Lay Committee
Guidelines

2009 Edition

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These may also be found on the VTS web-site at: http://www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.

## Maps: to Seminary and of Seminary
Preface

These guidelines are a distillation of the experience and wisdom of a wide variety of persons who have served as field educators – clergy, laity, faculty – as well as seminarians. Lately they have been added to and revised yearly, based on feedback from the Year-end Evaluations by Lay Committees. This year there are several minor, clarifying additions in a variety of places plus some clarifying additions to the role of convener. In past editions we have not been clear about the liaison role of the convener between the seminary and the lay committee members. Now it is explicitly stated that the FE Department sends materials to the convener who is, then, responsible for communicating them to the members.

As you read these guidelines, you might note a certain tension. On one hand what is offered on pages 7-24 are options for your monthly agenda, not fixed agendas. Always you will be making choices about agenda. On the other hand, these choices should be based on the goals of your particular Lay Committee and use good relational processes as described on pages 3-6. Much of this relational wisdom helps us incarnate our baptismal vow of "respect(ing) the dignity of every human being" and might be applied in other parish settings as well.

If you develop an appetite for knowing more about the Field Education program or the seminarian’s seminary context, you are invited to speak with the seminarian, supervisor, or Carol Jubinski or Jacques Hadler in the Field Education office. Further written information is available on the website www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.

These Guidelines make great use of material compiled and gathered by my predecessors, the Very Reverend William S. Pregnall, who published the first consolidated Field Education Manual in 1979-80, and the Reverend Edward Morgan III, who presided over numerous revisions.

Our previous color-coding conventions have been continued in this edition:

- **Pink** pages for material primarily relating to lay committees;
- **White** pages of lay committee response and evaluation forms for copying.

Jacques Hadler, Jr.

July 9, 2007
Introduction

A. The Process Toward Ordination

Not all seminarians seek ordination, but most who earn the Master in Divinity degree at Virginia Seminary plan to be ordained and do three or four semesters of field education as part of the degree requirement. Therefore, these guidelines are designed primarily to be used with M. Div. seminarians who plan to be ordained.

In order to place field education in the larger context of the ordination process, the following outline is provided. While the process varies from diocese to diocese, there are common elements. The following composite outline shows that persons seeking ordination are involved in a two-part process which ordinarily takes 4-5 years (although in some cases the process can be shorter or much longer).

Part I  Diocesan Process

1-2 Years  - Aspirant seeks support of his or her rector.
            - Application to the Bishop.
            - Parish-based process leading to Vestry recommendation.
            - In some Dioceses, an internship in another parish.
            - Postulancy interview with Commission on Ministry of Diocese.
            - Aspirant interviews with Bishop.
            - Bishop admits Aspirant as Postulant for Holy Orders.

Part II  Seminary Process

Year 1  - Postulant enters Seminary in September.
         - Postulant searches for Field Education site.
         - Postulant completes Junior year of Seminary.
         - Clinical Pastoral Education in summer following.

Year 2  - Begin Middler year of Seminary; begin Field Education.
         - Interview with COM for advancement to Candidate for Holy Orders.
         - COM recommends Postulant to Standing Committee of Diocese.
         - Standing Committee interviews Postulant; recommends to Bishop for advancement to Candidate.
         - Bishop admits Postulant as a Candidate.
         - Conclude Middler year of Seminary.
         - Summer open, although some dioceses require a full-time parish training program.

Year 3  - Begin Senior year of Seminary. Some will continue Field Education for another semester or two.
         - Candidate takes General Ordination Examination (GOE).
         - Standing Committee interviews Candidate and recommends her or him to Bishop for ordination as Deacon.
         - Bishop certifies Candidate for ordination as Deacon.
         - Candidate searches for position doing pastoral ministry.
         - Graduation from Seminary.
         - Ordination as Deacon.
B. The Seminary Educational Context (briefly described)

Theological education is a complex process. It is, on one hand, an interlocking set of disciplines, academic and practical – Bible, Theology, Church History, Ethics, Mission and World Religions, Liturgics, Homiletics, Music, Pastoral Theology, Christian Education, and Field Education. On the other hand it is the journey of a unique human being, a seminarian who, as part of a community of diverse persons, is encountered by God and seeks to respond appropriately.

