

Sacred Compass: The Way of Spiritual Discernment with J. Brent Bill
Weekend Edition

A compass makes a good metaphor for our spiritual lives and the work of discerning God's will for them. God doesn't speak as clearly and as obviously as Mapquest or GoogleMaps or GPS. Maybe that's because we don't navigate the life of faith via anything remotely resembling GPS. Instead, the divine compass points us to the mind and love of God. Keeping our soul's eyes on the sacred compass leads us to the holy discovery that we can move through life with purpose and promise, even in those times when we may not sense with certainty what that purpose and promise are. In a grace-filled way, our compass invites us into a life of continuous experiences of God and of spiritual transformation. As we move toward Divine guidance, we joyfully behold the face of a loving God gazing back at us. This workshop, based on Brent's book *Sacred Compass*, will be an interactive opportunity to check our compasses and see where God has lead and is leading us. We'll use experiences such as drawing Life Maps, charting the call of the Divine in our lives, and more.

Friday Night

Introductions

Make something that represents some icon of faith to you.

to tell your story through your personal faith tradition. Write about why you follow the faith that you do. Are you Catholic by choice or birth or both? How have you arrived at the faith you now hold? Describe your path. As you think about your story, ask yourself:

What is the title of your story?

- What would be your first line?
- What will come from your heart?

Introduction to compass model

Many books are about 1 path or 1 way or 1 decision making

Experience w/ GPS?

Good

Bad

What about compass?

It's about finding God's direction

It leads to holy discoveries

It complements our unique personalities and souls

Saturday

Morning

Life as a pilgrimage

It is a pilgrimage

We don't travel alone

We learn from other pilgrims

We are lead by the Spirit

Pilgrimages take many paths

We live with imagination and spirit

We learn to trust God

We see the Divine in the details

Do “Life Map” Exercise--

This is an exercise to help you visualize your life as pilgrimage to God – and to see “compass points” you’ve had. This is an exercise in the art of living – so don’t expect it to be anything more than it is. The Life Map is just a tool to help you see your life in a new spiritual way – the way of following your sacred compass. Don’t worry about your artistic ability – or lack of it. Neatness does not count! Do as much as is helpful and don’t do anything that isn’t. Have fun with it – spirituality with a playful spirit.

Find one other person to share your “Life Maps” with.

Brent will supply some suggested spiritual questions to ask.

Afternoon

Hearing the voice of God

Read portion of Peggy Payne’s short story “Revelation”

When have you known/felt a leading

How did you know it was real?

How did you feel it?

Do “Call Chartograph”-- Like the Life Map, this is an exercise to help you visualize your life as pilgrimage to God – and to see “compass points” you’ve had. In this case, you’ll be looking at places where you’ve felt God’s call on your life. It is a way to help you see God at work in the various seasons of your life (recognizing that some of us may have had more seasons than others!). Don’t feel you have to follow the directions exactly – make it work for you. Do the same with the questions suggested below – use them if they’re helpful. Or come up with others. As with the Life Map, have fun with this exercise.

Find two other people and share

Questions to ask

Evening

Sensing, waiting, acting – there stages in following our sacred compass and checking our leadings against it. These stages are sensing, waiting, and acting. But following our sacred compass is not a rigidly linear process, so you might not approach these stages in the order I list here. Your waiting may lead back to sensing, or forward to action. Likewise, action may lead you back to sensing or waiting. Often, the three are a synthesis of each other—a blend of sensing and waiting while acting, for example. They flow one to another and back around. This nonlinear movement is disconcerting to those like me who crave order and reason, but is the nature of true spiritual work. Yet, naming the stages helps us see where we are in testing our leadings and sensing additional signs, and lets our soul know where we are in the process of following our sacred compass

Sensing Exercise:

Think of a current leading you’ve been feeling. Test to see where it’s coming from – inside, ego, the will of God, etc.

Waiting Exercise

Waiting with our bodies. One way our lives speak is through our physical being. What does discernment taste like, feel like, sound like, look like, smell like?

Acting Exercise

What sorts of sensing and waiting activities will you use in the action phase?

Sunday

Leadings

Come from within
 Are beautiful
 Are persistent
 Fill us with joy
 Require waiting time
 Bring calmness
 Give us power
 Fit our teachability

Current Callings

Where am I being led at this time?

Supplies Needed – large paper(i.e. Post-It Note chart papers), colored markers, colored paper, scissors, glue sticks,

Brent Bill lives on Ploughshares Farm in Mooresville, Indiana, with his wife, Nancy, where they are returning Hoosier pastureland to prairie grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and native hardwoods. He is a Quaker minister and serves as the executive vice president of the Indianapolis Center for Congregations, Inc. A graduate of Wilmington College and Earlham School of Religion, Brent is the author of many books including *Sacred Compass: The Path of Spiritual Discernment*, *Mind the Light: Learning to See with Spiritual Eyes*, *Holy Silence: The Gift of Quaker Spirituality*, and *Imagination and Spirit: A Contemporary Quaker Reader*. He is a frequent speaker and workshop leader and may be reached through his Web site www.brentbill.com. His blog, Holy Ordinary, appears at holyordinary.blogspot.com