

REVEALING VOCATION

Finding God's Story
in Our Lives

*A Vocation Discernment
Retreat Designed for
Volunteers Exploring Vocation*



VOLUNTEERS EXPLORING VOCATION



 **FTE** | VOLUNTEERS
EXPLORING VOCATION

Call Young Leaders. Renew the Church. Change the World.



REVEALING
VOCATION:
FINDING GOD'S STORY
IN OUR LIVES

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Retreat Designed for
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825 Houston Mill Rd. Suite 100

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404.727.1450

WWW.FTELEADERS.ORG

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PREFACE

The Fund for Theological Education (FTE) is pleased to offer this retreat resource to our partners in the Volunteers Exploring Vocation (VEV) project and to all others engaged in the lives of young adults seeking their purpose as followers of Jesus Christ. VEV, established in 2005 with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc., aims to enhance the capacities of faith-based volunteer year-of-service organizations to nurture the call of God in young adults' lives and to support the young adults who seek to discover their calling. These are remarkable partners and vibrant young people; FTE remains grateful for the opportunity to be in partnership with them on behalf of God's work in the world and, in particular, to raise to view the goodness and import of the pastoral life. To learn more about VEV, please visit www.fteladers.org/explorevev

When we decided to create a resource for retreats to explore vocation, we turned to former young adult volunteers to shape the project. They had walked the road being traveled by the current volunteers. They knew the questions that mattered and how to live into them. This group worked together “virtually” for many months and then met together in person for their own weekend of discernment and creativity to finalize the project. They represent diverse backgrounds, experiences and traditions within the Christian family; the design and content you will find here represents the best of each. They have prepared a retreat experience that can be completed in one long weekend and, at the same time, have crafted each session to stand alone or to be offered separately but in succession with the others.

With gratitude for the retreat design team and for the leadership of VEV — James Ellison, VEV Coordinator; Martha Wright, VEV Program Associate; and Wayne Meisel, VEV Consultant, we send *Revealing Vocation: Finding God's Story in Our Lives* out to bless those who draw from it, all for the glory of God.

Melissa Wiginton

Vice President

The Fund for Theological Education

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Volunteers Exploring Vocation Members:

We are thrilled to provide you with *Revealing Vocation: Finding God's Story in Our Lives*, a vocational discernment retreat. This retreat was designed with the hope of presenting the idea of a vocation in a new light. The prayers, reflections and activities embrace a variety of faith traditions while calling all participants to discern God's work in their lives. Vocation is more than, "What do I want to do?" It is a question of who we are already becoming, what communities are shaping us (and who we are going to shape) and our connection to God.

This retreat project focuses on vocation as story. Our lives are more than the decisions we make. We are all characters in a story. The question this raises is, "Am I living a good story?" Our stories, however, impact more than just ourselves. As writer Donald Miller said, "The world needs you to live a better story." Our team was captivated by approaching vocation as story throughout the development and creation of this retreat. We hope that your organization and volunteers find this approach to vocation to be provocative, interesting, faith-filled and fun!

This retreat is structured in three segments: Retreat 1: *What's My Story?*; Retreat 2: *Stories in Community*; and Retreat 3: *Enacting Our Stories*. It was designed so that the three retreats can be presented in sequence over a three-day or weekend retreat or presented one at a time separately throughout the volunteer year. Our hope is that you complete the entire retreat, as each day of the retreat highlights a different aspect of vocation and discernment. If you only have time to do one day of the retreat during the whole year, we recommend one of the following two options of activities selected from among the three retreats:

OPTION 1

An Overview of the Entire Retreat

- Opening Prayer (RETREAT 2)
- Narrative Icebreakers (RETREAT 1)
- Vocation as Narrative:
Now, What Do I Do? (RETREAT 1)
- Vocation: Living into
God's Story (RETREAT 2)
- Contemplative Practices:
Tools for the Journey (RETREAT 3)
- Preparation for Worship and Worship
(RETREAT 2)

OPTION 2

Highlights from Each Retreat

- Opening Prayer (RETREAT 1)
- Vocation as Narrative:
Now, What Do I Do? (RETREAT 1)
- Vocation: Living into
God's Story (RETREAT 2)
- Chapters in God's Story (RETREAT 2)
- Holy Listening (RETREAT 1)
- Examining Our Context (RETREAT 1)
- Sending Forth (RETREAT 3)

Revealing Vocation

FINDING GOD'S STORY IN OUR LIVES

In this document, we have provided all necessary information for each section of each retreat. While it is possible to literally pick up the packet and lead the retreat, we recommend that you read through each activity before the retreat and make any adaptations needed to make this most applicable to your group. Please adapt this material to your group in any way that will make it more impactful for you. Many of the sections have scripted portions for the staff. However, the scripts are suggestions and should not be read verbatim. The retreats include many breaks for meals and stretching; however, please take breaks where you need to take breaks. Feel free to incorporate any traditions of your organization (prayer before meals, evening board games, etc.) into the retreat to make it your own. This retreat is here to serve you and the volunteers.

In addition, the time of year in which you hold the retreat determines what is emphasized. For instance, in Retreat 1: *What's My Story?* the questions asked in the afternoon session on "Context" can be varied depending on the time of year. The retreats can be adapted to fit any time of year, whether it is orientation, mid-year retreats, or the final retreat. Our hope is that the volunteers are equipped with the tools to discern throughout the year.

Enjoy *Revealing Vocation: Finding God's Story in Our Lives*. We would love to hear how this retreat is working for you! Please feel free to contact us at vev@fteaders.org

Blessings,

Annie Selak

TEAM COORDINATOR

Marie Campbell

Dana Cassell

Benjamin Colahan

Susan Haarman

Kevin Ressler

TEAM MEMBERS

GETTING TO KNOW THE RETREAT DESIGN TEAM

marie campbell

Marie Campbell spends her days in the library reading and writing about culture and relational theology at Vanderbilt University Divinity School in Nashville. She's enjoyably distracted dreaming about beekeeping, planning adventures and growing community gardens. Rhythm and people dancing make her heart squirm blissfully. Key words for her vocation are: hospitality, empowerment and voice. Some of her favorite memories are of the times she spent curled up in her grandmother's lap by the fire, listening to her stories about growing up in the South. A former member of the Episcopal Service Corps, Marie worked at the Micah Project in Boston.

dana cassell

Dana Cassell spends her days working for Brethren Volunteer Service, talking about vocation and creating community houses. She lives in the mountains of Virginia, where she drinks lots of coffee and practices her long-lost Southern accent. After earning her M.Div. at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Dana now serves in the Brethren Volunteer Service at the Ministry Office of the Church of the Brethren. She loves banjos, blowing bubbles and crossword puzzles. She's pretty sure that everyone she meets is much more than meets the eye.

ben colahan

Ben Colahan spends his evenings listening to stories of people's lives in his role as an intern Lutheran pastor. During the day, he is inspired by those stories to craft fairy tales which explore the human condition in a new way that he can share with his parishioners. As a student at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, he also tries to convince random people on the street that being silly and making art like a child is a profound spiritual discipline. Although originally from the Pacific Northwest, Ben continually manages to end up in unnaturally dry and warm climates; should you find him in such an area, please return him to the nearest fog bank and specify what type of talking animal you would like to be portrayed as in a story. Ben is a 2008 Ministry Fellow of The Fund for Theological Education.

GETTING TO KNOW THE RETREAT DESIGN TEAM

susan haarman

Susan Haarman has lived in Louisville KY, Milwaukee WI, Houston TX and Wheeling WV. She recently completed a Master of Divinity degree at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley and is now the Associate Director of Campus Ministry at Gannon University where she can convince college students that God has crazy plans for them. She has been a camp counselor, Jesuit Volunteer, knife salesman, Half-Iron Woman, Hold Steady groupie and professional designated driver. When she has free time she enjoys being a slow triathlete and actually manages to combine her love of endurance racing with her passion for the continuing recovery in New Orleans. Susan received Undergraduate, Volunteers Exploring Vocation and Ministry Fellowships from The Fund for Theological Education.

kevin resseller

Kevin Ressler spends his days dreaming. In his evenings, he takes the opportunity of time and unencumbered freedom to cook for guests (known and unknown), seed strangers' confidences in the uncommon paths, and conjure up ideas for cultural revolution. A former Mennonite Volunteer and graduate of Eastern Mennonite University, he is co-founder of The Doplic Project, an organization he is building with his friends to facilitate such a revolution. He loves people and food and conversation and board games and making memories in Lancaster, PA.

annie selak

Annie Selak loves any and all things concerning the ministry of accompaniment of young women. A graduate of the Master of Divinity program at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, she is the former Director of Campus Ministry at an all girls high school in Southern California and is currently the rector of Walsh Hall at the University of Notre Dame. Theologically she loves exploring ecclesiology, lay ministry, peace movements and transition in young adults. Her other loves include reality TV, the city of Detroit (where she was a Jesuit Volunteer), sushi and the California coast. Annie is a 2006 Ministry Fellow of The Fund for Theological Education.



What's My Story?

RETREAT 1

RETREAT 1
What's My Story?

OPENING PRAYER

(15 minutes)

NARRATIVE ICE BREAKERS

(1 hour, 15 minutes)

**VOCATION AS NARRATIVE:
NOW WHAT DO I DO?**

(2 hours)

LUNCH

HOLY LISTENING

(2 hours)

BREAK

(30 minutes)

EXAMINING OUR CONTENT

(1 hour)

DINNER

WINDING DOWN

(1 hour)

OPENING PRAYER

(15 minutes)

Goal: This session opens the day centered in prayer. Throughout the day we will meander into the gray areas of vocation. This opening prayer reminds us that for all our differences, we are here for the same general purpose and driven here by the same general being — the being of God.

Materials Needed:

- 3 People to serve as Readers
- 3 Copies of “Prayer for Ecumenical Groups” included below

Instructions for Moderator: Below you will find instructions for Readers regarding tempo and mood as well as for their physical placement within the space. You can respect or ignore these suggestions based on the constraints of the room and the viewpoint of the moderator on effectiveness.

Please do not distribute copies of the prayer prior to the reading. The intention is for the volunteers to pray through hearing the prayer from different voices. After the prayer is read, you may distribute copies of the prayer for further reflection. This is a group prayer to elicit the participation of the all via proxy. The three readers stationed in different sections of the room provide stimulus to the participants seated in different areas. The change of voices gives participants prompts for refocusing on the prayer instead of falling into lulls or sleeps during what is, admittedly, a lengthy prayer.

Preparation: Each Reader is to stand in a particular location: Reader 1 should stand at the front of the room, centered and facing the group. Reader 2 should be behind the group at the left corner and Reader 3 should be behind the group at the right corner. Readers should not speak over one another but instead speak one immediately after another as if finishing each other's sentences. Clarity is of the utmost importance, but alacrity is a close second. Also, best efforts should be made to build the intensity ... not speed, but intensity ... from the beginning to the end. It is a call and the call should become more earnest and urgent as the prayer progresses. Readers should do their best to connect with one another so that this is organic and not forced by one or two of the individuals. **READERS NEED TO REHEARSE THE PRAYER BEFORE LEADING IT FOR THE COMMUNITY.**

Activity: Three Readers pray the “Prayer for Ecumenical Groups.”

Prayer for Ecumenical Groups

Reader 1: To you,

Reader 2: *the one who called upon Abraham,*

Reader 1: we sing praise more melodic than other songs.

Reader 3: *Out in the wilderness the covenant was made.*

Reader 1: Sons and daughters promised a long-living man,

Reader 2: *nearly barren and with a barren wife.*

Reader 1: Like sands or stars would number these children. From that one sent many.

(Short Pause)

Reader 2: *Here today, we children gather in likeness of being,*

Reader 3: lost, inadequate offspring, after thousands of years.

Reader 1: *We may each see a different face or gender,*

Reader 3: We may call you by different names, in different tongues,

Reader 2: *but you are our first forebear and Abraham our second.*

(Short Pause)

Reader 3: Later,

Reader 1: *we would be called through a son of your own.*

Reader 2: He, called, himself, many times; He, tempted, himself, many times;

Reader 1: *in the wilderness by He who hates you, by He who devotes war against
your peace. Your son,*

Reader 3: human like ourselves,

Reader 1: *triumphed over the spoils of the world; guaranteed promises of personal
pleasures and gains.*

Reader 2: Give us such strength.

(Short Pause)

Reader 3: *Through your son,*

Reader 2: Abraham's children are given purpose and insight and knowledge and
encouragement.

Reader 3: *Through your son and the passages of time,*

Reader 2: the works of saints,

Reader 3: *and the happenings of prophets,*

Reader 2: we sacrifice pleasures and gains.

Reader 1: *We place our purposes as sacrifices on altars to seek the wisdom of your purpose.*

(Short Pause)

Reader 3: No Jew and no Gentile.

Reader 2: *No mother and no son.*

Reader 3: *No father and no daughter.*

Reader 1: *We are called as brothers and sisters in an age where billions upon billions trace themselves to father Abraham.*

Reader 2: *Muslims alike with Christians,*

Reader 3: *Christians alike with Jews,*

Reader 2: *Jews alike with persons who seek not,*

Reader 3: *and speak not,*

Reader 2: *your name or image or likeness of being in understood resonance.*

Reader 3: *Allow us to look upon the billions near us in rooms and far off on other continents.*

Reader 2: *Give us the insight to look outwards,*

Reader 1: *and the knowledge that our images, crafted after your image, are far more similar than separate, far more like than unlike.*

Reader 2: *What are our modern sacrifices to your ephemeral altars;*

Reader 3: *monies and powers and friends and families,*

Reader 2: *pleasures and pains and joys and sorrows,*

Reader 1: *goals, dreams, aspirations, wants.*

(Short Pause)

Reader 3: *We do not always sing the praises of these sacrifices.*

Reader 1: *We seek our purposes in you.*

Reader 2: *We yearn for ways to write stories unwritten for us within your book of time.*

Reader 1: *Teach us not to fail in our design but to succeed in the eminence of your infinite love.*

Reader 2: *Guide our blind souls*

Reader 3: *with eyes of divine purpose.*

Reader 1: *Lead us, and teach us to follow though we so seek to veer.*

Reader 2: *Let our work not be called ecumenical,*

Reader 3: *interfaith,*

Reader 1: *post-religious,*

Reader 2: *but instead; let it be called Your Work.*

Reader 1: *Aid us to avoid the temptations to focus on our mortal differences.*

(Short Pause)

Reader 2: *Thank you,*

Reader 3: *forebear of our forebears, thank you,*

Reader 1: *thank you for giving us such beautiful brothers and sisters.*

Disjointed Unison: *Amen*

NARRATIVE ICE-BREAKERS

(1 hour, 15 minutes)

Goal: Get the group comfortable playing and creatively sharing ideas about themselves, the world, and the intersection of the two.

Materials Needed:

- Large empty space (the space should be large enough for all participants to move around comfortably without bumping into each other)
- A group of 10-40 people (if more than 40 people are attending the retreat, break up into groups of 20-30)
- Newspaper

Instructions for Moderator: The key to ice-breakers is that they be fun. These ice-breakers may ask people to behave in ways that they never have. In order for people to be comfortable participating, they have to trust that they will not be mocked or criticized. You create an atmosphere of trust in large part by your own behavior. Be confident in your own silliness; rejoice in the silliness of others. Some of the activities involve questions and answers. There are no wrong answers. The point is never to “accurately” answer a question or identify a scene; instead, the goal is to stimulate the participants into thinking about their own lives and how they view the world around them.

The activities listed below are designed to build upon each other. They begin with very simple and non-threatening activities designed to get the group comfortable touching, looking at each other, and following your instructions. The activities then ask the participants to begin taking initiative in determining their own movements and self-reflection within a narrowly-defined set of rules. The final activities require a considerable amount of creativity on the part of the participants as they explore broad and somewhat abstract themes. When done in order, the activities should be manageable for everyone and get them thinking about themselves and their context as they prepare to tell their personal story in the rest of the retreat. If participants want to know why they are playing apparently random games, it may be helpful to explain the process. Once again, the key to ice-breakers is fun. If the group is not enjoying something, skip it.

Order and Purpose of Activities:

1. **Introduction** People find out they are going to play some games to get them in the storytelling mood.

2. **Thumb Grab** People get comfortable participating, touching each other and following your instructions; also, it is really fun.
3. **Heads Down, Heads Up** People get comfortable looking each other in the eye, and learn to follow the rules of the game by policing themselves.
4. **Group Walk** People learn each other's names, start making decisions about who they are and move accordingly, and learn to react to other participants' decisions.
5. **Where I'm From** People learn names and begin thinking of their context and the setting of their life story.
6. **Group Frame Sculpture** People practice thinking about a place and physically expressing it to others. It is best to start off with a concrete location with which everyone is familiar.
7. **Group Headline Sculpture** Using the skills developed in the previous activity, people contemplate and express the needs of the world around them, and imagine a different world.
8. **Final Headline Sculpture** Using the skills developed in the previous activities, people contemplate the variety of people and activities needed to bring about the kingdom of God.

