

Come to the Waters

2015–2016 PW/*Horizons* Bible Study by Judy Record Fletcher

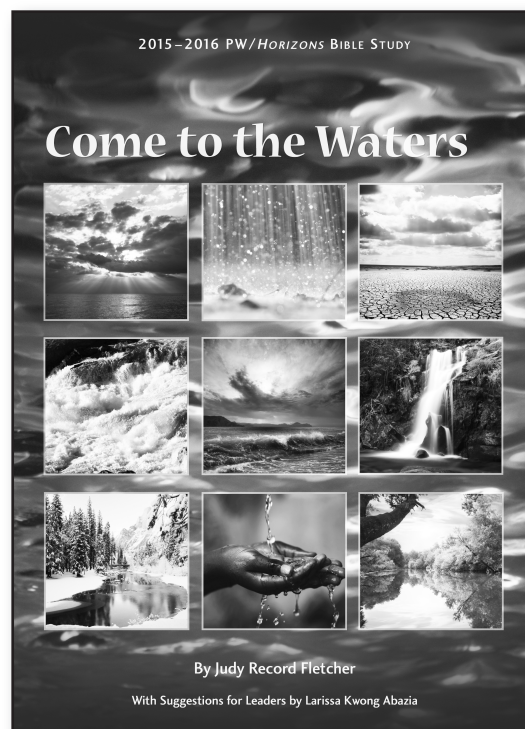
Workshop for Leaders

By Betsy Ensign-George

This workshop is a lesson plan that includes activities that explore, and resources that support, the 2015–2016 PW/*Horizons* Bible study, *Come to the Waters*.

If you're a Bible study leader, this workshop is for you. You can use it with other leaders or by yourself. The goal of this workshop is for you to have the information you need to be a confident leader.

Use this workshop in your congregation, synod, or presbytery. Introduce *Come to the Waters* to Bible study leaders and/or plan to lead a workshop at a gathering of Presbyterian Women or a meeting. Leaders from one or more different congregations can support one another and meet other leaders to whom they can go for help and ideas.



Welcome to the 2015–2016 Presbyterian Women/*Horizons* Bible study, *Come to the Waters*. “Just as humans cannot live without water, Christians cannot imagine living without the Word of God. Water and the Word go hand in hand as we strive to live as faithful followers of Jesus. This Bible study turns to some of the water stories and images in the Bible to enable us to learn more about God and how God would have us live our lives. The study also draws our attention to the power of water, its potential, and its effects on our lives and culture. We are invited to remember that water is precious and that clean water is unavailable to millions of people. Water and Word work together to quench the thirsts of our bodies and our souls” (*Come to the Waters*, Introduction, p. 5).

Each of the study's nine lessons includes one or more Bible passages and a primary theological theme or issue. The titles and themes are

1. **Birthgiving Waters—Creation**
2. **Life-giving Water—Baptism**
3. **Absence of Water—Thirst and Longing**
4. **Dangerous Waters—God's Deliverance**
5. **Stormy Water—Faith**
6. **Waters of Justice and Righteousness—Justice**
7. **Streams of Mercy—Forgiveness**
8. **The Hospitality of Living Water—Compassion**
9. **River of Life—Hope**

Meet the PW/*Horizons* Bible Study

Come to the Waters was written by Judy Record Fletcher. Judy is a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Her call when she retired was to synod executive of the Synod of the Sun. She approaches the theme and study with the heart of a pastor and a teacher. The art chosen for the study is a collection of photographic images of water that support each lesson's scriptural theme. Larissa Kwong Abazia, vice moderator for the PC(USA), provided the Suggestions for Leaders that go with each lesson. You can read Judy's and Larissa's bios on page one of the study. The PW/*Horizons* Bible study committee began work on this study in February 2011. Five years of dreaming, studying, praying, and creating have gone into the study you have in your hands. Now, it is ready for you.

Come to the Waters timeline

- Theme chosen: February 2011
- Author chosen: February 2012
- Field tested: Fall 2013
- Revised/rewritten/final draft: January–August 2014
- Published: March 2015

Things You Need To Lead the Workshop

- Bibles
- A copy of *Come to the Waters* for each participant
- Pens, pencils, and markers
- Post-it notes or other removable notes to use to mark the passages referred to in the study
- A bowl or pitcher of water
- An empty bowl or a bowl of dry sand
- An easel with a pad of paper and markers

Preparing for the Workshop

Refer to the chart in the back of this workshop/lesson plan and read the scripture passages for each lesson. Use Post-its or other removable notes to mark all of the passages in your Bible. You will come back to those passages more than once over the course of the study, and since they are found throughout the Bible, it helps to have them marked. You'll do this with participants during the workshop.

