:* Ask participants to read session 2, pages 6-11, before the next session. If there are questions you consider important from this first session that you didn't address, ask them to reflect on them on their own during the week.
- Prayer:* Close in prayer, using the closing prayer in the *Covenanted listening* document included in the booklet and on-line.

Session 2: The Church and the Millennium Development Goals

- Conversations:* After *opening prayer* and your reviewing the *plan for this session*, refresh the group's memory about mission and ministry from the first session before turning to the questions listed on page 11. We've put these questions into four categories:
- Exploring the connection between the MDGs on the one hand and mission and ministry on the other
 - Linking particular MDGs with particular Marks of Mission and examining any connections the group perceives
 - Reflecting on any connections between passages from James and 2 Corinthians on the one hand and the MDGs and 0.7% on the other

- Asking what the diocesan resolution on the MDGs and 0.7% tells us about the nature of the church

Here are the questions, from page 11:

(Set one)

- What do the MDGs have to do with God’s mission and our calling to ministry?
- What if anything bothers you about making such a connection?

(Set two)

- What among the first seven Millennium Development Goals resonates with you? Why?
- With which of the “Marks of Mission” (found on page 5) do you identify strongly?
- Do the Millennium Development Goal and the Mark of Mission that resonate with you, “connect”? If so, how? If not, what might that say to you?

(Set three)

- Look again at the passage from James at the beginning of this session, and from Corinthians on page 8. What seems to you to be the essential message? How does it relate to the MDGs?
- How do Paul’s and James’ teachings, in these passages, relate to your own understanding of stewardship? How does 0.7%?

(Set four)

- Consider the diocesan resolution. What picture of the church does it seem to reveal to you?

As the title of this session suggests, we want participants to explore ways in which our understanding of our faith may (or may not) connect with the MDGs. Unlike the first session, where we encourage you to choose which questions you think will be the most valuable to emphasize, here it is important to at least touch on all four themes (not necessarily by having full discussion on each; you could just flag some questions or themes for future reflection).

The exercise that the second set of questions represents is one to which we will return as we examine both partnership (session 4) and action (session 5). What is key here is to embrace the notion that we, individually and as congregations, may properly “connect” with, may be “touched” by, particular aspects of our life of faith and of needs in the world. This exercise might be a good occasion to use newsprint. Naming that with which we *resonate* is an important piece of discernment. This, we hope, will become clearer and clearer as participants continue in the study. It’s important!

We have not posed specific questions related to the reflection “Never again” on page 9. If you or the group want to comment on it, that is all to the good. This reflection does provide some basics about the MDGs and about Episcopal Church initiatives, but its

personal nature may also connect well with the theme of what “touches” us as we look at our world through our eyes of faith.

The last section in session 2 of this resource has to do with *types* of theological questions. If this proves of interest to you or to some in the group, fine. As far as priorities for this session go, this is not the highest.

- ❑ *Assignment:* Remind the group to read session 3, pages 12-18, before the next session. In addition, they are being asked to use the internet a bit, where they will gain some sense of MDG targets and indicators, of the data that helps to reveal the conditions under which people live, and of the stories that help to humanize these realities. If you are leading a group that includes folk unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the internet, you should go to these sites yourself (described on pages 14-15); pick out a few items that seem to represent (1) indicators and targets, (2) data, and (3) stories; print them out; and distribute them to participants in advance of the third session.

We’d like to think that we explained the drawing and the “root causes” exercise fairly well, if briefly, in the session 3 essay of the participants’ text. However, you might mention to the group that you will be leading them in using the drawing next time, so they shouldn’t be concerned if they don’t seem to end up at “root causes” on their own. See below for more explanation.

- ❑ Close with *prayer*.

