

Formation at CTS has a specific purpose: to prepare students for vocational ministry. Based upon many years of congregational ministry and seminary teaching experience, the seminary faculty and staff have identified the six ministry practice areas below as vitally important areas of competence for pastors and ministry leaders today. While every student will not be equally gifted in every ministry area, the Formation for Ministry goal is that students will demonstrate *basic competence* in all these areas.

The **Ministry Practices Inventory** helps you gather ministry experiences you have already had in your life that contribute to *your competency* in the 6 Ministry Practice Areas (MPAs). It also gives you room to consider future opportunities in internships or in your local church setting that you need to acquire competency in the 6 Ministry Practice Areas (MPAs). Plan to spend 60 minutes completing this form. Each page offers **Activity Choices** that may help you remember experiences you've had and assist you in considering future opportunities you need to seek out. Please note that these Activity Choices are not a list of things you must do.

Basic Ministry Practice Competencies

Students will be able to...

1. Evangelism, Discipleship, Teaching

- 1.1 Tell the story of God's grace at work in his or her life in a lively and engaging way.
- 1.2 Join with other Christians in intentionally communicating the gospel message to those outside the church with the goal of enfolding new believers.
- 1.3 Demonstrate the ability to disciple believers as they grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ.
- 1.4 Engage in age-appropriate teaching that is biblical, authentic, contextual, and life-changing.

2. Service, Social Justice, Cultural Engagement

- 2.1 Engage in a variety of community and church service ministries.
- 2.2 Participate in ministries of the church that promote social justice.
- 2.3 Enter into cross-cultural experiences in a way that deepens one's appreciation for the contextual nature of all ministry.

3. Worship, Preaching

- 3.1 Prepare and lead worship effectively.
- 3.2 Collaborate with others in the process of preparing for, leading, and evaluating worship.
- 3.3 Preach sermons that are biblically faithful, authentic, contextually sensitive, and life-changing

4. Community Life, Fellowship

- 4.1 Engage in ministries which foster connection and care within a local congregation.
- 4.2 Model a life of hospitality within a community, welcoming people and paying attention to their needs in ways that impart God's grace and blessing.
- 4.3 Confess wrongs in an appropriate way and ask for the forgiveness of those you have injured.
- 4.4 Demonstrate the ability to address difficulties constructively and mediate conflict within Christian community.

5. Pastoral Care, Counseling

- 5.1 Demonstrate the capacity for empathy by listening to others carefully, discerning their needs, and responding in appropriate ways.
- 5.2 Guide and counsel people within the bounds of one's expertise as pastor, referring them to other professionals as necessary.
- 5.3 Use scripture and prayer appropriately in pastoral care.
- 5.4 Offer pastoral care to various people (young, old, and ethnically diverse) in a variety of life situations—in their homes, in jails, hospitals, etc.

6. Administration, Leadership

- 6.1 Engage in ministry in ways that reflect a biblical understanding of leadership in the church.
- 6.2 Understand the dynamics of a healthy congregation in relation to its leaders and staff, and learn what to do when that relationship encounters difficulty.
- 6.3 Know how to lead and administer effectively within the church, following through on commitments and developing and promoting the leadership abilities of others.