Descriptions of Activities:

1. **Introduction** (1 minute) The moderator tells the group that they are going to play some games to prepare them for thinking about themselves and the world in creative ways. The games are like the retreat, both provide a framework to help us think about ourselves and our stories; in both, the story that is actually created is up to us.
2. **Thumb Grab** (1 minute) The full group stands in a circle. Each person in the circle places his or her left thumb in the open right-hand palm of the person to the left. Everyone should thus have their left thumb pointed down in someone's palm, and their right palm open with someone's thumb on it. The moderator says "1,2,3 GO" and everyone tries to grab the thumb in their palm while preventing their own thumb from being caught. After playing a couple of times, ask for a volunteer to lead the "1,2,3 GO."
3. **Heads Down, Heads Up** (4 minutes) Everyone stands in a circle with their heads down. When the moderator says "Heads Up," each person looks at one person's eyes in the circle. If two people look at each other, they remove themselves from the circle. The moderator says "Head Down," and the game repeats until only two people are left.

4. **Group Walk** (10 minutes) Every person (including the moderator) starts walking randomly around the space. Each person should try to keep the whole group in sight; don't turn your back to anyone. At any point someone can stop and the whole group must try to stop with him or her. Then anyone can start walking and the whole group must try to start with him or her. *This game continues while another starts:*

Affinity Groups As the group walks, the moderator asks people to silently place themselves in groups based on what they are wearing on top. They then have 10 seconds to learn the names of the people in that group. The group returns to walking/stopping. Then the moderator has people silently place themselves in groups based on what they are wearing on bottom. Then they have 10 seconds to learn the names of the people in that group. Repeat by splitting into groups based on shoes. Repeat by splitting based on eye color.

Names After a few rounds of affinity groups with names, people are invited to introduce themselves to anyone with whom they have not been in a group.

5. **Where I'm From** (10 minutes) The group stands in a circle. One person stands in the center and finishes the prompt, "Where I'm from ..." (For example: "Where I'm from people eat cereal for breakfast"). The person in the center and everyone to whom that prompt applies must find a new spot in the circle. Since there is one less spot in the circle than there are people, whoever doesn't find a new spot stands in center. The group shouts out the name of the new person when he or she enters the center. The new person finishes the prompt "Where I'm from ..." and the game continues. People decide for themselves where they're from and what it means — it can be their family, hometown, college, the subculture with which they identify, etc.
6. **Group Frame Sculpture** (10 minutes) The group lines up on one side of the room. The moderator names a specific place with which everyone is familiar (like the city where the retreat is held or the retreat space) or a type of place with which everyone is familiar (like communal housing). When people feel inspired they go in front of the group, strike in a pose that might be seen in that place and freeze in that pose. As more people have ideas, they join the first person in creating a frozen tableau/image of what might be seen in that space. When a large portion of the group has joined the sculpture, the moderator asks the remaining individuals what they see. Who are the people in the image? What are the actions? What are the emotions?
7. **Group Headline Sculpture** (15 minutes) The group splits in half. One half stands to the side of the room, and the other half goes to the center of the room. Prior to the activity, the moderator should gather headlines from a relevant newspaper. The moderator reads a single headline aloud. The group in the center creates a tableau

based on the headline by striking a pose of an activity, person or emotion related to the headline, similar to in the previous exercise. However, now all members of the group must all act at the same time to create a tableau within 10 seconds. The poses struck do not have to be literal poses or actions that correlate to the headline, but can also be abstract or emotional interpretations. Once the tableau is created, the moderator asks the half to the side to describe what they see, just as in the previous activity. After some initial responses, the moderator asks each person in the tableau to whisper repeatedly a single phrase that contains an opinion/thought from their individual image they just created. The group on the side then walks around the tableau and listens to what is being whispered. As they walk around, the moderator asks them to stand next to someone in the image, take their image, and then repeatedly whisper a phrase that is the opposite from the whispered statement they just heard. The half that had been previously frozen, unfreezes and walks around listening to the newly frozen half. Then the activity repeats with the halves reversed and the moderator reading a new headline. There may only be time for two or three headlines.

- 8. Final Headline Sculpture** (10 minutes) The group splits in half. Like the previous headline sculptures, but the headline read is "Community Strives to Create Kingdom of God." The group in the center creates a tableau based on the headline, similar to in the previous exercise. However, now all members of the group must all act at the same time to create a tableau within 10 seconds. The poses struck do not have to be literal poses or actions that correlate to the headline, but can also be abstract or emotional interpretations. Once the tableau is created, the moderator asks the half to the side to describe what they see, just as in the previous activity. This headline does not include the whispering portion of the previous activity. After the first half of the group goes, the second group goes. This activity concludes when the moderator asks the group to describe what they see.

RESOURCES:

Rohd, Michael. *Theatre for Community, Conflict, and Dialogue*.
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Drama, 1998.

Spolin, Viola. *Theatre Games for the Classroom*.
Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1986.

**VOCATION AS NARRATIVE:
NOW, WHAT DO I DO?**

(2 hours)

I have come so that they may have life and have life to the fullest. -John 10:10

The Glory of God is a human being fully alive! -Irenaeus

Goal: To approach the topic of vocation by asking the volunteers to begin thinking about their lives as an unfolding story. Our individual stories speak to the unique agency we each have within our communal story — our historical and cultural time and place — to be who God calls us to be for the life of the world. The volunteers will be asked to spend some time in personal reflection and then to reflect on their own stories in a particular way. This exercise will highlight the power of narrative in communication and discernment, empowering ownership and agency in the individual and collective vocational journey.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of 3 handouts (1 for every volunteer)
- FTE *Revealing Vocation* DVD and television with DVD player
- Alternative to DVD: Computer with internet access and projector to connect with www.fteleaders.org/vevrevealvocation-videos
- Art supplies: scissors, glue, tape, construction paper, magazines (for collage making), washable paints/brushes, markers, pens

Overview for Moderator: For this session, volunteers will be asked to reflect on the story of their lives and then to create a visual expression of that story. These are our public narratives. The point is to share them with each other.

Three video segments are provided to prepare volunteers to tell their stories. The first two pieces illustrate how storytelling can be a powerful way to communicate and to understand one's place in community. They are excerpted from a workshop conducted by Harvard sociologist and community organizer Marshall Ganz during the 2009 presidential election campaign. The third video (in two parts) introduces the idea that once we see our stories, we may want to change them — and that the world needs us to live our best story. It is an excerpt from an interview with Donald Miller, author of the popular book *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years: What I Learned While Editing My Life*. He provides some questions to help guide volunteers as they reflect and then create their own personal stories.

Begin in a large group. You may either watch both of the first two videos (Ganz) and discuss afterwards or have a short discussion after each video. Discussion questions are provided below and on **Handout 1**, but you may want to add questions and guide discussion as needed. You may split your group into two or three smaller groups for discussion if your large group is too large. The questions provided can be examples or starting points for the conversation.

After watching the third video (Miller), the volunteers should be sent off with **Handout 2**, then **Handout 3** to create the story of their life and to use the materials at hand to create a visual expression of their story. Splitting off individually is the best way for this to be done; the group will have time to reflect together in the afternoon session on Holy Listening. It is entirely up to you to decide what art supplies to use depending on what resources are available. Suggested materials are listed on the previous page. Volunteers may choose to create a collage using magazine clippings, to paint or draw. Those who prefer may write a narrative in prose form, a poem, create a concept map, or anything else they may find helpful. The point is that they work with their storyline in a hands-on, creative way.

A moderator should make sure that the volunteers know how much time they have. Please note that the scripts provided for the moderator are informational and instructional. We suggest that you read over the material and then use your own words to talk about the videos and to guide discussion.

Outline of Activities:

*All videos can be found at www.ftleaders.org/vevrevealvocation-videos

1. **Introduction** (3 minutes)
2. **Storytelling as a Powerful Way to Communicate** (30 minutes)
 - Introduce Marshall Ganz (2 minutes)
 - Video One:* “Marshall Ganz, ‘Values vs. Strategy’” (4 minutes)
 - Video Two:* “Labor Organizer Marshall Ganz” (3 minutes)
 - Group discussion (20 minutes)
3. **Telling a Better Story** (10 minutes)
 - Video Three:* Donald Miller Interview, parts 1 & 2 (10 minutes)
4. **Telling Your Story** (80 minutes)
 - Handouts/Personal Reflection/Create Autobiography

Moderator should gather the volunteers in chairs to watch a few short videos. After the first and second videos (Ganz), the moderator should lead the group in a large group discussion. Then, watch the third (Miller) video (parts 1 and 2). After the third video send the volunteers off with handouts for reflection and creation time.

Descriptions of Activities:

1. **Introduce session** (3 minutes)
2. **Storytelling as a Powerful Way to Communicate** (30 minutes)

Distribute Handout 1: *The Power of Telling our Stories*.

Introduce Marshall Ganz

The videos that we are about to watch feature Marshall Ganz. Ganz is a lecturer at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He entered Harvard College in the fall of 1960. In 1964, a year before graduating, he left to volunteer as a civil rights organizer in Mississippi. In 1965, he joined Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. Over the next 16 years he gained experience in union, community, issue, and political organizing and became Director of Organizing. During the 1980s, he worked with grassroots groups to develop effective organizing programs, designing innovative voter mobilization strategies for local, state, and national electoral campaigns. In 1991, in order to deepen his intellectual understanding of his work, he returned to Harvard College and, after a 28-year "leave of absence," completed his undergraduate degree in history and government. He was awarded an MPA by the Kennedy School in 1993 and completed his PhD in sociology in 2000. He teaches, researches, and writes on leadership, organization, and strategy in social movements, civic associations, and politics.

In the first and second videos, Ganz speaks briefly about the Barack Obama presidential campaign. Ganz was a major influential force in the shaping of that political campaign. Yet, no matter your political affiliation or preference, there is much to learn from how he talks about the role of narrative in social change. In the first video, Marshall Ganz speaks to a group about how personal narrative and motivation tie us together more than specific political issues in working towards a more just society. What is the power of narrative? Narrative is about how people make choices when confronted with not knowing what to do. A protagonist who is presented with a challenge becomes an agent or actor who actively engages the task of bringing about an outcome. Telling these kinds of stories help us to access hope over fear by illustrating how people are able to make powerful choices under the conditions of uncertainty. Public narrative, then, is about bringing people into the reality of telling a new story — a story about how things can be different than they are right now and that there are ways to go about creating that change right now. How do you make choices under the

conditions of uncertainty? In what ways can reflection on the story about your life help you decide what to do next?

In the second video, Ganz reflects on his own life and work. Pay close attention to the way he talks about the events in his life. Toward the end of the video, Ganz talks about how self-interest is not enough to create social movements that result in widespread social change. Instead, he calls for high levels of commitment and willingness to take risks, both of which require moral commitment. Think about what moves you to have the commitments you have. What in your life has birthed these convictions and life shaping values (background, life choices, experiences, etc.)? In what ways do you enact your values and commitments?

Pay close attention as you watch these videos.

Listen to and learn from Marshall Ganz

“Marshall Ganz, ‘Values vs. Strategy’” (4 minutes)

Reflection Questions for “Marshall Ganz, ‘Values vs. Strategy’” (10 minutes)

(Included on Handout 1)

- What is narrative? What does Ganz mean by the “power of narrative”?*
- What are core values? How do they move people to act in solidarity?*
- How does narrative provide people with the resources for action?*
- How can narrative help us to think about vocation? In what ways can our own stories help us better understand who we are and what we are to be doing in the world?*

“Labor Organizer Marshall Ganz” (3 minutes)

Reflection Questions for “Labor Organizer Marshall Ganz” (10 minutes)

(Included on Handout 1)

- Do you think he did a good job of telling his story? What worked? What could have been clearer?*
- What are some of the specific details in his story that you remember?*
- If you could summarize his story, what elements would stand out the most?*
- What are his passions and values? In what ways does he enact these in his life?*
- What strikes you most about this video?*
- Think about how you would tell your own narrative. What makes you the person that you are? What are your core values? What moves you to act? How can you tell this as a story?*

Note: If you do not have capacity to play the DVD or a computer with internet access, you may skip this section on Marshall Ganz. The remaining section can stand on its own. You may wish to summarize the Marshall Ganz section, or you may begin with the Donald Miller Section.

3. Telling a Better Story (10 minutes)

*The world needs you to have courage —
the world needs you to write a better story.*

Donald Miller, *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*

Introduce Donald Miller

As you reflect on your life, think about your own narrative (and God's place in it) like you would a movie. In Donald Miller's book, A Million Miles in a Thousand Years, someone proposes making a movie out of Don's life. As he helps edit and write a screenplay, he realizes he isn't living a "good story." He isn't a character he finds compelling. He doesn't have a clear goal. As Don tries to re-write the story of his life, he eventually begins to live a better one. How do you feel about the story of your life? To get you thinking out of the box, after we watch Miller in the video, we will give you some fun questions. See how they may apply to your life.

4. Telling Your Story (80 minutes)

Distribute Handout 2: *We Are Called By Our Lives*
and Handout 3: *Questions for Writing the Movie of Your Life*.

On the table, there are materials for you to use. You are invited to create something that tells the storyline of your life. It could be a collage — using magazine clippings or paint — or a narrative in prose form or as a poem. You might create a concept map, or anything else you may find helpful. You may even want to jot down answers to the questions on the handout. Do whatever will best help you to reflect on your story. The point is that you work with your storyline in a hands-on, creative way. Think about what you would tell someone else if you were asked to share your story with him or her. Would it make sense? Is it moving? Would they "get it"? If not, what needs to be rewritten?

RESOURCES:

Marshall Ganz, "What Is Public Narrative?" Kennedy School, 2008.

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/WhatIsPublicNarrative08.pdf>

Donald Miller, *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*.

Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009.

Handout 1

THE POWER OF TELLING OUR STORIES

Public narrative is woven from three elements: a story of why I have been called, a story of self; a story of why we have been called, a story of us; and a story of the urgent challenge on which we are called to act, a story of now. This articulation of the relationship of self, other, and action is also at the core of our moral traditions. As Rabbi Hillel, the 1st Century Jerusalem sage put it, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am for myself alone, what am I? If not now, when?"

Donald Miller, "What is Public Narrative?"

Marshall Ganz, 'Values vs. Strategy'

1. What is narrative? What does Ganz mean by the "power of narrative?"
2. What are core values? How do they move people to act in solidarity?
3. How does narrative provide people with the resources for action?
4. How can narrative help us to think about vocation? In what ways can our own stories help us better understand who we are and what we are to be doing in the world?

Labor Organizer Marshall Ganz

1. Do you think he did a good job of telling his story? What worked? What could have been clearer?
2. What are some of the specific details in his story that you remember?
3. If you could summarize his story, what elements would stand out the most? What are his passions and values? In what ways does he enact these values in his life?
4. What strikes you the most about this video?
5. Think about how you would tell your own narrative. What makes you the person that you are? What are your core values? What moves you to act? How can you tell this as a story?

Handout 2

WE ARE CALLED BY OUR LIVES

The questions of, what am I called to do, what is my community is called to do, and what we are called to do now are at least as old as Moses' conversation with God at the burning bush. Why me?, asks Moses, when called to free his people. And, who — or what — is calling me? Why these people? Who are they anyway? And why here, now, in this place?

Marshall Ganz

Everyone from your grandma to your high school math teacher wants to know, “What are you going to do with your life?” From each stepping-stone to the next — high school graduation, college graduation, etc. — that pesky little question sticks around. Far from an easy task, discerning your path forward is much more than picking a career. Yes, “vocation,” in one sense responds to the question “What are you going to do with your life?” But it more accurately responds to the questions, “How do I want to be in the world?” and “Who am I already becoming?” and “Who am I becoming this for?”

Vocation has many dynamics. **Passion:** *what gets me out of bed in the morning?* **Strengths:** *what do people tell me I'm good at?* **Direction:** *where do my gifts meet the needs of the world?* Vocation, then, involves the art of listening to your life in order to be present, aware, and aligned to the reality of God in the movement already unfolding in the rhythms and patterns of your life. If you take time to reflect upon your life, you will begin to see your passions, feel your strengths, and gain direction to continue moving forward.

