

EUCCHARISTIC VISITOR TRAINING

“EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR THE MINISTRY OF EUCCHARISTIC VISITOR”

**DIOCESE OF SOUTHEAST FLORIDA
2008**



*“The gifts of God for the people of God.
Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,
And feed on him in your hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving.”*

These materials are intended as a guideline for training Eucharistic Visitors in parishes throughout the Dioceses of Southeast Florida. Originally a nine-hour course divided into three separate three-hour sessions, the coursework materials have been stream-lined to fit into a one day program. Each facilitator brings their own gifts and graces to the coursework in addition to the enclosed materials. In light of that, you may wish to use your own meditations and reflections as part of the journey with your individual parish.

Books Required: *With Burning Hearts: A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life*
 by Henri Nouwen
 A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers
 by Beth Wickenberg Ely

- I. Welcome and Introduction of Instructor/Students
 - A. Sign-in Sheets
 - B. Review of Course Outline
- II. Morning Prayer
- III. **Session 1: *With Burning Hearts* – Henri Nouwen DVD**
- IV. Break
- V. Small Group Discussions on Five Questions – *With Burning Hearts* (Appendix A)
- VI. *The Bread of Life: A Meditation* by The Rev. Celeste Cox (Appendix B)
- VII. Lunch or Break
- VIII. **Session 2: Ministry of the Presence & Practical Application of Visits**
 - A. What Does It Mean to Care? The Basics of Listening and the Ministry of the Presence (Appendix C)
 1. Listening
 2. Caring for the Hospitalized
 3. Confidentiality
 4. Ministering to the Elderly
 5. Nursing Home Visits
 6. Ministering to Those Grieving
 - B. Break
 - C. Small Group Role Play and Discussion (Appendix D)
 - D. Eucharistic Visits
 1. Preparation of Eucharistic Visitor (Appendix E)
 - a. Canon 4: Of Licensed Ministries
 - b. Set Appointments for Home Visits
 - c. Practice - Administration of Sacrament using “*Service Under Special Circumstance*” - BCP 396
 - E. Questions/Discussion
- IX. Closing Prayer

Appendix A
With Burning Hearts Group Discussion Questions

1. We have just viewed Henri Nouwen's ***With Burning Hearts***. What word, phrase, or image in the film, or in your reading of the book, caught your attention? For now, just name the word, phrase, or image without elaborating in any way. Listen carefully to one another.
 2. Now, take a few moments to consider where this word, phrase, or image touches your life today. What may it be calling you to? Or, what may it be affirming in your life or ministry?
 3. Jesus became known to the two disciples in the breaking of the bread. In the film, Nouwen observes that when they eat this bread, when they "take in" the Lord in this most intimate communion "around the table", he vanishes from their sight. Yet in that moment they know he is with them – dwelling in their innermost being. What do you make of this? How might it be possible for us, individually and corporately, to grow in this deep spiritual awareness of the indwelling Christ?
 4. From the holy table of celebration at the service of the Eucharist, we the Body of Christ, send you, a member of that Body, to the sick and homebound. You bring to our friends and neighbors the consecrated bread and wine. What else do you bring to those persons? What do you want to bring?
 5. At the end of the film, and also in the last chapter of the book, Nouwen speaks of the return of the disciples to Jerusalem to tell the others, to share the news. "Communion is not the end. Mission is." And "...mission is not only to go and tell others about the Risen Lord, but also to receive that witness from those to whom we are sent." What do these two statements mean to you in light of what we are about here today? Do they say anything you did not expect?
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Appendix B
The Bread of Life Meditation
By The Rev. Celeste Cox

You are here because the Lord our loving God has called you to a special ministry of the Lord's Table. Your call is to extend that Table, really, to make it as wide and as long as it really is in the eyes of God. The Church sends you out as apostles, because the meaning of *apostolos* in the Greek is "one who is sent." That's you. Sent from the table of celebration, sent to the sick and homebound. And by this ministry, you proclaim to these persons the New Testament truth that nothing – neither things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth nor anything else in all creation, cancer, stroke, AIDS, permanent loss of mobility – nothing! – will be able to separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:39) They may not be able to attend the Sunday service as they had always done, but they are still gathered to Jesus' Table, gathered by you where they are fed the spiritual food - the Bread of Life.