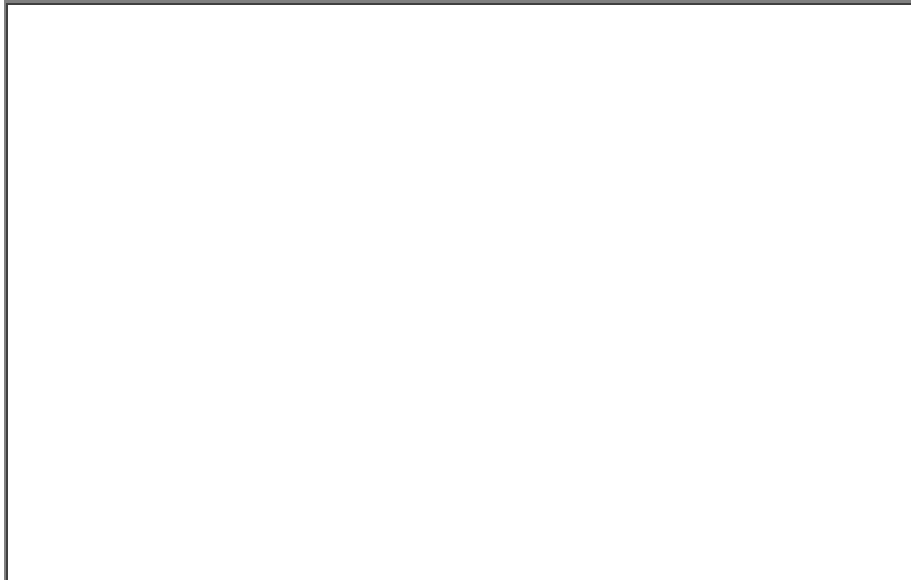
1. Evangelism, Discipleship, Teaching

Activity Choices:

- Tell your faith story to a variety of persons by incorporating scripture passages into a gospel presentation that is biblically faithful, authentic, contextually sensitive, and life-changing.
- Pray specifically for at least one unsaved person every day.
- Engage in a particular relationship that works toward bringing a person to Christ.
- Organize an evangelistic Bible study with at least half of the group unsaved or un-churched.
- Preach with unsaved people in mind, as well as church members who are starting to drift away from the church, and occasional visitors.
- Enter into a 3-6 month discipling relationship with someone who is looking for spiritual growth and nurture. Keep a journal of what you did together and how it went.
- Video-tape a class you are teaching. Assess the presentation with a gifted teacher in your local ministry setting to identify your strengths and the areas that need to be addressed.
- Prepare and deliver a children's sermon, and review it with a teacher, pastor, or mentor.
- Outline a six-week curriculum for a specific age group that includes appropriate learning objectives, outlines, activities and resources. Teach a class using the curriculum you have developed.
- Plan and lead a retreat or small group that gives you an opportunity to practice your facilitation skills and engage in the challenges of various group dynamics.
- Teach a lesson that employs instructional methods outside your "comfort zone" and evaluate the methods employed (e.g., small group discussion, experiential learning activities, artistic expression and interpretation, inductive bible study, etc).
- Teach a lesson using multimedia technology (e.g., PowerPoint, video illustrations, background music, projection of outlines or lyrics etc...) and evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of the technological component in light of your learning objectives.
- Others

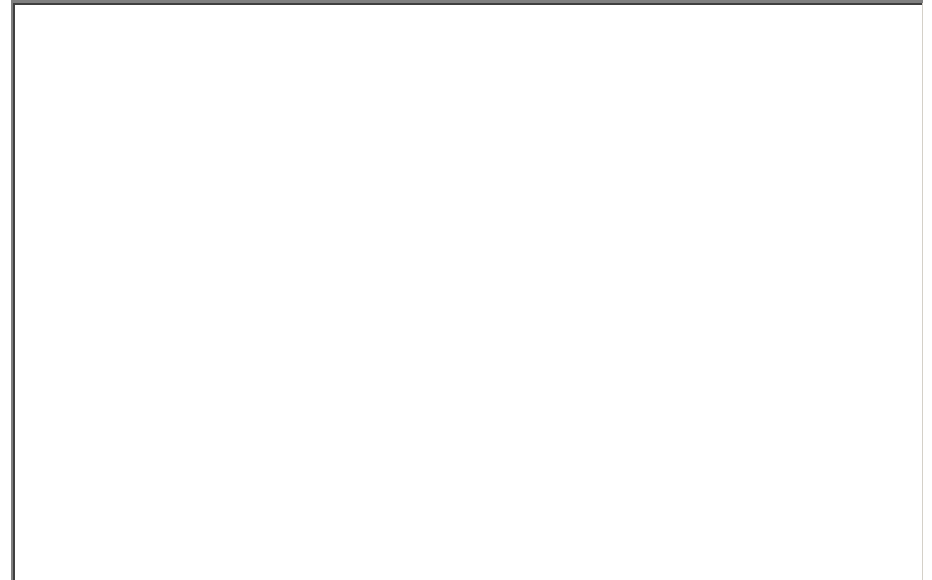
Training, experience, and understanding I have acquired in my life so far that contributes to my sense of competency in...

