Checklist of Pastoral Activities and Areas

No student in two years of field work will have the opportunity to do everything, nor even most things listed below. Students can, however, use the list to identify those activities and areas that appear most neglected thus far. Senior Field Education can provide this experience. In addition to these listed activities, students and supervisors may wish to reflect on the level of competency in each.

Worship

1. Leading or assisting in liturgical worship according to the Book of Common Prayer, as canonically and rubrically permissible.

Reading Scripture

Morning and Evening Prayer

The Great Litany

Liturgies for Special Days
   Ash Wednesday
   Palm Sunday
   Maundy Thursday
   Good Friday
   Holy Saturday
   The Vigil of Easter

Holy Baptism

Holy Eucharist
   Ministry of the Word
   Prayers of the People
   Chalice Bearer
   An Order for Celebrating the Eucharist

Pastoral Offices
   Confirmation
   Commitment to Christian Service
   Marriage
   Thanksgiving for Birth or Adoption of a Child
   Reconciliation of a Penitent
   Ministration to the Sick
   Ministration at the Time of Death
   Burial

2. Preaching
   Full sermon
   Short homily

3. Assisting Ministries
   Acolyte/Server/Crucifer
Training of Acolytes
Altar Guild
  Names of vestments, vessels, linens
  Preparation of church for variety of services

4. Planning Services
   Regular Sunday worship
   Seasonal worship
   Working with Lay Worship Planning Group
   Organizing bulletin for worship
   Use of music resources - hymnal, etc.

5. Leading informal or small group prayer

Education

1. Teaching
   Adults
   Youth
   Children

2. Family and Parish Preparation for
   Baptism
   First Communion
   Confirmation, Reception, Reaffirmation
   Marriage

3. Style
   Lead discussion
   Use of audio/visual
   Use of exercises/games
   Lecture
   Bible study

4. Management
   Working with Christian Education Committee
   Identifying goals and organizing church school
   Eliciting parental and participant support
   Recruiting staff
   Selecting curriculum
   Training teachers
   Evaluating results

5. Special Events
   Seasonal programs
   Retreats
   Study/planning weekends

Outreach

1. Enabling Lay Ministry
Gift identification
Vocational issues - personal
Job/family issues - ethical
Building support system

2. Institutional Outreach of Parish in Community
   Social programs
   Action on social issues
   Ecumenical cooperation
   Relation to social agencies in community

3. World Mission of the Church
   Partners/companion programs
   Overseas work/visits
   National Church programs

4. Evangelism
   Personal witnessing
   Seeking new members
   Calling on potential members
   Including new members

Pastoral

1. Visiting
   Newcomers
   Lost Sheep
   Pillars of the Church
   Recruiting (e.g., Church School teachers)
   Trouble shooting
   Crisis
   Shut-ins

2. Pastoral Conversation and Counseling
   Informal
   Short term - situational
   Crisis intervention
   Depth and/or referral counseling
   Spiritual direction
   Vocational counseling
   Working with divorced persons

3. Ministry to Sick, Dying, Bereaved
   Visiting at home, hospital, hospice
   Enabling funeral counsel before death; preparation
   Use of prayer, scripture, sacraments
   Support and guidance to bereaved
   Funeral home visits
   Pre- or Post-funeral visits

4. Ministry of Celebration
New schools, jobs, promotions
Engagements and marriages
Births or adoptions
Anniversaries
New vocations
The blessing of homes and other occasional offices: The Book of Offices.

Management/Stewardship/Administration

1. Awareness of national and diocesan structure as they relate to the local congregation.

2. Parish Structure
   Annual parish meeting
   Vestry
   Commissions/committees
   Staff meetings
   Staff responsibilities/authority/role
     Rector
     Assisting clergy
     Education officer or consultant
     Secretary
     Sexton
     Organist/choir director
     Others

3. Financial Structure
   Stewardship/Finance Committee
   Every Member Canvass
   Pledge records
   Treasurer
   Budget and bills

4. Dynamics of the Parish System
   Leadership styles
   Membership styles
   Power - groups/persons
   Planning process
   Decision making process
   Conflict management process/style
   Use of data, feedback, evaluation
IV. THE SEMINARIAN’S LAY COMMITTEE

Introduction

Every Lay Committee member should have a copy of the Lay Committee Guidelines which contains these pink pages plus several other excerpts from the Field Educational Manual.

