

TRAINING BEREAVEMENT MINISTERS

**RESPONDING
TO GRIEF**

&

**FUNERAL
PLANNING**



LEADER'S GUIDE

PLEASE NOTE: This leader's guide was originally written for those using this video program in its VHS format. Those now using this program on DVD may find some references that do not apply to their use (i.e., directions for locating segments, time notations, etc.). We trust that both VHS- and DVD-users will find this guide a valuable resource.

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Catholic Update Video

The Use of Video in Faith Formation

Jesus used the “media” of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus’ time, heavily dependent on *oral communication*—to the advent of *print communication*—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic media*—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious Communications*, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, all will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners’ hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners’ experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium’s strengths and weaknesses.

Video is a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. It draws us in, captures our imaginations and touches us on a deep, emotional level.

As it speaks to our experience and utilizes several of our senses, its message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality video programs into the catechetical process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as television becomes a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that it can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that it can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the *emotional* content of our faith rather than the *intellectual* content. Video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. It cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, it can be a powerful part of the “mix of media” used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic media—is used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- A preview of the video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.
- The catechist should select a video program (or section of a video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme.
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the video and to process the viewing experience.

Catechists must realize that they control the use of video in their sessions. They might approach a video program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to build a presentation or as a way to “enflesh” an existing skeleton.

A video program well-tailored to the needs of a group might be used in its entirety. At other times, catechists may creatively manipulate the video to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A video may be shown with the *sound off* to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The “pause” button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this video program have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Introduction to the Series

Catholic Update Video is a video resource designed for use in the RCIA, catechist formation, sacrament programs for parents, faith-sharing groups, study groups, ministry training and high school religious education. *Catholic Update Video* draws from Catholic life and practice to present a single topic in a “video toolbox” format with four distinct segments—story, witness, teaching and musical reflection.

Catholic Update Video has been designed with today’s learner in mind. Its segments are short and can stand alone or be used with others in the program. The format is flexible, making it useful in a variety of group settings as well as for individual viewing. The emphasis is on what video can do best, namely touch us through

story (story segment), testimony (witness segment) and song (musical reflection segment) with images and the emotions they carry. But a more “didactic” approach (teaching segment) respects the need to convey a concise core of information.

The general model for catechetical process (life experience, message or doctrine, response) is respected by the order of the four segments, although at times a catechist may choose to use them alone or out of sequence:

- Each program begins with a **story segment** designed to draw viewers in and help them connect their life experience to the faith topic.
- The testimony of real-life Catholics in the **witness segment** helps viewers reflect on their own life experience and prepare for group sharing.
- Our teacher briefly highlights some aspects of the topic in the **teaching segment**. Relevant images help to illustrate the points being made. (*This segment is not intended to treat a topic exhaustively nor substitute for a more thorough presentation on the message or doctrine.*)
- Viewers are invited to respond in prayer using the **musical reflection segment**.

The program’s host provides a context for each segment. This is designed to help viewers who will see the program from beginning to end. Catechists who use segments individually or out of sequence may wish to prepare their own lead-ins. On-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for reflection or sharing between segments.

This leader's guide is an important tool for making the best use of this video program. It includes the following features.

- **Suggested Uses for Training Sessions**
- **Summary and Suggestions for Use** for each segment.
- **Questions for Sharing** for the story, witness and teaching segments; facilitators can choose from them or use them as models for developing their own questions.
- **Suggestions for Use** for the musical reflection segment provide suggestions for using this segment in a prayer setting.
- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. *(If the VCR is equipped with an "elapsed time" counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an "elapsed time" counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the "review" mode [i.e., while the VCR is in "play"] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.)*

TRAINING BEREAVEMENT MINISTERS **RESPONDING TO GRIEF**

Overview of the Program

The two programs in the *Training Bereavement Ministers* series are designed to assist parish pastoral ministers as they offer initial training and ongoing formation to those who serve as bereavement ministers. *Training Bereavement Ministers: Responding to Grief* introduces bereavement ministers to the *context* in which they will minister, with emphasis on the emotional and spiritual needs of the bereaved. *Training Bereavement Ministers: Funeral Planning* (D2090) explores how the Church's funeral rites can bring comfort to the bereaved as they journey from grief to hope.

Jesus wept upon learning that his friend Lazarus had died (John 11:35). This very natural, human reaction in Jesus is often forgotten as we look beyond it to the miracle Jesus went on to perform—that of raising Lazarus from death.

While much can be said about the meaning of Jesus raising Lazarus, the fact that John records Jesus' human reaction to the death of his friend is very significant. John doesn't elaborate. He uses as few words as possible: *Jesus wept*. It's as if John expects that we understand why Jesus is weeping and so he sees no need to say more. It is clear that Jesus feels the pain of loss as deeply as we do.

Being both human and divine, Jesus is uniquely equipped to provide comfort to the bereaved: He knows both the pain of human loss and the promise of life eternal. He made special mention in the Beatitudes of "those who mourn," indicating that they are "blessed" and that "they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:3-5). In

calling those who mourn “blessed,” Jesus doesn’t mean that mourning is pleasant. People mourn as a result of tragedy and suffering. There’s nothing blessed about these situations. But those who mourn truly are blessed because God hears their cries and will comfort them.

One of the ways that God comforts those who mourn is through *us*. We can be the compassionate presence of God for others. St. Teresa of Avila is attributed with the following prayer. It captures well our role in enfleshing Christ’s care for others.

*Christ has no body now but yours;
No hands, no feet on earth, but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which he looks
compassion on this world;
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good;
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the
world.
Yours are the hands. Yours are the feet. Yours are the
eyes. You are his body;
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

This program contains the same four segments found in other videos in this series with one minor difference: The story and witness segments are integrated to facilitate use in training sessions.

Some users may wish to incorporate segments of this video into an existing training program. For others, this video and its companion, *Training Bereavement Ministers: Funeral Planning*, may provide a “skeleton” on which to build a training program. We offer suggestions for the use of these videos in training sessions on page 11.

None of us has all the answers nor can we meet all the needs of the people to whom we minister. Similarly, one, or even two, training tapes can’t possibly prepare ministers for all the situations they will face. In practice, the people with whom we minister will

become our teachers. What we offer here will stimulate discussion and further exploration of how to be truly present to those experiencing grief.