Evangelism, Discipleship, Teaching:



Training, experience, and understanding I will seek out in the near future to acquire the sense of competency I need and desire in...

Evangelism, Discipleship, Teaching:



2. Service, Social Justice, Cultural Engagement

Activity Choices:

- Include service learning in your personal and / or group Rule of Life and volunteer on a regular basis. See the *Service Learning Opportunities Booklet*.
- Reflect on the biblical concept of a servant leader. Pick a Bible character that models a life of service to you and identify the principles they live by. Practice applying these principles in a service ministry and keep a journal of your experience.
- Read one of the books of the prophets in the Old Testament. Pick one of the acts of oppression or injustice that God speaks against through the prophet and join up with a contemporary group that is working to end that particular act of oppression or injustice. Record your questions, concerns, thoughts and experiences.
- Develop and implement a plan to increase the awareness of a congregation towards acts of social injustice and oppression in the world.
- Enter into a cross-cultural experience with a group of people from your church. Gather together afterwards to discuss the similarities and differences you experienced between this new culture and your own.
- Recruit and train a group of high school students to serve as VBS teachers with you in a church that represents a different race, economic background, or cultural background than your own. Meet to discuss what you have learned about your own culture and other cultures as a result of this experience.
- Talk with students about their Horizon-expanding summer internship. Make a list of things that people learned from their experiences. Reflect on how you can apply what you learned from them in your local church volunteer setting.
- Explore the website, www.cultureisnotoptional.com. Participate in online discussions.
- Join or create a group which discusses current movies, books, and/or music from popular culture. Reflect on how to engage popular culture as a Christian leader.
- Regularly spend time in places where young people of a variety of backgrounds gather (malls, coffee shops, concerts). Observe their behavior and their conversation. Ask yourself what matters to them, what kinds of worldviews direct them, and how you can be Christ to them.
- Others...

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Service, Social Justice, Cultural Engagement:

Training, experience, and understanding I will seek out in the near future to acquire the sense of competency I need and desire in...

Service, Social Justice, Cultural Engagement:

3. Worship, Preaching

Activity Choices:

- Create a system whereby you maintain orderly files of liturgical materials.
- Prepare and conduct liturgies by yourself.
- Prepare and conduct liturgies with a worship coordinator or worship planning team.
- Prepare liturgies for funeral services, weddings, and celebrations of baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- Read Scripture in worship services with careful attention to interpretation.
- Prepare and offer prayers in worship services.
- Visit a worship service in a congregation outside of your typical comfort zone. Reflect on this experience.
- Prepare and preach sermons from both the Old and the New Testaments from the various genre of Scripture: narrative, wisdom, prophetic, gospel, epistle, apocalyptic.
- Preach a sermon or deliver a meditation in a non-church setting: a hospital, jail, homeless shelter, outreach/community service, funeral home.
- Prepare and preach a sermon series.
- Create a system whereby you maintain orderly files of sermons preached.
- In addition to gathering the required sermon evaluations, ask a group of people in your ministry setting to meet with you after you preach to discuss your sermons.
- Videotape yourself preaching and leading worship and then watch and listen for your strengths and growing edges.
- Others...

Training, experience, and understanding I have acquired in my life so far that contributes to my sense of competency in...

Worship, Preaching:

Training, experience, and understanding I will seek out in the near future to acquire the sense of competency I need and desire in...

