



Contemplative Outreach

THE LIVING FLAME PROGRAM GUIDELINES

(In Person/on site)

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What Is the Living Flame Program?

The Living Flame program (LF) is designed to heighten the awareness of the dynamics of Centering Prayer in the context of the spiritual journey and to offer guidance for staying faithful to one's Centering Prayer practice. It is an opportunity to share the conceptual background of Centering Prayer as well as experiential insights at a deeper level and to build a community committed to its daily practice. The LF program asks that participants have an established Centering Prayer practice.

The LF program is hosted by Contemplative Outreach chapters or local communities. It includes seven full-day offerings of in-depth spiritual study, usually presented over a seven-to-nine month period, by commissioned presenters from Contemplative Outreach. The program:

- offers encouragement and support in a small community setting;
- heightens the awareness of the transformation process;
- helps discern when psychological skills can be helpful tools;
- provides the opportunity to give and receive spiritual companionship

The Living Flame Program began in 1993 as the inspiration of the then Coordinator of the Tampa Bay area, Monica Freeman. After much prayer, preparation, consultation and approval of the faculty of Contemplative Outreach and the blessing of its founder, Fr. Thomas Keating, the first Living Flame was held in Bradenton, Florida. Since that time, it has been presented in many areas of the United States including Orlando; St. Louis; Long Island, New York; Milwaukee; Los Angeles; San Diego; Portland; Chicago; Newark; Cleveland; Pittsburgh; Indianapolis; Hartford; Washington, DC; Louisville. More recently, the program was offered in Iceland.

How To Begin

These guidelines have been written to assist in planning and implementing the Living Flame program with the assistance of the CO Living Flame Service Team.

To begin the planning process a CO chapter coordinator or group representative should contact the CO Living Flame Service Team leader to let her/him know of the interest and to ask any questions. The CO LF Team leader will encourage the reading of these LF Program Guidelines thoroughly, sharing them with those who are interested at the chapter or group level.

A chapter considering this program is encouraged to appoint an on-site coordinator. In smaller chapters the coordinator may fill this role, but in larger chapters another person may be appointed to the significant responsibilities that are a part of this role. The On-Site Coordinator works under the guidance of the local Chapter Coordinator. It is extremely helpful for a service team to be formed to assist the on-site coordinator in the tasks required to implement the LF program.

What Next?

Listed below are the steps involved in the planning and implementation of a Living Flame program:

- Using the information in these guidelines, the on-site coordinator and his/her team should determine a tentative budget that would be required to hold a Living Flame 1 program in their chapter or area. Note that funds are available from Contemplative Outreach, Ltd; review the procedures located in these guidelines for requesting these funds. Also note that participants may request individual scholarships for attending the Living Flame through the established CO guidelines.
- The LF brochure is a helpful tool to begin discussions and discernments about the Living Flame program in order to determine the level of interest and commitment for hosting and participating in the program.
- The local LF team will then select the seven dates for the monthly LF presentations; these are submitted to the CO Living Flame team leader. At the same time, it is also helpful to determine the venue for the LF program to ensure that it is available at the selected times.
- The CO Living Flame team leader will contact the LF presenters to determine who is willing to present the various topics. The CO LF team leader will then send the chapter or group the list of presenters and a brief bio of each presenter.
- Using the information in these guidelines, the on-site coordinator and his/her team should finalize the budget required to hold the Living Flame 1 program and discern the fee to be charged to each of the participants.
- It is suggested that persons who wish to participate in the Living Flame program have an established Centering Prayer practice and be familiar with Fr. Thomas Keating's writings, particularly *Open Mind, Open Heart*.
- The local team prepares and sends publicity communications (letter/email/other) detailing the contents of the LF Program, noting the suggested participation prerequisite and noting the availability of scholarships.

- Additional tasks for the LF on-site coordinator and the team include the following:
 - * Creating a registration process.
 - * Arranging for food, beverage and hospitality.
 - * Sending an introductory email/letter to registrants, welcoming them and giving instructions regarding arrival on the first day. The CO LF team leader is available for further instructions if needed.
 - * Providing participant materials for the LF Program include:
 - schedule of dates
 - list of participants
 - CO Vision brochure
 - Centering Prayer brochure
 - schedule of the day (see example in these guidelines)
 - Living Flame brochure
 - Small group Covenant Guidelines
 - * If presenters will be on-site, arranging for airport pick up and hosting at a local volunteer's home. Check if presenter has any special needs regarding food or housing.
 - * Obtaining in advance the handout materials the presenter needs to have emailed to the participants prior to his/her presentation. If presenter is on-site, copy handout materials and determine what special equipment a presenter may need.

