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Contemplative Outreach Facilitator Training

*How to Use Facilitator Training
Level 1 Workshop Materials*

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How to Use This Resource

In Gratitude

I would like to begin this introduction by giving credit where that credit is due. The original material from which this workshop grew was developed by Susan Komis, Bonnie Shimizu, and Rebecca Crowley. I am deeply grateful for the influence their ministry has had in my growth as a facilitator. And, a big "Thank you!" to Andy Rawls for his generous spirit and the long hours he lovingly dedicated to taping and editing the sessions.

Nestor de Armas, Centering Prayer Group Facilitator Support Service Team Leader

Introduction

The purpose of this workshop is to empower people with a very strong commitment to the practice of Centering Prayer to facilitate Centering Prayer groups. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the attendee's commitment to the practice. Everything worthwhile we do as facilitators springs from the Prayer.

The workshop consists of 10 sessions. Each session is followed by a period of small group discussion to dig deeper into some aspect of the material presented. One of the best resources available to the attendees is the wisdom the group brings to the workshop. Whatever learning takes place will come primarily from the attendees' willingness to engage in introspection and to share their experiences.

The topics will attempt to deal with the basics of facilitating a Centering Prayer group, dealing with the practical and getting the fundamentals right. The emphasis will be on the application of the topics to our Centering Prayer group experience: what actually happens in a group and in our lives. The workshop that was taped included a session on the Contemplative Outreach website. That session is not included in this workshop.

The 10 Sessions

The workshop will be organized around three topics:

1. Facilitator Attributes, Spirituality, and Skills
2. What a Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know
3. The Facilitator Handbook

These topics are broken down into smaller segments to facilitate discussion:

1. Facilitator Attributes, Spirituality, and Skills
 - a. Part 1
 - i. Spirituality of a Facilitator
 - ii. Desired Attributes of a Facilitator
 - iii. Facilitator Spiritual Preparation

- b. Part 2: Growing as a Facilitator
 - c. Part 3
 - i. Facilitating Faith Sharing
 - ii. Answering Questions
 - iii. Group Dynamics
 - d. Part 4: Large Group Question and Answer Session
2. What a Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know
- a. Part 1
 - i. Foundational Concepts
 - ii. Why, What and How of Centering Prayer Groups
 - iii. Models of Facilitation
 - iv. Tools and Punch lists
 - v. Variety of Centering Prayer Groups
 - b. Part 2
 - i. Getting the Meeting Started
 - ii. Leading the Centering Prayer Period
 - iii. After the Centering Prayer Period
 - iv. Guidelines for Sharing (Handout A)
 - c. Part 3
 - i. Models of Facilitation
 - ii. Facilitator Tools (Handouts B, C and D some of the tools offered under this topic)
 - iii. Variety in Centering Prayer Groups
 - d. Part 4: Large Group Discussion
3. The Facilitator Handbook
- a. Part 1: Handout E - Guide to the Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials
 - b. Part 2, Large Group Discussion

At the end of each session, there is a suggested exercise. These exercises will involve both small and large group discussion. Small groups of two to four people will be formed depending on the exercise. Some of the exercises will involve presentation or discussion of all attendees. These are referred to as large group discussions. Here is a brief introduction to the exercises.

Exercise 1: Personal Reflection Worksheet

The purpose of this exercise is to help the attendees discern the resources they bring to their ministry and the areas they have an opportunity to develop. Invite them to go through the questionnaire with a nonjudgmental attitude and then share their findings with another facilitator.

Exercise 2: Growing as a Facilitator

One of the greatest benefits available to all facilitators is the opportunity for spiritual growth that comes with service. An excellent resource for this growth is faith sharing with other facilitators. This exercise will offer this opportunity.

Exercise 3: Group Dynamics

The purpose of this exercise is to gain insight into possible approaches to difficult dynamics going on in the participants' Centering Prayer groups. This exercise will also form a basis for discussion in Exercises 5 and 6.

Exercise 4: Large Group Sharing

One of the most powerful resources of this workshop are the attendees. We use small group discussions to dig into the issues. We use large group discussions to share the most important findings. Consider using both small group and large group discussions as opportunities for the attendees to practice their facilitator skills. That is to say, assign attendees to facilitate both small group and large group discussions. If you are taking this workshop by yourself, we strongly urge you to do the small group discussion exercises with a mentor.

