

WALKING TOWARD
Eternity

Making Choices For Today



SERIES ONE: DARING TO WALK THE WALK

JEFF & EMILY CAVINS

Leader's Guide

ASCENSION
ADDRESS

West Chester, Pennsylvania

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Prayer for Leaders

*Teach me to realize that this world is passing,
That my true future is the happiness of heaven,
That life on earth is short,
And the life to come eternal.
Help me to prepare for death
With a proper fear of judgment,
But a greater trust in your goodness.
Lead me safely through death
To the endless joy of heaven.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
– Pope Clement XI*

Prayer for Facilitators

*Dear Heavenly Father,
I stand before you with humility of heart
to ask for your assistance in my role as a facilitator.
May my example of study and meditation
assist others to do the same.
May my actions and words help
my discussion group
share truths from your Word.
May each person in my group
be touched by your Holy Spirit
to make the changes you are gently prompting.
Bind us together with the love of God
so we can support one another
as we travel toward eternity.
Bless each member of this study,
our parish, and our priests.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



GENERAL INFORMATION

About Walking Toward Eternity

Walking Toward Eternity is a Catholic adult faith formation program that seeks to help people hear God’s Word to them in the prayerful reading of Scripture and to apply it, one step at a time, to real situations.

Each eight-part study program focuses on a related group of topics that are essential for living out the Christian life. The lessons involve home study and meditation on Scripture using *lectio divina*, small-group discussion of the truths that were learned, an informative and inspiring DVD presentation, and a time of prayer and commitment to change, preferably before the Blessed Sacrament. This follow-up to *The Great Adventure* Bible study program helps to turn “head knowledge” into “heart knowledge.” It challenges people to begin to “live in the story” by meditating on Scripture and applying it to their lives.

Series One: Daring to Walk the Walk

Session One: Hearing the Voice of God

Session Two: Walking in Love

Session Three: Walking in Forgiveness

Session Four: Walking in Humility

Session Five: Walking in Prayerfulness

Session Six: Walking in Faithfulness

Session Seven: Walking in Sacrifice

Session Eight: Walking in Thankfulness



The primary goal of *Walking Toward Eternity* is to help people hear the voice of God through the prayerful reading of Scripture. Each session provides multiple opportunities to achieve this with Journal exercises as well as group and private prayer.

Your study's Core Team can contribute to the effectiveness of the small group and private prayer times by doing three simple things:

- Make prayer the foundation of your planning.
- Make time to prepare facilitators to lead the small groups.
- Make sure there is a quiet, reverent setting for the closing prayer time, preferably before the Blessed Sacrament.

The closing time of prayer, as brief as it is, can be a powerful first step as people “walk toward Eternity.”



Program Elements

Home Preparation

For four days each week, the *Walking Toward Eternity* Journal guides participants in ten to fifteen minutes a day of prayerful reading and reflection on Scripture passages related to the topic at hand. In Series One: *Daring to Walk the Walk*, each topic is a virtue or Christ-like attitude that helps us along the road to eternal life. The questions help participants focus on understanding the virtue, its importance, and what it looks like in practice.

Each day begins on a new, dated page in the Journal as shown here. Over the course of the week, participants are drawn more into the practice of *lectio divina* as they are encouraged to listen for the voice of God in Scripture.

Class Time (allow two hours)

- **Group Discussion (45 minutes)**
After the introductory class, each session starts with a small-group discussion. Facilitators lead participants through a brief exercise of *lectio divina* before guiding them through a discussion of the topic at hand.
- **DVD Presentation (approximately 50 minutes)**
A talk by Jeff Cavins reinforces the lesson, suggests practical steps for personal growth, and challenges participants to take one step toward change in the following week.
- **Silent Prayer (10 to 15 minutes)**
A short time of quiet (preferably before the Blessed Sacrament) is observed after the presentation to allow time for people to listen to the Word spoken into their own life, to hear how Christ is asking them to change in that area, and to plan their next step.

Materials

- *Walking Toward Eternity* Leader's Guide and a copy of the Group Facilitation Guidelines PDF, downloaded from WalkingTowardEternity.com
- Series One: *Daring to Walk the Walk* DVD Set (eight, 50-minute sessions on four DVDs; CDs are also available)
- Journal (one per participant; includes *Walking Toward Eternity* Bookmark with instructions for *lectio divina*)
- Optional: extra DVD or CD set for lending library
- Bible (one per participant; a Catholic version is recommended)

Session Overviews

Session One

Session One begins with a DVD introduction to *Walking Toward Eternity*, followed by an explanation of the home preparation and group discussion parts of the study.

