

**Episcopal Diocese of Maine  
Deacon Formation Program**

**Education for Pastoral Care:  
An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

**June 2006**

June 2000

This material has been prepared  
for the Episcopal Diocese of Maine Deacon Formation Program  
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**Episcopal Diocese of Maine  
Deacon Formation Program**

**Education for Pastoral Care:  
An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Background	1
Implementation	1
Purpose	2
Essential Components	2
1. Individual Learning Contract	3
2. 100 hours of structured education in group and individual settings	4
3. 300 hours of supervised clinical practice	6
4. Evaluations	7
Appendices	
Appendix A: Coversheet for Proposal	8
Appendix B: Individual Learning Contract	9
Appendix C: Evaluation Questions	
Deacon Postulant's Self-evaluation	10
Supervisor's Evaluation	12
Addendum	13

1

**Episcopal Diocese of Maine  
Deacon Formation Program  
Education for Pastoral Education:  
An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

**Background**

In the past, some people in Maine who have had a sense of call to the diaconate have been prevented from responding to that call because of the Clinical Pastoral Education (hereafter, CPE) requirement. These were people who did not live within commuting distance of the CPE sites in Maine (Lewiston and Portland) or people who, because of their employment, have not been able to participate in traditional five-day-a-week CPE programs. In order to open the diaconate to such people, in October 1999 the requirements for ordination to the diaconate in Maine were changed to read “completion of CPE or alternative CPE” (Diocese of Maine *Ordination Process Handbook: Diaconate, October 20, 1999*; page 12).

Education for Pastoral Education (EPC) is an alternative model of clinical pastoral education, based on the purpose and the essential components of traditional CPE. Given the aforementioned geographic and employment realities, this alternative model does not have a fixed geographic location (i.e., CPE site). EPC may be implemented in any location in which the necessary human and organizational resources are available.

**Implementation**

The specifics of implementing EPC will be developed in written form by a deacon postulant, in consultation with a supervisor and with the Deacon Formation Program (hereafter, DFP) Coordinator. In order to assure that EPC provides formational focus appropriate to the individual, attention will be given to the deacon postulant’s previous background and experience.

The written proposal, signed by the deacon postulant and the supervisor will be submitted to the DFP Coordinator for approval and once approved will be sent to the Bishop for review and approval. Following approval by the Bishop, the coversheet with signatures will be returned to the deacon postulant and copies of the coversheet will be sent to the supervisor and the DFP Coordinator. A coversheet for such proposals is included in this document, Appendix A.

This alternative model of clinical pastoral education is based on *The Standards of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, 1999*, and on *The General Theological Seminary Field Education Handbook, Revised, August 1994*.

2

**Episcopal Diocese of Maine  
Deacon Formation Program  
Education for Pastoral Education:  
An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

**Purpose**

The purposes of EPC, as set forth in this alternative model, are to (1) foster growth in personal and pastoral identity of deacon postulants and (2) to facilitate the development of pastoral skills of deacon postulants.

With regard to personal identity, one objective of EPC is for deacon postulants to further their understanding of how they affect others in individual, one-on-one, settings and in group settings. A second objective related to personal identity is for deacon postulants to become more aware of how their attitudes, values and assumptions affect their relationships and their ministries.

With respect to pastoral identity, the objectives of EPC are for deacon postulants to increase in their understanding of themselves as pastoral caregivers and for deacon postulants to become more aware of their pastoral role in relation to other professionals (i.e., clergy of other faiths, social workers, nurses, doctors, hospice workers).

In the area of pastoral skills, the objective of EPC is for deacon postulants to learn about and acquire skills in the areas of group dynamics, consultation and collaboration, theological reflection, and pastoral care-giving. Specifically, the goals for deacon postulants are: (1) to acquire a theoretical and experiential understanding of group dynamics; (2) to be able to enter into peer group and supervisory relationships characterized by consultation, collaboration and dialogue; (3) to acquire an understanding of the theological issues of pastoral caregiving situations; and (4) to acquire pastoral caregiving skills including listening, non-anxious and non-judgmental presence, clear and responsible boundaries, appropriate use of religious and spiritual resources.

**Essential Components**

The essential components of EPC, as set forth in this alternative model, are: (1) an individual learning contract; (2) 100 hours of structured group and individual education that include education, individual supervision and group supervision; (3) 300 hours of supervised clinical practice; and (4) an evaluation process. These essential components are described in more detail below.

