

Lay Ministry Skills Readings, Reflection & Project Assignments for 2017-2018

September, 2017

Greetings Lay Ministry Skills Participants!

I am thrilled to be welcoming you back for this year of Lay Ministry Skills. The primary focus behind this year of Lay Academy is to provide you with a broad overview of most of the major ministry areas in which pastors and congregations share in their life together – Faith Formation, Pastoral Care, Worship Development, and Preaching or Proclamation. This year we will also do a session on discernment, which I hope will help you wrap up your lay academy journey with an opportunity to reflect on where you've been and begin to imagine next steps as your various ministries continue to unfold. I can't wait to see what this year brings for each of you. I have no doubt that this will be a year of deep learning, big questions, profound changes and spiritual growth and development for all of us.

This document outlines all of the assignments for this coming year. I have worked with the instructors to create these assignments. Each one is a combination of what they are planning to teach and what we discussed would be meaningful topics to reflect upon or explore in response to what is going to be taught.

For each session you have a choice – complete what I'm referring to as the **"Post Class Reflection Assignment"** which is basically your standard reflection paper but with questions more specific to the topic of the session OR complete the **"Practical Project"** and turn in a reflection on that project as outlined.

In order to receive a certificate of completion you will need to complete at least 2 **"Practical Project"** assignments. You are free to choose which of the two sessions you will do the more involved **Practical Project** for. Choose the ones that are more interesting to you or the ones that might challenge you a little bit. Each of the **"Practical Project"** assignments will necessitate you working closely with your Pastor or a mentor for guidance, mentoring and feedback. The project options are designed to be more in depth so you may want to look ahead and plan accordingly. The deadline for **Practical Project** assignments this year is **May 15, 2018**. I do NOT advise waiting until April to begin on these assignments!! **Post Class Assignments** are due immediately following the session upon which they are based.

If you come up with a different idea for a **Practical Project** that would be more helpful to your growth or learning, I would love to hear about it and am open to considering your ideas for what would be most meaningful for you. The primary goal in my mind is for you to challenge yourself and grow in the ways that are most helpful to you through this year of Lay academy.

Please talk with me about any questions you have on this and I hope it will be fun and interesting for you.

Tisha

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2017-2018 Lay Ministry Skills 4 Book List

For September (Marian Plant – Faith Formation)

Basics in Christian Education by Karen B. Tye (Chalice Press, 2000)

Faith Formation in Vital Congregations, Marian R. Plant (Pilgrim Press, 2009)

For November (Steven Russell – Pastoral Care)

Pastoral Care: An Essential Guide by John Patton

For January (Worship – Bryan Sirchio)

-The Work of the People: What We Do in Worship and Why by Marlea Gilbert, Christopher Grundy, Eric T. Myers and Stephanie Perdew

-The 6 Marks of Progressive Christian Worship by Bryan Sirchio

For March (Preaching – Mark Yurs)

Four Pages of the Sermon by Paul Scott Wilson

For April (Discernment – Sandy Graham and Patricia Jensen)

To Be Determined (hopefully soon!)

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The Art of Faith Formation, September 8-9, 2017

Instructor: Dr. Marian Plant, Professor of Religious and Ministry Studies, Defiance College

A Note from Marian: "During the Art of Faith Formation course we will explore more deeply what we mean by faith formation. I will share strategies for discerning faith formation opportunities in your local setting, and introduce you to drawing out topics and resources from less expected places. You will brainstorm and work to apply what you've gleaned from the texts, from the additional course content provided, and from knowledge of your local setting. Substantial time will be allotted for you to develop a faith formation "something" for actual use."

Session Preparation (to be completed prior to each session)

Read:

1. *Basics in Christian Education* by Karen B. Tye (Chalice Press, 2000)
2. *Faith Formation in Vital Congregations*, Marian R. Plant (Pilgrim Press, 2009)

You need to read or re-read both books before the class begins. I provided a note-taking packet when I taught you two years ago. Please locate it (I hope it's handy). It will help you add detail from the Basics in Christian Education text as you re-read it. Be sure to bring it to class with you.

So, as you read/re-read the texts, make notes or mark up your books with this in mind: "Before I ever decide what I want to do, I want to know what the "basics" of faith formation and Christian education are."

