## Reporting process:

1. After completion of the interview and the departure of the inquirer, the team would remain for a time of discussion and discernment.

2. A reporter for the team would compile, and collate these reflections, write the report and circulate it to members. Members would at this time give further input on the written report. If there are divergent opinions, all perspectives should be included.

3. The interviewing team will be giving a recommendation to the Bishop regarding this individual's Call to Ministry. **This report** should **address** this individual's perceived strengths and any areas of concern.

4. When all have read and agreed on the text of the report, it should be signed by all and forwarded to the Bishop.

**The Bishop, along with the Examining Chaplains of the diocese, carry on the process from this point. The Bishop communicates with the person involved as to what steps, if any, come next. It does, however, remain the primary responsibility of the person's parish community to provide support, prayer and encouragement for them, especially in the case that the discernment does not indicate ordained ministry. When continuing or perhaps expanded lay ministry is indicated, then this too needs to be affirmed and celebrated with the person involved.**

## Summary of the steps for the discernment of vocation:

Step 1: Individual meets with parish priest

Step 2: Priest's initial assessment

Step 3: Conversation with the Bishop

Step 4: Parish Discernment Committee is formed

Step 5: Committee meetings
- i) initial meetings
- ii) planning meeting
- iii) interview
- iv) report

Step 6: Bishop and Examining Chaplains committee make final decision

**Resources for Study:**

The Ordination Rites of the Book of Common Prayer (p 637 and following), and of the Book of Alternative Services (p. 631 and following).

Resources for scriptural study are available from the diocesan office.

# Discernment of Vocation:

***A guide for priests and parishes.***


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# Discernment of Vocation: a guide for priests and parishes

**God calls all Christians, not only into a life of worship and faith, but also into service and ministry as members of the Body of Christ. From time to time a parish community may sense for one of its members, or one of its members sense for themselves, a call to the specialized ministry of the ordained as deacon or priest. When this happens a process is required to help discern the nature of that person's call to ministry.**

Individuals (parishioners) interested in exploring their call to ministry should be in regular conversation with their parish priest. These initial conversations are an attempt by the priest to know the individual more deeply and to discern **(while being aware of one's own biases)** more clearly the exact nature of this individual's call. Is this call one to become a committed lay person, or a call to the diaconate or to the priesthood?

## Conversations:

**The conversations between the priest and the individual showing interest should include the following areas:**

1. The inquirer's present ministry in the parish **and elsewhere**.
2. Encouragement to explore various ministries, including serving during the liturgy.
3. Discussion of a disciplined prayer life/reading of scripture and other Christian liturgy.

## Initial Assessment:

The priest's assessment of the inquirer at this stage is an important part of the process. The priest should use care and discernment at this time because encouragement could increase expectations and may involve significant time, energy and expense for the person their family and assessors. The priest should consider the assessment prayerfully.

## Conversation with the Bishop:

When appropriate the incumbent would indicate to the Bishop that they have **an individual** that is seeking an initial conversation with the Bishop concerning a call to ministry.

## Parish Discernment Committee:

Following the interview and approval by the Bishop, the incumbent should form a Parish Discernment Committee to help the inquirer in their quest for direction. The format of the formal discernment process by the parish, depends on the age, spiritual maturity, educational level, and life experience of the inquirer. Inquirers may come from a very broad base of individuals, with a variety of gifts.

The three to five committee members, plus incumbent should be known by the candidate and appointed by the incumbent. They should be individuals with knowledge of the inquirer and who can attest to the inquirers role within the parish and to his/her leadership and spiritual depth. It is the responsibility of the incumbent to fairly represent the congregation in this discernment process. The whole process is to be done prayerfully and with an intentional listening for the leading of the Holy Spirit.

## Committee Meetings:

**Initial Meeting:** The entire team and the inquirer, led by the incumbent would participate in a study of ministry, particularly as described in the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer and the Book of Alternate Service. Outlines for study are available at the Diocesan Office. This study might require more than one meeting.

**Planning Meeting:** This meeting would not include the inquirer, but would include the incumbent and all of the interviewing team. The purpose of this meeting is to establish what needs to be addressed at the time of the interview.

1. Do we understand the material which was discussed at the initial meeting?
2. What qualities or characteristics are we looking for in an ordained minister? The team might refer to the sheet labelled "Core Values".
3. What do we know about the inquirer?
4. How will the interview be organized, chair, recorder, etc?
5. There would be a written **format** for the interview. Each member of the team would have a copy of the plan. The inquirer would know the general nature of questions, but not specific questions.

**Interview:** The direction of this interview should be to discern the nature of the person's ministry, whether lay or ordained. Each member of the team would take notes which would be used in the reporting process.