



Parish Discernment Committee Manual
Episcopal Diocese of Florida

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General Summary of the Process

Discernment is about seeking an understanding as to how one can best serve God and His creation. When God calls one to serve in a particular way, it rarely happens clearly. It certainly doesn't come with a set of specific instructions or a road map. The journalist's six questions (Who, What, When, Where, Why and How) are rarely answered. Sometimes one might know an explicit answer to one of the questions. Neil deGrasse Tyson, the astrophysicist, at age 9 knew he wanted to learn more about the stars after a momentous experience at the Hayden Planetarium. But he had to learn the name of that vocation and then for years had to learn the answers to the other five questions. He is probably still learning the answer to those five questions as he lives into his vocation as an astrophysicist. As Christians, we understand that God speaks to us in many ways and with various levels of precision. Mostly, we feel a stirring that we need to do something different or differently. Then we start talking with others about these stirrings. We gather information to help us learn what these stirrings are about. By the time a Seeker speaks to clergy about these stirrings, she or he knows some of the answers to the five questions. The Seeker experiences doubts and questions and wants some way to confirm or deny the assumptions that have developed so far.

The discernment process developed by the Episcopal Diocese of Florida is designed to enable a community of people to assist the Seeker gain answers to the questions. This process is based on a set of basic principles:

Discernment is more than seeking ordination. When limiting discernment to answering one question, the five questions are not even being considered. A discerning community must be open to considering any form of ministry. In our Episcopal culture, the answer to the "What?" question is often seen as lay or ordained. That answer only scratches the surface. There may be several layers of answers to the "What?" question.

Discernment is a lifelong endeavor. Even though a Seeker, with the help of a discernment committee may answer the "What?" question, the other four questions are still unanswered or maybe partially answered. Those answers may come as the Seeker pursues and enters formation for the discerned vocation. Additionally, many variables in life also have a way of changing the questions. Every time one feels like one has defined a call to ministry, something changes the dynamic.

At its best, discernment is a prayerful process. It is not an interview, or an interest and aptitude assessment. Discernment can include using these tools and others. It can include gathering information. It may even include a decision-making tool listing the pros and cons of a course of action. But, discernment without prayer, is simply a job hunter's quest. Ministry is more than a job. Since ministry is about serving God, God needs to be involved with the discernment process itself. The discernment process must intentionally make a space for the Holy Spirit to enter and participate. A prayerful process invites the Holy Spirit through liturgy, spiritual practices, use of Scripture, etc. The Book of Common Prayer offers a framework and context to a discerning community in addition to liturgy. A

prayerful discernment opens the questions and expands the possibilities that leading to answers that clarify the call and direct the Seeker to the next steps.

Discernment Committees are designed to be open to explore and reflect on ministries that may not be as yet defined as well as those that are well-known. The process used by the Discernment Committee is intentionally **designed to open “the ears of the heart”** (Benedict, Prologue) to the Holy Spirit, the familiar and the unfamiliar. The process is designed to be soaked in prayer with room and space for the Holy Spirit. This is not an interview process. ***This is a process of reflection and exploration.*** This is why the person seeking discernment assistance is referred to as **the Seeker**.

Discernment committees may be

- **Local:** comprised only of members from the Seeker’s home congregation. One member should be a vestry/bishop committee member.
- **Regional:** comprised of 2-3 members from the Seekers congregation and 3-4 members from surrounding Episcopal churches. This is recommended in instances where more than one seeker is engaged in discernment or when the Sponsoring Priest is unable to find 5 to 7 members of the congregation to serve. One member of the Committee should be Vestry or Bishop’s Committee member from the Seeker’s congregation.

The process is well defined, and training by the Sponsoring Priest or a member of the Commission on Ministry is highly recommended. Members of the Discernment Committee may have roles that vary according to the needs of each phase in the process. The Sponsoring Priest will assign a facilitator for the process.

Please note that the Seeker may choose to end the discernment process at any time. If this happens, the Facilitator will inform the sponsoring Priest. It is the Seeker’s responsibility to provide any additional information to the Sponsoring Priest. It is important to be respectful of the Seeker’s decision.

It is recommended that each Committee member read *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer prior to their first participation in a discernment committee. It is encouraged and highly recommended that all committee members read all the materials that are listed as homework assignments for the Seeker. There are other documents, web sites and books the committee members are advised, but not required, to read prior to the meetings with the Seeker.

Roles and Responsibilities

The discernment process involves participation by the Seeker’s faith community. The faith community includes people and leaders in the Seeker’s congregation, if applicable from other local area congregations, and the diocese. There are specific roles and responsibilities for the individuals participating in the Discernment Committee process.

Sponsoring Priest– *The Head of a Congregation, or their designee, serves as the sponsor for the Seeker throughout the discernment process.*

- **Formation of the local or regional discernment committee:** Determine if local or regional discernment committee is more suitable.
- Recruit parishioners from the Seeker’s congregation to be trained and to serve on the committee. Ideally, one of these would be on the Vestry.
 - Contact the Assistant to the Commission on Ministry, Hannia Reyes, to obtain names of other potential discernment participants if there are not enough available within a congregation
- Contact and invite the trained Regional Discernment Ministers to serve on the committee when needed.
 - Appoint one of the members to serve as the Facilitator of the committee. Ideally, this person would be from the Seeker’s congregation. (See Responsibilities of the Facilitator below)
- Meets with the Facilitator and Seeker prior to the first meeting of the committee. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that both the Sponsoring Priest and the Seeker understand the discernment process used by the Discernment Committee, to include roles and responsibilities. The Facilitator ensures that the Seeker and the Head of the Congregation have a copy of the Discernment Manual. They will review the report templates to understand the outcome of the process. This is a good time to review any pertinent timeline considerations. A proposed date for the first session may be identified at this time.
- Follow-up with the Seeker after the Discernment Committee process, providing pastoral care and support as the Seeker pursues further discernment for either holy orders or a lay vocation.
- Know the deadlines related to discernment for holy orders or other relevant time factors:
 - The Discernment Committee meets for a minimum of 6 meetings; more meetings may be necessary. Due to scheduling issues and other factors, it may take 3 months for a committee to complete its work.

Facilitator: This role is chosen by the Sponsoring Priest to serve as Facilitator for the Discernment Committee. Typically, this person has received training from the Sponsoring Priest or a member of COM. The Facilitator is responsible for the following:

- Meeting leadership: The Facilitator organizes, coordinates and leads the meetings according to the guidelines of each phase. This includes:
 - Communications: The Facilitator is responsible for communicating critical information to the committee members and the Seeker. These communications include reminders about the homework assignments, materials, meeting dates and location, and any other relevant information.
 - Meeting preparation: The Facilitator should review the description of the appropriate phase and related appendices to plan for each upcoming meeting. The Facilitator makes sure all materials needed for each session is brought to the meeting place and that the members of the committee have up-to-date copies of the ***Process Manual***.

- Meeting management: The Facilitator is responsible for managing the dates, times, and location for the meetings. This includes setting dates for which the members can participate, barring unforeseen circumstances. The Facilitator should inquire with all members about planned absences that could affect the committee's schedule.
- Overview of each phase: The Facilitator is responsible for providing the Discernment Committee an overview of the current phase.
- Orientation: The Facilitator meets with the Sponsoring Priest and the Seeker prior to the first meeting of the Discernment Committee. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that both the Sponsoring Priest and the Seeker understand the discernment process used by the Discernment Committee. The Facilitator ensures that the Sponsoring Priest and the Seeker have a copy of this manual. They will review the report templates to understand the outcome of the process. They will ensure that the Seeker understands their homework assignments prior to the first session.
- Time management: The Facilitator ensures that all parties are aware of any timelines that may affect the committee. This is particularly relevant for anyone who is sensing a call to ordained ministry.
- Issue resolution: The Facilitator is responsible for resolving issues that may arise that affect the work of the committee. The Facilitator may consult with the Sponsoring Priest or the Discernment Coordinator for assistance and feedback.
- Feedback: The Facilitator should provide evaluative feedback about the process to the Discernment Coordinator after the committee completes its work.

Discernment Coordinator: A Discernment Coordinator is a member of the Commission on Ministry assigned to each seeker's discernment process. They provide assistance to the Sponsoring Priest concerning the roles and responsibilities of the Discernment Committee members and Facilitator. The Discernment Coordinator collects feedback on the process.

Vestry/Bishop's Committee Liaison – This role is to be filled by a Vestry or Bishop's Committee member. The intention of this role is to provide a resource to the Vestry or Bishop's Committee for information about the process and the report findings as the Vestry or Bishop's Committee. *Based on the Discernment Committee report and the recommendation of the Sponsoring Priest, it is the Vestry/Bishop's Committee that makes the formal nomination of the Seeker to proceed to the Diocesan level of discernment.*

Committee members – The primary responsibility of the committee members is to listen, pray, and attend every meeting. To enhance the discernment experience, they must do their homework, prepare before every meeting, read materials as indicated, and **maintain confidentiality**. The committee members are responsible for informing the Facilitator of any unforeseen circumstances that hinder their commitment to attending all scheduled meetings. The absence of more than two meetings could disqualify the committee member from further participation. They should review information laid out in this manual and relevant to the upcoming session before each meeting. The committee members are responsible for completing their assigned work before each meeting. They write a one-page Spiritual Autobiography in preparation for the first phase along with the other pre-requisite assignments.

Seeker – The Seeker completes the homework assignments for each phase. The Seeker honors confidentiality and is open and honest.

Summary of the 6 Phases

Phase 1: Listening to the Story

This is the first meeting between the Seeker and the Discernment Committee.

Participants:

- learn about each other
- establish a safe environment for exploring issues related to Christian vocation and discerning a call within the community.
- learn the Prayer Model that will be used at the beginning of each meeting. The Prayer Model opens the way for the participants to become sensitive to behaviors that could impact the discernment process itself. Some examples include communication skills, the ability to relate to each other, personal integrity and self-esteem, physical health, and energy, as well as intellectual gifts and abilities.
- Set dates and times for the remaining 5 meetings and address any other administrative issues (meeting location, etc.)

Prior to the first meeting, the Seeker provides each committee member with his/her written spiritual autobiography. This autobiography provides the context for the conversation concerning vocation and call. It is highly recommended that the Seeker and the Committee have read Parker Palmer's book, Let Your Life Speak. They are encouraged to read Listening Hearts by Farnham, et al. (See Bibliography). With suggested questions, the Seeker and the committee reflect and explore the meaning of vocation and call.

Phase 2: Exploring the Gifts

This is the second meeting. The focus of this phase is to start defining the arena for the call to ministry. This phase is designed to explore the Seeker's gifts, talent, and skills through conversation and reflection. One homework assignment from the previous session calls for the Seeker to prayerfully meditate on the "inheritance" that God has awarded him or her. The other homework assignment is to complete an assessment of spiritual gifts. This session will explore the results of these activities as part of clarifying where the Seeker is called to serve.

Phase 3: Role of Mission and Ministry in the World

In this third meeting, discernment of our Christian vocation begins with the conviction that God calls each of us as a baptized Christian to actively participate in the Body of Christ. The goal of discernment is to know God's desire for a particular person or situation within the context of the wider vision of the Kingdom of God. The process is one of prayerful discovery that assumes God is already at work in the world around us, inviting us to participate and co-create. This phase allows the Seeker and the committee to explore the possible mission fields to which God may be calling the Seeker. They may reflect on the potential mission fields considered by the Seeker. Are there any indications that lead the Seeker to create a ministry or to pursue a known ministry in a new field? Possibly, the mission field is within the Seeker's current occupation. This conversation may include exploring such considerations as the environment, geography, motivation, skill sets, interpersonal interactions that are associated with this (these) mission field(s). The participants may consider the resources that appear to be necessary for entering this (these) mission field(s). An important question to start discussing at this point may be how ordination may enhance or weaken being involved in this (these) mission field(s).

Phase 4: Exploring the Orders of Ministry

This is the fourth meeting. The purpose of this phase is to explore the types of ministry in the context of the mission field(s) explored in the previous session. One's call to a special ministry can be found in the church and in the world. How does the Seeker's call fulfill the Baptismal Covenant? The Seeker and the committee discuss the various orders of ministry as described in the Catechism (BCP, 855-856). Is there a particular model of ministry that best fits the Seeker's call?

Some questions that the participants may explore include: How does each order fulfill and illuminate each of the vows in the Baptismal Covenant? How could the signs for successful ministry influence the implementation of each order? What was new information about each ministry? If you were to pursue one of these orders, how could this affect your family or your professional life? What additional information do you need to more fully understand each order of ministry?

The committee may choose to schedule one or more information sessions in the future, before proceeding on to the next phase, to have guests talk about their ministry. These guests may vary according to the orders of ministry being considered.