As much as vocation is an internal reality — a God-breathed unique call to be a certain way in the world — it is also a call to respond in that way to the task of building community. Our lives can never be understood in isolation — we are always part of a more complicated reality. Our societies and our world need us to be in touch with how we are most alive, so that we may bring that passion and energy into participation with the dream of God.

As people of faith, we believe that God works in creation to bring all things into wholeness. As one of the early church fathers, Irenaeus, succinctly stated, “The glory of God is a human being fully alive!” Each person is called to give birth to something new — to

co-create and collaborate in the movement of God in the world. Vocation, then, is about discerning how our lives have brought us to a particular time and place and how we are to respond to the problems, hungers, and needs that we see surrounding us, in our own lives and in the lives of others.

We are called by our lives, just as Moses was called by God, into action that changes the world. To transform the world, to be agents, we must first be able to tell about our own transformation, to trace the presence of the Spirit in our own lives. One way to listen to our lives is to construct a narrative, our personal story. We tell stories not to talk about our lives or about what we desire to do with them. We tell stories to embody the very energy that compels us forward, to communicate what moves us at the very core of our being.

With the materials provided and “Movie of Your Life” handout, create an autobiography: tell your story.

Your story, though filled with very personal details, can be a public narrative that has the power to invite others into a new reality. In light of this, you will have the opportunity later on to share your story with another person in the group.

Handout 3

THE MOVIE OF YOUR LIFE QUESTIONS

As you reflect on your life it might be easier to think about your own narrative (and God's place in it) like you would a movie. In Donald Miller's book *A Million Miles in a Thousand Years*, someone proposes making a movie out of Miller's life. As he helps edit and write a screenplay, he realizes he isn't living a "good story." He isn't a character he finds compelling. He doesn't have a clear goal. As Miller tries to re-write the story of his life, he eventually begins to live a better one.

On the table, there are materials for you to create a collage, write a narrative in prose form, a poem, create a concept map, or anything else you may find helpful. You may even want to jot down answers to the questions on the handout. Do whatever will best help you to reflect on your story. The point is that you work with your storyline in a hands-on, creative way. Think about what you would tell someone else if you were asked to share your story with them. Would it make sense? Is it moving? Would they "get it"? If not, what needs to be rewritten?

How do you feel about the story of your life? To get you thinking out of the box, here are some fun questions. See how they may apply to your life.

- Who is the main character in your story? If it isn't really you then who is it? Are you ok with being a central or marginal character in the story?
- What's the main conflict in your story? Who or what are the villains in your story, if there are any? Do you have an arch nemesis?
- What are you after? Interesting characters are the ones who want something. What's your buried treasure? Your personal quest? What do you have to get or achieve before the credits can roll? Do you know what you want?
- What is the source of your powers? Were you born with them? Or do your strengths come from a special occurrence? Freak accident? Obtained through a magical object?
- What's your kryptonite? Do you have a tragic flaw? Are there memories and baggage that keep you from moving on?
- What meetings or interactions have changed you the most? What other characters have influenced you? Were they chance meetings? Faithful sidekicks? Wise mentors?
- What have the pivotal moments been? Have you had a showdown? Diffused a bomb at the last second?
- Where have your adventures taken you? When did you climb to the top of a high mountain? When were you trapped in the sewers? Have you been shipwrecked, but found your way off the island? Have you met strange aliens, only to find they were more like you than you thought?
- Where are you happiest? Where would your secret lair be?

HOLY LISTENING

(2 Hours)

Goal: To spend time in intentional listening and sharing reflections and revelations from the day's previous activities.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Handout 4: *Touchstones for Creating Hospitable Space*, Handout 5: *Asking Open and Honest Questions*, and Handout 6: *Questions for Holy Listening*.
- Ample space for pairs of participants to spread out
- Journals
- Participants' creations of their own stories from morning session, *Vocation as Narrative*
- Optional sheet of questions

Instructions for Moderator: This time of "holy listening" is for participants to share their reflections from the day's earlier activities as well as to practice an intentional kind of listening to and hearing of those around us. The Touchstones for Creating Hospitable Space offer a good starting point for things to keep in mind when attempting to be wholly and holy attentive to one another. "Holy listening" is really a practice of paying attention. The listener withholds their comments, questions, and their own stories that come to mind while listening to the speaker. They can respond with body language, eye contact, and pseudo-verbal affirmations (hmmm, tsk, etc.), but are to remain attentive for the entire time that the speaker is talking. In the longer session below, a question or two of response and clarification will probably be appropriate toward the end of the 20 minutes allotted for each person's sharing time. Any questions should be for clarification purposes only, not to fulfill one's curiosity. This exercise often proves to be transformative for both the speaker and the listener, as it is increasingly rare to find anyone's undivided attention for conversation.

Outline of Activities:

1. **Explanation and Instructions:** Introduction of Touchstones for Creating Hospitable Space and discussion of which are hard/which are easy (15 minutes)
2. **Practice one-on-one listening** with one question prompt (5 minutes)
3. **Debrief practice exercise** (10 minutes)
4. **Introduce Asking Open and Honest Questions** (10 minutes)

5. **Holy Listening in pairs** (40 minutes-20 each)
6. **Journaling reflections from speaking/hearing** (20 minutes)
7. **Debriefing discussion of Holy Listening in large group** (15 minutes)

Descriptions of Activities:

1. **Introduction:** Sit in a circle if space allows. Moderator introduces the concept of Holy Listening, drawing from the introduction above. Each participant should be given a copy of Touchstones for Creating Hospitable Space. Go around the circle with a different person reading each Touchstone until all have been read aloud. Ask participants to reflect on these for a moment and invite them to share into the circle which one they find themselves most challenged by and which one feels quite natural.
2. **Practice one-on-one listening:** Now ask each participant to find a partner. There are benefits to pairing up with someone that is a good friend and benefits to pairing up with a complete stranger — talking and listening to someone you know well lends a certain kind of comfort in conversation, but the opportunity to share personal stories with someone you don't know at all can offer a great sense of freedom in what is shared. You will know the group best and know how they interact with one another, so use your judgment on this.

Once people are paired up, start them off with an easily answered question. A good practice question prompt might be, “Describe something that surprised you recently,” or “What’s something you’ve been wondering about over the last few days?” Answers can be ridiculous or mundane — the first couple of minutes are just to rehearse the postures and practices of holy and attentive listening. The first speaker has two minutes to speak and the partner is listening as described by the moderator in the introduction. At the end of two minutes, ask the pair to share with each other what the experience felt like. Then switch roles and repeat.

3. **Debrief practice exercise** (10 minutes)
4. **Introduce Asking Open and Honest Questions:**
Distribute Handout 5: *Asking Open and Honest Questions*

Holy Listening is about paying attention and listening with our whole selves. But sometimes such deep listening makes space for questions to emerge which may offer the speaker a way into deeper listening to his or her own life. If you as a listener feel prompted to ask a question, pay attention and wonder whether your question is open, is honest and is part of the movement to telling a powerful story. On the handout, we

have described the art of asking open and honest questions. (Read the handout as you read the Touchstones handout, out loud with different voices.) Which of these pose a challenge for you? Which have you noticed yourself or others doing?

5. **Holy Listening in pairs:** Once people have practiced Holy Listening with a short practice prompt and considered the art of asking open and honest questions, they will be invited to engage in a longer session during which each person will be given 20 minutes to share.

Pairs will need to settle into a comfortable place. It might be that the group wants to spread out and take their conversations outside — this is fine, as long as pairs find a spot to sit facing one another so that they can be intentionally face-to-face in their sharing and listening. You might also distribute Handout 6 Question Suggestions so that pairs of participants can carry them with them if they spread out away from the meeting room.

Invite participants to use their creation from the morning to tell their own story of self to their partner and encourage them to dig deeper into some of the questions that they explored in earlier exercises of the day — “What is your story?” “Who is the main character?” “What’s the climax of the narrative?” As moderator, you may want to check with groups and be prepared to ask a new question if they seem to have stalled. Be sure to call time when 20 minutes have passed.

6. **Journaling reflections:** After the listening and sharing — at the end of 40 minutes — invite participants to spend several minutes journaling about the experience. Their writing might continue working out some of the things they spoke about, or it might be some processing of what it was like to participate in Holy Listening — as a speaker and a listener. This journaling time is intended to be a free-write sort of exercise.
7. **Debriefing:** The ending debriefing discussion is also a free-form discussion: What was this experience like for you? Did you recognize or realize something while speaking or listening that hadn’t yet become clear? Did you hear something from the other person that clarified something you’d been thinking about? Did you come to know this person in only a few minutes?

Handout 4

Touchstones for Creating Hospitable Space

adapted from The Center for Courage and Renewal

1. **Be 100% present, extending and presuming welcome.**
Set aside the usual distractions of things undone from yesterday, things to do tomorrow. Welcome others into this place and presume you are welcome as well.
2. **Listen deeply.**
Listen intently to what is said, listen to feelings beneath the words. As Quaker Douglas Steere writes, “to listen another’s soul into life, into a condition of disclosure and discovery, may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another.”
3. **It is never “share or die.”**
You will be invited to share in pairs. The invitation is exactly that. You will determine the extent to which you want to participate.
4. **No fixing.**
We are not here to set someone else straight or to help right another’s wrong. We are here to witness to God’s movement in the sacred stories we share.
5. **Suspend judgment.**
Set aside your judgments. By creating a space between judgments and reactions, we can listen to another person, and to ourselves, more fully.
6. **Identify assumptions.**
By identifying our assumptions, which are usually transparent, we can set them aside and open the sharing and learning to greater possibilities.
7. **Speak your truth.**
You are invited to say what is in your heart, trusting that your voice will be heard and your contribution respected. A helpful practice is to use “I” statements.
8. **Practice confidentiality care.**
We create a safe space by respecting the nature and content of stories shared. If anyone asks that a story shared be kept in confidence, the group will honor that request.
9. **Turn to wonder.**
If you find yourself disagreeing with another, becoming judgmental, or shutting down in defense, try turning to wonder: “I wonder what brought her to this place?” “I wonder what my reaction teaches me?” “I wonder what he’s feeling right now?”

Handout 5

Asking Open and Honest Questions

When we are practicing Holy Listening, we may find it important to ask some questions that open the speaker's ear to hear their own inner truth, to listen to their own life. Learning to be a listener who asks honest, open questions is challenging. We are not there to show what good problem-solvers we are, but simply to support another person in listening to his or her own life. This means absolutely no advice and no amateur psychoanalysis. It means no "Why don't you ... ?" It means no "That happened to me one time, and here's what I did ... " It means no "There's a book/therapist/exercise/diet that would help you a lot." Nothing is allowed except real questions, honest and open questions, questions that will help the person listen to their own life without becoming burdened by the personal agenda of the listener.

What is an honest, open question? It is important to reflect on this, since we are so skilled at asking questions that are advice or analysis in disguise: "Have you ever thought that it might be your mother's fault?" **The best single mark of an honest, open question is that the questioner could not possibly anticipate the answer to it:**

*Did you ever feel like this before?
What did that feel like?*

There are other guidelines for good questioning:

- **Ask questions aimed at helping the speaker** rather than at satisfying your curiosity.
- **Ask questions that are brief and to the point** rather than loading them with background considerations and rationale — which make the question into a speech.
- **Ask questions that go to the person as well as the problem** — for example, questions about feelings as well as about facts.
- **Trust your intuition in asking questions**, even if your instinct seems off the wall: "What color is your present job, and what color is the one you have been offered?"
- **Avoid questions with yes-no or right-wrong answers.** At the same time, remember that the best questions are often simple and straightforward.

All materials adapted from Parker Palmer, "Guidelines for Asking Open, Honest Questions" and "Touchstones for Creating Hospitable Space."

Handout 6

Holy Listening Exercise

In this “Holy Listening” exercise, enter into the sacred space of being with one another and hearing about someone else’s story. You may begin with any question to which you feel drawn. Here are some ideas:

What is your story?

Who is the main character?

What’s the climax of the narrative?

Or, you might begin using your creative art as a point of entry into your story or by responding to an earlier question from the Movie of Your Life exercise which sparked the most reflection.

BREAK

(30 minutes)

This “Mindless Motion Break” is intended to provide volunteers with a physical and mental break. Choose a game that gets the volunteers moving. This should be a fun time to let loose, not a time to dissect one’s life. Ideas include “Duck Duck Goose,” “Elbow Tag,” and “Red Rover.”

EXAMINING OUR CONTEXT

(1 Hour)

Goal: Today has been spent examining one's life narrative. This session focuses on looking to the contexts within which our narratives occur. Ultimately, we will examine how these contexts impact our vocation.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Handout 7: *Examining Our Context*
- Easel Pad and Markers for Report-back Session (optional)

Instructions for Moderator: This segment can easily be adapted depending upon the size of the group, ministry/service placements, etc.

For the small group breakout reflections, please decide the groups ahead of time. Pre-plan the categories of service sites groups based on who is present for the event. Prearranging will avoid spending a lot of time deciding what groups, who goes where, etc. Divide into small groups based upon similar service sites (all those working in schools go in one group, domestic violence shelters go into another group, etc). Groups should be between six to eight people. You may need to create two groups for a type of site that has more than eight people in service.

Depending on the size of your group, the large group report-back session can be divided into several groups or kept as one large group. The ideal size for the report back session is 40 volunteers.

Outline of Activities:

1. **Introduction to Examining Our Context** (5 minutes)
2. **Small Group Reflection** (35 minutes)
3. **Large Group Report Back** (20 minutes)

Description of Activities:

1. **Introduction to Examining Our Context** Today has been full! Let's take a look back at where we've been. We began with a prayer that urged us to connect with others throughout the world, to look beyond ourselves. Then, of course, were the icebreakers. This morning we talked about our stories and imagining our lives as movies. After a delicious lunch, we engaged in Holy Listening.

And now, where does that leave us? Our stories do not take place in a vacuum. When we talk about our stories, we are telling them in a specific place and time and with particular people and events. All movies, all stories occur within a certain context. This context is a crucial piece of our story!

A natural place to start considering context is within our service sites. This setting is where much of our story has taken place, right? This context is more than a background setting for our stories, but really helps shape where we are in our unfolding narrative. When we look to our context, we can see that we are telling our story within a community. In fact, the only way we can tell our story is within community.

In order to more fully examine our context, we are going to break into small groups according to type of service site. For instance, all those working in schools will form one group, all those in healthcare go in another group, those in community organizing form another and so on.

- 2. Small Group Reflection** Divide into groups the moderator has pre-arranged. Distribute Handout 7: *Examining our Context*. Each group should have one person to serve as timekeeper and to open the group with a review of Touchstones — either silent reading or read aloud. Groups will have 35 minutes for discussion. The list of questions on the handout is suggestive. They are not expected to answer all the questions or to proceed in order, but rather to start with a question that sparks the most energy. At the end of the time, the small groups will come back together and share what they have discovered with the whole group.
- 3. Large Group Report Back** After 35 minutes in small groups, bring the groups back together in a large group. At this time, the moderator should facilitate a conversation, perhaps beginning by eliciting general responses and moving to the question “What did you learn about the relationship between your story and your context?”

RESOURCES:

Ganz, Marshall. “Public Narrative Workshop Guide.”

Handout 7

Examining Our Context

*Discuss the questions that evoke the most response within you.
Do not feel pressured to answer all the questions.*

Throughout this year of service, your service site acts as the setting in your story. These questions are designed to lead you in a careful look at your setting and in reflection upon how the setting shapes your story of yourself.

Describe the setting in one or two paragraphs. What was the first thing you noticed? What do you notice now that you didn't see at first? How does that change the story?

When looking to the setting, how do you feel? Excited? Overwhelmed? Bored?

How does your setting impact your story — the characters, the challenges, the choices and the outcome?

If the setting were to change, your story would also change. How does this prospect make you feel?

How does your story connect with the stories of others in your context? In the words of Marshall Ganz, how does your “story of self” connect with the “story of us”?

How does this setting impact your relationship with God? Does the context bring out any new aspects of God? Bring up any doubts? Affirmations?

What are the communities in which this story is being lived out?

What are the communities that need to be present for these stories to change?

How is God present in our context?

WINDING DOWN

(1 hour)

Goal: Today, a lot has been asked and a lot has been accomplished by both the group and the individual participants. Hopefully, people have allowed themselves to become more vulnerable with each other as the day progressed. Now we want to be able to build upon that openness to allow for a deeper, more fulfilling bonding.

Suggested Materials:

- Hymnals or Other Music Resources
- Candles
- Holden Prayer Guide or other directed prayer with music
- Taize Worship Materials
- Board games, puzzles, playing cards, dice
- Arts and Crafts Materials

Instructions for Moderator: This evening session is intended to provide a space at the end of the day to relax, bring together the events of the day, enjoy one another's company and pray together. Given that each group has different needs, this evening session is the most flexible and can easily be adapted to each group. Perhaps the group is yearning for worship or music or entertainment from your perspective; please take this time as an opportunity to pursue that.