Three *story segment* vignettes provide fictional “case studies” of grieving families. Situations include death after a long illness, the sudden death of a child, and death related to addiction. The stories also reflect different reactions and emotional needs of family members at the time of loss.

In the *witness segment* following each vignette, a panel of bereavement ministers comments on the situations of grief as well as the positive and negative aspects of the pastoral visit depicted.

In the *teaching segment*, chaplain, author and educator Patti Normile grounds bereavement ministry in the call of Baptism, through which we are “buried with Christ” to rise through Resurrection to new life. A bereavement minister’s presence to the bereaved in their suffering can help them find God’s love in the midst of pain.

Our program concludes with a *music video reflection*, the song “Live in Me,” which reminds bereavement ministers that God is present in and through them as they reach out to console others.

Audience

The intended audience of this program is those in initial training or ongoing formation for the ministry of consolation or bereavement. Ideally, training for this ministry (and viewing of this video) will take place in a group setting for more fruitful sharing of ideas, feelings and responses. Where a group setting is not possible, the producers strongly encourage personal interaction between an experienced pastoral minister and the trainee at the time of the viewing, rather than simply sending this video home for private viewing.

Suggested Uses for Training Sessions

Please note that this video and its companion *Training Bereavement Ministers: Funeral Planning* are designed as resources to enhance the training of your parish bereavement ministers. They are not meant to do the training for you. It is our belief that no video can replace the most valuable resource: a “live” minister who is present to share faith and experience, who can design a presentation for a particular group, and who responds to the specific needs and questions of the participants.

Ideally, the material presented in this program (and its companion video) would form part of ongoing ministry formation, used over a number of sessions. The teaching segment can serve as a foundation to ground the basic formation. Then, the “case study” stories (with their accompanying on-screen discussions) can be used individually. With time allowed for experienced pastoral ministers as well as newcomers to bereavement ministry to discuss their reactions and share their own stories, one vignette alone can provide enough material for a satisfactory training session.

If, however, all the material in the program needs to be covered in a single session, we recommend at least 3-4 hours be set aside during which the video program can be adequately viewed and discussed. Usually, this would be too much time for a weeknight session but could fit into an extended training session on a Saturday. If weeknight evenings are the only scheduling option, we strongly suggest breaking up the vignettes and panelists’ responses so that only one vignette and accompanying panel response is viewed and discussed each evening.

When both videos are being used in the formation of bereavement ministers, we recommend spreading the material over two extended sessions on separate Saturdays: a session on *Responding to Grief* one week

and a session on *Funeral Planning* a week or two later. It would be possible to cover all of the material in one day (*Responding to Grief* in the morning, *Funeral Planning* in the afternoon), but the weight of the subject matter could leave new volunteers exhausted and overwhelmed after a long day. Experienced ministers who are using these video programs for enrichment and ongoing formation would more likely be able to handle the intensity of a long day since they already have some experience in this ministry.

An Outline for Using *Training Bereavement Ministers: Responding to Grief*

Suggested length of session: 3-4 hours minimum

I. Teaching Segment

Follow this with reflection and discussion using questions on p. 24.

II. Story Vignettes and Panel Response

- Stories may be viewed in any order.
- Some facilitators may wish to lead the group in discussion of the story *before* viewing the panel response. There are questions to help with discussions on page 18. Follow the discussion with the panel response.
- Others may wish to immediately follow the story with a viewing of the panel response.
- Questions are provided on pages 19 to help facilitate discussion following the viewing of each panel response.

III. Additional Material

Include instructions/guidelines the ministers need to know—particular to your parish.

IV. Musical Reflection Segment

Use this as part of a closing prayer experience. See sample prayer on page 25.

When training includes use of both *Training Bereavement Ministers* videos, a suggested format for a session using *Funeral Planning* is very similar to the one above. See the leader's guide for *Training Bereavement Ministers: Funeral Planning* for a session outline. As noted above, these sessions would ideally take place on separate Saturdays.

STORY AND WITNESS SEGMENTS

Summary

Vignette One: Marilyn and Vanessa

(Begins approximately 04:19 into program.)

Marilyn, a woman in her 60's, has been widowed after many years of caring for her husband who had suffered from Alzheimer's disease. Her daughter Vanessa is also grieving the loss of her father. Marilyn and Vanessa both have a strong grounding in their faith but are dealing with the loss in different ways. Marilyn seems to be at a loss now that her role as caregiver is complete. She busies herself cleaning the house and worrying about having coffee on hand for the parish bereavement ministers. Vanessa grows impatient with her mother's concern about what she considers unimportant things and wants to talk about their feelings and comfort one another. The two find a way to connect despite their different needs.

Ministers' Response

(Begins approximately 07:45 into program.)

The bereavement ministers comment on several aspects of this vignette including:

- The words you speak are important; watch what you say.
- Listening is important; we can learn a lot by listening to the bereaved.
- People play different roles and have differing needs; it's important to accept and validate these.
- Everyone grieves differently.
- Don't take sides.
- Be present to the bereaved, accepting where they are in their grief.
- Determine whose voice is primary in decision-making.

Vignette Two: The Montoyas

(Begins approximately 13:12 into program.)

Rudy and Pamela Montoya are a young couple who have lost their young daughter Teresa in an accident. They are in shock and have a great deal of anger at the drunk driver responsible for their daughter's death. Janet, a bereavement minister from their parish, pays a visit to offer them the sympathy of the community.

Janet has walked into a particularly traumatic situation. She manages to convey heartfelt concern for the Montoyas despite making numerous mistakes. She apologizes for her mistakes when she can. She also helps the Montoyas name and accept their anger as a natural response in their situation and leads them in prayer before leaving.

Ministers' Response

(Begins approximately 18:06 into program.)

The bereavement ministers comment on several aspects of the visit including:

- The minister's desire to be present to the hurting family and acknowledge their pain came through despite her mistakes.
- The minister got into difficulty when she began *making statements*. Statements cut off communication. Questions open up communication.
- The minister acknowledged her mistakes and persisted in her efforts to help the family.
- The minister allowed the father to express his emotions through both tears and words.
- Prayer typically occurs at the end of a pastoral visit; ministers should get clues about language to use in the prayer from the language used by the bereaved.
- Helplessness in the face of death binds people together.