Phase 5: Affirming a Direction

This fifth meeting begins without the Seeker, in "executive session." From historical experience, discernment committees often need the space to converse "privately" about the Seeker's attributes that may either enhance or limit the Seeker's perceived call to ministry. The overall design and intent of this process is to create a compassionate environment for open and honest conversations with the Seeker. After the Committee has

reached a consensus or summary about the Seeker's call, the Seeker is invited into the second half of the meeting to share his/her views on the call.

The result of this conversation would be an agreement and affirmation on the ministry to which the Seeker is called. It should also include agreement on any concerns that may need to be addressed in the development and formation plan for this ministry. By this phase, the participants feel confident about the ministry to which the Seeker is called. **The outcome of this phase is the development of a report, which will be completed prior to the next phase.** The Committee members commit to a process and timeline for generating this report between this phase and the next.

Phase 6: Conclusions & Closure

This is the final meeting. In this session, the Seeker and the discernment committee finalize the report to the Sponsoring Priest. By this time the committee should have agreement of the content and conclusions of the report.

After having become a community of discernment, the group needs to experience closure. They recollect special moments and debrief on the process itself. The Seeker is sent forth on the continued journey of ministry with a special liturgy.

Lectio Divina

Traditionally, a gathering of Episcopalians will begin their business with a prayer. The form of the prayer varies. One person may recite a well-known prayer or express a reflection relevant to the purpose of the meeting. Alternatively, the group may begin the meeting with Bible study as a method for centering their focus on the purpose of the meeting. In this tradition, every meeting of the discernment committee begins with a form of a “*communal prayer discipline.*” (Tran, p. 23)

Lectio divina (Latin for “divine reading”) was not something new to Christians but flowed out of the Hebrew method of studying the Scriptures, *haggadah*, or learning by the heart: “The word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe” (Deut 30:14). While many Church Fathers stressed the prayerful reading of the scriptures, Origen is credited with the first use of the term “*lectio divina*” in the 3rd century: “*While you attend to this lectio divina, seek aright and with unwavering faith in God the hidden sense which is present in most passages of the divine Scriptures*” (Epistle to Gregory 4).

We distinguish *lectio divina* from reading the Bible for enlightenment or encouragement, which we may do individually or together as in a Bible study group, and from praying the scriptures in common. *Lectio divina* is a practice that uses thoughts, images, insights, and inner silence to enter into a conversation with God. There are varying approaches to *lectio divina*, but in reality, simplicity is at the heart of the practice. *Lectio divina* will transform

you for transformation is at its core – whether you realize that transformation consciously or not, and whether you reflect that transformation visibly or not.

At the beginning of phases 2-4 you will spend time together practicing Lectio Divina as a way of inviting the Holy Spirit into the space, grounding yourselves, and disconnecting from your daily demands. In phase 1, it will occur in the middle of your session as you build your community. Each phase has a scripture verse assigned to it to guide your reading.

Lectio Divina Shared in Community

I. Listening for the Gentle Touch of Christ the Word

(The Literal Sense)

- a. One person reads aloud (twice) the passage of scripture, as others are attentive to some segment that is especially meaningful to them.
- b. Silence for 1-2 minutes. Each hears and silently repeats a word or phrase that attracts.
- c. Sharing aloud: [A word or phrase that has attracted each person]. A simple statement of one or a few words. No elaboration.

II. How Christ the Word speaks to ME

(The Allegorical Sense)

- a. Second reading of same passage by another person.
- b. Silence for 2-3 minutes. Reflect on “Where does the content of this reading touch my life today?”
- c. Sharing aloud: Briefly: “I hear, I see...”

III. What Christ the Word Invites me to DO

(The Moral Sense)

- a. Third reading by still another person.
- b. Silence for 2-3 minutes. Reflect on “I believe that God wants me to today/this week.”
- c. Sharing aloud: at somewhat greater length the results of each one's reflection. [Be especially aware of what is shared by the person to your right.]
- d. After full sharing, pray for the person to your right.

- IV. **Conclusion:** Anyone may “pass” at any time. If instead of sharing with the group you prefer to pray silently, simply state this aloud and conclude your silent prayer with **Amen.**

Session organization (Agenda for Phases 2-4)

Minutes	Activity	Description	Who
5	Lectio Divina	Begin by inviting the Holy Spirit into the space through divine reading.	Facilitator 1 Female 1 Male
5	Phase Review	The Facilitator reviews the purpose, objectives and overview of the current phase.	Facilitator
10	Homework Reflections	The Seeker converses with the committee members about the lessons learned and insights developed as a result of the homework assignment(s). The members of the committee may ask questions and respond with their insights.	All
45	Today's Work	Seeker and all members converse about the content assigned to this session.	All
3	Silent Meditation	Sit in silence for 1 to 3 minutes to allow for a transition. Pray about what you have heard and reflect on the information, emotions, questions, and insights that arose during the previous discussion.	All
10	Seeker's Check-out	Seeker reflects on the session. ▪ What was this session like for me? ▪ What new insights do I have? ▪ What do I need to pay attention to?	Seeker
10	Group Reflection and Check-Out	This time is set aside for debriefing the session. The focus is on the process, not the content, of the session. Example reflections may include: ▪ What worked? ▪ Did we make room for the Holy Spirit? ▪ What should we do differently? ▪ What logistical issues (space, location, privacy, etc.) enhanced or impeded the experience?	All

2	Assignment for Next Phase	Review the homework assignment for the next phase.	Facilitator
5	Prayer	Silent meditation, extemporaneous prayer, selected prayer from Daily Office (BCP, 39-134), Daily Devotion (BCP, 136), or other resources.	Committee member
5	Optional Committee Debrief	The Committee may choose to debrief the session after the Seeker leaves.	Committee members only
100	1 hrs 40 minutes	Build in group breaks as needed	ALL

Phase 1: Listening to the Story

Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it, listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent.

Parker J. Palmer, Let Your Life Speak

I. Lectio Divina

- a. Most sessions begin with Lectio Divina. In this session, Lectio Divina is introduced and conducted after completing the Creating Community and Establish Guidelines activities.

II. Purpose

- a. This is an opening session in which participants learn about each other and establish a safe environment for exploring issues related to Christian vocation and discerning a call within the community.

III. Objectives

- a. Share a common purpose and vocabulary
- b. Establish guidelines for a common group process
- c. Establish guidelines to communicate with one another
- d. Share one another's stories
- e. Reflect on what a calling to vocation is about
- f. Form a "Book of Common Prayer" and biblical underpinning for their work together

IV. Overview

- a. Group becomes sensitive to the following characteristics:
- b. Communication skills
- c. Ability to relate to others
- d. Personal integrity and self-esteem
- e. Physical health and energy
- f. Intellectual gifts and abilities

V. Note Regarding Time

- a. More time may be needed for the first meeting to get to know each other; therefore, the committee may wish to meet for 2.5 hours for the first meeting.

VI. Pre-Requisite

- a. The Seeker and Discernment Committee members will have read *Let Your Life Speak* by Parker Palmer.
- b. The Seeker will have written and submitted a spiritual autobiography.
- c. The Discernment Committee members will have completed an orientation and training session.
- d. The Facilitator will meet with the Seeker and the sponsoring Priest to review the process.

VII. Optional Reading

- a. The Discernment Committee members and the Seeker are encouraged to read *Listening Hearts* by Suzanne Farnham.

VIII. Today's Work: Part 1

- a. **Creating Community**
 - i. Each committee member introduces themselves to the Seeker.

IX. Today's Work: Part 2

- a. **Establish Guidelines**
 - i. The Team and the Seeker establish the overall organization and guidelines for discernment sessions, including:
 - ii. Meeting dates and times
 - iii. Confidentiality of content and participation
 - iv. Standard agenda
 - v. Roles of Committee members
 - vi. Team communications
- b. **Lectio Divina**
 - i. See page 10 for detailed instructions. Use Deuteronomy 7:6-8 as your scripture for your first time as a committee entering into divine reading.
- c. **Silent Meditation**
 - i. Sit in silence for a few minutes to allow for a transition and reflect on the previous discussion.

X. Seeker's Check-Out

- i. The Seeker reflects on the session:
- ii. What was this session like for me?
- iii. What new insights do I have?
- iv. What do I need to pay attention to?

XI. Group Reflection and Check-Out

- i. This time is set aside for debriefing the session, focusing on the process, not the content.

XII. Assignment for Next Session

- i. Meditation on the Prodigal Son
- ii. Spiritual Gifts Inventory

XIII. Resources

- i. Works See Bibliography (by item number) Cited
- ii. (17) Fanucci, Laura Kelly.
- iii. (18) Farnham, Suzanne
- iv. (38) Palmer, Parker
- v. (49) Tran, Catherine C. and Boyd, Sandra Hughes
- vi. Scripture
- vii. Deuteronomy 7:6-8 – The Lord has chosen his people
- viii. Matthew 28:16-20 – The Great Commission
- ix. I Corinthians 12:12-31 – One Body with many members
- x. _____
- xi. Book of Common Prayer
- xii. The Catechism:
- xiii. The Church; BCP, 854-855
- xiv. The Christian Hope; BCP, 861-862
- xv. Prayer for Renewal of Baptismal Covenant; BCP, 418
- xvi. Collect For the Unity of the Church; BCP, 255

Phase 2: Exploring the Gifts

I. Lectio Divina

- a. This phase begins with Lectio Divina to create a space for the Holy Spirit. Use Philippians 2: 1-8 as your scripture.

II. Purpose

- a. This phase provides the opportunity to explore and define the Seeker's attributes that enhance or detract from participating in leadership ministry roles.

III. Objectives

- a. Explore the gifts received from God
- b. Imagine how these gifts may be valuable in a mission field
- c. Explore the gifts in which the Seeker has confidence
- d. Explore the gifts about which the Seeker has less confidence

- IV. **Overview**
 - a. This session is designed to explore the Seeker's gifts, talents, and skills through conversation and reflection.

- V. **Homework**
 - a. Reflections: The Seeker converses with the committee members about the lessons learned and insights developed from the homework assignments.
 - b. Today's Work: Read specific pages in the Book of Common Prayer and consider the instruments the Seeker identified through homework. (See "Book of Common Prayer" References in resource section for this phase)

- VI. **Silent Meditation**
 - a. Sit in silence for a few minutes to allow for a transition and reflect on the previous discussion.

- VII. **Seeker's Check-Out**
 - a. The Seeker reflects on the session:
 - b. What was this session like for me?
 - c. What new insights do I have?
 - d. What do I need to pay attention to?

- VIII. **Group Reflection and Check-Out**
 - a. This time is for debriefing the session, focusing on the process, not the content.

- IX. **Assignments for Next Phase**
 - a. Make a list of where and how you are ministering in various aspects of your life.

- X. **Prayer**
 - a. End the session with prayer.

- XI. **Committee Debrief**
 - a. After the prayer and Seeker's departure, the committee may choose to stay and debrief the session.

- XII. **Resources**
 - a. Works- See Bibliography (by item number)
 - i. (9) www.Amplified Church.com
 - ii. (10) Ecclesiastical Authority, C. Andrew
 - iii. (12) Ecclesiastical Authority, C. Andrew
 - iv. (18) Farnham, Suzanne
 - v. (38) Palmer, Parker

 - b. Scripture
 - i. Isaiah 45:1-7 – Cyrus of Persia is God's instrument
 - ii. Philippians 2: 1-8 – Christ's humility
 - iii. John 12: 20-26 – Whoever serves me

- c. Book of Common Prayer
 - i. A Form of Commitment to Christian Service: BCP, 421
 - ii. The Celebration of a New Ministry: BCP, 561-563
 - iii. A Prayer of Self-Dedication, BCP, 832
 - iv. Prayer of St. Francis: BCP, 833
 - v. Prayers for Vocation. BCP, 100,
 - vi. Collects for Vocation: (traditional) BCP, 206, 210; (contemporary) BCP, 257, 256, 261

Phase 3: Role of Mission and Ministry in the World

Mission Statement—The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and with each other in Christ. The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the gospel and promotes justice, peace and love. The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members.

I. Lectio Divina

- a. This phase begins with Lectio Divina to create a space for the Holy Spirit. Use Hebrews 6:9-12 as your scripture.

II. Mission Statement

- a. The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and with each other in Christ. The Church pursues its mission through prayer and worship, proclaiming the gospel, and promoting justice, peace, and love. This mission is carried out through the ministry of all its members.

III. Purpose

- a. To explore possible environments or relationships where the Seeker may best serve the Kingdom of God.

IV. Objectives

- a. Reflect on potential mission fields considered by the Seeker.
- b. Explore considerations such as environment, geography, motivation, skill sets, and interpersonal interactions associated with these mission fields.
- c. Identify the necessary instruments for entering these mission fields.

V. Overview

- a. Discernment of our Christian vocation begins with recognizing that God calls each baptized Christian to participate actively in the Body of Christ. The goal of discernment is to discern God's desire for a person or situation within the

- broader vision of the Kingdom of God. This process involves prayerful discovery, suggesting that God is already at work, inviting us to co-create.
- b. This phase may require more than one session, depending on arising issues and points of interest.

