



*Facilitator
Handbook*

*Serving Others on
the Spiritual Journey
in Community*

Publication Date – March 2013

© 2013. Contemplative Outreach Ltd. Butler, New Jersey. USA.
All Rights Reserved.

Copyright 2013. All Rights Reserved.

No portion of the material contained in this document may be copied or distributed without express written consent of Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.

Contemplative Outreach, Ltd.

10 Park Place, 2nd Floor, Suite B, Butler, New Jersey 07405

973-838-3384 Fax 973-492-5795

www.contemplativeoutreach.org

office@coutreach.org

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement is gratefully made to the following Contemplative Outreach resources for their permission to either reprint or edit excerpts from their material:

- Contemplative Outreach for excerpts from the *RHB – Resource Handbook*.
- Contemplative Outreach for excerpts from the *Lectio Divina Presenter’s Handbook*.
- Contemplative Outreach for edited excerpts from “The Spirituality of the Servant-Leader,” 2004, Contemplative Outreach National Conference in Toronto.

Edited for Contemplative Outreach by Bonnie J. Shimizu for use by all Facilitators in the community of Contemplative Outreach.

Foreword

The purpose of this program is to provide a conceptual background for the evolving experience of the practice of Centering Prayer.

The Centering Prayer Introductory Program is the time to establish a daily practice of two 20-minute periods of Centering Prayer in private. The prayer groups that are formed following the Centering Prayer Introductory Program provide further input and the opportunity to share the initial experience with others.

The needs of the members of these initial contemplative communities vary because of their personal background. Some already have significant experience of the eastern forms of meditation; others have progressed in traditional Christian devotional practices; and still others are just beginning to become interested in the spiritual journey.

This program seeks to organize the primary resources in such a way as to accompany the changing needs and spiritual development of those committed to the Centering Prayer practice in the most fruitful way providing, at the same time, flexibility in adapting the material to the different situations that exist in various parts of the country and abroad.

Thomas Keating

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Foreword	4
Section 1: Introduction.....	7
Welcome to the Facilitator Handbook	7
In This Handbook.....	8
Working with Coordinators & Chapter Consultants.....	8
Preliminary Comments.....	9
Contemplative Outreach Vision	10
Theological Principles.....	11
Administrative Principles	12
Contemplative Outreach Symbol	13
The Weekly Centering Prayer Support Group	14
Facilitating a Centering Prayer Support Group.....	15
Regarding the Integrity of the Method of Centering Prayer	16
Section 2: Centering Prayer Groups.....	17
General Information	17
What Facilitators Do	19
What is Required to Serve as a Facilitator	20
Centering Prayer Groups.....	21
Guidelines for Sharing in Centering Prayer Groups	22
Section 3: Growing as a Facilitator	23
The Spirituality of the Servant-Leader.....	25
Spiritual Preparation for the Facilitator.....	26
Leading the Centering Prayer Group Meeting	27
Recommended Reading.....	28
Section 4: Faith Sharing	29
The Essence of Faith Sharing.....	29
Suggested Topics for Faith Sharing	30
Group Covenant	31
Section 5: Lectio Divina.....	33
Section 6: The Centering Prayer Introductory Program.....	35
Section 7: Appendices.....	37
Appendix A: Other Experiences for Centering Prayer Groups.....	37

Appendix B: “Spiritual Journey Series” 42
Appendix C: Excerpts from the RHB 43
Appendix D: Guide to the Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials..... 44
Appendix E: Overview of Contemplative Outreach Programs 45
Appendix F: Facilitator Formations 46



Section 1: Introduction

Welcome to the Facilitator Handbook

You have this book in your hands because you have offered, or are considering offering, your service to the Contemplative Outreach community as a Facilitator of a Centering Prayer group. For your generosity we are truly grateful.

The *Facilitator Handbook* has been developed to help Facilitators assist others on the spiritual journey, particularly by leading a Centering Prayer group. Inside this book are many guidelines that will help you become a good Facilitator, and will make you feel part of the community of other Facilitators who follow these same guidelines with their own Centering Prayer groups.

The *Facilitator Handbook* has been designed to be used in one of three ways:

- As the foundation materials for the “Basic Facilitator Skills I Workshop,” offered usually bi-annually in St Louis, Missouri, and also offered in a region or local area upon request by a Chapter or Coordinator.
- As information shared with new Facilitators when a Centering Prayer group is first started after the Centering Prayer Introductory Program. The *Facilitator Handbook* is shared with the volunteers who have agreed to lead, or assist in leading, the six continuing sessions and potentially lead the subsequent Centering Prayer group that is established.
- As a welcoming packet to new Facilitators who join the Leadership Team, once the Centering Prayer group has been established. Often, multiple Facilitators are needed in an area where there is a large Centering Prayer group, or there are multiple groups, or Facilitators retire from their role in the group and new volunteers fulfill their role.

We hope you find the *Facilitator Handbook* useful in your service to the community. If you have any questions about the information contained in this handbook, feel free to contact your local Coordinator.

Thank you again for your faithfulness to the practice of Centering Prayer, and for your generous offer to assist others in their spiritual journey. The Contemplative Outreach community is grateful that God has called you to this service.

In This Handbook...

Along with the *Facilitator Handbook* are several brochures that have been developed for the Contemplative Outreach community that beautifully explain the major components of our purpose and our programs. These brochures can be obtained from the CO website or through your local Coordinator. These brochures include:

- “Transforming the Heart of the World” brochure
- “The Method of Centering Prayer” brochure (2006)
- “Lectio Divina: Listening to the Word of God in Scripture” brochure (2007)
- “Welcoming Prayer” brochure
- “The Works of Thomas Keating” brochure (2010)

Working with Coordinators & Chapter Consultants

Always work through your local Coordinator whenever possible. If you do not know who your Coordinator is, refer to the Contemplative Outreach website for additional contact information. Or contact one of the Chapter Consultants.

Susan Komis – susankomis@coutreach.org

Marie Howard – marie@coutreach.org

Preliminary Comments

The basic structure upon which the program rests is the Centering Prayer group. Regular meetings of a Centering Prayer group always include at least one period of Centering Prayer of twenty to thirty minutes. Regular meetings may also include one or two of the following:

- Personal sharing
- Reading and discussion of books by Fr. Thomas Keating
- “Spiritual Journey Series” (videos and transcripts)
- Group Lectio Divina experience

The program is divided into parts, based on the structure of the “Spiritual Journey Series,” which is a foundational work that recorded many of the lectures taught by Fr. Thomas Keating in the early years of Contemplative Outreach. The program is based on experience and knowledge, rather than merely years of practice. Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the “Spiritual Journey” series present the basics and essentials of the contemplative journey. Parts 4 and 5 contain more in-depth teaching on additional aspects of the spiritual journey. Enrichment programs for Contemplative Outreach provide further understanding. Each part can flow at a pace congenial to the local group.