Post Class Reflection & Project Options (To be turned in to Tisha – tbrown@wcucc.org by May 15, 2018)

Choose either the Reflection or the Project Option for this session. If none of these options resonates with you, feel free to suggest an alternative that would support and enhance your learning goals.

Post Class Reflection Assignment Options:

- 1) Describe the role of faith formation in the current life of your congregation. Now reflect in writing on the understanding of faith formation's role that you have evolved through your study and class work in The Art of Faith Formation. Finally, review the faith formation project you developed. How does the project reflect your evolved understanding of the role of faith formation in your congregation?

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- 2) Describe the assumptions you had before taking this class about methods that are best/worst for nurturing faith formation. Do this for at least two different age levels. Remember, “adults” is not a single age level, nor is “children” or “youth”!
Now, identify the process(es) you used in developing your faith formation project.
Finally, reflect in writing on how expanded knowledge and understanding of age-appropriate methods informed the formation of your project.

The Practical Project for this session is:

- 1) Briefly describe the faith formation project you created (or developed) as part of The Art of Faith Formation. Reflect in writing on gifts for faith formation you knowingly used or discovered along the way as you midwived your project idea into life. In the coming year, put some element of your project into practice in the life of your congregation. How might you identify faith formation gifts in others and recruit them to participate in helping you bring an element of your project to life?

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The Art of Pastoral Care, November 3-4, 2017

Instructor: Rev. Stephen Russell, Retired Pastor and Chaplain

Session Preparation (to be completed prior to each session)

Read: *Pastoral Care: An Essential Guide* by John Patton

Come prepared to describe a pastoral care visit that you experienced at a crucial time in your own life. Consider the following: What was the experience or situation? Who visited you? What happened during the visit? Were there any religious interventions such as scripture reading or prayer? What went well? Was there anything that did not go well? Were there any surprises or new learnings?

Please remember to share only what is comfortable for you to share, in other words, you may not want to choose the most critical or challenging moment of your life to share with the group.

Post Class Reflection & Project Options (To be turned in to Tisha – tbrown@wcucc.org by May 15, 2018)

Choose either the Reflection or the Project Option for this session. If none of these options resonates with you, feel free to suggest an alternative that would support and enhance your learning goals.

Post Class Reflection Assignment:

Reflect on these themes: What is purpose of Pastoral Care in the life of a congregation? How has your understanding of the purpose of Pastoral Care and the skills needed to do effective pastoral care been influenced by the book you read and by the discussions and instruction in the class? Reflection papers should be 3-5 pages in length.

The Practical Project for this session is:

Go with your pastor on a pastoral care visit as described below.

1. Talk with your pastor about which type of visit he/she would be most comfortable including you on (baptismal preparation or pre-wedding consultation, a “new member” conversation, visit to a nursing home, a private home, the hospital etc. If he/she is open to including you in a pastoral care visit proceed with the following:
2. Meet with your pastor before the visit to talk with him/her about how they approach the different types of visits (baptism, wedding, hospital, etc.) –

For wedding/pre-baptism visits discuss the following questions and any others you may have:

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- What does your pastor do to prepare for these visits?
- What does he/she ask the parents or the engaged couple to do in preparation?
- What is the congregation's approach to non-member baptisms or weddings? How does that differ, if at all, from the approach to baptism or weddings for members?
- What is your pastor's baptismal theology?
- What is your pastor's understanding of the role of the Pastor and the church when it comes to performing weddings?
- Any other questions you might have about preparing to conduct a baptism or a wedding.

For other types of visits discuss the following questions and any others you may have:

- How does your pastor prepare for these visits?
- What is your Pastor or your congregation's approach to confidentiality when it comes to pastoral care visits? What information can you share with your pastor or with others and what information are you expected to keep confidential between yourself and the one you're visiting?
- How and when will you pray with the person you are visiting?
- Discuss how you might respond to the unique situation of the person you are visiting – are they lonely, are they experiencing grief or loss, are they physically or mentally ill?
- Consider whether or not there might be something you could bring with you to help the visit go well (poem or scripture passage to read, short story or piece of music to share etc.),
- Consider how long you should stay and how to begin and end the visit.
- It might be useful to discuss these things with your pastor before the visit and receive his/her guidance

3. After the visit, debrief the experience with your pastor. What happened? Were there any surprises? What went well? Was there anything that did not go well? Were there any surprises or new learnings? What additional questions arose for you during the visit?

