

Possible Rituals for Marking the Beginning of a Field Placement

Students are encouraged to discuss the possibility and suitability of recognizing the beginning of their field placement, during worship or other public occasion. By marking the field in a liturgical setting, students are inviting prayer and support, and covenanting with the ministry/agency. The ritual also informs others by communicating the nature of the student's role and involvements in the coming year. Please feel free to adapt these rituals as suits context and local needs.

Covenanting Ritual 1

Leader: agency/ministry has many people who relate to and work with the people in programs. Each person plays an important part in the work of this agency/ministry, including those who participate in our programs. Within this agency/ministry some of us have accepted specific responsibilities and offer gifts of leadership to the work of this agency/ministry. is a student for diaconal ministry/professional lay ministry at the Centre for Christian Studies. S/he is among us as a student this year. I would ask her/him to state her/his commitment to the work of this agency/ministry.

Student: I have come to share in the life of this agency/ministry for the better part of this coming year: to work with the staff and participants of this agency/ministry, to learn from others and to encourage learning, to be supported and to offer support, and to challenge and to be challenged.

Staff: We, the staff of this agency/ministry commit ourselves to offer you support, encouragement, guidance, and new learning opportunities, as we work together for the enrichment of all who participate in the work of this agency/ministry.

People: We, the participants of this agency/ministry are happy to welcome you and look forward to working with you over the coming year.

All: Together we commit ourselves to the purpose and work of this agency/ministry as we support and encourage one another in the coming year.

Another Possible Covenanting Ritual

Leader: (*student's name*) is embarking on a journey as a student for diaconal ministry. "The primary task of diaconal ministry is mutual empowerment through education, service and pastoral care. This includes working together to maintain relationships that are life-giving and sustaining of community to meet immediate needs and to work to create a just and loving world..." (From Statement of Belief," adopted in 1992 by Diakonia of The United Church of Canada).

(*Student*) studies with the Centre for Christian Studies which prepares people for diaconal ministries of education, pastoral care and social transformation. S/he gathers a couple of times a year with the other students in the program (they come from coast-to-coast), returning home to complete assignments and work at the field

placement here at church/agency/community ministry.

(Student) is here among us as a learner. I invite her/him now to state her/his commitment to these ministries.

Student: I have come to share in the life of this congregation/agency/community ministry, to minister and to be ministered to, to learn and to encourage learning, to challenge and to be challenged.

Leader: As part of the program *(student's name)* has a Learning Facilitator. A facilitator is someone who guides and supports the student's learning through reflection and action. The focus of this relationship is the experiences of ministry in the congregation/agency/community ministry. I ask *(name of Learning Facilitator)* to come forward at this time to state their commitment to this ministry.

Learning Facilitator:

I have come as *(student's name)*'s Learning Facilitator. I offer to her/him my support and encouragement, as well as challenges and assistance in her/his theological reflection and field placement experiences. I offer to her/him my relationship as her/his Learning Facilitator. The symbol I present to her/him is a question mark which represents the questions I ask her/him to facilitate her/his learning. *(Present to student the symbol.)*

Leader: Another aspect of the program is the Local Committee. The Local Committee works with *(student's name)* to provide an opportunity for her/him to ensure different experiences in her/his field placement are focused on her/his learning goals. I ask the Local Committee to come forward at this time to state their commitment to this ministry.

Let me introduce to you *(student's name)*'s Local Committee. (As you are introduced, please step forward.)

Local Committee: As a member of *(student's name)*'s Local Committee we offer to her/him our support, encouragement and feedback in her/his ministry here at Church/agency/community ministry. We offer to *(student's name)* our relationship of being her/his Local Committee. On behalf of the committee we offer to her/him the symbol of a heart which represents her/his relational ministry with us - as one being in community with us.

Leader: *(either a member of the Local Committee or Facilitator reads this part)*
Another aspect of *(student's name)*'s ministry is her/his Diaconal Mentor. It is the responsibility of the Diaconal Mentor to help her/him to develop a diaconal identity in ministry. The Diaconal Mentor assists *(student's name)* to reflect on the issues of ministry providing an outside view on the issues in her/his field placement. I ask to come forward at this time to state her/his commitment to this ministry

Diaconal Mentor: As *(student's name)*'s Diaconal Mentor I offer to her/him my support, encouragement, and assistance in helping her/him to discover her/his diaconal identity. I offer to her/him my relationship as her/his mentor. The symbol I present to her/him is the towel and the wash basin - the symbol of service.

Leader: As a congregation/parish/community ministry you have a very special and unique

privilege. You have been asked to participate in *(student's name)*'s educational process, ministry experience and in a very real sense her/his life. As a symbol of your support I ask you to stand and share in your commitment to this ministry, which is printed in the bulletin.

Congregation/agency/community ministry: We, the people of this congregation/agency/community ministry, pledge to you our support, our understanding and our prayers, that together we may serve our God.

All: God, you have heard our offerings and promises. Grant to us strength to keep them and encouragement to continue serving you. Amen.

[adapted from a service written by Karen Lumley]