Individual videos from the “Spiritual Journey Series” can be repeated as desired by the group. Several meetings may be required to complete the discussion of certain videos. Between viewing of videos from the “Spiritual Journey Series,” there may be breaks to allow a session or two for in-depth faith sharing, further discussion of the material, or the practice of Lectio Divina.

The workshops and retreats sponsored by Contemplative Outreach are assigned to the various parts of the program as suggestions or as “ideal scenarios,” recognizing that attending workshops and retreats are often governed by time, availability of the workshop, and cost.

For more information about the various workshops and retreats, refer to Appendix E or contact your local Coordinator.

Contemplative Outreach Vision

Be still and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10

The intent of Contemplative Outreach is to foster the process of transformation in Christ in one another through the practice of Centering Prayer.

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul,
and with all your strength, and with all your mind;
and your neighbor as yourself.*

Luke 10:27

Reflecting on the Vision and Theological Principles

Centering Prayer groups have found inspiration in reflecting on the Vision and Theological Principles in a group setting, reading each principle and allowing for silent reflection for a few minutes. This can happen in the Lectio Divina style, reading each principle over several prayer sessions, allowing silence, and then inviting members to share insights with the group if desired.

Theological Principles

1. Contemplative Outreach is a community of individuals and Centering Prayer groups committed to living the contemplative dimension of the Gospel in everyday life.
2. A commitment to the daily practice of Centering Prayer is the primary expression of belonging.
3. Listening to the word of God in Scripture through the practice of Lectio Divina is encouraged, particularly its movement into contemplative prayer, which a daily practice of Centering Prayer facilitates.
4. The source of Centering Prayer is the Indwelling Trinity. Its practice consists of responding to the call of the Holy Spirit to consent to the Divine presence and action within.
5. The Divine presence affirms our basic core of goodness made in the image of God.
6. The Divine action is the process of transformation in Christ which inspires and deepens our consent.
7. The contemplative dimension of the Gospel manifests as an ever-deepening union with Christ and the practical caring for others that flows from this relationship. It reveals the deeper meaning of Christ's life and teaching.
8. Our relationship with the living Christ is the bond uniting us together in mutual love.
9. While formed by our respective denominations, we are united in our common search for God and our experience of Christ through Centering Prayer.
10. We identify with the Christian contemplative heritage in which Centering Prayer is rooted. We recognize this heritage as the common ground for Christian unity.
11. We affirm our solidarity with the contemplative dimension of other religions and sacred traditions.
12. Through the continuing practice of Centering Prayer, we experience a deepening commitment to the needs and rights of each member of the human family and an increasing respect for the interdependence of all creation.
13. We foster a spirit of unity, generosity and utmost charity in all our relationships.
14. Following the teachings of Jesus, we exercise leadership through an attitude of humility, listening and service.
15. We recognize and maintain a spiritual relationship with Saint Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado.
16. We acknowledge that any good accomplished by Contemplative Outreach is the work of the Holy Spirit.

*So that they may all be one; just as You, Father, are in me,
and I in you, may they also be one in us.*

John 17:21

Administrative Principles

*There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit;
there are different forms of service but the same Lord;
there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.*

I Corinthians 12:4-7

Contemplative Outreach is an evolving community with an expanding vision and deepening practice, serving the changing needs of Christian contemplatives.

1. As members of this evolving community we are responsible to foster and transmit the Vision of Contemplative Outreach.
2. We fulfill our Vision through attraction to the Centering Prayer practice not by proselytizing.
3. The gift of contemplative practice enables us to bring an attitude of humility, listening and service to our daily activities.
4. We reach decisions through discernment and consensus.
5. We serve in leadership, ordinarily in a voluntary capacity.
6. All who provide Contemplative Outreach services do so in consideration of, and in balance with their personal, family, and professional responsibilities.
7. We avoid indebtedness and owning real estate in order to remain free to devote our resources to sharing the gift of Centering Prayer.
8. We employ staff and contractors as our growth may require.
9. We cooperate with church authorities in the areas where we work, but do not seek to become a religious or lay institute.
10. We wish to remain accessible to everyone. For this reason, we do not endorse particular causes or take part in public controversies, whether religious, political or social. As private individuals, we act according to our conscience.

Contemplative Outreach Symbol



Job's Redeemer – Patient Waiting

- Alpha and Omega – the Symbol of God – the beginning and the end
- The cross – the symbol of our salvation
- Flowers – symbol of the abundance of life – the resurrection
- Circle – sign of ongoing progress

The heart and soul of Centering Prayer is consenting to God's presence and action in our lives. The Alpha and Omega acknowledges that our God is at the center of our consent and being. The cross is a symbol of our dying to our thoughts and commentaries. In the letting go our false self gives way to the flowering of the new self. This is an ongoing process bringing us deeper into Divine Intimacy.

Like Job, our patient waiting and consenting will be our gift of gratitude.

This symbol has been seen in three different locations:

- On an ancient church in the land of Uz. Uz is a place in south Edom, east of Palestine. Scripture references of Uz are found in Job 1:1, the residence of Job and also in Jeremiah 15:20 and Lamentations 4:21.
- It has been seen as a Byzantine stone from excavations in Jerusalem at the southern wall of the Old City near the Huldah Gates and the original stairs to the temple.
- The church of "Multiplication of the Loaves" in Galilee area. The church was completed in 1984 and this symbol was over the main door entrance. The Monastery and Basilica are run by German Benedictines.

The Weekly Centering Prayer Support Group

Excerpt from Open Mind, Open Heart by Thomas Keating

While centering prayer is done privately most of the time, a weekly or bi-weekly sharing of the experience in a small group (up to fifteen) has proven to be very supportive, as well as a means of continuing education. The weekly meeting also serves as a means of accountability. Just knowing that one's support group is meeting together each week is an enormous encouragement to keep going, or an invitation to return to the practice of centering prayer if circumstances such as illness, business, family problems, or urgent duties have prevented one from carrying out one's commitment to daily practice for a time.

By sharing the experience of centering prayer with others, one's own discernment of the ups and downs of the practice is sharpened. The group serves as a source of encouragement and can normally solve problems that might arise regarding the method. The collective discernment of the group tends to be well balanced.

The purpose of the meeting is spiritual refreshment and mutual encouragement in the practice.

