Practicum Guide
Leadership for Ministry

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PRACTICUM

SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

Integral components of the Certificate IV Leadership for Ministry course assess the participant’s development of team/group and leadership skills, interpersonal and communication skills, and professional and reflective praxis.

This is a structured practicum to be completed over the whole Leadership for Ministry course. The practicum is introduced on Day 1 with opportunities for further work, mentoring and/or updates on designated workshop days throughout the course. The practicum can be specifically adapted to a Catholic parish or workplace, although the term ‘Catholic parish’ is used throughout.

AIMS

On completion of this practicum with its associated activities and research, you should be able to:

- facilitate, plan, and participate in group activities;
- develop trust, confidence, inclusion, and foster effective teamwork in a group context;
- use communication skills to build relationships and foster effective teamwork in your group;
- communicate effectively with group leaders and members in a Catholic context;
- identify and address communication barriers and other areas of conflict;
- monitor and review your parish group’s performance;
- reflect on and improve your own professional practice;
- link learning in this course with your own professional practice;
- ensure continuing self-support and mentoring/supervision;
- use feedback to enhance your participation and formation in a Catholic context;
- reflect on and apply “best practice” in your participation and leadership;
- operate within an agreed code of ethics or practice.
OVERVIEW

Throughout the *Leadership for Ministry* course you will endeavour to further develop your leadership, communication, team, liturgical, scripture study, theological, professional practice, reflective practice, and other specific skills. This practicum assesses general participation, leadership, team, professional and reflective practice skills all of which include communication skills.

You will be:

1. A member in a *Leadership for Ministry* team of course participants. You will be involved in:
   - planning, preparing and leading Opening Prayer
   - planning, preparing and setting up the workshop environment and Morning Tea for an assigned *Leadership for Ministry* workshop.

2. An existing, new, or guest member in the context of a Catholic parish or other ministry group. You will be involved in:
   - participation and service within a Catholic community
   - reflective practice, including developing a professional practice plan
   - reviewing the group’s effectiveness
   - reviewing your personal participation and leadership effectiveness
   - planning and being involved in group activities for the duration of the course year.

In this practicum you will find activities, exercises, readings, websites and other information which will add to your knowledge, practical experience and skills. Some parts are simply for your own learning; others are submitted for assessment.

Those parts of your practicum which are to be submitted are clearly marked with the assessment icon: 

Participants will work in teams for the preparation and activities which occur in *Leadership for Ministry* workshops; however each member of the team submits his or her own workbook.

Further practicum details and an opportunity to map out a focus-specific practicum for yourself are included as part of the practicum plan in section 1.
READINGS AND RESOURCES FOR THE PRACTICUM

The following ‘Practicum specific’ readings are available in the Module Readings for the Leadership in Ministry module. Readings set for the Leadership in Ministry Study Guide can also be used as resources for the Practicum.

Reading 21   IFE Study Notes, Examples of Commissioning Rites (2012)
Reading 22   Trish Stapleton and Rob Cosgrove, Prayer (2008)
Reading 23   Judith Lynch, Naming God (2012)
Reading 25   IFE Study Notes, Prayer: Three Aspects (2012)
Reading 26   Michael Leunig, Prayers for Times of Reflection (1990)
Reading 27   Peter Gagen, Roles and Functions in the Group (1989)
Reading 29   B. Fleischer, Facilitating for Growth (1993)
Reading 30   Ellen Rufft, Collaboration – Working with, not for, against, or around others (2006)
Reading 31   Ingrid Bens, Facilitating with Ease (2005)
Reading 32   Peter Gagen, Practical Skills for Meetings (1989)
Reading 33   Jean Marie Hiesberger, Dealing with Conflict and Anger: Danger and Opportunity (2003)
Reading 34   Seán Ruth, Conflict in Groups (2006)
Reading 35   IFE Study Notes, Service and Leadership with a Family Perspective (2012)
INTERNET SITES

USCCB, Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord (2005)  
www.usccb.org/_cs_upload/7915_1.pdf  
This website provides a pdf copy of the Statement, Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry developed by the Committee on the Laity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (Washington DC: USCCB, 2005). This Statement offers pastoral and theological reflections on the reality of lay ecclesial ministry, affirmation of those who serve in this way, and a synthesis of best thinking and practice.

NCPS, Integrity in the Service of the Church (2011) Required Reading for Practicum  
www.catholic.org.au/index  
This website provides a pdf copy of the Statement, Integrity in the Service of the Church: A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia, developed by the NCPS a Committee of ACBC and CRA (Bondi Junction, NSW: NCPS, 2011). This Statement is to allow and enable bodies of Church Workers to use the principles and standards as a resource to assist in devising guidelines or processes appropriate to their particular work in the Church.

NCPS, Integrity in Ministry (2004)  
www.catholic.org.au/index  
This website provides a pdf copy of the Statement, Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia, developed by the NCPS a Committee of ACBC and ACLRI (Bondi Junction, NSW: NCPS, 2004). This Statement (reprinted in 2010) has been compiled to serve as a resource for those preparing for ministry in the Catholic Church and as a code of conduct and guide for reflection for those already involved in ministry.

www.catholic.org.au/index.php?option=com-docman...

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, approved by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) in May 2007, is available in pdf form

ADDITIONAL READING

A leaflet by the Diocese of Rockhampton, ‘Go out to all the World’: Service With Integrity (2001) Required Reading for Practicum
LISTEN TO THE TEACHINGS OF YOUR HEART.
EACH DAY, FIND SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL FOR. GIVE THANKS.¹

SECTION 1 – REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

1. PRACTICUM PART 1A: AN EXERCISE IN SELF-AWARENESS

MEET ME!

As you begin the Leadership for Ministry course, take a few moments to introduce yourself to members in your assigned team by answering question 1 and then share, discuss and note preliminary responses to questions 9-12.

Your personal responses to all the ‘Meet Me!’ questions are to be written up and submitted for course coordinators to read within 2 weeks of Workshop 1. They will be revisited at the last Leadership for Ministry workshop.

1. Who am I?

2. What are my gifts, talents and strengths - what do I do well?

¹ Adaptation of Proverbs 22:17.
3. What are parish group activities that I am drawn to and enjoy participating in?

________________________________________________________________________

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4. In the context of wider parish activities, the area of participation I am involved in is ...
   (for example, liturgical, hospitality, social justice, or a combination of areas). Explain.

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5. How did I become interested in this group’s focus area and how did I discern whether or not it was suitable for me?

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6. What inspires me in this group participation?

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7. What challenges me in this group participation?

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8. Who is/are my role model(s) for this ministry area?

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9. Why am I doing the Leadership for Ministry course?

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10. What skills do I hope to learn and develop further while doing the course?

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11. In what areas of my parish involvement do I need more formation?

________________________________________________________________________________________
12. Leadership roles I have held during my daily life experience, for example, as teacher, mother, father, workplace colleague, team member, parishioner, etc, are:

2. WHAT IS REFLECTIVE PRACTICE?

_We were born to make manifest the glory of God within us. It is in everyone, and as we let our own light shine, we give other people permission to do the same._

(Nelson Mandela)²

Marbina, Church and Tayler have written a paper on reflective practice.³ While the paper is written from a Victorian Education context, the description of reflective learning applies generally, whether the focus of the reflective practice is specifically education or other professional practice, such as Christian ministry participation and leadership. Excerpts from the evidence paper are included for you here.

Donald Schön, in his influential book _The Reflective Practitioner_, developed the term “reflective practice” (Schön 1983). Schön introduced the concepts of “reflection-in-action” (thinking on your feet) and “reflection-on-action” (thinking after the event). Schön focused his attention on five professional fields – engineering, architecture, psychotherapy, town planning and education – and talked of the inextricable link between the concept of professionalism and the process of reflective practice.

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Recognizing that professionals face unique and challenging situations on a daily basis, Schön argues that the most effective professionals use their previous experiences to better understand how and why things happen. Schön’s work has been instrumental in influencing practice around the world by encouraging professionals to take responsibility for improvements on and in practice. …

Pollard (2002) has identified the following seven characteristics of reflective practice as useful in helping … professionals gain a collective understanding of what reflective practice involves and how it can improve … outcomes:

1. An active focus on goals, how these might be addressed and the potential consequences of these
2. A commitment to a continuous cycle of monitoring practice, evaluating and re-visiting it
3. A focus on informed judgments about practice, based on evidence
4. Open-minded, responsive and inclusive attitudes
5. The capacity to re-frame one’s own practice in light of evidence-based reflections and insights based on research
6. Dialogue with other colleagues, in-house and with external networks
7. The capacity to mediate and adapt from externally developed frameworks, making informed judgments and defending or challenging existing practice.
   
