

# LAY EUCHARISTIC VISITOR TRAINING

“EQUIPPING THE SAINTS FOR THE MINISTRY OF EUCHARISTIC VISITOR”



*“The gifts of God for the people of God.  
Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,  
And feed on him in your hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving.”*

The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania  
The Right Reverend Daniel G. P. Gutiérrez, XVI Bishop

This booklet is intended as a guideline for training Eucharistic Visitors in parishes throughout the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania. This training is designed for a one-day session to which the instructor brings their own gifts and graces to the coursework. Instructors are invited to add their own meditations and reflections as part of this journey with your parish.

Please read for this training:

**With Burning Hearts: A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life by Henri Nouwen**  
<http://www.moederkerk.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/With-Burning-Hearts.pdf>

**A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers by Beth Wickenberg Ely**

Suggested Order for Training:

Welcome

Sign-in Sheets

Review of Course Outline

Morning Prayer

**Session 1: *With Burning Hearts***

*With Burning Hearts* Group Discussion Questions

p. 2

**Break**

**Session 2: Ministry of the Presence & Practical Application of Visits**

“What Does It Mean to Care: The Basics of Listening and the Ministry of the Presence” pp. 3 - 5

Confidentiality

Listening

Ministering to the Elderly

Small Group Role Play and Discussion

p. 6

Break

Preparation of Eucharistic Visitor

p. 7

Set Appointments for Home Visits

Practice Administration of Sacrament

**Questions/Discussion**

**Closing Prayer**

**References:**

Canon 4: Of Licensed Ministry

pp. 8-9

“*Communion Under Special Circumstances*” (BCP 396-399)

pp. 10-12

*With Burning Hearts* Group Discussion Questions

1. We have read Henri Nouwen's *With Burning Hearts*. What image in the book caught your attention?
2. How does this image touch your life today? To what may it be calling you? How may it be affirming in your life or ministry?
3. Jesus became known to the two disciples in the breaking of the bread. Nouwen observes that when they eat this bread, when they "take in" the Lord in this most intimate communion "around the table", he vanishes from their sight. Yet in that moment, they know he is with them - dwelling in their innermost being. What do you make of this? How might it be possible for us, individually and corporately, to grow in this deep spiritual awareness of the indwelling Christ?
4. From the holy table of celebration at the service of the Eucharist, we the Body of Christ, send you, a member of that Body, to the sick and homebound. You bring to our friends and neighbors the consecrated bread and wine. What else do you bring to those persons? What do you want to bring?
5. In the last chapter of the book, Nouwen speaks of the return of the disciples to Jerusalem to tell the others, to share the news. "Communion is not the end. Mission is." And "...mission is not only to go and tell others about the Risen Lord, but also to receive that witness from those to whom we are sent." What do these two statements mean to you in light of what we are about here today? Do they say anything you did not expect?

## Ministry of the Presence & Practical Application of Visits

What Does It Mean to Care: The Basics of Listening and the Ministry of the Presence

*“Preach the Gospel always. When necessary, use words.”* (St. Francis of Assisi)

### Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is **CRUCIAL** to establish trust between the EV and the hospitalized, homebound or nursing home resident. Once the person returns to the congregation, the last thing they want to hear at coffee hour are details regarding their illness, family situation or personal information. The EV should report **IMMEDIATELY** any **life-threatening** situations to their Rector or Deacon overseeing the EV program. *It is the Clergy’s responsibility to report these situations to family members or social service authorities, not the Visitor’s.*

### The Commandments for Effective Listening:

1. **STOP TALKING.** You can’t listen if you are talking. Polonius (Hamlet):  
“Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice.”
2. **PUT THE SPEAKER AT EASE.** Help the speaker to feel that he/she is free to talk. This is often called “creating a supportive environment.”
3. **SHOW THAT YOU WANT TO LISTEN.** Look and act interested. Making a personal “mental laundry list” is obvious to the person you are visiting. Don’t glance at the television or another person or don’t pick up a magazine. Look into the person’s eyes. (EXCEPTION: Be aware of what is acceptable on a cultural level. Looking into someone’s eyes may be disrespectful in some cultural contexts.)
4. **REMOVE DISTRACTIONS.** Would it be quieter with the door closed or the television turned off?
5. **SIT AT EYE LEVEL.** If the person is in bed, this might mean moving furniture or sitting on the arm of a couch. Whatever it takes, do not stand **OVER** the person you are visiting.
6. **EMPATHIZE WITH THE PERSON.** Try to put yourself in his/her world. This might give you a different point of view. Listen to *understand*, rather than to cheer up or change.
7. **BE PATIENT.** Don’t rush the speaker. Allow plenty of time. Don’t interrupt. Allow the speaker to find his/her own words. The speaker might be experiencing

- difficulty with speech. If the person is physically able, allow him/her to finish what he/she is saying.
8. **ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS.** Don't assume the person does or does not want to talk about the illness or even death, or children, grandchildren or a spouse.
  9. **LISTEN FOR THE *MESSAGE*, NOT THE WORDS.** Try to understand the emotion behind the speaker's words more than the literal meaning of the words.
  10. **REFLECT THE FEELINGS AND MESSAGE.** This will let the speaker know you understand and care.
  11. **LISTEN ATTENTIVELY.** Do not formulate your answer as the person is speaking. Sometimes one does not even need to answer!
  12. **BE AWARE.** Note your mental, physical and psychological state. What is going on within yourself? What are you reacting to?
  13. **RELAX.** Be yourself. You are *there* to be *there* - you do not have to do anything else.
  14. **STOP TALKING!** This the first and last commandment, because all other commandments depend on it!