The above list does not represent any particular activity but a variety of items that could be used in this space. It is not a complete list, and it is not given as a prioritized list.

Below, you will find a prayer activity that can be done if desired to close out the day.

Activity: Below is a group/communal prayer. After the leader prays a short prayer that touches on the five senses, the group is then allowed to pray a prayer of thanks for how they have seen God in their day today, whether through a conversation, a meal, the woodworking of a chair or the craftwork of a hand knit scarf. The idea is to remember that everything in this world that has been done is an extension of creation by a God who allows humans to create as well.

The intent is to draw out in people a sense of understanding and appreciation for the different ways we can all be touched in tangible sensory ways. The sample prayer focuses upon God's presence in nature.

It should be explained before the prayer begins that there are no limitations. The purpose is to get people to think beyond the lofty, spiritual ways in which we often pray to God and into the details of daily life. How has God touched us today? A word said? A compliment given? A compliment received? Someone else's writing utensil or the appreciation in a shoe design? Most everything we see around us is created by God or by humans, and nothing created by humans would have existed without God giving us the ability.

As such, the prayer may gain a life of its own with one person inspiring the next person and carrying on a particular topic. The prayer may also, however, take a path towards complete randomness. It is up to the group, and there are neither expectations of topic or requirements on length. If someone wants to go through all five senses they can, if they want to only highlight one that is also acceptable. Allow the prayer to carry its own life and then finish it by wrapping up the themes of the prayers.

If the leader does not use the sample prayer, they should still open with the first line and the last line (indicated below in bold.)

If the choice has been made to use the prayer described above, the following introduction can be used as a script in presenting the intent of the evening. Make sure to remember to present the points of the prayer outlined above in your own words: *One of the undeniably wise practices of the Bible is the concept of rest. And so let us move from the taxing work of the day into respite and relaxation. Let us find this upcoming opportunity to begin the process of rejuvenation. For some, this may mean reflection, for others this may mean introspection, and for others it may mean expression. The important part is that all are able to rest the burdens and labors of the day.*

— Hear Our Prayer, Bind Our Souls —

OPENING LINE:

God, awesome creator, strike in us a comprehension of majesty.

God, in silence, you remind us of song with symphonies made of wind wisps and tree leaves applauding. You exist, not invisible when morning tulips show me their hearts' lovely colors and their movement as they close for the night. God, we are never forsaken, reminded in the warmth of a never failing sun who wraps us daily in celestial arms. If we do not breathe, we cannot live, and every inward breath whelms with the scents of life abundant. God, your waters run clear under your mountains to the juices of your exotic fruits quenching our thirsts and allowing us to fill with the sweetness of your being.

Revealing Vocation

FINDING GOD'S STORY IN OUR LIVES

Today you have brought us here; part curious, part intimidated; part confident, part disinterested. Every experience, God, given in your days is one of mystery and excitement, confusion and wonder. We, created in and filled with the divine, too often miss the glory of ourselves in creation. Let us speak, now, to the brightness we have seen in each other this day. Let us note the ways we have been affected by one another, moments of praise or impression, moments of awe or fascination. Lord, let us lift up one another for ways, today, we have shown you to one another this day.

The community is invited to speak aloud the many ways that God has been present today.

CLOSING LINE:

How many ways have we been awestruck today! Amen.

RESOURCES:

Taize Community's website provides good overviews and instructions to some of their worship materials and styles: <http://www.taize.fr/en>

Holden Prayer is a communal Evening Prayer. This setting of vespers follows the traditional form while using contemporary and inclusive language. It includes singing, spoken, and silent prayer. Holden Prayer Resource can be purchased at: <http://www.giamusic.com/products/P-3460.cfm>



Stories in Community

RETREAT 2

RETREAT 2

Stories in Community

OPENING PRAYER

(15 minutes)

STORIES THAT SHAPE US

(2 hours)

**VOCATION: LIVING IN
GOD'S STORY**

(1 hour)

LUNCH

CHAPTERS IN GOD'S STORY

(2 hours)

DINNER

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

(1 hour)

WORSHIP

(1 hour)

OPENING PRAYER
Prayer of the Word Made Flesh

(15 minutes)

Goal: To get the volunteers' blood flowing, help them think about their gifts and desires, and center their minds on their roles in God's story.

Materials Needed:

- A wide open space
- 3 readers
- 3 copies of Prayer of the Word Made Flesh

Instructions for Moderator: You will need to give copies of the prayer to readers beforehand so they can be prepared to read clearly and coherently. You will also need prepare the group and offer some instruction before you begin the prayer.

The movement of the prayer is a means of quickly communicating answers to questions that the moderator asked. As the prayer is prayed, the moderator will point to a location or locations in the room and the participants will move in relationship to that point or points depending on how they relate to the statements corresponding to the locations. After you designate a location to correspond to a statement, participants will move to the place with which they identify. Allow time for participants to move and observe where others are located. After the short silence, conclude each repetition with the phrase, "Behold the Body."

To begin the preparation, have the group stand in a large open space.

This prayer is designed to help you see yourselves as unique individuals who form the Body of Christ when in community with others. Or, to put it in the language of the retreat, the prayer is intended to help us see that our individual characters combine to form a cast who collectively will live out God's story.

As we pray, each reader will point to a spot or spots in the room that designate a concept named by the reader of the prayer and you will be invited to move to the location that corresponds with your personal experience. We will demonstrate in a moment.

When you move, please do so prayerfully and silently and look around to observe how each person differs and relates to the others in the group. When we have found our places and looked around, we will say, "Behold the Body."

After you have explained what will happen, test that the group understands the mechanics of the prayer by assigning a point on the floor with “I love math,” and another point with “I hate math.” Hopefully everyone will gravitate towards some place between the two points; if they do not, try to clarify the concept. Once everyone understands the process, begin the prayer.

The questions in the prayer are suggestions for the moderator; if you have other questions that you believe would be appropriate, please include them.

Activity: Prayer of the Word Made Flesh

The group stands in a circle.

Reader 1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was One, but the Word was not singular. For in the Word was a Story, and in it many sentences, many syllables, many breaths to breathe life into the earth. Breaths that brought forth awe and wonder. Breaths that brought forth pain and suffering. Breaths that brought forth hope and healing. Breaths that brought forth love. These breaths formed a Body, and in it, the Word was made flesh.

Reader 2: But the breath which formed the ear said to the eye, “Because I am not the eye, I am not of the Body.” And the breath which formed the eye said to the hand, “I have no need of you,” and to the feet, “You are not of the Body.” And so the Body of the Word was broken. But the Word was not. The Word calls to each of us, to its breaths; calls us to find each other once again, to find our place in the Body, to find our place in the Story, to breathe the Word into the world made whole.

Reader 1: Where are you in the Body? Where are you in the Story?

Reader 3: Some thrive connecting to people. Some thrive connecting to objects. Some thrive connecting to ideas. *Reader 3 points to three points forming a triangle at different ends of the room saying,* Here is people, here is objects, here is ideas. Where do you thrive?

Behold the Body of Christ.

Reader 1: Some prepare well in advance, some prepare at the last minute. *Reader 1 points to two points on opposite sides of the room.* Here is preparing well in advance, here is preparing at the last minute, where are you?

Behold the Body of Christ.

Reader 2: Some feel comfortable in their religious tradition. Others do not. *Reader 2 indicates a point in the middle of the room saying,* Here is comfort with your religious tradition, where are you?

Behold the Body of Christ.

Reader 3: Some love to win, others hate to lose, other just want to have fun. *Reader 3 points to three points forming a triangle at different ends of the room saying,* Here is love to win, here is hate to lose, here is just want to have fun. Where are you?

Behold the Body of Christ.

Reader 1: Some seek confrontation, some flee confrontation, some seek to resolve confrontation. *Reader 1 points to three points forming a triangle at different ends of the room, saying* Here is seek confrontation, here is flee confrontation, here is seek to resolve it. Where are you?

Behold the Body of Christ.

Reader 2: Some prefer money, some prefer independence, some prefer status, some prefer creative opportunity. *Reader 2 points to four corners of the room, saying* Here is money, here is independence, here is status, here is creative opportunity. Where are you?

Behold the Body of Christ.

Reader 3: Some make choices through conversation, some make choices through reflection, some make choices through instinct, some let the others make choices for them. *Reader 3 points to four corners of the room saying,* Here is conversation, here is reflection, here is instinct, here is others. Where are you?

Behold the Body of Christ.

Reader 1: Some are the hands of the Body, some are eyes, some are the feet of the Body, and others the heart. *Reader 1 points to two opposite ends of the room saying,* Here is the head of the Body, and here are the feet. Where are you?

Behold the Body of Christ.

Moderator: This is the Body of Christ, and you are part of it. Distinct but not divided; together you will live out God's story. May we have the courage to hear the call that the Word has breathed for us. Amen.

STORIES THAT SHAPE US

(2 hours)

Goal: This session is intended to get volunteers thinking about the large, “meta” stories that shape who we are and how we live in the world, and to introduce the idea of God’s story at work in the world.

Materials Needed:

- Butcher Paper
- Markers
- FTE *Revealing Vocation* DVD: *For Such a Time as This* and DVD player and television OR Internet access and projector to broadcast from www.fteleaders.org/vevrevealvocation-videos

Instructions for Moderator: For this session, you will need to provide a bit of explanation about “Big Stories,” or “meta” stories. This might be a concept with which participants are familiar, but it might also be something new to them. The main focus of this session is to introduce the idea of “Big Stories,” the idea of God’s story, and the opportunity for individuals to choose which Big Stories color their view of the world.

We’re moving beyond personal stories, family stories, and community stories now, and beginning to talk about the stories that shape us through our culture. While we often begin to tell “our” story by telling a personal narrative with relevant facts (where you were born, how you grew up), we often forget that the cultural stories going on around us have huge effects on how our lives get lived. “Big Stories” might be the Story of America, the Story of Progress, the Story of Consumerism, etc. Whether we recognize them or not, our lives make up a part of each of these stories, and these stories have an effect on how we live our lives. For instance, living within the Story of Consumerism might shape our lives in such a way that we find ourselves following the plot line of accumulating things to make ourselves better. Since we live within the Story of America, we might cast Americans as the main characters in any international plot line, whether that is true or not. The “Big Stories” have such power that they bleed into many of the smaller situations and narratives of our lives, and while it is probably impossible to extract ourselves from any of these cultural stories, we can become aware of them and their effects on us.

For example, think about Joe. Joe, a middle-class American guy, has just graduated from college and is deciding what to do next with his life. Joe’s own personal story exists among many other, “big” stories. His life choices are influenced by the Story of America, the Story of Consumerism, the Story of Progress, the Story of Globalization, the Story of Militarism. Think about what his life would look like if he chose to follow any one

of these stories as his primary script. If his life were most affected by the Story of Consumerism, Joe might be compelled to quickly find the job with the best salary and begin making money to insure he owned the biggest and newest consumer products. If his life were most affected by the Story of America, Joe might find himself drawn to working in public policy or government in order to further the “American way” as he understands it. Of course, sometimes it is hard to distinguish which story has the greatest pull on our lives, which is why it’s good to name and attempt to understand them.

Outline of Activities:

1. **Group Discussion** (10 minutes)
2. **Butcher Paper Brainstorming** (15 minutes)
3. **Small Group Storytelling** (45 minutes)
4. **For Such a Time As This** from FTE *Revealing Vocation* DVD or FTE website (15 minutes)
5. **Group Discussion/Small Group Discussion/Journal time** (35 minutes)

Description of Activities:

1. **Group Discussion** Begin the session with a large group discussion about some of the larger stories that we live in, sometimes without even acknowledging them. After explaining the idea of a Big Story, ask the group what some of the stories are that they are already living within. You might make a list of these brainstormed stories on an easel.
2. **Butcher Paper Brainstorming** On four large pieces of butcher paper, write titles of four Big Stories that the group named during the discussion. Place one on each of the four walls around the room. Invite volunteers to take several minutes to move from one wall to the next, brainstorming the elements of each story: Who are the main characters in this story? What is the setting? How does the plot progress? How does the story end? They should write their ideas on the paper.
3. **Small Group Storytelling** Divide the group into four smaller groups. Assign each group one of the Big Stories, and hand them the butcher paper with the appropriate brainstorming ideas on it. If there will be more than six people in a group, divide the group and allow more than one group to be assigned the same story. Instruct the group that they’ll have about 20 minutes to come up with a way to tell the Story that they’ve been assigned — in 3 minutes or less. Encourage them to be creative! Telling the story could be a simple recounting of the narrative, it could be acting out a scenario, creating a piece of art or a comic strip storyboard (with leftover

butcher paper and markers), etc. Once groups have had 20 minutes of planning time, bring the large group back together to view the presentations.

4. ***For Such a Time As This*** Introduce the video, “For Such a Time As This” as another Big Story — God’s story, or the biblical story. Ask participants to think about the elements of God’s story as they watch the video — characters, setting, plot structure. Show the video.

Take a few moments to name the characters, setting and plot structure shown in the video. Write these on butcher paper and place them on the wall alongside the previously described Big Stories.

5. **Small Group Discussion** Divide into small groups of 4-5 people. Instruct groups to discuss two questions:

- 1) Which of the Big Stories are most influential in your life?
- 2) When you think about your own story, which of these stories does it most closely resemble? Which one would you like it to resemble?

VOCATION: LIVING INTO GOD'S STORY

(1 hour)

Goal: To introduce volunteers to a concept of vocation that is nuanced, approachable and engaging.

Materials Needed:

- FTE *Revealing Vocation* DVD: *Vocation 101: What Do You Mean by Vocation?*
- DVD player and television OR Internet access and projector to broadcast from www.ftleaders.org/vevrevealvocation-videos

Instructions for Moderator: Gather the group together and encourage them to get comfortable. Introduce the video.

We've been talking a lot about stories the last few days — our own and God's story. The bigger question now is where those two intersect. The idea or doctrine of vocation helps us answer the question of where the two intersect. We want to spend some time talking about vocation. For some of you this is a familiar term — and perhaps a scary one. For others, you've never heard this word before. We invite you to suspend your preconceived notions or just be open to learning something new as we watch this video.

Outline of Activities:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Watch *Vocation 101*** on FTE *Revealing Vocation* DVD
3. **Reflection** (group discussion, small group, or individual)

Description of Activities:

- 1-2. **After an introduction** similar to the one provided above, **play *Vocation 101***. You may want to play it twice; it is not long.
3. **Reflection** Find a partner — the person sitting next to you is fine — and one at a time, explain “vocation” to each other. If a particular question arises, raise your hand.

Moderator will call on those with raised hands who will state their question. If you have a response, raise your hand. Responses will be shared and process repeated until all questions have been answered.

Revealing Vocation

FINDING GOD'S STORY IN OUR LIVES

Now join with another pair to form a group of four. First, each member of the group is invited to tell about someone who, based on what we now know about vocation, is living in vocation and what it is about that person that leads to your belief. Second, each member is invited to tell about someone they know who does not seem to be living in vocation and what it is about the person that leads to this conclusion.

In each group of four, reflect on the persons named as living in vocation. How might they be part of God's larger story?

Thinking back on the Movie of Your Life, does any part of it connect with any part of God's story as we know it in scripture, tradition, theology or Christian practices? What about the movies of the lives of other people at the retreat? Do you see connections there?

CHAPTERS IN GOD'S STORY

(2 hours)

Goal: To support participants in understanding how they might find their place in God's story by showing how other people, past and present, have found their place in God's story.

Materials Needed:

- SIGN Vocation Game: (All the information you need is provided below.)
- One pen/pencil per person
- Copies of Handout 8: *Instructions for the game SIGN* (one per group of 6 participants)
- FTE *Revealing Vocation* DVD and television to play Sign Vocation Game Instructions
OR Internet access to watch www.fteladers.org/vevrevealvocation-videos

Instructions for Moderator: Having discussed the overarching narrative of God's story, this exercise is designed to examine how individuals throughout history have lived out parts of God's story and to explore what shaped these individuals to play the roles they played. This activity contains two parts. The first part is a game called "Sign" which is based on the game "Clue" by Hasbro. The purpose of this game is (1) to help volunteers learn about people who have lived out their vocations from within their own traditions and (2) to help them identify background/community influences that have shaped other people within the Christian tradition to live out their vocation — so that they might see the influences in their own lives more clearly. The second part of the activity is "Living the Legends," in which groups share about the Characters they learned about in the game.