The Manual itself is comprehensive – much of it does not apply directly to lay committees. However, the Introduction and the section, Description of Issues Commonly Arising During Seminary Years (pp. 52-63), may give lay committee members insight into what goes on in seminarians’ lives from the start of Seminary to the end.

Persons interested in the whole Field Education process may consult pages 4-27 in the Field Education Manual. Each site is given two Manuals, one to the supervisor and one to the lay committee convener.

Beyond these suggestions, lay committees are urged to use these Guidelines as a resource, not a straightjacket. Each lay committee is unique: some are inexperienced, others are veterans. More material is offered here than any lay committee can use. Creativity is a gift that resides in lay committees: develop it, trust it, use it.

But remember! Lay committees have a clear role, and their effectiveness is dependent on taking the task seriously and making a commitment to the seminarian, to the Seminary, to each other, and to the Church that the seminarian will ultimately serve in a new way.

A. Purpose of the Lay Committee

Essentially the purpose is twofold: to assist the seminarian in his or her development as a Christian minister; and to walk with the seminarian as fellow pilgrims and disciples who share in common the joys and struggles of life and faith, growing and learning together.

We are aware that there is some tension in this purpose – a tension which comes out in both giving honest feedback and being supportive, in working together through seven sessions and then stepping back and giving a comprehensive assessment in the final one. “Development”, “pilgrimage”, “discipleship” each involves movement and direction. Thus tension is unavoidable if you are going to get anywhere together in ministry formation. For some areas in which to assist the seminarian in his/her development as a Christian minister, see the Assessment of Middlers form in the Appendices. May your entry into this tension lead all of you to deepened faith in the One who leads us and walks with us.

NOTE 1: This is not a discernment of call committee – we assume that the direction of call has been heard and affirmed. Development or formation for ministry is now our purpose.

NOTE 2: Many if not most seminarians have been active, leading, and responsible lay persons in the secular world and in their home parishes. Suddenly they find themselves deeply immersed in a three-year process that seems designated to put to rest the seminarian’s “laity” and bring to life the “clergy” in each. The seminarian abandons the very calling – a whole life lay ministry – that he or she is then called to interpret to the church as an ordained person! If this seems to be a curious plan, then let the lay committee become a forum with the seminarian to wrestle over what is the essential ministry in the Church, where it is done, who does it, and how.
B. Functions of the Lay Committee

Like any group, no lay committee operates in all its modes all the time. However, a balance of the following functions will be the mark of an effective lay committee.

1. Reflecting. The model of learning used in Field Education is Action-Reflection. The seminarian does some ministry – he or she acts. The lay committee should facilitate the seminarian’s reflection on those acts of ministry. Experience is not the best teacher; reflecting on that experience is. For seminarians, mistakes and inadequacies are normal, as are doing things well and having strengths; so, reflect on both the negative and the positive so that ministry might change for the even-better.

2. Listening. To listen is to respond to the seminarian’s comments in a way that seeks clarity, mutual understanding, and greater depth. Active listening is the ability to get beneath the surface words to the level of meaning, feeling, and value. To help a person speak straightforwardly and to hear another person clearly is of the essence of good ministry.

3. Giving Feedback. This is a matter of telling the seminarian how he or she is coming across to me. Thus, it is not an objective and final judgment but some subjective yet concrete evidence, whether negative or positive. Several approaches contribute to effective feedback:

   a) Make it descriptive, not judgmental: “When you read the lesson, I couldn't hear you”; not, “Your voice is too weak.”

   b) Make it specific, not general: “Reviewing the agenda before we began the meeting was helpful to me”; not, “You sure conduct a good meeting.”

   c) Make it timely. The best feedback, ordinarily, is fresh, near in time to the word or act to which it responds.

   d) Make it considerate. There are moments when feedback is too hard to bear, or is unlikely to be helpful.

Remember that negative feedback is most easily received and positive feedback is most highly valued between persons who trust and respect each other.

