

II.  
RETREATS AND SEMINARS  
FOR  
LAY MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT

# RETREATS AND SEMINARS

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# OVERVIEW

Retreats and Seminars are to provide formation in knowledge, identity, attitude, and skill for ministry.

1. The Retreats and Seminars provide encouragement and support for the church's community life ministries and ministry in daily life.
2. The events would provide quality resources (information, vision, training) that enliven basic, baptismal ministry.
3. Events should have a strong practical focus pertinent to all orders of ministry.
4. Retreats should center around practical methods of prayer that lead to sustained, intentional ministry.
5. Events presently done in Nebraska can find a home in this component of the plan; i.e., the COM-TMG doesn't have to invent or compete with other ministry development going on. In fact, this component of the Plan provides an organizational place for such work to be done cooperatively.
6. The COM - TMG could provide necessary oversight, encouragement, coordination, advocacy, and promotion of a wide spectrum of opportunities.
7. Some events could be ecumenical and interfaith in interest. (Note: When people join in compassionate service, doctrinal squabbles diminish.)
8. Diocesan deacons, well-trained, could provide leadership and connection to the Bishop's apostolic charge. (Note: This perspective rests on a view of the diaconate as

being an ordered ministry that resides on the boundary between the church and the world.

9. Events would range from annual diocesan conferences to half-day or evening local gatherings.

10. Use of emerging technology of telecommunication offers economic means to increase involvement across the state.

11. This component begs for a leader with vision, gifts, passion, availability, vocation, and tenacity to bring the retreat - seminar potential into reality. Without such leadership this component will sit on the back burner until it evaporates.

Further ideas for seminar/workshop/training events:

Examples:

A weekend devoted to those who work in medical professions, or who own small businesses, or are teachers, administrators, ranchers, farmers, and so forth. People with similar occupational interests could come together for reflection, Bible study, support and enjoyment. Their common concerns and challenges could be discussed and prayed about in light of Christian teaching and tradition.

Repeated day-long, or longer, seminars on listening, grief recovery, healing, prayer, compassion, support for adults with ailing parents, and so on and on and on. The possibilities are limited only by our imagination -- and people who will lead these events.

Seminars that focus on issues of today's society could be offered, i.e., adult literacy, interracial relationships, interfaith connections, poverty and its effects, issues of farming or ranching, or numerous other areas. The purpose is the consideration of how ministry occurs in response to those issues.

Other possibilities are a vestry/bishop's committee training weekend; a retreat or seminar/workshop for altar guild members; a choir weekend; weekends for any of a congregation's community life ministries.

# Pastoral Care Ministry

Basic Skills of Pastoral Care Ministry

Meaningful worship and responsive pastoral care are the center of a congregation's life. Just as the activity of worship involves all members of a congregation, so does that of pastoral care. Pastoral care is most often support offered to people who are experiencing some type of crisis, such as death of a family member, broken family relationships, economic reverses, job loss, illness, birth, or move to a new community.

These pastoral skills seminars emphasize the information, reflection, and skills necessary for pastoral care in a congregation. The seminars would happen in local congregations for all members. The following outline proposes four seminars of two to three hours each that could be offered in any sequence and with locally determined frequency.

For example, the seminars could occur on the first (or any) Sunday of the month, after the congregation's worship; they could occur four times during the year in the months with five Sundays; all four could be offered over two days, since each is only 2-3 hours, and could be repeated a couple of times each year.

Some important pastoral care skills and norms are:

- listening
- extending care
- prayer and "rule"
- willing to be present
- confidentiality
- safe place to come (either in a group or 1 to 1)
- knowing how, when, and where to make a referral
- knowledge of pastoral care resources

The Basic Skills for Pastoral Care training provides time to practice and reflect on most of the preceding skills and norms. The training helps lay people

- 1) begin building pastoral skills;
- 2) practice & develop basic listening skills;
- 3) learn about and reflect upon what pastoral care is;
- 4) support one another in offering responsive pastoral care.

According to William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle in their book, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, four historic functions or ministries of pastoral care are:

- healing
- sustaining
- guiding
- reconciling

These functions or ministries focus the basic pastoral skills training.

For more detail, see *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, by William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Prentice-Hall, 1964.

