

DIACONAL MENTORING SESSIONS

EDUCATIONAL & LITURGICAL MINISTRY YEAR

INTRODUCTORY SESSION FOR PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME

Session 1: Getting Acquainted

1. Introduce yourselves; talk about the ways in which you have been involved in the life of the church and what gives you energy and hope in this work. Reflect on how it feels to be part of/connected with the Centre for Christian Studies Program.
2. Decide when, where, how often you will meet and discuss a format for your meetings. Determine the focus for your next meeting. Set up an agreement or covenant that will guide your work.
3. What does the word “mentor” mean to each of you? How does your past experience influence the expectations that you bring to the role?
4. Discuss what you mean by the word “reflection.” What do you understand “theological reflection” to mean to each of you? How are these words related?

In order to generate discussion you may want to consider these interpretations:

Reflection: taking time to think back over experience, interpret what happened, compare it to the theories you know, identify learnings.

Theological Reflection: making meaning, relating issues or events to your understanding of God or life’s purpose, identifying what gives life, finding God’s presence or finding our role in acting with God; “Faith seeking understanding”(St. Anselm).

Questions could include:

- Who are we? - the nature of humanity (theological anthropology, sin, evil, place in creation, image of God, etc.)
- What is our task? - our vocation (missiology (nature of mission), ecclesiology (role of the church), eschatology (understanding of the realm of God), ministry, etc.)

REGULAR SESSIONS RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL & LITURGICAL MINISTRY THEME

While we have suggested an order for these sessions, please determine what approach will work most effectively in your context. From time to time, you may want to focus on a particular session that addresses an issue that has emerged in the field placement. Re-arranging the order of the sessions will not be detrimental to the process. Please do not feel limited by the resources; they are offered to support the mentoring process.

Session 1: Sharing Learning Goals

1. Discuss the student’s goals for the field placement. (These will have been determined in consultation with the learning facilitator for the placement.)
2. Work together to determine your goals, as student and mentor, for the mentoring process. The guidelines for writing learning goals (provided in the CCS “Student Kit” available on the CCS website) may be helpful in this work. The goals for the mentor need to be related to the role of the mentor and to fostering the mentoring relationship. The mentor may have some learning goals of her/his own related to ministry that may be appropriate to share with the student.
3. Talk together about the student’s overall goals for the CCS ministry preparation program.
4. Explore more thoroughly the student’s hopes and fears related to this educational ministry field placement.

Session 2: Faith Life Journey Related to Educational Ministry

You will need to do some preparation for this session. You may want to draw a graph or a map or various symbols of your life experience in relation to a variety of educational ministry experiences (people with whom you have worked, places you have visited, experiences of learning). You might also consider bringing pictures or symbols that relate to significant times of feeling God's presence or sensing God's absence in these experiences.

1. Try to create an atmosphere that is relaxed and comfortable. Allow a generous amount of time for each of you to tell the story of your faith from a educational ministry perspective. Include reflections on the values and assumptions that were part of your childhood ethos and on how your values have changed since then. In what ways has your faith influenced these values over the years? What images of God have been strongest for you at different points in your life? How have your life experiences shaped your faith?
2. Share these experiences and identify the gifts and dilemmas these stories present for you.

Session 3: Exploration of Gifts for Educational Ministry

Before the session read a commentary on the passage: Deuteronomy 6:1-9.

1. One of you read aloud Deuteronomy 6:1-9.
 - What stands out for you in this reading?
2. The other one read aloud the same passage.
 - Name some of your gifts for educational ministry.
 - Identify experiences that have helped you to recognize your gifts for educational ministry.
 - How do you see your gifts enabling you in the work of educational ministry?
3. Read the passage in unison a third time.
 - Begin to identify some of the gifts and skills needed for effective educational ministry.
 - Explore together the practical and theological aspects of educational ministry.
 - In what ways does educational ministry require gifts in areas in which you do not feel confident?
 - How might you grow in areas of educational ministry for which you need to enhance your gifts and develop/strengthen skills?