   (Pollard, 2002)

In recent years, reflective practice … has also been influenced by action research, which aims to bring about positive change in order to better respond to needs. This process relies on critical reflection, where professionals question their own assumptions and their work.

Critical reflection draws on the work of Habermas, a German critical social theorist (Pinar et al, 1995) who identifies three main ways of thinking (adapted from MacNaughton, 2003):

1. Technical: when professionals are concerned with finding out how things happen and how they can control this. This way of thinking often leads to conformist practices that reinforce existing understandings.
2. Practical: when professionals are concerned with finding out what things mean to other people. This way of thinking is concerned with understanding events rather than trying to control them and often involves reforming thinking as professionals try to gain new insights.
3. Critical: when professionals examine whether what they know might somehow be biased. This way of thinking is most likely to lead to transformed ways of thinking as professionals ask themselves critical questions about whose needs are being met by the knowledge and beliefs that they have.
Drawing on the work of Habermas and action research, MacNaughton (2003) states that critical reflection can provide professionals with some of the tools required to critique the “big ideas” that shape daily practice. MacNaughton (2003) suggests six questions that critically reflective professionals use to gain a deeper understanding of their practice and to bring about positive change:

1. How have I come to do things this way?
2. How have I come to understand things this way?
3. Who benefits from how I do and understand this?
4. Who is silenced in how I do and understand this?
5. How many other ways are there to do and understand this?
6. Which of those ways might lead to more equitable and fair ways of doing and understanding things?

The research shows that reflective practice is a crucial way of learning and extending professional understanding. Reflection and critical reflection are highly personal processes that require the professional to take daily experiences, internalise them, turn them over in their mind and filter these new thoughts through previous lived experiences and personal values and biases, before deciding how best to proceed.

The catalyst for reflection can be either internal or external; it can be self-reflective or involve others. Reflection can be spontaneous or can be deliberately planned. Reflection can provide both the basis and the motivation for further inquiry which serves as a guide for future behaviour to improve our practice and ultimately the outcomes ...

Reflective practice is best described as a continuous process that involves the professional analyzing their practice in order to identify what drives learning and development, as well as the impact of their values on learning and development.  

Marbina, Church and Tayler outline and explain a number of reasons why reflective practice is important:

- Settings with the best outcomes have staff who engage in reflective practice;
- People learn the most when professionals reflect on their own values and consider how their views impact on their practice;
- Reflective practice allows professionals to develop a deeper awareness of their own prejudices, beliefs and values, and to better support people from diverse backgrounds and advance learning for vulnerable members of the community;
- Reflective practice provides a common professional goal for leaders working across agencies and is a unifying practice for diverse groups of professionals.

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5 Ibid., pp.10-13.
REFLECT

How can reflective practice strengthen parishes and parish groups? Consider the reasons why reflective practice is important and how each of them might apply in your context.

How can we develop Reflective Practice?

This practicum provides an opportunity for you to develop reflective practice. It includes a number of activities that will engage you in reflective practice and provide a framework for such practice. Marbina, Church and Tayler summarize a number of implications for developing reflective practice which highlight:

- The importance of reflecting both in practice and on practice: both thinking on your feet and thinking after the event;
- The importance of structured tools for reflective practice and the importance of embedding such reflective practice in normal day-to-day practices;
- The importance of mentors or companions: ‘Another leader or professional can bring a different perspective to the reflection and encourage ... others to think about what values they hold, why they hold them, and what works best ...’;
- The importance of regular learning networks which cut across one’s own familiar world: reflecting not only with other leaders and ministers within one’s own parish or organization, but with staff in Catholic schools, other parishes and/or other contexts which can share best practices and challenge what may be taken-for-granted within the context of parish;
- The importance of creating adequate time and space for reflection;
- The importance of contemporary research for informing professional development and hence reflection on practice.

3. DISCERNMENT AND BEST PRACTICE

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”
“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.
“I don’t much care where —” said Alice.
“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go.”
(Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland)

Reflective practice encourages you to:

- Realistically recognize your own personal and professional progress, gifts and talents as well as areas which need improvement.
- Be aware of the need for incidental and systematic feedback for assessing your past and current studies, formation, and professional performance.
- Name what you hope to achieve in your studies and in the professional application of skills and knowledge gained from your learning.
- Set short and long term goals and monitor your progress towards reaching these goals.
- Plan systematically what you need to do, which resources you will need to assist you, and construct a realistic timeline.
- Decide how you are going to obtain critical, realistic feedback from key people, for example, priest/associate priest/deacon, pastoral associate, parish group leaders, colleagues, mentors, supervisors, and/or other appropriate people.
- Decide what kinds of evidence will indicate that you are successfully reaching your goals.
- Develop a method for measuring your own progress.

This topic will further unpack ‘how we can develop reflective practice’ and provide a structure and process for your practicum that enables you to plan for developing reflective practice both within the context of this course and more broadly for your on-going parish leadership and participation in general.

You will start by looking more closely at what you want to learn. You’ll reflect on how you can ensure you gather feedback from mentors as part of this process and you will develop a structure for reflective practice for this course.

DISCERNMENT

The word “discernment” comes from the Latin discernere meaning “to sift through, to distinguish, to separate, to put things in order”. In particular life situations, spiritual discernment involves sifting through choices open to us, finding God by means of the circumstances and persons involved, and choosing the alternative which will bring more freedom, love and justice into our lives and the lives of others. As we seek to make choices throughout our lives, discernment requires an informed commitment which becomes a
way of life.
The discernment process expresses our desire to experience the presence of God in our lives and brings us to a deeper awareness of God’s mission to which we are called. For parish group discernment, the process will not be effective unless all group members are in life-giving daily relationship with God, feel a strong connectedness with each other, and are able to listen intently.

As baptized Christians, we complement our diverse participation, mindful of the importance of the discernment and stewardship of gifts, and the affirming of both lay and ordained ministries which serve the Church and the wider community. Discernment of a call to lay ministry is a process that requires prayer, dialogue and evaluation. It is both personal and communal.

When a person is discerning and deepening a call to ministry, a spiritual director or mentor can be of assistance in the process to determine the person’s suitability. There needs to be consideration of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral readiness.

Personal discernment includes:

- Fostering a contemplative posture that helps us to be aware of the presence of God in the concrete events and experiences of ordinary life
- Searching for wisdom; sifting through choices open to us and making a choice that enables us to live deeply in harmony with God, oneself, others and the cosmos
- Being aware of and finding sacred time and space
- Asking the question, “What does God hope will be my contribution in promoting and bringing about the kingdom of God here and now?”
- Believing that the Spirit of God is present and active in our parish community
- Letting go of vested interests and personal desires so that I have an inner freedom to hear the movement of the Spirit in my life

At the outset and as part of your reflective practice, you may find it helpful to spend time discerning your place in your parish group by:

- Setting aside space and time to pray
- Gathering information about your present ‘life’ in the group
- Reflecting prayerfully on this ‘life’
- Pondering choices for your future involvement and/or leadership in the group
- Sharing your wisdom and ideas with another group member or companion
- Seeking confirmation of any decision(s) you have come to

What decisions have you made regarding your calling to ‘life’ in the parish group?
Write how you feel about this method of discernment. Would you use it again? Why or why not?

A parishioner approaches you about joining the group that you belong to. Give three steps which you and the other group members can take to ensure this person is welcomed, informed, guided and mentored as she/he discerns whether her/his gifts are going to be appreciated and can be used?

In your participative and/or leadership role reflect on how you can help others, for example, those who have journeyed for years in the group, to discern whether their involvement continues to be ‘life-giving’.
BEST PRACTICE IN MINISTRY

We noted the importance of contemporary research for informing professional development and hence reflection on practice. This is certainly helpful and important in parish ministry too. What are people saying about effective evangelization, for example? What is most effective in ministry with young people?

What is good practice in your area of involvement and/or leadership? Where might you go to find out, or who might you ask about that?

In the context of your ‘lived experience’ within the group, consider a particular challenge you have for grounding your own participation and/or leadership in good practice and on a firm spiritual base. Write your responses in the table below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>My Desired Response with Respect to ‘Good practice’</th>
<th>Blockers to Implementing My Desired Response</th>
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A good practice is to have a mentor or companion who can bring a new perspective and encourage you. If and when needed, a person who is able to walk with you as a companion or mentor will be available for contact during your practicum journey. In what ways do you think such a person can be of help to you?

There are also important best practice principles that apply generally for lay people working in Catholic deaneries and parishes in Australia. These are set out in the booklet, *Integrity in the Service of the Church: A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia* which can be accessed at http://www.catholic.org.au/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=158 (or via the “Professional Standards” link on the front page of the website www.catholic.org.au). This document was produced by the National Committee for Professional Standards in 2011, which is a committee comprised of Australian bishops and leaders in religious institutes.