Worship, Preaching:

4. Community Life, Fellowship

Activity Choices:

- Assess the care and connection activities currently practiced within the church you attend. How do you attend to long-time members, new members, drifting members, visitors? What activities are designed to connect these people together? Identify what things are working well, where the gaps are, and what can be done to strengthen a sense of community and fellowship within your congregation.
- Articulate the challenges and opportunities inherent in a multi-ethnic, intergenerational Christian community divided socially, economically, and politically. Describe three things you have tried to do to bring divided people together. What worked and what didn't? Why/Why not?
- Recruit three groups of eight to work through Dee Brestin's Bible Study Guide called "The Joy of Hospitality: Recovering a Lost Art". One group of eight could be made up of single adults, one group of eight could be made up of women, and one group of eight could be made up of four couples, or maybe you might decide to mix them all up. When the study is over spend a few hours together talking about how to make your church more hospitable to singles, couples, widows, and visitors.
- Gather together a group of leaders in your church and read "Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Consider what God is calling you to as you live your life of faith together within your own community.
- Study scripture and other resources to develop a framework on how to deal with conflict within your church community. Teach a class on how to confess sin, ask forgiveness, receive forgiveness, and mediate conflict. Ask people to apply these disciplines at home, at work, and in church. Follow-up with people individually to find out how it is going.
- Others...

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Community Life, Fellowship:

Training, experience, and understanding I will seek out in the near future to acquire the sense of competency I need and desire in...

Community Life, Fellowship:

5. Pastoral Care, Counseling

Activity Choices:

- Visit hospitalized parishioners and consider how best to minister to them and their families. Don't forget the importance of follow-up visits and/or phone calls.
- Visit a parishioner who is struggling with depression and/or chronic anxiety. Practice your listening skills, bring comfort, pray specifically, and bestow blessings.
- Visit a person who is dying. Be ready to listen and learn.
- Involve yourself in pre-marital conversation as your vocational mentor deems appropriate and as the couple allows.
- Involve yourself in the planning and conducting of a funeral or memorial service with the guidance of your vocational mentor. Ponder the mysteries together of life and death.
- Visit with a bereaved family after the funeral. Reflect on the experience with your vocational mentor or FFM group.
- Identify a situation in which a referral would be appropriate and make a referral to a professional or to a member of the congregation with pastoral gifts suitable to the person's needs.
- Maintain accurate, appropriate and confidential records of pastoral calls.
- Visit a meeting of a Friendship meeting for developmentally disabled adults and reflect on your experience.
- Visit a prison and minister to the inmates.
- Others...

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Pastoral Care, Counseling:

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Pastoral Care, Counseling:

6. Administration, Leadership

Activity Choices:

- Attend a council meeting, a consistory meeting, and/or a meeting of the diaconate in your ministry setting and talk with your vocational mentor about what you observed.
- Attend a meeting of classis and begin to become familiar with the connections between the local church and the classis.
- Choose a month, craft a list of your individual priorities, keep track of hours spent in each priority category (e.g., family, church, school, friends, personal), compare actual time spent with list of priorities. Determine what to do when you are being swallowed up by the work, your family feels ignored, or you begin to feel spiritually bankrupt.
- Evaluate your church's plan for the training of elders and deacons.
- If it is available, obtain the ministry plan of your local church (strategic plan, goals--whatever the church calls its integrated plan of action for the coming year) and discuss with various program leaders in the church how that plan is going.
- In many cases church programs are not driven by a "top down" ministry plan. In those cases, explore at a program level (i.e., Cadets, Gems, household groups, vacation Bible School) how program leaders assess needs, plan programs, and evaluate programs to see whether they have addressed the needs they were intended to address.
- Find out what processes your local church uses for evaluating programs and personnel. Learn where the responsibility for evaluation lies (senior pastor? council? executive committee? ministries committee?) and evaluate the evaluation process
- Visit with an elder who is respected in your local congregation and as a leader in his/her workplace. Explore with this elder the principles of leadership and organizational behavior that apply in all groups and those that are peculiar to a local congregation.
- Consider what you would do if you were on a staff ministry or church council where personality conflicts begin to sabotage a healthy ministry work environment. How would you deal with the conflict if it involves two individuals on your team or council? How would you deal with the conflict if you were one of those individuals?
- Identify a church order change that could serve the church better, and reflect on what the change should be and how the process to change the church order should go.
- Design council or staff training modules using a biblical theology of leadership that fits with Reformed polity and a systems understanding of congregations.

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Administration, Leadership:

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