



Reader Training Handbook – For Reader-in-Training and their Incumbents

Introduction

So, you have attended a discernment conference for consideration for training as a Reader and have been told you have been recommended for training. What happens now? Hopefully you have an exciting and rewarding journey ahead of you as you continue to be formed in the ministry God is calling you into. Reader Ministry is a licenced ministry within the worldwide Anglican Communion, and you will find Readers in all areas of the Communion. However, Reader ministry is essentially local. The shape that your Reader ministry will take grows from the context of the local church and community within which your calling has been recognised and developed and in which it will be exercised. More than that it is also individual. Each of us is unique before God. We have different gifts, skills and personalities which will shape the way in which we are called to serve. However, while recognising this individuality, you have specifically discerned a calling to Reader Ministry. The Diocesan ‘Reader Ministry Discernment’ document (see cypgulf.org/resources) attempts to give a broad outline of the understanding of Reader ministry in this Diocese, and it is a calling to this ministry which has been recognised and affirmed in you. So now how do we go about further equipping and forming you for this ministry? This handbook outlines a practical response to this question.

The Shape of Reader Ministry Training

All ministry training essentially comprises of three elements:-

- Theological Training
- Skills Training
- Ministerial Formation

Theological Training

Theological training is primarily provided through the Exploring Faith Course. It is expected that Readers in training in this Diocese will engage in this course, delivered in a local setting. More information on this course can be found in the Queens College Discipleship and Ministry Program Handbook. The Diocesan Summer School, currently planned to be held every two years, will also have an input into this, and it is anticipated that all Readers in training will attend a Summer School during their training period.

Skills Training

Skills training refers to practical skills associated with the exercising of ministry. This may include such things as:

- preparing and leading services
- preparing and leading intercessions
- preparing and delivering sermons
- leading study groups, confirmation classes, prayer groups etc
- preparing and leading funerals (depending on the local context)
- a variety of pastoral encounters

This is far from an exhaustive list and will vary depending on the context and vocation of the individual. Some aspects of this skills training are included in the Exploring Faith Course, but

the bulk of this is delivered through the Diocesan Summer School, other Diocesan run training events throughout the year, and through local opportunities within your church setting. A key person in this process will be your training incumbent. This will normally be the parish priest in your local church, but may be an assistant priest or other minister assigned by your parish priest, in consultation with the Warden of Readers. It is essential that you have a locally identified minister who takes on a supervisory and local oversight role of your training. You should have a meeting with your training incumbent at the beginning of your formal training to discuss your training needs. This meeting should discuss:

- Expectations during the training period. e.g How will this work around your work and family commitments? What would be a reasonable level of commitment to formal training opportunities? Discuss your support structure etc..
- Practical training needs and opportunities. e.g What opportunities would be appropriate within your church setting for gaining experience in leading services, preaching, leading small groups, pastoral care etc..
- Methods of feedback. e.g How often will you meet with your Training Incumbent. Go through the feedback forms that are available in this handbook. Discuss how feedback will be given etc..

A written record should be kept of this meeting, and regular similar meetings should be scheduled throughout your training. If you or your training incumbent would like input or advice into this process then contact the Diocesan Warden of Readers.

A further essential element of practical skills training for all Readers will be an appropriate Safeguarding Course. All Readers should be familiar with, and adhere to, the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy.

Ministerial Formation

Ministerial formation is an absolutely essential element of ministry training, but the most difficult to quantify. It cannot be measured through course attendance or assessment, and is unique to each minister. Although it is not possible to provide a structured program for formation it is possible to provide a skeleton from which it can grow. A key element of this will be a commitment to an ongoing process of theological reflection, which should become an essential component of your lifelong ministry. By establishing this in a formal way during your training it is hoped that it will become a way of life that will sustain you throughout your ministry.

