
Reflection Forms for Use in Supervision

General Directions

1. In some cases it may be helpful to decide upon the form you will use before the event you record. Obviously this is not always possible or desirable. However, in many cases the planned use of a form helps bring questions to an event that otherwise might not be considered.
2. Put your name and date at the top of the first page of each report.
3. Leave a 3" margin on the right side of each page. This will allow space for comments.
4. Never use real names in reports. Use fictitious names or initials instead. Confidentiality is extremely important.
5. Number the pages.
6. Use the 3" margin to signal to the supervisor any points you think especially critical for discussion.
7. Give one copy to the supervisor (preferably in time to read before the supervisory session) and keep one for yourself.

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Theological Reflection

A Format for Theological Reflection on Incidents

based on *The Art of Theological Reflection*

by Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer, The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997

ASSUMPTIONS

- Theological reflection is an act of making meaning.
- Making meaning out of our lives and the events of our lives is a fundamental human ambition.
- Making meaning is most pressing when our ordinary explanations or comfort are unsettled.
- On the other hand, we often look to quiet discomfort and upended world-views as quickly as possible, thereby rushing to new but superficial meaning making.
- Theological reflection, then, requires a process in which the feelings of discomfort are fully engaged and explored before rushing to new insights.
- In our current culture traditional theological categories, insights and narratives are less naturally employed in meaning making than, say, psychological categories. Therefore, theological reflection will seek ways to allow the reflector to access explicitly theological meaning making. That said, the categories which are considered theological will vary widely from person to person. Various religious traditions, and in some cases, secular traditions, such as literature will be appropriate resources theological reflection and meaning making.

PROCESS

Narration

The purpose of narration is to re-enter the event. The assumption is that events are speeding by as they are experienced. You may, at the time, notice emotional and intellectual responses which make the event a suitable candidate for theological reflection. But only rarely can you fully experience the feelings, let alone reflect on an event, while it occurs. A full and detailed narration designed to re-immense the narrator in the contours of the event, now with the luxury of time to reflect is the goal.

Feelings

The facilitator/supervisor should help the reflector name and explore feelings that are experienced in the narration. Two difficulties often arise at this stage. The first is the tendency of the reflector to want to figure out the event and the answer. It will be important to keep the reflector focused on feelings rather than explanations. Related to the first problem may be tendency to name things one level above feelings. Rather than saying, I felt angry, the reflector may say, it was a nasty situation. Here it will be helpful to ask for the feelings the nastiness evoked, for example.

Cont. next page

Images

In this section the supervisor/facilitator helps the reflector come up with images, which relate to the feelings. Images are just that, pictorial. They say, sometimes, more than a thousand words. They say more than the person may have been conscious of. They enliven and enrich the reflection. They may lead to other feelings being uncovered. For example, if a person says of an overwhelming situation that she feels as though she has a steel bar across her back, it evokes, perhaps, feelings of hardness, weight, and coldness, among others. It may also suggest something like a yoke.

Religious Images and Stories

As images are explored, the supervisor/facilitator may help the reflector connect the images with stories, images or other aspects of religious tradition. Using the example of the steel bar, a Christian reflector might note that Jesus said Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you; and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Insight or Meaning Making

Often this stage cannot be completed as part of a single reflection session. In the above example, the Christian reflector might note, AI am getting one message from my body and another from Jesus. I am not sure how these two messages go together, or if they do. I will pray or meditate with these images and see what I can find out. Perhaps later, one insight might be, AI think I can do a better job of balancing my active life and my spiritual life. Difficult things have become easier to bear when I have turned to prayer. Another and very different insight might be, I have been focused so much on how hard the situation is that I had paid little attention to the difference my work has made. When I paid attention to those smiles, the weight of the bar lifted and the yoke did become easy. Or another, again quite different, insight might be, I have spent so much energy in wanting to change the world that I have not given myself permission to actually enjoy my life. Reflecting on Jesus' yoke has reminded me that I can better balance things so that the yoke doesn't feel as heavy.

Change

There's the joke: How many Harvard professors does it take to change a light bulb? Answer: Change? Change? If meaning making is usually occasioned by disruptions to one's worldview and comfortable understanding of things, then useful insight almost always implies some change. For theological reflection to become more than consciousness raising, it is desirable to help the reflector think through what changes are implied and how he or she will go about implementing them.

Alternate Theological Reflection Report

Choosing the Event for Reflection

Of the many events that have been meaningful for your ministry, choose one that is current in your thinking, and which evokes a significant theological, spiritual or emotional response for you.

Events, which you experience negatively or positively, are both good candidates about which to write and reflect.

Preparing to Write

Recall as much as you can of the details of the event so that you will have it fully in mind. Writing notes may be helpful in filling out your recollection.