Read *Come to the Waters*. Note how the features of the study work together. Review the Table of Contents and find the items listed there. We added a scope and sequence to the Bible study this year (see p. 7). Along with the chart in this workshop, the scope and sequence lists scripture, focus, and action for each lesson—it is another tool for planning. Take time to become familiar with the study book.

Review this workshop model. Decide whether you will offer all or some of the suggested activities. Gather necessary supplies.

Find a bowl or pitcher and fill it with water. In the Bible study, we suggest that participants start each lesson by contemplating water (or its absence) and reading the litany provided. The workshop will start the same way.

Pray for yourself and for the workshop participants as you prepare to lead.

Right Before the Workshop Begins

Set up the meeting room. Arrange furniture in a way that makes it easy for participants to see one another. Check lighting and temperature. Will participants be comfortable? Make sure that all technology that you are using works. What's your back-up plan if the equipment doesn't work during the workshop?

- Arrange supplies so that they are ready.
- Place the bowl or pitcher of water and the empty bowl or bowl of dry sand near you.

Begin

Welcome participants as they arrive. If people are early, invite them to help you set up.

Start the workshop by reading the litany from Lesson One (used throughout the study).

Opening Litany from Isaiah 55:1–3a

Leader: Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters.

Participants: Listen carefully to me,

Leader: Incline your ear, and come to me.

Participants: Listen, so that you may live.

All: I will make with you an everlasting covenant.

Welcome everyone to the workshop. Explain your reasons for being together and add details particular to your situation. Ask participants to turn to their neighbors and introduce themselves. Suggest that they talk about their favorite things to do on, in, or with water. Call the group back together before the conversation winds down completely. Introduce yourself more personally by telling your own story of water.

Introduce the Study

Hold up or display the Bible study book and read the title: **Come to the Waters**. Tell everyone that the study was written by Judy Record Fletcher, that the art is photographic images of water, and that Larissa Kwong Abazia provided the Suggestions for Leaders that go with each lesson. (Author bios are on page one.)

Give each participant a copy of the study.

Invite participants to look at the front cover. Each of the images represents a lesson in the study. Read through the list of lesson titles and themes on page one of this plan and see whether participants can match the lessons with their photos (KEY: top row across—Lessons One, Two, Three; middle row across—Lessons Four, Five, Six; bottom row across—Lessons Seven, Eight, Nine). What do participants imagine is going on in each picture?

Ask participants to describe ways that the photos give hints about the content of the lessons and the study.

Invite participants to open the front covers of their study books to the PW Purpose, About this Bible Study, and biographical information about the authors. Turn to the Table of Contents on pages two and three. Briefly review the Table of Contents and take time to find everything listed.

Invite participants to find the scripture passages for each lesson in their Bibles. Suggest that they use Post-it or other notes to mark each passage. They can write the references on the outside edge of each note so that the references can be seen when the Bibles are closed. Studying the Bible is an important commitment and preparing their Bibles in this way is part of getting ready to do the hard work of studying together. The marker tabs will help to keep all of these stories about water up front in their minds throughout the months of the study.

Turn to the introduction on page four and explain that the introduction provides background information that will help them know more about the context of the study as they prepare to lead the lessons. Ask everyone to turn to page five and have them read along while you read aloud the first paragraph in the left column (It begins: “Just as humans cannot live without water . . .”). Note the Symbols and Things to Look For in the Study box on page six and the Scope and Sequence on page seven.

Exploring *Come to the Waters*

Make the transition to a time of individual exploration. Explain that the activities that follow will help them explore different aspects of *Come to the Waters*. Offer all of the activities, or choose from the ones listed here. The activity descriptions have been written directly to participants. If you choose to have this be a self-directed activity, you can photocopy the descriptions, cut them out, and use them as description cards at each activity location.

Point out the different activities you have arranged around the meeting space. We suggest:

Time with Water

Supplies: Supplies: A bowl or pitcher of water, an empty bowl or a bowl of dry sand, *Come to the Waters* Bible study books

Each lesson explores a biblical story of water. In some lessons there is a lot of water and in others there is not so much. Skim through each lesson of the study and pay attention to the role that water plays in the lessons. The author suggests that you place a pitcher or bowl of water, or a bowl of sand, in your meeting space when you read the study and when you meet together to study it. What other ways can you bring water and water images to your study of *Come to the Waters*?