## GENERAL CONTEXT

In their book, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle carefully remind the reader that, while one function may dominate in a given historical period, all four functions of guiding, sustaining, healing, and reconciling are required in varying degrees. Likewise, since each person has unique circumstances and challenges, there will be the simultaneous need for all of these historic pastoral care ministries in any congregation.

Above all, the context for these training seminars is the community of faith. No pastoral care can be given without the life and ministry of the community, and their awareness of partnership with God in loving and caring for one another.

## RESOURCES FOR PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

**Become familiar** with community resources such as grief recovery workshops, workshops in listening skills, hospice training, and so forth. Also helpful will be awareness of community agencies for counseling, addiction treatment, hospice support, and the like. Some of the following books and tapes will be useful to assist people in the healing, guiding, sustaining, and reconciling ministries of pastoral care.

### **Books:**

*Introduction to Group Dynamics, Third Edition.* Keith Pearson. J.B.C.E. 1996.  
Can be ordered from Morehouse Publications. It is one of their "affiliated publishers."

*Learning to Use What You Already Know.* Stephen A. Stumpf & Joel R. DeLuca.  
Berrett-Koehler Publishers. 1994.

*The Wisdom of Teams.* Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith.  
HarperBusiness. 1993.

*Collaborative Ministry: Skills and Guidelines.* Loughlan Sofield, ST & Carroll Juliano, SHCJ. Ave Maria Press. 1989.

*In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership.* Henri Nouwen.  
Crossroad. 1989.

---*The Living Reminder.*

*Preface to Pastoral Theology.* Seward Hiltner. Abingdon Press.

*The Ministry of All Christians.* Norman Pittenger. Morehouse Publishing. 1983.  
*Total Ministry.* Stewart G. Zabriskie. Alban Institute Publications. 1995.

*Prayers for Pastors and People.* Carl G. Carlozzi. Church Hymnal Corporation. Published about 1995. 800-CHC-1818.

Subscribe to *Forward Day by Day.* Forward Movement. 800-543-1813.

**Video tapes:**

*With Burning Hearts: A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life.* Henri J.M. Nouwen. 28 minute VHS with study guide. An Orbis Video by Fisher Productions. Distributed through Paulist Press. 1-800-218-1903.

**Audio Tapes:**

*Yours is the Day: Prayer at Daybreak.* Society of St. John the Evangelist. 50 minutes. Recording of two morning prayer services. Cowley Publications. 1996.

*Compline: Prayer at the Close of Day.* Society of St. John the Evangelist. 50 minutes. Two services of the night office of Compline from the *Book of Common Prayer* sung by the SSJE brothers. Cowley Publications. 1996.

## BASIC PASTORAL SKILLS TRAINING OUTLINE

**This training will support the pastoral care ministry of a congregation and is for as many people as possible in the congregation.**

### **General Outline:**

- A. Meetings would happen on a schedule determined by the congregation.
- B. Each training seminar focuses on one of the four ministries or functions of pastoral care and can be offered in any order:
  - Guiding
  - Healing
  - Sustaining
  - Reconciling
- C. Each training seminar is two to three hours.
- D. Reflection, meditation/prayer, teaching, and practice (skill training) in each training seminar.
- E. Leader will need to review each outline and plan time to include breaks and enough time to complete the activities. Feel free to adapt the designs as seem appropriate to the specific congregation, that is, how many attend, how much time they're willing to devote to receiving this training. *Please do not try to accomplish the sessions in less than 2 to 2 1/2 hours.*

# GUIDING

*Purpose:* practice and deepen understanding of guiding as a part of pastoral care ministry; practice listening skills.

## CONTEXT

Guiding is a pastoral care ministry in which one helps another find wisdom when faced with a difficult problem of choosing between various courses of thought and action. Guiding occurs along a continuum from advice-giving on one pole to listening and reflecting on the other. *The Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola are a good example of an advice-giving tool for guidance; likewise the Ten Commandments. The troubled person is helped to find holy wisdom in particular and difficult circumstances. In pastoral care, the function of *guiding* is always to lead someone toward God. (Drawn from Clebsch and Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historic Perspective*)

## **A. Meditation and Prayer**

1. *Leader slowly reads the two following passages aloud:*

Psa 73:21-24 (NRSV) When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart,  
I was stupid and ignorant; I was like a brute beast toward you.  
Nevertheless I am continually with you; you hold my right hand.  
You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me with honor.