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3

**Episcopal Diocese of Maine  
Deacon Formation Program  
Education for Pastoral Education:  
An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

**Essential Component 1: Individual Learning Contract**

Once a proposal for a particular program of EPC has been approved, the deacon postulant and the supervisor will work together to develop an Individual Learning Contract. This Individual Learning Contract should follow from the proposal.

In the Individual Learning Contract the deacon postulant and the supervisor will describe clearly the goals and objectives of the EPC program. Learning experiences, available resources and details regarding supervision will also be described.

The Individual Learning Contract is to be completed, signed by participant and supervisor, and submitted to the Deacon Formation Program Coordinator no later than the end of the first month of the participant's involvement in the EPC program.

The format for Individual Learning Contract is in Appendix B

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4

**Episcopal Diocese of Maine  
Deacon Formation Program  
Education for Pastoral Education:  
An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

**Essential Component 2: 100 hours of structured education  
in group and individual settings**

GUIDELINE: Of this 100 hours of structured education, approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the time will be in education,  $\frac{1}{4}$  in individual supervision, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  in group supervision.

**Education**

Within the context of EPC, structured education is understood to be a defined course of study. Such a course of study will include, but not be limited to human development, personal dynamics, group dynamics, theories of pastoral care, and introduction to multi-cultural dynamics including death practices.

**Individual and Group Supervision**

Supervision in EPC involves a covenanted relationship between a deacon postulant and a supervisor. Supervisors are important mentors. Supervisors and deacon postulants need clarity about roles and goals. Thus supervisory relationships will not be based in already established personal friendship, spiritual direction, pastoral counseling, or relationship with the priest of one's home / sponsoring congregation. Additionally, the supervisor should not be someone who is in another evaluative role with respect to the deacon postulant. Deacon postulants need to have the freedom to make some mistakes, as well as to achieve some goals and experience some vocational affirmation.

A supervisor is a person who has experience working with groups; understands theological reflection; understands and models pastoral care-giving, though the supervisor does not need to be an ordained person; understands CPE and the CPE process, though the supervisor does not need to have taken CPE; and is in supervision.

Supervision also involves intentional learning and working goals, developed by the participant in consultation with the supervisor.

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**Episcopal Diocese of Maine**  
**Deacon Formation Program**  
**Education for Pastoral Education:**  
**An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

EPC includes both individual and group supervision. Individual supervision normally should happen weekly for at least an hour or on some equivalent basis, which is marked by regularity and the full attention of the supervisor and the deacon postulant. Supervision is not lunch once a month, a nice chat once in a while or simple companionship in an otherwise lonely ministry.

Group supervision also should happen on a regular basis, preferably weekly, and in group of at least 3 plus the supervisor.

Supervision will include clinical tools of supervision such as verbatims, case studies, and critical incident reports.

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**Episcopal Diocese of Maine**  
**Deacon Formation Program**  
**Education for Pastoral Education:**  
**An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

**Essential Component 3: 300 hours of supervised clinical practice**

These 300 hours of supervised clinical practice are to be experiences in ministry to persons in multiple settings. Many traditional CPE sites are hospitals where CPE students minister to people in different units or wards. The guideline for EPC is for supervised ministry experiences to be in three (3) different settings. For example, if the primary setting is in a nursing home, then some ministry experiences might be home visits to parishioners and hospital visits. Or, if the primary setting is a community agency, additional ministry experiences might be home visits to parishioners and nursing home visits.

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7

**Episcopal Diocese of Maine  
Deacon Formation Program  
Education for Pastoral Education:  
An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

**Essential Component 4: Evaluation**

Evaluation of the deacon postulant's experience is required. Evaluation may take various forms, be conducted with a variety of persons, occur at many and various times, and serve multiple purposes. In the context of EPC, evaluation is a disciplined, deliberate and on-going process, which is to be undertaken by the deacon postulant and the supervisor. Evaluation will encourage integration of the deacon postulant's experiences, affirm gifts and strengths, and identify areas for continued growth and learning.

Half-way through the program and again at the conclusion of the program, the deacon postulant and the supervisor will share conjointly in an evaluation process. This evaluation grows out of the stated goals of the Individual Learning Contract and, if supervision has been regular and honest there should be few, if any, surprises. Outlines for these evaluations are included in Appendix C.