VI. Homework Reflections

- a. Faith is often defined more outside the church than within. As you reflect on your homework, consider these questions:
 - i. Where are you currently ministering to the world?
 - ii. How is Christ reflected in your ministry?
 - iii. How do these experiences connect with the Kingdom of God?
- b. The Diocese of Florida historically emphasizes the mission field, expanding from church planting to global outreach. What mission fields do you envision for the church? How could you participate?

VII. Today's Work

- a. This phase includes two activities. You may complete either one or both, possibly requiring an additional session.
 - i. Option 1
 1. Read Chapter Two: Call to Ministry of Listening Hearts aloud.
 2. After a period of silence, open conversation with the Seeker about this passage. Consider discussing:
 3. The variety of places where you are serving God or could serve.
 4. Particularly drawn mission fields.
 5. The balance of giving and receiving in ministry.
 6. Energy levels: What might drain or nurture your commitment?
 7. Changes in your understanding of ministry during discernment.
 8. Stories of ministry empowered by the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. Option 2
 1. Reflect on your mission field in various settings:
 2. Work
 3. Church
 4. Home
 5. Social gatherings
 6. Social service communities
 7. Organized communities
 8. Prayer life
- b. Consider:
 - i. Comfort levels in different ministries.
 - ii. Draw towards specific mission fields.
 - iii. Requirements for pursuing what you love.
 - iv. Consequences if your vision materializes.

- c. Examine the impact of ordained ministry on your vision and challenges:
 - i. What does being ordained add or subtract?
 - ii. How will you continue your ministry if not ordained?
 - iii. What support is needed for missional communities, whether established or newly created?
- d. For further reflection, consider the questions from page 61.

VIII. Additional Sessions

- a. Additional sessions may be arranged to reflect and discuss mission fields and leadership roles for the Seeker. Refer to the appendices on Missional Ministries (page 35) and research questions for lay vocation (page 48) for more resources.

IX. Silent Meditation

- a. Sit in silence for 2 to 5 minutes to transition. Pray and reflect on insights from the discussion.

X. Seeker's Check-out

- a. The Seeker reflects on the session:
 - i. What was this session like for me?
 - ii. What new insights do I have?
 - iii. What do I need to pay attention to?

XI. Group Reflection and Check-out

- a. Reserve time to debrief the session, focusing on the process rather than content. Reflect on:
 - i. What worked?
 - ii. Did we allow room for the Holy Spirit?
 - iii. Suggestions for improvement in space, location, or privacy.

XII. Next Session Assignment

- a. Homework applies to both the Seeker and committee members:
 - i. Read and reflect on:
 - ii. The Baptismal Covenant (BCP, 304-305)
 - iii. The Examination for Priesthood (BCP, 531-532)
 - iv. The Examination for Diaconate (BCP, 543-544)
 - v. "Desirable Qualities for Leaders" (page 38) as critical reading for upcoming phases.

XIII. Prayer

- a. Conclude the session with prayer, which may be a silent meditation, extemporaneous prayer, selections from the Daily Office, or any other resource.

XIV. Committee Debrief

- a. After the prayer and departure of the Seeker, committee members may choose to stay for a debrief.

XV. Resources

- a. Scripture
 - i. Psalm 8: Divine majesty and human dignity
 - ii. 1 Chronicles 9:26-30, 32: Duties of Levites
 - iii. Hebrews 6:9-12: God's blessing on your work
 - iv. Mark 4:2-9: The Parable of the Sower
- b. Additional Resources
 - i. The Catechism: The Church (BCP, 854-855)
 - ii. Collect for Proper 15 (BCP, 232)

Phase 4: Exploring the Orders of Ministry

The Ministry

Q. Who are the ministers of the Church?

A. The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.

Book of Common Prayer, p. 855

I. Lectio Divina

- a. This phase begins with Lectio Divina to create a space for the Holy Spirit. Use Ecclesiasticus 39:1-8 as your scripture.

II. Purpose

- a. This phase gives the opportunity to explore how the Seeker may live into the call to serve God by examining the three forms of church leadership, particularly in the context of the mission field(s) explored in the previous phase.

III. Objectives

- a. Explore how each form of ministry fulfills one's Baptismal Covenant.
- b. Discuss the desirable qualities for leadership ministries.
- c. Compare the Seeker's instruments to the desirable qualities for leadership.
- d. Identify which form (order) of ministry appears to best suit the Seeker's call to a leadership role at this time.

IV. Overview

- a. One's call to leadership in ministry can be found in the church and in the world. The Catechism identifies four types of ministers, each fulfilling the baptismal vows in different ways with its own degree of freedom, restrictions, and forms of authority. The exploration of these types of ministries should help discern which particular model of ministry may best fit the Seeker's call.
- b. The recognition of lay persons as ministers exemplifies that leadership is never limited to ordained ministers. If there are indications that the Seeker is considering leadership in a missional community, this is a good time to discuss the various types of leadership for entering this particular ministry. Only three ministries—lay, deacon, and priest—are under consideration in this discernment process, excluding the ministry of the bishop for obvious reasons.

V. Homework Reflections

- a. The content of the homework assignments will be addressed in "Today's Work." For this reason, the Seeker may offer reflections on the experience of the discernment process thus far. Consider the following questions:
 - i. Were any assumptions held at the beginning of this process that have changed? What were they, and how were they changed?
 - ii. How has your perspective about ministry changed?
 - iii. How has your perspective about "letting your life speak" changed since this process started?
- b. The committee members may ask questions and share their insights.

VI. Today's Work

- a. Part 1: Explore Three Forms of Ministry
 - i. Lay person
 - ii. Deacon
 - iii. Priest
 1. How does each order implement and illuminate each of the vows in the Baptismal Covenant?
 2. How could the desirable qualities for leadership influence the implementation of each order?
 3. What new information have you learned about each ministry?
 4. If you were to pursue one of these ministries, how could it affect your family life? Your professional life?
 5. What additional information do you need to understand each order of ministry more fully?
 6. What are the realities of living in these ministries?
 - iv. Additional Sessions
 1. The committee may choose to schedule an information session in the future before proceeding to the next phase. The purpose of such a session is to learn more about specific vocations with which the committee is less familiar. The Seeker may be assigned homework to research a particular vocation, or the committee may invite

someone active in a particular ministry to share their experiences and insights.

b. Part 2: Desirable Qualities for Leaders

i. Consider factors relevant to:

1. Ordained ministry
2. As a deacon
3. As a priest
4. Lay vocations
5. Leading a missional community
6. Participating in a missional community
 - a. Of the factors listed, which does the Seeker appear to exhibit with confidence?
 - b. Is the Seeker concerned about needing to develop or improve any of these factors?
 - c. Which elements for success has the Seeker demonstrated thus far during this discernment process?
 - d. Are there certain factors limiting the pursuit of ordination or seminary training?
 - e. If so, what other options are available for the Seeker to apply his or her instruments for the benefit of the Kingdom?

VII. Silent Meditation

- a. Sit in silence for a few minutes (2 to 5) to allow for a transition. Pray about what you have heard and reflect on the information, emotions, questions, and insights that arose during the previous discussion.

VIII. Seeker's Check-Out

- a. The Seeker reflects on the session.
 - i. What was this session like for me?
 - ii. What new insights do I have?
 - iii. What do I need to pay attention to?

IX. Group Reflection and Check-Out

- a. This time is set aside for debriefing the session, focusing on the process, not the content. Example reflections may include:
 - i. What worked?
 - ii. Did we make room for the Holy Spirit?
 - iii. Is there anything we should do differently? What needs to change in terms of space, location, privacy, etc.?

X. Assignment Prior to Next Session

- a. The Seeker writes a report to the Discernment Committee after reading and reflecting on the information relevant to the form of ministry to which he or she feels called. In light of the discernment experience thus far, this report should be 500 to 1,000 words and should define the chosen ministry.
- b. Describe personal qualities or “instruments of grace” that support the call to this ministry, including attributes, life experiences, or family concerns that either contribute to or detract from readiness for the ministry or the formation process. It is rare for anyone to enter a vocation fully prepared.
- c. The Seeker should identify and reflect on factors that may need to be developed or improved and suggest ways for doing this. This report must be emailed to the Discernment Committee members by the specified date, typically at least one week before the next meeting. For the Seeker discerning a call to ordained ministry: Read excerpts and information on living into a life of ordained ministry found on pages 55 through 62. After reading the assignment, reflect on your perception of a call to vocation as either a priest or a deacon.
- d. The questions beginning on page 65 may be particularly useful as a framework for your vision. For the Seeker discerning a call to a lay vocation: Using the guidelines written on page 63, begin researching the ministry under consideration. Use these questions as a framework for your description of this vocation and include an initial plan for entering and developing the field of ministry to which you feel called.

XI. Prayer

- a. Conclude the session with prayer, which may include silent meditation, extemporaneous prayer, a prayer from the Daily Office, selections found in the BCP, or any other resource.

XII. Committee Debrief

- a. After the concluding prayer, committee members may choose to stay for a debrief.

XIII. Resources

- a. Works
 - i. See Bibliography
 - 1. Cited
 - 2. Application Packet for Ordination
 - 3. 5. Bolles, Richard Nelson.
 - 4. 11. Ecclesiastical Authority, C. Andrew. "The Real World and Clergy."
 - 5. 24. Harwell-Jones, Tony
 - 6. 33. Middleton, Tracie

- b. Scripture
 - i. Ecclesiasticus 39:1-8 – The Lord will direct his counsel
 - ii. Psalm 119:33-40 – Teach me the way of your statutes
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 12:4-28 – Many gifts, one body
 - iv. Matthew 9:35-38 – The harvest is great

- c. Book of Common Prayer
 - i. The Catechism: The Ministry, BCP, 855-856
 - ii. The Ordination of a Priest, BCP, 525-535
 - iii. The Ordination of a Deacon, BCP, 537-547
 - iv. The Litany for Ordinations, BCP, 548-551
 - v. Collects for the Ministry, BCP, 256-257
 - vi. Collect for the Mission of the Church, BCP, 257

Phase 5: Affirming a Direction

*The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness
and the world's deep hunger meets.*

Frederick Buechner, Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC

- I. Lectio Divina**
 - a. This phase begins with Lectio Divina to create a space for the Holy Spirit. Use Psalm 46:1-5 as your scripture.

- II. Purpose**
 - a. This phase provides an opportunity to affirm the direction for the Seeker's call to ministry.

- III. Objectives**
 - a. Identify which form of ministry appears to best suit the Seeker's call to a leadership role.
 - b. Have a conversation about the qualities that inform the committee's assessment of the Seeker's call.
 - c. Explore any concerns that may need to be addressed in the development and formation of the Seeker's ministry.

- IV. Overview**
 - a. The historical experience is that discernment committees often need the space to converse privately about the Seeker's attributes that may either enhance or limit the Seeker's perceived call to ministry. The overall design and intent of

this process is to create a compassionate environment for open and honest conversations with the Seeker. However, experience justifies the need for an “executive session” of the committee members. This phase begins with an executive session that is followed by a conversation with the Seeker. The result of this conversation would be an agreement and affirmation on the ministry to which the Seeker is called. It should also include agreement on any concerns that may need to be addressed in the development and formation plan for this ministry.

V. Executive Session

a. General Description

- b. This session provides a forum for discussion of any concerns about the Seeker’s qualities to fulfill the leadership role discerned thus far.
- c. The objective of this session is to accomplish one of the following:
 - (1) Affirm the Seeker’s call to his or her perceived leadership role.
 - (2) Provide examples of factors and experience that support this affirmation.
 - (3) Identify issues that need to be addressed as part of pursuing this leadership role.
 - (4) Affirm the Seeker’s sense of call to ministry and redirect from self-assessment to another type of ministry.
 - (5) Provide examples of factors and experience that support this discernment.
 - (6) If the Seeker is being redirected to a type of ministry that differs from his or her perceived call, develop a plan for pastoral care of the Seeker and communication with the sponsoring Priest.
 - (7) Prepare to communicate the conclusions of this executive session to the Seeker.

d. Materials for Executive Session

- (1) The Committee will use the following materials for reference in their executive session:
- (2) Seeker’s Report
- (3) Desirable Qualities for Effective Leadership (See page 51):
- (4) Are there any factors that could limit pursuit of the ministry perceived thus far?
- (5) Which factors for success has the Seeker demonstrated thus far during this discernment process?

e. Executive Session Format

- (1) The Discernment Committee members meet without the Seeker. The design format for this session is based on the Prayer Model and the practice of Mutual Invitation (29, Law).
- (2) The format is designed to give all members a time to speak and respond, without judgment or resolution, before having a general discussion and developing a consensus. The session also ends with prayer.