Open Mind, Open Heart, Twentieth Anniversary Edition, p. 173-174.

Facilitating a Centering Prayer Support Group

by Mary Mrozowski

Facilitating is a ministry that empowers people and enables group process. As a ministry it helps group members to become more aware and more loving. Empowering others in this way is the heart of Christian ministry.

Good facilitating enables the growth of a Centering Prayer support group, empowering the group to feel capable and strengthened for the spiritual journey. Support group growth begins with the facilitator's attitude. A successful facilitator should be on the same faith journey as other group members. No one wants to feel divided into classes or levels because of a "leader" who has all the answers. Humility before God and one another creates mutuality in relationship.

A good facilitator needs to be a prayerful person. Prayerfulness is basic to this ministry. It is foundational for the ministry of hospitality – the most important part of facilitating. A facilitator who genuinely offers hospitality creates a warm, welcoming experience and provides the group with an island of safety. This includes the physical setting: temperature, lighting and chairs arranged comfortably.

A support group is generally composed of people who desire to journey together and are oriented toward contemplative prayer and practice Centering Prayer for two twenty-minute periods daily. Their values and practice of silence and solitude are integrated into their ordinary daily life experience. They meet regularly (once a week is ideal) to share in the practice of Centering Prayer.

When the Centering Prayer support group has settled in and there is a commitment to Centering Prayer, deep sharing usually begins. Some ground rules are important at this point in the process. Be careful to share time equally. Keep sharing confidential. Don't try to solve problems. With the proper environment members will listen with empathy and affirm one another, each acknowledging the other's contributions. From this mutual affirmation comes growth and success of the Centering Prayer group.

NOTE: Mary Mrozowski was a founding member of Contemplative Outreach and was instrumental in the early days of the community. She is often remembered for her extensive work with Centering Prayer groups in the New York area, and also for her work with what has come to be known as the Welcoming Prayer. Mary died in 1993.

Regarding the Integrity of the Method of Centering Prayer

Fr. Thomas Keating, our Spiritual Guide, emphasizes both the importance of integrity and the need for flexibility and tolerance within the CO community. Our hope is to preserve the deeper meaning of the Christian contemplative heritage and its teachings learned through our daily practice of Centering Prayer under the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit and to understand and study the Christian spiritual journey.

This integrity is an interiorization of the Centering Prayer method and a manifestation of its fruits. It is important that all Servant-Leaders, including Presenters, Coordinators, Contact Persons and Facilitators, understand that a transmission takes place during the presentation of any introductory program, formation or retreat. It is not so much about strict adherence to guidelines of any particular program itself. Rather, it is about the integrity of the person's commitment to the Centering Prayer practice and one's submission to the transformative process that is conveyed from Servant-Leaders to seekers and practitioners.

Guidelines are very helpful and well-received when they are seen not as rules but as a guide to understanding. Guidelines work best for most people most of the time; there is also room for exceptions when needed. As Servant-Leaders, we are called to enter into the mystery of our shared experience of contemplation, while at the same time returning to the simplicity of the Centering Prayer experience that we interiorize and carry with us into the activities of our daily lives and share with one another as the CO community.



Section 2: Centering Prayer Groups

2

General Information

- Centering Prayer groups are most often formed from participants of the Centering Prayer Introductory Program and continuing sessions. Occasionally, others join the group as they hear about Centering Prayer and the group becomes their first experience of Centering Prayer and in sharing the Christian contemplative journey.
- Members meet on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to support one another in the practice of Centering Prayer.
- The primary purpose of the Centering Prayer group is to help sustain the commitment to a regular practice of Centering Prayer.
- Centering Prayer group meetings always consist of one or more periods of Centering Prayer and as time and the needs of the group evolve should include:
 - Sharing with others of experiences with Centering Prayer and its effects in daily life.
 - Ongoing education in the conceptual background of Centering Prayer.
 - The experience of Lectio Divina.

Such small groups have the potential to grow into contemplative communities to support the members' growth in the contemplative dimension of the gospel.

A Common Concern of Facilitators — “Open” vs. “Closed” Centering Prayer Groups

When Centering Prayer groups are formed, usually following the Centering Prayer Introductory Program, an invitation to join the group is extended to anyone interested in meeting with others to practice Centering Prayer in community and to share their common experience. The Centering Prayer group lends support to members and inspires one another to practice fidelity to their personal practice of Centering Prayer throughout the week.

As group members are bonded and faith sharing deepens over the years, group members may discern that it is not beneficial to open the prayer group to new members for a period of time.

The group may want to focus on a particular book study, video program, or other conceptual information that may not be appropriate or interesting to persons newly introduced to Centering Prayer. Or, faith sharing in the group may have reached a level of intimacy that would be uncomfortable for new members or for long-term members.

It is always up to the discretion of the Centering Prayer group members to make the choice to remain an “open” prayer group for as long as the group continues to meet, or to have a “closed” group at some point in time.

What Facilitators Do

The role of Facilitator in service to the Centering Prayer group consists of the following:

- Establish and/or guide regular Centering Prayer group meetings, following the suggested format and guidelines for the Centering Prayer group.
- Introduce the method of Centering Prayer privately to new group members, encouraging them to attend the Centering Prayer Introductory Program when it is available. The “Method of Centering Prayer” brochure is very helpful when introducing people to Centering Prayer for the first time one-on-one.
- If there are questions on the method of Centering Prayer and its conceptual background, offer the appropriate answers based on your own readings and experience. Adhere to the principles of the method of Centering Prayer and avoid a role of interpreting personal experiences.
- Assist commissioned Presenters and the local Coordinator by conducting, when possible, the continuing sessions of the Centering Prayer Introductory Program.
- Maintain contact and collaboration with the local Coordinator.
- Encourage the Centering Prayer group members to support the necessary expenses of:
 - Their group, e.g., the cost of books and videos, fees for presenters, refreshments, etc.
 - Their Chapter, e.g., cost of the newsletter, cost for others to attend the Annual Conference, scholarships, etc.
 - The Contemplative Outreach Resource Center (CORC), by occasionally passing the basket to send a donation to the Butler, New Jersey office.

What is Required to Serve as a Facilitator

Facilitators are asked to consider these guidelines when discerning whether to serve a Centering Prayer group as their Facilitator.

