

## Competency Exercise

### Leading the Church through Care and Interpreting the Faith for the Church

For the competency exercise joining Leading the Church through Care and Interpreting the Faith for the Church, the student will submit a portfolio for review by the faculty including:

1. A verbatim of a pastoral care visit

- During the month in which you have registered for the exam, arrange to have a pastoral conversation with someone who is not a family member, close friend, or fellow student. Ideally you will go as a representative of a church or religious group you are affiliated with. At the least, the person you visit should know that you are seminary student, and are making the visit as a pastoral care giver. **Request his or her written permission to record and/or take notes on what is said.**
- As soon as you can after the conversation, transcribe the dialogue from memory as accurately as you can. Another option is to make an audio recording and transcribe a portion of it.
- The verbatim should be submitted in the following format:

#### Section 1: Background Information (2 paragraphs)

Include in this section basic identifying data -- factual information you knew about the person before the pastoral visit. Describe the person, situation, and occasion for the visit. Include the person's age, gender, family background, and any information about their history that might seem relevant to the visit. Note: to identify the person being visited, please use their initials or make up a first name for them. Do not use their real name.

Then include any observations from the beginning of your visit – where and how you met the person, the seating arrangements, and the appearance of the person e.g. posture, facial expressions, mannerisms.

#### Section 2: Dialogue (about 3-4 pages, single spaced, 750-1000 words)

Write out approximately ten minutes of the actual dialogue in verbatim i.e. as if you were writing a movie script. Each line of dialogue should be a separate paragraph, and should be numbered. Include any relevant gestures or tones in italics, noting body language as well as speech. For example:

1 Jessica: Hi Ann, it's Jessica, from church.

2 Ann: *raising hand in greeting* How nice of you to stop by!

3 Jessica: How are you? etc...

2. An analysis of the verbatim with two sections, as detailed below

#### Section 1: Self-Assessment (2-4 pages, 500-1000 words)

Summarize your understanding of the thoughts, feelings, and concerns of the person to whom you offered care. Then assess the work you did in the conversation. You can use the following questions to guide your analysis

- What did you do well in the conversation? Were there any responses or skills you used that were especially effective? Reference the specific line numbers in your discussion.
- Were there any points in which a different approach or response might have been more effective? Again, reference specific line numbers.
- What were your responses, feelings, or concerns during the interchange? How did they impact your decisions? Did any of your embedded theological commitments emerge during the conversation? Was there any point in which you felt the impulse to “fix” or “save”?
- Did you / how did you engage the deeper emotional and spiritual truths offered by your pastoral care seeker, as opposed to staying on a factual level?

## Section 2: Theological Assessment (2-4 pages, 500-1000 words)

Where did you see God in the conversation? Utilizing a theological lens, discuss what you believe to be the theological in the story or experience of your pastoral care seeker. Were these themes implicitly or explicitly discussed? Identify all the lines where you see theological themes emerge. Name these theological themes. You may find the same theological theme repeated, for instance, in dealing with the death of a loved one you might see issues related to theodicy or resurrection appear several times as a care seeker explores her feelings about death. Such reoccurrence may signal that this is an important topic to the care seeker. If you see recurrent themes, consider using no more than two of these to explore in more depth in your credo, described below.

### 3. A care plan in response to your assessment (1-2 pages, 250-500 words)

Given your assessment, outline your plan of care in relation to this careseeker moving forward. What will be your plan for future interaction? To what issues or questions will be you attuned or curious about? What kind of care will you hope to offer? How will that care be informed by your theological assessments?

Do the spiritual needs of this particular careseeker guide or point towards any possibilities of pastoral response on a community level? Are there any community resources that might be utilized to meet the careseeker’s needs? Are there any needs or issues illuminated by your careseeker but shared within the larger community? How will your care encompass these levels?

4. A critically written Credo addressing the most important theological issue(s) (*no more than two*) the student believes arose in the pastoral care conversation. (approx. 2,000 words).

“A Credo is the thoughtful expression of what one believes and is prepared to act on.... [a] Credo by a Christian is not a statement of original or novel beliefs; on the contrary, it is the personal embrace, the personal representation of beliefs central to the Christian tradition.”<sup>1</sup>

Included in the credo must be:

- A statement of belief describing why theology is important to pastoral care
- A critical statement of belief related to the theological issue/s that arose in the conversation which the student has chosen from the theological analysis section of the pastoral care conversation. See the chart below for examples of relevant theological issues (*no more than two*) which might be explored in the credo
- The statements of belief must incorporate the work of relevant theologians who help shape and support the student’s insights.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Life Event</b>	<b>Theological Issues</b>
sexuality	a parent’s teenage child came out as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer	doctrine of creation, theological anthropology, soteriology
disability	a member of your church has become disabled in an auto accident	embodiment, theological anthropology, theodicy
grief/loss	a couple’s newborn baby died during childbirth	theodicy, theological anthropology, soteriology

### **\*\*Evaluation Guidelines**

As part of their evaluation and grading of the exercise, the two faculty (one from Leading the Church through Care and one from Interpreting the Faith of the Church) will review the material.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sallie McFague, *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000) 15-16.

Students will receive two grades for the exercise—one for each area covered. As part of the feedback provided to the student, the attached rubric will be used to signal to the student her or his strengths and weakness in the two areas.