Isa 42:16 (NRSV) I will lead the blind by a road they do not know, by paths they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I will do, and I will not forsake them.

2. *Allow time for silence -- about 30 seconds.*

3. *Individually -- and not to be shared aloud -- each spends about five minutes writing about his or her need for guidance.*

**B. Establish norms** for time together, particularly a norm of confidentiality.

How are norms a form of "guiding?"

**C. A brief exercise in guiding/being guided:** in pairs, one person closes his or her eyes and the other leads the partner around the space for about 30 seconds. Partners switch roles and repeat the exercise.

*Leader invites responses to:* What did it take for you to let someone guide you?  
What are the implications for pastoral care in this congregation?

**D. In full group,** invite each person to briefly relate a time when someone guided him or her in a positive way.

In groups of four to five, list on newsprint what made the experiences positive.  
Share lists in full group and together identify characteristics similar in each list.  
Discuss implications for pastoral care.

## **E. Listening Skills Exercise**

1. *Brief Presentation* -- Listening is one of the most important things we can offer another. When listening to someone, listen to:

what's being described: facts, events, situations, or information  
how the speaker feels -- emotions that go along with the information  
emphasis and energy expressed by the speaker in words and gestures  
what the speaker's body is saying

Sometimes, it's necessary to try to listen for what the other wishes he or she could say. That takes practice, patience, and prayer.

2. *Take a brief time* for people to talk about what it's like to be listened to and what it's like not to be listened to.

3. *In pairs* -- each person has ten minutes to speak while the partner practices listening. Talk about an event that was important or enjoyable. At the end of EACH ten minute period, the listener offers:

- a. a synopsis of what was said
- b. what the listener heard the speaker's feelings to have been about the event and about sharing the event
- c. words or images that stood out
- d. what the listener thought the speaker was saying with his or her body.

*The speaker confirms or corrects* the listener's perception, then tells what he or she liked about the other's listening style. Particularly helpful information to give the listener is:

- a. how the listener asked questions
- b. how the listener's body posture encouraged sharing
- c. what other responses helped the speaker feel understood and helped him or her to clarify what was being shared.

4. *In full group, leader asks for learning* as a result of the listening exercise. *Briefly identify implications* for the pastoral care ministry of guiding.

#### **F. Closing Prayer**

A Prayer for Guidance (*Book of Common Prayer*, page 832, adapted):

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.*

# SUSTAINING

*Purpose:* explore and practice the pastoral care ministry of sustaining; practice listening skills.

## CONTEXT

It is helpful to recall that the word "sustain" refers to helping something/someone stay alive; it begins with the presence of life and seeks to keep life going. The pastoral care ministry of sustaining offers support particularly in times of individual or community upheaval. This is the work of helping others "hold on", such as during a bereavement period. Sustaining helps gently move another from a sense of fear and isolation to hope and community with God and others. In *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, Jaekle and Clebsch describe four dimensions of a sustaining ministry: *preservation, consolation, consolidation, and redemption*. Preservation is reaching in towards another and helping him or her stop a downward spiral of alienation and death. It's like the hand that grabs a drowning person and lifts that one out of the water's grip. Preservation occurs when the possibility of conscious life remains. Consolation is comfort towards another, helping the other to grieve appropriately, offering a sense of togetherness with another in the midst of pain. It's saying, "I know you're scared, lonely, angry, sad. You have every reason to be. And you're not alone." Consolidation is helping another take stock again; helping one face the reality not only of loss, but of what remains. It's where decision making can begin anew. Redemption is helping another turn fully into a future with hope and to act on decisions that move them toward a new life and a deepened faith in Christ.

SUSTAINING

## **A. Meditation and Prayer**

1. *Leader slowly reads the following aloud:*

2 Cor 1:3-5 (NRSV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, 4 who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ.