There are four major dimensions of the process of theological education at Virginia Theological Seminary:

- Learning the Christian tradition (as found in the Bible, Church History, Theology, and Ethics).
- Learning to use one's total capacities to think theologically about this tradition and all of life, and appropriating the tradition as one's own.
- Development of skills for the practice of ministry (such as preaching, leading worship, teaching, leading a congregation).
- Spiritual formation, or the deepening of one's personal identity as a Christian (through worship, private prayer, counseling, and Spiritual Direction).

These areas of development cannot, however, be rigidly compartmentalized. They are only dimensions of a process that is integrated within and by the seminarian. The years in seminary do not complete this process. At best, they prepare a foundation on which to build one's practice of ministry and to continue one's theological education.

For most of our seminarians, the locus for this theological education of persons is twofold: (1) The VTS community of worship, classes, and community life, and (2) The Field Education training site. Far more time is spent on the VTS campus than in the Field Education site, for field involvement is a course in the fall and spring semesters of the middle and senior years, restricted to twelve hours per week. Field Education is the laboratory in which academic learning is weighed and tested by that seminarian who is learning to think theologically.

Field Education provides three arenas for integration by the seminarian: supervision, colloquy, and lay committee. Supervision by an experienced practitioner takes place weekly or bi-weekly. Colloquy is a peer reflection group that meets with faculty, clergy, and lay mentors on a weekly basis during the middle year. Lay committee is a lay reflection group that meets on a monthly basis. We hope that each of these arenas may provide a model to be adapted for continued integration and growth upon graduation and ordination.

It is the purpose of these guidelines to affirm and describe the contribution of the lay committee to theological education. Our hope is that you will join seminarians, field supervisors, and faculty in being both a learner and teacher in this process. In a very practical and ultimate sense it is the Holy Spirit who guides everyone “into all truth.” (John 16:13)
Section One: The Seminarian’s Lay Committee

Introduction

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

Persons interested in the whole Field Education process may consult the old Field Education Manual. Since Field Education is in the midst of several years of on-going revision, there will not be a new Manual for awhile. An old Field Education Manual may be found in the office of an experienced supervisor, or portions of that manual may be found on the VTS website at www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.

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, may give lay committee members insight into what goes on in seminarians’ lives from the start of Seminary to the end.

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 of 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 and Expectations.** A lay committee of five to seven members is recommended. Too large a group diminishes individual participation and may encourage absenteeism; too small a group is neither representative enough nor will it provide the critical mass of at least four persons, plus the seminarian, to make a viable group. Members should be committed to attending every meeting, and miss no more than two of the eight due to emergencies or illness. It will also be helpful if members can be present in worship when the seminarian requests their feedback on preaching or teaching.

Note that there are certain categories of people who are usually counterproductive to a well-functioning lay committee: persons exploring a call to ordained ministry and their families, persons who have formally explored a call to ordained ministry and their families, and any clergy person or relative of a clergy person. Such persons may be helpful to a seminarian individually, but usually they have too much gravity on a lay committee.

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 June 30 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 distribute copies of the Lay Committee Guidelines in August/September of the first year.

To distribute the Field Education Department’s Lay Committee Calendar as well as invitations to Lay Committee Orientation and End of Year Assessment workshop at the beginning of each semester.

To plan each meeting agenda with the seminarian.

To let members know the agenda ahead of time, especially when responding to liturgical activities such as preaching, reading, or public teaching.

To consult with 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 30, 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 by May 15.

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.

If resigning before the end of the year, to contact the Coordinator of Field Education (703/461-1744)

5. **Orientation.** Orientation will be offered for all members at the Seminary in September. It is **strongly suggested** that those who have not served on a lay committee before come to one of the orientations. Further orientation may be done by the Supervisor during the first hour of the first meeting. (See p. 11 “Prior to the Seminarian’s Arrival.”) **Note:** If the Lay Committee has not yet been chosen or cannot attend one of the orientations, it is **wise for the seminarian to attend** the orientation.