Exercise 5: Centering Prayer Group's Statement of Purpose

It is very helpful for a Centering Prayer group to have a clear definition of its purpose. This statement is not a strait jacket. It is more like a light house that keeps the group headed in the direction it has chosen. A clear statement of purpose will be especially helpful in avoiding conflicts and encouraging Centering Prayer groups to work together in the future. The purpose of this exercise is to help facilitators lead their Centering Prayer group reach a consensus on why it exists. You may want to visit the group dynamic issues that participants faced in Exercise 4 and ask how a clear group purpose might help with those issues.

Exercise 6: Your Centering Prayer Group's Sharing Guidelines

It is very helpful for a Centering Prayer group to have clear guidelines for sharing. A strong consensus on sharing guidelines helps the group avoid potential conflicts and encourages unity of purpose. The purpose of this exercise is to prepare facilitators to lead a guideline discussion in their group. You may want to visit the group dynamic issues that participants faced in Exercise 4 and ask how a clear group guidelines might help with those issues.

Exercise 7: Introducing Centering Prayer in Less Than Five Minutes

It is important for us to extend a warm welcome to visitors. Key aspects of feeling welcomed are knowing what to expect (agenda) and having some basic understanding of what Centering Prayer is. The purpose of this exercise is to help facilitators begin to prepare a brief, less than five-minute, introduction to Centering Prayer.

Exercise 8: Large Group Sharing

One of the most powerful resources of this workshop are the attendees. We use small group discussions to dig into the issues. We use large group discussions to share the most important findings. Consider using both small group and large group discussions as opportunities for the attendees to practice their facilitator skills. That is to say, assign attendees to facilitate both small group and large group discussions. If you are taking this workshop by yourself, we strongly urge you to do the small group discussion exercises with a mentor.

Exercise 9: Guide to Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials

One of the most important aspects of facilitating small group discussions is to locate resource materials for those discussions. The purpose of this exercise is to acquaint facilitators with the resources found in the Guide to Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials and the Facilitator Handbook. If you want to make this fun, have the attendees award prizes for creativity, for broad use of Contemplative Outreach resources, and for meeting the needs of the group.

Exercise 10: Large Group Sharing

This will be the final wrap up session. It is a marvelous opportunity for people to share what the workshop has meant to them. We urge you to open the discussion to any question they may still have about facilitating a Centering Prayer group.

Possible Agendas

One of the benefits of this program is the flexibility in agendas. You will be the best judge of what agenda is best for your group. We have included a listing of the duration of each session to help you plan your own agenda. We have also enclosed a suggested agenda for a one day workshop. We believe a Facilitator Formation Level 1 workshop can be held as a weekend-long retreat/workshop by including more Centering Prayer periods, time for reflection, and by expanding the small group exercises and the large group discussions. The workshop can also be offered as a series of half-day workshops over a period of weeks. Finally, this workshop may be used as a self-study by one individual. When used individually, we recommend the participant work with a mentor to discuss their questions and share their exercises. You are encouraged to customize this workshop to your needs to the fullest extent possible, including coming up with your own exercises and large group discussion topics.

Session Duration

We have included a Session Duration document that you can customize to meet the needs of your particular program.

A blessing

Ephesians 3: 16 – 21

Facilitator Formation Training Online Videos

Download Instructions

The videos are available on the Contemplative Outreach website:

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/facilitator-formation-online-level-1-workshop-access/>

To **watch** the video, click the Play icon in the video (bottom left)

To **download** the video, click the Download video button below the module.

If you have additional questions please email <mailto:webmaster@coutreach.org>.

Exercise 1 Personal Reflection Worksheet

(For personal use only – not to be handed in)

This exercise is offered to help you (1) reflect on the motivations that may be influencing your service and (2) identify your current strengths and opportunities for growth.

Instructions: Use the questions below to reflect on how you see yourself on a scale of 1 to 5. 1 indicates a lower ability. 5 indicates a higher ability. Circle the appropriate number.

1. Do I listen well in most situations? 1 2 3 4 5
2. Am I able to respond to ideas and personalities in a non-judgmental way? 1 2 3 4 5
3. Do I put people at ease in a group? 1 2 3 4 5
4. Am I sensitive to the needs and feelings of others in a group? 1 2 3 4 5
5. Do my personal feelings and prejudices interfere with my listening and communicating skills? 1 2 3 4 5
6. What you have learned about yourself that you can use to help the members of your CP Group support one another in transformation in Christ?
7. Share the results of question 6 with another facilitator in the workshop.
8. In the next couple of days, take time to write down specific ways you can apply your strengths and specific behaviors you would like to develop.