2. *All silently reflect on being consoled by God.*

3. *Each privately prays for anyone who is in need of consoling right now.*

## **B. Exercise in the ministries of sustaining**

1. *Review the four ministries of sustaining as described in the preceding context material: preservation, consolation, consolidation, and redemption. Encourage some brief conversation about these ministries of sustaining:*

*when anyone's experienced any part of this ministry;*

*how the four sustaining ministries interrelate;*

*what some pitfalls might be in offering this ministry to another.*

2. *Practice: Use 1 - 3 groups for the following exercise.* If entire group is small enough (about 5 or 6 folks), you'll probably just want to have them work together as one group. For groups of 6 to 8, use two groups, and for groups of 9 to 11, use three groups. Have the three "case studies" ready that accompany this seminar outline.

a. *Each group draws one situation to work with -- simulating the reality that we often have to respond to a situation that's "handed" to us from the circumstances of life.*

b. *The work group reads through the situation described and talks for no more than thirty minutes about how a pastoral care ministry of sustaining might be offered.* Consider the four aspects of preservation, consolation, consolidation, and redemption.

c. *Each group records its ideas for discussion in full group.*

3. *Connect gifts and resources:* It's important to recognize that pastoral care ministry is a partnership between the community and God. God sustains all of us; we participate together in God's sustaining work.

*Reflect briefly on God's invitation to participate with the Son in a ministry of sustaining:*  
**Matthew 26: 36-38** (Revised English Bible)

Jesus then came with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he

said to them, "Sit here while I go over there to pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. Distress and anguish overwhelmed him, and he said to them, "My heart is ready to break with grief. Stop here, and stay awake with me."

a. *Take about twenty minutes for people to tell one another about the sustaining ministry they have given to or received from each other.*

b. *Together, the group identifies resources available in their area (city, county) for providing sustaining ministry.*

c. *How will the members of this congregation help offer the pastoral care ministry of sustaining?*

### **C. Listening Skills**

In his book, *People Skills*, Dr. Robert Bolton identifies a cluster of listening skills called "Attending." (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979, page 33.) The four specific skills of "attending" are nonverbal and convey attention in physical ways:

- A Posture of Involvement
- Appropriate Body Movement
- Eye Contact
- Nondistracting Environment

1. *Ask everyone to convey inattention and noninvolvement by using only their bodies and facial expressions.* Give a minute or two for people to get into the posture and to look around the group.

2. *Ask everyone to use only their bodies and facial expressions to convey attention and involvement.* Again, take just a minute or two for assuming the postures and for everyone to look around the group.

3. *Ask if anyone had trouble assuming either posture?* The answer should be "NO" -- most people sort of automatically "know" what attentive and inattentive posture is!

4. *Further describe each of the attending skills:*

A Posture of Involvement: best conveyed with relaxed alertness, body leaning slightly forward, facing the speaker squarely. Maintain an "open" position toward the speaker with uncrossed arms and legs. Position yourself at an appropriate distance from the speaker. Studies indicate that approximately three feet of separation is most helpful.

*Form pairs and briefly practice a posture of involvement.*

Appropriate Body Movement: A completely still and unmoving listener appears cold, aloof, controlled, and reserved. A more active -- though not in a fitful or nervous way -- listener is experienced as warm, friendly, casual, and not acting a role. *Good listeners move their bodies in response to the speaker. Ineffective listeners move in response to things going on that are unrelated to or outside of the speaker.* Distracting motions while another is speaking are fiddling with keys or pencils, constant shifts of body positions, nervous mannerisms such as tapping fingers, cracking knuckles, swinging a crossed leg up and down. Also distracting and inattentive when another is talking are watching TV, waving or nodding to people passing by, or continuing on with one's activity like reading the paper.

*Form pairs again. Each takes turns being speaker and then listener. The listener practices appropriate listening body movements while the partner BRIEFLY (about two - three minutes) tells about something that upset or excited him or her recently.*

*In full group, ask for a SAMPLING of comments and thoughts about what it was like to practice the effective listening movements, and what it was like to be the speaker.*

Eye Contact: effective eye contact expresses interest and a desire to listen. According to Bolton, effective listening involves "focusing one's eyes **softly** on the speaker and occasionally shifting the gaze from the speaker's face to another part of the body, such as a gesturing hand, and then back to the face, then to the eyes again." Poor eye contact that disturbs the speaker and inhibits communication is to gaze unblinkingly and blankly, or to never look at the speaker, or to look away as soon as the speaker looks at the listener (pg. 36)

*Ask for a few responses: What makes good eye contact difficult?*

Nondistracting Environment: Often, when another is in need of pastoral care, it is essential to remove all environmental distractions in order to facilitate not only your listening, but the other's talking. Undivided attention to another is key to the listening skill of "attending." That means the attending listener cuts distractions to a minimum. Turn off the TV, or other noise makers. You may need to take the phone off the hook; post a DON'T KNOCK OR RING THE BELL on your door. Remove sizable barriers where possible: if there's room in an office for two comfortable chairs away from the desk, provide that.

