

A Handbook for Student Ministry Interns ¹



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1. Art of Ministry Program Overview

The Art of Ministry curriculum provides a three-year framework for integrating theory and practice and for exploring vocational identity. Courses in the Art of Ministry program are designed to equip students with skills for ministry in a changing world, to encourage students to reflect theologically on and within the practices of ministry, and to empower students to lead communities of faith and other organizations in responding to God's work for justice, reconciliation, and compassion in the world.

As a subset of the Ministerial Studies (MIN) curricular area, Art of Ministry courses are rooted in and explore the following values:

- *Theory and practice*: Ministerial Studies courses convene a dynamic conversation between the practice of ministry and the theologies, theories, and methodologies that inform and construct ministry practices;
- *Community leadership*: Ministerial Studies courses consider the faith leader's role in empowering individual persons to constitute themselves as vibrant and flourishing communities that share their lives together in the presence of God;
- *Context analysis*: Ministerial Studies courses prepare students to be skillful analysts of the cultural, historical, social, political, and other relevant contexts in which ministry is practiced;
- *Multicultural and Intercultural competency*: Ministerial Studies courses invite students to consider how ministry is offered in a diversity of human communities and across a diversity of human experiences. Students learn to recognize their own cultural formation and how it informs their theological reflection and ministerial practices;
- *Wisdom*: Ministerial Studies courses engage seasoned practitioners in the learning process, creating opportunities for students to learn from the wisdom practitioners have developed about the practice of ministry;
- *Ministerial identity*: Ministerial Studies courses encourage students to develop self-awareness in the public role of professional ministry. Students should experience themselves in various ministry roles and recognize their gifts and opportunities for growth in the practice of ministry.
- *Vocational Discernment*: Ministerial Studies empowers students to explore their vocational path. The study of ministry helps students reflect on and make decisions about institutional and denominational affiliations.

The Art of Ministry curriculum consists of both coursework and ministry internship placements, in the following progression:

1.1 MDiv. Year 1

Art of Ministry I: Theological Imagination/An Integrative Approach (MIN 501) is a first-year seminar that functions as a forum for dialogue between students, faculty, clergy, and other religious leaders about pressing issues facing the church and ministry in the 21st century. A primary aim of the course is to introduce students to the contexts and complexities of vocation in general and to ministerial vocations in particular.

1.2 Internship Placement Requirements in M.Div. Years 2 and 3

Ministry internship placement requirement: All students in the M.Div. program are required to complete one, 300-hour ministry internship placement following the first year of the program. The internship placement component is a required but uncredited graduation requirement.

Internship placements must be completed in **two** of the following four time periods:

- A full-time ministry internship placement (300 total hours, to be completed in 5-7 weeks of full-time internship work) in the summer following the first academic year;
- A part-time ministry internship placement (2 semesters at 100 hours per semester, for a total of 300 hours) in the second academic year;
- A full-time ministry internship placement (300 total hours, to be completed in 5-7 weeks of full-time internship work) in the summer following the second academic year;
- A part-time ministry internship placement (2 semesters at 100 hours per semester, for a total of 300 hours) in the third academic year.

The Director of the Art of Ministry program works with students in the spring of each academic year to arrange ministry internship placements for the following summer and academic year. The Director also tracks student progress toward fulfilling the ministry internship placement requirement.

1.3 Primary Reflection Seminar Requirement

Students will complete a three-hour reflection seminar concurrently with one of the two required ministry internship placements. There are three ways to complete the reflection seminar requirement:

1. Option 1: MIN 602A and 602B; 602C: “Internship Reflection Seminar” engages students in theological reflection through a year-long internship. The 3-hour, two-semester course (1.5 credits in each semester) includes plenary sessions that focus on skills development. At the center of the internship learning process is a structured relationship between each student and an on-site mentor. Students also learn how to reflect theologically about ministry and leadership through work with peer groups consisting of other student interns.
2. Option 2: MIN 636A and 636B: “Clinical Pastoral Education” (CPE) is the coursework component of the part-time introductory CPE unit at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. Students who complete this 5-hour course along with the required clinical hours

will satisfy one internship placement requirement and the reflection seminar requirement.

3. Option 3: Summer Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) “Internship” in any program accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). Students will receive 5 transfer elective credits at the end of the summer upon successful completion of a summer CPE program.

Students who complete an introductory Clinical Pastoral Education unit in the full-time summer format in any program accredited by the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education will satisfy one of their two ministry internship placement requirements. In addition to satisfying one internship placement requirement, students who complete the CPE summer unit will also be eligible for five transfer elective course credits. See the section on CPE below for more details.

To satisfy the primary reflection seminar requirement, students must complete one of the three courses described above concurrently with an internship placement or CPE unit. Students may petition the Dean of Academic Affairs for an exception. Exceptions are granted to students who enroll in and transfer credit from a comparable course through another accredited seminary or divinity school. Comparable courses generally include at least the following elements:

- Ministry practice in a congregational, clinical, or nonprofit setting
- A structured process of reflection and evaluation
- A qualified mentor or supervisor
- Course assignments and requirements equivalent to those of MIN 602A and 602B
- A course comparable to this Internship Reflection Seminar

1.4 External Programs

Students wishing to satisfy the Art of Ministry internship requirements through the programs of another school must petition the Curriculum and Academic Policy Committee.

1.5 M.Div. Year 3

Third-Year Seminar: All third-year students will complete a 1-hour capstone seminar (MIN 705) in the spring of their third year. The third-year capstone course will have two interrelated components: (1) A capstone reflection component, in which students develop an electronic portfolio to facilitate reflection on their cumulative learning in light of School of Divinity curricular standards (in the areas of disciplinary knowledge, vocational reflection, and skill development for leadership); (2) A professional development component, in which students will continue vocational reflection and ready themselves for employment searches. The capstone course will be co-developed and co-facilitated by the Director of the Art of Ministry Program and the Director of Leadership Development. The third-year seminar is a pass/fail course.

2. Internship Structure and Process

What kind of experience counts as a “ministry internship”? The Art of Ministry program defines ministry broadly as the work of empowering persons and communities to discern and respond to God’s presence and work in their lives. Ministry can happen in a wide variety of contexts: in congregations, chaplaincy settings, nonprofit organizations (both faith-based and secular), educational settings, activist, and other organizations that practice public witness, agricultural settings, etc.

One way to specify what ministry is as a kind work is to indicate the range of practices that distinguish that work. The following list, albeit not exhaustive, points to the practices that often distinguish the work of ministry. (This list also tracks with coursework requirements in the MIN curriculum area):

- **Proclamation**: Practices that interpret the experiences of human communities through public speech, arts, and performance and in conversation with sacred texts, religious practices, and theological traditions.
- **Relational Care**: Practices that provide and foster the care of persons, communities, and creation as they encounter and engage the complex range of human experience, and practices that empower communities to practice care.
- **Community Building**: Practices that empower communities to take up the demands of justice, reconciliation, and compassion in public spaces and in non-ecclesial institutions.
- **Spirituality and Formation**: Practices that explore spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of human experience through the arts and other disciplines.