- (3) The meeting Facilitator begins with the following prayer: “Lord, Source of all Wisdom, we pray for hearts of wisdom and ears poised to listen so that we may learn your desire for [Seeker’s Name].”
- (4) A two-minute period of silence follows.
- f. **Invitation to Speak (Mutual Invitation)** – approximately 10 minutes:
 - (1) The Facilitator invites a member of the committee to express his or her thoughts about the Seeker’s Report and Qualities for Effective Leadership. That member will then invite another member to speak. Each member invites another until all have spoken. A member may choose to “Pass” or to “Pass until later.” A member who chooses to “Pass” may maintain silence and not be invited again to speak. A member who says “Pass until later” may be invited to speak at another time. Each member is encouraged to speak for only one minute.
 - (2) A two-minute period of silence follows.
- g. **Invitation to Respond** – approximately 10 minutes:
 - (1) The Facilitator invites a member of the committee to express his or her response to what was spoken earlier. That member will then invite another member to respond. Each member invites another until all have responded. The guidelines about passing an invitation apply. Each member is encouraged to speak for only one minute.
 - (2) A two-minute period of silence follows.
- h. **Discussion** – approximately 20 minutes:
 - (1) At this time, the committee members may discuss various issues related to the direction of the Seeker’s call. The purpose of this discussion is to inform and develop a consensus concerning the Seeker’s call. The discussion should include positive statements about the Seeker’s gifts and qualities as well as any apparent hurdles that may inhibit the Seeker’s pursuit of the perceived call.
 - (2) It is important to acknowledge any hurdles that may necessitate a redirection of the Seeker’s perceived call. For example, the call may require a graduate degree and the Seeker does not have a college education. The barrier itself may not be insurmountable. In this example, the pursuit of the Seeker’s call would require the Seeker to get an undergraduate degree first. Continuing with this example, if the Seeker cannot go to college for some reason, a related ministry that doesn’t require a college degree may need to be considered.
 - (3) It is also important to acknowledge any concerns about personal factors that may benefit from pastoral care, spiritual direction, or professional counseling. If this is relevant to the Seeker’s call, the committee must consider how to address this concern with compassion and grace to the Seeker.
- i. **Consensus** – approximately 15 minutes:
 - (1) The Facilitator leads the discussion to a consensus of the Seeker’s call and any items of interest that should be discussed with the Seeker. The Committee decides on a spokesperson to communicate the consensus

decision. If the committee determines that the Seeker may need pastoral care to process this consensus, the committee must develop a plan for this care and for communication with the Seeker's sponsoring Priest.

- j. **Prayer:** The Committee ends this session with The Lord's Prayer.

VI. Meeting with the Seeker

- a. **Prayer:** "Lord, Source of all Wisdom, we pray for hearts of wisdom and ears poised to listen so that we may learn your desire for [Seeker's Name]."
- b. **Silent Meditation:** A two-minute period of silence follows.
- c. **Affirmations:**
- (1) The Committee members express affirmations about the Seeker's qualities: gifts, talents, previous ministry experiences, skills, vision for ministry, etc.
 - (2) Committee Consensus:
 - (3) Based on the conversation in the executive session, the Committee spokesperson communicates its consensus concerning the ministry to which the Seeker appears to be called.
 - (4) A two-minute period of silence follows.
- d. **Response:** The Seeker responds.
- (1) A two-minute period of silence follows.
- e. **Conversation and Q & A:**
- (1) The Seeker and Committee members may have a conversation about the consensus and any essential points that merit discussion before writing the report.
 - (2) **Prayer:** The Seeker and the Committee recite the Prayer For Guidance (BCP, 832 or page 78 of this manual).

VII. Assignment for Next Session

a. Report Preparation:

- (1) The Committee prepares a final draft of the report. When this phase is completed, the Seeker and the Committee should be in agreement on the order of ministry to which the Seeker is called.
- (2) Step 1: Assign a Scribe to write the report.
- (3) Step 2: The committee creates a plan to draft and complete the report so that it is ready for review and signature at the last meeting.
- (4) Step 3: The plan needs to include dates for:
 - (5) sending to the Scribe via email
 - (6) sending collation report to all members of the committee
 - (7) comments to be sent to the Scribe
 - (8) final draft sent to the committee members and the Seeker
- (9) Step 4: Use the report template provided on either page 63 (ordained ministry) or page 64 (lay vocation), according to the discerned vocation.

VIII. Offering for Closing Liturgy:

a. Write on paper one sentence describing one gift you would like to offer the Seeker as he or she continues on their discernment journey.

b. Silent Meditation:

(1) Sit in silence for a few minutes (2 to 5) to allow for a transition. Pray about what you have heard and reflect on the information, emotions, questions, and insights that arose during the previous discussion.

IX. Seeker's Check-out:

- a. The Seeker reflects on the session.
- b. What was this session like for me?
- c. What new insights do I have?
- d. What do I need to pay attention to?

X. Group Reflection and Check-Out:

- a. This time is set aside for debriefing the session. The focus is on the process, not the content, of the session. Example reflections may include:
- b. What worked?
- c. Did we make room for the Holy Spirit?
- d. Is there anything we should do differently?
- e. What needs to change in terms of space, location, privacy, etc.?

XI. Prayer:

a. End the session with prayer, which may be a silent meditation, extemporaneous prayer, a prayer from the Daily Office (selections found in BCP, 39-134), Daily Devotion (BCP, 136), or any other resource.

XII. Resources

a. Works Cited:

- (1) See Bibliography (by item number)
- (2) Application Packet for Ordination
- (3) Law, Eric

b. The result of this conversation would be an agreement and affirmation on the ministry to which the Seeker is called. It should also include agreement on any concerns that may need to be addressed in the development and formation plan for this ministry.

Phase 6: Conclusions & Closure

I. Lectio Divina

a. This phase begins with Lectio Divina to create a space for the Holy Spirit. Use John 21:15-17

II. Purpose

- a. For this session: To finalize the discernment process and achieve a sense of closure.

III. Objectives

- a. Finalize and sign the report to the sponsoring Priest.
- b. Celebrate the next steps and adventures for the Seeker's continued journey.
- c. Recollect the discernment experience.
- d. Experience closure.

IV. Overview

- a. In this final session, the Seeker and the discernment committee agree on the final report to the sponsoring Priest. By this time, the committee should have agreement on the content and conclusions of the report.
- b. After having become a community of discernment, the group needs to experience closure. They recollect special moments and debrief on the process itself. The Seeker is sent forth on the continued journey of ministry with a special liturgy.

V. Tools

- a. A printed copy of the final report.
- b. It is recommended that a computer and printer are at hand, in case there is a need for revision of the final report.
- c. Paper and an electronic copy of the report must also be available.

VI. Today's Work

a. Report:

- i. The Committee and the Seeker read the report, either silently or aloud, as they choose. If subsequent discussion leads to any revision of the report, the revision may be made on the spot if a computer and printer are available. Otherwise, the committee and the Seeker may need to end this particular session and reconvene on a subsequent date.
- ii. The last session should not end with any loose ends. It is better to delay by one more meeting than to leave with unfinished business. Once the report is read as final, all members of the Committee sign the report.

b. Debriefing:

- i. The Seeker and the Committee members reflect on the discernment process. This debriefing focuses on the process itself. Some sample questions to consider during the debriefing may include the following:
 1. What was particularly effective?
 2. What lessons did they learn that could be recommended to future committees?
 3. What did they learn about themselves and their ministry of discernment?
 4. What new insights did they learn about ministry in general?

5. How did the notion of serving Christ in the world change for them?

VII. Closing Liturgy:

- a. The Committee decides on who will officiate the Closing Liturgy. Prior to the Closing Liturgy, Committee members, who were not able to do so already, may take a moment to write their gift offering in one sentence on a piece of paper. The instruction for that one sentence is: “What is one gift you would like to give the Seeker as he or she continues on this journey towards answering God’s call? Write one sentence describing this one gift.”
- b. Use the Closing Liturgy found beginning on page 64 to end this last meeting.

VIII. Resources

a. Scripture

- i. Isaiah 55: An invitation to abundant life
- ii. I Corinthians 4:1-13: The ministry of Apostles
- iii. John 21:15-17: Feed my sheep

b. Book of Common Prayer Readings

- i. The Induction and Prayer (BCP, 561-563)
- ii. The Celebration of a New Ministry: Prayer Collect
- iii. A Prayer of Self-Dedication (BCP, 832)
- iv. A Prayer attributed to St. Francis (BCP, 833)

Appendices

What is Vocation?

Concepts from the Collegeville Institute

- We shape our vocation in response to God’s call. Looking at all that our life embraces, we can see how the unique quality of our vocations is created by weaving together:
 1. Who I am called to be? —the core of my identity, as created by God and baptized in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit;
 2. How I am called to live? —my commitments of lifestyle and relationships, whether marriage, parenting, the single life or vowed celibate life;
 3. What I am called to do —the work, service or activities that fill my daily life.

Our vocations—as both universal and specific callings—are lived out in particular ways in our homes, neighborhoods, workplaces, and churches: all the places where we are called and challenged as people of faith.

- In this context, which of the three areas
 - Seems clearest to you in terms of your current vocation?
 - Do you have the most questions?
 - Do you have a sense of God’s presence in your life?

Conversation about “call.”

- What does it mean to have a sense of “call” in one’s life? How it is known, sensed, experienced, heard, learned, etc.? How do we respond to it?
- How have we discerned God’s will for us in our own present vocations?
- What are our responsibilities as Christians in our present vocations?
- What gifts do we have that could add to the unity and wholeness of the Body of Christ?
- How can we be more open to Christ’s presence with us?

Prodigal Son Meditation

Read the Parable of the Prodigal Son: Luke 15: 11-32

This contemplation comes from the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Ignatian prayer uses your imagination to place yourself in the setting of the Scripture. Visualize the event that you read, paying attention to details. Then imagine where you are in the story. This particular meditation assumes that you would imagine yourself as the younger son. If this is difficult for you, experience the story in whatever way is more comfortable for you.

Begin by finding a quiet place where you can be alone for a while, 10 to 15 minutes. Practice rhythmic breathing, then prayerfully read the assigned passage. Then you imagine yourself in the story as described in the instructions below. When you are ready, rest silently in God’s presence and then say *Amen*. At this point, you may want to write down your thoughts or reflections. You may prefer to draw something or just sit quietly for a little while longer.

Meditate on the scripture in three separate prayer sessions as described here. Plan to meditate in two different locations.

1. Focus on verses 11-12

Ask God for your inheritance.

Make a list. Include all forms of assets, whatever comes to mind. Some examples of categories to consider may include genetic traits, things, talents, relationships, skills, etc. List whatever comes to mind.

If you would prefer, your “list” could be in a different form. Let the Holy Spirit flow in whatever form it comes.

2. Focus on verses 13-19

Go to another place to do this meditation.

Using your imagination, squander these gifts. How do you squander them?

3. Focus on verses 20-32

Return to the first place where you meditated.

Ask God for forgiveness for squandering your inheritance. How does God accept you? How do you feel? What happens now? What gifts do you want recover and dedicate to ministry?

Spiritual Gifts Inventory

The website for the King of Peace Episcopal Church, Kingsland, Georgia, has a useful gifts inventory. The results offer insight into varieties of giftedness. The descriptions of these varieties are very brief, but they can offer assistance when considering the various mission fields you currently have and those which could be in your future.

Consider the five or so qualities (lowest scores) that appear to be the gifts about which you may have greater confidence and are more ready to offer in the ministry. How would these gifts enhance or detract from the ministry or ministries to which you feel drawn today?

Consider the five or so qualities (highest scores) about which you appear to have less confidence. How could you develop or compensate for these gifts, if needed? How are they relevant, or not, to the ministry to which you feel drawn?



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Directions

In the pages that follow, we'll give you a series of statements. As you read them through carefully and prayerfully, we ask you to mark down a response in your worksheet as follows

- 1 = Wow, that's me! I do that all the time.
- 2 = Yes, I am often like that.
- 3 = I do that sometimes, but not consistently.
- 4 = Well, I'm only like that on rare occasions.
- 5 = Hey, you're talking about somebody else here.

Remember there are no prizes here for answering the way you want people to think about you. The best way to answer is how you feel you are now, not as you feel you should be. You're not trying to get a specific score. Your goal is to understand how God has wired you and how you can become the person you really are inside.