Session 3: The Millennium Development Goals

- ❑ *Plan for this session:* After *opening prayer*, review the plan for this session. This is a particularly important session, as it lays out the eight MDGs, encourages people on their own to learn more about the goals – from indicators to data to stories – and encourages ever-deepening discernment about ministry and calling of the individual and of your parish.
- ❑ *Conversations:* Refresh the group’s memory about what was said in the last session about MDGs that resonate. Ask them to comment on what they read during the week, and how that has influenced their thinking.
- ❑ *Root causes exercise:* We suggest that you spend most of your time in this session on the exercise using the sketch and the “but why” method. Here, in much more detail, is how this method works.¹

One of our most challenging tasks as people of faith addressing societal issues involves discovering root causes. These are fundamentals that put us in touch with the very nature of our global society in a way that heightens our awareness of injustice and human need and focuses our energy for effective action.

¹ This section of the facilitators guide is adapted from “Reflections on Faith... Actions for Justice: The Model...,” written by the author of this resource when he served as Faith in Community coordinator for Greater Birmingham Ministries in Alabama in 1998.

Having no coat in winter is an explanation for why one is cold, but it is not a root cause. Only when we explore more and more deeply the reality of that person's life in the broadened context of poverty in our society do we approach root causes. And when we perceive those causes, when our consciences have been aroused to systemic realities, we will then, and only then, be well-placed to take effective action.

Struggling with root causes can be uncomfortable and risky. The process is uncomfortable because it challenges some fundamental assumptions about ourselves and our society and our world; it is risky because it compels us to act in ways that may set us apart from our community and its comfort with the status quo.

Struggling with root causes can also be energizing and empowering. One of the purposes of this session is to identify what Paulo Freire calls "generative themes," the issues where energy truly exists in the group, where we find the true subjects of concern and hope in the community. As you support the group in its search for root causes, the group itself will reveal the energy it feels for certain of the Millennium Development Goals (and perhaps the comparative lack of energy it feels for others). It is critical for you to be attuned to *generative themes* as the group moves forward toward discernment and action.

This exercise draws upon a device, which those who developed this method called *codes*, which allows participants to examine an issue at a non-threatening distance, and then to work toward root causes as confidence grows and the group feels enabled to grapple with fundamentals more aggressively. *Codes* are images, pictures, that simply help to get the discussion going. They are means by which a group examines a situation in a way that reveals the roots of a reality in their society. The code challenges the group to see more clearly and to enter into dialogue more deeply.

Some years ago I was given a photo by Jim Spillano. It shows an African-American man seated on a cushioned bench at one of the galleries of the Smithsonian in Washington. He is wearing a jacket and jeans and a wool cap. He is leaning over, his head resting on his arms. You cannot see his face. A lavender backpack is lying on the floor next to him. Behind him on the wall are four posters advertising Smithsonian exhibits: One of Ronald Reagan; one of Pete Rose, his bat on his shoulder; one of Abraham Lincoln; and one of George Washington. For a good *code*, we might add two other persons, standing nearby. Both are decently-dressed. One is staring at the seated man. The other is looking away.

This photo, adapted in this way, would make a good code. It does not "prove" anything. But it does challenge us to think in a wide variety of ways.

What might we do with such a code? A small group such as yours would go through three stages that we could name in this way:

- Description
- First analysis
- Root causes

The first, *description*, is easy: What do you see in this picture? What is each person doing? What do you think each is feeling?

The second, *first analysis*, remains focused upon the picture, but it is asking for more thought: Why are they doing what they are doing? The facilitator might persist with “why” questions, what David Wemer, the author of *Where There Is No Doctor*,² calls the “but-why method”:

The person is looking away.

But why?

Because she is uncomfortable.

But why?

Because she is there to enjoy the exhibits, and the man has interfered with her fun.

But why?

Because he reminds her of the realities of the poor in her society.

But why does that make her uncomfortable?

Because she would rather avoid dealing with those realities.

But why?

Because it would mean she would have to confront the great inequities in her society.

But why...

Obviously the dialogue could take a variety of directions. The person staring could be seen to be angry. The person seated could be seen as the key actor who has wisely found a warm public place to meet his basic needs. The point is that the *code* has permitted the group to make a first analysis that moves them toward talking about the key issue the group is to face. It has engaged them; it has involved them; it has drawn them into the issue.