Tasks for the LF Day

On each scheduled day of the Living Flame, the role of the on-site coordinator, or one of the team members, includes the following:

- Preparing the room for the day, such as arranging chairs in a prayer circle, setting up equipment needed by the presenter, etc.
- Keeping a master list of attendance, if desired.
- Helping the presenter and the participants to stay on schedule.
- Coordinating lunch, snacks and refreshments.
- Encouraging and modeling silence, where appropriate.
- Obtaining in advance the checks needed to pay the stipend to the visiting presenters and also to the venue and caterer if any.
- Distributing and collecting the evaluation forms and sending a summary of them to the CO LF Coordinator. The Evaluation Form is on page 9 of these Guidelines.

Other Suggestions for the LF Day

Check-In Times:

The on-site coordinator will open the day in the prayer circle. The coordinator will ask the participants to offer a brief "check-in" that expresses his/her thoughts or feelings about the day. The coordinator might model this by keeping his/her thoughts to a couple of words. At this time, the coordinator will introduce and welcome the visiting presenter.

Introduction of the Theme of the Day:

The presenter will offer a brief reflection of who he or she is in light of being a Living Flame presenter and in terms of experience with Contemplative Outreach and Centering Prayer. A short description and introduction of the Theme of the Day is also appropriate at this time.

Centering Prayer Periods:

A short Psalm or part of a Psalm in keeping with the spirit of the day is suggested before the Centering Prayer periods. Usually the on-site coordinator or a member of the coordinating team leads the prayer or solicits volunteers to do so. The two periods of Centering Prayer in the morning and again in the afternoon are an essential part of the program.

Lunch:

Although silence at lunch is suggested, groups may differ as to preference. Many Living Flame groups draw from a large area and participants wish to have conversation with others there, while some prefer total silence. Still other groups set up both silent areas and non-silent areas. It may be preferable to let the group as a whole decide.

Small Groups:

The participants are placed into small groups for a more intimate experience of sharing during the seven sessions. Ideally, 4-5 members will be in each group, and the makeup of the small groups will remain the same for all the sessions of the Living Flame program. This will encourage bonding in the Spirit throughout the months of the Living Flame program. These groups will be invited to review and accept the Small Group Covenant guidelines for faith sharing that will be in their folders. See attachment on page 8 of these Guidelines. The presenter for the day will give the small groups focusing questions to keep the group on the topic.

Large Groups:

As time and space allows, participants are invited back to the prayer circle to give any brief reflections or feedback from the day with a "check-out" similar to the opening "check-in." This is an appropriate time to express gratitude to the presenter and allow him or her to give any final words about the day.

Evaluations

A short evaluation form (see attachment at the end of these Guidelines - page 9) will be given out - perhaps at lunch - and collected at the close of the day.

Financial Aspects of Living Flame Program

The following is a Financial Estimate for 25 participants:

Fixed Costs for the Living Flame Program for one year (7 sessions):

Presenters' stipend $\$250 \times 7 = \1750 .

CO LF Team Leader Stipend \$150

Total Fixed Costs = \$2050.

In addition to the fixed costs, there are variable or optional costs that may be incurred when presenting the Living Flame Program. Foremost is airfare & meals for presenters; expenses such as refreshments, lunch, room rental, printing and copying, postage may also be included.

Using the above figures based on 25 participants, the fixed costs per person per year would total \$82.00, or roughly \$12.00 per person per session. The variable costs will be different for each chapter or group. The variable costs will be different for each chapter. Some chapters have opted to do pot-lucks or brown bag lunches to save on food; many have found a space to accommodate their programs for which they do not have to pay rent. The traveling presenters are picked up at the airport and can be "hosted" by one of the local members, so that once again, there is little or no cost incurred. Hospitality, such as a dinner after the presentation with the leadership of an area, can also be a variable expense; this experience can be very beneficial to both the presenter and the chapter.