Use the back of this worksheet if you need additional room to write down your reflections.

Exercise 2

Growing as a Facilitator

The purpose of this exercise is to reflect on how the role of facilitator has transformed you and what the influencing factors may have been.

1. Form small discussion groups of three or four participants. If the number of attendees is fewer than six, do the entire exercise as one group. If you are taking this alone, find another facilitator deeply committed to practicing Centering Prayer and do this exercise with them.
2. If working in small groups, select someone to be your group's facilitator for this exercise. This person should ask for a volunteer to take concise notes that will summarize your group's wisdom.
3. Spend a few minutes self-reflecting on the following:
 - a. How have you grown as a facilitator over the past year?
 - b. How did this growth come about? What or whom contributed to this growth?
4. Share your insights within your group.
5. Reconvene as a large group and share with large group.

Exercise 3

Group Dynamics

The purpose of this exercise is to gain insight into possible approaches to difficult dynamics going on in your Centering Prayer group.

1. Form small discussion groups of three or four participants. If the number of attendees is fewer than six, do the entire exercise as one group. If you are taking this alone, find another facilitator deeply committed to practicing Centering Prayer and do this exercise with them.
2. If working in small groups, select someone to be your group's facilitator for this exercise. This person should ask for a volunteer to take concise notes that summarize will your group's wisdom.
3. Invite members of the group to share a difficult dynamic going on in their group. Group members are then encouraged to share their personal experiences in a similar situation.
4. It is important to keep in mind that we are not trying to solve the problem. We are simply sharing similar experiences and insights that might be helpful to the speaker. Ultimately, it is up to the speaker to prayerfully discern the appropriate response.
5. Help your reporter summarize the major points from your group's sharing on a flip chart. If we have enough time, we will reconvene as a large group and share.

Exercise 4

Large Group Sharing

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage a large group discussion and review of all the issues presented to date. This is an excellent opportunity to allow the wisdom of the group to inform all participants. Simply ask for questions or clarifications. Consider refraining from answering the questions yourself, but rather, invite the participants to respond *out of their own personal experience*. If at the end of a given discussion you feel strongly that you have an insight that would be beneficial to the group, go ahead and share it. You may also use this time for each small group to share the result of their discussions during Exercise 2.

If you are taking this alone, consider sharing your questions with an experienced facilitator you know.

Exercise 5

Centering Prayer Group's Statement of Purpose

It is very helpful for a Centering Prayer group to have a clear definition of its purpose. This statement is not a strait jacket; it is more like a light house that keeps the group headed in the direction it has chosen. A clear statement of purpose will be especially helpful in avoiding conflicts and encouraging your group to work together in the future. The purpose of this exercise is to help you lead your Centering Prayer group in reaching a consensus on why it exists.

Break up into small groups of three to four participants. Select a facilitator.

1. Have each member share what they believe is the purpose of their own group. Why do they meet? Here is an example. (This example is offered *only* to assist your discussion. It is not offered as the purpose statement for any group. Each group is invited to engage in reaching consensus on their own statement of purpose.)

We come together as a community for personal and individual prayer, to experience God's presence in quiet and peace, and to support each other in this transformational journey.

You may find the Vision of Contemplative Outreach helpful:

We embrace the process of transformation in Christ, both in ourselves and in others, through the practice of Centering Prayer.

And the following commentary on its Vision:

The fundamental purpose of Centering Prayer and of Contemplative Outreach is to further the knowledge and experience of God's love in the consciousness of the human family.

2. Be prepared to share your group's various purpose statements during the large group discussion that follows.
3. After the workshop, take the time to write a draft of your Centering Prayer group's purpose.
4. When you are back with your own Centering Prayer group, invite them to clarify the group's purpose.
 - a. Explain why clarity of purpose is helpful
 - b. Share your draft of a purpose statement. Make it clear it is being offered only *as an example to facilitate the group's discussion*.
 - c. Invite each member to share their version of the group's purpose. As a starter, begin the discussion by having each person share what they think is an important aspect of the group's purpose.
 - d. At the end of the discussion, invite them to prayerfully reflect on the group's purpose during the week and be prepared to share their draft of a purpose statement with the rest of the group.
 - e. Over time, facilitate your group to reach consensus on a statement that clarifies why you meet weekly.
 - f. Periodically, as appropriate for your group, read the group's Statement of Purpose and ask if it still applicable. If not, facilitate a consensus exercise on a new Statement of Purpose that is more in line with the group's purpose.