5. a. *Ask everyone to "paint a word picture" of what attending would look like when practiced at its best. Just have everyone verbally offer his and her thoughts.*
- b. *Brainstorm on newsprint: What core values does the listening skill of attending embody?*
- c. *Ask everyone to privately write down what they most need to work on in order to*

increase their skill at being an attentive listener.

6. Ask for some final thoughts and connections between the listening skill of attending and the pastoral care ministry of sustaining.

**D. Closing Prayer** -- a classic prayer/psalm of sustaining:

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; \*  
I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures \*  
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He revives my soul \*  
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I shall fear no evil; \*  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me in the presence of those  
who trouble me; \*  
you have anointed my head with oil,  
and my cup is running over.
- 6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days  
of my life, \*  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

*Book of Common Prayer, 1979, page 612-613*

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Following are three "situations" to use with **Exercise B.** of the **Sustaining** seminar. Cut the situations apart, and put them in a container or something so each group can draw one.

\*\*\*\*\*

A very dear friend has recently learned that she has inoperable lung cancer. You and she are together and she suddenly puts her hands over her face and says, "I'm so scared." She begins crying.

\*\*\*\*\*

You're helping a young single father to obtain his GED. He has two sons, aged 5 and 7. You can tell that he's upset about something and ask him how things are. He begins crying and says that he's just received an eviction notice from his apartment and his phone is cut off. He has no income because he's devoting full time to getting his GED so he can get a better job and maybe go to college. The last of his money is gone. He's expecting an IRS refund which will enable him to meet his bills, but it won't come until

after the date for eviction. He says, "I've thought about suicide or giving my sons up. I don't want to go on welfare. I've been there, and got out, and I don't want to go back. I don't know if God's punishing me or testing me or something."

\*\*\*\*\*

Your mother and father are no longer able to live in their home of many years. They can't take care of it or afford the expenses of utilities and upkeep. Their health is still pretty good, but they know they need to move. They have decided to move to a retirement apartment complex in the same town where they presently live. In talking with you, though, they express depression and anxiety over this pending change.

# HEALING

*Purpose:* explore and practice the pastoral care ministry of healing; practice listening skills.

*Materials:* Have Bibles and Prayer books available for this session.

## CONTEXT

The purpose of the pastoral care ministry of healing is not only to work for healing of body, mind, and/or spirit but to help the healed person move to a new level of spiritual life. Jesus' hands bear scars now healed, but the physical healing is an outward sign of the healing and new level of spiritual life achieved through God's power. In the pastoral care ministry of the church, the healing ministry has included the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, prayers, exorcism, and sacrament. Parish prayer chains, Sunday prayer request lists, and the Order of St. Luke are some of Christ's healing ministries carried on by the laity. Many parishes and missions include healing services on a regular basis, often combining laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and eucharist. The continued support, concern, and care of priest and laity help all healing to become the means of a new life in Christ.

## **A. Meditation and Prayer**

*1. Leader slowly reads the following. An alternative is to have copies available for all in the group to read together.*

**Luke 9:1** Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, **2** and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

**6** They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere. *(NRSV)*

*2. All reflect silently on what needs healing in their lives.*

*3. Ask people to name prayer requests for friends and family in need of healing. When all have had a chance to speak, say the Lord's Prayer together.*

## **B. Practical Work with Healing**

*1. The prayers offered during the opening are some practical and real aspects of the healing ministry.*

*2. Distribute Prayer Books and have everyone turn to page 453.*

*3. Together review the instructions at the beginning of the Ministration to the Sick.*

*4. If it's possible to form four small groups or four pairs, do so. Assign a set of scriptures from pages 453-454 for each group to look up.*

*5. Each group briefly discusses the passages and why they would be used in healing ministry.*

*6. In full group, note the instruction on page 456 that identifies circumstances in which lay people may anoint with oil.*

*7. Spend a few minutes allowing pairs to practice saying and "doing" the anointing with one another.*

*8. Call attention to the prayers on Prayer Book pages 458 - 461 and pages 828 - 835. All take several minutes to quietly read some of the prayers. Invite people*

to identify any prayers which particularly touched them.