Organizations that create opportunities for students to explore these practices of ministry leadership will be good candidates for hosting ministry internship placements.

A primary expectation of the internship setting is that it provides opportunities for students to function as ministry leaders in whatever ways are appropriate in that setting. Ministry internships should not therefore be limited to shadowing, office work, and the like, though some of both of the former are appropriate. Internship settings are **NOT** required to provide a stipend to interns, since students receive course credit for their internship work. But many settings do provide a stipend to defray the cost of travel, etc.

The Director of the Art of Ministry (hereafter “Director”) does not appoint students to internship settings. Rather, meeting with students throughout the spring term before the following summer and academic year, the Director works with students to identify potential internship placements, mediate conversations and interviews between students and potential site supervisor/mentors, and otherwise coordinate the process leading to the selection of an internship setting. In the case of academic year internship placements, students are required to complete arrangements for their internship placement before they leave school in May so that they are already set up in an internship placement when they return in August. Students and site mentor-supervisors

together complete a “Covenant of Shared Wisdom,” formally indicating the agreement that an internship setting will host a student ministry intern in the following academic year.

The summer internship program encourages students to be creative about the internship placements to which they apply to serve as interns. Summer internship placements are not limited to North Carolina; applications can be made to placements anywhere and everywhere.

2.1 Learning Opportunities for Ministry Interns

Ministry is the practice of making space for persons and communities to discern and respond to God’s presence and work in their midst. Art of Ministry courses constitute a kind of ministry to our students, in that they make space for students to explore and respond to God’s call to the life and work of ministry. These courses create space for students:

1. *To explore their emerging identity and presence as ministers.*

“Emerging identity as ministers” means an awareness of the gifts and talents students bring to ministry, as well as an understanding of how a student’s call to ministry informs their sense of who they are and what God is calling them to do with their lives. Internship placements should help students to clarify how God is calling them to do the work of ministry.

“Presence as ministers” means an awareness of the ways that personal and social formation shape how persons minister to others in particular situations. Ministers never enter into ministry situations as impartial participants whose job it is to determine and then offer “the right” response to the situation. In fact, the capacity of a minister to analyze and understand a ministry situation, to empathize with persons present in the situation, and to imagine what a meaningful response to it would be in light of God’s call, are all conditioned by one’s formation in families and communities of origin, significant life experiences, important relationships, and the like. Therefore, it is crucial that students develop the kind of self-awareness enabling them to know how their presence in a ministry situation conditions how they respond to it.

2. *To practice the skills necessary for proficient ministry in a particular ministry setting (congregation, clinic, non-profit, etc.) and to reflect on these practices.*

Students learn much about the practices of ministry in their seminary courses. But the practice of ministry in a particular time and place intersects with a host of complex local meanings and norms that condition how a minister offers ministry. Pulpits, for example, are not empty spaces. They are laden with a history of expectations about what constitutes a good sermon and the role it plays in the life of a particular congregation. Student ministers must negotiate these explicit and implicit expectations when they contribute their homiletical voice to a community’s worship practice.

Schools of theology couldn’t possibly prepare students for all of the ministry practices they will need to engage in their vocational journey. There aren’t many classes on the most ordinary ministry practices, such as how to deal with building maintenance and how to lead a congregation through a visioning process. Art of Ministry doesn’t spend

much time teaching these practices explicitly, either. But Art of Ministry is a space for students to explore what they have learned about them together with their colleagues.

Ministry internship placements should empower students to share their gifts for ministry and challenge students to develop new skills and practices for ministry and new awareness of their own style and approach to the work of ministry. In the midst of these learnings, ministry internship work is also an occasion for the student to reflect on the meaning of ministry as practiced in a particular time and place and for particular persons and communities.

3. *To reflect theologically on their practice of ministry.*

Seminary students come to the year-long reflection seminar and III with a good deal of theological knowledge they have learned in their seminary coursework. But most students have not deeply engaged this knowledge in conversation with ministry experiences. That is, students haven't practiced making meaning of ministry experiences in conversation with the biblical, theological, historical, and ethical discourses they have learned in the classroom. Nor have students considered how ministry experiences illumine or complicate classroom knowledge. Internship courses, then, constitute a place for students to reflect on theological understandings in light of ministry experiences. Our hope is that students learn more about the explicit theological knowledge they gain in their seminary coursework and that they excavate the implicit theological commitments they bring with them into ministry situations.

What all three of these areas have in common is integration. Art of Ministry is an opportunity for students to begin to integrate their classroom-based and field-based learning, to move from theory to practice and back again. Our hope is that through the integrative learning process, students glimpse the art of ministry, the wisdom that discerns just the right way to respond to God's call to a particular community in a particular time and place.

Students enrolled in MIN 602A/MIN 602B or MIN 602C will generally complete the following requirements:

- A minimum of 150 hours each semester (both fall and spring, roughly September 1 – May 1) of internship service in their ministry setting (plus an additional 20 hours of traveling/commuting time, for a total of 100 hours each semester). Students record internship service hours in a weekly log;
- A 75-minute course meeting each week in which students meet in peer groups, facilitated by a local ministry leader, and take turns sharing case studies ("event accounts") from their internship work;
- Working with their site mentor/supervisor, the completion of a "Learning Plan," an extensive learning plan for the student's internship work at the beginning of the academic year. The Learning Plan provides structure for the student's internship work appropriate to their ministry setting;

- Students meet one hour each week with their site mentor/supervisor to reflect on the student's work, in terms of theological meaning-making, vocational discernment, professional practice, etc.;
- Working with their site mentor/supervisor, students complete assessments of their internship work in both the fall and spring semesters.

Additionally, site supervisor-mentors are required to:

- Working with the student intern, complete a short ministry setting application (called a "Covenant of Shared Wisdom"), typically in the spring term before the internship begins the following fall;
- Complete one, three-hour mentor training program offered online in an asynchronous format;
- Oversee and supervise the student's weekly work in the internship setting.

3. Selecting an Internship Placement

3.1 The Selection Process

As mentioned above, the Art of Ministry Program does not assign students to pre-arranged internship placements in the year-long reflection seminar, III, and summer internship programs. Instead, the Director of the Art of Ministry works with students to identify and arrange internship placements in settings that resonate with the student's sense of call. The Art of Ministry Program also does not require that students complete internship placements in any particular kind of placement (congregational, chaplaincy, non-profit, or parachurch settings) but encourages students to explore different settings in subsequent internship experiences.