Exercise 6

Your Centering Prayer Group's Sharing Guidelines

It is very helpful for a Centering Prayer group to have clear guidelines for sharing. A strong consensus on sharing guidelines helps the group avoid potential conflicts and encourages unity of purpose.

Break up into small groups of three to four participants. Select a facilitator.

1. Review Handout A – Centering Prayer Group Guidelines for Sharing
2. Ask each member to share which guideline they find particularly helpful.
3. Ask each member to share additional guidelines that might be helpful.
4. As a group, come to a consensus on the top seven guidelines.
5. Be prepared to share your top seven guidelines in the large group discussion.

When you are back with your Centering Prayer group, facilitate your group through a consensus process to create a new set of guidelines or to reaffirm or update its current guidelines.

Exercise 7

Introducing Centering Prayer in Less Than Five Minutes

It is important for all members to extend a warm welcome to visitors. A key aspect of feeling welcomed is knowing what to expect (agenda) and to have some basic understanding of what Centering Prayer is. The purpose of this exercise is to get you started in preparing a brief (less than five-minute) introduction to Centering Prayer.

Break up into groups of two participants.

Take about five minutes for each participant write some very brief notes on how to share the Prayer by briefly answering the following questions:

1. How did you first find out about Centering Prayer?
2. Why did you decide to try it?
3. What difference has it made in your life?

Have each participant role-play, sharing their Centering Prayer experience as a way to introduce Centering Prayer to a visitor. Have the “visitor” give some feedback on what they found helpful and perhaps make some recommendations for improvement. If either participant has another way of briefly sharing what Centering Prayer is to visitors, share this too.

Be prepared to share in a large group discussion any insights from this exercise (or from past experience) that you find particularly helpful in briefly introducing Centering Prayer to visitors.

Exercise 8

Large Group Sharing

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage a large group discussion and review of all the issues presented to date. This is an excellent opportunity to allow the wisdom of the group to inform all participants. Simply ask for questions or clarifications. Consider refraining from answering the questions yourself; rather, invite the participants to respond *out of their own personal experience*. If at the end of a given discussion you feel strongly that you have an insight that would be beneficial to the group, go ahead and share it.

If you are taking this alone, consider sharing your questions with an experienced facilitator you know.

Exercise 9

Guide to Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials

One of the most important aspects of facilitating small group discussions is to locate resource materials for those discussions. The purpose of this exercise is to acquaint you with how the Guide to Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials (Handout E) might be useful in locating resources for small group discussion topics.

Break up into small groups of three to four participants. Select a facilitator.

Imagine you are a group that has come together as a result of an Introduction to Centering Prayer Workshop that your church held for your church eight weeks ago. You have finished the six sessions that follow the Introduction to Centering Prayer Workshop. The experience has been enriching and you have decided you want to continue as a Centering Prayer Group that meets every Wednesday at 6 p.m. for Centering Prayer and then discussion on Centering Prayer and the contemplative dimension of the Gospel. You have already agreed that you want to use a variety of topics and resources: books, DVDs and audio CDs. Using Handout E, the Guide to Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials, and the Appendices at the end of the Facilitator Handbook (Handout F), put together an annual plan composed of four programs of several weeks each.

Be prepared to present your plan during a large group discussion.

Exercise 10

Large Group Sharing

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage a group discussion and review of all the issues presented to date. This is an excellent opportunity to allow the wisdom of the group to inform all participants. Simply ask for questions or clarifications. Consider refraining from answering the questions yourself; rather, invite the participants to respond *out of their own personal experience*. If at the end of a given discussion you feel strongly that you have an insight that would be beneficial to the group, go ahead and share it.

If you are taking this alone, consider sharing your questions with an experienced facilitator you know.