You will need to prepare the SIGN game beforehand.

Instructions for preparation of SIGN: The game requires some advance preparation on the part of the moderators. Each game set should include (per group of 6 people):

- Pack of 27 Influence Cards (3 for each of the 9 Characters)
- Character Descriptions (9)
- Character Stories (9)
- One Discernment Pad per player, each listing the 27 possible influences
- Envelope
- One pen/pencil per person

The Character Descriptions, Character Stories, and Influence Cards are below and can be photocopied and cut as needed to make the game pieces.

The **Characters** prepared represent a spectrum of people past and present from various Christian traditions: Dorothy Day, Martin Luther, Alexander Mack, Anna Mow, Angelina Emily Grimké Weld, Judith Ann Mayotte, Edwina Gateley, Ignatius of Loyola, Bishop Marwa Zedekia Kisare and Jeff Johnson.

If Characters from your organization's tradition are not present, you are encouraged to replace some of the Characters with people from your own tradition. To do this, you simply need to create a Character Description, Character Story, and three Influence Cards.

- A **Character Description** includes a two or three sentence description of the Character and how they lived out part of God's story.
- A **Character Story** is a specific incident in which the person lived out his or her vocation. Ideally the Story should contain either some sort of conflict, collaboration, choice, or some other stageable moment with more than one character. This should be no longer than one page double-spaced.
- **Influence Cards** should be three background/community influences that shaped the person to be able to live out his or her vocation. Each card should be roughly a two-sentence explanation of what the influence was and how it shaped the person. You will also need a short bullet form description of each Card to fit on the Discernment Pad.

The activity works best if there are as many groups of three to six people playing as there are possible Characters (Using the Characters provided here, that would mean nine groups of three to six people). This way every Character has at least one group that is learning about him or her. However, the game can work with both fewer groups and fewer Characters. Playing with more than twelve Characters is not recommended as it causes the game to last too long. If there are more than seventy-two people at the retreat, have more than one group investigate the same Character.

Instructions for Living the Legends: Once all of the teams have figured out their Character, it is time to share with the other groups. Everyone has encountered the wide variety of traits amongst all of these faith driven heroes and now it is time to put them together. Each group will present the story of their character in a theatrical way. One doesn't need to be Laurence Olivier, and the production doesn't need to be Stephen Spielberg, it is just to get the story on its feet in a lively fashion.

Each story has a Cast of Characters listed in order of importance for presenting the story. If there are fewer people in the group than in the Cast of Characters, begin at the beginning of the list filling the principles first. If there are not enough characters listed for each person in the group to have a part, add a few extra ones. These characters may be animate or inanimate objects fitting to the scene. For instance, if there are two people who do not have characters and the scene takes place in a church, they could get on hands and knees and form a pew. Or if it is outside, one could stand arms extended and waving to make a tree.

At the beginning of each scene, the performers should introduce themselves and their roles. The narrator can then begin reading the story and as (s)he reads the story the characters should actively participate in the story being read. Even a tree can wave in the breeze while someone travels by, so nobody should have to feel disengaged.

Outline of Activities:

1. **Prepare the SIGN and Living the Legend games for each group**
2. **Divide the retreat into groups of three to six players**
3. **Explain to the groups the concept and rules of SIGN**
4. **Begin playing SIGN**
5. **Groups perform stories in Living the Legends**
6. **Concluding reflection**

Explanation of Activities:

- **SIGN Game:** Divide into groups of three to six players. The moderator should prepare each group's game by selecting a Character for the team, giving the team the Character Description and Character Story sheet and placing the Character's corresponding Influence Cards in the Envelope. The remaining Influence Cards from the set should be placed in a stack next to the Envelope along with the corresponding Character Description and Character Story.

Show the explanation of "SIGN" found in three minute video form on your DVD or on www.fteleaders.org/vevrevealvocation-videos

Distribute Handout 8: *Instructions for playing SIGN.*

When each group is finished, or when all groups have completed play, explain Living the Legends. (See previous page.)

Each group performs their Living Legend story.

6. **Concluding reflection** After each group has presented, Moderator asks the whole group:

- What were your overall impressions?
- Any big surprises?
- Did you see any common themes in the influences on the Characters?
- What were they?

Handout 8

Instructions for Playing SIGN

*This game may sound complicated.
But if you have ever played “Clue,” you can play SIGN.*

Object of the Game: The object of the game is to identify three significant influences that shaped a particular, well known, historic person of faith who has played a part in God’s story.

Each group of players will be given one description of one Character and a brief story about that person’s life. They need to discover what three background or community Influences shaped this person to be able to play his or her part in God’s Story. The answer lies in an Envelope. The Envelope contains three Influence Cards describing three influences. The player who, by the process of deduction and good plain common sense, first correctly identifies the three Influence Cards hidden in the Envelope, wins the game.

Equipment (per group of 6 people):

- Pack of 27 Influence Cards
- 9 Character Descriptions
- 9 Character Stories
- One Discernment Pad per person, each containing a list of 27 possible influences
- Envelopes — 1 for each team
- One pen/pencil per person

Player Preparation: One player reads aloud the Character Description and Character Story given to their group — the person who was influenced in his or her vocation by the three things listed in the Envelope. Players shuffle their stack of Influence Cards. They deal them face down clockwise around the table. It is important that no player see any of the cards while they are being shuffled and dealt. It does not matter if some players receive more cards than others. Each player secretly looks at his or her own cards. Each player checks off the items on the Discernment Pad that are in his or her hand to eliminate them as possible influences (as they cannot be in the envelope).

Playing the Game: Starting with the youngest person and rotating clockwise, each person has the opportunity to make a Suggestion about the Influences on the Character. A Suggestion is one player telling the other players that he or she believes the Character was shaped by three of the Influences listed on the Discernment Pad. For example, “I think Martin Luther was influenced by The Works of Tolstoy and

Dostoyevsky, Time in India Opens Eyes, and Years as Monk Fail to Provide Spiritual Comfort.” As soon as a player makes a Suggestion, the other members of the team, in turn, try to prove it false, moving clockwise. The first player clockwise to the Suggester looks at his or her cards to see if one of the three Influences just named is there. If the player has one or more of these cards, he or she must show it to the Suggester and no one else. If the player has more than one of the cards named, he or she must select just one to show the Suggester. If that player does not have any of the three cards, then the next player clockwise examines his or her cards and must show one of the three if he or she has it. Obviously, if any player has one or more of the 3 cards named in the Suggestion, it is proof that those particular cards are not in the Envelope. The opportunity to prove the Suggestion false passes clockwise until some player has shown ONE card to the suggesting player, whose turn then ends, and play passes to the next player. If no one is able to prove the Suggestion false, the Suggester may either end his or her turn or make a Revelation now.

Making a Revelation: When a player thinks he or she has figured out which Influences correspond to their Character (i.e., which three cards are in the Envelope) the player may, on his or her turn, make a Revelation. The Revelation consists of declaring the three Influences in the Envelope. Then, so that the other players do not see, the player making the Revelation looks at the three cards in the Envelope. If the Revelation is completely correct, that is, if the player finds in the Envelope all three cards named, the player lays the cards face up on the table and gains the fleeting happiness of being declared the winner. If all three cards named in the Revelation are not in the Envelope, the Revelation is false. In this case the player who made the Revelation secretly returns the three cards to the Envelope. This player loses his or her next turn, but continues to assist in verifying or contradicting Suggestions made by other players.

MARTIN LUTHER

Martin Luther, realizing the corrupt and abusive practices of the Church at the time stood up to the powers-that-be and demanded that the Church proclaim God's unconditional love and salvation through grace. In spite of fierce opposition and threats against his life, Luther helped lead a major reformation in church practices with the goal of creating a less hierarchical and more grace-filled church.

MARTIN LUTHER STORY:

Cast of Characters: Martin Luther, Emperor Charles V,
Johann Eck, Church Officials, Friends, Table

Martin Luther, a monk and scholar with two bachelors' degrees, a master's degree, and a doctorate, was a priest and theology professor who initiated the Protestant Reformation. Initially, his complaint about church practices was poorly received. Church officials banned his writing.

Later, in 1521, Luther was ordered to appear before the Diet of Worms, a general assembly of the Roman Empire. Emperor Charles V presided. Johann Eck, speaking on behalf of the empire, laid copies of Luther's writings on a table, looked at Luther, and asked him if the books were his. Luther affirmed that they were. When Eck asked Luther if he stood by the contents, he pleaded for time and left. He went to pray. He consulted with his friends. The next day, Luther delivered this response:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. May God help me. Amen.

The Emperor declared Luther an outlaw, banned his literature and required his arrest. He made it a crime for anyone to give Luther food or shelter. He permitted anyone to kill Luther without legal consequence.

INFLUENCE CARD

**TUTORS BARTHOLOMÄUS ARNOLDI VON USINGEN
AND JODOCUS TRUTFETTER:**

Luther was deeply influenced by two tutors, Bartholomäus Arnoldi von Usingen and Jodocus Trutfetter, who taught him to be suspicious of even the greatest thinkers and to test everything himself by experience.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

FATHER FUNDING A PRE-LAW MASTER'S DEGREE:

Martin Luther's father hoped that Martin would become a lawyer; as such he paid for Martin to go to university and then law school. There, Luther studied philosophy and reason, but eventually came to reject it as providing no assurance of a loving God. Eventually Luther dropped out of law school, causing great disappointment for his father.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

**YEARS OF MONASTIC LIFE FAILING TO
PROVIDE SPIRITUAL COMFORT:**

Despite being considered one of the holiest and surest ways to achieve salvation, Luther's extremely devout experience as a monk gave him no assurance, but only deepened his fear of failing to achieve salvation.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

ALEXANDER MACK

Alexander Mack, the leader and first minister of the Schwarzenau Brethren, joined with seven other radical pietists to found the Brethren movement on Christmas day, 1708, in Schwarzenau, Germany. He led the original small group in their illegal refusal to become members of a state-sanctioned church, started underground bible studies, performed unsanctioned adult baptisms, and emigrated to America to establish Brethren communities in North America where they enjoyed freedom of religion.

ALEXANDER MACK STORY

Cast of Characters: Alexander Mack, Ernst Christoph Hochmann, Chief Law Enforcement Officer, Worshippers, Sympathetic Count, County Clerk

Mack became a close follower of Ernst Christoph Hochmann, a charismatic preacher who would have little to do with the state church. On August 22, 1706 Hochmann was leading a religious service in the Mack family mill when the chief law enforcement officer from Heidelberg broke into the meeting to interrogate the worshippers. The county clerk accompanying the officer was so angered by the illegal gathering that he threatened to call in a regiment of soldiers to arrest them all.

The Mack family had to make a hasty decision — to flee or not to flee, to leave or to stay. They chose to flee. That night, Mack and his wife and their two small sons gathered together all the possessions they could carry and fled from Schriesheim in the deep darkness of night. They found refuge in the village of Schwarzenau. Under the protection of a sympathetic count, many other Separatists had found this haven of peace and freedom from persecution.

Mack had a sizable inheritance from his father and shared his wealth unselfishly with those who also fled their homes for religious freedom. Although Mack was only in his twenties, he was highly regarded as a natural leader, and was especially respected for his knowledge of the Bible and his ability to interpret it. He was soon the leader of a small group who met regularly in the Mack home for worship and Bible study.

INFLUENCE CARD

RELIGIOUS CLIMATE DISSATISFYING:

In early 18th century Germany, religion was determined by the particular province and its ruling prince. There were three state-sanctioned churches: Catholic, Reformed and Lutheran. Membership in one of these communions was required of all citizens, as was infant baptism and compliance with the particular theology.

Mack grew up in this climate, and found himself associating with dissenters who, like him, found forced religion distasteful and unbiblical.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

ERNST CHRISTOPH HOCHMANN VON HOCHNAU SHARING PIETIST IDEAS:

Hochmann von Hochnau was a traveling pietist preacher, spreading both mainstream pietist views — individual piety and an intensely active lived faith — and more radical ideas, such as adult baptism and home bible studies. Hochmann von Hochnau visited Mack and his family, and convinced them to begin an illegal bible study in their home with several close friends. This biblical study led the group farther away from the state churches as they became convinced that infant baptism, forced religion, and a hierarchical and corrupt priesthood were both unbiblical and dangerous for the Church.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

CALLED TO BE NON-HIERARCHICAL LEADER BY COMMUNITY:

Though the original eight Brethren held strong opinions against structured church authority and even refused to name the member who performed the first baptism, they did put their confidence in Mack as leader. They allowed him to correspond and converse on their behalf with state authorities and other religious leaders, write what would become foundational theological documents of the Brethren movement, and lead them in their immigration to America. This confidence, in a community intentionally without hierarchy, was essential for Mack's leadership and fulfillment of his vocation.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

ANNA MOW

Anna Mow, one of the first women ordained to ministry in the Church of the Brethren, was a minister, teacher, missionary, seminary professor, author of many books and sought-after speaker. Her influence spanned the globe, but she is most remembered for her ability to care deeply about each person she came into contact with and her loud, raucous, infectious laughter.

ANNA MOW STORY

Characters: Anna Mow, General Hershey, Anna's Son,
Local Draft board, Writing Table

During the Vietnam War, Anna's son was called up in the military draft. He registered with them as a conscientious objector, but the local draft board rejected this, designating him to the military anyway. The Mows were a pacifist family and the son knew his commitment to Jesus' peace meant eventual disobedience to his government and military superiors.

Anna sat down at her writing table and wrote an impassioned letter to General Hershey, the Director of the Selective Service System, asking for help. After some time had gone by, the General wrote his own response informing Anna the C.O. status had been honored. The entire family was relieved, but it did not mark the end of the story.

Months later, Anna was in an airport when she recognized the big, imposing General Hershey in his uniform standing nearby. Little Anna walked over to the General, introduced herself, and reminded him of their correspondence. The General remembered her letters. She thanked him for his help, and turned to go. But before he could leave, Anna caught his sleeve and told him, "General, I want you to know that I pray for you every day."

The General was shocked and began to cry. "People tell me plenty of things, mostly hateful and curses. But no one has ever told me they're praying for me." Anna's ability to love everyone — even the General in charge of sending men like her son into war-made a difference in many lives — known and unknown.

INFLUENCE CARD

FAMILY ROOTS IN TRADITION AND EDUCATION:

The daughter of I.N.H. Beahm, a prominent teacher and minister in the Church of the Brethren, Anna moved around quite a bit during her childhood, and got to see churches and schools built from the ground up at the instigation of her family. Anna's mother was also from the Church of the Brethren, and attended college in a day when women rarely did so. The house was always full of books, and reading was a beloved past time.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

TIME IN INDIA OPENING EYES:

As a missionary in India, Anna struggled with both the physical and spiritual hardships of caring for a small family, encountering deep poverty, and living in a time of political upheaval. She began to befriend people from all castes, to work and worship with both dignitaries and "untouchables." These relationships opened Anna's eyes to Christ's presence in each and every person — large or small.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

RUSSELL GRAHAM LEADING TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING:

While in India, Anna met fellow missionary Russell Graham, who reminded her that "If you have Christ in your heart your family will be first to know." Anna took these words to heart, and during a prayer retreat at Graham's house, experienced a profoundly moving encounter with the Presence of Christ. Afterward, she said, "Even my good emotions are to be His, not mine. Looking at it in that light makes a difference. I am conscious daily in my contacts with others that I am 'bound' to show His emotions ..."

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

DOROTHY DAY

Dorothy Day was an American journalist, social activist, former anarchist and devout Catholic convert. Day established the Catholic Worker movement: a nonviolent, pacifist movement that continues to combine direct aid for the poor and homeless with nonviolent direct action on their behalf.

DOROTHY DAY STORY

Cast of Characters: Dorothy Day, Cardinal Spellman,
People reading/getting food, Catholic Worker Staff

Dorothy Day, an American journalist, social activist, one-time anarchist and devout Catholic convert spent most of her young life fighting injustices as a crusading journalist. She believed religion did not address the day's social concerns. After her daughter was born, she gradually found faith.

In the 1930s, Day began publishing *The Catholic Worker*, a newspaper letting working people know about the dignity of life that Christianity taught. People began coming to the paper's office looking for food. Dorothy and the staff did what they could to feed them.

After *The Catholic Worker* was established, Cardinal Spellman, the Archbishop of New York, confronted Dorothy. The work of *The Catholic Worker* — such as feeding the poor and caring for the sick — was attracting a great deal of positive support from around the city and the country. But Dorothy had publicly criticized Spellman for his lack of support for the unionizing of Catholic gravediggers.