6. The Lay Committee and Supervisor consult only:

- by the Lay Committee’s End of the Year Assessment due April 30.
- regarding absentees/resignations (at least four members should be present at each meeting).
- if there are questions or problems.

**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 VTS website.** For forms and further information, type in www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.

2. **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.

3. **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.

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

5. **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.

6. **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, nonparticipation, 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 offers a sample agenda and suggests three approaches to developing topic(s) for the meeting agenda.

   a. **Sample Agenda for the two-hour meeting:**

   - Prayer
   - Checking in with each other (15-30 minutes)
   - Meeting topic(s)
   - Agenda suggestions for next meeting
   - Prayer

   Probably many lay committees will pick and choose from the following 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:

   b. Based on the seminarian's VTS life and work.
   c. Based on activities and issues in Christian ministry.
   d. Based on a Calendar framework for middlers and for seniors.

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

   b. **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 the section, Description of Issues Commonly Arising During Seminary Years, in the old Manual or on the VTS web-site at
www.vts.edu/ — click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.

For example, First Semester Middlers often struggle with time priorities and setting limits. 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.

c. 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 – also located on VTS website – www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box, and provide feedback at the next lay committee meeting. Identify and discuss what "proficiency" means – to whom.

(2) Pastoral Activities and Areas. Look on the VTS web-site for the “Checklist of Pastoral Areas and Activities” at www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box. 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.

d. **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 three parts: one for Middlers, one for Continuing Seniors, and one for One-Year Seniors and Anglican Year Students.

**NOTE:** Some Lay Committees find that filling the recommended two hours is difficult. In this case some committees have made Bible Study a regular part of each or most of their meetings. If this is chosen, don’t assume that the leader ought always to be the seminarian. Rotating the leadership allows each person an opportunity to work on their leadership, and it allows the seminarian to participate from the member position—a position that supports the development of lay ministry.
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.
- 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**

- The convener sees that each committee member receives a copy of the seminarian’s Work/Learning Agreement. This includes not only his/her learning goals and parish responsibilities, but also his/her overall plan for field education. Knowing these things can help you plan your time together and make the best choices for meeting topics.

This meeting may be scheduled within several weeks of the first meeting and continue the process of building trust and group spirit. The topic may center 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**

There are two possibilities:

1. 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.]

Participation in a discussion on these issues of inclusion and being in relationship to God and to a congregation may be helpful for members as well as seminarians. Such questions and issues touch on some of the categories covered in the seminarian's Reflection Paper and may deepen a conversation begun in October.
(2) By now the seminarian has preached or will be preaching. This meeting might best begin with some ground setting for sermon feedback before responding to a specific sermon. (Refer to “Listener Response To Person Reading Scripture In Worship” and “Sermon Response Form” in the Appendix and on the website - www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.) See March of Middler Year, p. 15, for some thoughts on using this form.

December

This is a “short month” for seminarians since classes end in the second week. A long break follows, covering the Christmas Season and the month of January. Because this break can have a disconnecting effect on the relationship between seminarian and congregation, it is important to prepare for it. The best preparation we know is to hear the seminarian’s plans for this time and to plans ways to maintain awareness of the seminarian during his/her absence. Some seminarians will have plans to be away the whole time; in this case, praying for them in the prayers of the people and explaining their absence to those who wonder whether s/he will be coming back may be enough. Other seminarians will be at seminary taking intensive courses and may desire to attend worship and coffee hour in order to maintain contact. Still others will contract with their supervisor to do some intensive work during January and continue to be very present. A few will negotiate with their supervisor to return to the parish sometime in January in exchange for finishing field education earlier. If the last option is chosen, the lay committee can begin its second semester meetings in January rather than February.

Besides everyone sharing plans for the Christmas holiday and January term and making arrangements for picking up again in February, there are two possibilities:

(1) If you chose option #2 in Nov., option #1 of Nov. is still timely.