Session 4: Diaconal Relationship to Worship and Preaching

1. Using the framework of Session 2 discuss your histories and ideas related to liturgical ministry.
 - Share your experience with regards to worship leadership and preaching.
 - Reflect on the impact that worship and preaching has had on your faith and ministry.
2. Analyze the role and place of worship and preaching in the church and images of ministry.
 - Consider the role and place of worship and preaching for diaconal ministry.
 - Discuss the role and place worship and preaching will have in your ministry.

Session 5: Exploration of Gifts for Liturgical Ministry

Before the session read a commentary on the passage: Isaiah 6: 1-8.

1. One of you read aloud Isaiah 6: 1-8.
 - What stands out for you in this reading?
2. The other one read aloud the same passage.
 - Name some of your gifts for liturgical ministry.
 - Identify experiences that have helped you to recognize your gifts for liturgical ministry.
 - How do you see your gifts enabling you in the work of liturgical ministry?
3. Read the passage in unison a third time.
 - Begin to identify some of the gifts and skills needed for effective liturgical ministry.
 - Explore together the practical and theological aspects of liturgical ministry.
 - In what ways does liturgical ministry require gifts in areas in which you do not feel confident?
 - How might you grow in areas of liturgical ministry for which you need to enhance your gifts and develop/strengthen skills?

Session 6: Diaconal History: Biblical Background

Before the session read: Walter Deller. "Learning about Servant Ministry: The Formation of Christian Communities for *Diakonia*"

1. Use the discussion questions at the end of the paper to guide your reflection.

Session 7: Diaconal History: Early Church

Before the session read: Deborah Deavu. "Conclusion: Summary of Results" in *No Menial Tasks: An Historical Examination of Accompaniment Ministries in the Early Christian Church*"

1. Identify the marks of the early church that Deavu discusses in her thesis.
2. Deavu identifies a number of "areas of potential application." Where might you further be able to weave hospitality and accompaniment into your ministry?

Session 8: Diaconal History: Middle Ages

Before the session check out a number of the websites about:

- The Beguines, for example:
 - <http://www2.kenyon.edu/projects/margin/beguines.htm>
 - <http://www2.kenyon.edu/projects/margin/beguine1.htm>
 - <http://www.users.csbsju.edu/~eknuth/xpax/beguines.html>
 - Francis and Clare of Assisi, for example:
 - <http://www.osfphila.org/about/francisclaire>
 - <http://forallsaints.wordpress.com/2012/10/04/francis-of-assisi-deacon-and-friar-1226-2/>
 - <http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/woman/75.html>
 - Calvin's Geneva, for example:
 - <http://www.tenth.org/blog/posts/the-role-of-the-deacon>
 - http://books.google.ca/books?id=Y-LDkpSGCxUC&pg=PA129&lpg=PA129&dq=calvin+deacons&source=bl&ots=70wbzoWgCl&sig=URt0vong4gFJ8k1pN_wtfDJZ8vM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=9KgbUbCXMaT62AWCn4DwCQ&ved=0CEQQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=calvin%20deacons&f=false
1. Discuss:
 - What are the aspects of this history that stand out for you?
 - In what ways is this history *diaconal* history?
 - In what ways do these historical understandings and expressions of ministry stretch or confirm your understanding of diaconal ministry?
 - In what ways are the elements of lifestyle and mission of the Beguines, Francis and Clare, and Calvin's Genevan deacons affirming for your ministry? Challenging for your ministry?

Final session of closure for the year

This session might be a part of the previous session or could be a special session of sharing time together over a meal as you debrief from the year's experience of your time together as mentor and student

1. What have been some of the appreciations of your time together this past year?
2. What might you like to see done differently another year both in terms of
 - a. the actual session together?
 - b. the resource and outline for the sessions?
3. What have been some of your learning this past year in terms of
 - a. working together?
 - b. the work of social ministry?
4. What would be the advantages of continuing to work together for the coming year? The disadvantages?