9. *Full group discusses when and why the healing prayers and ministrations might be useful for them to know. How might they use the prayers?*

10. *Brainstorm some of the healing resources of the local area.*

### C. Practicing Listening Skills

1. *Either read the following excerpt aloud, or have copies available for everyone in the group to read:*

I often ponder the nature of true human sincerity, true transparency. . .

It is a rare and difficult thing; and how much it depends on the person who is listening to us! There are those who pull down the barriers and make the way smooth; there are those who force the doors and enter our territory like invaders; there are those who barricade us in, shut us in upon ourselves, dig ditches and throw up walls around us; there are

those who set us out of tune and listen only to our false notes; there are those for whom we always remain strangers, speaking an unknown tongue. And when it is our turn to listen, which of these are we . . . ?

\_\_\_\_ Anonymous (A letter from a patient quoted in Paul Tournier, *The Meaning of Persons*, New York: Harper & Row, 1957, p. 165).

*Ask if any of the above kinds of listening are familiar, that is, ones that people have experienced from others. Let conversation and recognition flow briefly.*

2. *Divide the group into smaller groups of four, if possible. In each group, one person volunteers to be the "speaker" and the others will be the listeners.*

a. *One listener from each group draws one of the following listening assignments. Have the assignments written on slips of paper which can be drawn from a container or something:*

**The Wanderer:** not concentrating on what the person is saying. Make no eye contact and no responses while listening.

**The Performer:** constantly change the subject to center the conversation on you and not on the speaker. Often, people who do this become competitive and try to come up with a topic that is similar to but more exciting than the speaker's.

**The Swami:** complete the speaker's sentences, acting as if you understand what they are saying, giving advice before you have heard them through.

**The Wiggle-Worm:** jiggle your feet, tap your fingers, twist your hair, click your pen. Show impatience with your body while saying you're concerned and interested.

*(Exercise adapted from the Education for Ministry Manual for Mentors, 1996)*

- b. For two minutes, the speaker in each group talks about something good and exciting that happened in the past few months. The others in the group (or perhaps only one person) demonstrate the selected listening assignment.*
- c. "Debrief" the experience with full group at the end of the two minutes. Ask how the speakers felt; what the experience was like for the listeners; what people learned.*
- d. Reflect as a group on:  
What is creative about good listening?  
What is destructive about poor or ineffective listening?  
What is healing about good listening?*

### **3. Additional Listening Skills Information --**

- a. Leader presents the following information.*

*The three listening skill clusters which Dr. Robert Bolton identifies in *People Skills* are "attending," "following," and "reflecting" (Prentice-Hall, 1979, 33). This session will focus on the specific skills of the "following" skills cluster; "attending" is considered in the session on "Sustaining" and "reflecting" is considered in the "Reconciling" session.*

The specific skills in the listening skill cluster of "following" are:

- Door Openers
- Minimal Encourages
- Infrequent Questions
- Attentive Silence

1. Door Openers: A noncoercive invitation to talk, such as "You seem bothered by something lately. Care to talk?" Used when you sense that the other person wants to talk, but is having trouble getting started. You may also use door openers when you're listening to someone who suddenly seems unsure about proceeding. "I'd like to hear more about it," or "I have time and am interested in hearing more" can help open conversation's door. Door closers are things like judgmental statements, trying to reassure too quickly ("Cheer up!"), advice giving before really listening or being asked.

Door openers usually have one or more of the following elements:

- a. A description of the other's body language. "You look really down." Your face is glowing today!"*

b. **An invitation to talk or to continue talking.** "Would you want to talk about it?" "Please go on with what you're saying."

c. **Silence** -- respecting the other enough to give him or her time to decide whether to talk and what to say.

d. **Attending** -- eye contact and body posture that communicate interest in and involvement with the speaker.

2. Minimal Encourages: Simple responses that encourage the speaker to say what he or she wants to say in his or her own way. Some examples are:

Tell me more.	I see.
Oh?	Sure.