At the beginning of each spring semester, the Director of the Art of Ministry will arrange to meet with every student who is seeking an internship placement for the following summer and/or academic year. Over the course of the spring semester, the Director will work with students to identify an internship placement, a process that will conclude by mid-April. The Director's role in this process is to facilitate the student's discernment about internship opportunities, present concrete internship options for the student to explore and arrange initial meetings between students and potential internship settings. The student's role is to follow up on internship opportunities mediated by the Director. When a student has found an internship placement, the student and their internship supervisor/mentor will complete a Covenant of Shared Wisdom (hereafter "Covenant"), indicating a formal agreement on the part of the internship setting to host a student as a ministry intern in the following summer or academic year. Students will submit the completed Covenant of Shared Wisdom in hard copy to the Director by April 15. The submission of a completed Covenant of Shared Wisdom concludes the internship placement selection process.

3.2 Covenant of Shared Wisdom

The Covenant of Shared Wisdom is a short online form used to formalize the commitment of the student, the internship setting, and the School of Divinity to complete a summer or academic internship placement. The internship supervisor-mentor will complete the Covenant online. The student and the Director of the Art of Ministry program will then indicate their commitment via email. Completed Covenants of Shared Wisdom are required before students are given permission to enroll in internship courses.

The Covenant of Shared Wisdom indicates the primary roles and responsibilities of the internship setting mentor-supervisor:

- Participating in one time, 3-hour online training program;
- Providing the student with opportunities to work and exercise leadership in the internship setting, for a minimum of 300 hours over the course of the summer or academic year;
- Working with the student at the beginning of the summer or academic year to create a Learning Plan that outlines the student's roles and responsibilities, and then using that to supervise the student's work;
- Meeting with the student for an hour each week to facilitate reflection on the student's internship work;
- Writing an internship evaluation at the end of the summer or fall and spring semesters.
- Providing a stipend of \$4500 to support the student's internship work (300 hours at \$15 per hour). Students may negotiate that rate with their internship settings if, for example, a setting is unable to provide a stipend at that rate, and the student feels that they do not need it. Students may also opt to waive the stipend requirement altogether. The School of Divinity does have some funding to provide in cases that an internship setting cannot provide a stipend.

3.3 Internship Placements and Ministry Employment

Students employed in part-time or full-time ministry positions may use their positions as their internship placement during the summer and/or academic year. In such situations, it is often useful for the student to select an external mentor (i.e., someone other than the staff member to whom the student reports in their position) for the purposes of reflecting on the work of ministry during the period of the internship placement. The Director of the Art of Ministry will work with students to identify a suitable mentor.

3.4 Internship Placements in Congregations of Membership

Students will not ordinarily be permitted to serve as interns in their congregation of membership/home congregation, for several reasons: First, it is often confusing for congregations to experience a student first in the role of congregant and then in the role of ministry leader, a transition that often leads to confusion and that can impede the student's ministry in the setting. Second, in ordination processes in some traditions, a student's home

congregation serves as an advocate for the student in the ordination process. Serving as a ministry leader in the same congregation can create tensions in the congregation's evaluation of the student's fitness for ministry. Finally, it is helpful for students to preserve spaces in which they can be ministered to by others, rather than having to provide ministry to others. Some exceptions to this standard will be allowed, as in, for example, the case described in 2.2 above.²

3.5 Changes of Internship Setting or Termination of Internship Placement

Students are expected to complete all internship requirements in a ministry/service setting with which there is a signed Covenant of Shared Wisdom. After the Covenant of Shared Wisdom is signed and submitted in the spring semester, changes to internship settings will not ordinarily be permitted. A Covenant represents a commitment on behalf of the student, the internship setting, and the School of Divinity to furthering the student's learning and the ministry of the internship setting, which the School of Divinity endeavors to honor.

In some circumstances, the School of Divinity may need to change or terminate a student's internship placement. Reasons for a change or termination of an internship placement include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) The student engages in inappropriate and/or unprofessional behavior in the internship setting; (2) the mentor-supervisor leaves their position and can no longer supervise the student; (3) either party, the student or the internship setting, cannot substantially honor its obligations to the Learning Plan; (4) the internship setting does not adhere to the standards and policies of the Art of Ministry program.

On the rare occasion that a student should need to change the internship setting or terminate an internship placement after a Covenant of Shared Wisdom has been approved, the student should complete the following procedure:

1. Meet with the supervising instructor, John Senior, and be prepared to explain the reasons for a change in setting. Changes in internship settings require instructor approval.
2. Complete an additional assignment required by the instructor. These assignments will likely include required meetings with the mentor and written reflections on the decisions by the student and mentor.
3. Complete and submit a Covenant of Shared Wisdom with the new ministry/service setting for approval.
4. Meet all other course requirements.

4. The Role of Internship Site Mentors

² In some traditions, the student's movement towards ordination requires the student's participation as a ministry leader in the student's congregation of membership.

The task of the site mentor is to be a space-maker for students to explore each of these three themes in the ministry setting. And site mentors serve as ministers to emerging ministry leaders.

Site mentors are among the most important teachers to our students. They teach using wisdom, a pedagogical tool that does not reside easily in the seminary classroom. Wisdom, as noted above, is about knowing the right thing to do, at the right time, and for the right person or community, in light of God's presence and calling. Wisdom is knowledge, but it is not the kind of knowledge that can be captured in a technical manual. Ministry is not the sort of thing about which one can read in a book and derive from that reading all of the knowledge sufficient to do the job well (though books on ministry are useful). The kind of wisdom that good ministers have comes through practice, and consistent and constructive reflection on practice. Thus, the primary role of the site mentor is to provide opportunities for the student to practice ministry and occasions for the student to reflect on the practice of ministry so that students begin to grow in wisdom. Mentors do this work in two ways: through their work as internship supervisor and their work as ministry mentors.

4.1 The Supervisory Role

As a supervisor, the site mentor helps the student create structure and direction for the internship at the beginning of the year. The mentor then monitors the student's week-to-week work around the roles and responsibilities assigned to them.

The Art of Ministry program provides a tool to help mentors and students organize and structure the internship. That tool is the "Learning/Ministering Covenant," discussed in more detail below (find a draft of the Covenant in Appendix II). The Covenant is a framework for mentors and students to arrange the student's roles and responsibilities in the ministry setting. Additionally, the Covenant helps the students to discern broader learning goals in the areas of professional competencies, leadership development, spiritual development, and personal development, and to link these broader goals to the concrete tasks of ministry in the setting.

The shape of the student's week-to-week work, and thus the mentor's supervision, will depend upon the structure given to the student's internship in the Learning/Ministering Covenant. Once the Covenant assignment is completed and agreed to, the mentor's job will be to monitor the student's week-to-week work, ensuring that they are doing their work, and helping them do it well.

Mentors are encouraged at the beginning of the year to introduce the student intern formally to the community to which the student is providing ministry, so that community members understand who the student is and what their role as a minister in the community will be. There are a number of ways of doing this. Suggestions can be found in Appendix III.