See the Assessment of Middlers form in the Appendices for some areas for feedback for seniors as well as middlers.

4. Empathizing. It is helpful if committee members show that they “identify with” the seminarian as he or she faces various significant decisions and turning points during this extremely important period.

5. Supporting. Support involves the expression of encouragement, hope, care, forgiveness, acceptance, and love (add your own words to these). Support also includes steadfastness through times of disagreement, failure, and confusion.
Curiously, an atmosphere that is constantly one hundred percent supportive fails sooner or later to feel supportive, because every seminarian knows that he or she needs to be held accountable.

6. **Challenging.** Now is the time for lay committees to be lovingly candid, to question assumptions that the seminarian seems to be making, to prod him or her to think about something differently or to act in an atypical way. Lay committee members can model with the seminarian a relationship of mutual authority. Gracious challenging is a gift.

Last but not least: all these functions are properly exercised by the seminarian with the lay committee, and by lay committee members with each other.

C. **Organization of the Lay Committee**

1. **Timing.** Formation of the lay committee in the summer enables work to begin in the fall without delays that inhibit the committee's effectiveness.

2. **Responsibility.** Most often the Field Education Supervisor recruits lay committee members from a diverse, representative group in the parish. Sometimes a parish committee has this responsibility. Sometimes the seminarian is given the responsibility of selecting one or several members.

3. **Numbers.** A lay committee of four to six members is recommended. Too large a group diminishes individual participation and may encourage absenteeism; too small a group is not representative enough.

4. **Convener.** A convener is named by the Supervisor or selected in some other way. The convener's name, address, and telephone numbers are given by August 1 to the Field Education Office at the Seminary. The convener's duties, *some of which may be shared, are*:
   - To notify members and seminarian of meeting times and places.
   - To convene and end the meetings on time, and to see that leadership for each meeting is provided.
   - To plan each meeting agenda with the seminarian.
   - To consult the Field Education Supervisor from time to time about progress of the group.
   - To send the required written assessment of the seminarian to the Supervisor by April 15, with a copy to the seminarian.
   - To send a written evaluation of the lay committee's work at the end of the academic year to the Director of Field Education.
   - To attend orientation meetings and other training opportunities offered by the Seminary, and to encourage other members of the committee to attend, as may be appropriate.
D. **Support for the Lay Committee**

Lay committees, despite their essential role, have somewhat of a satellite position in the Field Education constellation by virtue of their geographical distance from the Seminary. To minimize isolation, it is important for lay committees to be supported and to feel supported. These are the primary sources of support:

1. **The Parish.** Clergy, vestry, and members of the congregation should understand the ministry of the lay committee and find ways to affirm it. For example, the lay committee may be commissioned at a Sunday worship service in September of its first year and/or recognized for its ministry in April of its last year.

2. **The Lay Committee Coordinator.** This person is appointed by the Director of Field Education for the specific purpose of supporting and strengthening the work of lay committees: by planning and executing orientations and training seminars; by being available for telephone or personal consultation; by corresponding with lay committees about mutual concerns; and by planning special events.

3. **The Administrative Assistant of Field Education.** The Administrative Assistant can provide, as needed, much practical guidance on a variety of matters involving lay committees, and is readily available.

4. **The Director of Field Education.** The Director has overall responsibility for the Field Education program and is available to lay committees, particularly on matters of policy or when there is some point of confusion or conflict.

5. **The Seminary.** The dean, faculty, and staff of the Seminary show their support for lay committees, notably on such occasions as the spring Senior Lay Committee Appreciation Celebration.

E. **Meetings of the Lay Committee.**

1. **General Guidelines.** The experience of many lay committees and seminarians has confirmed the wisdom of these guidelines for the conduct of lay committee meetings:

   **Do**
   - Establish a regular day of the month and place, and set regular beginning and ending times for two-hour meetings.
   - Arrange for a pleasant, comfortable setting.
   - Take time to know each other personally and develop trust.
   - Plan ahead. Hold the first meeting in September and subsequent meetings each month through April, totaling eight for the year.
   - Reserve time at meetings to express concerns and identify issues for discussion.
• Establish ground rules: e.g., confidentiality, attendance, shared responsibilities.