Reviewing the Study with Watercolors

Supplies: *Come to the Waters* Bible study books, basic watercolor paint sets, small paint brushes, water in small containers, paper, and/or *Come to the Waters* coloring pages

Use watercolor paints, water, and paper to create your own versions of the water images for each lesson. Read a lesson's scripture passages and paint images that come to mind when you hear and think about the words.

Find the *Come to the Waters* coloring pages at www.pcusa.org/horizons, download, and print them onto white paper. Use brushes and watercolor paints to color in the images.

Renewal of Baptism

Supplies: *Come to the Waters* Bible study books

Lesson Two considers the meaning of baptismal waters—for Jesus, the early church, and for our lives today. The lesson ends with a Renewal of Baptism. Turn to page 22 in your study book and read through the closing renewal of baptism liturgy. How will you use it with your group?

Exploring Suggestions for Leaders

Supplies: *Come to the Waters* Bible study books

Suggestions for Leaders follow each lesson in the study. You'll find suggestions on pages 15 (Lesson One), 23 (Lesson Two), 31 (Lesson Three), 39 (Lesson Four), 47 (Lesson Five), 55 (Lesson Six), 63 (Lesson Seven), 71 (Lesson Eight), and 79 (Lesson Nine). Note that there are five steps to the Suggestions for Leaders in each lesson:

1. Testing the Waters: Preparation for the leader
2. Skimming the Surface: Light conversation about the Bible study and topic
3. Diving In: Activities and conversations to deepen understanding
4. Resurfacing: Concluding questions
5. Coming Ashore: Closing prayer/activity

When you prepare to lead, read the lesson, review the suggestions for leaders, and choose the activities you will use to help teach the lesson. Choose a lesson now and review its suggestions. Pick an activity and think about how you would use it or adapt it to work for your group.

Trying the Spiritual Discipline of *Examen*

Find The Practice of *Examen* resource on page 85 in the study book. *Examen* is a daily spiritual discipline that helps participants discern the presence of God in their lives. Read the resource and try it now. Think about how you will introduce *examen* to your group.

Finding Bible Study Resources on the *Horizons* Web Pages

Supplies: Internet access and a computer with a screen

Go to www.pcusa.org/horizons.

Click on the Bible study tab. Look for the free downloadable Workshop for Leaders, web exclusives, and other helpful resources. Follow links to see where they take you. Preview the ordering process. Make notes about leader help you can find on the *Horizons* web pages.

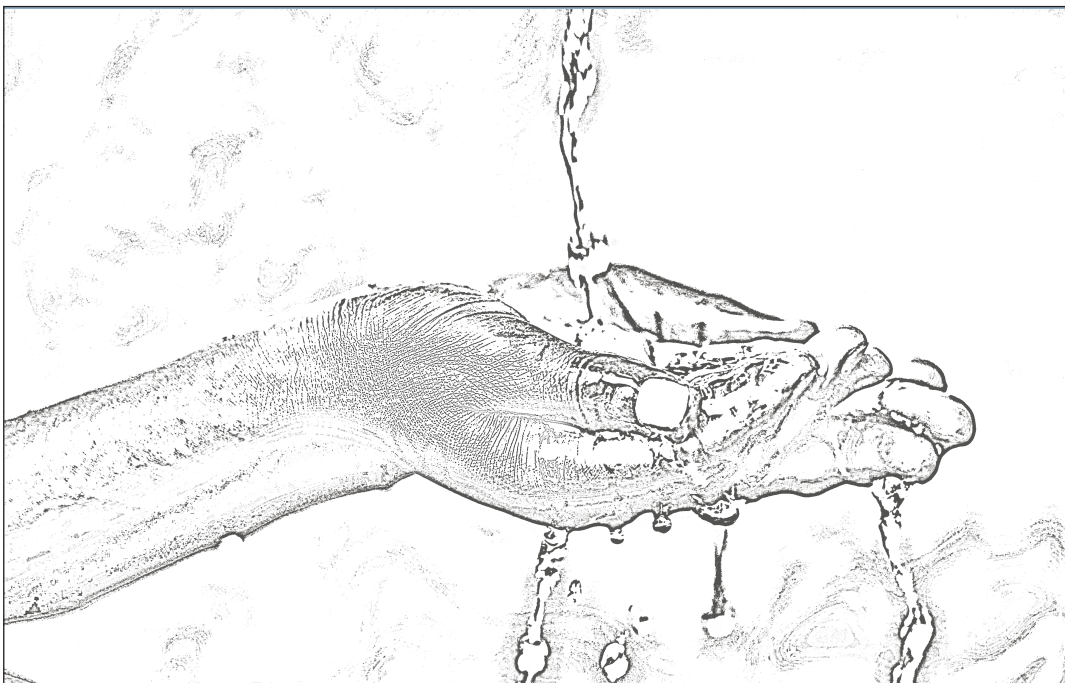
Resources will be added to the site throughout the summer of 2015. If they are not there when you look the first time, please check back or contact the PW offices at 844/PW-PCUSA (844/797-2872).