The third stage, *root causes*, now becomes the exciting challenge: Why? What is at the center of this issue? To what depth can we take the group in understanding a societal reality? As the facilitator you (and perhaps the group, if there had been some consensus with the MDG that resonated at your last session) will have settled upon the key focus for the discussion of root causes, and you now want to take the group with you on the search. If in this example the alienation theme seems wise both from the standpoint of the broader issue your group has identified, and if group energy seems to rest there, then you should direct the group toward that theme, setting the others aside, at least for the moment.

The facilitator might thus return to the “but why” method. If we took up where we left off above, when a participant says

² David Werner, with Carol Thurman and Jane Maxwell, *Where There Is No Doctor: A Village Health Care Handbook* (Berkeley: Hesperian Foundation, updated 2003).

Because it would mean she would have to confront the great inequities in her society

the facilitator might continue:

But why are some of us reluctant to confront the great inequities in our society?

There might be several answers:

*Because that person's problem isn't mine **or***

*Because it is all so hopeless **or***

Because I have no idea what to do.

You could legitimately choose any of these to follow, but you choose only one and set the others aside.

Why does it all seem so hopeless?

And again there will be several answers:

*Because the scale is so great **or***

*Because he probably needs everything from drug treatment to literacy training to a house **or***

*Because he is unwilling to change **or***

Because those of us with some wealth have abandoned and excluded the poor from the mainstream of society.

You might then ask:

Do we think it's true that we who are better off have abandoned the poor, and if so, why have we?

Because of fear. Fear is the answer.

What are we afraid of?

Perhaps this “fear” response may not seem all that significant, but it is. The group began by observing a simple act of a woman looking away, to avoid dealing with the realities of a person in poverty seated before her. Unthreatened by the code, someone in the group acknowledged that looking away could be a sign of her desire to avoid confronting the great inequities in her society. As the discussion continued, some in the group declared that those in our society whose material needs have been met have abandoned any responsibility to act with and for the poor, and then they reached the point: Some of us have done this because of *fear*. If this is true, then it is a significant step toward addressing alienation in our society. Until we confront fear, no amount of food pantries and clothes closets and shelters will resolve inequities and injustices and alienation. What are we afraid of? How do we address that fear? What action commends itself? Ultimately, what transformation is possible that moves a community beyond fear and toward a more just reality?

The group has therefore moved toward a *root cause* that could be the basis for their discernment about action as a people of faith. As the process moves ever more deeply, the group reaches *structural systemic community-based* answers for the issue before them.

Here are some points for you as facilitator to consider in carrying out this exercise:

- Keep things moving. While giving members a chance to offer their varied answers to one of your questions, you should try to avoid lengthy explanations or discussions. If someone disagrees with an answer, fine, but what you want to do is to bring out from her an alternative answer.
- Choose one direction to go and stick with it. When you gain multiple answers to a question (as you should), you could legitimately choose any of them to follow, but you choose only one and set the others aside. (“*Because it is all so hopeless*” above is an example.) When you draw upon that one answer to ask your next question, you will once again secure multiple answers (such as “*Because he is unwilling to change*” or “*Because those of us with some wealth have abandoned and excluded the poor from the mainstream of society*”), and you again could choose any of them. You make your choice and proceed to probe the issue more deeply.
- Only if and when you feel you have exhausted one line of thought do you – time permitting – go back and pick up another. Otherwise groups tend to get very confused about where you are taking them, and the exercise is ineffective. For example, when the facilitator asked above, “*But why are some of us reluctant to confront the great inequities in our society?*” we noted three answers:

Because that person’s problem isn’t mine and

Because it is all so hopeless and

Because I have no idea what to do.

We then continued the conversation with, “*Why does it all seem so hopeless?*” Now, if you feel you have exhausted that avenue and there is time remaining, you might drop back and remind the group of the other answers given above, and now ask, “*Why would we say that person’s problem is not mine?*” and continue looking for root causes for this denial of community responsibility.

- If someone answers with a stereotype, you may speculate that we may or may not know that to be true. Your point is not to put that comment down, but to remind the group that many of our answers are subjective, and that sooner or later we need to question what evidence we have for some of our views. *But*, don’t debate the stereotype now. Draw from it what you can to formulate your next question, or choose one of the other answers you have been given.
- As you reach closer to root causes, look for ways to shift your questions to our faith community’s responsibility and relatedness.
- Allow these *why* questions to lead as far as they can toward the identification of root causes. Remember that root causes is a plural phrase. We are not looking for a single answer. Rather we are trying to deepen our understanding of one aspect of the MDG.