Vignette Three: Connie and Brian

(Begins approximately 23:50 into program.)

Connie is the newly widowed mother of a teenage son, Brian. Connie's husband died from health problems related to his years as an alcoholic. Deacon Clark, a minister Brian knows through the church youth group, visits Connie and Brian in their home.

It becomes clear that open communication is not a regular reality in Connie and Brian's home. Brian is clearly dismayed when Connie reveals to Deacon Clark that she is looking into cremation for her husband. There is also tension about Connie not having contacted Brian's older brother to let him know of their father's

death. Brian's brother, Rick, is away at law school, and Connie doesn't want to ruin his exam week with the news. Deacon Clark challenges her on this. When Connie leaves the room, Deacon Clark offers reassurance to Brian that tears can be healing, feelings are okay, and that he will be there to help Brian through this difficult time.

Ministers' Response

(Begins approximately 28:45 into program.)

The bereavement ministers comment on several aspects of the visit including:

- The deacon came into the situation unaware of the family dynamics and secrets.
- He had strength to minister without judgment, condemnation or "shoulds."
- He showed his caring through both his speech and his silence; he was gentle, low-key and supportive.
- He gave permission to both Connie and Brian to feel and to share feelings with him.
- He was careful not to impose his own agenda on the family; he allowed them to make their own choices, even ones he might disagree with.
- Ministers should treat each situation of bereavement as new and unique.

Suggestions for Use

Those training to become bereavement ministers are often drawn to this ministry because of personal experience with the loss of a loved one. They may have benefited personally from the caring presence of a bereavement minister in their own time of need or they may know of others who were helped by such ministers. Regardless of past experience, their common intent is to offer comfort to those in need—at a very vulnerable

and emotional time.

As good-hearted, caring persons, those training to become bereavement ministers are rightfully anxious about taking on this important role. They come to training for this ministry with the humility almost every one of us has experienced in the face of death: We realize that our words cannot take away another's pain, that we are powerless to change the finality of death.

They come to training for this ministry with a desire and need for guidance and training. They will encounter people at their most vulnerable, and no two encounters, no two situations of death, will be alike. Helping new ministers anticipate the kinds of situations they may encounter and discussing possible responses will give them insights to apply to their real-life contact with grieving families. Viewing these vignettes of different situations of bereavement and hearing the responses of experienced bereavement ministers will help them develop their own style of compassionate presence to the bereaved.

These vignettes and the bereavement ministers' responses have been arranged for ease of use in training situations. Trainers may choose to use all three stories in one training session but may find this to be too much to cover adequately in a short time period. We suggest using the three vignettes in separate sessions on different days or spread throughout a single, extended day of training.

When several training sessions are scheduled, an individual story may be the central piece around which an entire session is built. We strongly recommend that viewers stop the program to discuss the vignette before hearing the panel's response. It is likely that viewers will be affirmed when they hear the panelists make some of the same comments they discovered on their own. Role-playing the scene over again, incorporating changes the group and panelists suggest, is an excellent

way for the trainees to practice using the insights gained from the vignettes.

It is important for trainees to realize that no one book, video or individual is going to have all the right answers to every situation of bereavement ministry. Their encounters will be as unique and varied as the individuals involved—themselves and the families they will assist. Keeping the panelists' key points in mind will help guide trainees in their response. They will also draw on the gifts of their own personality, the strength of their faith, and their ability to listen with their hearts.

The following questions may be helpful in facilitating discussion of the vignettes both before and after viewing the ministers' response.

Questions for Sharing

(Before hearing the ministers' responses)

1. What is your reaction to the ways the members of this family are dealing with the loss of their family member?
2. There is no bereavement minister portrayed in the story of Marilyn and Vanessa. What challenges might the bereavement minister encounter? What strengths do Marilyn and Vanessa have that the bereavement minister can work with?
3. What did the bereavement minister in the story you viewed do well?
4. What errors did the bereavement minister make? Was he/she able to correct the errors?
5. How might you have approached the families/individuals differently?
6. What aspect(s) of this bereavement setting make this situation special?

7. What aspect(s) of this bereavement setting might cause you to be uncomfortable? How will you deal with that discomfort?

(After hearing the ministers' responses)

8. Is there anything the ministers missed that you think was significant?

9. Do you disagree with anything the ministers said? What personal knowledge or experience leads you to a different attitude or approach?

10. What further help do you need to be better prepared to deal with the issues raised?

Teaching Segment

(Begins approximately 33:59 into program.)

Summary

In the teaching segment, chaplain, author and educator Patti Normile grounds bereavement ministry in the call of Baptism, through which we are "buried with Christ" to rise through Resurrection to new life. A bereavement minister's presence to the bereaved in their suffering can help them find God's love in the midst of pain.

I. Bereavement ministers walk into vulnerable places in which people grieve the loss of a loved one.

- A. They represent the parish community.
- B. When informed of a death, they must respond quickly.
- C. They may assist the family in planning the funeral liturgy.

II. There are important things to consider before beginning to plan a funeral.

- A. Grief is a raw, open wound—affecting sleep, eating, work and relationships.
 - 1. Grief may be expressed by tears or silence.
 - 2. Grief may make us feel we will not survive.
 - 3. Grief may stay a short time or linger.
 - 4. Grief leads to a state of bereavement.
- B. *Bereavement* comes from an ancient word meaning *to burst, tear, split*.
 - 1. The bereaved may feel they might burst with agony, their hearts and lives are being torn apart.
 - 2. The grieving may feel powerless in the grip of sadness, anger, bewilderment and anguish.
 - 3. When emotions are raw, people are very vulnerable.
- C. Pain is a cost of loving another.
- D. Encourage remembering.
 - 1. Few fears surpass that of being forgotten or having a loved one forgotten.
 - 2. Few salves are more soothing than the reassurance that remembering brings.
 - 3. Jesus told stories that we read, retell, learn from, live by and cherish.
 - 4. Invite the bereaved to remember, to tell their stories of joyful times and difficult moments with the deceased.
 - 5. Ministers must treat all memories as sacred.
- E. Not all losses occur when relationships are healthy or without conflict.
 - 1. The death of an abusive spouse or parent removes fear of more abuse but may seem to close the door on healing the relationship.