- Maintain a regular practice of Centering Prayer.
- Availability to facilitate regular meetings of a Centering Prayer group.
- Familiarity with the Contemplative Outreach Vision, Theological Principles and Administrative Principles.
- Availability and willingness to serve at least one year as a Servant-Leader.
- Attendance at the Centering Prayer Introductory Program when possible.
- Familiarity with the three foundational books by Fr. Thomas Keating: *Open Mind, Open Heart; Invitation to Love, Intimacy with God.*
- Familiarity with the “Spiritual Journey Series” by Fr. Thomas Keating.
- Recommended: Attendance at a Contemplative Outreach Intensive Retreat.
- Highly Recommended: Attendance at the Facilitator Basic Skills I Workshop, or the Presenters Formation for Centering Prayer.

Centering Prayer Groups

Purpose: To support the Centering Prayer practice in the context of a small community that prays together, and participates in faith sharing.

The group agrees:

- To come together to pray and support each other with a regular weekly or bi-weekly meeting.
- To establish norms for the group experience, i.e., time frame, prayer time, topics for exploration and introduction of new members into the group.
- To gently encourage the essence of faith sharing which involves one's own personal experiences in one's own words, not abstract ideas (using the pronouns "I" and "me," instead of "you" or "we").
- To gently discourage irrelevant sharing.
- That if anyone tends to monopolize the faith-sharing experience, the group can remind itself that time for sharing is for everyone.
- That the atmosphere during faith-sharing be non-judgmental and whatever a person shares be received with acceptance and support.
- To regard everything that is said as confidential and not for outside use.

The facilitator agrees:

- To prepare the room for prayer, making it a hospitable environment with materials and equipment ready.
- To monitor the time for the group and help maintain its commitment to begin and end on time.
- To lead the prayer.

Guidelines for Sharing in Centering Prayer Groups

These guidelines are important to the community as they come together to share.

- We accept one another as we are.
- We do not give advice.
- We do not criticize what others share.
- We listen attentively and without interruption when someone else is speaking.
- We keep the sharing in the group absolutely confidential.
- We share experiences from our own lives, not abstract ideas.
- We gather to care, not to cure or remove the crisis or pain. God does the healing.
- We decide among ourselves how much time we will devote to sharing, making sure that each person who wants to share will have a chance to speak.
- We are always free to remain silent if we wish.

These guidelines should be discussed by the group and modified if desired, to fit the particular needs of the group. When the guidelines are agreed upon they should be returned to from time to time to renew the group agreement.

It is helpful to print copies of the agreement for each member and to have on hand some copies to give to new members.

The guidelines are suitable for personal sharing about the effects of Centering Prayer, Lectio Divina reflections, as well as discussions of the “Spiritual Journey Series” and books by Thomas Keating.



Section 3: Growing as a Facilitator

Because Facilitators act in a volunteer capacity, the services listed below should be offered only in proportion to and in balance with personal, family, professional, business and other responsibilities.

PRAYER: Your personal practice of Centering Prayer will help you conduct the group lovingly and in a *flexible* manner. Your sharing the gift of Centering Prayer arises from your personal practice.

3

PLANNING AND REVIEWING is essential. Prepare the room for prayer, making it a hospitable environment, with equipment and materials ready. If possible, set up the chairs in a circle. Prepare yourself by reviewing the material briefly before the meeting. Don't try to "wing it." Your meeting will not be as effective.

START AND END ON TIME. Respect other people's time. If participants know that you start on time and end on time, they tend to respond in kind. Be flexible to circumstances.

BE SILENT yourself so as to allow others the opportunity to talk. Avoid the temptation to teach, to lecture, or talk too much yourself.

CONFLICT AND DIFFERENCES of opinion are usually very good. They often expand the sharing. However, they should not be allowed to get out of hand.

COMMUNICATION is the essence of group sharing. Remember this is a complex and sometimes delicate process, particularly in spiritual matters. It includes careful *listening* and judicious comments on your part as facilitator. If you provide the example of listening, others will notice and hopefully follow.

MANY QUESTIONS WILL GO UNANSWERED. That's normal. Sharing does not mean finding answers. Growing is having more, not fewer questions. Be comfortable with the situation of not having all the answers, but challenge people to begin to search elsewhere for the answers. Being present with them in their questioning and searching is the most helpful service you can offer.

DON'T FEEL YOU HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT. St. John of the Cross said that "we are all beginners." We are not responsible for representing the whole 2,000 years of the Christian contemplative experience. However, if you think you know where to find an answer to someone's question, offer a reference or **CALL SOMEONE ELSE** in Contemplative Outreach to see if they can help.

AVOID DOGMATISM. Be careful not to encourage theologizing, philosophizing or a conversation of what “my Church says.” Everyone is entitled to respect as a child of God. Remember, Contemplative Outreach is ecumenical in origin, character and scope. Centering Prayer is a common ground of Christian unity. One person’s dogmatism can be another’s discomfort.

USE THE NATURAL LEADERSHIP OF THE GROUP. Many leadership functions take place naturally as people offer to help. Encourage this. One goal for you is to give control of the group to the group, while keeping the goals, purpose, and process in mind. Encouraging people to participate is a vital form of service.

ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERISM. This allows members to begin to develop the habit of service. The practice encourages commitment. It’s often easier for a Facilitator just to do the task oneself. It takes more time to plan tasks and ask for volunteers. However, it is much more rewarding to see others participating. It also eases a Facilitator’s task list after volunteers have learned a task.

SHARING THE DUTIES/ROLES. As a Centering Prayer group grows, it is possible to share the leadership duties and roles. Offer others the opportunity to lead the Centering Prayer period and the discussion, showing and discussing the video and providing hospitality needs. Develop *group consensus* and shared responsibility for the growth of the group.

KEEP THE PRAYER GROUP LEAD PERSON INFORMED. In a developed chapter with a Centering Prayer group lead person, each Facilitator is responsible for keeping the lead person informed about the Centering Prayer group schedule, members, location, activities, needs, changes and updates.

INTRODUCE THE METHOD OF CENTERING PRAYER privately to new group members, encouraging them to attend “The Seven-Session Introduction to the Centering Prayer Practice” when it is available.

MAINTAIN CONTACT and collaboration with the local Coordinator.

The Spirituality of the Servant-Leader

The Essence of the Spirituality of Contemplative Outreach

Serve wholeheartedly, as if you are serving the Lord. Ephesians 6:7 NIV

- The primary intention of the Servant-Leader is to live ordinary life with extraordinary love.
- The basic commitment of the Servant-Leader is to a regular, consistent practice of Centering Prayer (communing with God).
- The primary task of the Servant-Leader is to share the prayer!
- Servant-Leaders of Contemplative Outreach maintain the integrity of the Centering Prayer method and its conceptual background; they are the primary keepers of the Vision.
- The Spirit provides the corresponding grace in your role as Servant-Leader; the Spirit leads you to service.
- Contemplative service is the “God in me” serving the “God in others” and the transmission of the “heart” of the message to others.
- Servant-Leaders give freely without expectation or return.
- Our deep appreciation for Centering Prayer, Contemplative Outreach, and its Vision sustain our commitment.
- We place our intention to serve before God and simply consent.
- Servant-Leaders are open and willing to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit so they will grow in charity, flexibility and accountability.
- Servant-Leaders strive to be collaborative and seek win-win solutions; to be resilient and recover quickly from change.
- Servant-Leaders are encouraged to use the Theological Principles that support the Vision.
- Servant-Leaders, in the spirit of humility, remain teachable. We are always beginners on the spiritual journey. The journey continues into eternity.