At the end of each semester, mentors and students will evaluate the student's internship work using an assessment. The assessment asks students to look back at the learning goals set out in the Learning/Ministering Covenant. A draft of the fall assessment can be found in Appendix IV. More details on the assessment process follow below.

4.2 The Mentoring Role

Wisdom and discernment work together. Constructive reflection on practice is the way in which persons develop wisdom about their work. Part of that constructive reflection involves being in touch with the ways God is calling communities to do God's work in the world. Good ministers are always reflecting on what makes for good ministry practice. Ministers do this reflection alongside discernment about what God is doing in their communities and in their own lives.

One way that mentors teach students about ministry wisdom is through example. Drawing on the resources of their own experiences, mentors show students the ropes of the practice of ministry. That is, they show students how to go about performing the many practices of ministry well. Mentors also help students navigate the history, expectations, norms, and practices (implicit and explicit) of a particular community. They draw the student outside of themselves to consider what their ministry might look like from an outsider's perspective.

Because wisdom requires an ongoing discernment of God's calling, the kind of example that a mentor provides is never a finished one. That is because the mentor's own journey into ministry is never over. Therefore, the task of the site mentor is not to make the student over in the site mentor's own image. Such an approach assumes that the mentor is the finished product, and the student should strive to be the finished product. That kind of thinking is idolatrous, and healthy discernment resists it.³

Instead, the site mentor's job is to open the student to discernment about the student's calling to ministry through critical reflection on ministry practice. The mentor's work to facilitate this discernment happens alongside a process in which the mentor also engages, as they continue to discern God's calling to ministry through critical reflection on practice. Exemplary mentoring, then, is about modeling, but not rigid modeling; rather, it is modeling open to change for both persons in the mentoring relationship.

On an everyday basis, there are two ways in which mentoring can happen. It can happen during the mentoring session, the one-hour weekly meeting in which mentors and students reflect together on the student's work in ministry. More details on the mentoring session follow below. Mentoring can also happen in less formal ways, "on the fly" as it were. Suppose, for example, a congregant calls the pastor with a pastoral issue. After responding to the issue, the pastor can ask the intern how they might have responded to the issue and then think together about the situation. Mentoring on the fly in this way is a skill that one develops, like all skills, through practice. It takes time and intentionality.

5. The Learning Plan

At the beginning of the academic year or summer, students and mentors will craft together a Learning Plan. The Learning Plan has two main goals. First, it helps students and mentors clarify the student's roles and responsibilities in the ministry setting. It spells out in concrete terms what the student will be doing on a regular basis so that all parties know what to expect.

³ For more on the relationship between mentoring and discernment, see Charlene Jin Lee, "The Art of Supervision and Formation," in *Welcome to Theological Field Education!*, ed. Matthew Floding (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2011), ch. 2.

Two caveats are relevant here: (1) We all know that ministry is unpredictable. There will be some weeks when all bets on “regular duties” are off, and ministers will need to respond to changing situations in whatever ways are appropriate. The Covenant is not intended to foreclose opportunities for ministry that may present themselves in unanticipated ways. Indeed, these opportunities often make for some of the best learning moments in ministry internships. (2) It is certainly fine for roles and responsibilities to change as circumstances change. That also is in the nature of ministry. A well-crafted learning plan, however, will help mentors and students to know (a) *that* change is happening and (b) what the *status quo ante* was before the change began to happen. This will reduce misunderstanding about the student’s learning plan.

The second goal of the Learning/Ministering Covenant is to help students craft broader learning goals for their internship work. Students name goals in the areas of professional competencies, leadership development, spiritual development, and personal development. The structure of the learning plan is self-explanatory on the latter three of these goal areas. The area of professional competency, however, bears some explaining.

Our students work in a variety of different internship settings: congregational settings, chaplaincy ministries (in hospitals, clinics, schools, and prison systems), and non-profit settings. Each of these requires different (though not always radically different) professional competencies. Students will be asked to locate themselves in one of these three ministry settings. Each one lists a set of competencies students can explore. From the list, students will pick **at least three** competency areas relevant to their ministry setting. For each of these competency areas, students will name **two** learning objectives. For each of the two learning objectives, students will also name a concrete task or practice they will perform that will facilitate their learning in the competency area. Detailed instructions are provided in the Learning Plan, a draft of which can be found in Appendix II below.

It is the responsibility of students to write the text of the Learning/Ministering Covenant. In an early mentoring meeting, students should bring a draft of the Covenant with them to review with the mentor. Once the Covenant is agreeable to students and mentors, both will sign the cover page and submit the whole document, including the signed cover page, to the Director of the Art of Ministry.

It is important to underscore the meaning of a covenant. A covenant is an agreement between multiple parties, in this case, between the student, the mentor, the community in which the student will provide ministry, the School of Divinity, and God. A covenant is not a contract. It is not, that is, an agreement for the provision of goods or services based on exchange (*quid pro quo*). Instead, it is a relational bond formed to respond to God’s calling to work in the world. It provides the student an opportunity to explore the student’s calling to ministry, and it provides the community an opportunity to explore its calling to form leaders in the faith.

A covenant has multiple parties. It is not simply an agreement between student and mentor. It also includes the interests of the community and of the School of Divinity. That is why it is appropriate for the School of Divinity to be included in any important conversations about the status of the student’s internship. If there are any serious problems related to internship placements, it is both permissible and desired to involve the Director of the Art of Ministry in conversations about them.

6. Weekly Mentoring Sessions

We ask mentors to meet with their interns for an hour each week to help reflect on their work. The sessions should be scheduled at a regular time and at the beginning of each semester to ensure that they happen each week. The time and location of the session should be conducive to uninterrupted reflection.

The mentoring session provides an intentional and structured space in which the student can reflect on their practice of ministry. There are several levels of reflection that can be appropriately addressed in the mentoring session⁴:

1. **Professional level**: Reflection on the student's practice of ministry, including the assessment of ministry skills and the student's effectiveness in practicing ministry.
2. **Interpersonal level**: Reflection on the student's pastoral presence and intervention in human relationships relevant to ministry, including events in which the student offered ministry to persons in the community.
3. **Systemic level**: Reflection on the student's capacity to work within organizations and their ability to understand the structural dynamics that make organizations work the way they do (for better and worse).
4. **Theological level**: Reflection on God's work in a ministry setting, as well as reflection on the theological commitments (explicit and implicit, formal and functional) that condition that student's ministry in the setting.
5. **Vocational level**: Reflection on the student's calling to and emerging sense of identity in ministry in light of the internship work and other relevant experiences.

The mentoring session **IS NOT** primarily an **administrative meeting**, taken up entirely with the planning of activities; **NOR** is it a **therapy session**, in which the mentor explores the emotional life of the student (although, of course, emotional issues are often relevant in exploring the student's ministry practice); **NOR** is the mentoring session a **monologue**, in which the mentor expounds at great length about their ministry wisdom and offers unending advice about how the student should practice ministry (although the mentor's wisdom and advice are sometimes relevant in the reflection process).