3. Infrequent Questions: Ask *open questions* and ask only one question at a time. Open questions give the speaker space to explore his or her own thoughts and feelings. Open questions are those which require more than a "yes" or "no" response. An example is, "What's on your mind, Ann?" rather than "Are you worrying about your job?"

4. Attentive Silence: Learn to value silence as a way to free the speaker to formulate thoughts, feelings, and expression. Silence is a balm; it is equally important in moments of joy. During silence, attentive listeners attend to the other, observe the other, and think about what the other is communicating.

b. *Role play in pairs:*

1. One person "acts" like something is troubling him or her and the other practices the listening skills of "following." Role play for about five minutes. Do not reverse the roles at the end of five minutes.

2. After the role play, first the "listeners" briefly talk in the full group about how the practice went for them, then the speakers briefly describe their experience.

c. *In full group, everyone identifies:*

One thing he or she most wants to remember from this session

One learning about healing or listening that he or she could take into the hospital when visiting a sick friend.

## D. Closing Prayer

God our healer,  
keep us aware of your presence,  
support us with your power,  
comfort us with your protection,  
give us strength  
and establish us in your peace.

*New Zealand Prayer Book, page 742*

# RECONCILING

*Purpose:* explore the pastoral care ministry of reconciliation; practice listening skills.

Materials: Prayer Books

## CONTEXT

Reconciliation is "helping alienated persons establish or renew proper and fruitful relationships with God and neighbor." (Clebsch, 58) When one is reconciled, one returns to full relationship and participation with God and neighbor. The Episcopal Church's second baptismal vow of "whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord" is a promise to work for reconciliation within oneself and among those with whom we live. That baptismal promise begins with the promise to "persevere in resisting evil;" in a very

real way, the greatest evil is destroying, breaking, or rejecting relationship with God or neighbor. Two important components that constitute being reconciled are forgiveness and discipline. Discipline is the practice of prayer, fasting, confession, repentance, and restitution that teaches and strengthens through repetition. Through these disciplines each person becomes more deeply aware of the need for forgiveness and offers heartfelt thanksgiving for God's gifts of mercy and love. The reconciling ministry of pastoral care can be offered either through a priest and the formal avenues of *The Reconciliation of a Penitent* (Prayer Book page 447-452), or can daily be offered more informally in all the circumstances of human life. Of central importance is for those who would be reconcilers, that is, all Christians, to themselves be aware of their daily need for forgiveness and discipline -- and to seek reconciliation in all areas of their life.

## RECONCILING

### A. Prayer and Meditation

**2 Cor 5:16-19 (NRSV)** **16** From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way.

**17** So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! **18** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; **19** that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

1. *Silence for private thoughts* on where reconciling is necessary in each person's life.
2. *Each briefly recalls a time* when it was as though he or she were "a new creation." These may either be spoken aloud, or simply recalled privately.

### B. Practice with Reconciling

1. *Review the Catechism*, p. 855 of the Prayer Book:

The ministry of lay persons 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; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

*In pairs, tell one another about personal gifts each has to offer to the pastoral care ministry of reconciling.*

Example: one person likes to grow flowers and take them to people who are lonely; one person can preside at eucharist; one person can gracefully help another speak about painful circumstances where reconciling is necessary; one person likes to send cards to family and friends; one person writes poetry, another loves to bake for others, and so forth.

2. *In full group, look at the Rite of The Reconciliation of a Penitent, Prayer Book pages 446 to 452.*

a. *All read through the Rubrics about this Rite on page 446. Particularly note the first and third paragraphs.*

Give time for any brief comments or discussion.

What is the distinction between the ministry of reconciliation and The Reconciliation of a Penitent?

b. *All review both forms of the Rite, pages 447 - 452. Invite observations and comments about the differences.*

c. *The Church takes reconciliation very seriously. Turn to the Disciplinary Rubrics on page 409 of the Prayer Book. What are some responses from the group?*

3. *Small groups of three or four reflect further. Each group records responses to the following on newsprint:*

If you could draw a picture of "reconciling," what would it look like?

What kind of smell would "reconciling" have? What color(s)?

What are some costs and some promises involved in the pastoral care ministry of reconciling?

What reconciling needs to happen in your local congregation or town?