2. Sometimes it's the bereaved who need to seek forgiveness from the deceased.
 3. Grieving is often more difficult for those with unresolved conflict.
- F. Each person has the freedom to choose her own attitude in times of loss.
1. Sometimes the bereaved may be concerned that they are doing it wrong, that they aren't feeling the right feelings.
 2. Some family members may not understand or accept another's reaction.
 3. Just as each relationship with the deceased was unique, so will be the grieving.
 4. There is no right or wrong way to mourn.
- G. The connection of family members to God and the Church can be strengthened or broken during this time.
1. The death of a loved one can confirm faith when the bereaved experience God's comfort.
 2. Faith may be shaken by anger at God if a person sees God as the one who has taken their loved one.
 3. Sometimes the only person who has been a practicing Catholic is the deceased.
- H. You will play a key role in creating a positive connection with the Church.
1. Express the sympathy of the church community and yourself as its representative.
 2. Offer the bereaved information about other ministries your parish offers—support groups, counseling or All Souls' Day services.
 3. Assure them that the community wants to support and help them.

III. As you meet with the bereaved, key insights to keep in mind are:

- A. Make time to be present to them, to look at photos and listen to stories.
- B. Listen without judging and with a commitment to confidentiality.
- C. Avoid words like *should* and *ought*.
- D. Refer to God as a comforter in times of loss, not the creator of loss.
- E. Find out who plays key family roles: caregiver, decision maker, etc. This, with a report on family interaction, will help the minister who presides at the funeral.

IV. As Christians, we are called to help others come to know our loving God.

- A. In Baptism, we are “buried with Christ” to rise through his Resurrection to new life.
- B. The journey through grief can lead to hope, thanksgiving and praise.
- C. We can’t fix others’ pain but we can help them search for ways to express thanks for their loved one.
- D. Ministers won’t be perfect. When mistakes happens, forgive yourself, apologize if possible, and continue to help the bereaved find God’s love in the midst of their pain.

V. Our hope lies in the Paschal Mystery—it was through death that Jesus entered into the joy of the Resurrection. We must be present to others in their suffering until they experience the Resurrection.

Suggestions for Use

Patti provides a general overview of the ministry of bereavement. She speaks directly to those being trained for this ministry but does not go into detail about its “how-tos.” These need to be handled by the in-house trainer who should tailor the instruction to the kinds of visits those being trained will make.

- Will they be calling on the bereaved in the family home or meeting with them at the parish offices?
- What is the role of a bereavement minister in your parish?
- Is the minister’s task to extend the sympathy of the community and offer assistance? Or does one also help plan the funeral liturgy?

Regardless of the task the minister is asked to perform, they will approach it more sensitively if they take in the insights shared by Patti in this segment.

A key point Patti raises in the second half of her presentation is the relationship of God to those who are grieving. Those training bereavement ministers need to explore how potential ministers understand this relationship themselves. How was their understanding of God affected by the death of a loved one? Role-playing questions about God, “God’s will,” prayer, and the “why” of death, are crucial to effective pastoral ministry. Their own experience, spirituality, and the language they choose to use with the bereaved will affect their ministry and how they communicate an authentic understanding of God to those who are grieving.

Questions for Sharing

1. When have I experienced someone being truly present to me? How did it make me feel?
2. What experiences and people have been part of my calling to this ministry?
3. What personal experiences of loss and grief will help me assist others who are grieving?
4. How do I view God in terms of suffering and death?
5. How will I respond to the questions those who are grieving raise about God or “God’s will”?
6. What personal gifts do I have to offer to those I will assist during their time of loss?
7. What do I hope to receive as a result of being involved in this ministry?

Musical Reflection Segment

(Begins approximately 42:55 into program.)

Summary

Our program concludes with a *music video reflection*, the song “Live in Me.” Using Jesus’ symbolism of the vine and the branches (John 15:1-17), the song reminds bereavement ministers that God is present in and through them as they reach out to console others. Images of ministers reaching out to those in need of God’s comfort in times of grief accompany this song.

Suggestions for Use

This segment may be used as an individual prayer or as part of a group prayer experience. An outline of a sample prayer service follows.

1. Gather around a central table on which is placed a vine plant, an open Bible and a lit candle.
2. Open the prayer with the following or similar words:
In the Beatitudes, Jesus promises comfort to those who mourn. As those in training as bereavement ministers, we hope to provide some of that comfort. Many of us know from personal experience the pain of losing a loved one. We realize how much it means to know that someone cares but we also realize the limits of human words in the face of death. As we gather now to pray, let's remember that Jesus is present to us and through us as we reach out to others in their time of need.
3. Scripture: John 15:5-9 (vine and branches)
4. Reflection and sharing: What will you do to ensure that you and your ministry remain connected to Jesus?
5. Video reflection: "Live In Me"
6. Close with the Lord's Prayer and Sign of Peace.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

- 1) **Scripture references:** John 11:35 (death of Lazarus); Luke 1:78-79 (Canticle of Zechariah); John 15:1-17 (vine and branches); Job 17:6-7; Ecclesiastes 3:3-5; Isaiah 61:1-3; Jeremiah 31:12-16; Psalms 10:13-14, 31:9-10, 35:13-14, 38:6-7, 88:8-12; Matthew 5:3-5; John 16:5-7, 19-24; Romans 12:14-16

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:

Most entries in the *Catechism* concerning the Christian understanding of death can be found in “I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body” (988-1019) and “I Believe in Life Everlasting” (1020-1060). Funerals are addressed in “Christian Funerals” (1680-1690).

3) Available from St. Anthony Messenger Press:

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F U N E R A L P L A N N I N G

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Catholic Update Video

The Use of Video in Faith Formation

Jesus used the “media” of his day to teach. He was a master storyteller. His preaching is full of imagery. His parables are calculated to engage his audience. Through the ages, Christian teachers and preachers have followed Jesus in the creative proclamation of his message.