Spiritual Preparation for the Facilitator

In addition to reviewing the material ahead of time, the most important element in preparing for a meeting is your attitude toward service. Your attitude is what participants respond to and remember. Prior to a meeting, it may be helpful to consider the following questions to remind yourself of your commitment to contemplative service.

- Have I placed my intention to serve before God and simply consented?
- Is it my intent to serve with the utmost charity?
- Am I respectful for what can be accomplished through group sharing?
- Am I patient in achieving these benefits?
- Am I respectful of the ideas and opinions of others with a different point of view?
- Do I have a genuine interest in what people say and their reasons for saying it?
- Do I respect personal feelings?
- What motivates me to offer contemplative service as a Facilitator?
- Am I personally willing to grow closer to God through the practice of Centering Prayer?

A few practical points to keep in mind as you prepare for the Centering Prayer group:

- Set up the room with chairs in a circle if possible.
- Many Centering Prayer groups like to set up a small table in the center of the circle with candles, cross, Bible, plants or flowers as a focal point.
- Invite others in the group to participate in leading the group, such as reading the opening prayer or spiritual reading, ringing the gong and keeping time for the prayer session, closing the prayer period with a gong, or a short prayer, such as the Lord's Prayer, etc.

Leading the Centering Prayer Group Meeting

These guidelines are presented to assist Facilitators in guiding the Centering Prayer group consistently for each meeting. Most Centering Prayer groups meet for one hour, but many meet for up to two hours. The group can decide by consensus what formats to use and how long they want to meet.

- Enter the prayer period in silence (optional).
- Opening prayer, chant, scripture, spiritual reading, contemplative walk, or an excerpt from *Open Mind, Open Heart* as vestibule time.
- Begin the 20-minute Centering Prayer period by lightly ringing a bell/gong.

NOTE: May introduce two 20-minute periods of Centering Prayer, with contemplative walk.

- End the prayer period by lightly ringing a bell/gong and/or reciting a short prayer, or the Lord's Prayer while others listen.
- Allow one or two minutes of silence before standing or opening the eyes.
- In addition to the prayer period, groups may choose one of the following formats:
 - Read from Thomas Keating's books. (optional)
 - OR
 - View a video from the "Spiritual Journey Series." (optional) (See Appendix B for a complete list of videos from which to select.)
 - OR
 - Lectio Divina experience. (optional) (See Section 5 for more information about leading a Lectio Divina experience.)

It is recommended that if one of the alternate formats is used, the Centering Prayer group should regularly return to the basic format from time to time so the group has time for extended faith sharing of their experiences and concerns about their Centering Prayer practice.

- Faith sharing: Invite group members to relate the material to everyday life, or to their experiences in Centering Prayer.
- Closing prayer. Make sure everyone knows the time and location of the next meeting.

Recommended Reading

Open Mind, Open Heart: The Contemplative Dimension of the Gospel – Keating
An excellent resource. Answers many questions about Centering Prayer.

Invitation to Love: The Way of Christian Contemplation – Keating
The spiritual journey is covered in detail, including the emotional programs for happiness, false self, afflictive emotions, Night of Sense, and Night of Spirit.

Intimacy with God – Keating
Transformation through contemplation leads to deeper intimacy with God.

The Mystery of Christ: The Liturgy as Spiritual Experience – Keating
Fr. Keating recovers the deeper sense of the liturgical year and shares a theological and mystical perspective of the annual cycle.

The Human Condition – Keating
Lectures delivered at Harvard Divinity School discussing how Christ calls on people to repent and reclaim their “true selves.”

Forty Days to a Closer Walk with God – Muyskens
A simple 20-minute daily practice of contemplative prayer over the course of 40 days can lead you to a closer relationship with God.

A Deeper Love – Smith and Chalmers
This introduction to Centering Prayer is based on the teachings and writings of Thomas Keating, most notably his books *Open Mind, Open Heart*; *Invitation to Love*; and *Intimacy with God*.

Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures – Pennington
Lectio Divina is described as the art of letting God speak to us through his inspired Word and then our response to the Word received.

Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina with 500 Scripture Texts for Prayer – Hall
Leads the reader to discover a way to intimacy with God in childlike simplicity.

A Taste of Silence: Centering Prayer and the Contemplative Journey – Arico
Fr. Arico’s spirituality and warmth are profound; his guide has been well received.

The Daily Reader for Contemplative Living – Compiled by Iachetta.
Excerpts from the works of Thomas Keating with related scriptures.

The Contemplative Life Program: CLP Praxis Series (can be purchased by subscription or as individual booklets)



Section 4: Faith Sharing

The Essence of Faith Sharing

FAITH SHARING *is not* a theological discussion; no speeches, homilies, or dissertations are required. It is not an information model.

FAITH SHARING *is not* an answer to anyone's problems; nor is it a place to vent frustration. It is not a therapeutic model.

FAITH SHARING *is* my experience of God in my personal history or journey of life. It is a mystery model.

FAITH SHARING *is* living in the messiness and vulnerability of life; sharing the joys, sorrows, hopes, and fears of the human journey and God's faithfulness in that journey.

FAITH SHARING *requires* reverential listening in prayerful silence; "my experience" is the content and "my experience" is not discussable or debatable.

4

Suggested Topics for Faith Sharing

It is suggested that members of the Centering Prayer group purchase the book or transcripts that will be studied and read at home in preparation for the group discussion. The Facilitator may select questions at the end of each chapter or transcript for the group to discuss.

Selections from the following are appropriate for all levels:

- *Open Mind, Open Heart*, Chapter 13: “Guidelines for Christian Life, Growth and Transformation” is designed to provide a conceptual background for the practice of Centering Prayer. These guidelines offer in-depth reflection on the contemplative journey through a series of thought-provoking statements.
- *The Daily Reader for Contemplative Living*.
- *The Contemplative Life Program: CLP Praxis Series*.