Handout A

Centering Prayer Group Guidelines for Sharing

- Participate with utmost charity
- Listen to others from the heart
- Accept each other as we are—non-judgmental
- Seek understanding, not agreement
- Maintain confidentiality and trust
- Speak from own experience—not about ideas or theology
- Okay to be silent
- Facilitator has permission to remind the group when straying or monopolizing
- NOT interrupting when others are speaking
- NOT speaking a second time until all have had a chance to speak
- NOT giving advice
- NOT criticizing

Handout B

ASC Centering Prayer Group Facilitator Bag–Punch List

- Large canvas bag
- Facilitator bag punch list
- Facilitator punch list
- “Welcome! Please enter in Silence” signs
- Laminated Format Explanation
- Music, CD player or iPod, Bluetooth amplifier (fully charged)
- i-Qi Clock and Mediation Timer (Apple app), Android app, or manual timer and gong
- Appropriate readings:
 - ✓ Your own favorite scriptures
 - ✓ *Psalms for Praying*, Nan Merrill
 - ✓ [http://www.faithandworship.com/Celtic Blessings and Prayers.ht](http://www.faithandworship.com/Celtic_Blessings_and_Prayers.ht)
- Votive Candles (or you can use the ones in the Chapel)
- Lighter for candles

Handout C

All Saints' Centering Prayer–Facilitator Punch List

Thank you for agreeing to serve as Facilitator to our Centering Prayer Group. Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

1. Arrive by 5:30 p.m. If the church is not open, call Beth Davis on her cell: (321) 689-5611 and she will get the Sexton to open it.
2. Make sure you phone is on airplane mode, silenced and Bluetooth setting is “on.”
3. Put Bluetooth speaker on “preacher’s podium” and turn on music appropriate for the quiet stillness we seek through Centering Prayer.
4. Adjust lighting as necessary (switches 1-4).
5. Light the candles on the altar (please use plastic sheets to protect altar) and the two large candles in the back of the Chapel.
6. Hang the two Welcome signs (one on the Lyman Door and one on the door leading to the Winderweedle Center).
7. Make sure the Lyman Street door is unlocked by pushing the small button on the side below the lock.
8. Place a several of “Order of Service” handouts on the small table by the aisle.
9. Set up your reading materials on the front seat.
10. At 6:05 p.m., turn off music.
11. Gong once (slow, allow for a moment of silence between gongs).
12. Read the Psalm or prayer.
13. Gong three times.
14. Center for 20 minutes.
15. Gong three times.
16. Turn music back on.
17. After a couple of minutes of music, welcome everyone and invite participants to our Centering Prayer study group at the Winderweedle center. Explain the meeting will adjourn promptly at 7:30 p.m.
18. Turn the music back on.
19. After everyone has exited, turn off altar candles (let them cool off while you pick up) and the two candles at the back of the Chapel.
20. Put “order of service” handouts back in facilitator bag.
21. Put candles back on their rack.
22. Shut off music and put the amplifier back in the facilitator bag.
23. Pick up Welcome signs and put back in facilitator bag.
24. Exit Chapel.

Handout D Order of Service



Centering Prayer Group

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

Welcome to our Centering Prayer Group where we come together as a community to experience God's presence in quiet peace and to support each other on this journey.

We invite you to sit quietly as we consent to God's loving presence and action in our lives.

Our Centering Prayer time will begin in a few minutes with three gongs.

A scripture, or a prayer, will be read.

A gong will invite you to join us in Centering Prayer:

1. Choose a sacred word (for example, Abba, Jesus, or Mercy) as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's loving presence and action within.
2. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word.
3. When engaged with thoughts, return ever so gently to the sacred word.
4. At the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with eyes closed for a couple of minutes

A gong will signal the end of the 20-minute Centering Prayer period.

When you are ready, please exit quietly. From October through June, those of us who like to meet for small group discussions regarding our rich Centering Prayer tradition and its potential to enrich our lives and the lives of those we love, will meet at the Winderweedle Center immediately after the Centering Prayer this period. We will adjourn promptly at 7:30 p.m.

Blessings!

The purpose of this Order of Service is to acquaint you with the format of our Centering Prayer time together.

Handout E

Guide to the Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials

The charts in the guide are meant to assist beginning and experienced practitioners in navigating the published teachings and resources available in the [Contemplative Outreach online bookstore](#). These are only guidelines; any materials may be ordered by any level of practitioner at any time.

