

Ordained Ministry Discernment Timeline Chart

Personal Discernment for an Inquirer

A good parish discernment process for ordained ministry begins with personal discernment in a congregation with the support of a sponsoring priest. Typically, this first phase of discernment takes at least a year and includes many of these practices:

- Prepare for Confirmation/Reception/Reaffirmation (BCP p. 413), if you haven't already been confirmed or received by a bishop in the Episcopal Church
- Explore your call with your sponsoring priest
- Volunteer for ministries that demonstrate skills for ordained ministry: lay reading and Eucharistic ministry, pastoral visiting, outreach ministry
- Attend Ministry Discernment Day in September to learn more about lay and ordained vocations in the Church and the world
- Take advantage of group discernment resources (e.g. Loving the Questions): visit [St. Paul Center for Theology & Prayer — The Cathedral Church of Saint Paul, Boston](#) to learn more about this and other group discernment resources
- Explore your call with a spiritual director/vocational counselor: Visit the Bethany House of Prayer spiritual direction resources ([Contact — Bethany House of Prayer](#))
- Learn more about diaconal and presbyteral ministry by visiting other congregations and talking with our Archdeacons

When you and your sponsoring priest discern that the time is right to move to parish discernment for Holy Orders, plan to attend Ministry Discernment Day in September.

The Parish Discernment Timeline

Month	Activity
September	Attend Ministry Discernment Day Sponsoring priest: Submit a Commitment Form to the Office of Ordained Vocations by October 15 if the inquirer hopes to apply for Holy Orders by August 1 next year. Inquirer: write ministry and autobiographical statements
October	Work with COM liaison to convene a parish discernment committee and schedule seven or eight meetings as works best for your congregation
October-March	Discernment committee meets with the inquirer and decides whether to recommend the inquirer to apply for Holy Orders
April/early May	Discernment committee completes report and has a final meeting with the COM liaison; sponsoring priest writes letter of recommendation for the vestry
May/June	Vestry endorsement of inquirer to submit application for Holy Orders
June-August	Collect and submit application materials due August 1 Schedule and complete psychological assessment for postulancy
September-October	Nominee meets with members of the COM Review of postulancy applications Invitation to postulancy interviews
November	Postulancy interviews
December	Applicants receive the bishop's decision about postulancy