From the culture of Jesus’ time, heavily dependent on *oral communication*—to the advent of *print communication*—to our own time and its dependence on *electronic media*—Christian teachers have adapted their proclamation to each new medium and its particular demands.

Media scholars like Marshall McLuhan remind us of the impact of the medium on the message it carries. *How* we communicate affects *what* we communicate. Electronic media offer us new ways to tell the story of our faith. Father Pierre Babin points out (see *The New Era in Religious Communications*, Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991) that the message, as well as the sender and receiver, all will be re-shaped in the telling.

Catechesis, as a part of the total evangelization process, must touch the learners’ hearts and shine the light of faith on their lives. It must connect to the learners’ experience or risk being discarded as irrelevant. To be effective, catechists must learn how to make the best use of the electronic media available in our culture, aware of the particular medium’s strengths and weaknesses.

Video is a very popular, familiar and accessible part of our electronic culture. It draws us in, captures our imaginations and touches us on a deep, emotional level.

As it speaks to our experience and utilizes several of our senses, its message is more likely to be heard and remembered. By integrating quality video programs into the catechetical process, catechists can share the message more effectively.

At the same time, as television becomes a more pervasive part of our lives, we can be lulled into thinking that it can do everything for us—inform, entertain, shop, even worship. The reality is that it can't and shouldn't do everything. As Pierre Babin emphasizes, electronic media function differently than print media. They appeal first to the *emotional* content of our faith rather than the *intellectual* content. Video cannot begin to convey the amount of information print can. It cannot replace the live presence and personal witness of the catechist. But in a catechetical setting, it can be a powerful part of the “mix of media” used in proclaiming the message.

How effectively video—or any electronic media—is used in the catechetical setting depends primarily on how prepared the catechist is to use it:

- A preview of the video is essential to determine the best use of the program with a particular group.
- The catechist should select a video program (or section of a video) based on the audience, the purpose, and the availability of competent teachers and other resources and activities to support the theme.
- Sufficient time should be available to introduce the video and to process the viewing experience.

Catechists must realize that they control the use of video in their sessions. They might approach a video program in one of two ways: as a skeleton on which to build a presentation or as a way to “enflesh” an existing skeleton.

A video program well-tailored to the needs of a

group might be used in its entirety. At other times, catechists may creatively manipulate the video to fit their needs:

- An excerpt may be taken from a longer piece to illustrate a point.
- A video may be shown with the *sound off* to highlight an aspect of the program.
- The “pause” button can be used freely to interject explanations and examples or to elicit reactions.
- The program or excerpt may be repeated to emphasize a point.

The producers of this video program have attempted to craft both medium and message with an awareness of the power of the medium as well as its limitations. They encourage those who use it to study this guide and become familiar with ways to allow this program to supplement their own sharing of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Introduction to the Series

Catholic Update Video is a video resource designed for use in the RCIA, catechist formation, sacrament programs for parents, faith-sharing groups, study groups, ministry training and high school religious education. *Catholic Update Video* draws from Catholic life and practice to present a single topic in a “video toolbox” format with four distinct segments—story, witness, teaching and musical reflection.

Catholic Update Video has been designed with today’s learner in mind. Its segments are short and can stand alone or be used with others in the program. The format is flexible, making it useful in a variety of group settings as well as for individual viewing. The emphasis is on what video can do best, namely touch us through story (story segment), testimony (witness segment) and

song (musical reflection segment) with images and the emotions they carry. But a more “didactic” approach (teaching segment) respects the need to convey a concise core of information.

The general model for catechetical process (life experience, message or doctrine, response) is respected by the order of the four segments, although at times a catechist may choose to use them alone or out of sequence:

- Each program begins with a **story segment** designed to draw viewers in and help them connect their life experience to the faith topic.
- The testimony of real-life Catholics in the **witness segment** helps viewers reflect on their own life experience and prepare for group sharing.
- Our teacher briefly highlights some aspects of the topic in the **teaching segment**. Relevant images help to illustrate the points being made. (*This segment is not intended to treat a topic exhaustively nor substitute for a more thorough presentation on the message or doctrine.*)
- Viewers are invited to respond in prayer using the **musical reflection segment**.

The program’s host provides a context for each segment. This is designed to help viewers who will see the program from beginning to end. Catechists who use segments individually or out of sequence may wish to prepare their own lead-ins. On-screen graphics provide viewers with a question for reflection or sharing between segments.

This leader's guide is an important tool for making the best use of this video program. It includes the following features.

- **Suggested Uses for Training Sessions**
- **Summary and Suggestions for Use** for each segment.
- **Questions for Sharing** for the story, witness and teaching segments; facilitators can choose from them or use them as models for developing their own questions.
- **Suggestions for Use** for the musical reflection segment provide suggestions for using this segment in a prayer setting.
- **Resources for Further Study** are listed at the end of this guide.
- Approximate times are noted for where each segment begins. *(If the VCR is equipped with an "elapsed time" counter, reset the counter to 0:00:00 at the beginning of the tape and fast-forward to the time listed for the beginning of the desired segment. If the VCR does not have an "elapsed time" counter, the facilitator can fast-forward in the "review" mode [i.e., while the VCR is in "play"] to find the gray screen and Catholic Update Video logo that indicate the start of a segment.)*

TRAINING BEREAVEMENT MINISTERS
F U N E R A L P L A N N I N G

Overview of the Program

The two programs in the *Training Bereavement Ministers* series are designed to assist parish pastoral ministers as they offer initial training and ongoing formation to those who serve as bereavement ministers. *Training Bereavement Ministers: Funeral Planning* explores how the Church's funeral rites can help the bereaved in their journey from grief to hope. *Training Bereavement Ministers: Responding to Grief* (D2090) introduces bereavement ministers to the context in which they will minister, with emphasis on the emotional and spiritual needs of the bereaved.

When we say the word *funeral*, most people think of the funeral Mass, but the Church actually provides us with a progression of three funeral rites, a three-fold procession, if you will, that helps us who grieve the loss of a loved one to surrender our loved one into the hands of our loving God.

