

**Lay Eucharistic Visitors &
Lay Eucharistic Ministers**

A Training Program for New LEVs & LEMS
Leader's Guide



For the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee
Last Updated: November 17, 2014



Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training (L.E.V.)

The purpose of this package is to help in the training for Lay Eucharistic Visitors, (LEV). It is not intended to reinvent the wheel but bring some uniformity for training with in the Diocese of Milwaukee. There are several resources that can and should be used in the training and development of Lay Eucharistic Visitors. This training package will use and refer to them. Parts of the training will be indicated as a must, others will be called helpful and the last area would be for further study and resources.

There should be several steps used to train and develop a LEV.

Resources

A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Beth Wickenberg Ely, Morehouse Publishing, copyright 1991. This book is a must to read. (Several copies are in the resource center and can be borrowed.)

Guidelines for Lay Eucharistic Visitors Diocese Of Milwaukee.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors Specially Licensed to Take the Sacrament To Those Who are Ill or Infirm Best Practices, Distribution of Holy Communion by Lay Eucharistic Visitors to Person Who are Ill or Infirm, Concerning the Rite. This is a must read.

Notes to go with *A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers* This is a must read.

Practical Training, classroom, observation, supervised, on your own with a debriefing, periodic review sessions. This is a must.

Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training, lead by Diocese of Milwaukee Christian Formation Staff. This would be helpful.

Safe Guarding God's People, can be done on line, get password information from Christian Formation Office. This would be helpful.

Eucharistic Visitor Training, "**Equipping the Saints for the Ministry of Eucharistic Visitor**" Diocese of Southwest Florida, 2008 This can be found online. This can be used for further study and resource.

The Cup of Salvation, A manual for Eucharistic ministers, Beth Wickenberg Ely, Morehouse Publishing, copyright 2012. This book can be used for further study and resource.

With Burning Hearts, A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life, Henri J. M. Nouwen, ORBIS Books, copyright 1994 This book can be used for further study and resource.

Notes to go with *A Manual for Lay Eucharistic Ministers*

Chapter 1

Custom and Canon: The History of Lay Administration of the Eucharist

Bishop Miller expects the parish priest to celebrate Holy Eucharist with the homebound at least once a year. Laity are extra ordinary ministers of communion and are expected to minister immediately from the principle service.

Chapter 2

What Is a Lay Eucharist Minister?

Your visit to a person is never merely your own visit but you carry the parish with you. It unites the whole community together. Bring the Sunday Bulletin from church with you and the monthly newsletter if there is one. Sometimes the homebound can feel left out of the community, take the extra effort to find ways to keep them part of the community. For example: bring others with you on your visits, ask the homebound person to pray for others at church, ask people at church to pray for the homebound person, and give them a phone call, post card or email note telling them they are being prayed for regularly or thanking them for their ministry of prayers.

Chapter 3

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

On Maundy Thursday we celebrate Christ great commandment to us, to love one another. The one way we do this is in a simple act of taking bread and wine, giving praise to God, and partaking of the body and blood of Christ. This simple act has been repeated over and over again across centuries of time. It is done when two people come together, in a hospital room, but also when hundreds of people come together during General Convention. It does not depend upon how many candles are lit, how many pipes are in the organ, or how much smoke rises; what it does depend upon is that it is done reverently, and lovingly, when at least two people come together and share and lets Christ dwell with in us, and we are thus connected with the whole world wide church, extending back over the ages and into the future. When you function as a Lay Eucharist Visitor, remember the responsibility you carry but also share in the joy of this sacred act. Every situation is unique unto itself but also it is universal at the same time.

Chapter 4

A Special Kind of Visit

Three Aspects Of Ministry

A Ministry of Presence

A Ministry of Healing

A Ministry of Hope

What is written in the book speaks to this so well to try to expand upon it would be counter productive. What I will suggest is four things,

1. Re read this chapter every time you are called upon to be a Lay Eucharistic Visitor early in your ministry. Over time reread this chapter on a regular basis.
2. After your visits, ask yourself was I able to fulfill these three Aspects on Ministry.
3. Pray that you can become a living presences of Christ's love to those you Visit.

4. Ask yourself if you were the one being visited, would you have felt Christ's presences.

Communicating with the Clergy

Your ministry is an extension of the community, and your ministry is not a substitute for the ministry of your parish clergy. You are part of the team that must work together.

Chapter 5

Preparing Yourself To Be a Lay Eucharistic Minister

Remember those you visit and plan to visit in you personal prayers.

Make an appointment for those you are planning to visit if at home, arrange for others to accompany you if appropriate.

Notify the altar guild and clergy of your visit so that the kit can be available as well as the elements. Hopefully it is your parish practice to be sent forth bearing these holy gifts following the principle service and that time is set aside for prayers and sending. Include enough of the consecrated bread and wine in case there are others present during you visit.

Chapter 6

Visiting Day

The names of the people that you will be visiting are remembered during the prayers of the people. Remember that the place you are visiting is that person's private space, whether it is their home, or room in a hospital or nursing home, be respectful of this space.

After the visit, make sure the visit is recorded in the parish register of services! Sometimes you may record that directly into the book, or a visitation card is the way it is recorded and then added to the register, each parish has it own way of doing this.

The Holy Elements should be returned immediately to the church or consumed.

Chapter 7

The Service

The service is from the Prayer book, but I have found it helpful to have a few copies of the service along with me so it makes it easier for those present to follow the service. Most times you visit someone in the hospital there will be people present that are unfamiliar with the rite, and also helps the person you are visiting feel more at ease. I have used worn out Books of Common Prayer, I removed this section from the prayer, in a sense recycled them because this section usually is not wore out (also not violating any copyright laws).

One of the things that shocked me the first several times I made visitations but over the years the shock has turned into being an indicator to me that Christ is present; is when I have visited a near or comatose person, and during the rite a peace passes over them, and/or they may even be able to say the Lord's prayer.

As you embark on this ministry of being a Eucharistic Visitor, part of your training should include visiting with more experienced Lay Eucharistic Visitors, and with your parish clergy. After several visits take responsibility for some of the sections of the visit.

The service of a Lay Eucharistic minister is not just to do the rite but also to listen and visit with this person who is unable to be present with the church community, and help them feel they are still part of that community.