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| <p>___ 1. I am a very organized person. I keep a neat desk and “daytimer.”</p> <p>___ 2. I like working outside the spotlight to help others be more effective in what they do.</p> <p>___ 3. I like to work with my hands, or with tools.</p> <p>___ 4. I find art/music to be a great form to communicate my feelings.</p> <p>___ 5. I welcome people into my home for dinners, parties, and chats.</p> <p>___ 6. I'm an entrepreneur and like getting in on the ground floor of new things.</p> <p>___ 7. I have lots of friends who are not yet Christians and I am glad to talk with them about why I am a Christian.</p> <p>___ 8. I enjoy leading Bible Studies and helping other people understand the teachings of the Bible.</p> <p>___ 9. I can motivate others to help or serve in new ways.</p> <p>___ 10. I enjoy visiting the sick and those who are shut-in to listen to them, sit with them, or minister to them in simple ways</p> <p>___ 11. I can't always be there to help personally, but I take pride in being able to help those who can by giving generously of my money or resources.</p> <p>___ 12. I enjoy having a stake in the care and nurturing of other Christians.</p> <p>___ 13. I'm a pretty good judge of a person's character. My first impressions are often proved true as I know people better.</p> <p>___ 14. I sometimes realize the truth in a situation without some- one telling me.</p> <p>___ 15. I can often find a way to reconcile people who are in the middle of conflict.</p> <p>___ 16. I want to work hard to correct the wrongs in the world and serve God by serving the common good.</p> <p>___ 17. I believe God will answer my prayers. If I pray for rain in a drought I take my umbrella along with me to work.</p> <p>___ 18. I feel good when a friend or a co-worker asks me to pray for them.</p> <p>___ 19. I pray for the sick because I know God will heal them through.</p> <p>___ 20. People often follow my lead or take my suggestions for how to accomplish a task.</p> | <p>___ 21. I plan everything out ahead of time— even my vacations.</p> <p>___ 22. I would rather do routine tasks to help others than be asked to come up with new ideas for serving.</p> <p>___ 23. I love going to craft shops or learning new hobbies. I like making gifts for others by hand rather than buying them.</p> <p>___ 24. I love to give God glory through artistic expression.</p> <p>___ 25. I'm outgoing. I like to greet people and meet new people.</p> <p>___ 26. I like the excitement of being involved with a new church rather than a historic church where everything's already set.</p> <p>___ 27. It's a great joy for me to see one of my friends or co-workers find God in their lives and see their lives changed by his power.</p> <p>___ 28. I enjoy helping others learn about the meaning of my faith.</p> <p>___ 29. I want to be able to bring comfort to those in need or who are grieving. I look for ways to help others.</p> <p>___ 30. I feel a lot of compassion for those who are hurt or for the forgotten people of the world.</p> <p>___ 31. I feel glad to be able to offer financial support to worthy causes.</p> <p>___ 32. I am confident in helping others by offering spiritual advice and guidance. I would be glad to be a spiritual mentor to others in need of help.</p> <p>___ 33. I can tell when someone else is not being truthful with me.</p> <p>___ 34. I can often tell what's on a person's mind before they say what's really bothering them or most on their mind.</p> <p>___ 35. I can often find just the right word or words to help some- one else see how God is at work in their lives or how God is calling them to a new way of life.</p> <p>___ 36. I sometimes catch myself saying, "I knew that was going to happen, I just knew it."</p> <p>___ 37. I believe God will work for my good, even when things seem to be going all wrong in my life. I don't give up my faith when things get tough.</p> |
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- ___38. I follow up my prayers with requests to find out how God has answered them or how I can pray for that person better.
- ___39. I have physically felt God's power at work through prayer for the sick and by reaching out my hands to touch someone else or hold their hands.
- ___40. Others often accept and enjoy the goals I set for a group I'm in. They readily join forces to help accomplish them with me.
- ___41. I like to understand the details of a task before starting it.
- ___42. I like working on tasks that help free others up so they can lead or share their gifts in other ways.
- ___43. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I finish making a project.
- ___44. I experience a freedom to worship God through movement and song. I like to lead others to do the same.
- ___45. I enjoy social events at church, coffee hours and suppers. It's neat to get together with others and share.
- ___46. I relate well to people of other cultures or races and can talk easily with people of all sorts.
- ___47. I can talk comfortably with others who don't share my faith in Jesus. I like to help others find the joy of faith I've found.
- ___48. I like to learn Bible stories so I can share them with others.
- ___49. When people are upset I can make them feel better through my words.
- ___50. When people are in pain I try to minister to them even if it means just sitting nearby or holding their hand.
- ___51. When people are in need I look for ways to help them financially or with any other resources I may have available.
- ___52. I assume responsibility for ministering to others and leading the work of my church in caring for other people.
- ___53. I can tell the difference between what God considers right and wrong in difficult situations.
- ___54. I enjoy reading the Bible to find specific insights for my church.
- ___55. I enjoy reading the Bible for how it can help my friends cope with their life and their problems.
- ___56. I feel compelled at times to speak out about what's wrong with the world. People know I'm doing more than just griping.
- ___57. I enjoy reading the Bible to strengthen my trust in God.
- ___58. I have felt many times that God has answered my prayers in wonderful and sometimes unforeseen ways.
- ___59. I have felt many times that God has answered my prayers in specific ways for those who are sick.
- ___60. I like to help people accomplish big things in life.
- ___61. When things are run inefficiently it drives me crazy and I want to find ways to help make them run smoother.
- ___62. I look for ways to be faithful in doing small things and often do them without being asked.
- ___63. I prefer being busy with my hands making things, more than sitting around, reading, or listening to others talk.
- ___64. I like finding new ways to communicate God's word to others.
- ___65. I like networking with others, and I'm good at helping new people get connected and make new friends.
- ___66. I would love to visit other countries and learn from them. I would like to share my understanding of God's love with them.
- ___67. I think it would be neat to be able to preach a sermon or share my story someday, especially for those who are unsure of their faith. Maybe I could make a difference in their life.
- ___68. I love to see the light bulb come on for someone else as I help them discover the truth of God's words.
- ___69. I look for ways to bring out the best in myself and others.
- ___70. One way I am at my best is in cheerfully giving to others.
- ___71. I look for ways to give my best to help those who are in need.
- ___72. I would like to be a Small Group leader and offer guidance and support to a group of friends over a long period of time.
- ___73. I can sense when there is evil at work in others or in the world.
- ___74. I sometimes have a specific idea of what a person most needs to hear or what they most want to know about God.
- ___75. People consider my insights into the teachings of the Bible to be helpful.
- ___76. God's words are sometimes so clear to me I can't help but share what I've heard or learned with others.

- ___77. I trust God with my life, my finances, my family, my health, and with everything I have.
I believe he's totally in control.
- ___78. I have been able to entrust my loved one's deepest needs to God.
- ___79. I trust God will use me to bring hope to those who are sick or dying.
- ___80. I can energize others by sharing my vision for doing things.
- ___81. I like making all the pieces of a plan fit together so people's time and talents are put to good use.
- ___82. Serving others quietly by folding newsletters, or helping to answer phones, or cleaning up in the kitchen is a way I serve God.
- ___83. I might not be comfortable acting on stage but I could do well building a set, or painting a backdrop, or designing a bulletin or poster.
- ___84. I have my talents that I wish to share in performance for others.
- ___85. I like to help people who feel alone to know they are wanted.
- ___86. I am willing to take risks to make sure others know of God's love.
- ___87. I look for chances to bring up church or God with friends and new people, and I like to share the value of being a Christian with my friends.
- ___88. I like to share my faith in a way that not only invites others, but helps them learn about God and themselves.
- ___89. I look for chances to support those who are having doubts or fears. I like to offer encouragement to others.
- ___90. I want to offer people a second chance to get back on their feet.
- ___91. I don't count the cost of gifts I give, nor do I expect to be repaid for giving freely to help others.
- ___92. People sometimes look to me for help in finding their way.
- ___93. People sometimes look to me for help in making decisions.
- ___94. People sometimes look to me for help, expecting me to know just what's wrong and how God can help.
- ___95. People sometimes look to me for help in applying God's teachings to their specific situations in life.
- ___96. I am willing to tell others the truth when asked, even if they won't like what I have to say.
- ___97. I am always ready to move forward even without visible support from those around me, so long as I believe God wants me to go on.
- ___98. I have had many visible signs of God's power at work in my life and the lives of others through my prayers.
- ___99. I have seen people who have been made well through prayer and am bold enough to ask God to use me in this way too.
- ___100. People often look to me for leadership or direction when things get too quiet or after everyone else has had their say.

Write the number of your response to each question in the corresponding box below. Add the numbers in each column down to find a score for each lettered square. Then compare the letters with the list of Spiritual gifts provided. Like in golf, the low scores win.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T

Here's a quick description of the spiritual gifts (instruments) found in this survey. The lower your score, the more confidence you have in that instrument.

- A. **Administration:** helping a body function smoothly, choosing goals.
- B. **Helps:** work behind the scenes to help with routine tasks and chores.
- C. **Craftsmanship:** use talents to create or design items by hand/ tools.
- D. **Artistic Communication:** drama, singing, painting, dance.
- E. **Hospitality:** offering fellowship to others in God's name.
- F. **Apostleship:** sent out with a special purpose to spread the Gospel.
- G. **Evangelism:** to share the gospel gracefully and appropriately.
- H. **Teaching:** helping others to learn the truth of the Bible's words.
- I. **Encouragement:** offering comfort and support to those in doubt.

- J. **Mercy:** to support and sustain those in great need.
- K. **Giving:** the joyful offering of goods and money to others.
- L. **Shepherding:** pastoral care for others over a sustained period.
- M. **Discernment:** the God-given ability to tell right from wrong.
- N. **Knowledge:** the grace to see truth for the good of others.
- O. **Wisdom:** words of knowledge that helps in specific situations.
- P. **Prophecy:** revelation of what's true to help comfort or correct others.
- Q. **Faith:** trust in the grace of God to hold all things in his hands.
- R. **Intercession:** praying continually for the needs of others.
- S. **Healing:** ability to pray for and see real healing in others.
- T. **Leadership:** uniting people in a common vision of God's work.

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Missional Ministries in the World

Call to Congregational Ministries

Source: Process for Discerning Baptismal Ministry, Presented by The Committee for Baptismal Ministry Development Commission on Ministry for the Diocese of Oregon, Summer 2007.

Congregational ministries are dedicated to building up, sustaining, and invigorating the worshipping community. Many baptized persons are called to ministries for which they are naturally gifted. Beyond this, a call to ministry may necessitate licensure within the diocese or secular study and training. These ministries may include but are not limited to the following:

Licensed Ministries

Pastoral Leadership
 Preaching
 Eucharistic Visitors

Worship Leadership
 Eucharistic Ministers
 Catechists

Unlicensed Ministries

1) Service

Buildings
 Financial Administration
 Office Administration
 Senior or Junior Warden

Grounds
 Money Counters
 Vestry

2) Community

Pastoral Care
 Parish Nurse

Stephen Ministry
 Spiritual Direction

	Discernment Committee	Ministries Coordinator
	Community Outreach	Social Justice
	Diocesan Council Representation	
	Hospitality and Fellowship	
	Intercessory and Healing Prayer	
3) Education	Child Care	
	Religious Education and Formation (for adults and youth)	
4) Worship	Altar Guild	Vergers
Planning &	Lectors	Ushers and Greeters
Participation	Acolytes	Intercessors
	Musical Leadership	Choir
	Vocalists	Instrumentalists

Call to Missional Ministries

The Book of Common Prayer tells us that the ministry of the baptized is to “represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world” (p. 855). The natural response to the Sacrament of Baptism and the outcome of our spiritual formation process is to minister to others.

Through ministry, Christian disciples live out their baptismal covenant by discovering and then utilizing their spiritual gifts. The attitude and spirit we bring to these ministries is that of the mind and heart of Christ, allowing him to be present in all aspects of our lives. Such service may be in the form of paid or volunteer vocations within the local community, across the country or around the world. These ministries include all manner of service offered in God’s love as members of the Body of Christ including but not limited to the following:

Agriculture – those who farm and tend the land or livestock and grow or produce food for all

Armed forces and Public Protection – those who ensure and defend our personal freedoms and deter crime

Arts – those who provide beauty and creative expression through drama, art, or music

Churches – those who are priests, deacons, ministry leaders, spiritual directors, monastics, and those who pray for the concerns of others

Communication – those who develop, promote, and maintain communication

Construction – those who plan, design, and build communities and infrastructure.