The Report (2 pages, more or less, double-spaced)

Information. Describe the event in a way that helps the reader create a mental picture of what took place. What happened? Who was involved? What were their roles? What were the results of the event?

To maintain confidentiality in written documents, be certain to change, mask or otherwise conceal the identity of persons and institutions.

Feelings and Interpretations. What effects did this event have on you? On others who were involved? What emotions were experienced? What do you identify as key issues? How do you see this event in the context of ministry?

Meaning. What theological issues, problems, questions, principles, or doctrines do you see in the situation? Which do you see the people involved, including yourself, dealing with? What does your normative theological understanding contribute to your view of this experience? Are there incongruities between the actions and the beliefs of those involved, including yourself? To what do you attribute any divergences? As you reflect on the above questions, consider the ways that race, gender and class affect the event and/or the analysis of the event.

Reflect, also, on your ideas of ministry. What does it mean to be a minister or to do ministry in this situation? To what extent are those ministered to given voice and seen as equals?

Reflecting on your course work, describe ways in which your theological education thus far might inform your analysis of this experience. Also, in what ways might this experience shape your thinking in the academy?

Implications. What do your reflections suggest regarding areas of growth for you in both your theological development and your ministerial development? What do your reflections suggest for actions at this time?

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT I

Describe the most critical incident in your ministry during the past two to four weeks. The assignment presumes no a priori for what is critical; rather it allows you the fullest latitude in recalling the event which, in whatever way it is important, seems to typify your experiences. A critical incident can be a personal involvement that may have caused anxiety. On the other hand, it may be an event that was exceptionally gratifying. In any case, it should be some experience that can be marked as the "high point" or the "low point" of the two to four week period. Use the following suggestions, where applicable, to order your report and pose questions.

1. Name of event, place, time, length.
2. What was your pre-contact understanding of the function of this event?
3. Record your first impressions as you entered the building and room, observing both people and surroundings. What do you learn from your senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste?
4. What were your initial plans or intentions?
5. Describe the event, including critical verbal and non-verbal communication involved, and your responses.
6. Describe any emotions you perceived in others.
7. Describe your personal feelings about the situation.
8. State what makes this event a "high point" or a "low point" for you.
9. Explore your response to the situation. Were some things particularly hard to handle? Are there ways in which you wish you had responded differently? State any new insights or growth, for yourself or others, you perceive coming from the situation.
10. How do you understand or make sense of this incident theologically? What theological issues were present in the content of what you or others said, or in manner? What beliefs were expressed by actions? Where do you or others stand in relation with God, as demonstrated in this incident? What Biblical passages come to mind which speak to this situation?
11. What changes would you like to make in your future relationships with any of the individuals involved? Are any of these persons beyond your time or ability with whom to make a healthy relationship? If so, how will you relate to this person? What plans or goals do you have for the future? How will you attempt to implement them?

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT II

Describe an incident that has been "critical" for you in your field education experience so far, during the past two or three weeks. A "critical" incident is a personal involvement that has had significance for you, e.g. it has caused you anxiety, or anger, or deep satisfaction, or it has provided an important new insight for you. The incident, then, is one that has had an impact upon you as you develop your understanding of ministry.

Suggested Outline for Writing the Report:

1. Give a brief title to the incident/experience to be described.
2. Describe the context and setting of the event.
3. Identify your initial plans or intentions prior to the incident.
4. Describe the circumstances or background leading to the event and how you became involved.
5. Indicate your personal feelings about the situation.
6. Point out whether you felt you responded appropriately to the situation, or whether you could have done otherwise.
7. What theological issues arise for you from this event?
8. Has your understanding of ministry been helped or hindered by this incident?

FORM FOR ADDRESSING ISSUES OF IDENTITY

1. Name of event, place, time, length.
2. Description of event (including critical verbal and non-verbal communication).
3. In relation to this event identify and state:
 - a. Believer's identity:
 - 1) How has your self-understanding as a believer been affected?
 - 2) How do you feel about any changes that may have occurred in your understanding of yourself as a believer?
 - 3) What issues relating to your faith and your self-understanding does this experience open for further work?
 - b. Professional Identity:
 - 1) Has your commitment to ministry grown stronger, or has it been shaken by this experience?
 - 2) In light of this experience, what personal characteristics or skills do you believe you need to acquire or develop if you are realistically to pursue ministry?
 - 3) What issues about ministry have been revealed by this experience which you feel you need to deal with before ordination?
 - 4) How has your theology of ministry been affected by this experience?
 - c. Institutional Identity:
 - 1) How has this experience affected your understanding of what it means to be a minister?
 - 2) How has this experience affected your feelings toward the church?
 - 3) What has this experience suggested that you will need to know or experience further in order to be able to feel comfortable or be effective as a minister?