Both the deacon postulant and the supervisor are to submit written evaluations to the DFP Coordinator. The DFP Coordinator will forward a copy of each evaluation to the Bishop. When the deacon postulant applies to the Committee on Holy Orders (hereafter, COHO) for ordination, copies of these evaluations will be sent by the Bishop to members of COHO for their consideration. These evaluations are held in confidence by the Bishop, by the DFP Coordinator and by members of COHO. The release of the evaluations for any other purpose can only be done by written permission of the deacon postulant.

Evaluations are to:

1. identify deacon postulant, supervisor, program location, date and preparer of document.
2. be submitted within thirty calendar days of the mid-point of the program and within thirty calendar days of the end of the program.
3. protect the confidentiality of the deacon postulant, peers, and persons to whom the deacon postulant ministered.
4. be typed.
5. be signed and dated by the deacon postulant and the supervisor.

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**Episcopal Diocese of Maine  
Deacon Formation Program  
Education for Pastoral Education:  
An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

**Appendix A  
Coversheet for EPC Proposal**

**Proposal prepared by the Deacon Postulant, in consultation with his/her Supervisor and the DFP Coordinator.**

Deacon Postulant \_\_\_\_\_  
Print or Type Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and Date

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
Print or Type Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and Date

DFP Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_  
Print or Type Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and Date

Bishop of Maine \_\_\_\_\_  
Print or Type Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and Date

**Copies of the approved proposal and coversheet with signatures will be sent to the Deacon Postulant, the Supervisor and the DFP Coordinator.**

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9

**Episcopal Diocese of Maine  
Deacon Formation Program  
Education for Pastoral Education:  
An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

**Appendix B  
Individual Learning Contract**

1. The deacon postulant is to state her/his learning goals in this EPC program with respect to:
  - a. Reason for arranging this particular program.
  - b. General learning expectations.
2. The supervisor is to state her/his goals in supervising this deacon postulant with respect to:
  - a. Reason for choosing to supervise.
  - b. Institution's expectations of the deacon postulant.
3. The deacon postulant is to state what he/she wants to learn and how he/she wants to grow as a result of this EPC program.
4. The deacon postulant and the supervisor are to list and describe the experiences, related to the learning objectives, in which the deacon postulant will be involved.
5. The deacon postulant and the supervisor are to list and describe the resources available to assist the deacon postulant in accomplishing her/his objectives and experiences.
6. With regard to supervision, the deacon postulant and the supervisor are to:
  - a. describe how the work of the participant will be presented, reflected upon and assessed.
  - b. describe specific plans for supervision: day, time, place
7. The Individual Learning Contract is to be completed, signed by the deacon postulant and the supervisor, and submitted to the Deacon Formation Program Coordinator no later than the end of the first month of the deacon postulant's involvement in the approved EPC program.

A copy of the contract, signed by the Deacon Formation Program Coordinator, will be returned to each the deacon postulant and the supervisor.

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**Episcopal Diocese of Maine**  
**Deacon Formation Program**  
**Education for Pastoral Education:**  
**An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

10

**Appendix C**

**Deacon Postulant's Self-evaluation**

**The Deacon Postulant is to submit a written evaluation  
half-way through the program and at the end of the program.  
The evaluations, signed by the Deacon Postulant and by the Supervisor,  
are to be submitted to  
to the DFP Coordinator who will forward a copy to the Bishop.**

- A. Regarding the Individual Learning Contract
  - 1. Half-way through the program
    - a. Are there changes you would like to make to your Individual Learning Contract?
    - b. If so, what are these changes? [NOTE: In order that everyone involved (deacon postulant, supervisor, DFP Coordinator) is clear about these changes, submit a Revised Individual Learning Contract along with this evaluation.]
  - 2. At the end of the Program
    - a. Did you meet your learning goals and objectives? If not, what happened, what "got in the way?"
    - b. What assistance might have helped you in developing your Individual Learning Contract?
  
- B. You as Pastoral Caregiver
  - 1. What has surprised you most about yourself as a pastoral caregiver?
  - 2. With what aspect of being a pastoral caregiver are you most comfortable?
  - 3. With what aspect of being a pastoral caregiver are you least comfortable?
  