Don't - • Muddle social time and meeting time: end the coffee-and-dessert and start the meeting; end the meeting and serve the coffee-and-dessert.

• Talk about a third party not present or bemoan a situation in the parish – or elsewhere.

• Take absenteeism, non-participation, or breach of the ground rules without appropriate questioning.

• Put either seminarian, convener, or any member of the committee in the position of dominating the agenda or the discussion.

2. How to Plan the Monthly Meeting. This section suggests three approaches to developing the agendas for lay committee meetings. Probably many lay committees will pick and choose from the three, or even use some other method – but whatever the approach, it is important that discussions center on issues and practices of ministry relevant directly and personally to the seminarian. Avoid abstract, global philosophizing! The three suggested approaches are:

a) Based on the seminarian's VTS life and work.

b) Based on activities and issues in Christian ministry.

c) Based on a Calendar framework for middlers and for seniors.

Refer also to these for timely agenda suggestions!

Each of these approaches will now be presented in more detail.

a) Agendas based on the seminarian's VTS life and work. Two ways to go about this may be useful.

(1) Curriculum. Obtain copies of the VTS catalogue and see how courses the seminarian is taking fit into the overall curriculum. Focus on one course for the lay committee meeting. If, for example, the seminarian is studying the Gospels, discuss what the particular material being studied means to the seminarian and to the lay committee members; how committee members use the Bible; what different approaches to interpretation various individuals take. Or, if the course is Liturgics, discuss salient points being taught, lay attitudes to various liturgical practices, and how the Prayer Book is or should be used. Seminarian and lay committee members articulate their own views; the object is not agreement, but understanding.

(2) Issues. A discussion may arise out of one of the issues suggested in Part II (pp. 52-63) in the Manual. For example, First Semester Middlers often struggle with time priorities and setting limits (p.
A lay committee meeting could be devoted to a discussion of how this struggle is real for the seminarian right now; how the present struggle reflects what the seminarian will encounter in full-time parish ministry; and how the lay committee members engage in the same type of struggle. What is at stake in setting limits on time and commitments? How do one's own expectations and the expectations of others exacerbate the struggle? The lay committee may be able to assist the seminarian in working out a healthy balance with a relatively clear conscience.

b) Agendas based on activities and issues in Christian ministry. Three possible variations on this theme are suggested.

1. **Field Education Goals.** Refer to the seminarian’s Work/Learning Agreement (the seminarian should give each lay committee member a copy at the beginning of the year). Focus on a specific learning goal identified by the seminarian. If, for example, the seminarian’s goal is to become more proficient in leading worship, observe the seminarian in action, make notes or use the form, “Listener Response to Person Reading Scripture in Worship” (use master in Appendix for making copies), and provide feedback at the next lay committee meeting. Identify and discuss what “proficiency” means – to whom.

2. **Pastoral Activities and Areas.** Refer to the checklist in the Manual (pp. 33-37). Select an area in which the seminarian has some concern or in which he or she is currently involved in field education. If, for example, the area selected is pastoral counseling, discussion could include committee members' assessment of the value of this ministry; whether and how it can be shared by clergy and laity; how they and the seminarian see the seminarian developing skills in this area. Such a discussion could help the seminarian to clarify whether to seek certain field education experiences and to enroll in certain VTS pastoral theology courses in order to become more proficient and knowledgeable.

3. **Issues in Christian Ministry.** Some current event or debate may call attention to a significant issue relating to Christian ministry; or, such an issue may arise in the life of the seminarian or a lay committee member. If so, the agenda for a meeting could be planned around a discussion of the issue: for example, the role of the Church in peace efforts; the ministry of the laity in the world and in the Church; what constitutes positive clergy leadership in response to the AIDS crisis. In such discussions, seek to stay with personal convictions, objective data, and realistic possibilities. Remember: as with any discussion on potentially controversial issues, seek mutual understanding above agreement.
Agendas based on a calendar framework. This approach may meet a need for more structure. As the reader will see, the calendar framework presented includes several of the agenda-building approaches described above. Of course, any monthly suggestion from the calendar may be used independently. This section is divided into a part for Middlers (First and Second Semester) and a part for Seniors (First and Second Semester).

