



## **Alternatives to CPE in Diaconal Formation**

Archdeacon and Director's Conference: Open Space Notes - Spring 2014

*Every year, AED convenes a large group of Archdeacons and Deacon Directors for a professional learning lab. Using [Open Space Technology](#) methods to shape the discussion, these experts in diaconal formation and management of deacon programs provide peer review of adaptations made in their local programs, or raise timely issues for general discussion. Discussion notes are kept. These "Open Space Notes," while often written informally, provide the best and most recent thinking on a variety of diaconal theological and management challenges by a body of experienced deacons with a wealth of knowledge. Names listed are those of the Conveners. Contact information to initiate further discussion may often be located in the [Directory of Deacons](#) published by AED annually.*

### **How does your Diocese satisfy "Practical Training and Experience" ... other than CPE?**

#### **Kyle Pedersen and Jan Grinnell - Province I**

**Diocese of Montana** (Roxanne Klingensmith and Connie Campbell) - no CPE option, passed out a packet being used; bishop is supporting 9 month diaconal process for diaconal experience, the student contracts with organization outside the parish (e.g., detention center and community cafe) - organize volunteers to bring in people to do this work; students meet once a month, and meet with priest (Valerie Webster) 1:1. She traveled to wherever our parishes were. She was the supervisor. Students had two reading assignments to reflect on each month (had to be from Sojourner, or whatever), other readings Streams of Living Water (etc.) and other theological reflections. This is done during the third year, and combined third year of parish and field ministry - including developing rule of life. Reflect on how to 'be' rather than 'do'. It is a year to reflect on who they are. The facilitator (Valerie Webster) is 'in love with' the diaconate. Her name and contact information is in the packet. We can contact her. The Dean of the school and the Archdeacon are committed to this program.

Number of hours - 2 hours of week in the parish minimum (Connie, who is an Ordinand did 20), 8 - 10 hours for 'hands on' for the field experience.

Is there spiritual formation and expectation during first two years? Yes But the third year is where they create the Portfolio that also includes a daily rule. COM sees the portfolio during third year. People start school before they are postulants. Not necessary to have discerned before school.

Montana has a ministry manual - discernment committee is selected by rector, and they meet 9 times over 6 month period, and this can happen before school OR after they are in school. COM is only before candidacy and ordination. Portfolio is only used before last visit to COM.

Archdeacon is used to train discernment team.



**Diocese of Olympia** (Dennis Taylor) – Student is pulled out of calling parish as fast as possible, and placed into another. Bishop believes that they need to be out of their congregations. Students do 18 months in a parish, then 9 months diaconal focus. Need to write and discuss in formation groups. Formation group meets 5 times a year, and the other 4 they have curriculum that hit the canonical areas. Oversight happens in the individual parish where the student is assigned during their diaconal focus.

**Diocese of So. Ohio** (Douglas Argue) – Students do field work while in formation. During the weekends that we gather - set aside time called practicum. When in field work, students are not allowed to do liturgical work. The liturgics are studied during practicum time during school (set table - veiling, unveiling, etc.) Learn how to use a thurible and incense, too. Their alternative to CPE is to do case studies from material such as Shared Wisdom (book), by Carol Allen - a way of presenting case studies in small groups to think through incident. Think through professional wisdom, personal wisdom, wisdom through God's people. Present a case, and part of a group. Process of what we learn and go through in these three areas. Reflection process is written evaluations from field supervisors, their own reflections on supervisors, and then practicum through three years.

**Diocese of Alabama** (Lou) - no formal process. Thought about why is priest wedded to CPE (which was formative to them). Attributes that you get out of CPE:

1. Need to confront your own issues
2. Tread water
3. Emotional honesty

Doesn't matter where this happens - doesn't have to be in certain place. It is key that this rigor happens.

**Diocese of NC** (Pam)- bishop says don't go to CPE. People come voicing a ministry already. Why can't we have them do verbatims and reflections wherever they are. This spring we will be doing our homeless day, then they do verbatim and reflection - meet with priest who hosts this ministry in Ashville. Then they go out without money and no ID onto the street for one day. When they are on the street they are given questions to answer: What would you do? Where will you sleep? Where will you go to bathroom?

They also use Asset Mapping for helping them to discern where to go with their ministry.

**Diocese of Eastern Michigan** (AnnaLeigh Kubbe) - One three year program for priests and deacons. Verbatims and reflections out of field experience. Donot go to hospitals. They need to find their own experiences and need to be far from their comfort zone. They have to do a minimum of four verbatims and reflections in their group. Don't know what will happen in new formation process.

### **General Discussion:**

We need to prepare our students to be aware of things as they come up, and need to come to us to get help.

We need to know our brokenness.

Do any programs do anything with systems work in parishes, etc?

1. LA Fresh Start program (Catherine Wagar) - post ordination; in deacons formation seminar two year program meeting once a month except July and August - giving people a framework for understanding church conflicts and deacons role in these situations in terms of boundary management (covert and unconscious) - we reinvent each month.



2. So. Ohio - post ordination, Fresh Start, Freidman, someone comes in and talks about systems - as part of human awareness

3. MT - Connie - best practices of dealing with co-dependent and manipulators - learned how to set boundaries

4. Olympia (Dennis) - was opposed to CPE due to hearing priest experiences in early 60s. CPE closed down in WA. We create own CPE initiative - find local site, 4 - 6 weeks and diocesan supervisor

Eastern MI - Listening skills but not good interviewing skills - now happens at the beginning of training before verbatim -

CT - non-violent communication skills - good stuff on web - Transforming Church Conflict (book)

Community Organizing training? MT yes - one whole day; yes in LA; WA - two year formation after ordination and this has to happen then; NC - new deacons post year - discernment in parish and Asset mapping;

The Dancing Guy from youtube - show first days

**Articulate competencies for this area:**

1. Confronted by suffering
2. Treading water - out of comfort zone
3. Give/receive emotional honesty
4. Ask questions & listen
5. Community Organizing
6. Boundary management
7. Non-violent communication and mediation training
8. Conflict management
9. Liturgical training - prayers, music, practical, services
10. Homiletics
11. Public presentation skills
12. Family/congregational systems

**Assessment:** (why assessment? What are we assessing?)

1. Tests - end of section/semester (some dioceses do Canonical Examination instead of intermediary testing)
2. Verbatims
3. Checklist for completion of item
4. Attended and participated in ...
5. Presentation and critique (e.g., preaching, leading worship)
6. Mentor