The aim of *Integrity in the Service of the Church* is to help Church workers to reflect on and uphold Christian vision and values in all their relationships and actions.

In the *Leadership in Ministry* workshop, you take a look at some statements set out in *Integrity in the Service of the Church* concerning ‘discernment’. Take some time now to reflect on five key principles for Catholic workers presented in the Introduction to *Integrity in the Service of the Church*.

Catholic workers:

- 1. are committed to justice and equity
- 2. uphold the dignity of all people and their right to respect
- 3. are committed to safe and supportive relationships
- 4. reach out to those who are poor, alienated or marginalized
- 5. strive for excellence in all their work.

*Service, given according to these principles is life-enriching for both providers and recipients.*

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7 *Integrity in the Service of the Church*, p.3.
Using pp. 6-14 of this document, give one practical example of best practice for each principle.

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How is the 3rd principle demonstrated in your parish, in your group service, and in your own individual participation and/or leadership?

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EXPLORE BEST PRACTICE IN MINISTRY

There are a number of resources that explore what is best practice in ministry. Select at least one of the following to read to explore this topic further:


Diocese of Rockhampton, ‘Go out to all the World’: *Service With Integrity* (2001)


This statement has been compiled to serve as a resource for those preparing for ministry in the Catholic Church and as a code of conduct and guide for reflection for those already involved in ministry.


[www.usccb.org/_cs_upload/7915_1.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/_cs_upload/7915_1.pdf)

This statement developed by the Committee on the Laity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops offers pastoral and theological reflections on the reality of lay ecclesial ministry, affirmation of those who serve in this way, and a synthesis of best thinking and practice.

After carefully reading at least one of the above resources, answer the following:

Give three examples of what is best practice for workers in Catholic parishes and workplaces.

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How can you personally apply best practices in your particular area of service and/or leadership? Give two concrete examples.

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________________________________________________________________________
GATHERING AND USING FEEDBACK WELL

One key skill for developing your professional and reflective practice is being able to elicit and use feedback from others. ‘Actively seeking feedback and accepting it non-defensively’ and ‘participating in reviews as a commitment to upgrading skills and knowledge’ are both part of the competency Reflect on and improve own professional practice. For this reason you will practice and demonstrate these skills as part of your work in this course.

In your parish experiences there may be times when you need to gather feedback.

Examples of general ways to gather feedback are:

- face-to-face in a formal or informal interview
- a questionnaire with open-ended questions
- questions that ask for ratings on a scale
- email questions or a questionnaire or invite people to complete a paper form
- ask a larger number of people and gather the feedback anonymously (this may change how participants give feedback)
- tailor a method specifically to suit your audience
- in these days of smart phones, tablets and internet, feedback mechanisms are available that allow instant feedback from people gathered electronically or using on-line tools such as ‘survey monkey’ to gather feedback

Planning is an essential step in gathering feedback. Feedback is not gathered for its own sake, but to assist you in reflecting on your own, or the group’s, service. What do you need to know? What feedback might help you? What feedback has been helpful to you in the past?

Three ways of gathering personal feedback in a parish context are to:

- meet with a priest, pastoral associate, colleague, mentor, supervisor, or other delegated person and have conversations about your ministry and/or leadership in the ministry group and, if applicable, in the wider parish context.
- have a conversation with one person in your group and invite them to complete a feedback sheet ... this can give you rich information
- prepare several feedback sheets to be completed by different people who can give you good feedback

These methods are not all required for the practicum but are worth considering as part of your professional development practice.

Note:

- A support person and/or support network is invaluable for your ministry and leadership.
• Always consider what feedback you wish to get, from whom, and for what purpose?
• Consider how will it help you to gain confidence that what you do is achieving the desired goals or to gain new insights on ways to improve your professional and reflective practice?

In Section 2, Topic 2, you will carry out an internal and external review of your work within the group, the group itself and its’ activities by looking at the mission and structure of your group and carrying out an analysis of its effectiveness. In Section 3, Topic 2, you will gather feedback on your group participation from a person from within your parish group.

In Section 4, Topic 4, you will gather feedback from a person who is familiar with how you personally communicate and contribute to teamwork in your ministry group. A course coordinator will assist you to discern someone who will be able to do this. In particular, this feedback will be specifically gathered with respect to your communication and team skills. This will be carried out using the feedback sheet which is provided.

In Section 6, Topic 3, you can obtain feedback on your conflict resolution skills if need arises (optional but recommended)

Who could give you good feedback? Think of people or a person who work(s) closely with you and are/is in a position to reflect and give you feedback. Be aware that you may need different people for the above examples of different types of feedback. Brainstorm your ideas.

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4. PRACTICUM PART 1B: PRACTICUM PLAN

*Sow much, reap much. Sow little, reap little.*  
(Chinese Proverb)

From your reflection and learning in the previous topics, you are now ready to complete the first step in your ministry practicum, which is to set out your own learning plan. This is submitted as part of your assessment.

Your plan includes two parts:

1. **Role-Specific Best Practice**
   
   **a)** *Name the specific area of ministry involvement within the Catholic context that will be your focus for the Practicum and briefly explain what the group does.*
   
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   **b)** *From your reading and reflecting in Topic 3, ‘Discernment and Best Practice’, give examples of best practice in your area of ministry. (one paragraph)*
   
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c) How will the practice principles you explored in Topic 3 shape your own involvement in the parish group? (maximum 3 paragraphs)

2. A clear statement that sets out what your focus for your own reflective learning will be developed.

Above, you have nominated the specific group area in which you participate. Now you are to also articulate more specifically what your own learning goals are within this group. You’ll see in question 3 below that there are a set of structured activities that you’ll complete in this course as part of your practicum which focus on various aspects of leadership and ministry. This part is your own unique individual learning goal, where you articulate for yourself what you want to learn.

For example, your role might be to participate in coordinating the parish children’s sacraments of initiation and your specific learning goals might be that you want to develop
your skills at engaging parents in the process. You’ll need to clarify for yourself what this involves; what specifically you will need to do to develop your skills.

Your learning goals can emerge from your reflections on what you do well and what you would like to improve and on your reading and reflection on good practice.

Complete this part of the practicum by completing the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Baseline: Where are you now?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Write a paragraph that articulates briefly and concisely your current involvement and leadership practice in relation to the parish group which will be your focus for the professional and reflective practice development plan.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Vision: Where do you want to be?</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What do you hope to improve or achieve? (Name one goal.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why do you want to achieve this? What will you gain? (Why is this relevant for you?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are your long term goals in relation to this goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are your short-term goals?</td>
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</table>

*Consider setting a goal for yourself that you are passionate about. Your goals can be about improving an area of weakness, but they can also be about building on strengths. What is it that you enjoy about your participation and/or leadership and your role in the parish group and how can you improve these areas further?*

*There is no point setting a vision for yourself that you have no interest in reaching!*
**Plan: How will you get there?**

- What will you need to do or learn or improve to get there?
- What resources will you need to get there?
- What is the time-line for getting there?

*Consider your own learning style and what you know about yourself as you complete this plan. Make the plan realistic and suitable for yourself. Your plan must include some steps that can be achieved over the length of the course.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence: How will you know when you have arrived?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- How will you measure progress?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What evidence will indicate success?</td>
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</table>

3. **A complete plan for when and how you will complete the various parts of the practicum.**

Skim through the entire practicum (all topics). Take note of the various parts that need to be completed. Some of these will be completed in workshops where you will be assigned to a group. Take note when it is your turn to complete these activities in the workshops. Some activities need to be completed in your parish. Every parish and every group is different. You will need to plan when it suits you, your group, and parish to complete some of these tasks.

Take note that some of the activities require gathering feedback from others. As previously stated, you will need to plan to ensure that you find appropriate people to provide this feedback and gather the feedback from them at the appropriate point.

Each part of the practicum that is to be submitted has been clearly marked. The various parts do not need to be submitted in order – depending on your own circumstances and group context, it may be appropriate to submit the various parts in a different order. Submit each part of the practicum as soon as it has been completed.
As a guide, note the following parts of the practicum to be completed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Submitted</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>‘Meet Me’: Exercise in Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Within 2 weeks after Workshop 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Practicum Plan</td>
<td>By workshop 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Group review</td>
<td>Select your own appropriate submission date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Developing reflective practice in teamwork and communication</td>
<td>Select your own appropriate submission date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(<em>Note that this includes gathering feedback from others</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Planning an opening prayer</td>
<td>After your group has led the opening prayer at one of the workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Planning for hospitality</td>
<td>After your group has facilitated hospitality at one of the workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>4c</td>
<td>Planning activities in your parish group context</td>
<td>Select your own appropriate submission date</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(<em>Note that this includes gathering feedback from others</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Leadership and service in the church</td>
<td>By workshop 6</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Conflict in groups</td>
<td>By workshop 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ethics and integrity &amp; Final self-reflection</td>
<td>By workshop 8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final reflection can be completed by or in workshop 8</td>
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</table>

You will need to plan your own unique time-line in terms of when you are assigned to assist in workshops and when you are able to complete activities that link to your regular group meetings and activities.