Students will record mentoring sessions in their monthly internship logs.

7. Internship Assessments

⁴ The following sections are adapted from Lee Carroll, *Supervised Ministry in the Congregation*, Columbia Theological Seminary Handbook.

In the fall and the spring, students and mentors write assessments of the student's internship work. A form is provided for this task. The fall internship assessment is a more intensive exercise since the student will have another semester to incorporate feedback from the assessment into their continuing ministry. The questions in the assessment are tied to the goals set forth in the Learning Covenant. Students should refer back to their Learning/Ministering Covenants as they complete the fall assessment.

The spring and summer assessment is a summative assignment, giving students and mentors an opportunity to reflect on the student's next steps in her vocational formation. Due dates for these assessments are noted in the course syllabus.

8. Peer Group Structure

8.1 Format and Event Accounts

Students in the year-long reflection seminar course meet about seven times each semester in peer learning groups, facilitated by a local ministry leader. The peer groups create space for students to reflect cooperatively on their work in ministry. The primary assignment that peer groups work on is the event account. The event account is a short case study of a ministry situation that occasions professional, systemic, interpersonal, theological, and vocational reflection on each student's internship experience. One student presents an event account to the peer learning group each week, and the group works together to reflect on the account.

9. Art of Ministry Program Policies

9.1 Confidentiality Standards

The School of Divinity protects student privacy and any confidential information related to a student's educational process at Wake Forest University in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). That said, the School of Divinity views the covenants that the School and the student make with their internship setting as a three-party agreement to share information relevant to the student's learning, development, and performance in the internship setting whenever necessary. Discretion should always be exercised in sharing student-related information. As a rule, no party should share any more information than is necessary to advance the best interests of the student and the internship setting. Students and internship setting mentor-supervisors should view the Director of the Art of Ministry as a resource to help resolve any problems that may arise in the course of the internship placement and should therefore feel free to share information relevant to such issues as they arise.

All conversations that happen in peer group meetings are to be kept confidential by members of the peer group. Hard copies of event accounts will be supplied by the instructor. At the end of each session, hard copies of the event accounts should be returned to the weekly presenter, who may destroy them. The faculty facilitator is responsible for informing the instructor regarding all matters that arise within the group and internship settings.

9.2 Failure to Complete Program and Course Requirements

The following is the Art of Ministry program policy for completing the year-long reflection seminar requirements when a student is not able to complete the service and hours in the Learning Plan and course requirements:

If a student is unable to function in their internship placement due to issues of personal crisis or misbehavior, requiring termination of the internship placement, the student's participation in the course will end with the termination of the placement and the student will receive a grade of "withdrawn failing" or "F," to be determined by the professor based on the number of weeks the course has been in session.

The student will meet with the Director and a plan of action will be created for the student along with benchmarks that the student must achieve before being assessed as ready to complete the year-long reflection seminar requirements for graduation.

For example, while a student is not enrolled in an Art of Ministry course, they may be encouraged to spend the remainder of the semester or the following semester in a therapeutic relationship to be determined by the student. No report of confidential information is expected. However, the student will be asked for official notification from the therapist that a plan of action has been followed.

After having met the benchmarks in the plan of action and with the permission of the Associate Dean, a student may enroll in a supervised internship. The successful completion of that course will fulfill the graduation requirement for the year-long reflection seminar.

9.3 Art of Ministry Program Statement on Sexual Misconduct

Central to the formation of ministerial identity and Christian faith is a communal environment in which students, mentors, and all people pursue the work of ministry in an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. The Art of Ministry Program stands firmly against all forms of sexual harassment.

9.3.1 Definition

Sexual harassment is defined by the Wake Forest University Policy on Sexual Harassment as unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic success;
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting the individual, or;
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating or hostile or offensive work or academic environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include repeated and unwelcome conduct involving one or more of the following: sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, sexually explicit statements,

questions or jokes, displays of sexually explicit pictures, physical conduct or touching or other conduct of sexual nature that is unwelcome and makes a reasonable person feel uncomfortable.

9.3.2 Sexual Harassment and Vocational Formation

Many mentoring relationships are the basis of genuine collegial friendship; however, bringing sexual behavior, whether verbal or physical, into the mentoring relationship is inappropriate, particularly due to the power dynamics involved in the relationship.

Students and mentors are responsible to the Divinity School as well as to their various ministry settings for their behavior in this area. It is the policy of the Art of Ministry Program that a sexual relationship of any kind within the practicum setting is incompatible with appropriate ministerial ethics.

Any complaints or allegations regarding sexual misconduct in the ministry setting should be brought to the instructor and will be dealt with according to the policies of Wake Forest University. Rape is a moral and criminal offense and should be reported immediately to the appropriate legal authorities.

9.4 Legal Covenants (from the “Covenant of Shared Wisdom”)

The organization named in the attached covenant will provide the program described in the covenant in return for Wake Forest University’s permitting students to participate in the organization’s activities.

The program provided for the students will in all respects treat the students as the Organization’s own and not as agents of or acting on behalf of Wake Forest University. The named organization will comply with all laws and regulations relating to the activities of the students participating in the program. It will ensure that the students are covered by motor vehicle insurance and any other applicable insurance programs. The Organization will indemnify and hold Wake Forest University harmless from any liability or claim. Including defense costs, relating to activities of the students undertaken in connection with programs of the named organization.

Appendix I: Art of Ministry Program Calendar (2021-2022)

Fall Semester 2021

- August 1, 2021: Students who have completed their draft Learning Plan and have received feedback from the Director of the Art of Ministry and approval from their internship setting mentor may begin working in their internship settings.
- August 28, 2021: First day of class for Internship Reflection Seminar (plenary session)
- Week of August 28, 2021: Students begin working 8-10 hours per week in internship settings (a minimum of 100 hours per semester).
- September 6, 2021 (Thursday), 11:00-12:30: Service of Commissioning, Davis Chapel, Wingate Hall, WFU
- September 5, 2021: Revisions to Learning Plan and final approval by site mentor due
- October 11-14, 2021: Fall break - no classes
- November 21-25, 2021: Thanksgiving Holiday - no classes
- November 28, 2021: Fall internship assessments due from both interns and mentors
- December 7, 2021: Last day of class.
- December 10-15, 2021: Fall exam period
- December 16, 2021 - January 13, 2021: Winter break

Spring Semester 2022

- Week of January 14, 2022: Students return to their weekly work in their internship settings (minimum of 100 internship service hours per semester)
- January 16, 2022: First day of class for Art II (plenary session)
- January 31, 2022: Revised Learning Plans due from student interns (if necessary)
- March 9-17, 2022: Spring break – no classes
- April 19, 2022: Good Friday Observance – no classes
- May 1, 2022: Last day of class. Spring assessments due from both student interns and mentors
- May 3-10, 2022: Spring exam period
- May 18, 2022: Hooding Service: All internship site mentors invited
- May 20, 2022: Commencement

Appendix II: Learning Plan

The Learning Plan is now completed in an online form. What follows below is a description of the work the online form requires.