4. Turn in a 3 page reflection paper on this project **by May 15, 2018**. Describe what you did and share your reflection on the experience. What did you learn? What additional questions do you have? What, if anything would you do the same or different from what your pastor did?

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The Art of Worship, January 19-20, 2018

Instructor: Rev. Bryan Sirchio, Pastor, Musician, Author

A note from Bryan: Prior to our class experience pay close attention to experiences in worship that do what you think and want worship should do/be for you. Note these, remember them, and be ready to share them and unpack them in class.

Session Preparation (to be completed prior to each session)

Books to read prior to class experience:

Required:

1. The Work Of The People: What We Do In Worship And Why, by Marlea Gilbert, Christopher Grundy, Eric T. Myers, & Stephanie Perdew.
2. The 6 Marks of Progressive Christian Worship Music, By Bryan Sirchio

Suggested:

3. Think Like A Filmmaker: Sensory-Rich Worship Design For Unforgettable Messages, By Dr. Marcia McFee.
4. Brim: Creative Overflow in Worship Design, By Andra Moran and Suzanne Castle

Post Class Reflection & Project Options (To be turned in to Tisha – tbrown@wcucc.org by May 15, 2018)

Choose one Reflection or one Project Option for this session. If none of these options resonates with you, feel free to suggest an alternative that would support and enhance your learning goals.

Post Class Reflection Assignment Options (Choose One) Reflection papers should be 3-5 pages in length.

1. Describe a worship service that is particularly meaningful to you and in which you truly felt that you “worshipped.” Now that you’ve learned more about different aspects of worship and what it is that we are trying to help make possible for people, what was done well and on purpose that “worked” for you? What was it specifically that “happened” that caused you to experience a profound sense of worship.

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2. Describe a worship service that fell flat completely for you. What, in your opinion, went “wrong?” What was missing. What essential things were not addressed or done on purpose or effectively?
3. Same as the previous question, but make this one about a service that you helped created and that still fell flat. What did you learn from this?

The Practical Project Options for this Session are (Choose One):

1. Visit a worshipping community of some kind that is significantly different from your home church in terms of the worshipping style. Was there anything this community did liturgically that taught you something important? If so, what was it, and what did it teach you? Write a 3 page reflection on your visit and these questions.
2. At this point in your journey, what kind of worship liturgy and experience do you long for most? If you could create your ideal worshipping community, list the outline of the worship service liturgy you would put together to help create the environment in which the kind of worship you long to experience would be most likely to take place. Share your worship liturgy and a 2-3 page explanation of why you made the choices you did.

Take it a step further (optional but probably a lot of fun)...

- If your pastor is open to this experiment, lead your congregation or a small group in your church in the worship service you’ve designed. If you’re able to conduct this experiment turn in your worship liturgy and a brief discussion of how and why you developed it as you did. Also, discuss the experience of leading people in this liturgy and what you would do differently next time.
- You might also consider leading a small group through your worship liturgy in some other setting – at your home, in a café or other public place. If you do this, turn in your worship liturgy and a brief discussion of how and why you developed it as you did. Also, discuss the experience of leading people in this liturgy and what you would do differently next time.

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The Art of Proclamation/Preaching, March 2-3, 2018

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Mark Yurs, Pastor at Salem, UCC in Verona

Session Preparation (to be completed prior to each session)

Pre-class Assignment:

Read: *Four Pages of the Sermon* by Paul Scott Wilson

Bring a draft of a sermon to class. It does not have to be a sermon you've preached before. Use the guidance in the book to help you develop your draft. These will be used for discussion in the class itself.

Post Class Reflection & Project Options (To be turned in to Tisha – tbrown@wcucc.org by May 15, 2018)

Choose either the Reflection or the Project Option for this session. If none of these options resonates with you, feel free to suggest an alternative that would support and enhance your learning goals.