- C. Your Pastoral Caregiving Skills
  - 1. You began this program with education, experiences and skills.
    - a. What education, experiences, skills previously acquired have been most useful to you as a pastoral caregiver?
    - b. Are there any previously acquired skills that have been unhelpful or that have "gotten in your way" as a pastoral caregiver?

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**Episcopal Diocese of Maine**  
**Deacon Formation Program**  
**Education for Pastoral Education:**  
**An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

11

2. Your alternative model of clinical pastoral education includes structured education, in group and in individual settings.
  - a. What about the structured education (content or process or ???) has been most helpful?
  - b. Are there topics that have not been included that would be helpful?
3. Are there pastoral caregiving experiences you would still like to have? If so, what are they?

**D. Your Learning**

1. In what ways has your alternative model of clinical pastoral education been helpful to you so far? Please give specific examples.
2. Are there ways your alternative model of clinical pastoral education has been unhelpful to you? If so, please give specific examples.
3. With regard to the **PROCESS** of peer group sessions, what has been most helpful about these sessions? What has been most unhelpful?
4. Again with regard to **PROCESS**, what has been most helpful about individual supervision? What has been most unhelpful?
5. With regard to this evaluation process,
  - a. What has been helpful?
  - b. What has not been helpful?
  - c. What suggestions do you have for how to make this evaluation process more helpful?

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**Episcopal Diocese of Maine**  
**Deacon Formation Program**  
**Education for Pastoral Education:**  
**An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

12

**Supervisor's Evaluation**

**The Supervisor is to submit a written evaluation of the Deacon Postulant half-way through the program and at the end of the program. The evaluations, signed by the Supervisor and by the Deacon Postulant, are to be submitted to the DFP Coordinator who will forward a copy to the Bishop.**

- A. Regarding the Individual Learning Contract
  - 1. Half-way through the program
    - a. Are there changes you would like to suggest to the deacon postulant with regard to her/his Individual Learning Contract?
    - b. If so, what are these changes? [NOTE: In order that everyone involved (deacon postulant, supervisor, DFP Coordinator) are clear, if any changes are made, a Revised Individual Learning Contract is to be submitted along with this evaluation.]
  - 2. At the end of the Program
    - a. From your perspective as supervisor, did the deacon postulant meet her/his learning goals and objectives? If not, what to you think happened, what might have "gotten in the way?"
    - b. What assistance might have helped you in the development of the Individual Learning Contract?
- B. Describe the deacon postulant as a pastoral caregiver.
- C. Describe the deacon postulant's skills as a pastoral caregiver.
- D. Describe how the deacon postulant has engaged in this alternative model of clinical pastoral education with respect to ...
  - 1. Structured educational settings
  - 2. Peer group supervision
  - 3. Individual supervision
- E. What suggestions do you have with regard to this evaluation process?

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**Episcopal Diocese of Maine**  
**Deacon Formation Program**  
**Education for Pastoral Education:**  
**An Alternative Model of Clinical Pastoral Education**

13

**Addenda**

**Summer 2000**

*confidentiality*

covered by, and follow, the confidentiality guidelines of institutions within which one functions

ask that institution to be clear in writing about their guidelines

*Liability*

category of “volunteer”

all such guidelines as apply to volunteers at the institution should cover

**February 2001**

*Hours*

Most traditional Clinical Pastoral Education programs seem to provide within clinical hours some amount of time for writing notes. Traditional programs reviewed suggest that within 300 hours of supervised clinical practice there could reasonably be 40 hours for writing notes. Traditional programs also seem to have from 25 to 100 hours that do not quite fit into clinical practice or writing notes. Given these considerations, the Episcopal Diocese of Maine DFP Education for Pastoral (EPC) education model will understand 300 hours of supervised clinical practice as including:

40 hours - writing notes

25 hours - other work in the Education for Pastoral Care program

235 hours - patient hours in the settings described in a particular EPC proposal

**June 2006**

*Safe Church Training*

Participants in EPC programs in the Diocese of Maine are to complete Safe Church Training or an approved equivalent before beginning pastoral visits.

*Liability*

Participants in EPC programs who are members of congregations of the Diocese of Maine are “volunteers covered under our Liability policy.”

The Rev. Dr. Margaret A. Thomas  
DFP Coordinator

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3/27/2009