(2) 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 – also available on the VTS website www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box) 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 (Pages 14 – 17)**

**February**

Seminarians usually return to Field Education the first Sunday of the 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 after the long break and to re-build their work together. Because of the “getting back on board” nature of this meeting, it may take longer than the usual two hours.

Over the break the seminarian may have made important contacts – with home parish, with diocesan officials, and with extended family. S/he may have done a cross-cultural internship, gone on retreat, or taken some special courses. 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 in early April has to do with the sacred story of God with this congregation, including reflections on its
leadership. Some discussion in 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.

**March**

Discussion of a seminarian's sermon is valuable. Spend no more than one session a semester responding to the seminarian's preaching unless the seminarian’s learning focus is preaching or there are serious problems with his/her 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 Response Form” form (available in the Appendix for making copies – also available on VTS website www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box) 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. (See also the section in the Appendix on "Listener Response to Person Reading Scripture in Worship")

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 is reminded to fill out his or her End-of-the-Year Assessment of Middlers form (found in the Appendix or on the web site) and bring it to the April meeting.

**April**

The April meeting should be a comprehensive 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 30. A copy of the lay committee assessment may be sent to the Director of Field Education, but is basically meant to inform the seminarian and supervisor’s evaluation session in May.

**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. 4 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. This becomes the summary report which the convener submits to the field education supervisor. (The convener may also receive a copy of each member’s assessment and use these to write the summary report following the meeting.) *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 summary report is submitted in writing only once, by April 30, 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**

May like December is a short month, with field education ending on the second Sunday. Once again the meeting might focus on sharing plans for the upcoming break (over the summer) and making arrangements for beginning again in the fall. You may also want to review your year of work and group life and then socially celebrate it.

We ask that the convener of the lay committee fill in and mail the "End of the Year Evaluation of Lay Committee Work" (master available in the Appendix and on the website) to the Director of Field Education by May 15. This data is
used in revising program and materials for the future; they are invaluable feedback from the lay committee to the Seminary.

NOTE: If the seminarian is completing his/her field education and will not be returning or meeting with you again, then this is your last meeting. It is appropriate that the focus of the gathering becomes closure, and hopefully a celebration of the life you have shared together.

**Continuing Seniors - Third Semester at Site (Pages 17 – 20)**

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, including the timing of the seminarian’s plans for completing Field Education. Will it be in December or May?

**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 and sharing expectations for the new year, including anticipated senior year issues, will provide a good beginning.

NOTE: 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. 11, 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.

NOTE: If the seminarian is completing his/her official Field Education in December, then the Lay Committee has three possible paths, depending on the seminarian’s plans:

a. If the seminarian is leaving the parish, then all the closure activities of the April and May agendas need to be attended to in December:
-Review for Seniors is due to the supervisor on December 8.
-The Review session may be combined with the final, ‘social’ gathering as described for May.
-A parish-wide farewell.

b. If the seminarian is staying with the parish unofficially and will not be continuing unofficially with the Lay Committee, then only the official Lay Committee Review for Seniors needs to be attended to by December 8 and given to the supervisor.
- The final, ‘social’ gathering of the Lay Committee as described for May might be held at any convenient time between December and May.
- The parish-wide farewell would take place near the seminarian’s last Sunday.

c. If the seminarian is staying with the parish unofficially and will also be continuing unofficially with the Lay Committee, then only the official Lay Committee Review for Seniors needs to be attended to by December 8 and given to the supervisor for the last evaluation.
- A meeting rhythm needs to be agreed upon with the seminarian for the Fourth Semester. The conditions for these meetings are completely at the discretion of the two parties, since there is no more accountability or reporting to either the supervisor or the Field Education Department.
- The final, ‘social’ gathering as described for May might be held at any appropriate time before the seminarian departs.
- The parish-wide farewell would take place near the seminarian’s last Sunday.

October through March

The agendas for these next five meetings can touch on a variety of topics based on the learning needs and situation of the seminarian. These can be generated according to the issues in seminarian’s diocesan process, field education learning goals, pastoral activities and areas, or issues in Christian ministry (refer to the Guidelines pp. 8-10 for details).