Post Class Reflection Assignment:

Reflection papers should be 3-5 pages in length.

In your reflection paper, reflect on these themes: What is the role and purpose of a sermon in worship? What is the role of the preacher? How has your understanding of the role and purpose of the sermon and the role of preacher been influenced by the book you read and by the discussions and instruction in the class?

The Practical Project for this session is:

Preach a sermon you have prepared in your home congregation on a Sunday when your pastor will also be there and invite feedback from your pastor and members of the congregation using the suggestions below. Make a video recording of the sermon portion of the worship service.

- A couple of weeks before you are scheduled to preach, find a minimum of 3 people you trust plus your pastor who will listen attentively to your sermon and provide you with constructive feedback after worship.
- Give them a copy of the sermon evaluation form ahead of time to help them focus their listening and their feedback. The form is included in this document and can be found on the Lay Academy website – www.wcucc.org/layacademy.
- Meet briefly with the small group of people you selected immediately after worship. Ask one of them to take notes on what people say so that you can focus on listening. Listen to their

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feedback and receive their guidance seeking ways that you can grow and mature as a preacher and preparer of sermons. Discuss the 4 main areas on the sermon evaluation form folks have filled out. Collect their sermon evaluation forms for future reference.

- Watch the video of your own sermon and give yourself an evaluation based on the same sermon evaluation form.
- Write a brief reflection on this experience. What did you learn? What was this experience like? How will you use what you've learned as you grow into the role of preacher?
- Turn in the video of your sermon and your reflection on this process to Mark Yurs (myurs@salemchurchverona.org) and Tisha Brown (tbrown@wcucc.org) **by May 15, 2018**

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Sermon Evaluation Worksheet

Name of Preacher: _____

Name of Evaluator: _____

Directions: Rank the preacher on every main category below, and include any notes you feel would be helpful to the preacher in explaining the score you gave. For the ranking, use the following scale: 4 (excellent), 3 (good), 2 (fair), 1 (poor).

CLARITY.....()

- Was the purpose of this sermon clear?
- Did the sermon follow a logical sequence of thought?
- Did the introduction really introduce the topic addressed?
- Did the conclusion genuinely conclude the topic addressed?

Comment on Clarity:

IMPORTANCE()

- Was this sermon about a topic that really matters?
- Was the sermon given a true-to-life application?
- Did this sermon make an effective use of scripture?
- Was this sermon theologically appropriate?

Comment on Importance:

INTEREST()

- Did the sermon capture and keep your interest?
- Did the sermon make effective use of illustrations or other material?
- Were words used meaningfully and creatively?
- Did the sermon employ appealing images?

Comment on Interest:

DELIVERY.....()

- Was the preacher free from undue attachments to notes or manuscript?
- Did the preacher seem at home in the pulpit or ill-at-ease?
- Was the preacher's voice pleasing in terms of volume, tone, pitch, variety, and pace?
- Were the preacher's gestures meaningful and in tune with the sermon?

Comment on Delivery:

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Sermon Evaluation Worksheet (P. 2)

The best thing about this sermon:

The area in which most improvement is needed:

Any other comments you'd like to share?

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The Art of Discernment, April 27-28, 2018

Instructors: Rev. Dr. Sandra Graham, Alverno College; Dr. Patricia Jensen, Rev. Tisha Brown

Session Description:

During this session you will have ample opportunities to reflect on your Lay Academy journey to this point and to prayerfully consider the road ahead.

Session Preparation (to be completed prior to each session)

To Be Determined

Post Class Reflection & Project Options (To be turned in to Tisha – tbrown@wcucc.org by May 15, 2018)

Choose either the Reflection or the Project Option for this session. If none of these options resonates with you, feel free to suggest an alternative that would support and enhance your learning goals.

Post Class Reflection Assignment:

What are your next steps? How will you continue to discern God's presence and the Spirit's call in your life? What additional support do you need? How will you gain that support?

The Practical Project for this session is (Choose One):

1. Gather a small group of trusted people to serve as an accountability or discernment circle with you and for you and one another. Have at least one group session and reflect briefly on how it went and what you will do differently the next time.
2. Teach what you have learned about discernment to others in your congregation.