CREATING A LEARNING PLAN

FALL SEMESTER

A learning plan provides structure for the relationship between the student, the ministry agency/congregation, the mentor, the divinity school, and God. A dynamic covenant facilitates spiritual and leadership growth; it is not a job description. The primary purpose of the covenant is to guide the student in setting their own learning goals.

Students are to prepare this covenant in conversation with their mentors. Students and mentors should work together to be as concrete as possible in specifying learning objectives, roles, and responsibilities (with the caveat, of course, that in ministry, even well-laid plans are always subject to change!).

Keep in mind that internship work is limited to 8-10 hours per week. Be realistic about the amount of ministry work and learning that can happen in that time period.

The student and mentor should sign and date the covenant on the cover sheet provided, and the student should return the signed covenant to their small group facilitator by Wednesday, October 1. The Director of the Art of Ministry will then review, sign, and provide feedback to each student.

Section I: Contact Information

1. Student's name
2. Mentor's name
3. Name and address of setting
4. Email and telephone information for both student and mentor

Section II: Vocational Discernment

In a paragraph or two, account for your interest in this internship in light of your understanding of your vocational path so far. How does this internship experience make sense against the backdrop of your life's journey up to this point? And how does it "fit in" to your current vocational discernment about the future?

Section III: Ministerial Formation

A. Professional Competencies

Areas of Professional Competence: Ministry in any setting requires many professional competencies. First, find the type of internship setting (congregational, clinical/chaplaincy, or non-profit placement) that best describes your internship placement and consider the competency areas in the relevant category. Then, using the structure provided below, pick **AT LEAST THREE AREAS** of professional competence that will be the focus of your internship work.

The categories outlined below may not be adequate to name all of the kinds of competencies that happen in a particular setting. Please consult with the Director of the Art of Ministry should you wish to reconfigure these categories in a significant way.

1. Congregational placements:

- A. Administration: Administration includes the work of church boards, budgeting and stewardship activities, congregational committees, congregational identity and visioning processes, the care and supervision of facilities, etc.
- B. Liturgy: Liturgy includes worship planning and leadership, preaching, children's worship, musical leadership, etc.
- C. Mission and outreach: Mission and outreach includes the development and administration of programming that extends the congregation's vision and mission to local, regional, and global communities, including community organizing and other social justice programs, direct outreach to local communities, global mission projects, etc.
- D. Pastoral care: Pastoral care includes the visitation of house-bound, institutionalized, or hospitalized persons, leadership of prayer groups, building intentional relationships with congregants and persons in the surrounding community, etc.
- E. Religious education: Religious education includes the curricular design and teaching in a congregation's education program for children, youth, and adults (Sunday School, Bible studies, etc.).

2. Clinical/chaplaincy placements (in hospitals or clinics, colleges or universities, prison systems, hospice care facilities, etc.):

- A. Pastoral care: Regular pastoral visitation to assigned constituencies, on-call pastoral care, intentional relationship building with clients, etc. In some chaplaincy settings, pastoral care constitutes the bulk of a student's work. In that case, it is acceptable to count pastoral care for **TWO** areas of professional competence.
- B. Liturgical leadership: Liturgical leadership includes worship planning and leadership, preaching, musical leadership, etc.
- C. Program development and administration: Program development includes the planning and implementation of any programming that furthers the mission of

the chaplaincy unit in which the student is providing ministry. Examples include the development of support groups, Bible studies, prayer groups, interfaith dialogue, etc. In some settings, program development constitutes the bulk of a student's work. In that case, it is acceptable to count program development for **TWO** areas of professional competence.

- D. Institutional leadership: Institutional leadership relates to the ways in which ministers participate in other units of the institution in which they are serving. For example, chaplains might serve on a hospital's ethics board, university chaplains might participate in university-wide conversations about religious diversity, etc.

3. Non-profit placements:

- A. Administration: Administration relates to the overall management of the organization, its day-to-day operations, working with boards of directors, etc.
- B. Program development: Program development relates to the design and implementation of any programming relevant to the organization's mission and vision, including the organization's ongoing efforts to communicate effectively with broader publics.
- C. Financial leadership: Financial leadership relates to the organization's fund-raising efforts, grant writing, budget development, etc.
- D. Volunteer development: Volunteer development has to do with the recruitment, training, and retention of volunteer workers who staff the organization's programs.
- E. Pastoral care: Pastoral care in a non-profit setting has to do with building intentional and pastorally responsive relationships with clients and guests of the organization, as well as volunteers and employees, in whatever ways are appropriate in light of the organization's policies and norms.

Learning Objectives: For each competence area, name two or three specific learning objectives. These might include certain skill sets associated with the area of professional competence. For example, a student working on preaching might indicate that they would like to determine a method for preparing a sermon that works for them.

Specific Tasks and Activities: List specific tasks or activities, agreed upon by you and your mentor, which will contribute to the realization of the learning objectives named in (2) above. Again, be as specific and realistic as possible. In the example of liturgical leadership, the specific task might be that the student preaches at least two sermons per semester.

You might find it useful to complete this section using the following chart:

	(Example)	1	2	3
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Professional Competence Area	Liturgy			
Learning Objective 1	Identify an approach to sermon preparation that works for me.			
Concrete Task 1	Preach twice this semester; use weekly mentoring meeting in preceding weeks to focus on my process of sermon development.			
Learning Objective 2	Address my fear of praying in public on behalf of a community.			
Concrete Task 2	Lead pastoral prayer twice during this semester; experiment with two different approaches to this task.			

B. Leadership Development

1. Try to imagine the demands that your particular setting places on ministerial leadership. What challenges do you think face a ministry leader in your setting?
2. Consider your gifts and growth areas for leadership in light of this particular ministry context (B.1). What specifically will you do to develop yourself as a leader in this ministry setting?
3. How do you typically respond to stress, and, in particular, to relational conflict? Here are some questions you might consider as you think about this: Are you aware of what you experience when you have relational tension with other persons? Can you claim and own these feelings? Do you tend to project your insecurities onto other persons with whom you are in conflict? Do you shut down and/or try to avoid conflict entirely? What might you do to engage constructively your experience of stress and conflict this year?

C. Spiritual Development

1. Briefly, how would you describe your spiritual life currently?
2. Where do you hope to be in your spiritual development by the end of this semester? By the end of this year?
3. In what regular practices will you engage to deepen your spiritual life? What practices will you do, and when will you do them? What practices might you want to try out? Be both specific and realistic about what you can do on a regular basis to explore your spiritual life. Think about how and where these practices will fit into your daily and weekly routines. What will need to happen in order for you to actually do these spiritual practices?