Agenda:

- Registration/Materials
- Welcome (5 to 10 minutes)
- DVD Presentation (approximately 50 minutes)
- Small-Group Orientation (30 to 40 minutes)
- Close (5 minutes)

Sessions Two Through Eight

The tone of Sessions Two through Eight is first set by a brief group exercise of *lectio divina* on a Scripture passage pertinent to the topic. Each of these class sessions continues with a small-group discussion of a particular topic based on the lesson the members have completed. The groups then gather together for a DVD presentation and the class closes with prayer—if possible, before the Blessed Sacrament.

Agenda:

- Welcome (5 to 10 minutes)
- Small-Group Discussion (40 to 45 minutes)
- DVD Presentation (approximately 50 minutes)
- Silent Prayer (10 to 15 minutes)

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Logistics

1. Review all materials thoroughly, including downloads available on WalkingTowardEternity.com.
2. Assemble a Core Team to pray, plan, and implement the program. Meet with them to review materials and downloads.
3. Schedule eight, two-hour class sessions. You will need this time for the group discussion, the DVD presentation, and the closing, plus any time you need for hospitality and a welcome and introduction. If you expect a large group, allow time to move between rooms.
4. Arrange the meeting space with DVD player and screen for the entire group, plus space for breakout groups of eight to twelve people to gather for discussion. Set aside a quiet space for people to pray at the end of each session, preferably before the Blessed Sacrament.
5. Set a registration deadline for two weeks before the start date.
6. Schedule weekends to set up a manned registration table after Masses.
7. Put together a promotional plan and assign someone to carry it out (see the following section on promotion).
8. Order a DVD set for the class and one Journal for each participant. Order extras for late registrants to avoid having to reorder; unused materials can be returned later. An extra set of the talks on DVD or CD is helpful if you plan to loan copies to those who miss a session. Consider having Bibles available for purchase at registration.
9. For billing and shipping questions, please call 1-800-376-0520.
10. Schedule a two-hour Facilitator Orientation and Training Meeting at least one week prior to the start date. Invite all potential facilitators, including those who have

already facilitated other *Great Adventure* studies. For the ***Walking Toward Eternity*** Series, they will learn an additional skill: how to lead a simple group exercise of *lectio divina*. Step-by-step instructions for this meeting are included in this Leader's Guide and can be downloaded free from WalkingTowardEternity.com.

11. Plan the first session using the agenda provided on page 15 of this Leader's Guide. Assign people to handle registration, hospitality, and other details.
12. Prepare name tags, small-group assignments, schedules, and other logistical materials as needed. Blank forms are available on the Leader's Portal of the *Great Adventure* website, BibleStudyforCatholics.com.
13. Make final adjustments based on the number of registrants.

Promotion

Be sure to plan your promotion early and carry it out in a timely manner. Even a simple plan, done well, should achieve good results. In our experience, an enthusiastic invitation from the priest, multiple announcements in a variety of vehicles, and personal invitations are the most effective methods of promotion.

Most of the printed materials mentioned in this section are available free to registered leaders as ready-made or customizable downloads at the website WalkingTowardEternity.com. Here is a sample schedule:

As Early as Possible

- Create your promotion plan.
- Determine your promotional budget.
- Look through your parish calendar to see whether there are any scheduled events you can take advantage of to promote your study. (Is there a ministry fair? Does your women's ministry or Knights of Columbus chapter have a meeting at which you might make a short presentation? Is anything else scheduled that relates to Scripture or Scripture study?)

Three to Four Months Before Your Study Begins

- Hang posters in your church vestibule, parish school, Knights of Columbus halls, and in surrounding parishes.
- Announce the study on your parish website and enter the dates on your parish calendar. Embed the *Walking Toward Eternity* highlight video, available at WalkingTowardEternity.com, on your parish website.
- Submit an article or announcement to your parish or school newsletter.
- Involve other parish ministry leaders (e.g., Altar Society, Women's Guild, Knights of Columbus, and school parents). Let them know about your study, and invite them to encourage their groups to attend it or to run the same study for their group at a different time so you can share the DVDs.
- Register your study at BibleStudyMap.com. This will allow people in your area to find your study on the map.

Four to Six Weeks Before Your Study Begins

- Begin announcing the study in your parish bulletin. This should be done for several weeks leading up to your registration deadline and should continue until the study begins.
- Include registration forms in the bulletin or place them in a convenient location.
- Send an email to your fellow parishioners promoting the study and include a link to the *Walking Toward Eternity* highlight video.
- Ask your pastor to announce the study at weekend Masses and to encourage participation. If possible, have someone share a brief personal testimonial about the study to help generate interest, and invite people to your Information Session (see below).
- The same week, insert flyers in your parish bulletin or stack them alongside several sample Journals on registration tables at the back of church. Have people available at the

tables to answer questions.