It is becoming the task of parish bereavement ministers to assist families in the planning of funerals. These ministers need to be familiar not only with the Funeral Mass but also with the Vigil for the Deceased and the Rite of Committal. This is particularly helpful when family members suggest things they would like to do that are not appropriate for a eucharistic liturgy. The Vigil and Rite of Committal allow for much greater flexibility than the Mass, and the Catholic Funeral Rite offers them as appropriate moments for different stages of grieving and the accompanying needs.

This program contains the same four segments found in other videos in this series with one minor difference: The story and witness segments are

integrated to facilitate use in training sessions.

Some users may wish to incorporate segments of this video into an existing training program. For others, this video and its companion, *Training Bereavement Ministers: Responding to Grief*, may provide a “skeleton” on which to build a training program. We offer suggestions for the use of these videos in training sessions on page 35.

None of us has all the answers nor can we meet all the needs of the people to whom we minister. Similarly, one, or even two, training tapes can’t possibly prepare ministers for all the situations they will face. In practice, the people to whom we minister will become our best teachers. What we offer here will stimulate discussion and further exploration of how to be truly present to those experiencing grief.

Three *story segment* vignettes provide fictional “case studies” of different circumstances of grief and options for the funeral rites—Vigil for the Deceased, Funeral Liturgy, and Rite of Committal. The stories also reflect different reactions and emotional needs of family members at the time of loss.

In the *witness segment* following each vignette, a panel consisting of a liturgist and bereavement ministers comments on the different funeral rites as well as the positive and negative aspects of the pastoral visit depicted.

In the *teaching segment*, chaplain, author and educator Patti Normile offers bereavement ministers suggestions for using the funeral rites of the Church to lead the bereaved from the great sorrow of loss toward the healing of our loving God.

Our program concludes with a *music video reflection*, a prayer invoking God’s help for those serving as bereavement ministers.

Audience

The intended audience of this program is those in initial training or ongoing formation for the ministry of consolation or bereavement. Ideally, training for this ministry (and viewing of this video) will take place in a group setting for more fruitful sharing of ideas, feelings and responses. Where a group setting is not possible, the producers strongly encourage personal interaction between an experienced pastoral minister and the trainee at the time of the viewing, rather than simply sending this video home for private viewing.

Suggested Uses for Training Sessions

Please note that this video and its companion *Training Bereavement Ministers: Responding to Grief* are designed as resources to enhance the training of your parish bereavement ministers. They are not meant to do the training for you. It is our belief that no video can replace the most valuable resource: a “live” minister who is present to share faith and experience, who can design a presentation for a particular group, and who responds to the specific needs and questions of the participants.

Ideally, the material presented in this program (and its companion video) would form part of ongoing ministry formation, used over a number of sessions. The teaching segment can serve as a foundation to ground the basic formation. Then, the “case study” stories (with their accompanying on-screen discussions) can be used individually. With time allowed for experienced pastoral ministers as well as newcomers to bereavement ministry to discuss their reactions and share their own stories, one vignette alone can provide enough material for a satisfactory training session.

If, however, all the material in the program needs to

be covered in a single session, we recommend at least three to four hours be set aside for each video program. This is too much time for a weeknight evening but could fit into an extended training session on a Saturday. If weeknight evenings are the only scheduling option, we strongly suggest breaking up the vignettes and panelists' responses so that only one vignette and accompanying panel response is viewed and discussed each evening.

When both videos are being used in the formation of bereavement ministers, we recommend spreading the material over two extended sessions on separate Saturdays: a session on *Responding to Grief* one week and a session on *Funeral Planning* a week or two later. It would be possible to cover all of the material in one day (*Responding to Grief* in the morning, *Funeral Planning* in the afternoon), but the weight of the subject matter could leave new volunteers exhausted and overwhelmed after a long day. Experienced ministers who are using these video programs for enrichment and ongoing formation would more likely be able to handle the intensity of a long day since they already have some experience in this ministry.

An Outline for Using *Training Bereavement Ministers: Funeral Planning*

Suggested length of session: three to four hours minimum

I. Teaching Segment

Follow this with reflection and discussion using questions on p. 48.

II. Story Vignettes and Panel Response

- Stories may be viewed in any order.

- Some facilitators may wish to lead the group in discussion of the story *before* viewing the panel response. There are questions to help with discussions on page 43. Follow the discussion with the panel response.
- Others may wish to immediately follow the story with the panel response.
- Questions are provided on page 43 to help facilitate discussion following the viewing of each panel response.

III. Additional Material

Include instructions/guidelines the ministers need to know—particular to your parish.

IV. Musical Reflection Segment

Use this as part of a closing prayer experience. See sample prayer on page 49.

When training includes use of both *Training Bereavement Ministers* videos, a suggested format for a session using *Responding to Grief* is very similar to the one above. See the leader's guide for *Training Bereavement Ministers: Responding to Grief* for a session outline. As noted above, these sessions would ideally take place on separate Saturdays.

Story and Witness Segments

Summary

Vignette One: Marilyn and Vanessa

(Begins approximately 04:18 into program.)

Marilyn, a woman in her 60's, has been widowed after many years of caring for her husband who had suffered from Alzheimer's disease. Her daughter, Vanessa, and brother-in-law, Wayne, are grieving the loss of their

father and brother respectively. A bereavement minister from their parish has joined them to help plan the funeral. This same minister was present to the family before George's death.

Marilyn and Wayne struggle for control of the planning. Each one has different needs and ideas of what should be done. The minister assists them by acknowledging their needs while making it clear that Marilyn's position as George's widow gives her wishes priority. She allows both Marilyn and Vanessa to participate in ministries that the bereaved would normally be discouraged from doing. While the minister offers her own cautions, she sees that these wishes are important for the grieving of the two women.

Ministers' Response

(Begins approximately 09:35 into program.)

The bereavement ministers comment on several aspects of this vignette including:

- The minister respected the widow's position as primary in decision-making.
- It is important to acknowledge different ideas and needs while keeping focused on the purpose of the rites.
- The Church's funeral rites assist the bereaved on their journey from grief to hope.
- Each funeral rite has its own feel and purpose.
- The minister needs to be knowledgeable of the rites *and* a caring person.
- This minister could have offered more options for involvement so that everyone felt included.
- A funeral is a time for the bereaved to be ministered to; it's okay for them not to be involved in the liturgies.