Planning with the Lesson Summary Chart

Supplies: Copies of the lesson summary chart in this Workshop for Leaders resource, *Come to the Waters* Bible study books, and pencils and pens

Review the lesson summary chart and find in the study book the items listed on the chart. Look closely at the study book. Find the Scope and Sequence—another feature to help you plan. Find the explanation of *examen* on page 85. Consider how you can use all of this information to help you lead your Bible study groups.

Start your planning now.



Reflect on *Come to the Waters*

Call participants back together and help them compare notes about their experiences. Ask them to share what they discovered about *Come to the Waters*. What will they take home? Make notes on an easel pad of suggestions and comments that are made.

Point out that the activities they tried emphasize different learning styles. While they may have been most comfortable doing one type of activity, it was still possible for them to learn something doing an activity that might not have been their favorite. Suggest that they push themselves to try to use learning styles in which they are weak as well as include the ones in which they are strong. For instance, if they think that they would never choose to do an art project, there could be someone in their group who would love to learn that way. What works for the group might not be their first choice but it could still be a good choice for their groups. Encourage participants to include a mix of learning styles when they lead.

Review the notes with the group and think together about ways that they can plan and lead their own groups.

Invite your workshop group to share contact information. They can be a community of leaders for one another.

Going Forth

Close the workshop with this prayer from Lesson Nine (p.78):

God of all ages and times and places, we thank you that you are our God and that you bid us to come to the waters. We thank you that you pour out your love for us, that you embrace us and wash us with forgiveness and grace. We praise you that you show us the way and give us the gifts to be the People of the Way. Use us, O God, that we may bear Living Water to a thirsty and hurting world. Use us to wash away the pain and suffering of others. Lead us to that day of fulfillment when all your children will know you, love you, and serve you. We pray this prayer in the loving name of Jesus, the Living Water. Amen.

Support the PW/*Horizons* Bible Study

With a gift to the publishing ministry

Any gift to support the publishing mission of Presbyterian Women will help ensure that Presbyterian Women's publishing legacy continues for another generation. Send your check made payable to "Presbyterian Women" to *Horizons*/Presbyterian Women, PO Box 421, Congers, NY 10920-0421.

Please note "gift to PW publishing ministry" in note lines of the check.

By nominating a potential author

Do you know someone you think would make an excellent Bible study author or a writer of *Suggestions for Leaders*? Pastors, educators, and professors have all created studies and suggestions that are beloved by Presbyterian women.

Strong candidates have these qualities (and more!)

- Knowledge of the Bible and related writings
- Knowledge of, and commitment to, Reformed theology
- Experience teaching Bible study
- Experience writing, especially for lay people
- Commitment to women's issues
- Commitment to using inclusive language in all communications
- Active membership in the PC(USA)
- Knowledge of, and commitment to, Presbyterian Women

Or field testing an upcoming study

Field testing takes place between August and December every year. Groups receive a draft of the study along with evaluation forms to complete as they make their way through each lesson. All evaluation forms are sent to the Bible study author, who uses the feedback to edit and rewrite her work. PW circles, Bible study groups, and coordinating teams have all made excellent field testing groups.

What about your group?

Nominate an author or apply to field test today! Contact Betsy Ensign-George at 844/PW-PCUSA (844/797-2872), ext. 5366, betsy.ensign-george@pcusa.org, or download an author nomination or field test application form from www.pcusa.org/horizons/bibleupcome.htm.