- Show the *Walking Toward Eternity* highlight video after Masses to generate enthusiasm.
- Schedule one or more Information Sessions after Masses or on an evening when parishioners can hear about the studies, ask questions, preview the materials, and register. Show the highlight video and have someone who has gone through the study share what they learned from it and what it has done for them personally.
- Nothing beats a personal invitation. Ask five to ten people to help spread the word.

Facilitators: The Key to Success

Identifying and preparing people to properly facilitate the small-group discussions will greatly contribute to the fruitfulness of your *Walking Toward Eternity* program. Instructions and an agenda for a Facilitator Orientation and Training Meeting are provided below.

Purpose of the Group Discussion

Each session of *Walking Toward Eternity* begins with small-group discussion of insights gleaned from the homework. A brief group meditation on a pertinent passage of Scripture, using *lectio divina*, sets the tone. Open-ended questions are provided to help facilitators focus the group's attention on the nature of the particular virtue being discussed, the importance of that virtue, what life is like without it, and on what it looks like in practice. The facilitators encourage participants to share examples and insights gleaned from their own experience and from their time spent meditating that week on Scripture.

Roles and Expectations

The facilitators welcome group members and guide them through the lesson, aiming to give everyone a chance to participate and keeping the discussion moving, focused, and on time. They are not required to teach, advise, or answer difficult questions.

All facilitators are asked to do the following:

- Attend the Facilitator Orientation and Training Meeting.
- Learn to lead a simple group exercise of *lectio divina* (taught in the Orientation Meeting).
- Commit to praying for the participants in the study each week.
- Carefully prepare each lesson in advance.
- Attend every study session or arrange for a substitute.
- Arrive on time and help to set a welcoming tone for the group.
- Facilitate discussion according to guidelines provided.
- Bring the *Walking Toward Eternity* Journal and a Bible to each class session.
- Dress appropriately for meetings (modest church attire is a good guide).

Assembling a Team of Facilitators

You will need one facilitator for each group of eight to twelve participants, plus one or more substitutes. Invite people who are prayerful, practicing Catholics in good standing with the Church who can commit to the responsibilities listed previously.

Consider inviting potential facilitators to a casual information session where they can meet the leadership team, hear about the program, and learn what being a facilitator involves. It is not a difficult job, rather like being a good host. It does require familiarity with the program and knowledge of how to guide a group through a discussion based on journal entries—something that the Facilitator Training Meeting will prepare them to do.

Don't forget to thank the Lord for sending people to help! Continue to pray for these important team members in their ministry.

LEADING THE MEETINGS (AGENDAS AND INSTRUCTIONS)

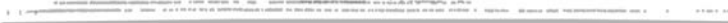
Leading the Facilitator Orientation and Training Meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to familiarize facilitators with the *Walking Toward Eternity* program and prepare them to be effective facilitators of small-group discussions. It is also a good time to become acquainted and build your team. Set aside an entire morning for the training. Consider ways to incorporate hospitality and take the time to get to know one another.

Make sure you and those in your Core Team are familiar with all the materials and this agenda and are comfortable with leading a group exercise of *lectio divina* before the Orientation Meeting.

Materials

- *Walking Toward Eternity* DVD #1
- *Walking Toward Eternity* Journal and Bookmark (one per facilitator)
- *Walking Toward Eternity* Group Facilitation Guidelines (download the PDF from WalkingTowardEternity.com and make copies for all facilitators)
- Handouts relevant to your class: schedule, contact list, site map, procedures, small group assignments, and so on



Agenda

- I. Welcome and opening prayer
- II. Explanation of the program
 - A. Introduce *Walking Toward Eternity* and explain what to expect from this meeting. A brief description of the program can be found at the beginning of this Leader's Guide.
 - B. Make sure everyone has a Journal, Bookmark, and Group Facilitation Guidelines (downloaded from WalkingTowardEternity.com). Review the schedule, handouts, and procedures relevant to your group.
 - C. Briefly explain the four integral elements of the *Walking Toward Eternity* program (see pages 2-4 of this Leader's Guide):
 1. Home preparation
 2. Group discussion
 3. DVD presentation
 4. Silent prayer
 - D. Preview the Introduction DVD, "Hearing the Voice of God," (approximately fifty minutes), which will be shown during Session One. Point out the outline of this presentation in the Journal, pages 5–7.