Create a time-line for yourself that includes clear submission dates for all parts of the practicum. Include consideration in your planning for completing activities in your regular group participation and gathering feedback as required. Complete this part by completing the table below.

Remember that you may not be completing all of the parts of the practicum in the exact order in which they appear in this guide.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Practicum part/topic</th>
<th>Assessment Items to Complete, Group Participation and Leadership Activities, Feedback, Associated Tasks and Activities, etc</th>
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</table>
SECTION 2: GROUP REVIEW

*Use your gifts well. Pass on your talents ... For they are best developed in the service of others.*

This part of the practicum helps you to complete a review of your specific parish group. This is not just your own work in this group, but the group’s work and service to the parish in general. A review is a helpful tool for reflective practice for both individuals within the group and for the group as a whole.

A number of different strategies for reviewing a group are included here, including some that can be completed by you individually as you reflect on the group and your work within it, some that are designed as strategies for the parish ministry team to reflect on the group, and some that are designed to gather feedback on the group’s activities from the wider parish or people receiving the ministry/service the group offers.

Work through all of the tools to gain a better understanding of the area in which you are working. Where possible, engage your whole parish group in the review.

You do not need to complete this review all at once; it may be better to complete it over some time, to enable you to include your group members if possible (could some of this review be completed as a group in a team meeting?) and to gather feedback on the group’s work/service more widely from the parish community. Again, this review is something you could either complete individually or something that could include all your group members. In that case you could plan, as a group, how you will gather feedback more widely from the parish community.

You will select at least one of the tools for the group analysis and submit a summary of your review for this practicum (see Section 2, Topic 2).

---

⁹Glenda Hodge, *Something to Think About: Thoughts for Your Journey* (Brisbane, Australia: Jacaranda Direct, 1997), 9.
1. TOOLS FOR CONDUCTING REVIEWS

Well done is better than well said.
(Benjamin Franklin)\textsuperscript{10}

EXPLORING THE MISSION AND STRUCTURE

Explain the vision, mission, and goals of the group.

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Describe the leadership structure (for example, chairperson, secretary, etc, and their roles) and outline the service and work of the group.

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Record the number of people, the approximate average age, and the percentage of males and females currently working in your group?

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Describe your role within the group and the gifts and talents you bring to the life of the group.

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Are the gifts and talents, competencies and capacities of the group members being considered and used well? Give two examples.

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What events will the group organize or be involved in over the course of this year?

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List the main activities your group is involved in at present. Use the table below to help you determine those activities where your gifts and talents can best be utilized.

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Plus</th>
<th>Minus</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
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</table>

Select a regular group activity in which you are usually, or could be, involved and for which you have gifts and talents to offer. Describe this activity. When this activity is scheduled to be planned and run again, you will use your involvement for the group activity evaluation in ‘Planning Team Activities’.
SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT Analysis is a technique for understanding your group’s strengths and weaknesses and for identifying opportunities open to the group and the threats the group may face. This can help your group to focus on your strengths, minimize your weaknesses, and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to you.

**Strengths**

- What does this group do well?
- What resources can we draw on?
- What do others see as this group’s strength?
- What is unique about what we do?

**Weaknesses**

- What could we improve?
- What should we avoid?
- What do others see as weaknesses of this group?

**Opportunities**

- What good opportunities can you spot?
- What new technology or resources can help us with our work and service?
- What are the needs in this particular area? What new opportunities are emerging?

**Threats**

- What obstacles do you face?
- Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten your participation and/or leadership?
Complete a SWOT analysis as a group, perhaps at one of your team meetings or, if this is not possible, complete the analysis individually.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITIES</th>
<th>THREATS</th>
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</table>
ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES

Another helpful aspect of a review is to review the resources available in your area.

Explore the resources already available in your parish, and also other publications, particularly web resources. As a starting point for this exercise, see the comprehensive list on pp. 13-19 of the Leadership in Ministry Study Guide.

After discovering up to three resources that are currently available in your area of work and service complete a table, as set out below, for each resource you have found.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When was it produced? Who produced it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the aim of the resource?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the resource relevant and effective? (Explain why/why not)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REVIEW

An internal review is carried out using information gained from group members, practicum activities, and your own personal experiences. A SWOT analysis completed by the group is an example of an internal review.

An external review uses information about the group’s activities and effectiveness gained from interviews with the parish priest, priest associate(s), deacon, pastoral associate, supervisor and/or a group of parishioners. To conduct an external review, you will need to think carefully about who to consult and how information will be gathered. As an exercise in discovery, talk to at least two different people in other groups and also from within the wider parish.

The aim is for you to gather information by talking to people in the group or wider parish community about their perceptions of the work and service of the group and if possible, your own role in the group. Identify who are key people for you to talk to. You may consider these to be the parish priest, leader(s), and others ministering “at the coal face”, and also those receiving the ministry.

You may wish to research the perceived:

| Consider what are the **positives**, the **negatives**, and the **interesting** features of the resource. |  |
• ‘positives’ with respect to the group’s activities and effectiveness;
• needs or issues in the particular area of service, as the particular person and/or group sees them;
• opportunities for education, formation and spiritual reflection currently provided for leaders and other group members and what new opportunities group members or others would like to see in this area;
• hopes and dreams of the group and what other people would like to see happening in the group’s area of service;
• and/or challenges.

Has there previously been an evaluation of the group’s activities and/or effectiveness? If so, when and how was it done and by whom? If not, why not?

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2. PRACTICUM PART 2: GROUP REVIEW

*It is high time the ideal of success should be replaced with the ideal of service.*

(Albert Einstein)\(^{11}\)

Complete a concise summary of your group review by:

Collating the information gained into a one page summary report which gathers the findings and identifies the *positives, key issues, needs, hopes and dreams* in your group’s area of participation and service.

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Presenting a concise paragraph about your discoveries and understandings with respect to your group’s effectiveness.

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\(^{11}\)Ellen Castro, *Spirited Leadership*, 42.
SECTION 3: WORKING WITHIN COMMUNITY – TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

Remain aware of other people’s dignity.
Often nothing more is needed to lift your communication to its highest level.\(^\text{12}\)

This section of the ministry practicum provides a structure for developing communication and teamwork skills. Complete and submit answers to all questions included here.

1. PRACTICUM PART 3A: BUILDING TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION IN A GROUP

Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness. (Seneca)\(^\text{13}\)

Revisit your learning about collaborative, transformative and servant leadership. Using Reading 17 and notes from the Study Guide as resources, select two characteristics that are common to all three leadership styles and explain the importance of these in your particular group context of leadership in parish ministry. (maximum three paragraphs)

\(^{12}\) Adapted from the Charter of Human Rights.
\(^{13}\) Ellen Castro, Spirited Leadership, 28.
Do any characteristics of these leadership styles build trust and confidence in a group’s effectiveness? Explain.

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OBSERVE

In what ways do you observe members of your parish group build trust and confidence in the group?

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What other ways can you think of that may help build trust and confidence in a group?

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One key aspect of good teamwork is good communication. This includes both the way individuals communicate within groups and the way in which the group as a whole communicates — including how the team is run (e.g. how meetings are run; procedures, team communication such as agendas, minutes).
Describe the usual methods of communication used by the group. How do members generally contact each other? How does the group communicate with other parishioners, workers and the parish or workplace leaders?

Consider how well these communication methods are working for you as a group member. Carry out a simple analysis of how they are working for the rest of the group. Are any methods of communication not being used as effectively as they could be, for example, emails or texts?
Reflect on the effective communication and participation in the group:

- What ‘gaps’ have you discovered in the group’s communication, for example, are you given plenty of advance notice of up-coming meetings?
- In what specific areas, and how, could existing participation be better supported?
- Where might this participation and service go, grow, and develop? What might it look like in the future?

Read “Practical skills for Meetings” in your Book of Readings.

Describe the meeting procedures utilized and followed by the parish group. Using the reading resources provided, list at least six steps which can be taken to ensure that meetings and outcomes are effective.
Read Chapter One of *Messages: The Communication Skills Book* and Chapter Two which explores ‘self-disclosure’ to help you to complete this assessment item.