The Chapter Coordinator will have to consider all of the local conditions and apply them in order to have a more accurate reflection of the total actual costs. Actual costs will then determine the cost per person to attend The Living Flame Program. It is suggested all monies be collected from participants before the start of the series in order to assure meeting of all expenses.

Scholarship Information

1. Contemplative Outreach Budget Allocation for Chapters

Contemplative Outreach has, within its current budget, funds that can be provided to help CO chapters who are unable to provide all of the funding needed for the Living Flame program in their area. Chapters who would like to apply for these funds are invited to contact the CO Living Flame Team Leader to indicate their interest.

- The CO LF leader will send the chapter the Living Flame Program Guidelines for them to review,
- The chapter will review the financial aspects of the program,
- Determine their own budget,
- Determine how much of their budget they think they would be able to provide toward the LF program.
- Make a request of the Living Flame Service Team for the amount of money still needed.

Based on the number of requests and the amounts needed, funds will be allocated to the chapters who are ready to hold a Living Flame program.

2. Individual Scholarships (forms submitted by the Chapter)

Scholarships from Contemplative Outreach can be used for attending the Living Flame. Applicants are invited to apply through the regular scholarship procedures of CO which are as follows:

Contemplative Outreach will match a scholarship amount awarded by the local chapter. All scholarship applications are to come from the sponsoring chapter to Contemplative Outreach, Ltd. Scholarship application forms and procedures are available at office@coutreach.org. Scholarship funds are distributed after applicant has attended the LF program.

Administration of the Living Flame Program

Judy Sharer is the CO Living Flame contact person. Judy was the on-site coordinator in Louisville, KY, for Living Flame 1 and 2. She is commissioned by Contemplative Outreach as a presenter for the Centering Prayer Introductory Program and for Lectio Divina. If you are interested in more information about The Living Flame Program and would like to consider hosting it in your area, please contact her at: 270-304-7684 jsharer@bbtel.com

The Living Flame Service Team members are: Rickey Cotton, John Mark Etensohn, OMI, Ruth Hofmann, Karlye Keleher, Judy Sharer and Marilyn Webb.

Living Flame Daily Schedule

The basic daily schedule can remain the same for each of the sessions and for both Living Flame 1 and 2. The two back-to-back prayer periods in the AM and PM are an essential part of the day. The presentation conference times might be adjusted by the presenter of the day, according to the nature of the presentations.

Suggested Schedule of the Day

9:00	Arrival
9:30 - 9:50	Welcome & Check In
9:50 - 10:00	Introduction of Theme of the Day
10:00 - 10:45	Centering Prayer (2 periods)
10:45	Silent Break
11:00 - 12:15	Conference
12:15	Light Lunch (silence or talking - site decision)
1:00 - 1:45	Centering Prayer (1 30 minute or 2 20 minute periods)
1:45 - 2:45	Conference
2:45	Silent Break
3:00 - 3:45	Small Groups
3:45 - 4:00	Large Group
4:00	Departure

* Please note that the afternoon Centering Prayer period(s) may be moved to the end of the day if that is deemed best by the Living Flame site coordinator and team.

Living Flame Small Group Covenant Guidelines

*We accept one another just as we are, remembering that we come from different faith perspectives and that it is our Christian contemplative heritage that unites us.

*We listen, rather than give advice – we relate from our own experience. (Use I statements).

*We never criticize what others share.

*We allow everyone who wants to share the opportunity to share. No one “must” share.

*We listen attentively, without interruption, when someone else is speaking. In this regard we avoid any ‘cross-talk’ or private conversations.

*We keep the sharing in the small group absolutely confidential.

*We gather to care, not to cure or remove the crisis or pain – God does the curing and healing.

*We are conscious enough of the time so that no one person dominates the sharing. Equal access.

*We remain on topic/or faithful to the questions posed by the presenter or facilitator.

*We become a ‘caring community’ for our small group members.

Living Flame Evaluation for _____

Date _____

We value your feedback. Your input and suggestions will help us to plan future workshops.

1. Please give us your overall rating for today's session.

Very Good___ Good___ Sufficient___ Insufficient___

Please comment if rating is "insufficient".

2. Tell us what was especially helpful or challenging within the Presentations, Small group discussion, or Centering Prayer periods

3. Please provide any suggestions on how the guest presenter might improve his or her presentation.

4. What suggestions do you have for the local chapter service team to better serve your needs during the program?

5. Please share any other comments you may have.

Name - optional _____