Frustrated at being attacked, Spellman instructed Dorothy to drop the “Catholic” out of the paper's name. Believing the name an attempt to indicate Catholic positions, he rejected anybody else speaking for the church. Dorothy refused to do so and Cardinal Spellman asked “What would you do if I, your cardinal, told you to shut down *The Catholic Worker*?”

Dorothy said, “If our dear, sweet cardinal, who is the Vicar of Christ in New York City, told me to shut down *The Catholic Worker*, I would close it down immediately. But to be faithful to my baptismal calling, I may have go to another diocese and continue my work there.” This ceased Spellman's threats.

INFLUENCE CARD

THE WORKS OF TOLSTOY AND DOSTOYEVSKY:

The works of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky inspired Dorothy as a young girl. They opened her eyes to social inequality and the need for people to play a role in making the world a better place. Later the works of Tolstoy would be instrumental in her conversion to Christianity.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

PETER MAURIN:

Peter Maurin was a Frenchman and former Christian Brother who embraced the lifestyle of radical poverty of St. Francis of Assisi and was extremely passionate about Catholic Social Teaching. Something of a street preacher, he taught Dorothy about Catholic Social Teaching worked with her to shape what the Catholic Worker stood for.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

AMMON HENNACY:

Ammon Hennacy was a pacifist and activist who influenced Dorothy to take more activist steps in her pacifism, including protesting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and condemning all war. He also practiced war tax resistance, making sure he did not make enough money to qualify to pay income taxes because he could not be sure that money did not go to fund war.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

ANGELINA EMILY GRIMKÉ WELD

Born on a South Carolina plantation, Angelina Emily Grimké Weld was a devout Quaker, fierce abolitionist and early feminist thinker. An excellent speaker, she was called the “The Most Famous Woman in America” for her anti-slavery speeches. In 1838 she became the first woman in the United States to address a legislative body when she testified before the Massachusetts State Legislature on the corruptive influence of slavery on the nation. All of her writings and public speeches denounced slavery using religious and moral language; she is credited with galvanizing Christians and churches against slavery. She later began to ask larger questions about the equality of women in society, as well as the treatment of black women.

ANGELINA EMILY GRIMKÉ WELD STORY

Cast of Characters: Angelina Emily Grimké Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, Group of People (they will play the various groups and split to represent different sides), Representative of the AASS

Angelina Emily Grimké Weld wrote a personal letter to well-known abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, in 1835 supporting his work. The impressive letter compelled Garrison to reprint it in *The Liberator*, his famous newspaper. The immediate public reaction drew dramatic favor and equal vitriol towards Grimké’s writing. The next year, she wrote and published *An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*, a unique piece written in the hopes that Southern women would not be able to resist an appeal made by one of their own. The unique essay, styled personally, used simple language and firm assertions to convey her ideas as the only appeal by a Southern woman to other Southern women regarding abolition.

Grimké’s Appeal was widely distributed by the American Anti-Slavery Society and received with great acclaim by radical abolitionists while being received with great criticism by her former Quaker community and publicly burned in South Carolina.

The American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS) approached Grimké to lead womens’ groups in Philadelphia and other Eastern cities. She addressed groups of women about the importance of abolitionist work. Her speeches at these meetings were so inspiring that

men began sneaking in to attend. Often only standing room was available. Mixed gender meetings of this kind were considered highly socially inappropriate and called “explicit.”

The AASS, concerned that the meetings would damage Grimké’s reputation and the work of the AASS, asked her to discontinue the meetings. After much prayer, Grimké refused to bar men from meetings. Theodore Weld stepped forward and began scheduling speaking engagements for her privately. Within a year she was asked to address the Massachusetts legislature about slavery.

INFLUENCE CARD

SISTER AS ROLE MODEL:

Sarah Moore Grimké, who, at age thirteen, begged her parents to allow her to be Angelina’s godmother. They consented, and the two sisters maintained a very intimate relationship throughout their lives. Sarah converted to become a Quaker and it was her example that later caused Angelina to seriously reconsider her own religious ideas and thoughts.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

TEACHING SUNDAY SCHOOL TO FATHER’S SLAVES:

Teaching Sunday school their father’s slaves led Angelina to connect on a human level to the people who served as slaves on her father’s plantation and see the richness of their faith. This experience of realizing they both worshipped the same God sowed seeds that changed her understanding of what it meant to be human.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

GROWING UP IN THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH:

Growing up in the Antebellum South gave Angelina a credibility and personal experiences that many abolitionist of the day did not have. As a result her speeches and writing were often more respected.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

JUDITH ANN MAYOTTE

Dr. Judith Ann Mayotte is an American humanitarian, author, theologian, Emmy-winning producer, former nun, ethicist and university professor. She advocates for the rights of refugees and works for the Desmond Tutu Peace Center in South Africa.

JUDITH ANN MAYOTTE STORY

Cast of Characters: Judith Ann Mayotte, Her Father,
MacArthur Foundation Representative

Born in Wichita, Kansas, Judy grew up in the typical Midwest household. Against her father's wishes, she turned to Catholicism and became a nun. Entering the convent went against everything her family stood for — pre-eminently their utter disdain for everything regarding the Roman Catholic Church.

During those years, Judy developed a strong social consciousness and became more aware of the importance of being both politically and socially active. She chose to leave the religious life after Vatican II and spent time as a television producer. In 1978 she joined WTTW, Chicago's public broadcasting station, as the Director of Research for the News and Current Affairs Division. In 1982 she joined Turner Broadcasting as Senior Researcher and producer for the Emmy and Peabody Award-winning documentary series *Portrait of America*.

In 1985 she won an Emmy for writing and producing the "Washington" segment of the series. It was during this time that she found herself drawn, inexplicably, she says, to refugee work. She simply realized one day that she wanted to venture overseas and work with the displaced: "It's something I can't really explain. It was just in my heart and my gut. I just didn't question it."

She applied for and was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Grant. This allowed her to write a book about refugees. In 1989, at age 51, she embarked on two years of living alone in Eritrea, Sudan, Pakistan, Thailand and Cambodia. Orbis Books published her book *Disposable People? The Plight of Refugees* in 1992.

INFLUENCE CARD

**CONTRACTING POLIO
DURING YEARS AT COLLEGE:**

Judy had to literally learn to walk again. But the experience taught her resilience and humility that she carried with her for the rest of her life along with the conviction that God can always use you, no matter what state you are in.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

**LOSING LEG IN A
FAILED AID DROP IN SUDAN:**

When an aid plane overshot its drop site, a 200 lb bag of grain crushed Judy's leg. Rather than despairing, she realized that her work for refugees would simply have to be on a systematic scale.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

MARRIAGE TO JACK:

Although her marriage to Jack Mayotte only lasted a few years before he passed away from cancer, the experience of being loved totally for who she was helped Judy believe that all people, no matter what their circumstances, should have a life full of love and dignity.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

EDWINA GATELEY

Edwina Gateley, a lay woman in the Roman Catholic Church, continues to respond to her belief that God is in all people. In response to her belief that the church is not limited to the clergy, she encouraged active participation among the laity by founding the Volunteer Missionary Movement. Astonished by the homelessness in Chicago, she began reaching out to women in sex work, establishing the Genesis House, a home for women in sex work.

EDWINA GATELEY STORY

Cast of Characters: Edwina Gateley, People at the Bar, Teddy Bear

After months in isolation in a trailer in Yorkville, Indiana, Edwina Gateley responded to her desire to go to the streets of Chicago and work with women in prostitution. Once decided, she didn't know where to start. She wrote, "I am going to work with women in prostitution. I am not sure where to find them. First I must get to know the streets — wander around wherever I feel drawn. Only God could have got me into this!"

Her first few months in Chicago were filled with awkward moments, continually out of Edwina's comfort zone. She spent her evenings interacting with people in brothels, homeless shelters, soup kitchens and bars. Occasionally, she would be mistaken for soliciting people for sex, while other times being suspected of being an undercover agent. Edwina continued to force herself into these situations because it was something she felt drawn to do.

To Edwina, it appeared that women in sex work were not welcome in the Church. She felt this was contrary to God's infinite love, and sought to create a church where all were welcome.

While wandering the "Red Light districts," the streets of Chicago became her Church. "My congregation was made up of the winos, the drug addicts, the homeless, and the prostitutes. Every encounter, every moment spent sitting in the bars, the brothels, the streets, and the shelters became, for me, Eucharistic events. I knew that God was there."

After spending this time on the streets, Edwina befriended many of the women working. Teddy Bear became especially near and dear to her heart. While Teddy could

be excruciatingly difficult to work with at times, she became the inspiration to begin “Genesis House.” Teddy needed a place to stay, a place where she could be away from sex work and try to maintain her sobriety. Edwina found Teddy a room. From this friendship, Genesis House was born.

INFLUENCE CARD

EXPANDING HORIZONS IN AFRICA:

Edwina graduated from college in 1961. After graduation, she moved to Uganda and worked in a school. She says, “In Africa, my understanding of God changed because of the hospitality, generosity and openness of the African people. Their notion of God seemed to be so much bigger than what I had learned from my Church at home. I learned that we are suffused with God.”

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

CHURCH OFFICIALLY CALLING FOR RENEWAL:

Upon returning to England, Edwina takes seriously the call of Vatican II for the active participation of all in the life of the church. She established the Volunteer Missionary Movement for lay people to serve throughout the world.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

CITY STREETS AND FOREST HERMITAGE:

In 1981 and 1982, Edwina lived in solitude for nine months in a trailer in Indiana. This hermitage is juxtaposed with walking the streets of Chicago. Edwina met the homeless, women in prostitution, drug dealers and other people on the streets. Seeing these people as friends, she intentionally got to know everyone on the streets.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Ignatius of Loyola, while recovering from a battle wound, became inspired to live a life dedicated to God. Establishing the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits, Ignatius guided a new religious community to live out the Gospel values of reaching out to the poor. He pioneered a new approach to spirituality, creating the Spiritual Exercises and emphasizing the presence of God in all things. Eventually he was canonized as a saint.

IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA STORY

Cast of Characters: Ignatius of Loyola, Surgeon, Saints

Ignatius of Loyola was seriously wounded in 1521 when a cannonball wounded one of his legs and broke the other at the Battle of Pamplona. Undergoing several surgical procedures (without anesthesia!), he lay in recovery.

During this time he read the *De Vita Christi* (The Life of Christ) by Ludolph of Saxony. The *De Vita Christi* is a commentary on the life of Jesus Christ wherein Ludolph proposes to the reader that he place himself at the scene of the Gospel story, visualizing the crib at the Nativity as well as other Gospel scenes. This practice of meditation and contemplation changed Ignatius' life. He was inspired to go into hermitage in Montserrat. This method of prayer is common in Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises. Ignatius also read a book on the lives of the saints.

He was struck by the lives of the great monastic leaders. He felt called to emulate their lives, beginning with journeying to the Holy Land.

INFLUENCE CARD

RICH TO POOR:

Ignatius was a Spanish Knight from a Basque noble family, gaining notoriety in the region for never being wounded in battle.

After becoming seriously wounded from a cannonball to the leg at the Battle of Pamplona in 1521, he underwent a spiritual conversion while in recovery.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

VISIT TO THE HOLY LAND:

After his conversion, Ignatius was determined to go to the Holy Land to convert non-Christians. The Franciscans sent him back to Europe. Unable to fulfill his dream of going to the Holy Land, Ignatius went to graduate school.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

ESTABLISHING NEW MONASTIC ORDER:

After studies in Paris, Ignatius attracted many followers. These close-knit friends were his companions, supporting Ignatius and ultimately joining him on his next adventure. He established a new religious order — The Society of Jesus — that focused upon self-examination and education.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

BISHOP MARWA ZEDEKIA KISARE

Bishop Kisare was the first indigenous Bishop in the Mennonite Church in East Africa. Growing up in a traditional tribal family with traditional beliefs, he encountered men of God early in his life and continued to muse upon the reflections of meaning for years until he had an encounter with Christ that transformed his life. He became Bishop and held rallies with thousands of people at a time all over what is now known as Tanzania. During his tenure, he built the church from small, regional missions run by Americans to the second largest body of Mennonite believers in Africa and one of the five largest Mennonite fellowships in the world.

BISHOP MARWA ZEDEKIA KISARE STORY

Cast of Characters: Marwa Zedekia Kisare, 2 Seventh Day Adventist Missionaries, Susanna Kisare, Elam Stauffer

Marwa's life was spent in reflection. He was born circa 1909 into a traditional family of the Luo tribe. At five or six years old he began to muse, "How did I, Marwa, come to be a human being?" Although Luo traditional religion does not speak much of a God character, the response came to Marwa, "If God would not have been, then I, Marwa, would not have been. God is both the purpose (why) and manner (how) of my existence."

At age ten, Marwa heard the Gospel for the first time while herding goats with a friend. Two traveling African Seventh Day Adventist evangelists gathered them under an acacia (uh-kay-shuh) tree where they were sung to and read to from a book. At 14, he began to worship with nearby Adventists. Wanting to walk with and please God, he was baptized into that church in 1933 and took the name Zedekia (though later in life, reflecting on the meaning of names, he would begin again using his name Marwa with his Christian name). Also in the year of his baptism, he married Nyaeri Akello (Susanna) from a nearby Luo Village and was hired by Elam Stauffer to help build the newly founded Mennonite Mission station in his home village of Shirati.

After working with the Mennonites at the mission for seven years, Zedekia Marwa Kisare was confronted by Jesus. In Marwa's tradition, the image of a circle meant one's family and extended family that composed the village in which one lived. With a polygamous society this group could be quite extensive and large. Jesus said to Marwa, "I am drawing a circle. The church is the new circle, the Village of God. It includes all who confess me, Jesus, as Savior and Lord."

Zedekia Marwa Kisare and his wife Susanna moved to study at the Bukiroba Bible School and then, while teaching there, studied at the nearby Mennonite Theological College. They spent their life as evangelists and church planters. Zedekia became the first East African Bishop in the Mennonite church, serving from 1967 to 1995. He spoke and traveled nationally and internationally preaching, "Confession of our sin is not something we do once and forget about. It is a way of life practiced by God's people."

INFLUENCE CARD

DON JACOBS STRIVING FOR GLOBAL CONNECTIONS:

Bishop Don Jacobs worked closely with Kisare connecting the Tanzanian Church to the world body. In some ways he was a supervisor in other ways a colleague, but they worked together to strategize spreading the gospel.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

JOHN MOSEMAN:

Moseman was one of his first two contacts in the Mennonite church which hired Kisare to help build the mission station that would lead to him learning more about Christ and eventually lead him to being sent to seminary.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

SIMEON HURST PUSHING FOR LOCAL LEADERSHIP:

Bishop Simeon Hurst led the church in the process of indigenization of leadership positions. This helped pave the way for Kisare to become the first African Bishop.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

JEFF JOHNSON

Realizing the societal harm that comes from systemic oblivion to any segment of humanity, Jeff Johnson worked in various capacities to make visible and empower the gay and lesbian community, people with AIDS, immigrants, and workers. Despite being approved for ordination before the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America banned non-celibate homosexuals from ordination, Jeff co-founded Lutheran Lesbian and Gay Ministry and the Extraordinary Candidacy Project to create a means for other homosexuals to be ordained within the Lutheran tradition.

JEFF JOHNSON STORY

Cast of Characters: Jeff Johnson, Cleve Jones, Three other seminarians

Jeff Johnson, in 1987, having nearly finished seminary without revealing his sexual orientation, joined three other non-public gay Lutheran seminarians in skipping their ordination approval interviews to attend a major civil rights march in Washington, D.C. The march concluded with an interment ceremony for Harvey Milk to create a national memorial for the assassinated civil rights leader.

During the interment, Cleve Jones invited everyone present to take a pink carnation and place it in front of Harvey Milk's urn as a symbol of resolution to live as Harvey would want. As Jeff did this, the wall of deceit that he had built around his life broke and he realized that it was not his responsibility to hide the truth from the world. When he returned to seminary, he and his friends all came out as gay men to their ordination committees. For this action, they all received unanimous approval.

INFLUENCE CARD

**FAMILY'S ILLUSION OF PERFECTION
AND CONTROL SHATTERING:**

Having lived up to his parents' expectations in all matters, the year prior to entering seminary Jeff informs his parents that he is gay. Jeff's father avoids responding until he can summon Jeff to his office where he is a high school principal and begins interrogating Jeff as he would a student. When Jeff refuses to be intimidated, and instead responds as an equal, Jeff's father breaks down into tears.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

**CAMPUS PASTOR
INTRODUCING NARRATIVE THEOLOGY:**

Campus pastor Jerry Swanson introduces Jeff to narrative theology, and for the first time Jeff encounters an understanding of religion that is not about conforming to social expectations, but instead about an inner struggle.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

INFLUENCE CARD

**MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY
IN INNER-CITY LOS ANGELES:**

During college, Jeff spends six weeks living with monks in inner city Los Angeles. These days of simple living, walking the city streets talking to the marginalized, and even risking his life with a monk to stop a gang fight, show Jeff that religion can provide more than just charity; it can provide transformation.