When and how do you notice self-disclosure occurring in your group?

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For your personal reflection and development in communication this week, take note of your own blocks to self-disclosure.

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There are four different styles of ‘expression’ used in communication with other people: observations, thoughts, feelings and needs. Whole messages include all four – what you see, think, feel, and need.\(^{14}\) To deliver ‘whole messages’ you need to have self-awareness and to be aware of the other group members and the group environment.

Using knowledge gained from exercises in your ‘Leadership in Ministry’ Study Guide and Chapter Three, “Expressing”, in *Messages: The Communication Skills Book*, explain why both listening skills and effective ‘whole messages’ are important for generating ideas in group planning discussions.

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When messages are mixed or mislabeled they become contaminated. The messages become confusing and can cause alienation. How can this be avoided when people are presenting their ideas to the group?

For effective communication, messages need to be direct, immediate, clear, straight and supportive. Briefly explain the importance of each of these five characteristics for effective expression of ideas.

REFLECT

Assess the effectiveness of your group’s formal communication strategies (agendas, meeting ground rules, facilitator and group co-responsibility and collaboration. (The textbook, *Messages: The Communication Skills Book*, and other resources given in the Book of Readings can be used to help you assess these aspects of your group’s communication skills)\(^\text{16}\)

Identify and explain any improvements that could be beneficial.

2. PRACTICUM PART 3B: DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

Have faithfulness and sincerity as first principles.

(Confucius)\(^{17}\)

Developing communication and team-building skills is an on-going process. At the end of the next parish group gathering, reflect on your own participation in the group.

- In what ways did you help build the team spirit?
- How did you communicate with others?

Ask one other person from the group to give you feedback on how they see you participating as a team member. Include both a summary of their feedback and your own reflections on what you learnt from their feedback.

Note: You may notice a more detailed process for gathering feedback included later in the project (see project part 4c). This first opportunity to gather feedback is not intended to be as extensive. It is a first opportunity, within the context of this course, for you to gather feedback on your skills within your parish group context.

\(^{17}\) Ellen Castro, Spirited Leadership, 64.
SECTION 4: PLANNING TEAM ACTIVITIES

Encouraging others becomes easy when you realize how exquisitely interdependent we all are.\(^\text{18}\)

This section of the practicum provides opportunity to develop and demonstrate your skill at planning team activities. There are two contexts in which you will do this:

- In the context of the Leadership for Ministry course, by participating in planning activities within the course
- In the context of your regular group participation an service (e.g. within your parish context)

**Within the Leadership for Ministry course**

As part of your participation in this course you will be assigned to a team. Each team will be given a roster to assist with the running of our workshop days. You will participate and reflect on the work of the team.

This will involve:

- Planning, preparing and facilitating a time for Opening Prayer
- Helping with course organization and hospitality by setting up and packing away the training room and organizing Morning Tea for the whole group.

These two tasks provide two small contexts for practicing team skills within the context of this course. They will provide opportunities to reflect on your skills and to receive feedback from your peers and course facilitators.

**Within your regular ministry/parish**

During most of the practicum time you will need to use your skills at working in groups or teams in the context of your regular, on-going parish work and service. As you participate in your regular parish group, or participate as a guest in a group within a Catholic parish, you will use this context to reflect on, and develop, your skills at working with group members.

\(^{18}\) Adaptation from words of the Dalai Lama.
This will involve:

- Gaining experience in the group’s activities with particular emphasis on professional practice
- Using your knowledge of team and communication skills to analyze the effectiveness of your own participation in the group’s activities
- Being part of the group’s planning procedures for carrying out a specific activity
- Communicating and consulting with members of the group and wider parish community both during the planning and for feedback afterwards
- Evaluating and presenting an analysis of the group’s effectiveness in planning and carrying out a particular activity.

Gathering feedback from others

An IFE course coordinator or assessor will be present during the planning and delivery of team activities completed as part of the course workshops (opening prayer and hospitality). He/she will provide feedback on their observation of your participation in the team, both in the context of these two activities and perhaps more widely as part of their interaction with you over the whole course. Feedback will be provided continuously and informally as part of your participation in the course. It will be provided formally as feedback when you submit your own reflections on your participation in the team work involved in planning and carrying out the opening prayer and hospitality activities. In this way, course facilitators and assessors will help you to reflect on and develop your communication skills. At the completion of the course, the facilitator will complete the ‘communication and team skills feedback form’ to provide feedback on your communication skills overall (see pp. 58-62).
1. PRACTICUM PART 4A: TEAMWORK 2: INFLUENCING OTHERS

*Example is not the main thing influencing others. It is the only thing.*

(Albert Schweitzer) 19

READ, OBSERVE, REFLECT

Much of our communication is about attempting to influence others to change, particularly in groups that are planning activities. Read Chapter 18, “Influencing Others”, in Matthew McKay and Martha Davis, *Messages: The Communication Skills Book*, and combine this with what you have learnt from your own experiences to answer the following:

Your parish group works on planning and carrying out service and/or activities. This work is task-orientated. Do you think that you can influence people in the group to change their ideas if you just ask them to? Why or why not?

Explain how the four strategies: praise, trading, building in rewards, and verbal/non-verbal appreciation, can be effectively used to influence positive behaviour and outcomes in the planning of the activity.

During one of your ministry group planning meetings, record the number of times **one** of these strategies is used:

- Praise
- Trading
- Building in rewards
- Verbal/non-verbal appreciation

On the whole, do you think they were effective strategies for influencing behaviour? Why or why not?

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Community consultation is an essential component in effective group involvement in parish activities. It ensures the activities meet community needs and gain community support. It also draws out feedback and ideas from the community.

Has any community consultation been carried out by your group ministry team, either specifically in relation to activities planned or in relation to more general work and/or service?

If so, describe the consultation. For example, it may have been an individual consultation, with the priest or pastoral associate, a meeting with another small group, or sending a proposal out to a person or people and asking for written feedback etc.

If not, suggest what community consultation you would recommend for your group as a way of building up the number of group members and of ensuring the group meets the needs of the community.

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2. PRACTICUM PART 4B: PLANNING AN OPENING PRAYER

“To be a Christian is to be in relationship to God through Christ in the Holy Spirit and within a communion of discipleship. A Christian’s first mode of speech ... is the language of personal address, the language of invocation; this is not talk about God, but address to (and from) God and one another in petition and thanksgiving, praise and lamentation, repentance and forgiveness, command and obedience, and blessing and curse. This language of prayer is the primary mode of speech that shapes, and is shaped by, experience and action.”

Prayer is God’s gift to us. There are many different ways of praying. Prayer and worship provide a primary context for Christian speech and reflection. As Christian disciples, we exercise our desire for God in prayer. Our modes of prayer contain images, metaphors, meditation, reflection, music, and other ordinary practices and language. Prayer also involves ‘a listening to God’ and a time of reflection.

Prayer can be a time of personal reflection or communal reflection. “We cannot pray unless God opens our minds and moves our hearts and attracts us to God’s own self.” Christians are called to pray in union with one another. Prayer is the great religious act, and for Christians it is the art of conversing with Jesus.

As leaders and/or ministers in the context of a Catholic parish or workplace, we need to take time from our busy schedules to pray. To begin our days together during this course, participants will lead us in prayer.

Resources given in the Module Readings can be used to help you prepare these times of ‘Opening Prayer’. These are not exclusive ... other resources may be used, for example, the Brisbane Archdiocese Year of Grace website contains a leaflet with outlines of ‘Prayer Styles’ used for Prayer Evenings with Archbishop Mark Coleridge in 2012.

Your group will be allocated one workshop day on which you will be responsible for leading the opening prayer. The opening prayer must not exceed 15 minutes in total length. You may be allocated a certain style of prayer. This ensures that the whole group experiences a range of different prayer styles over the course. It also reflects a common experience in ministry.

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Your group will gather at the conclusion of the previous workshop to plan for this prayer time. A course facilitator will be present during this meeting. The facilitator’s role is not to lead the organization of this meeting, but simply to be present and to observe. As you will use the opportunity to reflect on team work and your own participation in the team, the facilitator will be a helpful source of feedback for you.

Facilitating, leading or just taking part in a group discussion or planning session can be daunting or exciting. Many factors influence how we approach the task. As potential leaders, if we are comfortable with our own strengths and insights, we can approach each member as an equal within the team. You will observe and reflect on the work of the team.

After the planning meeting, complete the questions for reflection below.

Explain any ‘Ground Rules’ that were set? Were they adhered to?

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How did the team, including you personally, go about planning the activity?