A common agenda for the seminarian concerned with preaching or teaching is to schedule meetings following preaching or following a class presentation, and discussing the sermon or classroom session. If a "Helping Preaching Happen" workshop is offered during the fall and you have not attended before, this might be a time to revisit your sermon response format and your seminarian's development as a preacher. (Refer to “Listener Response To Person Reading Scripture In Worship “ and “Sermon Response Form” in the Appendix and on the website - www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.)

With General Ordination Examinations (GOE’s) coming in early January, some seminarians see the months October through December as a preparation period. During these months, the committee’s agenda could also focus on posing ‘Coffee Hour’ questions to the seminarian for response and then group discussion. These are the kind of short questions, arising out of curiosity or
confusion, which you or your children might ask an ordained person during a
coffee hour encounter. (Sample GOE questions, from past examinations, are
available in the VTS library. If these will be helpful, ask your seminarian to
bring copies.)

Still another possibility arises from seminarians reporting 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.)

For married or engaged seminarians, it has proven helpful to invite the
seminarian’s spouse or fiancé(e) for a meeting in December or during the
second semester. 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.

**December**

Remember there are only about two weeks of classes before reading period
and exams. Seniors may be anxious about GOEs in early January and about
any ordination and job search encounters which may take place between now
and February. Some attention to these areas may be appreciated by the
seminarian.

NOTE 1: If the seminarian is completing his/her field education and will not
be returning or meeting with you again, then this is probably your last
meeting. It is appropriate that the focus of the gathering becomes closure with
the Review for Seniors (see March and April meeting notes and use a due date
to the supervisor of December 8), and hopefully a celebration of the life you have shared together (see May meeting notes).

NOTE 2: If the seminarian is continuing, this is a “short month”, followed by a long break covering the Christmas Season and the month of January. Because this break can have a disconnecting effect on the relationship between seminarian and congregation, it is important to prepare for it. The best preparation we know is to hear the seminarian’s plans for this time and to plan ways to maintain awareness of the seminarian during his/her absence. Most seniors will be taking GOEs over a five-day period in the first or second week of January. Then, some will have plans to be away the rest of the time; in this case, praying for them in the prayers of the people and explaining their absence to those who wonder whether s/he will be coming back may be enough. Other seminarians will continue at seminary taking intensive courses and may desire to attend worship and coffee hour in order to maintain contact. Still others will contract with their supervisor to do some intensive work during January and continue to be very present. A few will negotiate with their supervisor to return to the parish sometime in January in exchange for finishing field education earlier. If the last option is chosen, the lay committee can begin its second semester meetings in January rather than February.

Continuing Seniors - Fourth Semester at Site (Pages 20 – 22)

February

Besides "catching up" from the Christmas and January break, 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. Others have shared about how they stand with their diocese and how that affects their ordination and the job search which lies ahead. Because of the “getting back on board” nature of this meeting, it may take longer than the usual two hours.

In addition to the possible agendas for February and March mentioned on pages 18-19 in the section “October through March”, the following may also be appropriate:

We want graduates of VTS to be pastors who provide vital Christian leadership so that all baptized persons in the parish have a sense of their unique and God-commissioned ministries. A simple exercise to explore this task follows:

- Each member takes a few minutes to meditate, 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 ...

20
• 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 agenda is chosen for 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 below to a paragraph on closure for the seminarian.) A discussion of "goodbyes" in general and this "goodbye" in particular may be an appropriate topic. *Each member is reminded to fill out his or her End-of-the-Year Review for Seniors form (found in the Appendix or on the web site) and bring it to the April meeting.*

The seminary hosts a Lay Committee Appreciation Celebration for members of seniors' lay committees and their senior seminarian in early April. 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.