THE FUND FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

DISCERNMENT PAD

- Ammon Hennacy
- Called to be a Non-hierarchical Leader
- Campus Pastor Introducing Narrative Theology
- Church Officially Calling for Renewal
- City Streets and Forest Hermitage
- Contracting Polio During Years at College
- Don Jacobs Striving for Global Connections
- Ernst Christoph Hochmann von Hochnau Sharing Pietist Ideas
- Establishing New Monastic Order
- Expanding Horizons in Africa
- Family Roots in Tradition and Education
- Family's Illusion of Perfection and Control Shattering
- Father funding a Pre-Law Master's Degree
- Growing up in the Antebellum South
- John Moseman
- Losing Leg in a Failed Aid Drop in Sudan
- Marriage to Jack
- Missionaries of Charity in Inner-City Los Angeles
- Peter Maurin
- Religious Climate Dissatisfying
- Rich to Poor
- Russell Graham Leading to Spiritual Awakening
- Simeon Hurst Pushing for Local Leadership
- Sister as Role Model
- Teaching Sunday School to Father's Slaves
- The Works of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky
- Time in India Opening Eyes
- Tutors Bartholomäus Arnoldi von Usingen and Jodocus Trutfetter
- Visit to the Holy Land
- Years of Monastic Life Failing to Provide Spiritual Comfort

EVENING WORSHIP: SHARING OUR GIFTS

Preparation and Liturgy

(2 hours)

Goal: As a conclusion to this retreat day, the community will create and participate in a communal prayer experience. After a day filled with discernment, volunteers will be able to use their gifts to benefit the community through this liturgy.

Materials Needed:

Given that this worship experience will be different in every gathering, many different materials may be needed. Some materials that groups might use include:

- Copies of Optional Handout 8A
- Candles
- Cloths for creating environment
- Crosses
- Bibles
- CD player or live music
- Ribbons and Markers (for prayer ribbons)
- Pens and paper
- Art supplies
- Water, bowl, pitcher and towels (for foot washing)
- Chime/Bell

Instructions for Moderator: This evening prayer should take place in a room that is sacred to your group. It can be a chapel or a transformed general gathering area. The room should be big enough for people to gather at different stations, yet small enough to maintain a feeling of intimacy.

Liturgy is defined as “the work of the people.” This evening worship experience embraces this definition of liturgy. The creation of this liturgy rests in the hands of the volunteers, as they create the various prayer stations that compose the worship service. The role of the staff is to support the volunteers in creatively developing this liturgy.

There is no formal structure to the liturgy. With many stations set up around the worship space, volunteers can go to whatever area they feel called to pray at and visit as many areas as they would like. There is no set time for rotations; volunteers move when they feel called.

Outline of Activities:

1. **Preparation for Liturgy**
2. **Volunteers divide into groups** to create stations
3. **Liturgy**

Description of Activities:

1. **Preparation for Worship** Moderator should introduce the liturgy as well as the community's active role in the preparation of the liturgy.

Throughout today, we have been diving deeper into the many ways that God is working in us and calling us to serve one another in this context. Now we each have an opportunity to serve one another.

Liturgy is defined as “the work of the people” or “work on behalf of the people.” We all have a role in creating tonight’s worship experience. In an acute way, tonight’s liturgy is truly the work of the people. It is the fruit of our efforts. And as many of us know from experience, when we pray together we are brought together in new ways.

Liturgy, like vocation, is about more than just us as individuals. Liturgy is also “work for the people.” Just as our vocation is shaped by the needs of those around us, so too, is liturgy. Praying together moves us beyond ourselves. Our worship experience tonight will be shaped by the needs of the members of our community.

Tonight’s worship service will be a combination of individual and communal prayer. Some of it may be familiar, while some might be very new. I encourage you to explore the many ways that God is moving in your life and in this community. As we create this shared prayer experience, let us be mindful of the ways that God is working in our lives.

In this communal worship service, there will be a variety of stations with different forms of prayer. What these stations consist of depends upon your creations. All of these stations will be going at the same time, so that throughout the evening worship service we will all move between the stations. There is no timetable for when we move from station to station; you can move from station to station whenever you want to.

In this next hour, we will each have a role in preparing this liturgy. Everyone can be involved in creating and setting up a station as they are called. What are your gifts? How might these gifts assist people in praying? Even if you aren’t the type of person who is typically drawn toward liturgy, we all have gifts we can share.

Perhaps music speaks to you. You can play the guitar throughout the liturgy or select music to be played in the background. Maybe the story of one of the people from your service site stands out. Write their story and create a station where others can write their stories, too. Maybe your favorite form of prayer is the gathering of the many intentions we all hold. Create a station where we can all write our prayers on ribbons and join the ribbons together.

We have supplies for those drawn to art to create icons — perhaps even of the many characters we have discussed on this retreat. There are supplies to help create a relaxing environment.

Take a few moments to think about what you want to share with the community. (Pause for reflection). Now gather with others with similar interests — or work alone — to create a station where the community can pray.

- 2. The volunteers will then break into groups** of their own choosing to create a variety of stations. Aim to have between 5 and 10 stations, depending on the size of the group. The goal is to have every person participating in the preparation, yet also not feeling overwhelmed by too many things going on during liturgy. (Optional Handout 8A contains ideas of stations.)

It is important to note that some volunteers will jump right into this, whereas others will deny having anything to contribute. It is important to emphasize that each person has something to contribute. Artistic skills are not a prerequisite for participation; a station can be as simple as setting up pens and paper to collect stories.

- 2. Worship** After each station is set up in the worship space, ask everyone to step out. Take a five to ten minute break, then open the space and begin the prayer service by welcoming the volunteers into the sacred space. Depending upon your tradition, you may wish to ring a bell or begin with a prayer. Give a brief introduction of each station so people know what opportunities are available. Remind them that there is no formal schedule to follow. They may visit all the stations or choose to remain at the same station the entire worship service. Volunteers do not need to stay at the station they helped create. The following is an example of welcoming comments:

(Ring Bell). Welcome to this evening's worship session. Liturgy, by its very definition, is the work of the people. We have all had a hand in creating this liturgy, in using our gifts to create prayer stations for this community. Throughout this room, we have several prayer stations. (Describe each station and orient the volunteers to the room). I invite you to go to as many stations as you feel called.

Try out new forms of prayer. See the many ways that God calls to us. You may stay at any station as long or as short a period as you want. You can visit as many or as few stations as you would like. As a reminder, if you are ministering at a station, do not feel like you need to stay there for the entire evening. Please feel free to get up and walk around, praying at the different stations. So now, as we enter into this evening of prayer, this shared prayer experience, let us be open to the multitude of ways in which God is present in our lives. Amen. (Ring bell again).

This worship service is the final activity of the evening. There is no set time to conclude; simply conclude when it feels like the group is ready. You may ring a chime or bell, sing a closing song, or any other method that seems fit for your group. A group leader should say a simple benediction, such as “We thank you, Almighty Creator, for giving us the gifts we shared tonight. Be with us now as we go forth into the night. Amen.”

Optional Handout 8A

Ideas for Liturgy Stations

Environment: Not a specific station, but an important element, volunteers should create a prayerful environment for this worship service. This liturgy is often aided by dim lighting, often with candles (can be flameless).

Making icons/pictures: Artists will create icons or pictures of people who are inspirational to the community. These can be people discussed throughout the day. Included should be members of the community who accompany us on our journey. Display these icons around the perimeter of the room. If you would like, include a short biography of the person displayed in the picture. Volunteers can spend time at the icons, entering into a different form of prayer. Perhaps he or she is inspired by this person, questions his/her path, etc.

Ministry of Presence: This station is ideal for people who claim they have no tangible gifts to offer. Set aside a small area for the "Ministry of Presence." This is designed as a place for holding compassion within the worship service. Volunteers can pray for others in the group or community.

Music: Depending upon the set up, live music can be a nice addition to the liturgy. Any option is acceptable, ranging from hymns to Taize-style songs to instrumental. Please avoid the tendency to distribute a worship aid and have everyone sing every song in unison. This service is modeled around disjointed unity.

Poetry: Have pens and paper set up for volunteers to write poems. These poems can be shared or kept private.

Story Writing: Have pens and paper set up at a different station for those who want to share stories. These stories can be from one's own life, experiences at service site, moments of feeling God's love, etc. These stories can be shared or kept private.

Names of People at Service Site: Have a prayer book or blank pieces of paper for volunteers to write the names of people at their service site. Consider using this collection of names throughout the year or at future retreats. This can be combined with "Prayer Ribbons."

Naming Communities: Similar to “Names of People at Service Site,” this station asks volunteers to write down the names of the communities they bring, that support them, etc. Volunteers will write down these communities in a book or on a piece of paper, calling to mind that we are not here alone, but supported by many communities. This can be combined with “Prayer Ribbons.”

Prayer Ribbons: This is a creative way of bringing together the petitions of the community. On ribbons, volunteers write their prayers. It can be one word, i.e. “Strength,” or longer, i.e. “For continued accompaniment in my discernment.” Attach each ribbon to another ribbon. Depending on the size of the group, you can create a project for these ribbons, such as creating an altar cloth.

Sacred Reading: Set up a station where volunteers can read from Sacred Texts. Have bibles open to specific readings, as well as having some for volunteers to read from a section of their choice. Contemporary sacred readings from mystics, theologians, etc., can also be included in this station.

Foot Washing: This station allows volunteers to minister to one another. Have a chair set up where one volunteer can sit. Another volunteer will wash their feet. This station works best if there is not a permanent person sitting there washing others’ feet. Rather, volunteers can invite one another to come to the station to participate in the foot washing.



Enacting Our Stories

RETREAT 3
Enacting Our Stories

OPENING PRAYER

(15 minutes)

CALL AND RESPONSE

(2 hours)

GRAND SILENCE

(3 hours, suggested at 11am to 2pm)

**LUNCH WITHIN
GRAND SILENCE**

FOCUS GROUPS

(1 hour, 15 minutes)

SENDING FORTH

(15 minutes)

OPENING PRAYER

(15 minutes)

Goal: To introduce the idea of setting an intention (as opposed to setting a goal) as a way to orient ourselves and our senses to the movement and image of God all around us.

Materials Needed:

- Space for volunteers to sit (chairs or floor)

Instructions for Moderator: The moderator should open with an introduction about the practice of intention as a practice that helps us to see God and be in the world with purpose.

This practice works best when sitting. Make sure that there are enough chairs for everyone or enough space on the floor for everyone. As you read the meditation, read at a slow and relaxed pace.

Activity:

Setting an intention helps us to enact our stories in the world as a way of being. This is different from setting a goal. When we set a goal, we are about a way of doing — envisioning a specific outcome, planning the steps to achieve it, getting started at the beginning and working hard to achieve that outcome. In helpful ways, goal making provides direction for action. For this opening prayer session, however, we want to open ourselves to another way of moving into action.

Over the course of this retreat, we have reflected on the stories of our lives and how these stories fit into the spectrum of our lives when we connect them to God's story and to the stories of our communities. Today will be focused on what to do now. How do we enact these stories? What resources could be helpful?

As we begin to look for how we enact our stories in the world, we begin to see the work and image of God all around us. We'll begin our day with a meditation practice, a way of praying that will open us to the way God is moving in all things and that will center us. Rather than making a goal for the day, we'll set an intention.

According to Buddhism and yoga practitioners, setting an intention is different from goal making in that it is a path or practice that is focused on how you are "being" in the present. By setting an intention for the day, we position ourselves to be aware of the

present, to sit in the present moments as they pass, and to be open to the movement of God in them. Some Buddhists use the term “monkey mind” to refer to the unsettled and restless attitude of our busy minds. By setting an intention for the day, we will root ourselves in the present and quiet our monkey minds, orienting ourselves in mindfulness.

Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Exhale. If you are seated on the floor, find a comfortable position with your legs crossed as you are able, with hands resting palms down on your thighs. If you are seated in a chair, make sure that both feet are touching the floor, both hands resting palms down on your thighs. Everyone sit upright, body erect.

As we begin, have a sense of your body, a sense of where you are. Notice the breathing. Let the breath come naturally. The breath is going in and out, in and out. With each breath notice how you become relaxed. As your thoughts come, do not shut them out. Take a look at them, and then let them pass.

As the breath comes and goes, notice the smells of the room. What noises are here? Are they loud, quiet, near, or far away?

As you breathe, think on how you will be today. How do you intend to be present to this day? By listening? By speaking?

Bring the gaze of your thoughts to your intention.

If you feel moved, speak aloud a word or phrase that embodies your hope for today.

Grounded in our intention to be present, we will open our hearts, ears, and eyes so that we may see the movement of God right now, in all things, in the stories of our lives.

Amen.

Open your eyes when you are ready.

CALL AND RESPONSE

(2 hours)

Goal: The goal of this session is to build a bridge between the content explored in Retreat Two with the activities of today and enacting our stories.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Handout 4: *Touchstones* and Handout 9: *Enacting Our Stories* for everyone present
- Small group discussion facilitators

Instructions for Moderator: In this activity, volunteers will discuss reflection questions in small groups and then report back to the large group.

Each small group should have four to six members plus a facilitator, either a staff member or a volunteer. The facilitator's job is to watch the time, make sure each person in the group has ample space to speak and lead the group in planning for what they will bring back to the large group.

Outline of Activities:

1. **Introduction by facilitator**
2. **Reflection time**
3. **Small group discussion**
4. **Large group report back**

Description of Activities:

1. **Introduction** (5 minutes)

We covered a lot of ground. We have talked about the stories that guide our lives, “meta-narratives,” and the context in which we live out those stories, God’s story. We talked about vocation and its many and varied definitions. We talked about the chapters in God’s story — the lives of the great “cloud of witnesses”— brothers and sisters whose lives offer us encouragement, examples of lives lived in radical connection to the unfolding of God’s story in the world. God’s story operationalized.

Later this morning, we’ll engage in a practice of contemplation drawn primarily from the non-Protestant branches of our Christian church — the Grand Silence. But first, we want

*to turn to a different tradition. One of the great treasures of the African-American church tradition is call and response: when someone give a witness to God in their lives the congregation responds, offering signs and words of encouragement, acceptance, sympathy and more. We want this morning to have a time to talk back to the testimonies you've heard during this retreat or previous **Revealing Vocation** retreat activities, to reflect in dialogue about the stories we have heard, the testimony that has been given.*

Handout 9 has a list of five questions to use as prompts for recalling the testimony and forming your response. We will take 15 minutes of silence for you to look at these questions and then we will gather in small groups to talk. As you reflect, you may be drawn to one or more questions that you want to talk about or you may find one or two that you want to pose to the other members of your group.

You will have 45 minutes to talk in your small group. The goal is not to answer all five questions, but remembering your intention for the day, to be present to the questions, to yourself and to the other members of your group.

At the end of 45 minutes, your facilitator will ask you what wisdom, insights, puzzles, questions or stories you want to bring back into the full circle. You will have about 15 minutes to discern what you as a group are being called to share.

2. **Silent reflection** (15 minutes)

Review of Handout 4 *Touchstones* (15 minutes). Each person should have a copy of Handout 4 *Touchstones*. Remind the group of these commitments to a way of dialogue. Ask that each touchstone be read aloud by a single voice, either moving around the circle or allowing people to speak as moved.

3. **Small group discussions** (45 minutes)

Divide into small groups of four to six with facilitators. Make sure that everyone has a handout with the discussion questions. Follow with Small Group planning (15 minutes) Each group discerns what they are being called to share with the rest of the group — a story, an insight, a concern, a joy, a hope.

4. **Whole group sharing** (30 minutes) Each small group offers their gift to the rest of the group with some time for discussion, making connections and observations.

Thomas Merton's prayer on Handout 9 is included as a kind of benediction. You may want to end with reading it in unison or with one person reading it — or not reading it at all, depending on the energy.

Handout 9

Enacting Our Stories

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Is there anything from the previous sessions that you find particularly compelling, problematic, or interesting? What has stuck with you?

Think about the ways you've already gone against the grain in enacting your own story. Just by deciding to spend a year as a volunteer, you've leaped into the unknown! It's involved quite a lot of risk-taking. Do you consider taking this year to be a countercultural decision?

Why did you enter this year of service? What hopes and/or reservations did you hold about the year?

