

SAMPLE ANSWERS

1. I learned a lot in this program about myself and basically how I have to learn to listen better, if I am going to minister to my brothers and sisters. If we really listen to each other, we feel much closer to each other and start to realize that we really are the Body of Christ! When we weep with those who weep and laugh with those who laugh we can come together, be present to each other and be community. I know now that we all have a lot of trouble in our lives, and sometimes with our own families, and that if we can just share this, then we help each other know God's love. I can see now more and more how we really have to trust in the Lord and really be open to each other. God loves each one of us no matter what happens in our lives. If we all really knew that . . . and I certainly feel this more and more . . . then we would each use our own particular ministry better in doing God's will and serving each other. Loving each other means to listen to each other!

I got a lot out of all the times we shared with each other in our classes and prayed together. I learned that we all feel pretty much the same when we struggle to grow and meet the needs of others in our parishes.

2. Due to my work in Ministry Formation I have learned about myself in the following ways:

Physically, I don't do well mornings when I've been up late the night before. I'm going to set limits on my night time meetings so that I'm not such a bear with my family and co-workers.

Spiritually, I've learned that I've been through a great deal, the deaths of my parents, the loss of our family farm, and my run-away son. I've felt grief and pain about these things, and yet I still believe in a future. I still have hope. I am able to reach out to people suffering loss. My present relationship with God is one of trust, not certainty, but I notice I'm not crying all the time any more. When people tell me about what they are going through, I can set aside my need to tell about my son and concentrate on being a real listener and minister to their need.

Emotionally, I've learned that I'm not afraid of messy feelings. I can weep with those who weep and laugh with those who laugh. I'm not afraid to go over to a parishioner's house the day after the funeral and help with the business of the house, the clothing and the next stage of that person's journey. I never knew that I was able to be so supportive. I've learned that my meeting with other ministers in faith sharing is also important so that I can keep on being supportive.

In communications, I know I still have to practice my skills in listening attentively. I keep wanting to get up and do something, like wash the dishes instead of sit quietly and draw the person into conversation. I can feel the twitching but I now know how to set that aside and concentrate on being wholly present to the person in front of me. I'm getting good at summarizing what I hear others saying to me when they talk, but it is very hard for me to put up with silence. I'm an extrovert so I keep wanting to fill the quiet.

With respect to learnings, I'm going to keep looking for more workshops on the Bible, liturgy and Church doctrine. I like to help people, but after this Ministry Formation Program I realize I haven't kept up with my adult religious education. I'm going to one workshop a year on either the Bible, liturgy or doctrine to help keep up.