NOTE: Lay Committees of Anglican year seminarians and Seniors who are new to the congregation need to be aware that they have one year (eight meetings) in which to work together. Hence some of the “Middlers - First Semester” start-up suggestions may be combined with some of the “Seniors - First Semester” issue suggestions to structure the four fall semester meetings.

Middlers - First Semester and any other Seminarian in their First Semester in this Parish

Prior to Seminarian's Arrival. The Field Education Supervisor is encouraged to meet with the committee at an organizational meeting - but at no others. The supervisor may share thoughts about the seminarian's place in the parish and how lay committee work correlates with what the supervisor will be doing with the seminarian.

September

- New conveners and new lay committee members are requested to attend an orientation session. Consult the Field Education calendar for date and time.

- The convener sees that each committee member receives a copy of the Guidelines, and a copy of the seminarian's Work/Learning Agreement.

- A first two-hour meeting with the seminarian is held. The primary task is to get to know the seminarian and one another within the lay committee context.

- A getting-to-know-you exercise is recommended for this first meeting. Part of the joy for the coming year is sharing with and learning from others. Two approaches are offered here; you might wish to use one of them and save the other for another meeting.

Spiritual Journeys. Each member thinks through a very brief version (jot down notes for yourself) of her or his spiritual journey thus far. The following reflections may be helpful.

- What were your childhood understandings and experiences of God?

- How has your history intersected with God – or has it? (You may need to summarize your history first.)

- What are your current moral dilemmas and spiritual delights?

- What is your sense of future direction for your personal journey?
In round-robin fashion each person then shares his or her personal journey for about ten minutes. Others may ask questions to clarify understandings, but remember, there are no “right” or “wrong” journeys. The group in ending the two hours may want to note what has been held in common along the way and what unique riches each brings to the group for the year.

**Self-Introduction and Expectations.** Each person introduces himself or herself with whatever personal data seems appropriate. In addition, all are asked to tell something about him/herself that is unknown to others in the group. In all self-introductions we should share who we are at whatever level seems appropriate to us at the time. Neither seminarians nor committee members need to reveal more of themselves than they wish. The seminarian, in addition to the above, might be given the opportunity to share expectations for working in the parish and expectations of work with the lay committee, using as a basis a description of his/her current courses and, if it is timely, a draft of the Work/Learning Agreement. Committee members respond by sharing their own expectations, and discussion ensues. Working toward clarity of expectations is an important early step in a group's life.

- Get to know the seminarian outside of formal lay committee meetings.
  - Introduce the seminarian to people in the parish who otherwise might not be met or who are important to meet. Share some stories that catch the flavor of parish life.

**October**

This meeting may be built on an issue arising in the September meeting, may be a continuation of the getting-to-know-each-other process, or may be centered on an exploration of the congregation as a whole. If the exploration option is chosen, the seminarian might introduce as a basis for discussion some of the categories from a Reflection Paper assignment on the congregation that is due in mid-November.

**November**

By now the seminarian has some degree of connectedness with the training site. Some exploration around the issue of belonging or feeling included might take place. What helps one feel included? What hinders? Have others experienced some of the situations and feelings shared by the seminarian? How does Jesus in the gospels address the issue of inclusion? What does this mean in relation to the church? To this parish? How do we build community in a congregation and in a small group? How do we celebrate belonging? How do we deal with lingering feelings of exclusion? How do we reach out? [cf. Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out.* Doubleday, 1975.] Reference to the discussion on the issue of inclusion may be helpful for members. Refer to the Manual (pp. 54-55). These questions touch on some of the categories to be covered in the seminarian’s Reflection Paper and may deepen a conversation begun in October.

**December**

This is a “short month” for seminarians since classes end in the first week. Besides sharing plans for the Christmas holiday, this meeting can be planned to give the
seminarian feedback on his or her reading of scripture and leading prayers. The “Listener Response to Person Reading Scripture in Worship” (available in the Appendix for making copies) is consistent with proper oral interpretation of Scripture. The seminarian who needs remedial help must know this now so that appropriate work can be done to improve these skills. Rather than rely solely on lay committee “opinions” about public reading, reproduce the Listener Response form and give it to a number of worshipers to fill out on a given occasion when the seminarian is reading the Scripture for the Sunday. Collect and tabulate. Use the tabulation at the December lay committee meeting for a discussion with the seminarian about the feedback. All worshipping responders should attach their names to forms so that follow-up may clear up questions about points—no form is perfect.