**Closure.** Being able to say goodbye to friends at seminary and in field parishes is important. Closure needs to be intentional. That is, we need to say our thank-yous, express our disappointments, regrets, joys, and fulfillments in a straightforward manner. Not to do so is to discover later that though the body may have moved on, the spirit is still back at VTS or the field parish. Liturgizing closure through farewell parties, services of worship celebrating the past time together, and simple handshakes, embraces, or personal notes is valuable. In order to be free to enter a new ministry after ordination, it is essential to close the field-site ministry gracefully and straightforwardly. Now is a good time to be aware of these dynamics, and May is a good time to live them out publicly.

**April**

Each member brings his or her Review in writing. (If a lay committee member joined the committee this year, then you may find the thoughts given on p. 15 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 30. A review of the lay committee’s work and life by the seminarian may also be in order as part of his/her closure.

**May**

May like December is a short month, with field education ending on the second Sunday. The lay committee will, of course, want to share in any
parish-wide farewell for the seminarian. Some members may be able to attend the Commencement, if tickets are available.

It is appropriate that a final, ‘social’ gathering take place, celebrating the group’s life and offering opportunities for individuals to share their plans for the immediate future.

The committee may also 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" (master available in the Appendix and on the Web-site) is filled in by the convener and forwarded to the Director of Field Education by May 15.

One-Year Seniors and Anglican Year Students (Pages 22 – 23)

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. For Lay Committee members who have served on two year Committees, this seems like too short a time to accomplish the goals of forming a trusting group and promoting a seminarian’s formation as an Episcopal/Anglican priest. Thus it is important to begin more intensively than usual by holding the first two meetings several weeks apart in September and early October, and by making a commitment to honest sharing and forthright conversation from the beginning.

Because a good fall semester start will be interrupted by the long Christmas/January term break, preparing for that break and intentionally taking time to re-connect in February can help to re-establish the momentum lost and lead to a satisfying spring. Possibilities for bridging this break are referenced below.

Because this is a ‘hybrid’ year with group elements of Middler start-up and with seminarian issues from the Senior/Anglican Year, we will make reference to agendas from both of these previous sections of the Guidelines and add some special considerations based on their one-year situation.

September

Follow the Middlers – September suggestions (p.11f).

NOTE for Anglican Year Committees: Most Anglican Year students have been ordained in another Christian tradition and have some years of experience in ministry in their previous denomination. Other Anglican Year students have completed two or three years of formation in a non-Episcopal seminary. In this introductory meeting, check out the seminarian’s experience in ministry. The former will be focused on learning about ministry in the Episcopal Church, while the latter may also have some skill-building goals. Thus their learning needs will be quite different from the usual three-year
seminarian. They are further along in developing the requisite skills for ordained ministry, and the former have already passed through the territory of forming a ministerial identity. Now their learning needs have to do with their Anglican identity. This leads to at least three areas of work: gaining comfort with the Prayer Book liturgy, learning to think like an Anglican, and understanding the subtleties of Anglican polity including how vestries work.

**October**

Read both the Middler – October suggestions (p.12) for group building and the Continuing Senior – October through March (p.18f) suggestions for topics, in order to help you see the road ahead and plan your topics accordingly.

- The convener sees that each committee member receives a copy of the seminarian’s Work/Learning Agreement. This clearly states his/her learning goals and parish responsibilities, and is another resource in planning your time together and making the best choices for meeting topics.

**NOTE for Senior Committees:** Because the seminarian has already done a year of field education, s/he is likely to be quite focused on certain learning goals, to build on what s/he has already learned or to learn in territory not yet explored. Expect more clarity and leadership than from a middler who would be just starting out in this new role.

**NOTE for Anglican Year Committees:** The three areas of work on Anglican identity (gaining comfort with the Prayer Book liturgy, learning to think like an Anglican, and understanding the subtleties of Anglican polity including how vestries work) provide three important areas for agenda building. If desired, the lay committee can provide feedback on liturgical presence. If desired the committee can work on ‘thinking Anglican’, especially with coffee hour questions from the GOEs. If desired, the committee can reflect upon and discuss the workings of the vestry, the rector, the annual meeting and the individual member – their division of labor, distribution of responsibility, and interaction for the good of the Body.