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What tasks were assigned to members? How were tasks assigned?

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How did you ensure that all team members were included in the activity? (If all were not included, why not?)

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In what ways were the individual gifts, talents, skills or needs of team members considered in the planning process?

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Did effective communication take place? Explain why or why not.

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Did all members of the team understand their individual tasks? How do you know this? Was help given to team members to complete their tasks, if required?

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In what ways were the needs of Leadership for Ministry participants considered in planning? (e.g. ensuring timing met the requirements; considering the members of the whole course group)

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After the group has facilitated the opening prayer, complete the second part of this reflection.

HOW DID IT GO?

Evaluate the effectiveness of:

The activity itself (How and why was it successful? Would you do anything differently next time?)
The teamwork in planning the event (What worked well? Did anything not work as well as you had hoped? What factors helped the group to succeed? If the team work did not work well, reflect on what hindered the group’s success.)


Your own participation in the planning and running of the activity. (Be specific)


3. PRACTICUM PART 4C: OFFERING HOSPITALITY

The perfect relationship: compliment and complete rather than compare and compete\(^2\)

A priority of the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane is “that parishes are welcoming, inclusive communities which people are drawn to and have a strong sense of belonging to” (Synod, 2003). Hospitality, welcome and inclusion are about developing the bonds of communion that exist in the Church.

This activity enables you to take part in a simple example of the ministry of hospitality and to play an active role in supporting hospitality for this course.

Your group will be allocated one workshop day on which you will be responsible for ensuring the set-up and clean-up of the room and organizing morning tea for the group (including bringing, and setting up/cleaning up, the food).

You are given time at the end of a particular workshop to gather with your allotted team and plan the setting up of the environment for the following workshop and the preparation of Morning Tea. A course facilitator will be present during this meeting. The facilitator’s role is not to lead the organization of this meeting, but simply to be present and to observe.

You as a participant will observe and reflect on the work of the team.

**After the planning meeting**, complete the questions for reflection below.

How did the planning meeting go?
Record your reflections and observation on how the group worked as a team. You might consider, for example:

- Whether the group worked effectively together (if so, what helped this to happen; if not, what hindered effective teamwork?)
- Whether it was a collaborative planning process (What helped this to happen or what hindered it?)
- Whether all members of the group contributed (what helped or hindered the participation of all members?)

\(^2\) Glenda Hodge, *Something to Think About: Thoughts for Your Journey* (Brisbane, Australia: Jacaranda Direct, 1997), 55.
What was your own role within the team? How did you contribute to the functioning of the team in the planning process? (Be specific)

After the workshop for which your group was responsible, complete the second part of this reflection.

How did the team work together on the day in setting up the room, setting up and cleaning up morning tea, and packing up the room at the end of the day?

Consider:

- Did all team members participate/contribute?
- In what ways did team members support each other in completing tasks on the day?
- Were there any problems to solve or issues to resolve on the day? How did the team manage this?
- How did the team communicate with each other, both in planning and on the day?
What was your own role within the team? How did you contribute to the functioning of the team on the day? (Be specific)

Is there anything you would change next time, either in the planning or in the teamwork on the day? Explain.
4. PRACTICUM PART 4D: PLANNING ACTIVITIES IN YOUR GROUP CONTEXT

Know what your group members’ strengths, gifts, and talents are. You cannot begin to make good use of them until you recognize and value them.

The following questions relate to recognition of and reviewing team skills.

Identify at least one specific instance where you will be or have been involved in a designated team for planning and carrying out a parish group activity. You are to observe and reflect on the work of the team from the planning stage to the completion of the activity.

What type of activity is/was it and what will/did the planning involve?

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Explain any ‘Ground Rules’ that were set? Were they adhered to?

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How did the team, including you personally, go about planning the activity?

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What tasks were assigned to members? How were tasks assigned?

Consider, for example, whether the roles are/were allotted based on particular skills of members, on availability; on the roles held by members in the parish group, etc, and whether roles are/were negotiated collaboratively by the team or are/were allotted by a leader.

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In what ways were the individual gifts, talents, skills or needs of team members considered in the planning process?

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In what ways were the needs of the parish community considered in planning? (for example, ensuring timing met the requirements or ensuring the event didn’t clash with other parish events)

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Did all members of the team understand their individual tasks? How do you know this?

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In what ways were group members kept up to date concerning progress of the planning?

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Did effective communication take place? Explain why or why not.


Did any members of the team need support to complete their assigned tasks? If so, who noticed and who provided that support?


Did the group encounter any hurdles in planning the activity? These could be unexpected problems or issues that arise within the group. How were these managed?


Do you think the team was working well together in planning this activity? Why/why not? Is there anything you would do differently for supporting teamwork in future?
What was your role in the team in planning this activity? Reflect on your own work in this context – what have you done well in supporting the work of the team? What have you learnt about building effective teams?

---

GATHERING FEEDBACK

For your involvement in parish group activities, you will consult with a course coordinator to discern someone suitable to give feedback on your ministry participation and skills. If you are unable to provide a suitable person to give feedback from among the ministry group, parish leaders or parish community (i.e. someone who “was there” while you were planning and running the activity) you can choose another mentor who is able to reflect with you on the activity. In this case you will meet with that person to discuss the planning and event and ask the person to provide feedback as part of that discussion and in the wider context of their knowledge of you and your skills.

You can use the feedback form on the next page to gather this feedback. If the form is not appropriate for your context or needs to be adapted, please discuss this with the course coordinator. It is important that the feedback process suits your context.

The form provides the option for the person giving you the feedback to either discuss this with you or to forward the form directly to the IFE. Either is fine. A reflective conversation in which you and the person providing the feedback are able to reflect on your teamwork skills together can be very helpful.
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COMMUNICATION AND TEAM SKILLS FEEDBACK FORM

You have been asked to complete this feedback for
____________________ [name] who is currently participating
in IFE’s Leadership for Ministry course.

Each participant in the course is asked to gather feedback from a
person who is familiar with how they participate in a parish group and, in particular, with
their skills at communicating and working in teams. Usually participants will gather
feedback from someone who has worked closely with them and has seen them “in action”
working in teams and communicating in the context of their service and/or leadership.
Occasionally feedback will be gathered from someone who is not immediately involved in
the participant’s group or parish, but who nevertheless has a very sound understanding of
the participant (for example a mentor who knows the participant well).

Your feedback is an important contribution to the learning of the participant. It helps the
participant and the IFE to see how the skills learnt in the course are being used in the
participant’s own parish and/or group and to ensure that what is learnt in the course is
relevant for the work, service, and/or leadership of the participants.

The feedback process is not intended to be onerous or threatening. It is designed as a
reflective process that helps participants to reflect specifically on how they communicate
and how they work in a team in the context of their parish group. Both of these skills are
developed over a long time. This feedback process can help to encourage the participant
by affirming what he or she is doing well and by identifying growing edges, areas on which
he/she can focus for further learning.

It may be helpful to discuss this feedback with the participant. You can also submit the
feedback directly to the IFE by forwarding it to ife.fl@bne.catholic.net.au (Please include
the subject line: Leadership for Ministry Confidential) or posting to IFE, GPO Box 282,
Brisbane QLD 4001. If you have any questions about the form or the feedback process,
please do not hesitate to contact the IFE on 07 3336 9167.
Name of person providing the feedback: ________________________________

Contact details: ________________________________________________
(phone number or email)

Date: _______________________

Please indicate how you know the participant (e.g. whether you are a member of the participant’s group, a mentor etc.):

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From your observation and knowledge of the participant, do you think the participant is able to develop confidence and trust within a parish group and to foster effective teamwork?

Please provide examples if possible.

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From your experience, how would you describe the participant’s current ability to communicate in the context of a ministry and/or leadership position?

You might like to comment on the following aspects:

*(Space is provided at the end for you to add comments)*

**Establishes rapport with others**

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<th>He/she is not able to do this or needs to develop a lot more skill in this area</th>
<th>He/she is developing skill in this area</th>
<th>He/she does this well</th>
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**Communicates clearly and effectively**

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**Respects and considers differences in views in a way that values and encourages the contribution of others**

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**Listens well**

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### Is able to clarify or use other strategies to address barriers in communication

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### Facilitates discussion in a way that promotes participation by all group members

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### Demonstrates respect for individual, cultural and social differences and needs in communicating with others

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### Identifies and addresses communication barriers such as

- Closed or unreceptive attitudes
- Mistrust or misunderstanding
- Emotional states (e.g. fear, anger, frustration)

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Please add general comments and feedback on your experience of the person’s communication skills in a ministry context:

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Thank you for your assistance!