Newly Formed Groups

- “Prologue to the Spiritual Journey Series – DVD 1: The Method of Centering Prayer”
- “Spiritual Journey Series” videos 0 through 5.
- Appropriate transcripts from the “Spiritual Journey Series.”
- *Open Mind, Open Heart*.

Groups Together for One to Three Years

- “Spiritual Journey Series” videos 6 through 12 and 14 through 17.*
- “Prologue to the Spiritual Journey Series – DVD 2: The Psychological Experience of Centering Prayer”
- Appropriate transcripts from the “Spiritual Journey Series.”
- *Invitation to Love*, chapters 1 through 13.

* “Spiritual Journey Series” video 13 is appropriate for beginning groups.

Groups Together for Three or More Years

- “Spiritual Journey Series” videos 18 through 23.
- Appropriate transcripts from the “Spiritual Journey Series.”
- *Invitation to Love*, chapters 14 through 22.
- *Intimacy with God*
- *The Mystery of Christ*, from Advent to Pentecost.

For more information about appropriate selected readings, refer to Appendix D.

Group Covenant

As a member of this community:

I listen to others from my heart.

Within each person is a core of goodness, of strength, and of love.
I put aside superficial feelings for other persons and their opinions.
I try to understand the heart of what others are sharing.

I listen to others with a non-judgmental attitude.

I try to hear the other's perception of reality. I may not agree with it,
but I can affirm that person's right to a different point of view.

I listen to others with love.

With the grace of God, people have within themselves all they need to discover truth and life.
My loving concern can assist that discovery for both of us.

I listen to others with respect for their freedom.

This group does not exist to give advice, but to encourage growth and insight.
We do not have to be of one voice or of one mind.

I listen to others with shared trust.

A basic level of trust encourages conversation to extend beyond the superficial
knowing that personal thoughts will be kept confidential.

I speak from my own unique experience.

I will use the pronoun "I" when I share my point of view.
I will learn to trust that what I have experienced is important and worth sharing with the group.

Together we seek understanding, not agreement.

We will help one another use and act on what we have come to understand.
No one can act for anyone else. But we can see creative possibilities because we have shared.

Notes:



Section 5: Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is an ancient practice that teaches a way of listening to the texts of scripture as if we were in conversation with Christ and He was suggesting the topics of conversation. It is listening with the “ear” of the heart, but learning how to use the four moments of Lectio Divina: lectio, meditatio, oratio and contemplatio.

This section refers to two foundational articles written by Fr. Thomas Keating, explaining the heritage of Lectio Divina and a brief explanation of the practice itself. A brochure is also available. These articles are available on the CO website, or from your local Coordinator or a commissioned Presenter of Lectio Divina.

- “Lectio Divina: Listening to the Word of God in Scripture” brochure, 2007.
- “The Classical Monastic Practice of Lectio Divina,” Fr. Thomas Keating, “Contemplative Outreach News,” Volume 12, Number 2, Winter 1998. (contained in the back issue of this newsletter on the CO website)
- “Four Phases of the Practice of Lectio Divina,” Fr. Thomas Keating, 1999.

Also visit the Contemplative Outreach website for more information on the method of Lectio Divina and for details about how to host the Lectio Divina Introductory Program for your Centering Prayer group.

NOTE TO COORDINATORS

Refer to the Leadership Resources page of the CO website to obtain copies of these articles.

Notes:



Section 6: The Centering Prayer Introductory Program

Understanding the Process

COORDINATORS COORDINATE

- Contact your Chapter Coordinator when you want to set up the Centering Prayer Introductory Program.
- Coordinators act as a resource person for and beyond the six continuing sessions.

PRESENTERS PRESENT — an important distinction

- Contemplative Outreach trains and commissions Presenters to present the Centering Prayer Introductory Program.

FACILITATORS FACILITATE — facilitate means “to make easier”

- Facilitators may work with their Coordinator to learn more about hosting the Centering Prayer Introductory Program, or facilitating a Centering Prayer group. Or they may attend the “Facilitator Basic Skills I Formation” to aid in developing skills to effectively facilitate a Centering Prayer group and learn more about the Contemplative Outreach community.
- Your participation is vital to the success of the program. Ways you can help:
 - Form a support group of at least five to six people who will commit to all seven sessions of the Centering Prayer Introductory Program. Ask the core group to help with publicity, hospitality, set-up and clean-up.
 - Work with the Coordinator to choose a place, date and time for the continuing sessions. Coordinators also welcome your involvement in the administrative details.
 - Prepare publicity flyers, parish bulletin announcements and pulpit announcements.
 - Invite neighboring communities.
 - Help ensure attendance at the continuing sessions. Plan to attend the six continuing sessions yourself and encourage others to attend the continuing sessions as well.

A few things to keep in mind as you consider hosting the Centering Prayer Introductory Program:

First, it is usually the parish/organization that contacts you to inquire about Introduction conducting the Centering Prayer Introductory Program. Or, you may express your interest in scheduling this and ask permission to plan it.

Second, after you have received permission to host the Centering Prayer Introductory Program, work with the Coordinator of your local area to select a commissioned Presenter and determine the dates for the one-day session and the six continuing sessions.

Finally, after the six continuing sessions, ask the participants about their interest in forming or joining a Centering Prayer group.

Goals of the Centering Prayer Introductory Program

*“Contemplative Outreach aims to transmit
the experience of Divine Love to the global community.”*

Father Thomas Keating

*Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ.
(John 17:3)*

The Centering Prayer Introductory Program teaches a contemplative process of transformation and how to integrate that process into our daily lives. The ultimate goal is to cultivate both an individual and a community response to the gift of contemplative prayer. This is often the first experience of most everyone in a Centering Prayer group. It is composed of Session One and six continuing sessions, usually covered over six weeks following the Session One.

Session One is divided into four parts:

- Prayer as Relationship with God
- The Method of Centering Prayer
- Thoughts and the Use of the Sacred Word
- Deepening Our Relationship with God

Session One includes at least one experience of Centering Prayer, presentation of concepts and teaching by a commissioned Presenter, and sharing by participants. The six continuing sessions offer support and community building. Each continuing session includes Centering Prayer, a video featuring Fr. Thomas Keating expanding on the conceptual background of the prayer, and group discussion. These sessions will help tremendously in the beginning weeks of the participants' Centering Prayer practice.



Section 7: Appendices

Appendix A: Other Experiences for Centering Prayer Groups

While the primary purpose of the Centering Prayer group and the single most important responsibility of the Facilitator is to share the Centering Prayer practice with others, there are several other group experiences and individual practices that can help people along their journey.