Particular attention should be paid to the following issues in oral communication when a seminarian reads Scripture or leads prayers in public worship:

- Did the reader come across as addressing anyone particular? (If a reader sounds as if he or she is not talking to anyone, it is relatively easy for everyone not to listen.)
- Did the reader use the sound system (if available) skillfully?
- Were there distracting gestures or posture?
- Was the volume appropriate?
- Was the articulation good?
- Were names, places, words pronounced accurately?
- Was the phrasing helpful? Did the voice drop unhelpfully at the end of phrases or sentences?
- Did the reader read with feeling and a sense of meaning that was conveyed appropriately to the hearer?
- Through the reading were you able to hear the Word of the Lord?

**Middlers - Second Semester**

**January**

Seminarians return to Field Education at mid-month. A meeting should be held as soon as possible after the new semester begins, for it is important for both seminarian and lay committee to “catch up” with each other and to continue to build their work together.

The seminarian may have met with his or her bishop or commission on ministry over the holiday. If so, the seminarian may find it helpful to discuss what transpired.
As the new semester begins, the seminarian will be taking some new curriculum courses and will likely be exercising some leadership responsibility at the field site in order to learn about ordained leadership. Some description of these new learning possibilities might be part of the seminarian’s “catch-up”.

The seminarian’s spring Reflection Paper due April 1st has to do with the sacred story of God with this congregation, including reflections on its leadership. Some discussion in January, February or March with the committee about the sacred story of this congregation and its leadership might inform the seminarian’s reflection on leadership and God’s presence with God’s People.

February

Discussion of a seminarian's sermon is valuable. Spend no more than one session a semester giving sermon feedback unless there are serious problems with preaching. In that case, please notify the clergy supervisor, seminarian, and Field Education Director in order that a conference may be set up between the seminarian, those concerned, and the Homiletics faculty.

A “Sermon Listener's Response” form (available in the Appendix for making copies) may be reproduced and filled out in writing by each designated listener immediately after the sermon is preached and then used in the group for sermon feedback. The discussion is most helpful when it is held as soon as possible after the sermon is preached.

March

Many seminarians, in their courses, will address a variety of church, congregational and pastoral issues relevant to you. You and the seminarian have also probably looked at the structure and dynamics of your congregation. The March meeting could center on one or two issues arising out of the above, with lay committee members sharing honestly their thoughts and feelings relative to these parts of the church's life and ministry. Seminarians may wish to respond at a later time with their thoughts and perceptions.

Another possible direction for the March meeting is to compose an overview of the seminarian's ministry for the year, prior to the April feedback session. Each member receives an End-of-the-Year Assessment of Middlers form (copied from the Master in the Appendix) to be filled out and brought to the April meeting.

April

The April meeting should be a feedback session scheduled in time for the convener to get a written composite statement to the field education supervisor after the session. For your committee assessment to be useful to the supervisor in his or her evaluation comments, it must be submitted to the supervisor by April 15. A copy of the lay committee assessment may be sent to the Director of Field Education, but is basically meant to inform the seminarian’s and supervisor’s evaluative session.
Individual Preparation Process. Each member fills out the End-of-the-Year Assessment form on the seminarian. Some may ask, “How can I assess a seminarian?” This form begins with your observation skills and invites you first to notice and describe the behavior of the seminarian in a number of categories which are important to priesthood. (See p. 39 of the Guidelines on giving Feedback.) It is usually very helpful to people to have their behavior mirrored back to them. If you have not noticed any behavior in some of these categories, say so. Either you have not been sensitive to that area or the seminarian has not shown him/herself in that area. Whichever turns out to be true, it provides a basis for the assessment conversation. Then you might ask, “By what criteria do we comment on what we've described?” While there may be objective criteria, their weight is different for different persons. It is part of your task to determine what your standards are and what weight they get as you make your comments. The clearer you can be about your standards, the better the seminarian can understand how different laity assess ministry. When you bring your standards to the group conversation, the discussion usually sorts out which standards are reasonable and which are not. This is why we insist on your doing the assessment with the seminarian in the group setting (as explained in the following paragraph).

