



Suggested Guidelines for Supervision **(Copies are to be given to pastoral mentor and to the student participant)**

The following guidelines are intended to offer some direction to the pastor supervising a student in the Ministry Inquiry Program. While the following are not rigid requirements, they do represent best practices that are helpful to be aware of. We want each person to construct this experience in a way that fits them while at the same time meeting the needs and expectations of student, pastor and congregation.

It is helpful for the pastor to begin with some ideas about the student's role and tasks during the course of this experience. At the same time, students entering the MIP program have been working to formulate some learning goals for themselves. Mutual sharing of these expectations and goals are a good place to begin and from which to negotiate priorities.

It is certainly appropriate for the pastor to encourage and challenge the student with the call to pastoral ministry; that is the purpose of this program. Sometimes this can best be done by how you embody the joys and challenges of each day. Being honest and realistic is also a virtue, and the integrity that you demonstrate may be among the most important learnings achieved.

PURPOSE OF MINISTRY INQUIRY PROGRAM:

“A leadership program of Mennonite Church USA...The Ministry Inquiry Program provides opportunity for students at Mennonite Church USA colleges to explore pastoral ministry*.”

**“Pastoral” to mean primarily in congregational settings with allowance/flexibility of exploring alternative “pastoral experiences” (e.g. camp, service agencies) as a part of their summer congregational placement experience.*

I. PROGRAM GOALS

- A. To enter into an inquiry with the student concerning his/her interest in the calling to pastoral ministry or other forms of ministry for the church.
- B. To affirm the gifts of the student and to enable these gifts to grow through practical experience.
- C. To provide an opportunity for the student to learn more about ministry through an exposure to some aspects of the work of the pastor. This will be done through observing the pastor, through accepting assignments from the pastor and through

reflecting on these experiences with the pastor. Students learn more by doing than by observing so we suggest a 70% doing, 30% observing ratio.

- D. To provide emphasis upon the personal dimensions of successful ministry. This will be done through examination of the student's personality traits, communication skills, understanding of self, the ability to do accurate self-appraisal, the ability to perceive other persons' responses, etc. These will be examined under the direction of the pastor in frequent reflection sessions throughout the experience.

II. PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

- A. It is expected that the student will spend a minimum of 11 weeks in the congregation to which assigned for the summer.
- B. A normal work week for an intern will be approximately 45 hours per week. Students should negotiate with pastor for appropriate time off.
- C. Participation on Sunday morning services is expected and will usually involve having specific duties.
- D. It is appropriate for the student to participate in activities outside the congregation such as church camps and church conferences. These will be considered part of the student's work, just as it would for the pastor.
- E. Regular supervisory times for the pastor and student to interact around the experience will be planned weekly. This will be a time for reflection and a time for the student to probe with questions and observations. Informal times along the way are also anticipated, sometimes for the pastor to share stories about people and about ministry.
- F. Some disciplined form of reflection/learning will be expected. This may take the form of a journal or an integration paper near the end of the experience. This will be the basis for a closing reflection session with the pastor.
- G. Approximately 500 pages of reading specifically related to the church or ministry is expected. Specific books or chapters or articles may be assigned by the pastor or suggested by the student. A suggested reading list is provided to help get you started.
- H. The student should plan to attend as an observer any meetings of the congregation, the leadership groups such as deacons, elders, council or board, and any special committee of interest or significance.

- I. Some churches have identified a special group of the congregation's members to meet regularly with the student for reflection, feedback in areas requested, discernment and support.
- J. Both student and pastor will write a final brief report (1-2 pages or 750-1,000 words) and submit the same to their college administrator, and conference pastors (from both sending and receiving conferences), by Sept. 15 or two weeks after the conclusion of the program.

III. MINISTRY LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS

A. Public ministries.

1. The student will be given opportunity to be part of the planning of worship experiences and will be included in worship leadership.
2. If appropriate and acceptable to both, the student will be given an opportunity to preach a sermon.
3. The student might be assigned to prepare and present more informal worship experiences with groups or in nursing homes, etc.
4. The student will be given some teaching opportunities in such settings as Vacation Bible School, Sunday school or midweek events.
5. Involve the student by using special gifts they might bring, such as music.
6. Where the church is involved in growth or outreach programs or in social action activities, the student should be included.

B. Pastoral care ministries.

1. Initially the student will accompany the pastor in visitation.
2. The student may then be assigned specific visitation situations such as a day to do the hospital visitation or assigned to visit some particular persons who would benefit from repeated contacts through the summer. Think also of persons whose response would enrich the student's experience.
3. Some students in MIP have particularly benefited by personal involvement in crises and even death experiences.
4. Special involvement with youth of the congregation may be a high priority for some; encourage both personal relationships as well as group involvement.

C. Administrative ministries.

1. Introduce and involve the student in office routines of the church. Let them be responsible for a church bulletin from collecting information, typing, printing and folding!

2. Assist the student in experiencing the coordinating/communicating role of the pastor as one who helps the church function well and with a positive spirit.
3. Involve the student in committees and boards of the church, though they should not be expected to attend everything!
4. Where appropriate, make space to introduce the student to the conference leadership to learn about how the conference works and greater conference initiatives. Conferences (both sending and receiving) are stakeholders in this program, as well, and provide financial assistance to the student scholarship.

IV. PEER LEARNING & NETWORKING

- A. Students are expected to participate in two virtual peer learning cohort group calls with all of the MIP students for the summer, hosted by the Mennonite Church USA administrators. Mennonite Church USA will be purchasing the book *Called to Be a Pastor: Why It Matters to Both Congregations and Clergy* by Larry Hauder, and will send this copy to each student at his or her host site welcoming them to the MIP program and giving blessings for the summer ahead.

The first virtual gathering will be a check-in/networking with one another, mid-June. Considerations/questions to guide this first cohort: What is one highlight, so far, in your experience? What has surprised you? What has challenged you?

The second virtual gathering will be to participate in a “virtual book club” on the book sent (to be included in their suggest reading), with Larry Hauder presenting and hosting the conversation. The book club will be mid-July. Mennonite Church USA will also host and coordinate.

V. CONCLUSION

Model as best you can what being a pastor is all about, sharing in the “joyful agony” of being God’s representative while still being one with the people whom God loves and forgives. Hold high the challenge of God’s personal call to the church’s office of ministry.