If you have any questions about this form, please contact the IFE on 07 3336 9167 or email ife.fl@bne.catholic.net.au
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SECTION 5: LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE IN THE CHURCH

Speak about what’s going well in your group activities. Just that small change can dramatically shift the atmosphere around you.

REFLECT

Reflect on the following questions in regard to your own progress with respect to working as a group member in a Catholic parish or workplace to date. Compare your responses to those you gave to similar questions in the Study Guide earlier in the year.

Who is my God? Have my images of God changed? Why or why not?

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Who is my role model for service and leadership? Explain.

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What kind of group member am I? Explain.

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What kind of leader am I? Explain.

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1. PRACTICUM PART 5A: PRACTICUM PLAN PROGRESS

REVIEW

*(Nothing helps an individual more than to place responsibility upon them and to let them know that you trust them.)*

(Booker T. Washington)

At the beginning of this practicum you worked out a practicum plan for yourself, including both:

- Your own individual learning goal(s) (see the table on pp. 22-23)
- Your plan for completing the various parts of this practicum (see p. 25)

Now is a good time to review your progress. Answer each of the following questions. Provide at least one paragraph in response to each question.

Is the goal you set for your own learning still relevant for you? Why or why not? What modifications would you make to your plan?

Have you started to implement the plan and measure progress? Discuss any barriers you have encountered.

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How well are you keeping to your timeline? Have you needed to make adjustments? Explain.


Are you developing reflective practice in your service and leadership? What is helping or hindering this?


Complete the following table regarding your progress with the timeline goals you set for the various tasks/parts of the practicum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/Part of the Practicum</th>
<th>Progress to Date</th>
<th>Work still to be Completed</th>
<th>Date Set for Submission</th>
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2. PRACTICUM PART 5B: REFLECTING ON CHURCH AS A PLACE OF WORK

A Leader is one who serves.
(Lao Tzu) 24

In other Leadership for Ministry modules you learn about Scripture, Theology, Church, Liturgy and Sacraments. For professionals working in the Catholic Church, it is not only a matter of understanding these topics (knowledge) but about how you operate as a person serving, ministering and/or leading in a church context (professional praxis).

Choose three of the following questions and write a one paragraph to half-page response to each question you have chosen.

1. Name three things you like about the church and explain why you like them.
2. Name at least one thing you do not like about the church and explain why.
3. What do you enjoy most about service and/or leadership in and for a church organization (e.g. a Catholic workplace or parish)?
4. What do you find most challenging in service and/or leadership in and for a church organization (e.g. a Catholic workplace)?
5. Which of the sacraments do you find most meaningful personally and why?
6. Are you affected by the response from other parishioners? How do you respond if you have a mixed response from parishioners to your service, leadership and/or other pastoral work?

---

24 Ellen Castro, Spirited Leadership, 44.
Good professional and reflective practice requires recognizing your own limitations and knowing how to get help and support. Where would you turn for support for the following situations? (Submit answers to all questions)

You have been asked to talk about a topic about which you know little or nothing.

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You decide that you would like to deepen your own spirituality as part of your on-going personal and professional and reflective practice. Where would you turn for help or training?

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A group member or other parishioner raises a tricky theological question to which you do not know the answer. Where would you turn for help?

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You encounter a pastoral issue you do not have the professional expertise to deal with. Where and to whom would you turn for help? Hint: If in doubt, first try the Archdiocesan Directory or website.

The pastoral council introduces a new practice which you believe conflicts with the ethos and values of the parish. Where would you turn for help, guidance or support?

*NB: You are demonstrating your skill at being able to identify support networks and seeking advice. You may also want to reflect on what is the appropriate (ethical, professional) behaviour to exhibit in such circumstances. You may gain insights from the resource: “Integrity in the Service of the Church”.*

Whenever you are planning and carrying out an activity you need to consider any existing policies and strategies and ask: Does this activity fit with the existing vision of the parish? Does it comply with relevant policies or strategies?

What are the relevant policies, strategies and legislations that you need to keep in mind in planning and carrying out parish group activities? (Consider both church policies, for example *Integrity in the Service of the Church* and government legislation, for example, blue card requirements, workplace health and safety requirements, etc)
From whom or where can this information be obtained?

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SECTION 6: CONFLICT IN GROUPS

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a)²⁵

Use love as your reference point.

1. PRACTICUM PART 6A: ADVANCED COMMUNICATION SKILLS

“Conversation is the art of combining questions, active listening, and self disclosure in such a way that people keep talking and enjoy it”.²⁶

Read pp. 213-217 of Chapter 14, “Making Contact”, in Messages: The Communication Skills Book, and by combining what you learn with your own experiences, answer the following:

Explain the difference between ritual questions and informational questions and give one example of each type of question.

²⁵ NRSV Translation.
Active listening involves listening in such a way that others feel heard. Give three reasons why an active listener feeds back what has been said in his/her own words.

Listening: A Sacred Art

Kay Lindahl, founder of the Listening Centre in California, writes about the principles of dialogue and presents nine guides for listening to others.

1. When you are listening, suspend assumptions.
2. When you are speaking, express your personal response informed by your tradition, beliefs and practices as you have interpreted them in your life.
3. Listen without judgment.
4. Suspend status.
5. Honour confidentiality.
6. Listen for understanding, not to agree with or believe.
7. Ask clarifying or open-ended questions.
8. Honour silence and time for reflection.
9. One person speaks at a time.

Listening is one of the basic skills of communication. Read Chapter One, “Listening”, in *Messages: The Communication Skills Book*, and answer the following questions:

1. “Real” listening is based on the intention to do one of four things:

   - Understand someone;
   - Enjoy someone;
   - Learn something;
   - Give help or solace (comfort)."

---

Explain the main difference between ‘real’ listening and ‘pseudo’ listening and give one example of a need which is met by pseudo listening.

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2. There are twelve blocks to listening. Select one ‘block’ that you tend to use often, define it, and give a concrete example of when you used this ‘block’ recently (do not use people’s real names – use a generic term like neighbour, friend, relative, etc).

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3. “There are four steps to effective listening: listening actively, listening with empathy, listening with openness, and listening with awareness.”³⁰ Choose one of these steps and explain what is involved in this type of listening.

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4. How can you be a ‘total’ listener?

 Disclosure

Disclosure makes intimacy (closeness) possible. Explain the three levels of conversational self-disclosure:

- informational;
- thoughts, feelings and needs (only about the past or future); and
- revealing your feelings about the person you are speaking with.

 During one of your group planning meetings, notice who the active listeners are and what levels of conversational disclosure they are using.
2. PRACTICUM PART 6B: MANAGING CONFLICT

A problem is a chance for you to do your best.

(Duke Ellington) 31

During meetings there is sometimes conflict and therefore a need for negotiation. Conflict can be an opportunity for change and positive outcomes can be a result of good negotiation. Generally to resolve a conflict someone will make a proposition and the other person can then make a counter proposition. With careful and respectful listening and a willingness to negotiate, a mutually agreed proposition may be reached.

There are many guidelines that can help with successful negotiation outcomes. Some guidelines are:

- Don’t take things personally
- Do not personally attack the other person
- Reframe the words to become an attack on the problem if the other person verbally attacks you
- Adopt the attitude that there are plenty of options and a variety of possible solutions
- Brainstorm ideas, options and possible resolutions
- Assume that both of you are reasonable people
- Assume that you will be able to reach a fair solution
- Put yourself in the other person’s shoes … show empathy
- Offer feedback by paraphrasing what the other person feels, thinks and needs
- Give your adversary a chance to understand your thoughts, feelings and needs
- Look for common interests that connect you
- Define the conflict in terms of your common interests
- Be patient
- Ask questions
- Redirect the discussion if/when necessary
- Remain open to further negotiation

31 Ellen Castro, Spirited Leadership, 76.
OBSERVE

Are there groups within the parish or workplace that have activities similar to, or are interrelated with, your group’s activities? Are there boundaries which ensure that there is no conflict over the roles of similar groups?

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How is any conflict that threatens to occur between groups managed? Are there workplace procedures for this?

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When have you observed conflict in a group/team? (This can be your ministry group or any other team in which you have been involved)

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How did the conflict develop? Was the conflict resolved? How?

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How were you involved (e.g. as a bystander; in the conflict)? What was it like for you?

Read Jean Marie Hiesberger’s chapter, “Dealing with Conflict and Anger: Danger and Opportunity” (see Reading 33). 

Reflect on this reading and then describe one way in which the ‘conflict’ example above could have been avoided.