Group Assessment Process. Each member brings his or her filled-out Assessment. At the meeting the individual lay persons read their comments. After all have read their comments, the seminarian responds, restating what has been heard. Discussion for clarification and consensus follows. The convener then writes down the consensus (or points of differing views) and checks this out with the committee and seminarian. After the meeting the convener writes a summary report for the field education supervisor. Assessments should not be submitted that have not been openly shared and discussed with the seminarian. This process can be an important opportunity for the seminarian to set future learning goals.

Evaluation. Each supervisor submits a written evaluation of the seminarian to the Director of Field Education at the end of each semester. The lay committee's comments are submitted in writing only once, by April 15, to the supervisor. The primary purpose of assessment by the lay committee is to provide feedback by which the seminarian might grow.

No formal provision is made for an assessment of the lay committee by the seminarian. It is helpful for the committee to invite such an assessment and for the seminarian to offer it. Lay committees can grow in their effectiveness, too. This may also establish the model of Mutual Ministry Review which is used by some rectors and vestries for their mutual assessment. The seminarian might, for example, refer to his or her expectations of the committee at the beginning of the year, and how these expectations have or have not been met. Suggestions might be made as to how the committee might be more helpful in the seminarian’s senior year. The convener should ensure that such comments are recorded and held up to the committee the following September. Naturally, this process should be a dialogue, with committee members having the opportunity to respond to the seminarian’s comments.

May
Since only final examinations remain in May for the seminarian, no lay committee meeting with the seminarian should be held. The committee may want to meet to review its work during the year.

We ask that the convener of the lay committee mail the “End of the Year Evaluation of Lay Committee Work,” (master available in Appendix for making copies) to the Director of Field Education by May 15. These data are used in revising program and materials for the future; they are invaluable feedback from the lay committee to the Seminary.

**Seniors - First Semester and Anglican Year Seminarians**

**Prior to Seminarian's Return.** The convener distributes copies of the Lay Committee Guidelines to any new members. The convener and the supervisor should consult with each other about plans with the seminarian for the coming year.

**September**

Conveners and lay committee members are invited to attend an orientation session – continuing conveners and members will have a separate section to deal with second year issues. Information is mailed to the convener during the summer by the VTS Lay Committee Coordinator.

A regular two-hour meeting with the seminarian is held. If the group and the seminarian are the same as last year, catching up on the summer, sharing expectations for the new year, and other things that will easily flow from the year past will be a good beginning.

NOTE: If a new seminarian is beginning in the parish for the senior year or Anglican year, or if the lay committee is a substantially different group from that of the preceding year, then the need to get to know one another is an important place to begin. (See September of Middler Year, p. 44, for some suggestions.)

If the group is largely the same but one or two new persons have been added or have replaced others, then these people need to be brought on board. One way to do this is for all persons to use pieces of newsprint or other large paper and draw a time line for themselves for the four months (May-August) since the old group last met. On the horizontal time line, all indicate through a rising and falling line the ups and downs in the events of their lives in the past four months. Taking ten minutes or so to draw the time line, these are then shared with the group. This exercise has the effect of building a new group that includes the new members easily. Then the group can go on to share expectations for the coming year.

In sharing expectations it is helpful if the seminarian can share the Work/Learning Agreement with the lay committee.

**October**

The September meeting may lead to a logical next agenda for October, or some theme derived from the VTS curriculum, issues in seminarian life, field education
goals, pastoral activities and areas, or issues in Christian ministry may be timely (refer to the Manual, pp. 42-43 for details).

Senior seminarians are generally acutely aware of the impending General Ordination Examinations (GOEs), and some seminarians may have pressing concerns about their progress in the “ordination track.” Check to see if these are areas in which the seminarian needs the support of the lay committee.