**November through March**

The agendas for these next four meetings can touch on a variety of topics based on the learning needs and situation of the seminarian. Options are described in the Continuing Senior - October through March section (p.18f). Additional options for Anglican Year Students are described in the above October NOTE for Anglican Year Committees.

**December**

Look at the Continuing Senior – December thoughts (p.19) and NOTE 2 (p.20) and build your agenda with these considerations in mind.
One-Year Seniors and Anglican Students - Second Semester

February

Look at the Continuing Senior – February thoughts (p.20) and build your agenda with these considerations in mind.

March

Follow the Continuing Senior – March suggestions (p.21).

NOTE for Anglican Year Committees: Please use the End-of-the-Year Review for Seniors form (found in the Appendix or on the web site) for your Anglican Year student. Also please know that you are included in the invitation to the Lay Committee Appreciation Dinner in early April.

April

Each member brings his or her Review in writing. (Since this is your first time to review your seminarian’s work and learning, you may find the thoughts given on pp. 15-16 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 30. A review of the lay committee’s work and life by the seminarian may also be in order as part of his/her closure.

May

Follow the Continuing Senior – May suggestions (p. 21f).
APPENDICES

(These can be downloaded from the VTS Website - www.vts.edu/ -- click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.)
**LISTENER RESPONSE TO PERSON READING SCRIPTURE IN WORSHIP**

Reader _______________________________ Listener _______________________________

Date of Reading ______________________ Place _________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you usually listen carefully to readers?</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you listen carefully to this reader?</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you usually hear and understand the words?</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you hear and understand the words of this reader?</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you usually comprehend a &quot;message&quot; as the Scripture is read in worship?</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you comprehend a message this time?</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Did the reader communicate the meaning of the passage by the way he or she read it?</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Did the reading come across to you as the Word of God?</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you think the reader seemed thoroughly prepared to communicate the meaning of the passage?</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. In what ways did the reader's delivery (demeanor, voice, movements, posture, eyes, hands, etc.) help or hinder in communicating the meaning of the passage to you?

8. What would you like to tell the reader about his or her ability to communicate the Word of God from the lectern?

8/94
Sermon Response Form

Responder___________________ Date_____________

NOTE: These questions are guidelines for your response to the sermon. Following the service, please answer at least four of the questions, including #1 and either #4 or #5. Use the back for any additional comments.

1. What did you hear in this sermon? What was its central focus, insight, or affirmation?

2. How did this sermon act on you? What did it move you to be or to do?

3. How did this sermon make you feel?

4. Which specific features* contributed to the effectiveness of this sermon?

5. Which specific features* of the sermon hindered your hearing of its message?

6. Which aspects of the preacher’s ‘performance’ of the sermon helped/hindered your hearing of it?

7. How did the sermon fit into the whole service of worship?

8. What touched you in this sermon? What will you take away with you?

* (engagement with text, engagement with our lives, form/structure, use of language and imagery)

[See March of Middler Year, p. 15, for some thoughts on using this form.]
LAY COMMITTEE'S END OF THE YEAR ASSESSMENT OF MIDDLES

This form may also be found on the VTS web-site at: http://www.vts.edu. Click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.

*Each lay committee member completes this form before the feedback session with the seminarian. (For some thoughts on assessment standards, see "Individual Preparation Process" in the Guidelines, p. 15.) After the session, the convener makes a composite assessment and gives a copy to the supervisor and to the seminarian. If the committee wishes, the convener may also send a composite to the Director of Field Education.*

CONVENER: RETURN ONE COMPOSITE COPY TO THE SEMINARIAN'S PARISH SUPERVISOR BY APRIL 29.

Seminarian's Name ________________________________________________________________

Training Site ________________________________________________________________

Name __________________________ Location __________________________

Date ________________ Number of meetings this academic year with seminarian _______

1. Comment on the seminarian's performance in ministry in your site. Please give supporting data for your comments.

2. Comment on growth observed and future growth desirable in each of the following four areas:

   A. Knowledge. The seminarian’s use of knowledge of the Christian tradition (Bible, theology, church history, ethics, liturgics) in ministry among you. For example, have you learned more about our Christian tradition from conversation and meetings with the seminarian?