I've had the privilege on many occasions to break bread and share the cup with men and women and with their families – in living rooms, in bedrooms, in hospital rooms, at the hospice center, in nursing homes and rehabilitation centers. In all of these places, of course, we stand on holy ground since the compassionate presence of God is there, though at times hidden in plain sight. And as we all know, where two or three are gathered together in Jesus' name, we are able to honor and celebrate his holy presence among us.

I've thought about what it is that I do in these sacred places, and what it is that I may bring to my Eucharistic ministry, and I wanted to share that with you today, as you embark on a new phase of your Eucharistic life. We are not all cut from the same cloth nor do we experience things the same way. I've had the benefit of a variety of soul friends along the way, so I thought I would extend my soul friendship to you, my fellow Eucharistic Ministers, in the Christian spirit of support, encouragement, and guidance.

“The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.” These words of invitation at the Holy Eucharist have helped form me for my Eucharistic Ministry. I know that before I minister to others, I must take in the spiritual food. I must be strengthened and nourished and transformed by the Bread of Heaven and the Cup of Salvation. And I must feed on him by faith.

But what is faith? It is, of course, a personal relationship with God in Christ that, like any other relationship, to be viable requires time and commitment beyond Sunday morning, or Monday morning, or any other morning. Faith, by the way, is not about so-called liberal or conservative theology. It’s not fundamentally about doctrine or social activism or where we stand on this issue or that. It’s not about how we approach the Scriptures. Faith is relationship – a PERSONAL relationship with the Lord. He asked the disciples – and he asks us every day – Who do you say that I am? In other words, Who is this Jesus in the context of MY life, MY joys and MY sorrows? Do I know Him well? Do I spend time with Him every day, in quiet prayer of the heart? Do I owe my heart to Him through the Scriptures – for God is present in the Holy Word, and the Scripture too must be “eaten,” chewed on, taken in? Do I seek him where he has taught us to find him – in the sick, the dying, the prisoner of addiction, the social outcast? In loved ones? (Henri Nouwen mentioned how difficult it can be relating on a faith level to those closest to us.) Do we seek Him in one another? Because that’s where He said He would be – in the midst of us.

I am to feed on him by faith, the Church instructs, feed on Him in these ways, so that when I receive Him in the Bread and the Wine, I’ll know the One I’m meeting. I don’t want merely to peruse his resume! No, I want to invite him to be with me, as Henri Nouwen pointed out. And I want to be intentional, disciplined and passionate about inviting him into my being and my life. I’ve learned there is most definitely a place for passion in the relationship of faith – a passion that reflects the joyful mystery of God’s passionate love in giving Jesus to us; and a passion that reflects the sorrowful mystery of the passion, the suffering, of the Lord Christ on behalf of our broken world. My life is bound up in

both, as is yours. And I can tell you that God uses me most effectively when I am in touch with both my passionate joys and sorrows, when I've articulated them openly to the Lord in prayer, and oftentimes, to others (my companions on the way). For, as Paul said, we are to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ – the law of Love. It's not possible to minister effectively if you do not allow yourself to be ministered to.

At the Holy Table, when we break bread together on our knees, Christ is present to assuage the hunger of our hearts. But I've learned that we must come to that Table seeking, seeking, seeking to know the Lord of our lives – and I mean our lives together AND our individual lives – seeking to know more nearly *who* He is we receive in the Bread and Wine. Already holding Him in our hearts, we open ourselves to receive even more of Him. To receive more of His Love which sustains our faith, which encourages hope and engenders compassion – His Compassion – working in us. To be Eucharistic Ministers, the ones who distributes the Bread and the Wine, the Body and Blood, WE must first be filled and fortified by that holy food. Why? That we may become Bread ourselves; that we may feed others. Why else would we come to the Table, but to know the Lord more clearly, to assimilate Him into our being, to take Him into our hearts? And then – to give Him away, in Love.