As this handbook is primarily practical it is not proposed to spend time here discussing the background, nature and theology of theological reflection. Theological reflection can take many practical forms, including time in thought and prayer, conversation with others and journaling. Throughout your training it should take on a more specific practical form in terms of regular written reports and feedback. Several forms are provided in the appendices of handbook for this process:-

- A. Yearly Self Assessment Form:- This form should be completed annually by all Readers in training on the anniversary of their attendance at discernment conference for selection to reader training. The sections of this form provide helpful focus for the various reflections you will carry out throughout the year.

- B. Sermon Reflection:- Reader Ministry in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf is primarily seen as a teaching and learning ministry. It is anticipated that for the vast majority of Readers this will include preaching sermons. Throughout your training it is hoped you will have opportunities to exercise and develop your preaching skills. It will help your ongoing development in this ministry for you to invite critical feedback. Forms are provided for:-
- a. Personal Reflection
 - b. 360 Congregational Feedback – These forms should be given to a few members of the congregation (4 or 5), before the day of preaching. As you progress through your training try to use a variety of congregational members.
 - c. Training Incumbent Feedback
- C. Service Leading Feedback Form
- D. General Reflection Form: There are a wide range of activities that a Reader can engage with during training and beyond. This form can be used as a structure to help with reflection on any of those activities.

Support Structure

There are several key people in supporting your ongoing training:-

- Training Incumbent – This will usually be your Parish Priest, but may be an assistant priest or other minister assigned by your Parish Priest, in consultation with the Warden of Readers. They will be the person who provides local oversight of your ongoing training.
- Spiritual Director – If you do not already have a Spiritual Director it is recommended that you seek to find one as you begin training. A Spiritual Director, otherwise known as a Soul Friend or Personal Mentor, has a role to help you look at how your training and ongoing formation is affecting your personal journey with God. It is a personal and confidential relationship, and, as such, they will not be called upon to report on you in any way. Ideally this should be somebody from outside of your immediate church context. If it is possible to find someone who has training in spiritual direction then this is helpful, but this is not always possible. They should be a prayerful individual with whom you can develop a good rapport. You should meet regularly (at least 3 times a year) to discuss your ongoing training, experiences, reflections, spirituality, relationships, joys and sorrows. The Diocesan Spirituality Advisor will be able to provide advice to any one taking on a Spiritual Direction role.
- Warden of Readers – The Warden of Readers should be the first port of call, for you or your Training Incumbent, in matters relating to your ongoing training. They will seek to provide information, help or advice as required.
- Director of Ministry – The Director of Ministry has oversight of all Ministry Training in the Diocese.

Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf



End of Year Self-Assessment: Readers

All Readers in training should complete this form annually on the anniversary of their attendance at the discernment conference for selection to Reader training. It should then be forwarded to the Warden of Readers, who will also ensure that a copy is retained in your ministerial file at the Diocesan Office.

Name: _____

Training Incumbent: _____

Parish: _____

Please consider all the questions. The questions are provided to help you summarise your formation and development as you review your various activities and reflections throughout the year. Please write in paragraph form, not just notes. This form should be reasonably easy to complete if you have been disciplined about your regular process of theological reflection throughout the year.

1) Activities and Opportunities Engaged in Throughout the Year

Provide a list of the various activities you have engaged in throughout the year, both formally and informally.

2) Quality of Mind and Theological Learning

What Exploring Faith modules have you taken this year and what marks have you been awarded so far (if any)? (Please also include any other formal theological training courses you have undertaken if appropriate)

The outcomes for this section are concerned with your ability to engage faithfully and critically with scripture and the traditions of Christian thought so that you can interpret and communicate the Christian faith effectively in the context of public ministry. This requires disciplined study and openness to new ideas as well as openness to others. Please summarise your reflections these areas (Faith and Quality of Mind).

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2) Faith, Vocation and Spirituality

This section is concerned with your developing sense of vocation and your ability to articulate it; your readiness to exercise the ministry of a reader; and your spirituality expressed in your life of prayer and Christian discipleship. How has your study and experience of ministerial formation influenced these areas in the last year?