   B. Skill. Development of skills for the practice of ministry. For example, did the seminarian learn or improve skills as a leader of worship, teacher, enabler of others' ministry, pastor, manager of differences, dissent, and resistance?
B.  **Skill (continued)**

  Preaching skill:

  Describe the preaching of this seminarian:
  What is distinctive about it? How has it developed over the course of this year?

  What might be some appropriate next steps in this preacher’s growth?

C.  **Spiritual Formation.** Comment on your perception of the seminarian’s spiritual formation or deepening of Christian identity. Can you cite examples of spiritual growth?

3.  A.  **Leadership.** Comment on the seminarian’s exercise of leadership in this and any other group for which s/he has responsibility. How does s/he share leadership, abdicate, assert, dominate, etc.? How does s/he treat other group members?

   B.  Describe his/her leadership style.

4.  At this point, how would you describe this seminarian’s progress toward ordained ministry in the church?

5.  Further comments (use additional page if needed).
LAY COMMITTEE'S END OF THE YEAR REVIEW FOR SENIORS

This form may also be found on the VTS web-site at: http://www.vts.edu. Click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.

Each lay committee member completes this form before the feedback session with the seminarian. After the session, the convener makes a composite assessment and gives a copy to the supervisor and to the seminarian. If the committee wishes, the convener may also send a composite to the Director of Field Education.

CONVENER: RETURN ONE COMPOSITE COPY TO THE SEMINARIAN'S PARISH SUPERVISOR BY APRIL 29.

Seminarian's Name ______________________________________________________________

Training Site ____________________________

Name ____________________________ Location ____________________________

Date ____________________________ Number of meetings this academic year with seminarian:

In committee ________ One-on-one __________

1. The high point of your ministry in this training site this year for me was...

2. I hope you will continue to grow in...

3. In your ministry here the most valuable thing I have received from you is...
4. I have tried to give you...

5. Other thoughts...

____________________
Signature (Convener) (Member)
END OF THE YEAR EVALUATION OF LAY COMMITTEE WORK
(to be completed at the end of both the middler and senior years)

This form may also be found on the VTS web-site at: http://www.vts.edu. Click on “Field Education” under Current Students, then click on “Downloadable Forms” and scroll down to the “Lay Committee” box.

To be completed by the Lay Committee Convener and returned by May 15 to:
Director of Field Education, Virginia Theological Seminary, 3737 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304

Training Site _______________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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Seminarian ___________________________ Convener _______________________

Date ________________ Number of meetings this academic year with seminarian____

Number of Committee Members _____________ Average attendance __________

Your response to the following questions will help the Director of Field Education to offer the best support possible to lay committees in the future.

1. Agenda Planning
   A. Was the agenda planned prior to the meeting?
      Always _____ Usually _____ Sometimes _____ Seldom/Never _____
   B. By whom and how was the agenda developed?
   C. How effective, do you think, was this method of agenda development?
      Very _____ Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory _________
      Why?

2. Meetings
   A. Location:
   B. Format:
   C. Content: ____ Derived primarily from the Guidelines
                  ____ Derived primarily from other sources
   D. Useful Processes. Please describe something that “really worked” or was particularly helpful.
3. **The Lay Committee Guidelines**

   A. Did you find the Guidelines
      
      Very Helpful _____ Helpful _____ Not Much Help _____ No Help ______

   B. Suggestions for improving the Guidelines (please be very explicit, concrete, and descriptive - use another sheet if necessary).

4. **Support and Training.** Please comment on what was helpful during the past year, and what could be provided in the future that would be helpful.

5. **Satisfaction.** Overall, how did your committee feel about its work?

   Very Satisfied _____ Satisfied _____ Somewhat Satisfied _____ Frustrated ______

6. **Other comments:**

7. I (will ____ ) (will not ____ ) (am not sure whether I will or will not ___ ) continue as convener for a seminarian's lay committee next year.

   Other convener, if known at this time:

   Name ____________________________________________________________

   Address ______________________________________ Phone _____________