There's a passage from Paul that's beautiful and mysterious – from 2Cor.3:18. He writes, "We all...beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another." Paul is writing poetically about the transformation we experience in knowing Christ. Which is knowing him through the scriptures, through prayer, through life in community where He dwells among us; knowing him in the sick and the prisoner; knowing him, yes in ourselves. Knowing him, of course, in the Holy Eucharist, and recognizing therein that we receive all that He has to give. At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "This is my body, which is given for you. The New Testament Greek word for "body" is "soma", which means more than the physical body. So what Jesus was really saying is, "This (bread) is my soma, all of me, all that I am. It is my life, and I give it for you. In love, I give all that I am – for you.

Do this breaking of the bread, this drinking of the cup, in remembrance of my life, of my love for you.” This is the One who invites us to commune with Him at the Eucharist. And when we receive him, take him into ourselves, we are empowered to be more and more like Him, to be the beloved of God incarnate in the world. Nourished at the Lord’s table, feeding on Him by faith, we are, indeed, changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another.

I’ve shared these few reflections with you on the Eucharistic life. But I’ll leave you with those words of invitation from our sacred Liturgy: “The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him, in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.”

If you want to live the Eucharistic Life, feed on him in your hearts, by faith. If you want to serve as a Eucharistic Minister, feed on him in your hearts, by faith. The rest will come; we’ll equip you with the foundations in this workshop. The concerns you may have about what to do, what to say, how to do this, and when to do that, will all be resolved in good time, in God’s time. But feed on him always – in your hearts, by faith. (September, 2000)

Appendix C

What Does It Mean to Care?

The Basics of Listening and the Ministry of the Presence

“Preach the Gospel always. When necessary, use words.”

(St. Francis of Assisi)

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is CRUCIAL to establish trust between the EV and the hospitalized, home-bound or nursing home resident. Once the person returns to the congregation, the last thing they want to hear at coffee hour are details regarding their illness, family situation or personal information. The EV should report any **life-threatening** situations to their Rector or Deacon overseeing the EV program in the parish IMMEDIATELY. It is the responsibility of the clergy to report these situations to family members or social service authorities.

The Commandments for Effective Listening:

1. STOP TALKING! You can't listen if you are talking. Polonius (Hamlet):
“Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice.”
2. PUT THE SPEAKER AT EASE. Help the speaker to feel that he/she is free to talk. This is often called “creating a supportive environment.”
3. SHOW THAT YOU WANT TO LISTEN. Look and act interested. Making a personal “mental laundry list” is obvious to the person you are visiting. Don't glance at the television or another person or don't pick up a magazine. Look into the person's eyes. (EXCEPTION: Be aware of what is acceptable on a cultural level. Looking into someone's eyes may be disrespectful in some cultural contexts.)
4. REMOVE DISTRACTIONS. Would it be quieter with the door closed or the television turned off?
5. SIT AT EYE LEVEL. If the person is in bed, this might mean moving furniture or sitting on the arm of a couch. Whatever it takes, do not stand OVER the person you are visiting.

6. EMPATHIZE WITH THE PERSON. Try to put yourself in his/her world. This might give you a different point of view. Listen to *understand*, rather than to cheer up or change.
7. BE PATIENT. Don't rush the speaker. Allow plenty of time. Don't interrupt. Allow the speaker to find his/her own words. The speaker might be experiencing difficulty with speech. If the person is physically able, allow him/her to finish what he/she is saying.
8. ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS. Don't assume the person does or does not want to talk about the illness or even death, or children, grandchildren or a spouse.
9. LISTEN FOR THE *MESSAGE*, NOT THE WORDS. Try to understand the emotion behind the speaker's words more than the literal meaning of the words.
10. REFLECT THE FEELINGS AND MESSAGE. This will let the speaker know you understand and care.
11. LISTEN ATTENTIVELY. Do not formulate your answer as the person is speaking. Sometimes one does not even need to answer!
12. BE AWARE. Note your mental, physical and psychological state. What is going on within yourself? What are you reacting to?
13. RELAX. Be yourself. You are *there* to be *there* – you do not have to do anything else.
14. STOP TALKING! This the first and last commandment, because all other commandments depend on it!