Vignette Two: The Montoyas

(Begins approximately 15:21 into program.)

Rudy and Pamela Montoya are a young couple who have lost their young daughter Teresa in an accident. They are in shock and have a great deal of anger at the drunk driver responsible for their daughter's death. Janet, a bereavement minister from their parish, pays a visit to offer them the sympathy of the community and help them with funeral arrangements.

Janet helps the Montoyas select personal items from Teresa's life to have present at the vigil and then joins them in the living room to talk about the funeral. Rudy and Pamela seem unable to focus on the task of funeral planning. Janet continues to encourage them to participate in the planning but backs off when it becomes clear that neither of them is ready for it. She allows them to express their anger, listens to their pain, and offers to come back when their parents have arrived. She reassures Pamela that she is "doing everything right." Pamela responds to Janet's compassion and understanding and decides that she would like to participate in the funeral planning as a final gift to her daughter. She asks Janet to help them.

Ministers' Response

(Begins approximately 19:51 into program.)

The bereavement ministers comment on several aspects of the visit including:

- The tragic death of a child may be the most difficult situation a bereavement minister will encounter.
- The minister's more important task is to validate and accept the feelings of the bereaved, rather than getting the funeral planned.
- Never say, "I know how you feel."

- Making decisions is difficult in times of great stress and grief.
- If the family isn't able to focus on funeral planning, the parish minister or priest can offer to do that for them. It is more important to be present to the family in their pain. Listening as they share about the deceased will help the minister personalize the funeral liturgies.

Vignette Three: Connie and Brian

(Begins approximately 25:22 into program.)

Connie is the newly widowed mother of Brian, a 15 year old. Connie's husband died from health problems related to his years as an alcoholic. Allan Macey, a bereavement minister from the church where Brian is involved in the youth group, visits Connie and Brian in their home.

It becomes clear that open communication is not a regular reality in Connie and Brian's home. Brian is dismayed that Connie has decided against a Church funeral for her husband. The added anger, confusion and pain of grief tax their poor communication skills. Allan steps in to help Brian understand why his mother may be making some of her choices. Without taking sides, Allan manages to support Connie as the primary decision-maker while encouraging Brian's participation. Connie and Brian argue again about what Brian should say about his father at the service. Brian wants to share honestly about the good and bad aspects of this father's life; Connie would like him to focus only on the good times. Again, Allan intervenes.

Ministers' Response

(Begins approximately 28:48 into program.)

The bereavement ministers comment on several aspects of the visit including:

- The bereaved are not bound by the instructions of the deceased. The deceased see things in a new light in glory. The funeral is for those who remain.
- The minister was skilled at listening and offering options.
- Use of the word *perhaps* is good for offering suggestions and direction.
- Ministers will learn things about families that must be kept confidential.
- The funeral is for the whole parish, not just the family of the deceased.

Suggestions for Use

Those training to become bereavement ministers are often drawn to this ministry because of personal experience with the loss of a loved one. They may have benefited personally from the caring presence of a bereavement minister in their own time of need or they may know of others who were helped by such ministers. Regardless of past experience, their common intent is to offer comfort and assistance to those in need—at a very vulnerable and emotional time.

As good-hearted, caring persons, those training to become bereavement ministers will be rightfully anxious about taking on this important role. They come to training for this ministry with the humility almost every one of us has experienced in the face of death: We realize that our words cannot take away another's pain, that we are powerless to change the finality of death.

They come to training for this ministry with a desire and need for guidance and training. They will encounter people at their most vulnerable, and no two encounters, no two situations of death, will be alike. Helping new ministers anticipate the kinds of situations they may encounter and discussing possible responses will give them insights to apply to their real-life contact with grieving families. Viewing these vignettes of different situations of bereavement and hearing the responses of experienced bereavement ministers will help them develop their own style of compassionate presence to the bereaved.

These vignettes and the bereavement ministers' responses have been arranged for ease of use in training situations. Trainers may choose to use all three stories in one training session but may find this to be too much to cover adequately in a short time period. We suggest using them in separate sessions on different days or throughout a single extended day of training.

When several training sessions are scheduled, an individual story may be the central piece around which a session is built. We recommend that viewers stop the program to discuss the vignette before hearing the panel's response. Viewers will be affirmed when they hear the panelists make some of the same comments they discovered on their own. Role-playing the scene over again, incorporating changes the group and panelists suggest, is an excellent way for the trainees to practice using the insights gained from the vignettes.

Trainees must realize that no one book, video or individual has the right answers to every situation of bereavement ministry. Their encounters will be as unique and varied as the individuals involved—themselves and the families they will assist. Keeping the panelists' key points in mind will help guide trainees in their response. They will also draw on the gifts of their own personality, the strength of their faith,

and their ability to listen with their hearts.

The following questions may be helpful in facilitating discussion of the vignettes both before and after viewing the ministers' response.

Questions for Sharing

(Before hearing the ministers' response)

1. What is your reaction to the ways the members of this family are dealing with the loss of their family member?
2. What strengths does this family have that the bereavement minister can work with?
3. What did the bereavement minister in the story do well?
4. What errors did the bereavement minister make? Was he/she able to correct the errors?
5. How might you have approached the families/individuals differently?
6. What aspect(s) of this bereavement setting make this situation special?
7. What aspect(s) of this bereavement setting might cause you to be uncomfortable? How will you deal with that discomfort?

(After hearing the ministers' responses)

8. Is there anything the ministers missed that you think was significant?
9. Do you disagree with anything the ministers said? What personal knowledge or experience leads you to a different attitude or approach?
10. What further help do you need to be better prepared to deal with the issues raised?

Teaching Segment

(Begins approximately 34:31 into program.)

Summary

In the teaching segment, chaplain, author and educator Patti Normile offers bereavement ministers suggestions for using the funeral rites of the Church to lead the bereaved from the great sorrow of loss toward the healing of our loving God.

I. Bereavement ministers walk into vulnerable places in which people grieve the loss of a loved one.

- A. They represent the parish community.
- B. Their primary task may be to assist the family in planning the funeral liturgy.
- C. They must also be aware of the emotional and spiritual needs of the grieving.