What have you discovered that you want to keep alive within yourself after this year is over? What do you want to nurture or cultivate? What have you done to keep these discoveries alive up until this point?

What are your current inspirations? Fears? Concerns?

MY LORD GOD, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

— Thomas Merton, "Thoughts in Solitude"

GRAND SILENCE

(3 hours)

Goal: A crucial part of discernment is taking the time to listen. This session allows volunteers to take a break from presentations and small groups and enter into silence.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Handout: 10 *Suggestions for Silence*, Handout 11: *Poetry* and Handout 12: *Select Contemplative Practices*
- Blank paper, numbered envelopes (one for each volunteer), and pens for letter writing and response writing activities
- Basket to collect the letters
- Bell

Instructions for Moderator: Introduce the silence and review the schedule set forth below before the silence begins. You may want to have a time schedule written where everyone can see to reference if they need to refresh their memories during the silence. Groups of any size may participate in this activity. For the opening and closing session, a large group circle is recommended, though any seating arrangement will work.

Volunteer years are often jam-packed with activities. From community living to urban environments, silence is one thing that is often missing, especially in a society revolving around being continually connected to technology. This afternoon aims to provide this silence for volunteers.

Keeping silence is an ancient practice of the Christian community and it is still regularly practiced today in monasteries, on retreats and even by regular everyday people who need to make space for something other than noise.

This time for silence stretches from morning to afternoon. It is largely unstructured, allowing you to use the time as your soul longs for. We urge to you to resist the pull to “fill” the silence by reading a book, going on a run, etc. Of course, these activities may take place but the overall intention is simply to “be.” Silence offers another way of listening to God in our lives.

Outline of activities:

1. **Large Group Gathering** — Setting the Mood for Silence (15 minutes)
2. **Silence Begins**

3. **Lunch** (in silence)
4. During Silence (anytime): **Volunteers write a letter to God**
5. **Large Group Gathering** — Responding to Letters to God (45 minutes)
6. **Breaking of the Silence** (15 minutes)

Description of Activities:

1. **Introduction** This period of silence begins with a large group gathering. A facilitator should introduce the afternoon of silence, briefly touching upon Handout 10: *Suggestions for Silence*. Announce what time volunteers are to return to the main room for an activity (also done in silence). The gathering will be signaled by a chime of the bell.
2. **Silence Begins** Distribute Handout 11: *Poetry* and Handout 12: *Select Contemplative Practices*. These are intended to serve as prompts for volunteers who may feel lost as to what to do when sent into silence. In order to transition from the explanation of the silence to the actual silence, please ask a staff member or a volunteer to read one of the poems. After reading the poem, ring a bell to signal the beginning of silence.
3. **Lunch in silence** Breaking bread together is a celebration; a way to unite with one another in a unique way. A silent meal does not go against this tradition, but embraces it in a new way. Though it may be awkward, volunteers are encouraged to embrace the awkwardness and uncertainty of the situation. Many find that after the initial awkwardness, eating a meal in silence is often liberating. If possible, play light instrumental music in the background. This helps eliminate the sounds of chewing.
4. **Letter to God** Before the end of silence, volunteers should write a letter to God. This letter can be whatever they are feeling at the moment. Where are they in their discernment process now? What are their anxieties, hopes, fears, aspirations? Volunteers should be informed that their letter will be read by another volunteer, but that they may remain anonymous (they need not sign their letters to God). Staff will provide each volunteer with a numbered envelope. Each volunteer must remember his/her number so that he/she can identify it later. The letter should be placed in the envelope, unsealed.
5. **Large Group Gathering** Ring a bell to signal time to return to the main room. As the group gathers back in the main room, each person should place their unsealed Letter to God in a basket. A staff member will then redistribute the letters to the volunteers.

Each volunteer will receive a different volunteer's letter and will be asked to write a response to the volunteer whose letter they received, writing as they imagine God might respond. Provide 30 minutes for responses. When finished responding, each volunteer should place their response in the envelope with the original letter and return it to the basket. The response will then be handed back to the volunteer who wrote the letter. Volunteers have 15 minutes to read the response and reflect.

- 6. Breaking of the Silence** The final breaking of silence takes on a celebratory tone with a closing prayer. Chime the bell and gather the volunteers in a circle. For smaller groups, ask the question, "How did it feel to read your response from God?" or "What was entering into silence like for you?" Each volunteer should answer in one or two sentences. For larger groups, ask the question, "What word or phrase describes what it was like to read your response from God?" or "What word or phrase describes your experience of silence?" It is suggested to close this prayer with a song from your tradition that the group knows and to which the volunteers can sing along.

To conclude this session, congratulate the volunteers on entering into this time of silence. Encourage them to continue this practice of silence in their daily lives, even if it is only for 5 minutes each day.

Note: The "Letter Writing to God with Response" activity was developed by Lasallian Volunteers Discernment Retreat Team. We are indebted to them for their creativity and grateful for sharing this activity with the Volunteers Exploring Vocation community.

Handout 10

Suggestions for Silence

Including Letter Writing to God

Try not to “fill” your time during silence. Do not create a “to do” list where you plan to read a book, go on a run, etc. Of course, these activities may take place. The overall intention is simply to “be.” Allow yourself to enter into unstructured time and see what happens.

Silence does not equal nap time, but if you need to sleep then take care of your body.

While the thought of eating in silence may seem awkward, allow yourself to enter into the awkwardness. Many find that after the initial few minutes, eating in silence is liberating. If you are struggling, try to be mindful of what you are eating. Where did this food come from? Who are the many hands that made it possible for this food to come to your table? Pray for those who go without food this day.

Think of this time of silence as spending time with God. Is there something God wants to say to you? Being with God in silence is a different way of listening.

Before the end of silence, write a letter to God. This letter can be whatever you are feeling at the moment. Where are you in your discernment process now? What are your anxieties, hopes, fears, aspirations? Place the letter in the numbered envelope provided, unsealed. *Please note: this letter will be read by another person.*

Handout 11

Poetry for Entering Into Silence

*We come to the silence,
Here in the dwelling place of God.
Now, deep in the silence,
We are the dwelling place of God.*

*Come to the silence
Enter your home
Deep in the silence
You are my own.*

-Gregory Dale Schultz

*Silence itself, of course, has no magic.
It may be just sheer emptiness, absence of words or noise or music.
It may be an occasion for slumber, or it may be a dead form.
But it may be an intensified pause, a vitalized hush, a creative quiet,
an actual moment of mutual and reciprocal correspondence with God.*

-Rufus M. Jones

*I would like to beg you dear Sir, as well as I can,
to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart
and to try to love the questions themselves
as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language.
Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now,
because you would not be able to live them.
And the point is to live everything.
Live the questions now.
Perhaps then, someday far in the future,
you will gradually, without even noticing it,
live your way into the answer.*

-Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*

Revealing Vocation

FINDING GOD'S STORY IN OUR LIVES

*Above all, trust in the slow work of God.
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay.
We would like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to something
unknown, something new.
And yet, it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through
some stages of instability —
and that it may take a very long time.*

*And so I think it is with you;
your ideas mature gradually — let them grow,
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on,
as though you could be today what time,
(that is to say, grace and circumstances
acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.*

*Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming in you will be.
Give our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.*

-Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ

Handout 12

Select Contemplative Practices

- I. A daily practice from the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, the Examen is an easy way to begin looking at the actions and interactions of each day in a spiritual light, and to consider what spiritual and vocational leadings might come out of everyday encounters.

There are 5 steps in the Examen:

1. *Become aware of God's presence.*

Take a few deep breaths. Notice the world around you, what you see, hear, smell, feel. Pay attention to how alive things are — notice the people near you, remember the person who created the altar before you, acknowledge the light that allows you to see, the air that allows you to breathe. Sense the Spirit at work creating and animating all things.

2. *Review the day with gratitude.*

Go through your entire day, moment by moment or hour by hour. Remember and review each of your interactions: who did you speak with? What did you see or read or hear? Where did you go? What did you eat? What memories surfaced? Moment by moment, walk through your day.

3. *Pay attention to your emotions.*

As you reviewed your day, how did you feel? Did a certain moment bring back a surge of joy? A nagging feeling of worry? Surprise? Guilt? Which moments made you feel the most strongly?

4. *Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.*

Of those moments, especially the ones that brought up strong emotions, pray about what you're grateful for, or excited about, or worried over, or afraid of. Use the strong emotion and share with God how you feel, why you feel that way, what your day has been like.

5. *Look toward tomorrow.*

As you pray, let go of the moments and emotions of the day. Release them and begin to focus on what tomorrow will bring. Continue to remember and be aware of God's presence, today and tomorrow.

A shorter, adapted version, asks a question which considers two opposite concepts:

- What are your consolations and your desolations from this day?
- Or, what brought you the most joy and the most distress?
- Or, when did you feel closest to God and farthest away?

Over time, reflections on this practice can show patterns of consolation and desolation, or reveal which actions and encounters lead an individual to feel closest to God and God's purpose in her life.

II. Imagine a conversation between yourself and a historical figure or spiritual ancestor. Maybe this person is a figure from the earlier SIGN game from this retreat, a deceased grandparent, or just someone whose life and choices you have admired and learned from. Imagine yourself sitting down to a cup of coffee with this person and telling them your story. Ask them questions. Based on what you know of them and their life, how do you imagine they would respond to you? What direction would the conversation take? What questions would you ask of them?

FOCUS GROUPS

(1 hour, 15 minutes)

Goal: Many volunteers are actively discerning their next steps after their volunteer year(s). This session will give volunteers a chance to have conversations with others who are considering a similar next step and get more information.

Materials Needed:

- Separate Rooms/Spaces for groups to meet in
- White boards or butcher paper for each group

Instructions for Moderator: At this point in time, volunteers will be invited to meet with a focus group about the choices they will be making for the next year. Make it clear that this does not have to be a set-in-stone decision and each group will be offered twice, allowing volunteers the opportunity to attend more than one focus group. This is a space for them to talk about where they are in the decision process about their next step and get more information. Emphasize that this is not meant to be stressful, but is just an opportunity to talk more concretely about what next year will look like. These conversations are not meant to be exhaustive, but instead to be helpful ways for volunteers to begin discussing these topics with each other. Each group should have a facilitator with some knowledge of the group's topic.

Also, we have included a list of break out groups that we believe are important. Please feel free to add others. Each group has a description, resources, people and questions that might be helpful.

Outline of activities:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Volunteers select their 1st group and meet** (30 minutes)
3. **Break** (5 minutes)
4. **Volunteers select their 2nd group and meet** (30 minutes)

Here are several focus groups to host:

Ministry: This is a group for volunteers who are considering going into professional ministry — working for the church, a vocation to religious life, pastoral ministry, campus ministry. It might be helpful to use this as an opportunity to explain and answer

questions about the differences between a Master of Divinity, Masters of Arts in Theology, Masters in Pastoral Ministry, as well as the initial steps into the ordination process (if applicable) of your denomination. It may be helpful to have someone moderating the group who is active in ministry or has a background in theological education. See www.fteleaders.org/fteguide for basic information in The FTE Guide to Theological Education.

Professional education: This group is for volunteers who are either applying to or thinking about graduate school and professional education. Depending on the size of the group it might be helpful to have students split up further into affinity groups (i.e. law school, med school, social work, business). Having a list of programs that appeal to and are interested in former volunteers is helpful (i.e. NYU's law school, grants for former volunteers, etc). Having a former volunteer who has gone through this experience to speak to the transition of volunteer program to graduate school would also be helpful, as would a list of former volunteers who might be contacted later.

Continued Service: This group is for volunteers who are interested in doing a second year of service either with the same program or elsewhere. It would be helpful to have a staff member from the program as well as a second year volunteer (if there are any) to talk about the process and the challenges and graces of a second year.

Undecided: This is a group for volunteers who have no idea what comes next for them. Discussions about the possibilities of moving back home and the hopes and anxieties surrounding that may come up. This may also be a good time for volunteers to process some of the things about vocation they have been hearing about over the course of the retreat and how it is affecting their thinking and views on what the next steps could be. It might be helpful to have resources that deal with how to best find a career that fits your interests and skills.

Career/Employment: This is a group for volunteers that are planning on pursuing a career next year without going into professional education, at least not immediately. This may be a mix of folks who are being hired on by their agency, as well as people who just want to get a job. The discussion of transitioning to the working world maybe helpful, as well as how they could carry the values and lessons of their volunteer program into their daily working life. It may also be helpful to discuss the concept of vocation as committing to do your job, whatever it may be, in the service of the Gospel and what that might look like.

Daily Life Resources: We do not want to replicate any information or focus you may be offering at a final retreat, but some volunteers may find it helpful to discuss what

actions they can do in their daily life to continue to live out the values and commitments they have grown in over the course of their volunteer year. Specific resources about conscientious consumerism, living in intentional community outside of a program, faith communities and networks of former volunteers are useful.

GENERAL RESOURCES:

St. Vincent Pallotti Center website specifically for current and former volunteers
www.pallotticenter.org

A guide for reflection on leaving your volunteer program
www.pallotticenter.org/docs/WNNotebook%202009%20screen%20reading%20version.pdf

A guide to fellowships and graduate school opportunities for former volunteers
www.pallotticenter.org/docs/graduate-programs.pdf?m=ra

Staying Connected

Their publication with great helpful ways to stay rooted to your volunteer experience.

MINISTRY:

The Fund For Theological Education — fellowships and further resources
www.fteleaders.org

SHOPPING GUIDES:

<http://www.newdream.org/marketplace/index.php>

<http://www.responsibleconsumer.net/>

<http://www.betterworldshopper.com>

CONTINUED SERVICE:

<https://www.cnvs.org>

<http://www.idealists.org>

<http://www.volunteer.gov/gov/>

<http://serve.gov/>

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/>

SENDING FORTH

Goal: Hopefully, the *Revealing Vocation* retreat has been deep and draining in a good way. Because so much new sharing, bonding, and relationship building has taken place, it is important to leave both with a sense of light-heartedness and an understanding of the importance of the work we have all chosen to pursue in one way or another.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Handout 13: *The Sending Prayer*

Instructions for Moderator: There are two activities in this section of the retreat. One is a physical, light-hearted activity and the other is a slightly heavier sending prayer. Feel free to use them in whichever order you feel is appropriate for your group. We recommend beginning with “Find Your Mother Like a Little Penguin” and concluding with the Sending Prayer.

Outline:

- Find Your Mother Like a Little Penguin
- We Seen Starvation — A Sending Prayer

Activity:

Find Your Mother Like a Little Penguin

After this retreat, volunteers will be sent back to their communities to engage in important ministry. This activity, while light-hearted, aims to convey the message that although we are scattered throughout the region (possibly state, country or world), we all share a common story at our foundation. We may be spread apart, but we are able to connect with one another through this shared foundation.

Step 1: The group should stand in a circle facing one another and close their eyes.

Step 2: The facilitator (eyes open) moves each individual (eyes still closed) to a new circle so no one knows next to whom they are standing.

Step 3: The group members grab the hands of the people on either side. Get to know their hands.

Step 4: Decide on a sound that is easy to repeat multiple times. Turn to your right. Make the sound. Listen to the sound of the person behind you at the same time. Turn to the left. Make the sound. Listen to the sound of the person behind you. Face back in

the circle. In silence, grab the hands of the people on both sides of you again — know those hands.

Step 5: The facilitator (eyes open) moves each individual (eyes still closed) to spread out throughout the room so no one knows who they're standing next to.

Step 6: Now use your sounds to find the original circle — once you find the people on both sides of you, grab their hands. Re-form your circle and untangle if necessary.

We Have Seen Starvation — A Sending Prayer

After playing “Find your Mother like a Little Penguin,” re-center the group. You may gather them in a circle or have everyone stand together in a clump, depending on your group's size. It is important that every person has a copy of the prayer and is able to hear the leader.

Handout 13

Sending Prayer

We Have Seen Starvation

- Leader:** From Eden into the world we have come, Lord.
- People:** We are forgiving for having experienced exile.
- Leader:** As we wander this world of brokenness and pain.
- People:** We are grateful for having touched suffering.
- Leader:** Our beings feel burdens of bigotries and angers ...
- People:** We are humbled for having seen troubles.
- Leader:** Crises and disaster and grand inequities.
- People:** We are patient for having seen starvation.
- Leader:** People on one half of the world chuck food.
- People:** People on one half of the world lack food.
- Leader:** Too often their meals are memories
- People:** thoughts to the last meals, fading dreams of scraps.
- Unison:** Together as a people
allow us a strength deeper
than we could sustain alone
and working as your hands
remind us to occasionally clasp together
in an homage pose to prayer
a circle of brothers and mothers
and fathers and sisters
to create for the world
the cloud of witness
from which you can best be seen.

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