D. Personal Development

1. As you consider your own life journey, personality, talents, and growth areas, how do you imagine that these qualities will inform your pastoral presence and practice in this internship setting? Think, for example, about your emotional needs (e.g., for belonging, affirmation, influence, closeness, responsibility, etc.). How might these affect your ministry?
2. How do you do with time management, organization, big picture vs. details? What will you need to do to handle these matters responsibly?
3. How will you take care of yourself? When will you exercise? How will you make sure you're getting enough sleep?

Section IV: The Mentoring Relationship

1. What would constitute a successful mentoring relationship for you? What will it take to make that relationship happen?
2. Outline a schedule for weekly mentoring sessions agreed upon by you and your mentor. The mentoring dialogue is essential to the learning process. **A regular, uninterrupted 60-minute period is very important.**
3. Outline your approximate weekly schedule (include time for preparation and mentoring). **Time spent traveling to and from the site is not usually included in the required weekly hours.** Misunderstandings can happen around assumptions about time on-site; vacation periods should be mutually set.

A copy of the Learning/Ministering Covenant will be kept in each student's Vocational Formation file. The covenant is a primary resource for internship assessment at the end of each semester.

Appendix III: Welcoming a Student Minister into the Life of a Community⁵

The following are suggestions to help communities of faith welcome student ministers into the community and to make their roles and responsibilities as ministers clear to community members:

- Introduce the student(s) at the first service they attend; have them stand so that parishioners can see them.
- Include a service of commissioning for student interns in a worship service at the beginning of the academic year.
- Give student interns a title (ministry student, student intern, etc.) and put it in the bulletin with their name.
- Provide the student intern with a small workspace with their own.
- Provide the student intern with a place to make and receive phone calls.
- Include student interns in staff meetings; introduce them to staff.
- Encourage parishioners to invite student interns to lunch after church on Sundays or other convenient times – nothing fancy, just to get acquainted.

⁵ Adapted from “Hospitality: Making Students Feel Welcome,” *Contextual Education II: Site Mentor Manual 2011-2012*, p. 7.

Appendix IV: Writing an Event Account for Theological Reflection

Revised January 2016

Once each semester, each group member will write an account of a concrete experience from their ministry setting for discussion in their peer group. The best event accounts for theological reflection are those events in which the student has some responsibility for deciding how to respond. ***Event accounts should be distributed to group members (via the Sakai mailing list) and to the instructor no later than Tuesday at 5 p.m. before the Wednesday morning on which the student is to present their event account.***

WHAT IS A “MINISTRY EVENT”?

Ministry is work that makes space for persons and communities to discern and respond to the presence and work of God in their midst. A ministry event is one in which you have done, or have begun to do, this work. The following are good candidates for ministry events (there are probably others):

- A discrete situation in which you offered ministry to another person or group (e.g., a chaplaincy visit in a hospital, a Sunday sermon);
- An one-time or ongoing relational challenge you are having with laypersons or other leaders in your organization (e.g., a lay person who calls your ministerial authority into question);
- A question about your identity and role as a minister in a particular context (e.g., what it means to be a Christian leader in an interfaith ministry setting);
- An problem or challenge your organization is exploring about how best it can do its work (e.g., how best to develop a program that serves at-risk youth in your ministry setting).
- It is helpful for your event account to include a situation that illustrates the question you’re working on, even if the situation is not itself the focus of your concern. This helps your colleagues to wrap their minds around what it is like for you to experience the issue that is the focus of your account.

WRITING THE ACCOUNT

The aim of theological reflection is to use the four sources of theological meaning-making—tradition, culture, personal belief, and experience—to reflect on an experience about which one wants to gain theological insight. Theological reflection occurs when the events of life are examined through the lenses of faith.

Critical theological reflection involves at least three parts: (1) examining one's actions in order to identify the underlying assumptions that have shaped them, (2) using the knowledge available in culture and tradition to determine if those assumptions are valid for a particular context, and (3) re-thinking these assumptions and their accompanying actions so that they are more adequate to current needs and realities. Practical theologians emphasize the cyclical nature of this process. Actions are reflected upon and the insights are integrated into subsequent actions that, in turn, are reflected upon again.

The following is a guideline for reflecting on an event in ministry practice. The aim of the written reflection is to provide a focus for dialogue. Each event account should be a one-page (no more) single-spaced (no smaller than "11" font) report of a ministry experience in your setting in which you were involved. Number the lines in the left-hand column for easier reference in discussion. Be sure to identify at the top of the account if this is confidential material.

1. Background:

Provide enough background information to put the event in context. What are relevant features of the ministry context that illuminate the event (e.g., the socio-economic and demographic features of a congregation and/or community, etc.)? Who was involved? What did you hope or fear would happen? When and how did you become involved in the event?

2. Description:

What happened? What actions did you take? Report the event in as much detail as possible, staying within the one-page limit.

3. Analysis:

What was going on here? What was at stake for me personally, vocationally, and theologically in the choices I made? Why did things happen the way they did (or are happening the way they are)? What relational triangles, if any, existed in this event, and how did these shape your ministry in the event?

4. Theological Issues:

What broad theological questions are relevant to this event? How have you begun to make sense of them in light of the event? *Drawing on relevant Scripture, theological doctrines (e.g., of creation, sin, salvation, eschatology, etc.), take a stab at interpreting the event theologically - but understand that the group will add its own interpretation in the discussion.*

Also, set the event into the context of your formal and functional theology.⁶ Where are the places of continuity/discontinuity in your actions with your understandings of who God is, what evil is, what the church is, what your role as a minister is, etc.? Where did these assumptions originate and how has this event reinforced or challenged them?

5. *Personal Formation and Reflection on Ministry Practice:*

What was on your mind and heart as you responded to the event (or as you continue to respond to it)? How might the ways you have been formed (in families and communities of origin, significant relationships, significant life events, broader cultural contexts, etc.) inform your ministry response to this situation? To put it more informally: what “baggage” did you carry with you into this event, and how did it shape your response to it?

6. *Challenges:*

What insights did you gain from this event? What challenges does this event pose for your ministerial identity, for theology, for the world?

7. *Focus:*

What is it that you hope to learn by using this event in the group process? What questions do you want your peer group to be sure to address? If there are particular ways you want your group to respond, note them (e.g., thinking theologically about the event, brainstorming a response to a situation or problem, focusing on the dynamics of a relationship, etc.).

⁶ Formal theology amounts to what you say you believe about theological matters. Functional theology, by contrast, is what your actions (or lack of them) say about what you believe about theological matters.