II. Funeral planning is a spiritual art.

- A. A funeral is more than a farewell; it is an act of faith expressed by the Church.
- B. The Catholic funeral rites provide sacred actions that support and comfort those who grieve.
- C. Funerals help us express what we believe about life and death.
- D. They invite those searching for faith to explore what Christ's life, death and Resurrection offer.

III. When planning a funeral, a bereavement minister should be conscious that:

- A. Every loss is new, with different relationships and circumstances.

- B. The bereaved will not only be dealing with the emotions of grief but also making significant decisions in a short amount of time.
- C. The bereaved are facing a multitude of emotions and stresses.

IV. A Catholic funeral is a threefold ritual celebrating the journey of the deceased from earthly to eternal life. This progression of rites helps those who mourn to separate and let go of their loved one.

- A. The Vigil for the Deceased is often held the evening before the funeral Mass.
 - 1. Family, friends and colleagues express their loss, share memories and care for one another.
 - 2. A family member or friend may speak in remembrance of the deceased.
 - 3. The rosary may be prayed. Organizations may hold their services. Evening Prayer for the Dead may bring comfort to the mourners.
 - 4. The vigil has less structure than the funeral Mass and allows more freedom to bring in elements particular to the needs of the grieving family. Special music may be played that would not be appropriate at the funeral Mass.
- B. The Funeral Liturgy is the principal celebration of the Church's funeral rites and is usually a Mass.
 - 1. At Eucharist, we celebrate Christ's death and Resurrection when we gather, tell the stories of our faith, share a holy meal and are sent forth.

2. At a funeral Mass, we also remember the life of the deceased, who was baptized into the mystery of Christ's dying and rising.
 3. God's love and mercy have been at work in the life of this Christian; God offers us the same love and mercy in our grief, and will continue to do so.
 4. In certain pastoral circumstances, the pastor and family may decide to celebrate the funeral liturgy outside of the Eucharist. Ministers should know what those circumstances might be.
- C. The Rite of Committal, held at the graveside or in a mausoleum, is a time to commit the deceased to God and to pray for those who remain.
1. This rite's simple framework offers a ritual sense of closure even as grieving continues.
 2. Farewell messages from family, friends and co-workers may grace this time. Poetry may be read and caregivers honored.

V. Ministers must keep in mind the life of the deceased, the circumstances of death, the various stages of grief and be familiar with the structure and options provided in the funeral rites.

- A. As decisions are made, prepare a detailed written plan to be shared with the presider of the funeral rites and other ministers.
- B. The plan should include the following:
1. When and where will the different funeral rites be celebrated?
 2. Who is the family decision-maker? Who is the family contact person?
 3. Which Scripture readings have the family selected, and who will read them?

4. Who will serve as Eucharistic Ministers?
5. Who will present the gifts at Mass?
6. What songs and responses will be sung? Who will be the musicians?
7. What information will help the presider personalize the homily?
8. Who will be the pallbearers?
9. Does the family have special needs?
10. Will a worship aid, a program of the funeral, be needed?

VI. When cremation is considered, the family needs to know the Church's guidelines for cremation and funeral liturgies.

VII. Bereavement ministry does not end with the funeral rites. Follow-up with the family after the burial is essential.

Suggestions for Use

Patti provides a general overview of funeral planning. She speaks directly to those being trained for this ministry but does not go into detail about all of its "how-tos." These need to be handled by the in-house trainer who should tailor the instruction to the kinds of visits those being trained will make and the liturgical practices of the parish and community.

- Will they be calling on the bereaved in the family home or meeting with them at the parish offices?
- Does the minister who helps the family with funeral planning also make the initial call to the family to extend the sympathy and support of the parish community?
- What are the parish guidelines for funeral liturgy planning?

Regardless of the extent of the tasks the minister is asked to perform, they will approach them more sensitively if they take in the insights shared by Patti in this segment.

Questions for Sharing

1. When have I experienced someone being truly present to me? How did it make me feel?
2. What experiences and people have been part of my calling to this ministry?
3. What personal experiences of loss and grief will help me assist others who are grieving?
4. What liturgical celebrations have been especially meaningful to me? Why?
5. What more do I need to learn about the funeral rites of the Catholic Church?
6. What personal gifts do I have to offer to those I will assist during their time of loss?
7. How comfortable am I with conflict? How will I handle situations of conflict within families I am helping plan funerals?
8. What do I hope to receive as a result of being involved in this ministry?

Musical Reflection Segment

(Begins approximately 44:26 into program.)

Summary

Our program concludes with a music video reflection, a prayer invoking God's help for those serving as bereavement ministers. Instrumental music and images of the "faces of grief" accompany this prayer.

Suggestions for Use

This segment may be used as an individual prayer or as part of a group prayer experience. An outline of a sample prayer service follows.

1. Gather around a central table on which is placed the *Order of Christian Funerals*, an open Bible and a lit candle.
2. Open the prayer with the following or similar words:
We gather as people of hope, people who place our hope in the promise of the Resurrection. We are assured of eternal life if we but respond to God's gift of love. It is this faith as well as our compassion for those who are hurting that draws us to assist the bereaved in their time of need. May our confidence in God's faithfulness and our own personal gifts blend to make us caring and effective ministers of consolation.
3. Scripture: Romans 6:3-4, 8-9
4. Reflection and sharing: What difference has the promise of eternal life made in my own experience of the death of a loved one? What difference will this make in my ministry to the bereaved?
5. Video reflection: musical reflection segment
6. Close with the Lord's Prayer and Sign of Peace.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

1) Scripture references: Job 17:6-7; Ecclesiastes 3:3-5; Isaiah 61:1-3; Jeremiah 31:12-16; Psalms 10:13-14, 31:9-10, 35:13-14, 38:6-7, 88:8-12; Matthew 5:3-5; John 16:5-7, 19-24; Romans 12:14-16

2) *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references:
Most entries in the *Catechism* concerning the Christian understanding of death can be found in “I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body” (988-1019) and “I Believe in Life Everlasting” (1020-1060). Funerals are addressed in “Christian Funerals” (1680-1690).

3) Available from St. Anthony Messenger Press:

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