In Church life, as in all areas of life, there is conflict. Many conflicts are caused by poor communication. (The Reading “Dealing with Conflict and Anger: Danger and Opportunity” gives ideas for managing differences of opinion). Six problem-solving techniques to help you eliminate conflict and to foster happier relationships within a group are: 

- Attack the problem not the person
- Describe your feelings rather than act on them
- Move from justification to resolution
- Look forward (to opportunity), not backward (for blame)
- Identify areas where you can give rather than take
- Remember: the angrier the event, the less likely logic will work

Suggest at least three things you can do if these techniques do not work.


3. PRACTICUM PART 6C: CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

Mistakes are the portals of discovery

(James Joyce) 34

Reflect on your own conflict resolution skills. As a reflection focus, choose a specific problem-solving technique which if learnt could enable you to improve your conflict resolution skills.

CONFLICT IN GROUPS

Reading 34 is pp. 274-281 of Sean Ruth’s, “Conflict in Groups” in Leadership & Liberation: A Psychological Approach (East Sussex: Routledge, 2006). Read this to help you to answer the following questions leading into the Case Study below.

Conflict can take place in group meetings. Conflicts can be a waste of time and energy and get in the way of problem resolution. Describe two common conflict difficulties that can arise.

1.

34 Ellen Castro, Spirited Leadership, 86.
2. The principles, strategies and skills that can be used for one-on-one conflicts also apply to group conflict. Skills and strategies which are key tools to use if you find yourself in a conflict situation in a leadership role are:

- Get control of yourself
- Calm the situation
- Address the problem

To complement these it is good to approach the situation by:

- Paying attention to and responding to the feelings that the other person is struggling with
- Separating the person from the problem
- Reaching out and making a relaxed, genuine, caring, human connection with the person
- Responding as a person rather than as a person in a formal role

Ruth gives six additional guidelines which can make a difference if applied to the conduct of meetings:

- Give everyone equal time to talk without interruption
- Put the focus on listening and understanding
- Design the process/agenda for problem-solving meetings around simple questions
- Speak from a personal point of view
- Treat each person with respect
- Keep it confidential
Choose one of the six guidelines and use an example (real or hypothetical) to explain how using the strategy can make a difference to the outcome of a conflict situation.

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A CASE STUDY

A local parish team offers formation for families with young children for the preparation and celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation: Confirmation and First Eucharist. Patricia has been the team leader for many years although other members move in and out of the group each year.

A team meeting is being held at which an agenda item is a discussion of the days and times for the two initial ‘parents’ gatherings. The gatherings provide parents with information about, and activities to open up, the meaning of the two sacraments.

When the agenda item re the proposed ‘parents’ gatherings is announced, Patricia announces that the meetings will be on Wednesday evenings from 6-7pm as usual. To Patricia’s surprise, Margaret asks if she can make a suggestion.

Margaret has come along to the meeting as a new member. Margaret’s two boys were in the previous year’s sacramental preparation group. Margaret suggests that it may be a good idea to survey this year’s parents to see what evening is preferred (for the majority) and whether a 6pm or 7pm starting time is best for them. Margaret and her friends found that to organize for at least one parent to be able to come by 6pm on a Wednesday was very difficult last year.

Patricia announces that only Wednesday is possible for her and a change to 7pm would not be suitable at all because the starting time has always been 6pm.
Suggest three possible approaches which may assist with a resolution for this conflict. The reading “Service and Leadership with a Family Perspective” may also be of help.

SELF-REFLECT

*Optional but highly recommended*

Discuss your reflections on your conflict resolution skills with someone else who can give you their perspective on your conflict resolution skills. You can add new insights from this feedback to your self-reflection assessment items above.
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SECTION 7: ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position, or prestige. It is discovered in goodness, humility, service, and character

(William Arthur Ward)

1. PRACTICUM PART 7A: ETHICS IN PRACTICE

What is the vision and code of ethics of your place of ministry and/or leadership?

Locate a copy of the vision (or charter) of your Catholic parish or place of work. If your parish does not have a vision or charter, locate the vision/code of your diocese.

Find out if the parish or place of work has a code of ethics or code of conduct and locate it as well. Or locate a copy of Integrity in the Service of the Church which is the code of conduct for workers in the Catholic Church in Australia. Since you will be reflecting on this vision or code of ethics in relation to your own ministry choose something that is meaningful to you, either in terms of where you are ministering and/or leading now, or an area in which you hope to minister.

Attach the vision or code of ethics as part of your submission.

SELF ASSESSMENT: REFLECTING ON THE VISION OR CODE OF CONDUCT

The vision or code of ethics of an organization tries to capture the goals and ethos of the organization. As a parish leader or member, or person working in a Catholic ministry in another organization or workplace, you are expected to promote and build this vision in the way you lead or work in the organization and with its parishioners and clients. In the case of a Catholic parish or workplace, the vision of the Archdiocese articulates how you relate to the parish leadership team, parish staff, parishioners and the wider community. As a lay worker in the Catholic Church, the principles and standards for lay workers in the Catholic Church in Australia (Integrity in the Service of the Church) apply to you.

The vision/ethos of the Catholic parish or workplace may fit well with your own personal approach and worldview or you may experience some dissonance (differences) between the vision/expectations of the organization and your own worldview.

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35 Ellen Castro, Spirited Leadership, 129.
Take some time to reflect on either the vision or code of ethics you have gathered, and/or excerpts from *Integrity in the Service of the Church*. What organizational values are expressed? How do these values match with your own values?

Complete the table below and submit it to complete this step of your ministry practicum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This self assessment relates to the following document:</th>
<th>Date completed:</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Organizational values expressed in the document:</th>
<th>How well does this value match your own values?</th>
<th>Comments:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify at least six values. For each value provide a page reference so your assessor can see where you have seen this value expressed in the document. (e.g. completely, partly, not at all, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Include a comment for each value that either:</td>
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<td>• explains your self-assessment, for example by explaining how your values differ or by raising any questions you have about the organizational value expressed in the document</td>
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<td>• supports your self-assessment by giving a concrete example of a way in which your ministry and/or leadership has reflected this value</td>
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<td>E.g. “I do this by...” (Or “I have demonstrated this value when I...”)</td>
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<td>“I find this value challenging because...”</td>
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<td>“I disagree with this value because...”</td>
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<td>“I have a question about this value or how it is expressed here: ...”</td>
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</table>
Name the organizational value in the table above that you find easiest to apply or reflect in your service and/or leadership role. Explain why. (1-2 paragraphs)

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Name the value in the table above that you find most difficult to apply or reflect in your service and/or leadership role. Explain why. (This might be because the value does not sit so easily with your own values, or because the value itself is difficult to apply in practice.) (1-2 paragraphs)

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2. PRACTICUM PART 7B: FINAL SELF-REFLECTION

We are all desperate to belong to something larger than ourselves. “Soulful work” is where you feel you belong

(Dana Whyte) 36

Your final self-reflection is in two sections:

1. Reflecting on aspects of your practicum
2. Reflecting on the course modules

PRACTICUM

REFLECT

Review the development of your education and formation in the practicum over the course of the year. Re-visit your “Meet Me” questions and answers from the first workshop – you may be surprised at how you would answer the questions now!

What do you notice? Have any of your initial responses changed in light of your experiences this year? Explain.

36 Ellen Castro, Spirited Leadership, 66.
Reflect on your practicum plan; the activities you completed, the feedback you received, your involvement in team/group activities, development of leadership, communication and teamwork skills.

*Answer each of the following questions. Provide at least one paragraph in response to each question. Your complete review should be around two pages in length and demonstrate depth of reflection.*

Do you think it was helpful to develop a project plan and articulate your own learning goals at the start of this practicum? Why or why not?

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Note some professional and personal insights that you have gained through completing the practicum. Did you achieve the goal(s) you set for your own learning?

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What learning activities or strategies completed as part of this practicum have you found most helpful for your own learning? Explain your answer.

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Are there any activities you were asked to complete as part of the practicum that you have not found helpful for the development of your own work, ministry and/or leadership skills? If so, reflect and explain what you learn from this about your own learning style and/or learning and formation needs. If possible, suggest an alternative approach, activity or question that would have been more suitable for your learning.

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Leadership for Ministry Course Modules

Present a concise summary of the development of your ministry and/or leadership formation in light of all the modules covered in the Leadership for Ministry Course, excluding the activities completed in your practicum. These insights will demonstrate your capacity for self-reflection and will answer the following:

- what you have learnt (professionally and/or personally)
- highlights of the course
- strategies for feedback, reflection and review that were helpful
- what you will use in your ministry and/or leadership in the future

What type of feedback, including that received from Assessors, has been most helpful to you this semester? Reflect on why it was helpful and what you learnt from this.

What strategies for reflecting on, and improving your ministry skills will you use in future? Will you draw on support networks or avenues for supervision and/or feedback?