Appendix V: Reflecting Theologically in Peer Groups

Revised January 2016

The event account is the raw material for reflection in the peer group. The group uses a reflection model to draw out learning from the event account. The group, not the event account presenter, has responsibility for the learning that happens in the group work. The process model allows the learning that happens in the peer reflection group to be “group property.”⁷

The basic rhythm of theological reflection on experience can be expressed in terms of three basic questions: *What? So what? Now what?*⁸ In other words:

- What happened? The group seeks to provide a careful and nuanced description of the event, in terms of an understanding of the experiences of the relevant participants in the event as well as the broader contextual issues (in terms of the social location of participants in the event, socioeconomic and demographic descriptions of the ministry setting, etc.)
- How is what happened theologically meaningful? The group draws on the resources of Scripture, theological traditions (doctrines, hermeneutical lenses, liturgy, song, etc.), relevant knowledge from the social and human sciences (sociology, psychology, etc.), and an analysis of the experience of the participants, to suggest theological interpretation of the event.
- How does theological reflection inform future action? What does the meaning-making in the above step suggest about how the student and/or the persons and community involved in the event move forward. What comes next?

There is great value in following the process as it is designed, though many of us resist this kind of order. Group members should pay attention to the times allotted for each section. Also note who is doing the talking in each step (directions are given in the parentheses in the grey box).

As groups begin to form their own identity and style, they will often vamp on the process model, emphasizing different movements in different ways. It is certainly appropriate for groups to develop their own approach to the model. However, it is important to begin the year using the model prescribed here and to commit to following it rigorously for a semester or so. Beginning with this kind of structure will feel a bit artificial and clunky at first. But an initial structure is important, both because it ensures that groups address important aspects of the event accounts

⁷ For a discussion of peer group reflection as “community property,” see Barbara Blodgett, *Becoming the Pastor You Hope to Be: Four Practices for Improving Ministry* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2011), chapter 4, “Community Property: Peer Group Practice.”

⁸ See Mathew Floding and Barbara Blodgett, “Introduction” to *Brimming with God: Reflecting Theologically on Cases in Ministry*, Floding and Blodgett, eds. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 12.

and that the group knows how it is departing from the model as it begins to develop its own style.

We encourage your group to practice this discipline.

1. CLARIFYING INFORMATION OF THE EVENT (Presenter and Group)

The presenter reads their event account out loud. The group takes a minute of silence to reflect. Group members ask the presenter questions for clarification.

**The group should resist attempts to begin analysis and evaluation at this stage.*

Approximate time: 5 minutes

2. ANALYZING THE DYNAMICS IN THE EVENT (Group)

When identifying shifts in action, the group is identifying places within the story/relationships where energy exists and moves. The group may also look for places where the response to a certain behavior may be more or less intense than the actual behavior requires. An extreme example might be yelling at a person for eating the last cookie. The main question the group is asking here is: Where are there shifts in energy in this event?

What are the relevant contextual factors that may have shaped what happened in the event? In other words, how might socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, historical, and demographic features of the ministry setting have conditioned the event?

Also – what power dynamics structure relationships between persons involved in this event? For example, does the presenter or other persons involved in this event impose expectations about identity, authority, or behavior onto other persons? If so, how, and why does it matter? What triangles, if any, existed between persons involved in the relationship, and how did they shape what happened?

Approximate time: 10 minutes

3. IDENTIFYING WITH THE PERSONS IN THE EVENT (Group)

How does the group identify with the presenter's feelings and experiences in this event?

How does the group identify with other persons' feelings in the event?

Approximate time: 5-10 minutes

4. REFLECTING ON PERSONAL FORMATION AND MINISTRY PRACTICE (Presenter and Group)

The ways in which we are formed in our families and communities of origin and through significant life experiences and relationships are always present in and inform the way we offer ministry to others. These formations shape our identity, values, habits of mind and heart, approach to conflict, capacity for empathy, etc.

How does the presenter reflect on the ways in which their personal formation shaped their presence in, and response to, this ministry event? In other words: What is unique in this event because the presenter was a pastoral presence in it?

What does the group notice about the presenter's presence in this ministry event?

What conclusions might you draw if you asked this same question about other persons present in this event?

Approximate time: 10 minutes

5. REFLECTING THEOLOGICALLY ON THE EVENT (Presenter and Group)

How was God present in this event? Here are some ways of getting at this question:

- How do group members respond to the presenter's theological reflection on the event?
- How do group members make theological meaning of this event? What biblical texts, hymns or songs, theological ideas, categories, doctrines, interpretive lenses, liturgical practices or images, etc., come to mind that help group members make theological sense of this event?
- How does the presenter respond to the group's theological reflection? What resonates with the presenter's own theological reflection on this event? What doesn't resonate, and why?
- Formal vs. functional theology: How might the event show differences between the presenter's formal theology (what the presenter says they believe) and their functional theology (what the presenter's behavior reveals about what they actually believe)? (This issue may not be relevant in every case.)

Approximate time: 10 minutes

6. INSIGHTS, QUESTIONS, AND FUTURE ACTION (Presenter and Group)

What has each group member learned or affirmed about what they already knew?

What insights have they gained?

How do the insights generated in this reflection process inform the presenter's and the group's future approach to and understanding of ministry (in this setting or others)?

How does the group's reflection on this event inform an understanding of how the relevant participants in the event/community in the ministry setting should proceed? What comes next for this community?

Approximate time: 10 minutes

7. GROUP PROCESS OBSERVATION (Group Process Observer)

What did the observer see and what are the implications of these observations for the group?

- What went well?
- What would the observer like to see more of in the event writing?
- What would the observer like to see more of in the group processing?

Approximate time: 5 minutes

Appendix VI: Leadership Roles for Theological Reflection Groups

Presenter:

The presenter writes the event account. Guidelines for writing the account are in tab one with other course assignments. *The presenter should distribute electronically their event account to group members and the instructor no later than 12 hours prior to the peer group meeting at which the event will be discussed.*

Discussion Leader:

The discussion leader chooses one of the suggested models to guide the group's theological reflection on the written account. It is important that the discussion leader prepares the group process *AHEAD OF TIME*. The discussion leader should read the event account, consider what might be important or interesting issues for the group to consider, and practice leading with the theological reflection model.

Process Observer:

Group interaction is a dynamic process that can be enhanced when group members spend time talking about how they are working together and how they can improve their work. Group processing gives group members a chance to think about elements that are often a part of ministry leadership: interdependence, accountability, small-group skills, and group interaction.

The process observer has the responsibility during the session to "observe" group dynamics. The worksheet in the appendix provides a visual tool for observations about the energy level of the discussion and the kinds of interactions that take place during the session. Where did energy wax and wane in the conversation?

Faculty Facilitator:

The primary function of the faculty facilitator is to guide the group in the practice of theological reflection. The relationship between the facilitator and the other members of the group should be one of shared wisdom and mutual accountability. However, the facilitator will at times share from their own expertise about issues raised by the event account. Facilitators are responsible to the instructor for the administration of group work and function as a team of advisors for the program.