Creation Care – those who work for the careful protection of our planet and its creatures, including family pets, and those who promote responsible stewardship of its resources

Education – those who teach or counsel and those who learn in our schools, universities, libraries, churches, and corporations

Government – those in political or civic office and those who assist and support them

Healthcare – those who heal and tend all with mental and physical illnesses in our clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, and hospice programs; those who perform medical and psychological research; those who manage insurance

Hospitality – those involved in welcoming others, and providing safe and nurturing environments for others in restaurants, hotels, meeting and conference centers, churches and corporations

Intercultural Outreach – those who offer humanitarian care throughout the world
Industry – those who participate in commerce, trade, manufacturing, distribution, and provision of business services

Landscaping – those who work to beautify our yards, parks, and green spaces

Legal Justice – those who uphold and carry out the laws of our country, those who mete out justice, and those who work in prisons and correctional facilities

Relationship Nurturance – those who befriend, parent, grandparent, tend marriages, and partnerships, and hold families and communities together, and promote intercultural and interfaith understanding

Social Services – those who care for the poor, the sick, the mentally ill, the elderly, and all marginalized members of our society

Desirable Qualities for Leaders

Factors contributing to effective leadership:

The following factors have been identified as signs for success in leadership in ministry. When one or more of these elements present a challenge, pursuing a call is not necessarily precluded. However, any challenge should be treated as a caution. These factors are offered as a guide to concerns that may foreshadow challenges to the individual or to a congregation or community under the individual's leadership. Some of these items may be remediated through time, education, counseling, spiritual direction or other creative methods. Others may present insurmountable obstacles for ordained ministry, but not present barriers for other forms of ministry.

- **Sufficient experience with the Episcopal Church:** Seekers with limited experience may benefit from education and mentorship by clergy or informed lay persons. An intentional exposure to the liturgical ministries (altar guild, lector, Eucharistic ministry, etc.) and governance processes of the church are also helpful.
- **Organizational skills:** Organizational skills are a key indicator for success in many professions, and it is true for ordained ministry.
- **College Degree:** Although not a barrier for the Iona School for Ministry, it is a prerequisite for entering seminary. Having completed a college degree indicates the ability to meet the academic rigor of a seminary education and the curriculum of the Diocesan School for Ministry. The demands of working full-time and participating in the educational curriculum and formation experiences in the field can be daunting. Successful postsecondary education can be a predictor for a successful education and formation experience.
- **Mental health – emotional or learning abilities:** A history of emotional or learning disabilities may not preclude pursuing a vocation in ordained ministry. However, honest conversations and reflections are necessary to discern the likelihood for the person's issues to present insurmountable problems during the formation process or as a leader of a congregation.
- **Recovery from addiction:** A person must have at least five years of sobriety before entering the formation and education program in preparation for ordination. There may also be other factors within the family system that should be considered. This guideline may also be appropriate for entering a specialized lay ministry, such as chaplaincy or leading a missional community.
- **Recent significant life events:** It is recommended that one wait at least a year after the death of a loved one before making any important decision. This guideline holds true for many significant life events, such as divorce, physical trauma, sexual abuse, bankruptcy, etc. In some cases, more than a year is necessary before pursuing a major vocational change. Education and formation for ordained ministry require significant focus and attention. Discernment for

readiness to pursue this major vocational change is essential, and the Discernment Committee must not avoid these conversations.

- **Completeness of the autobiography:** Vulnerability and transparency are critical qualities for ordained ministry. A failure to mention significant life issues or events may indicate an unwillingness to express one's own vulnerability. This doesn't mean that every detail of one's past transgressions need to be exposed, but the Seeker's willingness to be informative of significant problem areas or life events is desirable.
- **Personal spiritual practices:** As a leader in the church it is important to be grounded in Scripture and spiritual practices. Regular habits of prayer and reading sustain the practice of ministry.
- **Self-Care:** There are many demands on any leader of the church, lay or ordained. Sometimes these demands are overwhelming. Leaders who actively practice physical, emotional, and spiritual self-care appear to manage these demands more effectively.

Note: The Episcopal Diocese of Florida has set certain limitations for pursuing ordination or seminary training. The following could result in an applicant for ordination being ineligible for consideration:

- **Marital history** – A Seeker with a history of three divorces will not be considered for ordained ministry. If this circumstance applies to the Seeker, the Discernment Committee will necessarily need to focus on a lay vocation or refer them back to their Sponsoring Priest for spiritual direction.
- **Geographical mobility** – A Seeker discerning a call to ordination through the seminary track must be geographically mobile in order to relocate with their families for seminary and for eventual deployment. An essential component of full-time ordained ministry is being able to move to new locations. If a Seeker is not mobile, the bi-vocational track is available. Bi-vocational priests or deacons are not expected to relocate. However, they may be required to drive up to 70 miles, one-way, for an assignment.

The Seeker should understand that application for Holy Orders may not be possible in these circumstances, but the value for continued discernment is still relevant. The timing of a Seeker's ability to pursue Holy Orders may be delayed. The Discernment Committee may continue with the discernment process, as long as the Seeker understands the obstacle for pursuing application to Holy Orders. If desired, the Executive for Ministry is available to the Seeker for consultation.

Homework Assignment: Ordained Ministry

Tuesday, April 7, 2015

The Real World and Clergy¹

I recently heard these words about the clergy, “I don’t want [spiritual] direction by some pious fool who doesn't know what real life is about.”

Sometimes I hear that there is a difference between Church, the life and ministry of clergy, and the REAL WORLD. This is what I say when I hear words about how clergy don’t know what real life is about.

The clergy I know work over 50+ hours a week – many more than 60. They are not compensated fairly for their level of expertise but do it out of a sense of calling and devotion to God’s people. Clergy labor under the stresses and strains of a job at the crossroads of business, religion, spirituality, and public speaking. They take potshots from members of the church about how this or that was not quite good enough; meanwhile, they manage crisis after crisis. Their families at times are poorly treated by members of the congregation. Mothers glared at for noisy children, parishioners yelling at spouses because something the priest said or did. Yet, clergy walk with people through cancer, fevers, illness, deaths of beloved parents, suicides, and the death of a child. They have stepped bravely into the midst of family crisis often times taking arrows from the very people they are trying to help. They try and broaden their people's horizons on issues affecting the culture while being told they are heretical or having their job threatened. They have fought against racism and all manner of evil at great personal cost. I know many who have sat in hospital rooms with parents holding dead infants, sat at the bedside of a dying parishioner who had no family, and pulled over at the roadside to pray and help a stranger. I know still others who have gone into battle with their brothers and sisters in foreign lands. Clergy have called together communities to rescue people from slavery, to feed the poor, and to give voice to the voiceless. I know clergy who have heard literally thousands of 5th steps, confessions, and lies - and they have kept the faith.

So this is what I think. If anyone knows about the *real world* it is the clergy person, the deacon, the priest and bishop, only they can be foolish enough to have faith given everything they have seen and experienced. They not only know what *real life* is about, they have committed their whole life to walking with people through it regardless of what it brings, regardless of the faithful and the faithless, and regardless of where it leads. So today, in this real world I live in, I give thanks for the men and women with whom I get to share this life of ministry.

¹ Ecclesiastical Authority, C. Andrew. "The Real World and Clergy." *The Ninth Bishop of Florida*. Blogspot, 7 Apr. 2015. Web. 10 Sept. 2015.

How Ordination Affects Others

You should begin talking with your spouse/family about the questions you're considering (if you haven't already), and you should continue talking with them throughout the process. If you were to begin formation toward ordination, their lives would be affected by that journey as well. In addition, since discernment happens in community, those closest to you are important sources of insight.

Some things to discuss together about ordained ministry if you were to be ordained:

- you may be placed in a parish other than your current parish
- you would be 'working' on Christmas, Easter, and other major feast/fast days
- demands on your time would change, which would affect your availability to your family

Questions to consider concerning a call to ordination

Source: Diocese of Texas Commission on Ministry Application Packet (2014). Excerpt from an Introductory Memo for Canon 8 Priesthood written prior to 2014.

“At a Vocational Seminar, Mrs. Mary MacGregor, daughter of an Episcopal clergyman, offered some diagnostic questions to help persons evaluate their sense of call to ordained ministry. These questions were perceptive and provocative, and I am enclosing them here for contemplation. The questions themselves point to significant gifts that are necessary to function in a healthy way in the office of Deacon, Priest, or Bishop.

- What are my spiritual gifts and how have I put them to work in the church thus far?
- Am I able to relocate my family to attend seminary, receive an assignment, and be open to future calls?
- How sacrificial have I been in the giving of my time and talent to lay ministry? Have I volunteered regularly without being asked?
- Do I really understand parish/mission ministry and how it works?
- Have I given of myself to serve in many various capacities for a broader understanding of the dynamics of a congregation?
- Have I been a member of more than one Episcopal congregation? Do I realize that my perception of congregational life may be isolated and unrealistic if based on very limited exposure to only one or two congregations?
- Am I a leader? What tasks have I undertaken in a leadership position (in a secular or church setting) that motivated others to action? Do I enjoy that task?
- How tough is my hide? Am I prepared to face the barrage of judgment and criticism that comes with ordination?

- Am I willing to sacrifice and be a servant to other people's needs for the rest of my life?
- Have I taken on the challenge of proclaiming Jesus Christ to persons in my family, acquaintances and people in my work place? How seriously have I taken the great commission? Do I share my faith story easily?
- Do I love people? Do I see the good in even difficult people and situations? Can I be the unconditional love of Jesus Christ to all sorts and conditions of people?
- Do I possess a growing and deepening devotional life? Do I take time to say my prayers daily, remembering others in my prayers as well as myself? Have I read about the lives of the mystics of the church and am I acquainted with their sincere and extraordinary contemplative lives?
- Is the Bible a constant companion to me? Am I familiar with it by regular reading? Does its content excite and energize me? Am I eager to learn more about the Bible – its origin, its revelation, the application of its truths to my life as well as to the lives of others?
- Am I familiar with the history of the Anglican Church and its development as the Episcopal Church in the United States?
- Do I have some acquaintance and comprehension of Anglican liturgy and theology?"

Desirable Qualities for Priests in the Diocese of Florida

Source: Journey to Discernment 2024

The Episcopal Diocese of Florida seeks ordained leaders able to empower our congregations to adapt to new realities and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that speak to the varied missional contexts of our communities. Moving forward into new mission fields, our ordained leaders will need to be mission-focused, innovative, collaborative, and adaptive.

The qualities described here are not exhaustive—nor are these qualities exclusive to priestly and diaconal ministry. We do not expect every candidate for the priesthood or the diaconate to exhibit all of these qualities, but we do expect them to exhibit most of them. Our discernment process focuses on discerning the presence, or the seeds of presence, of these qualities and abilities in every seeker who is recommended for the priesthood or diaconate.

+ Compelling spiritual life and a passion for the Gospel: There is great spiritual hunger in the culture at large and in our congregations. The diocese seeks clergy who love God with heart, mind, and soul, and who know Christ and seek to make Christ known. We seek clergy who have a vision for the Episcopal Church's ministry and how to guide our people to greater faithfulness and spiritual depth; clergy who have both a deep reverence for the sacraments at the heart of our liturgical life and a sacramental worldview in which outward and visible things reveal inward and invisible truths.

+ Spiritual maturity, self-awareness, and authenticity: The work of the Episcopal clergy is challenging. We seek clergy who have a strong spiritual center, physical and mental stamina, healthy personal boundaries, and a willingness to grow and learn alongside others. We seek clergy who are able to persevere in challenging circumstances, recognize their personal growth edges, and are willing to learn new skills and ask for help.

+ Ability to communicate the Gospel in ways that people and communities find engaging and relevant to their lives: Communication is multi-faceted. We seek clergy who connect with others and draw them in from the pulpit, in personal conversation, and in social media. We seek clergy who are called to minister in a wide variety of contexts and engage people of all ages.

+ Ability to lead, organize, and equip others in ministry: Many people are drawn to ordained ministry for the love of ministry—pastoral care, teaching, service, and speaking out for justice. The predominant model of ministry in most Episcopal churches is that of a solo pastor (the priest) ministering to all the people, or at the center of the church's ministry. We seek a new paradigm, of clergy able to equip others for meaningful Christian lives and vocations, inviting others into the life of Christian community and ministry. We seek clergy who have community organizing skills and the ability to identify and mentor new leaders.

+ Innovative leadership: Twenty-first century clergy need creativity, the capacity to discern new paths, and the willingness to make mistakes and learn from them. We seek individuals who are able to take risks and try new things in ministry; innovative leaders who see opportunities where others see decline, possibilities where others see insurmountable challenges.

+ The ability to lead congregations through change: The majority of our congregations face significant adaptive challenges. We seek clergy who will lead our congregations through parish life as it has been to the mission fields to which God is now calling us. As with our spiritual ancestors, there is a process of transformation required of us on the journey, as well as the ability to adapt to new ways of being the Church. We seek clergy who are able to show the way, in faithfulness to God's call and in the challenging work of change.

+ A willingness and ability to be vocationally flexible: Our churches are in a variety of contexts in a variety of locations with a variety of needs. Few ordained leaders are likely to serve in one role at one type of church in one city for their entire vocation. We seek clergy who are able to respond to this variety with their own flexibility. In addition, a growing number of congregations require clergy leaders who do not depend on them for their entire livelihood. Thus, we seek some priests who can offer their presence and their gifts as priests in a part-time or non-stipendiary capacity. We seek clergy who will

demonstrate flexibility in their vision of professional ministry in order to respond to God’s call to them and the church in our world.