Guide to the Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials - 2017



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GETTING STARTED

Books	DVDs	Audio CDs	Online Courses
Open Mind Open Heart	Spiritual Journey, Prologue	Spiritual Journey Prologue	Centering Prayer
Spiritual Journey Video Transcripts, Prologue	Spiritual Journey, Part 1	Spiritual Journey, Part 1, CDs 1-5	A Training Course for Opening to the Presence of God
Spiritual Journey Video Transcripts, Part I	Contemplative Dimension of the 12 Steps DVD and Online Video	Contemplative Dimension of the 12 Steps	
Centering Prayer in Life and Ministry	Centering Prayer A Training Course	Inner Room	
A Deeper Love	Invitation From God - DVD with booklet	Forgiveness CD - Contemplative Life Program, Year 1 module #5	
A Taste of Silence	A Transformed Life - DVD with Guidebook	Forgiveness Teleconference 12/2005	
Forty Days To a Closer Walk with God	The Gift of Life - Death & Dying, Life & Living DVDs with Guidebook	Discernment Teleconference 08/11/2005	
Pathway to Freedom	Falling into the Hands of God	Active Prayer Teleconference 12/7/2005	
Divine Therapy, Addiction	Lectio Divina Practice - DVD	Centering Prayer Teleconference 2/8/2006	
Centering Prayer - Contemplative Life Program, Year 1 module #1			

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Up-to-date information is available as a PDF

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/download/guide-to-the-contemplative-outreach-store-resources/>

Handout F
**Facilitator Handbook: Serving Others on the
Spiritual Journey in Community**

This Handbook is a stand-alone document in PDF format. You may print out a copy or read it on your computer or other electronic device.

Handout G

Facilitator Attributes, Spirituality and Skills

1. Our purpose is to empower you to help your Centering Prayer Group members support each other in transformation in Christ.
2. Our approach:
 - a. My role is to present the topics suggested by the Facilitator Handbook for a Level 1 Facilitator Workshop.
 - b. Your role is to share your needs and your wisdom in conformity with our sharing guidelines *and* to apply what you learn to your Centering Prayer group experience.
 - c. Whatever learning takes place will come from our willingness to share with each other *and* your willingness to implement these ideas in your Centering Prayer group with an open mind and an open heart.
3. The purpose of this section is to:
 - a. Explore the basis of Facilitator spiritual development and growth.
 - b. Discuss ways to improve Facilitator skills in:
 - i. Facilitating Faith Sharing
 - ii. Listening, and
 - iii. The dynamics of small groups
4. Spirituality of a Facilitator
 - a. The primary intention of the Facilitator is to live ordinary life with extraordinary love.
 - b. The basic commitment of the Facilitator is to a regular, consistent practice of Centering Prayer (communing with God).
 - c. The primary task of the Facilitator is to share the prayer!
 - d. Contemplative Outreach Facilitators maintain the integrity of the Centering Prayer method and its conceptual background; they are the primary keepers of the Vision.
 - e. The Spirit provides the corresponding grace in your role as Facilitator; the Spirit leads you to service.
 - f. Contemplative service is the *God in me* serving the *God in others* and the transmission of the *heart* of the message to others.
 - g. Facilitators give freely without expectation or return.
 - h. We share a deep appreciation for Centering Prayer, Contemplative Outreach, and its Vision. They sustain our commitment.
 - i. We place our intention to serve before God and simply consent.

- j. Facilitators are open and willing to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit so they will grow in charity, flexibility, and accountability.
 - k. Facilitators strive to be collaborative and seek win-win solutions; to be resilient and recover quickly from change.
 - l. Facilitators are encouraged to use the Theological Principles that support the Vision.
 - m. Facilitators, in the spirit of humility, remain teachable. We are always beginners on the spiritual journey. The journey continues into eternity.
5. Desired attributes of a Facilitator
- a. Welcoming
 - b. Supportive
 - c. Compassionate
 - d. Calm
 - e. Reliable
 - f. Courteous
 - g. Good listener
6. Facilitator Spiritual Preparation: Self Reflection
- a. Place intention before God and consent?
 - b. Intend to serve with utmost charity?
 - c. Respectful of what is accomplished through group sharing?
 - d. Patient in achieving these benefits?
 - e. Respectful of others opinions and ideas?
 - f. Genuine interest in what others are saying?
 - g. Respect personal feelings?
 - h. What motivates me to offer contemplative service as a Facilitator?
 - i. Am I willing to grow closer to God through Centering Prayer?
 - j. See Personal Reflection worksheet, Exercise 1.
7. Growing as a Facilitator: Excerpts from Handbook, Section 3
- a. Commitment of Facilitator to Centering Prayer
 - b. Be silent yourself
 - c. Tolerate conflict and differences
 - d. Communication is careful listening, rather than smooth talking
 - e. Unanswered questions are okay
 - f. Don't need to be expert
 - g. Avoid dogmatism
 - h. Inspire volunteerism and give group control