Please summarise your reflections in these areas.

3) Ministry within the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, Mission and Evangelism, Lay Leadership and Collaboration

The outcomes for this section concern your understanding of ministry and your developing skills in the practice of ministry in all its variety; these include liturgical and preaching ministry; mission, evangelism and the communication of the Christian faith; and the ability to work with others by being supervised, leading collaboratively, and through teamwork. Please summarise your reflections in these areas.

4) Personality, Character and Relationships

The outcomes for this section are concerned with you as a person, your strengths and weaknesses, your self-knowledge, your care of self and relationships to others both personal and pastoral. How have you developed as a person over the last year? Please summarise your reflections in these areas.

5) Further Training and Development

What are your short and medium term goals for your continued training and future development? How best could those goals be resourced by (a) the diocese and (b) your parish and you? As you reflect on this are there particular areas where you need to do some more work?

6) Health Issues

Has your health posed you any concern over this year of training? Have you suffered any periods of ill-health in the past year (please provide brief details). Are there any on-going health issues that we should be aware of?

7) Additional Comments

Are there any additional comments you would like to make? Are there any family or support needs you would like us to be aware of or any other issue relating to your training?

8) Training Incumbent's Comments

Please provide comments of the progress of the candidate over the past year. Please include particular strengths and areas where further reflection, training and/or experience would be beneficial.

Training Incumbent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Candidates Signature: _____ Date: _____

Once you have completed this form it should be forwarded to the Diocesan Warden of Readers



Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf Sermon Reflection

Date: _____ **Church:** _____
Type of Service: _____

1. Describe how you went about preparing this sermon? What were the lectionary readings? How did you decide on the theme of the sermon? How did you develop the theme? Did you use illustrations? What techniques did you use to communicate your message?

2. What was the theme of the sermon?

5) What feelings did the sermon stir within you, and what was it that sparked them off?

6) What did the preacher reveal about his/her personality in the sermon, and how did their Christian experience come through?

7) If the preacher were to preach this sermon again, where could it be improved?

8) What will you take from this sermon into the future?

9) Please comment on the delivery of the sermon (eg. volume, clarity, gestures). Also comment about the length of the sermon, did it feel too long/short or about right?

Name:

Signature:



Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf Sermon Evaluation Form

Name of Preacher:

Date:

Name of Church:

Type of Service:

Supervisor's/Training Incumbents comments

1. How would you describe the genre of the sermon? What sort of sermon was this (e.g. teaching, expository, thematic, meditation, challenging, evangelistic, all-age worship talk)? Not every sermon can do everything, and there are quite different approaches to preaching: the purpose of this question is to enable the sermon to be judged on its own terms.

2. What was the aim of the sermon?

3. How did the sermon engage with the text?

4. What use was made of other theological resources, such as experience, tradition and reason?

5. How did the sermon engage with the congregation and/or the wider context?

6. Please comment on the structure and flow of the sermon, including the beginning and ending.

7. What use was made of illustration, and how effective was this?

8. Please comment on the delivery of the sermon.

9. What were the 2 strongest points of the content of the sermon?

10. What were the 2 strongest points of the delivery of the sermon?

11. What aspects could be developed further?

Signed:

Date:

13. In what ways might the Service Leader improve his/her delivery or content of worship?

14. Any Other Comments?

Name:

Signed:

Date:



Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf Theological Reflection

Date: _____

This form can be used for a variety of activities and experiences during your training as an aid to the process of theological reflection. This may include such things as, preparing and leading worship, leading small groups or a range of potential pastoral encounters

1. Describe the activity or experience. Be as thorough as you can.

2. Reflect on this activity or experience, using the following headings as a guide as appropriate:-

- (i) Quality of Mind and Theological Learning
- (ii) Faith and Spirituality
- (iii) Vocation
- (iv) Mission and Evangelism
- (v) Lay Leadership and Collaboration
- (vi) Personality, Character and Relationships
- (vii) Training and Development

