

Suggested Planning Guidelines for an 11th step CP Workshop or an 11step CP Weekend Retreat.

In 2001, 12-Step Outreach was established within Contemplative Outreach to offer Centering Prayer to people in all 12 -Step fellowships as an 11th step prayer/meditation practice. We are people in 12-Step recovery who help individuals and groups establish contemplative workshops, retreats and formation programs. Anyone in a 12-Step Program can initiate a Centering Prayer Introductory workshop or retreat by using this guide and contacting the 12-Step Outreach Leadership Team at adamsonje@gmail.com or jmac150@sbcglobal.net for information and further help.

We have provided these guidelines to assist you in planning and executing a weekend retreat or a one day intro workshop for people in 12-Step recovery. These guidelines are based on the collective experiences of the 12-Step Outreach Team.

The Introduction to Centering Prayer can be taught in a one day workshop format or a weekend retreat format. Either format presents the first of 7 sessions in which the method of Centering Prayer is taught along with its immediate conceptual background.

Session One presents the four guidelines of the method of Centering Prayer that introduces a practical way of preparing oneself to receive the gift of contemplation (presenters are commissioned by 12-Step Outreach). Time is allowed for questions, answers, and open discussion.

Session One consists of four presentations in a 6 hour, one day session in the workshop format. The first four conferences are also

the heart of a weekend retreat where those in 12-Step Programs can learn CP as an 11th Step practice.

- 1. Prayer as Relationship**
- 2. The Method of Centering Prayer**
- 3. Thoughts and Use of the Sacred Word**
- 4. Deepening our Relationship with God**

Sessions 2-7 will be chosen from the following list of materials:

- 1. The 12-Step tapes by Thomas Keating**
- 2. The transcripts of the 12-Step tapes**
- 3. *Open Mind, Open Heart*, by Thomas Keating**
- 4. *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, by Cynthia Bourgeault**

12-Step Outreach will assist your retreat committee in procuring any of these materials.

It is our experience that 12-Step Centering Prayer groups can spring from these 6 follow-up sessions where the new practice is nurtured in a group setting.

We have found that if we use the same principles and traditions that work so well for us in our regular 12-Step meetings our 12-Step Centering Prayer groups can be a very supportive setting which encourages members to establish a regular Centering Prayer practice. Sessions 2-7 will be chosen from the following list of materials:

- 1. The 12- Step tapes by Thomas Keating**
- 2. The transcripts of the 12-Step tapes**
- 3. Open Mind, Open Heart, by Thomas Keating**
- 4. Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening, by Cynthia Bourgeault**

Sample Format for Session 2-7 and continuing 12-Step CP Group:

Open the meeting with a brief welcome and explain the format.

20 minute period of Centering Prayer

View tapes or read from chosen material.

Brief sharing following the tape or reading. It is during this time that questions about the practice or the material can be addressed.

Close with the Serenity Prayer or the Lords Prayer.

If you decide that you would like to organize a retreat or workshop contact the 12-Step outreach Leadership Team and we will coordinate with you on your proposed event and supply presenters for your event. 12-Step Outreach would be happy to advise you regarding which format might work best for your group.

Presenters:

The workshop or retreat will be sponsored by 12-Step Outreach. The presenters who serve the retreat are people in 12-Step recovery who have met certain qualifications. These qualifications include, at a minimum, that (a) they have long term (i.e. 5 years or more) quality recovery; (b) they have substantial experience in Centering Prayer; and (c) they be certified Centering Prayer Presenters. We also have presenters who have experience presenting the Welcoming Prayer and the Human Condition Workshops.

Timetable:

We would suggest no less than 3-6 months lead time for the retreat. Because of the complexity of “marketing” it is a good idea to allow an extra cushion to determine if attendance will be adequate. You may need less lead time for a half day workshop.