#### Listening For Feelings:

1. I wish the doctor would tell me what's going on.
2. We're so far from home.
3. See you tomorrow - maybe.
4. My children are so young.
5. I wish my husband and I could really talk.
6. My roommate had the same operation and he went home today.
7. I always felt this couldn't happen to me.
8. I even find it hard to pray now.
9. It isn't easy to be alone in the room with him.
10. I never smoked or drank. Why did this happen to me?
11. There is a history of cancer in my family
12. The nurses seem to forget that we are human.
13. This makes you think about what you have done with your life.
14. I wonder what I've done to deserve this.
15. If only I had made her do something about that cough!
16. You have no idea how it feels to be here.

17. Talking to you has made a big difference.

### Ministering to the Elderly

#### Common Myths about the Elderly People

1. *Senility*. What is often mistaken as senility can be attributed to depression, grief, anxiety, lack of social stimulation, drugtranquilization, lack of proper diet.
2. *“You Can’t Teach An Old Dog New Tricks”*. The universities and colleges are filled with adults who have retired from careers. They often outshine their younger counterparts in academic achievement.
3. *Few Problems*. Elderly face more stresses in their daily lives than the younger generation. Typical issues the elderly deal with include: loss of friends and family through death; impending death of one’s self; economic inflation in connection with a fixed income; the increasing cost of health care; retirement and a possible resultant feeling of “being useless” feeling of loneliness; the high rate of crime against the elderly; decreasing physical and mental abilities; difficulties with transportation; being forced to move out of one’s home into a smaller dwelling or adult congregant living facility or nursing home.
4. *Chronological Age*. “You’re only as old as you feel.” Or a better way to express that might be, “It’s not how old you are, it’s how you are old.” There are people 30 years of age who are “old” and those who are 90 years of age and “young at heart”. Chronological age is not a good indicator of an individual’s physical, mental and/or emotional condition.
5. *Elderly Don’t Appreciate Change*. The ability to appreciate “change” is an individual characteristic. Some older people welcome change and some don’t. That is true for all age groups.
6. *Elderly Live in the Past*. ALL people talk and think about the past. If older people talk more about the past than younger people do, it is simply because they have more past to talk about! Talking about the past does not preclude someone living totally in the present.

## Small Group Role Play

### Warm-up Exercises

1. Pair up with one person you do not know well. Taking turns, each person tells the other person 3 things they need to know about you to get to know you better.
2. Pair up with another duo and form a quartet. Each person tells 3 things that she/he found out about their role-play partner.
3. Pair up with a new person. Take one minute to look at each other carefully. Turn your backs to each other and describe in detail everything that person is wearing. This exercise is to highlight focus, concentration and attention to detail.

### Role Playing

1. The group leader assigns parts (Care-giver and Care-receiver) \*
2. The group leader describes the situation or what is to be done.
3. The Caregiver and Care-receiver do the role-plays for approximately 4 minutes.
4. Group discussion for about 5 minutes. The group leader invites self- evaluation from the players and feedback from the group. Good questions to ask: “How did it feel to be the care-receiver?” “How did it feel to be the care-giver?”

### Other Suggested Role Play Situations:

1. The care receiver had surgery and has been in the hospital for one and a half weeks. She/he is very frustrated and angry with the hospital personnel.
2. The care receiver has just learned that she/he has inoperable, terminal cancer. She/he is denying the knowledge, sure that there must be a mistake.
3. The care receiver is an older, home-bound person who is depressed and angry at being alone and doesn't like her/his small room in this particular nursing home or care facility.

### \*Group Leader options:

1. Allow each pair practice without an audience so they can get used to “playing”.
2. Ask for volunteers instead of assigning roles.
3. Reverse roles, repeat and do feedback.
4. Be affirming and gentle. Role-playing can bring up real experiences. This can be a time for healing for everyone.



## Preparation of Eucharistic Visitor

Review of *A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers* by Beth Wickenberg Ely

- A. Discussion may center on all or parts of the following chapters:
- a. Chapter 2 “What Is A Eucharistic Visitor?”
  - b. Chapter 3 “The Gifts of God for the People of God”
  - c. Chapter 5 “Preparing Yourself to Be a Eucharist Visitor”, esp. “Being Sent Forth” (pp.40-42)
- B. Visiting
- a. Pray for those you are going to visit. (pp. 29-30)
  - b. Set appointments for home visitations several days in advance. (30-31)
  - c. Give the patient/home-bound person your name and phone number. Check with person day of visit before going to the home, in case the visit has to be rescheduled.
  - d. *Keep hospital visits short.* Check with nurses’ station to determine if patient is allowed wine. If the EV learns the patient can’t swallow, allow the patient to hold the Communion host in their hand if possible while doing the brief service. Then take the host and dispose of it by burying it in the ground following the visit.
  - e. The Kit (pp. 32-33)
  - f. Return kits with visitation information (name of person visited, location of visit, time of visit, number of persons present, number receiving communion) to the church according to the instructions provided by your parish.
  - g. Spend some time after your visit in prayer/meditation in thanksgiving for the gifts given and received during the visit.