What do you as facilitator do when the initial responses to the *code* seem to have nothing to do with the theme of the group study? It is wise to allow a bit of rummaging around, including some silliness, for in so doing the group is building community. They are not yet having to deal with their often competing views about, say, race and class and gender; instead they are engaged in a shared response to the *code*. Let them do that freely for a few minutes. If, however, there seems to be no movement to the key theme, you may

simply encourage the group to look again at the *code*, this time more specifically with economic class (for example) in mind. It rarely takes more than a gentle prodding to get a group engaged in a more focused exercise.

Now, as we take this method into your MDG work and the sketch we have provided, here are some additional thoughts about how to make the exercise more effective:

- As mentioned above, you and perhaps the group will have settled upon the key MDG focus for the discussion of root causes at the last session. If the group has done so, then you will plan in this session 3 to use that goal for this exercise. If a particular goal has not been identified clearly by the group, then you need to choose the one you want to use in advance. Time should not be taken choosing a particular goal *during* this session.
- Have the group turn to the drawing on page 18. (If you have access to Power Point and related equipment, we plan to have the drawing on our website, and you may wish to turn to our website and throw the drawing up on a screen.)
- Note on the drawing that the sign above the small shop (the slab of wood with nails on each end) is blank. If the goal you or your group has chosen is hunger (goal 1), write *Groceries*. If it is education (goals 2 and 3), write *School supplies*. If it relates to health (goals 4, 5, and 6), write *Clinic* into the blank sign. (If it's environmental sustainability, this picture doesn't work as well, though the setting may still stimulate a good conversation.)
- One of the common responses in the United States to discussions about needs in the Global South has to do with "personal responsibility:" If *they* hadn't borrowed so much money, they wouldn't be suffering under such heavy debt burdens; if *their governments* weren't so corrupt, they'd have medicines on their shelves. And so on. Countries and peoples in the Global South *do* bear much responsibility for their situations, and this exercise should not be used to deny that fact. However, the thrust of our study is toward discernment of *our* ministries, as expressed both in scripture and in the eighth MDG: *Create global partnerships*. Since this method of seeking root causes provides you with many choices as to which direction to head, you may find it wise to choose responses that lead the group to reflect about where we in the West fit into the picture. If, for example, your group was talking about health and you asked

But why are the shelves empty?

and the replies were

Their government was so corrupt that the medicines never made it to the shops and

Medicines were too expensive

then you might acknowledge the potential truth of the first but choose to pursue the second, for the second is more likely to take us toward ways in which the U.S. (and others) give priority to patent protection over health crises in the Global South.

Where you end up should bring us more fully into global responsibility, which will encourage us to enter more fully into global partnership.

As you close this exercise remind the group that its purpose was *not* to settle on a particular direction for the parish to take but instead to deepen our understanding of realities associated with the MDGs as a step toward discernment. You need not do more now than summarize in this way, to underscore the group's insights as a basis for further discussion at later sessions and to assure the group that it has taken some valuable steps.

If you *do* have more time available, you could make this act of summarizing more participatory by asking the group to define what it is that they have discovered. The group can be encouraged to indicate whether these findings deserve further attention in future sessions, and you can sense if energy exists within the group to continue this line of thinking, especially in the final session.

- ❑ *In lieu of the root cause method:* We hope you will give the root cause exercise described above a try. It's a lot easier than it may look, and we have *never* used it without there being an active and thoughtful and often fun involvement on the part of a group. If you are anxious, consider asking someone from your group to lead this part of the study.

If, however, you don't find it something you want to undertake, you might alternatively – *after* asking the group to comment on what they read during the week, and how that has influenced their thinking – turn to the meditation about Kimaru, on page 13. Using the paragraph from page 12, invite the group to

- Consider the obstacles facing families with meager incomes as they address both the educational needs of children and the family's needs for the household.
- Consider the obstacles facing churches, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governments in the Global South as they attempt to provide education. And,
- Consider the obstacles facing Western churches, NGOs, and governments as they attempt to be helpful.