GROUP EXPERIENCES

Besides the regular Centering Prayer group meetings that typically occur each week or biweekly, Contemplative Outreach has developed other group experiences that add to the community building and group sharing opportunities.

- Day of Renewal
- Day of Silence
- United in Prayer Day

Day of Renewal

A Day of Renewal can be held on a Saturday, often for three to six hours, or whatever timing best suits the needs of the group. The format is typically:

- Opening prayer/orientation
- One or two 20-minute Centering Prayer periods, with contemplative walk
- Review method of Centering Prayer (e.g. posture, sacred word, thoughts, contemplative walk)
- Group sharing
- Lunch in silence (optional, with or without spiritual reading from one of Keating's books)
- One 20-minute Centering Prayer period
- View video from the "Spiritual Journey Series" (optional) OR Lectio Divina (optional)
- Closing prayer/departure

Day of Silence

A Day of Silence can be held on a Saturday (“Silent Saturday”), often for three to six hours, or whatever timing best suits the needs of the group. This day focuses on a time apart, with emphasis on silence and a simple readings and prayers. The format is similar to:

- Opening prayer/orientation
- Morning and afternoon periods of Centering Prayer with contemplative walk
- Optional morning and/or afternoon conference*
- Lunch (in silence optional – with or without spiritual reading)
- Optional Lectio Divina experience
- Closing prayer/departure

*Conferences may be videos from Contemplative Outreach or guest speakers.

Suggested videos:

- “Invitation from God”
- “Heartfulness Series”

United in Prayer Day

Contemplative Outreach has been joining together for a United in Prayer Day for many years. It is an international gathering of many in the community on that day. The intention of the day is to form a network of Contemplative Outreach communities in silent prayer across the globe.

Each year Contemplative Outreach distributes a new DVD presentation which includes a complete kit with suggested format for the day, discussion guides, and other helpful materials. The United in Prayer Day happens annually on the third Saturday of March.

The United in Prayer Day has two elements:

- Formation – Local communities are enriched by connecting with members of other Centering Prayer groups in the area for personal and community growth.
- Information – The carefully selected material prepared by Contemplative Outreach opens communities to a deeper awareness of the contemplative dimension of the gospel.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICES

There are many contemplative practices that can be offered to members of the Centering Prayer group that will assist in their own personal development. In this appendix, we briefly mention each practice and give a simple explanation. It is suggested that Facilitators read more thoroughly and practice these in their own personal lives before sharing with their Centering Prayer group. Just a few of these practices, as explained by Thomas Keating in several of his books, are mentioned here.

DVD – “Practices that Bring the Fruits of Centering Prayer into Daily Life”

This DVD can be used in your Centering Prayer groups to assist members in learning more about other practices that bring the fruits of the prayer of their daily life. Topics on this DVD are presented by various servant-leaders of our community, and include the following topics:

- Lectio Divina
- Welcoming Prayer
- Prayer of Forgiveness
- Practice of Attention/Intention

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is one of the most important companion practices to go along with Centering Prayer. Most members of Centering Prayer groups would benefit from early exposure to this practice once they have established a sound practice of Centering Prayer. The topics include:

- Brief history of Lectio Divina.
- Monastic and scholastic Lectio Divina.
- Application for practices in daily life.

NOTE: In Section 5 of this handbook we have supplied a brief overview of the Lectio Divina Introductory Program.

Welcoming Prayer

Welcoming Prayer is a spiritual practice that teaches how to consent to God’s presence and action in our physical and emotional reactions to events and situations in daily life in the present moment. In this practice, we learn to actively let go of thoughts and feelings that support the false-self system and embrace painful emotions experience in the body rather than avoiding them or trying to suppress them.

Topics in the Welcoming Prayer video include:

- The Human Condition
- Welcoming Prayer
- Practice and Discussion
- Fruits and Extending the Practice of the Welcoming Prayer into Daily Life

NOTE: “An Introduction to Welcoming Prayer” is also available online by visiting the CO website. Also, a full-day workshop entitled the “Welcoming Prayer Introductory Program” is available by contacting your Coordinator, a Chapter Consultant or the Welcoming Prayer Service Team for more information.

Prayer of Forgiveness

The Prayer of Forgiveness is a practice that involves learning to forgive and be at peace with everyone, and be willing to share everyone’s pain and joy as if it were your own. Since forgiveness is a vital part of the contemplative journey, but is often difficult and complex, this DVD provides an overview of a simple method that helps with this process.

There is also an online introduction available to study this practice more in-depth. The DVD mentioned here is available to Facilitators to get a brief introduction to the practice, and can be shared with the Centering Prayer group to determine if they would like to further study this practice as a group. Topics in the video include:

- Power of forgiveness
- Process for forgiving oneself and others

Practice of Attention/Intention

The Practice of Attention/Intention is a practice that focuses on two components of attention (focusing on a particular object, such as the breath, an image, or a concept) and intention (the choice of the will in regard to some goal or purpose. The video mentioned here includes a presentation on this practice and is available to be viewed by Facilitators and Centering Prayer groups to understand this practice. The video includes topics such as:

- Practice in the routine of daily life.
- Practice of purity and intention.
- Transmitting the Divine Presence in daily life.

OTHER INDIVIDUAL PRACTICES

Guard of the Heart

Ref: *Open Mind Open Heart, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*, p. 169

Guard of the Heart is a practice of releasing upsetting emotions into the present moment as they arise. In other words, the ordinary events of daily life become our practice. This can be done by:

- Doing what you are actually doing.
- Turning your attention to some other occupation.
- Giving the feeling to God as a gift.

The fruit of Guard of the Heart is a habitual willingness to change our plans at a moment's notice. It disposes us to accept painful situations as they arise.

Active Prayer Sentence

Ref: *Open Mind Open Heart, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*, p. 171

The Active Prayer sentence, an aspiration often drawn from Scripture, has to be repeated again and again at free moments in order to work itself into the heart. It may take a year or more to establish an Active Prayer Sentence that arises spontaneously. One should go about this practice without anxiety, haste or excessive effort.

The advantage of this practice is that it eventually becomes a “tape,” similar to the “tapes” that accompany one's upsetting emotions, and erases old tapes, thus providing a neutral zone in which the spirit of God can rush in and suggest what to do.

Some examples are:

- “God come to my assistance, O Lord make haste to help me.”
- “Holy Mary, Mother of God, open my heart to your love.”
- “Lord, I give myself to you.”
- “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Refer to Appendix D and Appendix E for details about how to work with your local Coordinator to discuss the possibility of purchasing these resources or hosting any of these programs for your Centering Prayer group.