GROUP LEADERSHIP

Name of Group:

Attendance:

Purpose:

- I. What were the goals for this session? How did you arrive at these?
- II. Describe the session, including any critical verbal or non-verbal communication.
- III. Evaluate what happened in terms of:
 - a. Goals (Discrepancy between intention and performance, cause of any discrepancy).
 - b. Interpersonal and intra-personal dynamics (including your own feelings and those of others, sensitivity to the needs of others, and effectiveness in addressing these needs).
 - c. Your leadership (clarity and effective use of your role; your ability to discern and meet the needs or concerns of others, and anything you would like to change).
- IV. What did you learn about goal setting, group dynamics, and your leadership that will be helpful for the next meeting?
- V. What theological issues emerged for the group or individuals in the group? How do the group dynamics relate to religious understandings, relationships and values?

LISTENER RESPONSE TO PREACHING

Write comments in response to those items most significant to you. You may use the back of the form.

GENERAL IMPACT: Strong or weak? Sincere or artificial? Held attention? Punctual?

CONTENT: Relevant to real needs in audience?
Proper use of Bible? Faithful to Biblical theology?
Adequate use of other materials? Illustrations?
Concrete applications?

STRUCTURE: Central theme clear? Unified?
Progress in development? Transitions?
Introduction? Conclusion? Good balance?

STYLE: Clear or confused? Forceful or weak?
Correct usage? Words intelligible to audience?
Designed for hearing rather than reading?

DELIVERY: Bodily posture? Appropriate gestures?
Eye contact? Mannerisms? Relation to pulpit or to Notes?

VOICE: Quality? Pitch? Rate? Varied or monotonous?
Easy or Hard to understand?
Pronunciation? Enunciation?

EMOTIONAL ELEMENT: Communicated confidence?
Anxiety? Conviction? Uncertainty?
Love? Hostility?

EVALUATION FORM FOR WORSHIP LEADING

1. GENERAL IMPACT: Helped worshipers' religious experience? Distracting? Weak? Dynamic?
2. FOCUS: Was there a focus on ministering to the mind? the feelings? the will? Was there balance?
3. CONTENT: Proper use of scripture or other material? Proper understanding of each part of the worship service? Creativity in style? Degree to which it was faithful to the community's faith stance and to the needs of the persons present?
4. COMPOSITION: Was there clarity? Did it help call forth response from worshipers? Was it concise? Was it directed toward the appropriate audience?
5. DELIVERY: Bodily posture (even when sitting)? Body movement (including to and from pulpit or up and down stairs)? Appropriate gestures? Eye contact? Mannerisms? Relation to pulpit or notes? Voice quality? Pitch? Rate? Volume? Enunciation?
6. EMOTIONAL ELEMENTS: Emotionally warm or cold? Communicated confidence? Anxiety? Conviction? Uncertainty? Hostility? Joy? Frustration? Other? Your own feelings about your participation?
7. PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF LEADER: Degree to which you shared yourself through your emotional investment in the worship? Prepared or unprepared? Participatory or aloof? Leader-centered or congregation-centered? Rapport?
8. LEARNING: What needs improvement? How will you approach this differently the next time?

OBSERVATION REPORT

1. Name of event, place, time, length.
2. What was your pre-contact understanding of this function or event?
3. Record your first impressions as you entered the building and room (observing both people and surroundings. What did you learn from your sense of sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste?)
4. Describe the event (including any critical verbal and non-verbal communication involved, and your own responses.)
5. Describe any emotions you perceived in others.
6. Describe your own personal feelings about the situation.
7. What did you learn about the role of the leader in this situation?
8. How do you understand or make sense of this situation theologically?

MINISTRY START-UP
(To be used when starting a new task)

(Use the following guidelines as a cover sheet, and attach it to your written report.)

1. Function/Event:

 Your assignment

2. Expectations:
 - a. Yours
 - b. Others

3. Preparation Checklist:
 - a. Objectives
 - b. People to be contacted
 - c. Materials needed
 - d. Preparatory steps
 - e. Deadline

4. Describe the Event (who, what, when, where?)

5. Evaluation Procedures

6. Follow-Up Plans

7. Process for Theological Reflection

WEEKLY PROCESS REPORT

Tasks Performed When

1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
	TOTAL HOURS	_____

Select one task for detailed comment:

- a. What was your purpose?
- b. How did you prepare?
- c. What happened? (Consider both verbal and non-verbal communication.)
- d. What went well? (Evaluate content, inter-personal dynamics, your leadership.)
- e. What did not go well? (Evaluate the same categories.)
- f. How do you relate to the participant's or the group's religious understandings and values? How would you relate your participation to yours?
- g. What have you planned for the future? (What is the potential of this person or this group? What changes would you like to make in your relationship to this person or group? What alternatives do you have in your approach for the future? What specific plans or goals will you set for the future--long

term and short term?)