Duties of a Priest In Charge of a Congregation

The reality of normal activities performed by priests in charge of congregations depends on several variables. A priest of a small congregation may find oneself doing some activities that have very little to do with spiritual, pastoral, or sacramental life. These activities in some churches may be assumed by lay members or by paid staff. Financial resources, lay leadership, and the ability to recruit and delegate are three variables that may affect the need for priests to perform any of the activities listed below. This list is culled from a variety of resources, including the *Vocational Discernment for Ministry*, (copied on 10/31/2014) from the Diocese of Alabama. Although the information excerpted from Tony Harwood Jones’ website is from an Anglican priest in England, the reality that he presents is pertinent to an Episcopal priest in the United States.

The unsung duties that are performed by clergy (male and female) may include:

Prepare and print weekly bulletin	Prepare and print parish newsletter
Update parish webpage Visit sick and shut-ins Teach or facilitate a Bible study Serve on a Diocesan-level committee or department Respond to phone calls	Mow lawn Work to incorporate visitors Prepare a sermon on a weekly basis Clean and prepare worship space (includes cleaning bathrooms)

The intrinsic variety of demands on a priest in turn demands an understanding of the importance of and practice of self-care. This includes intentionally recruiting and delegating responsibilities that could be handled by a lay person. An ordained person’s practice of self-care and intentional spiritual development provides a role model for others.

The Basic Duties of a Parish Priest

Source: The personal website of Tony Harwood-Jones, *The Day to Day Life of an Anglican Parish Priest*, http://www.tonyhj.ca/Priest/priest_daily_life.html

All parish priests have to do **all** the things in the table below. The list is arranged alphabetically, because it is impossible to rank these jobs in order of importance (for example, presiding at church services is *hugely* important, but so is pastoral care of the parishioners, and making sure the organization runs smoothly). Of course you will be better at some things than at others, and it will be tempting to put all your

energies into whatever you are good at, but the fact is you will need to develop basic competency in every single item on this list.⁶

Administration	Some standard administrative duties for priests: overseeing the printing of bulletins; preparing reports to the diocese; making sure outdoor signs and parish websites are current; meeting with and managing other church staff (depending on parish size – secretaries, music leaders, youth leaders, custodians, webmasters, junior clergy); ensuring that the buildings are maintained, bills are paid, and financial records are properly kept.
Baptisms	Every priest is asked to baptize infants and sometimes to baptize adults. You will have to decide for yourself the degree to which you should work at preparing individuals and families for living the Christian life
Counselling	Parishioners often turn to their clergy for spiritual and moral guidance on marriage, parenting, relationship, and job problems. How will you respond when someone turns to you in this way? [ed note: pastoral counseling limitation]
Daily Prayer	Priests are obliged to say what is called the “Daily Office” every day of their lives. It can be done publicly in the church, or it may be done privately, but it is just as much a “duty” as is preaching a sermon or visiting the sick. A priest at prayer is “on the job.” For more information, click here .
Diocesan and wider church	Parish clergy are expected to participate in Diocesan meetings and conferences and to provide leadership in various ways.
Funerals	Parishioners die. As a priest, not only do you have to preside at someone’s funeral service, you will often be found at the sickbed before his or her death, and are expected to give prayer and comfort to the immediate family and community, both before, and for a long time after, the funeral.

<p>Meetings</p>	<p>Managing a parish involves innumerable meetings – from a small group planning a Sunday service, to the general year-end meetings of the congregation. The clergy have a central role, not just in attending these gatherings, but convening and often chairing them.</p>
<p>Preaching sermons</p>	<p>It is assumed that prayer, Bible study, scholarship, and intense reflection on eternal verities lies behind every sermon that is preached. All too often this is not the case.</p>
<p>Presiding at the weekly Eucharist</p>	<p>Presiding at a worship service requires good elocution and public speaking skills, a sense of timing, and a combination of humility and dignity in one’s personal deportment. Preparation for worship can involve meeting with music leaders, intercessors,⁷ lectors⁸ and many others.</p>
<p>Teaching the faith</p>	<p>Confirmation classes are very often considered the responsibility of the priest. As well, parishioners will turn to their clergy for leadership in Bible study, and for general adult Christian education programmes (Lenten classes are very common, for example).</p>
<p>Visiting parishioners in hospital</p>	<p>Hospital calls are a standard feature of every parish priest’s life.</p>
<p>Visiting parishioners in their homes</p>	<p>Home visits to parishioners have many purposes. For example: (a) you can become better acquainted with those to whom you preach each week; (b) new members and beginning Christians can be encouraged; and (c) sometimes in a home visit you can more effectively recruit people for parish leadership positions.</p> <p>In former days, home visits were one of the primary occupations of the clergy, and such visits had the single purpose of building a loving and supportive pastoral relationship between priest and parishioner. Today, such open-ended visiting is not very common.</p>

Weddings	Canon Law in the Canadian church prescribes ⁹ that the priest become personally acquainted with the bride and groom, and ensure that they are well prepared to enter into marriage. I'm sure that – whether by law or by custom – it is not much different in other parts of the church.
Writing	You may write well or badly, but church bulletins, newsletters and websites are always expected to have <i>some</i> contribution from the Rector.

Diaconate Characteristics

Deacons are called, not only to offer service themselves, but to lead others in service in their ministries. Are you (or could you become) flexible enough to lead others in ministries you have not been involved in?

Deacons not only serve and lead others in serving, but they also connect this work to the liturgy of the church. How do you feel about that aspect of diaconal service? The deacon...

- interprets the work of the Church to the world and the needs of the world to the Church
- gives voice to the voiceless
- is a bridge between the Church and the world
- “Being a deacon is not 'volunteering' and it's not a 'career' - it's a fulltime commitment to God's calling to serve. It's a way of life.”
- Has a concern for the poor, marginalized, etc. that is persistent and sincere (maybe even irritating to some)
- Would serve no matter what because he or she **can't NOT** do service.
A deacon may have considered being a missionary in a foreign country.
- Is a good communicator who can get ideas and information across clearly and simply.
- Communicates in words, actions, and example
- Has mature leadership gifts

If the above descriptions do not quite express what you feel called toward, try to describe how the calling you perceive seems different. If you don't see yourself as a bridge, for instance, can you think of another image that seems more accurate?

Homework Assignment: Lay Ministry

Researching one's mission field is very similar to researching a career. Using some of these guidelines below, make a list of resources that you would like to pursue to develop a plan.²

- What do you need to know before you can start working in this field?
- Where can you do this vocation? What organizations are in this field of ministry?
- How can you get experience?
- Is there compensation for this field of ministry?
- What are the sacrifices that one must make to participate in this vocation?
- Who do you need to meet to learn more about this vocation? Informational interviews with people doing this vocation are invaluable. You can ask such questions as: "How did you get into this vocation?" "What do you like about it?" "What frustrates you about it?" "Where else can one do this ministry?" Ask for a referral and introduction to someone else doing this ministry.
- Who do you know who can introduce you to someone in this field of vocation?
- Where can you get information?
- Where is this ministry needed?
- What "professional" organizations are there for people in this field of vocation?
- What resources can the Diocese of Florida offer?
- What resources can The Episcopal Church offer?
- What spiritual or theological formation do you need to enable or support you in this field of vocation?
- "Shadow professions" Is there a related vocation that allows you to work in the field but has less stringent entrance requirement or credentials?
- Do you need to create an organization or community to do this vocation? If so, can you get introductions to others who have created their own ministry fields so you can get an informational interview?

² These questions were culled from *What Color is Your Parachute?* 2015 by Richard N, Bolles

Template for Discernment Report

For Ordained Ministry

To: [Sponsoring Priest NAME and Bishop]

Regarding: [Seeker's NAME]

From: Members of the Discernment Committee

The Discernment Committee and [Seeker's NAME] met for a period of [NUMBER] months [or weeks] from [Begin DATE] to [End DATE]. We affirm a call to ordained ministry as a [priest or deacon] in the Episcopal Church in a [bi-vocational capacity or full-time vocation]. We recommend further discernment with you, the Vestry and the Diocese.

Write a short paragraph as to how the Seeker exhibits each of the qualities below.

1. Passion for the Gospel (love for Jesus, reverence for sacraments, spiritual trustworthiness)
2. Communication skills (preaching, conversing, social media, engaging and relevant; articulation of faith)
3. Spiritual Maturity (self-awareness, authenticity, transparency, ownership of flaws, learning from experience; growth; self-care)
4. Leadership: (demonstrated via current ministries,
5. Organizing and equipping others in ministry
6. Entrepreneurial qualities (risks, innovations, making mistakes)
7. Change management (tenacious pioneer spirit, lack of entitlement)
8. Vocational flexibility (willingness to move, family support)
9. Cultural competency (experience, openness to diversity, passion for the other)
10. Cross cultural and ideological boundaries (reconciliation, facing division, clarity of faith)
11. Missional (Gather and connect outside the church community)

We respectfully and prayerfully submit this report for your consideration.

Signatures of Discernment Committee Members

For Lay Vocation

To: [Sponsoring Priest NAME]

Regarding: [Seeker's NAME]

From: Members of the Discernment Committee

The Discernment Committee and the [Seeker's NAME] met for a period of [NUMBER] months [or weeks] from [Begin DATE] to [End DATE]. We have discerned that [Seeker's NAME] is called to serve as a minister of Christ in [description of ministry field]. We discerned with [Seeker's NAME] a possible plan of action to further explore this field of ministry with the Sponsoring Priest.

Description of the Ministry: *[describe in two or three sentences the nature of this ministry.]* We believe that [Seeker's NAME] has the following passion and foundational qualities to serve our Lord in this ministry.

Spiritual Maturity: *[describe the Seeker's spiritual life and discipline, particularly in connecting with the world. Include recommendations for further biblical and theological studies.]*

Education and Training: *[Include recommendations for necessary education to enter this field of ministry]*

Personal Preparation: *[Are there any personal concerns, such as medical, financial, or physical, that may present a challenge to fulfillment of this ministry? How would addressing these concerns enable the Seeker to more fully live into this ministry?]*

Communication: *[How does the Seeker demonstrate the communication skills to fulfill this ministry? What improvements could the Seeker make to enhance the effectiveness of this ministry?]*

Leadership: *[How has the Seeker demonstrated the necessary leadership skills to fulfill this ministry? What forms of leadership could be developed to improve the Seeker's experience in this ministry?]*

Proposed Next Steps: *[Attach or insert a copy of the Seeker's Plan here]*
We respectfully and prayerfully submit this report for your consideration.

Signatures of Discernment Committee Members

Closing Liturgy

Opening Prayer

A Prayer for Peace Within

(Attributed to St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Theresa of Avila)

Source: <http://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/Morning-and-NewBeginnings-Prayers.cfm>

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you

May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us.

Invitation and Praise

Officiant Lord, open our lips.

People *And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.*

Jubilate *Psalm 100*

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song.

Know this: The Lord himself is God; he himself has made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise; give thanks to him and call upon his Name.

For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

Lesson

Reader: A Reading from the Gospel of John
John 16: 20-26 (The Message)

20-23 I'm praying not only for them But
also for those who will believe in me

Because of them and their witness about me.

The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind— Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, So they might be one heart and mind with us.

Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me. The same glory you gave me, I gave them, So they'll be as unified and together as we are— I in them and you in me.

Then they'll be mature in this oneness,
And give the godless world evidence
That you've sent me and loved
them In the same way you've loved
me.

²⁴⁻²⁶ Father, I want those you gave me
To be with me, right where I am,
So they can see my glory, the splendor you gave me,
Having loved me
Long before there ever was a world.

Righteous Father, the world has never known you,
But I have known you, and these disciples know
That you sent me on this mission.

I have made your very being known to them—
Who you are and what you do—
And continue to make it known,
So that your love for me
Might be in them
Exactly as I am in them.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.
People *Thanks be to God.*

Canticle

16 The Song of Zechariah *Benedictus Dominus*
Deus *Luke 1: 68-79*

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; he has come to his people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty savior, born of the house of his servant David. Through his holy prophets he promised of old, that he would save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us. He promised to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, to set us free from the hands of our enemies, Free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, To give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins. In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth; I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Offertory

The Officiant gathers the gifts from the Committee members and hands them to the Seeker.

Officiant All things are thine, O Lord.
People *And of thine own have we given thee.*

The Prayers

Officiant The Lord be with you.
People *And also with you.*
Officiant Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God,
By whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified:
Receive our supplications and prayers
Which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, That in their vocation and ministry, they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Almighty Father, we thank you for uniting us through the fellowship of your Holy Spirit. We thank you for raising up among us faithful servants for ministry.

We pray that *N.* may be to us a gracious example of your love for all creation in word and action, in love and patience.