Appendix B: “Spiritual Journey Series”

The “Spiritual Journey Series” are divided into parts that are appropriate for various levels of experience. It is suggested that one begin with videos in Part One, and work through all parts in succession, based on the interest of the individual Centering Prayer group.

***NOTE: Video #13 “Human Condition – Philosophical Model” is applicable for all levels and can be viewed at any time.

Also available is a two-DVD set entitled “Prologue to the Spiritual Journey Series” including “DVD 1: The Method of Centering Prayer” and “DVD 2: The Psychological Experience of Centering Prayer,” which gives Thomas Keating’s explanation of the human condition, the archeological dig, and the spiral staircase.

It is also recommended that at least one set of the Spiritual Journey DVDs and transcripts be purchased by the Chapter for use by the Facilitator(s), and can be loaned to Centering Prayer groups or individual members. Many Chapters and Centering Prayer groups develop a lending library of books, videos and transcripts by Thomas Keating and other authors to share with members of the group.

Prologue to the Spiritual Journey Series:

- 1 The Method of Centering Prayer
- 2 The Psychological Experience of Centering Prayer

Spiritual Journey Series – Part One

- 0 Introduction – Attitudes Toward God
- 1 Prayer as Relationship – Relating to God
- 2 Four Levels of Spiritual Experience
- 3 Toward Resting in God
- 4 Centering Prayer as Method
- 5 Progress in Centering Prayer

Part Two

- 6 The Human Condition – Evolutionary Model
- 7 Formation of Home-Made Self – Existential Model
- 8 Pre-Rational Energy Centers
- 9 Frustrations Caused by Emotional Programs
- 10 Dismantling the Emotional Programs
- 11 The False Self in Action

Part Three

- 12 The Four Consents
- 13 Human Condition – Philosophical Model***
- 14 Anthony as Paradigm of Spiritual Journey
- 15 Liberation from the False Self System
- 16 Liberation from Cultural Conditioning
- 17 Spirituality in Everyday Life

Part Four

- 18 Night of Sense – The Biblical Desert
- 19 Night of Spirit – Towards Transformation
- 20 Beatitudes – Healing Emotional Programs
- 21 The Spiritual Senses
- 22 What Contemplation is Not
- 23 From Contemplation to Action

Part Five

- 24 The Most Excellent Path
- 25 The Divine Banquet and Dance
- 26 Prayer in Secret (2)
- 27 What is the Divine Therapy?
- 28 A Response to the Divine Invitation

Appendix C: Excerpts from the RHB

This appendix refers to excerpts available from the *RHB (Resource Handbook)* developed for Coordinators, Contact Persons and Leadership Teams. Ask your Coordinator for a copy of this information if desired as additional background information about the Contemplative Outreach community and how its Servant-Leaders serve that community.

Recommended pages for Facilitators from the *RHB* are:

- Part One
 - Who Are the Circle of Service (COS)
 - Who Are Contemplative Outreach Ltd. (COL)
- Part Two
 - Who is the CORC (Contemplative Outreach Resource Center)
 - Alternate Ways to Introduce Centering Prayer and Other Christian Contemplative Practices
- Part Three
 - What is the CPS (Chapter Programs and Services)
 - Who Is a Coordinator
 - Who Is a Facilitator
- Part Four
 - What Are the Programs Offered by the Chapter Programs and Services (CPS)

NOTE TO FACILITATORS

Contact your Coordinator or Contact Person, or a Chapter Consultant to find out how to obtain a copy of this document.

Appendix D: Guide to the Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials

This appendix refers to the “Guide to the Contemplative Outreach Resource Materials” which is available to Coordinators and can be shared with Facilitators upon request. This guide lists all resources (books, DVDs, CDs, online courses) currently offered by Contemplative Outreach and lays them out in a manner that assists Facilitators in working with Centering Prayer groups or can be helpful to individuals at various stages of their spiritual journey.

The guide is divided into the following stages:

- Stage 1 – Getting Started
- Stage 2 – Establishing a Practice of Centering Prayer
- Stage 3 – Continuing a Practice of Centering Prayer
- Stage 4 – A Faithful Practice of Centering Prayer
- Stage 5 – Support for a Well-Established Practice of Centering Prayer
- Stage 6 – Enrichment Possibilities

NOTE TO COORDINATORS

Refer to the Leadership Resources page of the CO website to obtain a copies of this document.

Appendix E: Overview of Contemplative Outreach Programs

This appendix refers to the “Overview of Contemplative Outreach Programs,” which gives an overview of programs currently supported by Contemplative Outreach. As Facilitators grow, and Centering Prayer groups mature, many will want to take advantage of other opportunities beyond their own Centering Prayer groups to enrich their spiritual journey and better equip them to serve as Servant-Leaders within the community.

NOTE TO COORDINATORS & FACILITATORS

Refer to the Leadership Resources page of the CO website to obtain a copy of this document.

Appendix F: Facilitator Formations

Basic Skills I Formation

The Facilitator Basic Skills I Formation is offered to anyone who has volunteered to be a Facilitator of a Centering Prayer group. It is regularly offered, usually bi-annually, but can also be adapted by special request by a Coordinator to be delivered for a group of Chapters in a local area. The format can be adapted from a one- to five-day workshop, based on Chapter needs.

Elements of the workshop include:

- The conceptual background of Centering Prayer and how to share it with individuals and small groups. Practice in answering the common questions that accompany a beginning practice is also shared.
- Education in, and the use of, the resources of Contemplative Outreach. Learning how a community works especially as it relates to small groups.
- What a beginning Facilitator needs to know and some tools Facilitators can use to facilitate the deepening of the group.
- The dynamics of small groups, guidelines for sharing, empowerment (sharing skills you have learned), and spiritual growth in the Centering Prayer group.

Facilitator Formation II

The Facilitator Formation II workshop is designed to build on the Basic Skills Facilitator Workshop and is most helpful for those who have been facilitating a Centering Prayer group for more than two years. This formation includes presentations and interactive experience on the following topics:

- Twelve Principles of Spiritual Leadership
- Spirituality of Service; the role of the Servant-Leader
- Spirituality of Centering Prayer Groups (videotape by Fr. Thomas Keating)
- The Psychological Experience of Centering Prayer
- Five Common Obstacles to Centering Prayer
- Human Condition/Divine Therapy
- Stages of Groups to Maturity
- Stages of Prayer as Related to Faith Development
- Four Levels of Listening
- Soul-Friending (in the context of the Centering Prayer Group)
- Open Forum addressing Facilitator & Centering Prayer Group Issues

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your Coordinator about when the next workshop is available or how to provide this workshop in your area.