November

Seminarians report that a value of the lay committee for them is to hear how lay people see themselves in ministry – both giving and receiving ministry. What is the lay person's faith? How is it experienced and expressed? Often this is gleaned from unintentional, informal conversation. It may be helpful to focus deliberately on the sharing of the lay committee members' faith and ministry through relating experiences. A sample format follows:

a) Select a theme, or issue. It may come out of a previous discussion. **Example:** “Asking for Help.” (The theme is set before the meeting.)

b) Silently as a group, get in touch with those experiences in your life which are related to the selected theme. Choose one experience you are willing to share with the group. (3-4 min.)

c) Group members share experiences in round-robin fashion. Be concise. (30 min.)

d) The leader (may be convener or seminarian or an appointed member) asks the question, “What in our theology helps us understand, live through, and interpret this experience?” Discussion. (15-20 min.)

e) Leader hands out Bibles (or mimeographed passage). **Example:** On theme of “Asking for Help,” the story of the centurion who asks Jesus to heal his servant. (Matt. 8:5-13) Leader asks, “In what way does this enrich, support, and challenge our present theological understanding of our experiences?” (20 min.)

December

Remember there is only one week of classes before reading period and exams. Seniors may be anxious about GOEs, ordination, and jobs. Some attention to these areas may be appreciated by the seminarian.

For married or engaged seminarians, it has proven helpful to invite the seminarian’s spouse or fiancee to a meeting or two. For seniors' families, the issues of moving, first job, and resettling loom large. The spouse may want to talk about her or his anxieties about the role of a clergy wife or clergy husband.

**Seniors - Second Semester**

January
Besides “catching up” from the Christmas vacation, this will be a time to find out how your seminarian experienced GOEs. Some seminarians have shared a GOE case or two with the lay committee for a reflective discussion about a particular issue in ministry.

February

We want graduates of VTS to be pastors who provide vital Christian leadership so that all Christian people in the parish have a sense of their unique and God-commissioned ministries. A simple exercise to help seniors to get a sense of reality in that task is as follows:

- Each member takes a few minutes to mediate, focusing on his or her ministry.
- Each person answers in writing the following:
  
  a) List ways I see myself ministering.
  
  b) My ministry was most recently affirmed when ...
  
  c) My ministry was most recently frustrated when ...
- A round-robin sharing of the answers is followed by discussion.
- All share their learnings about ministry at the end of the discussion.

March

Whatever the nature of the meeting, be aware that issues of affection and closure are present. That is, the group's life is nearing its end, and at least one member (the senior seminarian) is leaving. Refer to Manual (p. 63) on closure. A discussion of “goodbyes” in general and this “goodbye” in particular may be appropriate. Each member receives an “End-of-the-Year Review for Seniors” form (copied from master in the Appendix) to be filled out and brought to the April meeting.

The seminary hosts a Lay Committee Appreciation Celebration for senior seminarians and members of seniors' lay committees. In a setting that includes the Eucharist, a reception, and dinner, the seminary expresses appreciation for the ministries offered by lay committees and for their contributions to the theological education process. It is hoped that lay committee members and seminarians may participate together in this celebration as their journey draws to an end.

April

Each member brings his or her Review in writing. (If the seminarian began with the parish in his or her senior year, then you may find the thoughts given on pp. 47-48 of these Guidelines about your participation in the process to be helpful – see “April of the Middler Year, ‘Individual Preparation Process’ and ‘Group Assessment Process’.”) In the meeting the comments are shared. The seminarian's response and discussion follows. The convener collects the written responses,
collates them, and forwards a copy to the field education supervisor by April 15. An assessment of the lay committee by the seminarian may also be in order.

May

The lay committee will, of course, want to share in any parish-wide farewell for the seminarian; some members will be able to attend the Commencement; there may be an end-of-the-year lay committee “social” with the seminarian; but no lay committee meeting with the seminarian should be held.

However, the committee may benefit from a self-review of its work during the year and a consideration of plans or direction for the coming year if the committee, or part of it, will continue to function. An “End of the Year Evaluation of Lay Committee Work” is forwarded to the Director of Field Education by May 15.

The lay committee will surely express interest in appropriate ways regarding the seminarian’s graduation, prospective job, and plans to move.