Grant that we all may serve you now, and always rejoice in your glory; Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, On earth as
it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
 As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, For
ever and ever. *Amen.*

Closing Prayer

A Prayer in Times of Transition

(by Joseph P. Shadle, Source: <http://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/Morningand-New-Beginnings-Prayers.cfm>)

God of Love,

You are with us in every transition and change.

As we enter into this new era with excitement and even some anxiety, we recall your deep compassion, presence, and abounding love.

We thank you for the gifts, talents and skills with which you have blessed us.

We thank you for the experiences that have brought us to this moment. We thank you for the work of others that gives breadth and depth to our own work.

Be with us as we move forward, rejoicing with you and supporting one another.

We ask this in your Holy Name.

Amen.

Dismissal

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. *Ephesians 3:20,21*

Response: Thanks be to God

Training Materials: Communication Skills

Communication for Discernment Committee Members ³

Active Listening & Asking Quality Questions

An Overview

Active listening. Active listening is fundamental to effective communication. It involves providing some form of feedback to a speaker that informs her/him that the message sent has been received. Feedback may simply consist of a nod of the head or a two-word acknowledgment, “I see,” that lets the speaker know that their message has been heard. At higher levels of active listening (interactive listening), the amount of information that goes back to the sender is increased. Techniques may include brief restatements or parroting, summations, reflecting, reframing and paraphrasing. Asking follow-up questions is an extension of this process (See below). Active listening is important for discernment committee members in assisting the Seeker in being heard. Moreover, to accurately assist the Seeker in the discernment process, the committee members needs accurate information about the Seeker. Good listening skills encourage seekers to provide additional information.

The ability to ask quality questions. Effective questioning is a communication skill necessary for committee members to gather information from the Seeker and to help them identify the areas for further exploration in the discernment process. Good questions clarify confusing factors or issues. A committee member can search for broad areas of mutual understanding through open-ended questions that enable a Seeker to talk. Focused-questions, either-or/yes-no questions can narrow the focus on specific issues or concerns. Effective committee members plan their questions. They ask with a purpose, tailor their questions to their listeners, follow general questions with more specific ones, keep their questions short and clear, cover only one subject at a time and give their listeners time to answer.

The Basic Communication Process

To achieve *precision* and *effectiveness* in communication:

- A message must be **conveyed**
- The message must be **received**
- There must be a **response**
- Each message must be **understood**

³ Used with Permission Trachte-Huber Consulting ©2016

Factors Interfering with Effective Messages

An Exercise

Translate these poorly expressed proverbs:

- An ignoramus and his/her lucre are readily disjoined.
- In the absence of the feline race, certain small rodents will give themselves up to various pleasurable pastimes.
- A plethora of culinary specialists vitiate the liquid in which a variety of nutritional substances have been simmered.
- Impetuous celerity engenders purposeless spoilage.
- Illegal transgression has no remuneration for its perpetrators.
- A winged and feathered animal in the digital limb is as valuable as a duet in the shrubbery.
- The warm-blooded class avis who is governed by pre-emptitude can apprehend the small elongated and slender creeping animal.
- Provide the privilege of enfranchisement or I will feel that life is not worth living.
- A condition characterized by tardiness is more desirable than one that is systematically marked by eternal absenteeism.

Communication Skills

Barriers to Effective Communication

1. Poorly expressed messages

- Poorly chosen words and phrases
- Careless omissions
- Incoherence
- Awkward sentence structure

2. Inattention

- Speed of average human speech may vary from 150 to 175 words per minute.
- Meaning is assimilated at a rate of about 500 words per minutes.
- Listening Gap—responding, daydreaming, rebutting, boredom.

3. Hidden Assumptions

Exercise. Terms taken from employee reviews: individually assign a percentage value to these terms. In a group assign a percentage value.

- always
- almost always
- nearly always
- often
- never
- sometimes
- occasionally
- rarely
- usually
- most of the time
- seldom
- a lot
- quite often
- regularly
- frequently

Terms like these can hide differences in assumptions. Negotiators need to monitor for these words and clarify their meanings.

4. **Hearing what we expect to hear**

5. **Conflicting information**

- We tend to hear things in a way that makes them fit into our present belief system.
- We tend not to hear conflicting information.

6. **Norms and Group influence**

7. **Semantics: words mean different things to people in different times and places, cultures**

8. **Argot: special in-group language, acronyms**

- **Non-verbal language**
- **Incompatibility**
- **Emotional content**

9. **Language**

- Vocabulary: most words have more than one meaning; 14,000 different meanings for the 500 most commonly used words
- Ambiguity
- Jargon
- Rambling

10. **Psychological barriers**

- Emotionality
- Gender assumptions
- Mood
- Fear: often messages must be decoded for their intended meaning because we soften tone of message to avoid confrontation or to be polite.

11. Structural barriers

- Physical distance
- Time or timing
- Room set-up
- Method: written/oral

12. Situational barriers

- Noise
- Discomfort: too hot/too cold
- Intrusions

13. Weaknesses of Communicator

- Inappropriate tone or approach: oppositional; adversarial
- Unskilled communicator
- Lack of knowledge
- Poor literary skills
- Unprepared
- Prejudice
- Sends solutions/conclusions: gets to the end too fast, without providing enough information

14. Perceptual Distortions and Biases

Removing Communication Barriers

- Keep emotions in check
- Approach with positive attitude
- Maintain concentration
- Find something to get interested in
- Relax
- Change perspectives or reverse roles: “I can see how it might be difficult for you.”
- Use active listening techniques
- Use effective questions

Communication Skills: Active Listening

The Purposes of Active Listening

- To demonstrate to the speaker that her/his message has been heard
- To demonstrate that listener understands
- To legitimize the speaker. “I understand that you are feeling xxxx and it’s O.K.”

- To encourage the speaker to share more
- To build trust and empathy with the speaker

The Method

- Minimize distractions; face speaker, use eye contact, model effective communication
- Build Rapport
- Analyze what is being said: “What has this person told me? Is there anything vague or confusing about the message?”
- Separate relevant from irrelevant
- Test understanding of what has been said: seek clarification, “It sounds like you are feeling XXXXX about ZZZZZ”
- Consider the implication of what has been said
- Anticipate, but do not prejudge the speaker
- Watch body language
- Seek feedback
- Demonstrate listener etiquette:
- Don’t monopolize the conversation
- Don’t change the subject prematurely
- Be careful about stepping on another person’s sentences
- Check temper: outbursts are rarely useful
- Silence is powerful
- Ask good questions
- Allow the other party a method to save face

Summarizing.

- Pull together important facts and issues to establish a common ground before further discussion or to review progress.
- Examples:
 - “It sounds like the three main issues you are concerned with are . . .”
 - “Let’s see if I have this straight; you experienced _____ and feel _____.”
 - “It looks like you’ve both gotten a lot of new information on this issue.” “You’ve decided that _____ and _____ are not huge problem areas, so let’s move on to _____.”

Clarifying.

- Statements and questions are used to get more information from participants.
- Examples: “I’d like more information about what happened after the incident.”
“John, how do you respond to Jane’s statement that . . .?”

The use of closed and open questions.

Use closed questions (“yes” or “no” answer) to confirm a summarization or a specific point of fact.

Use open questions (“how,” “what,” or “why”) to get more information and invite longer answers.

Reframing.

- Redefine or re-conceptualize a situation to check on the intended message(s) of the speaker(s). The employee puts an idea into easy-to-understand language.
- Examples:
 - Identify commonalities: “I see you are both interested in security.”
 - Increase or decrease the level of emotion: “It looks like you have some extremely strong feelings about dishonesty.”
 - Bring out interests: “I recognize that you want to make money and secure your reputation.”

Reflecting.

- Summarize feelings that underlie the content of a person’s position or statement.
- Examples:
 - “It sounds like you are frustrated with your son’s behavior.”
 - “You seem to be feeling miserable because . . .”
 - “It sounds like you are puzzled by . . .”

Acknowledging.

- The employee validates or commends the parties by affirming their efforts or confirming that what was said was heard.
- Examples:
 - “Thank you for participating in the Tulsa meeting.”
 - “This is hard work . . . you’re doing great.”

Active Listening: Effective Questioning

Open-Ended Questions: Allow for the broadest possible answer. The question may be completely unfocused (“What do you think about . . .?”) or focused on a more specific topic.

- “Tell me more about . . .”
- “Could you explain . . .?” • “How did you feel when . . .?”
- “What happened . . .?”
- “Is there anything else that you feel is pertinent to . . .?”

Open-Focused Questions. A request for information similar to general open questions, but more directive.

- “Between the time when the cast was put on and it was taken off, did anything else related to this situation happen?”
- “How did you feel when you first learned that . . .?”
- “Why do you want to continue a business relationship with X?”

Requests for Clarification. More focused than open questions.

- “Could you explain to me how your product is different from product A?”
- “Help me understand why the lawnmower is not worth \$100?”
- “What specifically about your health is your major concern?”

Leading Questions. Questions that suggest the answer, often in one or two words.

- “You’ve had back trouble in the past, haven’t you?”
- “What type of traumatic experience has the accident caused your family?”

Either/Or, Yes-No Questions. Closed-ended questions that ask for very short, specific answers.

- “When you left the house was it one or two o’clock?”
- “Were the headlights too bright or too dim?”
- “Tell me, yes or no, do you want to be friends with Karen?”

Why/Why Not Questions. Useful in uncovering a party’s underlying interests.

Compound Questions. Avoid questions that consist of more than one request for information.

- “What type of party was it, social, professional, or was it just people from the neighborhood, and how did everyone know each other?”

EXERCISE:

In groups of three, take turns acting as sender, receiver & observer. Describe the following in a detailed manner:

- Starting and driving a car ten yards
- Ironing a skirt with pleats
- Changing a baby’s wet diaper
- Drawing a floor plan of your home
- Putting on a sports coat
- Installing a new hard drive on your computer

Selected Prayers & Scripture

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A Prayer of Thomas Merton

God, we have no idea where we are going.
We do not see the road ahead of us.
We cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do we really know ourselves, and the fact that
 we think we are following your will does not
 mean that we are actually doing so.
But we believe that the desire to please you
 does in fact please you,
And we hope we have that desire in all that we are doing.
We hope that we will never do anything apart from that desire.
And we know that if we do this you will
 lead us by the right road, though
 we may know nothing about it.
Therefore, we will trust you always though we may seem
 to be lost and in the shadow of death.
We will not fear, for you are ever with us, and
 you will never leave us to face perils alone.

Adapted **from: Thoughts in Solitude,**
Part Two - The Love of Solitude, Chapter II

Prayer for Guidance

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for
the godly:

Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties,
The grace to ask what you would have us to do,
That the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices,
And that in your light we may see light,

And in your straight path may not stumble;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Book of Common Prayer, page 832

Selected Scriptures

Old Testament	Deuteronomy 10:12-22 – <i>What does the Lord require of you?</i> Exodus 20:1-20 – <i>The Ten Commandments</i> Numbers 11:16-17 – <i>Select 70 elders</i> Ecclesiastes 3:1,9-13 -- <i>The God-given task</i> Isaiah 6:1-8 – <i>Here am I, send me</i> Jeremiah 1:4-9 – <i>I appointed you</i>
New Testament	Colossians 3:12-17 – <i>Live your life in Christ</i> I Corinthians 11:23-26 – <i>Institution of the Lord’s Supper</i> Ephesians 4:1-16 – <i>Unity in the Body of Christ</i> I Corinthians. 9:16-27 – <i>how Paul proclaims the gospel</i> Romans 12:6-12 – <i>we have different gifts</i> 2 Corinthian 4:1-2, 5-6 – <i>engaged in this ministry by God’s mercy</i> 1 Peter 2:11-17 – <i>live as servants of God</i> Ephesians 4:7, 11-16 – <i>The gifts he gave</i> Peter 5:1-4 – <i>Tend the flock</i> Philippians 4:4-9 – <i>Keep on doing the things you have learned</i> Corinthians 4:1-6 – <i>Engagement in ministry</i> 1 Timothy 3:8-13 – <i>Qualifications of deacons</i> Acts 6:2-7 – <i>Deacons chosen to serve</i>
Gospel	Luke 24:13-35 – <i>The Walk to Emmaus</i> John 20: 19-22 – <i>Receive the Holy Spirit</i> John 21:15-19 – <i>Feed my sheep</i> Mark 4:2-9 – <i>Parable of the Sower</i> John 6:(1-7) 8-13 – <i>Feeding the 5,000</i> Matthew 6:19-24 – <i>Treasure in heaven and healthy life of service</i> John 6:35-38 – <i>I am the bread of life</i> Luke 12:35-38 – <i>The servant who waits for his master</i> Luke 12:24-27 – <i>Consider the ravens and the lilies</i>
Psalms	Psalm 8 – <i>Divine majesty and human dignity</i> Psalm 43 – <i>I will go to the altar of God</i> Psalm 132:8-19 – <i>The Lord has chosen Zion</i> Psalm 84 – <i>A day in your courts is better</i>

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