As above with the root causes exercise, close this exercise by reminding the group that the purpose of this session is to deepen our understanding of realities associated with the MDGs as a step toward discernment. Consider making this act of summarizing more participatory by asking the group to define what it is that they have discovered.

- ❑ *Assignment:* Remind the group to read session 4, pages 19-22. Conclude with *prayer*.

Session 4: A vision of partnership

- ❑ *Plan for this session:* After *opening prayer*, review the plan for this session by indicating simply that here we are affirming Jesus' call to us to be in relationship one-with-another. When that crosses culture, nation, region and race, we are especially challenged to be partners to one another. The theme of this session is partnership.

- ❑ *Conversations:* Open the discussion by inviting the group's response to the essay on the evolution of our understanding of partnership. Allow the conversation to go wherever participants may wish it to go. Then turn more specifically to the questions raised at the end of the essay.

As facilitator, you should ascertain in advance whether or not your parish already has any relationships with international partners. For many congregations, becoming involved "overseas" is a big deal. If your parish is not yet engaged, this session may be more of a theoretical exercise. Still, it can be a good launching point; just keep in mind that the nature of the conversation will vary depending upon whether the parish *or* some members of the group have direct experience with global relationships.

Here are the questions, from page 21:

- What is *your* theology of partnership?
- What scripture would you cite as important to you when you talk of faithful relatedness in our world?
- Look at the "Ten Principles of Partnership in the Anglican Communion" on page 22. What is your response? How might they influence your own discernment of your ministry in fresh ways?

You may wish to conclude by inviting thoughts the group may have had upon reading the reflection in this session.

- ❑ *Assignment:* Remind the group to read session 5, pages 23-27. Invite them to visit several of the websites named in the essay for the next session. Encourage them to think in coming days about what they consider themselves, as individuals and as part of a faith community, called to do. Conclude with *prayer*.

Session 5: *What shall we do?*

- ❑ *Plan for this session:* After *opening prayer*, review the plan for this session by indicating that the task before us is to consider our call to some type of action. No final decisions need to be made; in fact, a parish study group is usually *not* the body within the Church to make decisions about the formal actions of a parish. That notwithstanding, the group can affirm personal commitments, and if there is some consensus about the direction the parish "should" take in honoring both church resolutions and the vision of the MDGs, it can identify next steps, so that the commitment does not end when the study program ends.
- ❑ *Conversations:* Invite the group to share any insights they gleaned from their readings since the last session, especially any ideas that came to them from some of the sources named in the text for this session. Encourage participants to share their own personal commitments, should they wish to do so. Open the discussion to specific proposals for

action by or through the parish, and just see where it goes. If a clear direction emerges, ask the group to name next steps, and establish some means for accountability.

There's nothing wrong, by the way, with having more study as a next step. This series of five sessions has not examined any particular Millennium Development Goal in great depth. If your parish has long-standing ties with Latin America and your group's energy lies with children's health, you could wisely invest in further study about health conditions and needs in the region, *as a step toward significant action related to root causes*.

Insert the issue of advocacy, as discussed in the essay for this session, into the conversation. Ask what responses participants have to that type of ministry.

You might also encourage the group to consider the "70 in 7" campaign, noted on page 23. Are there ways for this to be promoted in your parish? The group might also urge that your own parish honor the call from the diocesan resolution, noted on pages 6-7, if your parish is not doing so already (many are).

- ❑ *Worship.* Using the litany on pages 28-30, conclude this study. Consider rearranging the room for this closing time together. You might have a table in the center of a circle of chairs, perhaps with a tablecloth from some other region of the world, and add candles or a cross. A meditative CD might provide some background. Be creative!
- ❑ *Evaluation:* An evaluation form is included at the end of each participant's booklet and is also located online. Please encourage participants to complete an evaluation. You may find it beneficial to review the comments yourself. We would also be grateful if you would share the results with us as well.

Blessings to you. Enjoy.