8. We Facilitate Faith Sharing

- a. FAITH SHARING *is not* a theological discussion – no speeches, homilies, or dissertations are required. It is not an information model.
- b. FAITH SHARING *is not* an answer to anyone’s problems; nor is it a place to vent frustration. It is not a therapeutic model.
- c. FAITH SHARING is my experience of God in my personal history or journey of life. It is a mystery model.
- d. FAITH SHARING *is* living in the messiness and vulnerability of life; sharing the joys, sorrows, hopes, and fears of the human journey and God’s faithfulness in that journey.
- e. FAITH SHARING requires reverential listening in prayerful silence; *my experience* is the content and *my experience* is not discussable or debatable

9. Answering Questions

- a. Confirm you heard the question.
- b. “That is a great question!” Then ask them for their answer.
- c. If you don’t know the answer, never be afraid to say so. Reference Keating books or someone with more Centering Prayer experience.
- d. Sometimes there is more than one answer and it can be helpful to ask for input from the rest of the group.
- e. With certain open-ended questions, often of a more personal nature, remind the group that advice giving is not something we encourage in a prayer group.
- f. Sometimes the question cannot be answered and the person who asks may have to wait for the Spirit to provide an answer in the Spirit’s own time.

10. Group Dynamics: How would I effectively respond to any awkward or uncomfortable situation *with utmost charity* toward

- a. Rambler
- b. Highly argumentative person
- c. Skeptic
- d. Overly talkative person
- e. Silent or inarticulate person
- f. Scholarly theologian
- g. Person sharing too private an experience
- h. Theoretical philosopher
- i. Weeper

Handout H

Facilitators & Centering Prayer Groups: The Practical

1. This section will cover what a beginning Facilitator needs to know and some practical tools Facilitators can use to help facilitate a Centering Prayer Group.
2. The purpose of this section is to:
 - a. Focus on the practical *how to* of facilitating a Centering Prayer Group
 - b. Provide you with proven punch lists for getting thing done
 - c. Provide you with a tool kit to develop others to assume more responsibilities
 - d. Provide a forum for you to ask questions and to share experiences
3. Foundational Concepts
 - a. We are *servants*, not leaders: our service is to encourage our members, by example, to support each other in transformation in Christ.
 - b. “They won’t care what we know until they know we *care*”.
 - c. We *encourage_ownership* by members.
4. Why, What, Who, and How of Centering Prayer Groups
 - a. Why A Centering Prayer Group?
 - i. Mutual support in a spiritual community
 - ii. Continuing education
 - iii. Means of accountability
 - iv. Encouragement to keep going
 - v. Discernment of ups and downs of practice
 - vi. Group helps discuss problems encountered with the method
 - vii. Spiritual refreshment
 - b. What is a Centering Prayer Group?
 - i. Practical
 1. Members
 2. Facilitator
 3. Time Period
 4. Location
 5. Format
 - ii. Spiritual
 1. Christian faith community
 2. Purpose – Centering Prayer, Formation and Transformation

- c. Who Makes up a Centering Prayer Group?
 - i. A Facilitator who commits to serve:
 - 1. Prepares environment: the rooms
 - 2. Monitors time
 - 3. Leads prayer
 - 4. Encourages ownership by members
 - ii. Members who commit to participate and grow:
 - 1. Pray together weekly
 - 2. Faith share “I/me” personal experience
 - 3. Agree to norms
 - 4. Manifest utmost charity
 - 5. Practice non-judgment
 - 6. Honor confidentiality
- 5. How Centering Prayer Groups Work: Practical Steps
 - a. Getting the meeting (or Centering Prayer Group) started
 - i. Location
 - ii. Time
 - iii. Format
 - iv. Setting up environment
 - v. Maintaining good relations with your clergy and location contact
 - b. After Centering Prayer
 - i. Introductions
 - ii. Announcements
 - iii. Discussion of Material/Faith Sharing using group guidelines
 - iv. How and when to move on when sidetracked
 - v. How to end the meeting
 - c. How to develop guidelines for sharing
 - i. Establish guidelines early
 - ii. Give each member a copy
 - iii. Have an open discussion on the guidelines
 - iv. Discuss what each guideline means
 - v. Agree whether or not it is a good guideline for the group
 - vi. Incorporate additional guidelines