### Practice with Communion Kits:

Practice with the Communion kit provided to the EV. Direction given for set up, administration of Communion, and the return and cleaning of the kits following the service

### Questions and Discussion:

It is suggested time be allotted for questions and discussion regarding visits.

### Practicalities:

1. Home visits should be done in pairs when at all possible.
2. Attend the *Safeguarding God’s People* course offered by the Diocese.

**CANON 4: Of Licensed Ministries**

Sec. 1 (a) Selection and License. A confirmed communicant in good standing or, in extraordinary circumstances, subject to guidelines established by the Bishop, a communicant in good standing, may be licensed by the Ecclesiastical Authority to serve as Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, Evangelist, or Catechist. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons, and the duration of licenses shall be established by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry.

(b) Member of the Armed Forces. The Presiding Bishop or the Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Forces may authorize a member of the Armed Forces to exercise one or more of these ministries in the Armed Forces in accordance with the provisions of this Canon. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons shall be established by the Bishop granting the license.

Sec. 2 (a) Terms. The Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith may request the Ecclesiastical Authority with jurisdiction to license persons within that congregation or other community of faith to exercise such ministries. The license shall be issued for a period of time to be determined under Canon III.4.1(a) and may be renewed. The license may be revoked by the Ecclesiastical Authority upon request of or upon notice to the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

(b) Renewal. In renewing the license, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall consider the performance of the ministry by the person licensed, continuing education in the licensed area, and the endorsement of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith in which the person is serving.

(c) A person licensed in any Diocese under the provisions of this Canon may serve in another congregation or other community of faith in the same or another Diocese only at the invitation of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, and with the consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority in whose jurisdiction the service will occur.

Sec. 3. Pastoral Leader. A Pastoral Leader is a lay person authorized to exercise pastoral or administrative responsibility in a congregation under special circumstances, as defined by the Bishop.

Sec. 4. Worship Leader. A Worship Leader is a lay person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Sec. 5. Preacher. A Preacher is a lay person authorized to preach. Persons so authorized shall only preach in congregations under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Sec. 6. Eucharistic Minister. A Eucharistic Minister is a lay person authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. A Eucharistic Minister should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Sec. 7. A Eucharistic Visitor is a lay person authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration. A Eucharistic Visitor should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Sec. 8. Catechist. A Catechist is a lay person authorized to prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Sec. 9. Evangelist. An Evangelist is a lay person who presents the good news of Jesus Christ in such a way that people are led to receive Christ as Savior and follow Christ as Lord in the fellowship of the Church. An Evangelist assists with the community's ministry of evangelism in partnership with the Presbyter or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation, or as directed by the Bishop.

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[https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/2015\\_candc.pdf](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/2015_candc.pdf))

## Communion under Special Circumstances

*This form is intended for use with those who for reasonable cause cannot be present at a public celebration of the Eucharist.*

*When persons are unable to be present for extended periods, it is desirable that the priest arrange to celebrate the Eucharist with them from time to time on a regular basis, using either the Proper of the Day or one of those appointed for Various Occasions. If it is necessary to shorten the service, the priest may begin the celebration at the Offertory, but it is desirable that a passage from the Gospel first be read.*

*At other times, or when desired, such persons may be communicated from the reserved Sacrament, using the following form.*

*It is desirable that fellow parishioners, relatives, and friends be present, when possible, to communicate with them.*

*The Eucharistic Visitor reads a passage of Scripture appropriate to the day or occasion, or else one of the following*

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. *John 3:16*

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

*John 6:35*

Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him." *John 6:51, 55-56*

Jesus said, "Abide in me, as I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." *John 15:4-5a, 8-9*

*After the Reading, the Eucharistic Visitor may comment on it briefly.*

*Suitable prayers may be offered, concluding with the following or some other Collect*

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood:

Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*A Confession of Sin may follow. The following or some other form is used*

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

*The Priest alone says*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

***All officiants, other than a priest, using the preceding form substitute "us" for "you" and "our" for "your."***

*The Peace may then be exchanged.*

*The Lord's Prayer is said, the Eucharistic Visitor first saying*

Let us pray in the words our Savior Christ has taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.

*The Eucharistic Visitor may say the following Invitation*

The Gifts of God for the People of God

*and may* Take them in remembrance that Christ died for  
*add* you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

*The Sacrament is administered with the following or other words*

The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. [Amen.]

*One of the usual postcommunion prayers is then said, or the following*

Gracious Father, we give you praise and thanks for this Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of your beloved Son Jesus Christ, the pledge of our redemption; and we pray that it may bring us forgiveness of our sins, strength in our weakness, and everlasting salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*The service concludes with a blessing or with a dismissal*

Let us bless the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*