What resources does your church and community have for reconciling?

4. *Full group briefly discusses the work done in the small groups. Together, identify ways which this congregation can offer reconciling ministry.*

### C. Practice Listening Skills

1. Read the following quotation:

One friend, one person who is truly understanding, who takes the trouble to listen to us as we consider our problems, can change our whole outlook on the world.

(Quoted in Ralph Nichols and Leonard Stevens, *Are You Listening?*, New York:McGraw-Hill, 1957; used by Bolton in *People Skills*, 49 )

2. Offer the following information drawn from Bolton's *People Skills*:

Listening requires skills in "attending," "following," and "reflecting." This session focuses on the specific skills related to "reflecting:"

Paraphrasing

Reflecting Feelings

Reflecting Meanings (Tying feelings to content)

Summative Reflections

Reflective responses are those in which the listener mirrors, or reflects, what the speaker says. Reflective responses require careful attention and following by the listener so that the listener can demonstrate understanding and acceptance of the speaker's feelings and content.

a. Paraphrasing: the listener makes a concise response in his or her own words (this is NOT parroting!) that captures the essence of the speaker's message. The paraphrase deals with the facts or ideas conveyed rather than with the emotions the speaker expressed. When the paraphrase hits the mark, the speaker usually says, "Yes," in some way.

Example

*Jack*: I don't know whether I want to start a family yet. My wife isn't sure either. We both love our work . . . we get paid well, and our jobs are interesting and creative. But sometimes I ache to have a child and be a "Daddy."

*Ray*: You enjoy your work so much, but sometimes feel a strong pull towards parenthood.

b. Reflecting Feelings: the listener "sends back" the emotion transmitted by the speaker.

Listeners effective in reflecting feelings concentrate on four things as they listen:

the feeling words

the general content of the message

noticing the speaker's body language

internally checking "what would I be feeling if I'd had that experience?"

3. Brief Practice: in pairs, take turns with one telling something that happened recently while the other listens, then paraphrases and reflects feelings back.

c. Reflecting Meanings: joining feelings and facts in one short response.

Example:

*Speaker*: My supervisor keeps asking questions about my personal life. I wish he'd mind his own business.

*Listener*: You feel annoyed that he won't respect your privacy.

d. Summative Reflections: a brief restatement of the main themes and feelings the speaker expressed over a longer period of conversation than would be covered by any of the other reflective skills. Effective summary (1) gathers points that the *speaker* brought up, and (2) selects *relevant* data. A good summative reflection frequently helps the speaker to understand his or her situation more clearly.

4. Practice -- each person will need a piece of paper and something with which to write.

a. *Each person writes his or her first name in full.* For each letter in the name, the person identifies a **verb** that expresses something about the way he or she **likes to be treated by others**. Allow five to ten minutes for this -- and it's just fine if folks help each other come up with verbs!

*Ex: Martin---* **M** = meet; **A** = appreciate; **R** = respond; **T** = talk; **I** = inquire; **N** = negotiate

b. *In small groups, each talks about the words they came up with and what's important to them about how they want to be treated.* As one speaks, the others practice reflective listening, then carefully and thoughtfully respond to the speaker.

c. *Everyone in the small group takes a turn at being the speaker, telling the verbs they came up with and what's important to them about how they're treated.*

d. *In the full group, all have a chance to talk about how the exercise was; what they learned; what they want to work more on.*

#### D. Closing Prayer

Savior, hanging on the cross declaring God's love to us,  
you are forgiveness.

*(Silence)*

Beside you hangs a thief,  
beneath you waits Mary the forgiven,  
and all around watch those many people  
to whom you give new life and hope.

*(Silence)*

To us you give new life and hope.  
Forgiven sinners become your body and your Church;

*(Silence)*

may the reconciliation we share  
bring your gospel to all the world.

*(Silence)*

God,  
you call us to serve you with all the strength we have:  
you are faithful to those you call;  
may Jesus' resurrection raise us if we stumble,  
the Christlight beckon us if we lose our way,  
and we shall have strength once more  
to walk with you to the cross.

*(Silence)*

Preserve us, O God, while waking,  
and guard us while sleeping,  
that awake we may watch with Christ,  
and asleep may rest in peace.

**Amen.**

*New Zealand Prayer Book, 132*