- vii. Keep them under a dozen
 - viii. You want to end up with strong consensus and have the group own the guidelines
 - ix. Maintain guidelines consistently
 - x. Read the guidelines (pass it around) at each meeting
 - xi. Ask for consensus that they still work
 - d. Sample guidelines (See Handout A)
- 6. Models of Facilitation
 - a. Co-facilitators who backup each other if sick or traveling
 - b. Different facilitator when the group format rotates regularly, for example, one for *Lectio Divina*, one for formation material
 - c. Members take turns leading prayer or leading discussion of formation material
 - d. Sign-up rotation of facilitators
- 7. Organization Tools and Punch Lists
 - a. Facilitator bag (See Handout B)
 - b. Walk-In checklist
 - i. Welcome newcomers (assign)
 - 1. Introduce newcomer to Welcoming Prayer:
 - a. Facilitator's 5-minute Intro with (or apart from) group tailored to newcomer experience and
 - b. Contemplative Outreach Centering Prayer brochure
 - 2. Explain your Centering Prayer process
 - 3. Introduce newcomer to group members
 - ii. After Centering Prayer, read group sharing guidelines before discussion
 - iii. Small group discussion and sharing
 - iv. At end of meeting, get newcomer's name, phone number, and/or email address and give them the Newcomer packet
 - v. Call newcomer before the next meeting
 - c. How to, briefly, share the Prayer
 - i. A view of Centering Prayer

“Centering prayer comes out of a desire to renew, recover, and reclaim the Christian contemplative tradition for contemporary times. It is a way of cultivating interior silence and developing a basic disposition toward a relationship with God. Centering Prayer is a cascading movement of consent moving from external and internal noises to stillness and,

ultimately, to the center of our being beyond self-reflection to being with God: to just sit there and be still in God's presence ... and to let happen what happens." T. Keating

- ii. Perhaps the best way is to share out of your own Centering Prayer experience:
 - 1. How you came to learn about Centering Prayer
 - 2. Why did you decide to try it?
 - 3. What difference has it made in your life
- 8. Variety of Centering Prayer Groups
 - a. Meeting times
 - b. Location of meeting
 - c. Size of group
 - d. Backgrounds of attendees
 - e. Format of meetings (**always a period of CP**)
 - f. Group preferred learning style
 - g. Formation materials – what and how to pick
 - h. Use of *Lectio Divina*, multiple periods of Centering Prayer, etc.
 - i. Group guidelines
 - j. Facilitator Models

Suggested One-Day Workshop Agenda

Time

8:30 a.m.	Registration
9:00 a.m.	Centering Prayer
9:30 a.m.	Welcome and Introductions
	<i>Facilitator Attributes, Spirituality, & Skills</i>
9:45 a.m.	Facilitator Attributes, Spirituality, and Skills, Part 1
10:25 a.m.	Facilitator Attributes, Spirituality, and Skills, Part 2
10:55 a.m.	Break
11:10 a.m.	Facilitator Attributes, Spirituality, and Skills, Part 3
11:50 a.m.	Facilitator Attributes, Spirituality, and Skills, Large Group Discussion
12:10 p.m.	Lunch
	<i>What A Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know</i>
12:40 p.m.	What a Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know, Part 1
1:15 p.m.	Centering Prayer
1:45 p.m.	What a Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know, Part 2
2:25 p.m.	Break
2:40 p.m.	What a Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know, Part 3
3:20 p.m.	What a Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know, Large Group Discussion
4:00 p.m.	The Facilitator Handbook
4:50 p.m.	Adjourn

Session Duration in Minutes

<i>Title</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Total</i>
01 Facilitator Attributes Spirituality & Skills Part 1 Exercise 1: Personal Reflection Worksheet	22 18	40
02 Facilitator Attributes Spirituality & Skills Part Exercise 2: Growing as a Facilitator	11 19	30
03 Facilitator Attributes Spirituality & Skills Part 3 Exercise 3: Group Dynamics	22 18	40
04 Facilitator Attributes Spirituality & Skills Part 4 Exercise 4: Large Group Sharing Q&A	6 19	25
05 What A Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know Part 1 Exercise 5: Centering Prayer Group's Statement of Purpose	7 18	35
06 What A Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know Part 2 Exercise 6: Your Centering Prayer Group's Sharing Guidelines	21 19	40
07 What A Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know Part 3 Exercise 7: Introducing Centering Prayer in Less Than Five Minutes	23 17	40
08 What A Beginning Facilitator Needs to Know Part 4 Exercise 8: Large Group Sharing Q&A	21 19	40
09 The Facilitator Handbook Part 1 Exercise 9: Guide to Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials	30 20	50
10 The Facilitator Handbook Part 2 Exercise 10: Large Group Sharing Q&A , wrap up	10 30	40