Listening For Feelings:

1. I wish the doctor would tell me what's going on.
2. We're so far from home.
3. See you tomorrow – maybe.
4. My children are so young.
5. I wish my husband and I could really talk.
6. My roommate had the same operation and he went home today.

7. I always felt this couldn't happen to me.
8. I even find it hard to pray now.
9. It isn't easy to be alone in the room with him.
10. I never smoked or drank. Why did this happen to me?
11. There is a history of cancer in my family
12. The nurses seem to forget that we are human.
13. This makes you think about what you have done with your life.
14. I wonder what I've done to deserve this.
15. If only I had made her do something about that cough!
16. You have no idea how it feels to be here.
17. Talking to you has made a big difference.

Ministering to the Elderly and in Nursing Homes:

One of the best examples of how one relates to someone who is elderly or resides in a nursing home/care facility is illustrated in the following eloquent poem written by a Scottish woman. It was published in the *News Magazine* of the North Ireland Association for Mental Health.

An Old Lady's Poem

What do you see, nurses, what do you see?

What are thinking when you're looking at me?

A crabby old woman, not very wise, uncertain of habit, with faraway eyes?

Who dribbles her food and makes no reply when you say in a loud voice, "I do wish you'd try!"

Who seems not to notice the things that you do, and forever is losing a stocking or shoe.

Who, resisting or not, lets you do as you will, with bathing and feeding, the long day to fill...

Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see?

Then open your eyes, nurses; you're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still, as I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.

I'm a small child of ten with a father and mother, brothers and sisters, who love
one another.

A young girl of sixteen, with wings on her feet, dreaming that soon now a lover
she'll meet.

A bride soon at twenty – my heart gives a leap, remembering the vows that I
promised to keep.

At twenty-five now, I have young of my own, who need me to guide, and a secure
happy home.

A woman of thirty, my young now grown fast, bound to each other with ties that
should last.

At forty, my young sons have grown and are gone, but my man's beside me to
see I don't mourn.

At fifty once more, babies play around my knee, again we know children, my
loved one and me.

Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead; I look at the future, I shudder with
dread.

For my young are all rearing young of their own, and I think of the years and the
love that I've known.

I'm now an old woman, and nature is cruel; 'tis just to make old age look like a
fool.

The body, it crumbles, grace and vigor depart, there is now a stone where I once
had a heart.

But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells. And now and again my
battered heart swells.

I remember the joys; I remember the pain. And I'm loving and living life over
again.

I think of the years all too few, gone too fast, and accept the stark fact that
nothing can last.

So open you eyes, nurses, open and see, not a crabby old woman; look closer;
see ME!

Common Myths Overshadowing the Elderly:

1. Myth of Senility. What is often mistaken as senility can be attributed to depression, grief, anxiety, lack of social stimulation, drug tranquilization, lack of proper diet.
2. Myth of “You Can’t Teach An Old Dog New Tricks”. The universities and colleges are filled with adults who have retired from careers. They often outshine their younger counterparts in academic achievement.
3. Myth of Few Problems. Elderly face more stresses in their daily lives than the younger generation. Typical issues the elderly deal with include: loss of friends and family through death; impending death of one’s self; economic inflation in connection with a fixed income; the increasing cost of health care; retirement and a possible resultant feeling of “being useless” feeling of loneliness; the high rate of crime against the elderly; decreasing physical and mental abilities; difficulties with transportation; being forced to move out of one’s home into a smaller dwelling or adult congregant living facility or nursing home.
4. Myth of Chronological Age. “You’re only as old as you feel.” Or a better way to express that might be, “It’s not how old you are, it’s how you are old.” There are people 30 years of age who are “old” and those who are 90 years of age and “young at heart”. Chronological age is not a good indicator of an individual’s physical, mental and/or emotional condition.
5. Myth That Elderly Don’t Appreciate Change. The ability to appreciate “change” is an individual characteristic. Some older people welcome change and some don’t. That is true for all age groups.
6. Myth That Elderly Live in the Past. ALL people talk and think about the past. If older people talk more about the past than younger people do, it is simply because they have more past to talk about! Talking about the past does not preclude someone living totally in the present.

