

# An Overview

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*Pilgrim* is a course for the Christian journey. The aim of the course is to help people become disciples of Jesus Christ.

A pilgrim is a person on a journey. The Bible is a book full of journeys. God's people are always travelling. God's call to Abraham was to leave his own land for a great journey of faith. God's call to Moses was to lead God's people on a journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the promised land. Jesus took his first disciples on a journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. One of the earliest names for the people called Christians was followers of the Way.

*Pilgrim* is designed to help every local church to invite others to join the people of God on our great journey of faith. Its purpose is to help you to draw together a small group of people who are enquiring about Christian faith or are new to faith and to help them learn about the faith together.

This leader's guide is for clergy and church leaders who are thinking about introducing *Pilgrim* into the life of their church and is also a short handbook for those who will lead the groups.

## The origins of *Pilgrim*

In 2010 the Church of England committed itself to three priorities for the present five-year period (or quinquennium):

- To grow the Church through the making of disciples
- To serve the common good of society
- To re-imagine ministry to enable us to do these two things better

The House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council invited the authors in 2011 to develop new material to help the whole Church to

grow through the making of disciples. *Pilgrim* is our response to that invitation.

The four lead authors are Robert Atwell, Stephen Cottrell, Steven Croft and Paula Gooder. We all bring different experiences of helping people to learn and grow in faith. *Pilgrim* has been developed in conversation with many other people and we have involved a wide range of bishops, clergy and lay people in writing the materials.

## The structure of *Pilgrim*

There are many different aspects to helping people learn about the Christian faith.

We have taken as our starting point Jesus' summary of the commandments. We are called to offer our lives to God through loving God with all our mind, soul, strength and heart and to love our neighbour as ourselves. Learning about Christian faith and growing in Christian faith is about more than what we believe. It's also about the ways in which we pray and develop our relationship with God, about the way we live our lives and about living in God's vision for the Church and for the world.

We offer two stages of material in *Pilgrim*. There are four short *Pilgrim* books (each comprising a course of six sessions) in the 'Follow' Stage designed for those who are enquirers and very new to the faith. Then there are four short *Pilgrim* books (again, each comprising a six-session course) in the 'Grow' Stage designed for those who want to go further and learn more.

The structure of *Pilgrim* is set out in the diagram.

PILGRIM				
A Course for the Christian Journey				
	What do Christians believe?	How do Christians know and worship God?	How do Christians behave?	What is the Christian vision for the world?
<b>FOLLOW STAGE</b> <i>'Do you turn to Christ?'</i>	① TURNING TO CHRIST	② THE LORD'S PRAYER	③ THE COMMANDMENTS	④ THE BEATITUDES
<b>GROW STAGE</b> <i>'Will you continue in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship?'</i>	⑤ THE CREEDS	⑥ THE EUCHARIST	⑦ THE BIBLE	⑧ CHURCH AND KINGDOM
	Doctrine	Spirituality	Ethics	Lifestyle

Each short course consists of six sessions. The courses in the Follow Stage are designed to be led by someone who is further on in their Christian faith and who is a skilled teacher. The courses in the Grow Stage are designed so that the group can lead and guide themselves with some external help and support.

In the Follow Stage, each of the four courses is structured around one of four key texts:

- the credal questions asked before Baptism
- the Lord's Prayer
- the Commandments
- the Beatitudes.

These four texts have been important in helping people in the early stages of their Christian journey since the earliest days of the Christian faith.

In the Grow Stage, each of the four courses is structured around a major theme of the Christian life:

- the Creeds
- the Sacraments
- the Scriptures
- living in God's Church and in God's world.

Each session of each course is rooted in shared prayer. Each session begins with the group exploring the Scriptures together and continues with a more sustained reflection on the theme and opportunity for questions and discussion.

There is a *Pilgrim* website ([www.pilgrimcourse.org](http://www.pilgrimcourse.org)) which contains resources to support those using the course, including sound files of the Reflections included in each session, short videos to introduce the sessions and other support materials.

It is strongly recommended that you sign up to the email news facility on the site to make sure you are kept informed as to when new components of the course and new support materials are made available online, etc.

The short courses in the four Follow Stage books can be approached in any order. Together, we believe they offer a balanced introduction to the Christian life and journey. Our hope and prayer is that *Pilgrim* will help to introduce people to the Christian Way and also equip them to live their whole lives as disciples of Jesus Christ.

## About this Leader's Guide

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This guide is both an introduction to *Pilgrim* and a guide to using it well. The next section, Part Two: Teaching the Faith, explores some of the ideas behind the course and the principles that have guided its development. Part Three: Leading a *Pilgrim* Group is a more practical guide to gathering and leading a group on one or more short courses. Part Four: Pilgrim Resources gives details of the various books and publication dates, the website and other resources. Finally, Part Five offers some powerful images and an understanding of the role of the teacher, the group leader and catechist in this process of making new disciples.