

A SESSION GUIDE FOR THE MINISTRY OF ALL BELIEVERS

This study was originally prepared by the Task Force for a Joint Candidacy Process to test the features of the Inquiry Phase of the Preparation for Ministry Process. It has been revised for use as a resource by sessions, Christian Education Committees, or Committees on Vocation in providing the following functions:

1. Education of all members in the Biblical and theological meaning of the vocation of the Christian in all areas of life and in any occupation;
2. Education of church members regarding the nature, need, and opportunity for church occupations;
3. Counseling with inquirers regarding the appropriateness of a call from them to a church occupation as compared with other occupations;
4. Encouragement of persons who demonstrate appropriate abilities to consider preparation for the ministry of the Word, or other church occupations;
5. Establishing a continuing relationship with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry of the presbytery as it relates to inquirers and candidates from the congregation;
6. Maintaining a continuing contact with inquirers and candidates from the congregation through one or more of its members, in such ways as visitation, financial support, and celebration.

The six functions are placed into two categories: Promoting Understanding of the Vocation of the Christian, and Presenting Understanding of Ministry of the Word and other Church Occupations.

Promoting Understanding of the Vocation of the Christian **Possible Approaches**

1. Plan a four month (or less if necessary) study of the Biblical, theological, historical and contemporary understanding of the vocation of the Christian.
2. Utilize church members who are public school, college/university, business, industry or government personnel or guidance workers, in counseling persons about career choices.
3. Arrange for meeting to discuss the meaning of the word “vocation” and its relationship to work.

4. Provide information for young people about the advantages/disadvantages of church-related and non-church related colleges.
5. Provide information about Presbyterian college scholarships.
6. Interview all high school juniors about their occupational plans.
7. Set up in the church library a career guidance section including college/university catalogues.
8. Arrange tours of Presbyterian-related church colleges.
9. Set up a career night for young people to learn how Christian laymen and laywomen minister in and through their work.
10. Where available, give members of the congregation the opportunity to use the services of the Career & Personal Counseling Service centers or Church Career Development Council centers. If not available, investigate the nature and availability of career counseling resources in community public schools and colleges.
11. Form a group of committed church people who would be available for conversations with persons, particularly young people, about the relationship between their faith and their work.

**Presenting Understanding of Ministry of the Word and Other Church
Occupations**
Possible Approaches

1. Encourage those interested in church occupations to gain knowledge of these occupations by participation in activities for a period of time with members of the church professional staff.
2. Arrange for study tours to churches, mission projects, theological schools, etc., so that interested persons can learn more about the nature and mission of the Church.
3. Sponsor a meeting to provide information about the nature and variety of church occupations utilizing appropriate presbytery and/or synod personnel.
4. Use seminary Sunday as an opportunity to point out the nature of an educated ministry and the challenge of church occupations.

5. Encourage persons exhibiting gifts and talents for church occupations to attend informational conferences at Presbyterian theological schools to investigate educational opportunities.
6. Develop a model for relating persons expressing interest in becoming candidates for the ministry of the Word to the Committee on Vocation, local session, and presbytery committees on Preparation for Ministry.
7. Provide guidance and support for persons considering a call to professional ministry after some years of experience in another occupation, or who are considering a tent-making ministry.

RESOURCES Ministry of the Laity

Belles, Richard, What Color is Your Parachute?, Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1972.

The Center for the Ministry of the Laity: Toward Claiming and Identifying Our Ministry on the Workplace: Empowering Laity for Their Full Ministry; Identifying Gifts and Arenas; Christ's Ministry and Ours. Newton Centre, Massachusetts: The Center for the Ministry of the Laity, 1983.

From "Choices" Series: Roles, by Brunetta Wolfman and Work & Career, by Nancy van Vuuren (both especially for women). Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983.

From "Christian Education: Shared Approaches, Living the Word, Level 8": Work and Worth (Winter 1983-84).

Gibbs, Mark, and T. Ralph Morton. God's Lively People. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971

Hall, Cameron P. Lay Action: The Church's Third Force. New York: Friendship Press, 1974.

Kraemer, Hendrik. A Theology of the Laity. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958

Kung, Hans. The Church. Translated by Roy and Rosaleen Ockendem. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968. (pp. 179-191).

Lowell, Malcolm R. The Guidance Group as a Design for Implementing the Ministry of the Laity. Unpublished dissertation. San Anselmo, California: San Francisco Theological Seminary Library, 1974.

Ministry of the Word and Other Church Occupations

Book of Order, 1983-85. New York/Atlanta: Offices of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

“Discerning Your Call and Your Gifts for Ministry,” Office of Counseling Resources. Churchwide Partnership, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Johnson, Robert Clyde, editors. The Church and Its Changing Ministry. Offices of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, 1961.

Nelson, John Oliver. Opportunities in Religious Service. Skokie: National Textbook Company, 1980.

“Vocation and Church Occupations Packet.” Office of Counseling Resources, Churchwide Partnership Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Walker, Dan C. Why Me Lord? Lima, Ohio: The C.S.S. Publishing Company, Inc., 1976.

As you can see, this is not an exhaustive list of resources. One of the values of this study will be to uncover additional new resources.