Appendix D
Small Group Role Play and Discussion

Warm-up Exercise

1. Pair up with one person you do not know well. Taking turns, each person tells the other person 3 things they need to know about you to get to know you better.
2. Pair up with another dyad and form a quartet. Each person tells the 3 things that she/he found out about their role-play partner.
3. Pair up with a new person. Take one minute to look at each other carefully. Turn your backs to each other and describe in detail everything that person is wearing. This exercise is to highlight focus, concentration and attention to detail.

Role Playing

1. The group leader assigns parts (Care-giver and Care-receiver)*
2. The group leader describes the situation or what is to be done.
3. The Caregiver and Care-receiver do the role-plays for approximately 4 minutes.
4. Group discussion for about 5 minutes. The group leader invites self-evaluation from the players and feedback from the group. Good questions to ask are: "How did it feel to be the care-receiver?" "How did it feel to be the care-giver?"

*Group Leader options:

1. Allow each pair practice without an audience so they can get used to "playing".
2. **Ask for volunteers instead of assigning roles.**
3. Reverse roles, repeat and do feedback.

NOTE to Group Leader: Be affirming and gentle. Role-playing can bring up experiences that are real. This can be a time for healing for everyone.

Suggested Role Play Situations:

1. The care receiver had surgery and has been in the hospital for one and a half weeks. She/he is very frustrated and angry with the hospital personnel.
2. The care receiver has just learned that she/he has inoperable, terminal cancer. She/he is denying the knowledge, sure that there must be a mistake.
3. The care receiver is an older, home-bound person who is depressed and angry at being alone and doesn't like her/his small room in this particular nursing home or care facility.

Appendix E

Preparation of Eucharistic Visitor

Discussion: *A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers* by Beth Wickenberg Ely

A review of text allows the ministers to learn the practical aspects of serving as a Eucharistic Visitor. This would include use of kits, cleaning, names of items in the kit, etc.

Preparing for Sunday Visitations:

1. Set appointments for home visitations several days in advance. Give patient/home-bound person your name and phone number. Double check with person day of visit before going to the home. Things happen and your visit may need to be rescheduled.
2. Take time for individual prayer/meditation to center yourself prior to visit.
3. Keep hospital visits short. Check with nurses' station to determine if patient is allowed wine. What do you do if the patient can't swallow? It is suggested the EV allow the patient to hold the Communion host in their hand if possible while doing the brief service. Then take the host and dispose of it by burying it in the ground following the visit.
4. Return kits with visitation information (name of person visited, location of visit, time of visit, number of persons present, number receiving communion) to the church according to the instructions provided by your parish.
5. Spend some time 'de-compressing' after your visit with prayer/meditation in thanksgiving for the gifts given and received during the visit.

Practice with Communion Kits:

Instructed time should be spent practicing with the Communion kit provided to the EV. Direction given for set up, administration of Communion, and the return and cleaning of the kits following the service

Questions and Discussion:

It is suggested time be allotted for questions and discussion of visits to homes, hospitals and nursing facilities.

Practicalities:

1. A copy of the Canons for Eucharistic Visitors should be made available to those being trained.
2. Home visits – it is suggested when the EV is male and visiting a female at home, or visa versa, that he/she take along another person if the one being visited lives alone.
3. It is suggested all EV's attend the *Safeguarding God's Children* course offered by the Diocese.

The Diocese of Southeast Florida

Eucharistic Visitor Ministry

Original License and License Renewal

Eucharistic Visitor is an important lay ministry, responsible for taking the Sacrament of Holy Communion directly from the altar on Sunday mornings to the homes of those unable to attend church through illness or other disability. A person is licensed for three years.

Attendance at Eucharistic Visitor training requires the recommendation and signature of the Rector of the Eucharistic Visitor's parish. The license for a three-year period is issued by the Diocesan Bishop following completion of the training course. Renewal of the license after three years is by notification from the Rector to the Bishop.

The EV classes are offered through the Deaneries of The Diocese of Southeast Florida or through individual parishes by the Rector.

Rector's Recommendation for Training

Name: _____

Parish: _____

Rector's Signature of Recommendation:

Date: _____