SHORT BREAK

- III. Explanation of the materials
 - A. Review and explain the role of the *Walking Toward Eternity* Journal. Use the guidelines provided on pages 9–11 of the Journal, ending with "My Step for the Week." (Read it aloud or, preferably, explain in your own words.)
As you go through the explanation of each day, draw attention to the corresponding Journal pages. Use Session Two in the Journal as an example:

- Pages 14–22 Four days of brief reading and questions
 - Page 23 General instructions for the small-group discussion
 - Pages 24–26 An outline that can be used for taking notes during the DVD presentation
 - Page 27 Instructions for spending quiet time in prayer after the talk
 - Page 28 A place to record a planned step for the week
- Explain that facilitators will repeat this step for participants in their groups during the group discussion time in Session One.

- B. Introduce the *Walking Toward Eternity* Bookmark. This reference tool gives the steps for *lectio divina*.

IV. Role of the facilitator

Handout: *Walking Toward Eternity* downloadable Group Facilitation Guidelines

- A. Explain the expectations of the facilitator (see Group Facilitation Guidelines, Section I, and page 10 of this Leader's Guide).
- B. Review an explanation of and tips for facilitating a small-group discussion (see Group Facilitation Guidelines, Sections II and III).
 1. Be prepared.
 2. Set the tone: act as the host.
 3. Lead the way: act as a trail guide.
 4. Encourage others: act as a cheerleader.
 5. Direct the discussion: act as a traffic cop.
 6. "Let go, and let God."

V. Facilitating the small-group discussion: Session One

- A. The first meeting day provides an introduction to *Walking Toward Eternity* and is structured differently than the other days. Give a brief overview of the Session

- One agenda (see Group Facilitation Guidelines, Section IV, Part A, and page 5 of this Leader’s Guide).
- B. Ask facilitators to look through Session One in their Journals, noting the various sections:

Pages 5–7	DVD presentation outline
Page 8	Small-group assignment page
Pages 9–11	Instructions for using the Journal
Page 11	Instructions for <i>lectio divina</i> by an individual
Page 12	Instructions for <i>lectio divina</i> as a group exercise
 - C. Go through the Group Facilitation Guidelines, Section IV, Part A: “Facilitating Small Group Discussions for *Walking Toward Eternity: Session One.*” Give instructions as needed for distributing handouts, taking attendance, or other logistical needs of your group.
 - D. Teach facilitators how to participate in a group exercise of *lectio divina*. First explain the steps, then lead them in the exercise as though they are a small group using Ephesians 3:14-21. Instructions are on page 12 of the Journal. You may need to offer the first response after each reading if people are hesitant to participate.
 - E. Facilitators will repeat this teaching exercise with group members during the small-group time in Session One.
- VI. Facilitating the small-group discussion: Sessions Two Through Eight
- A. Go through the Group Facilitation Guidelines, Section IV, Part B: “Facilitating Small-Group Discussions for *Walking Toward Eternity: Sessions Two through Eight.*”
 - B. Answer questions.
- VII. Close with the “Prayer for Facilitators” at the start of this guide.



Leading Session One

1. Registration (time varies with group size and preparation)
As people arrive, check off names, distribute materials and name tags with small-group assignments, and take last-minute registrations. Direct people to the main meeting room. Consider offering hospitality during this time, particularly if you have a very large group.
2. Welcome (5 to 10 minutes) Leader
 - Opening remarks and prayer (include music if desired)
 - Logistical matters pertinent to your group
 - Introduce DVD. Point out note-taking outline on page 5 of the Journal
3. DVD Presentation (approximately 50 minutes)
 - Play DVD for Session One, "Hearing the Voice of God"
 - Dismiss to small groups
4. Small-Group Orientation (30 to 40 minutes). . . Facilitators
The time needed for the small-group orientation will vary based on the number of people in each group, the amount of time you choose to spend on getting to know each other, and how much time it takes people to move to their small groups and back.
 - Getting to know each other
 - Explanation of materials and small-group process
 - Practice *lectio divina* in a group setting
 - Return to main meeting room
5. Close (5 minutes). Leader
 - Before the closing prayer, ask if there are any questions and give any additional details pertinent to your group.

Leading Sessions Two through Eight

1. Welcome (5 to 10 minutes) Leader
 - Opening remarks and prayer (include music if desired).
 - Review logistical matters pertinent to your group.
 - Dismiss to small groups.
2. Small-Group Discussion (40 to 45 minutes) Facilitators
 - Brief review of past week
 - Group *lectio divina* exercise
 - Discuss insights gleaned from homework
 - Return to main meeting room
3. DVD Presentation (approximately 50 minutes)
4. Silent prayer; move to the church sanctuary if desired (10 to 15 minutes)

Remind participants that the two Journal pages at the close of each session, “Quiet Time in the Lord’s Presence” and “My Step for this Week,” are for their use during this time.