Lesson Summary Chart

	Title	Scripture	Lesson Focus	What the Lesson Does	S for L	Hymns GtG = Glory to God PH = Presbyterian Hymnal
Intro						
1	Birthing Waters—Creation	Genesis 1:1–2:4	Out of the waters of chaos God created everything. God saw the goodness of creation and gave humans responsibility for caring for it. The seventh day, a day of rest, is a part of creation, too.	Explores the creation story, God's goodness, the role of humans, and the place of rest in creation	p. 15	"God, You Spin the Whirling Planets" (GtG 23; PH 285)
2	Life-giving Waters—Baptism	Matthew 3:13–17	The waters of baptism give life. Lesson Two considers the meaning of baptismal waters—for Jesus, the early church, and for our lives today.	Examines baptism and its meaning	p. 23	"I Was There to Hear Your Borneing Cry" (GtG 488) "Out of Deep, Unordered Water" (PH 494) "Baptized in Water" (GtG 482; PH 492)
3	Absence of Water—Thirst and Longing	Exodus 17:1–7; Psalm 42:1–2; 63:1; John 19:28	We have dry spells in our lives—our bodies and our souls thirst. How do we survive times of little or no water?	Explores physical and spiritual thirst in the Bible and in the dry times of our lives	p. 31	"Hear My Prayer, O God" (GtG 782) "In Silence My Soul Thirsts" (GtG 790) "As Deer Long for the Streams" (PH 189) "O Lord, You Are My God" (PH 199)
4	Dangerous Waters—God's Deliverance	Joshua 3, Psalm 69:1–3	The Israelites need to cross the Jordan River; the psalmist is emotionally and spiritually drowning—everyone needs God's help. God does not disappoint.	Considers the ways God saved the Israelites and how God saves us today	p. 39	"Save Me, O God; I Sink in Floods" (Psalm 69) (GtG 478) "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy" (GtG 435; PH 298)
5	Stormy Water—Faith	Matthew 14:22–33	The disciples encountered stormy times in their faith, and so do we. What does it mean to be people of faith? How does our faith sustain us?	Looks at the ways Jesus, Peter, and the disciples react to a storm. How does their faith define them? How does our faith define us?	p. 47	"My Faith Looks Up to Thee" (GtG 829; PH 383) "We've Come This Far by Faith" (GtG 656) " <i>Kahm Kahm Hahn Bom Sanaoon</i> " ("Lonely the Boat") (PH 373)
6	Waters of Justice and Righteousness—Justice	Amos 5:21–24	Because of their shallow worship and sinful living, Amos calls the waters of justice and righteousness to roll down on the Israelites. What places in our world need the cleansing waters of justice and righteousness?	Explores Amos's calls for justice and righteousness. Asks "Where are justice and righteousness needed today?"	p. 55	"For Everyone Born" (GtG 769) " <i>Canto de Esperanza</i> /Song of Hope" (PH 432; GtG 765)
7	Streams of Mercy—Forgiveness	Isaiah 35:1–2, 5–7; Psalm 51:1–12; Matthew 6:12	Christians forgive and are forgiven. What can we learn about forgiveness and streams of mercy from the psalmist and from Jesus?	Explores the need to forgive and to accept forgiveness	p. 63	"God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us" (GtG 436; PH 261) "Have Mercy, God, upon My Life" (GtG 422) "Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive" (PH 347)
8	The Hospitality of Living Water—Compassion	John 4:1–30, 39–42; Acts 2:44–47	Jesus is the living water. The Samaritan woman, and people today, need this water. When we welcome living water into our lives, we learn the importance of hospitality and compassion.	Looks at the conversation between the Samaritan woman and Jesus; considers living water and why hospitality is important	p. 71	"Help Us Accept Each Other" (GtG 754; PH 358)
9	River of Life—Hope	Revelation 21–22	In Revelation, we get a picture of the end time, with the fullest revelation of God and God's creation. This becomes a cause of great hope. We learn that we live in between the revelation of Jesus Christ and this final revelation and that we are to witness to this as we live out our faith.	Explores the end times as described in Revelation, and our responsibility as people of faith between now and then	p. 79	"Shall We Gather at the River" (GtG 375) "O Holy City, Seen of John" (GtG 374; PH 453) "We Know That Christ Is Raised" (GtG 485; PH 495)

Order Form

TITLE	PDS#	QTY	PRICE	SUBTOTAL
2015–2016 PW/<i>Horizons</i> Bible study, <i>Come to the Waters</i> by Judy Record Fletcher				
English edition	HZN15100		\$8.00	\$
Ecumenical edition	HZN15102		\$8.00	\$
Spanish edition	HZN15110		\$8.00	\$
Large-print edition	HZN15150		\$12.00	\$
Audio edition (available by download only, Summer 2015) Slightly abridged, no Suggestions for Leaders	HZN15172		\$15.00	Visit http://store.pcusa.org
Companion DVD (available Summer 2015) Video of Suggestions for Leaders author teaching each lesson.	HZN15103		\$20.00	\$
<i>Workshop for Leaders</i> —an introduction to this Bible study (also available as a free download at www.pcusa.org/horizons)	HZN15101		free	
Charm/pendant	HZN15300		\$10.00	\$
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Bulletin cover—8½"x11"	Free download only at www.pcusa.org/horizons			

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