Attendance Size:

For group dynamics, we recommend no less than 10, and no more than 25 participants for each presenter. Because we recommend 2 presenters, that would suggest a minimum of 20 people. The economics of the retreat will change this recommendation. As for a 1/2 day workshop you will not necessarily need as many to participate in order cover you expenses.

Composition:

We recommend that the workshop be offered to members of all 12-Step fellowships and we stress the importance of maintaining the commitment to one’s recovery program. Centering Prayer is not a substitute for the 12 Steps but a method of practicing the 11th step...

Brochures and Marketing:

In light of the 12-Step traditions you must be sensitive to the group conscious in your area. If you can not pass flyers during the meeting pass them afterward or use word of mouth to generate interest. We have flyers printed about 3-4 months prior to the retreat and they are given to people in prayer groups. An e-version is sent around to everyone who has previously attended one of our retreats. We also advertise in the Contemplative Outreach National Newsletter, local Contemplative Outreach Publications, 12-Step Outreach web site.

Flyers or brochures are put in recovery clubs, recovery bookstores, treatment centers, churches, etc.

Workshop Format:

The workshop can be held in a half day setting consisting of the 4 Conferences given back to back with a break during the program. Event planners may also want to provide coffee, soda or water. It is a much simpler format than the weekend retreat.

Retreat Format:

The weekend retreat, as stated above, is built around the CP Introductory Workshop taught as an 11th Step practice. It's important to have a clear agenda and that it be presented to retreatants in a legible format placed both in the individual folders as well as posted in the public areas. The schedule of events/agenda should be reviewed and explained at the opening session of the retreat. Facilitators should remind retreatants about the schedule, the next event, and the rooms in which events are taking place which provides a sense of care and avoids confusion. It is helpful to have a couple of breakout rooms especially if it is a dual track retreat. Rooms are also needed for Soul Friending (a time to share one on one with retreat facilitators).

The CP retreat is intended to be a silent retreat during free time and most of the meals are silent. This is an invitation to deepen our interior work and a gift to ourselves with the opportunity to listen to our Higher Power and to be aware of his presence. The intention is to begin to change our relationship with silence and respect the silence of others. It is recommended that all written materials be put aside so

that the purpose of the weekend can be to “listen to the Spirit in the silence”.

On Friday and Saturday evenings there is an open 12-Step meeting. It is recommended to follow the format of “what it was like, what happened and what it’s like now”. The focus is on the 11th Step and the lead should be given by someone in recovery who is enthusiastic about using Centering Prayer as their 11th Step practice. The talk should include how CP deepened their 11th Step work and the fruits of their prayer practice.

Costs and Expenses of Retreats:

The major items of expense in the weekend retreat are the facility, room and board, and the presenters. The cost for the presenters should anticipate a per diem of \$100 per day per presenter (i.e. \$300 per presenter for a Friday-Sunday weekend retreat) plus an amount for travel. And, you will need to provide the room and board for the presenters. One of the presenters may be an Intern and only room and board needs to be provided.

The following is a sample showing many of the relevant financial issues for planning a weekend retreat:

Sample Cost and Expense

Cash Receipts

Total Participants 22

\$ Cost per person 175.00

Full Pay Participants 20 \$3,500.0

Total Receipts 0

Cash Expenses

Meals Cost Per Person

Total Meals \$

Room Cost Per night # nights
 Total Room Cost Place Meeting room
 Presenter Costs for 2 Scholarships?
 Other Costs Total Expenses
 Logistics/Volunteers:
 \$ 30.00
 \$ 660.00
 \$ 45.00
 2 \$1,980.0
 0
 \$ 75.00
 \$ 600.00
 \$
 50.00 \$3,440.00

The retreat is sponsored by 12-Step Outreach. Contact Jenny Adamson adamsonje@gmail.com to get the presenters. If there are no established Centering Prayer 12 step people in your area, organize a small retreat agenda committee to help organize the retreat with the help from 12- Step Outreach. Volunteers are needed for the following:

Technical:

Someone assigned to the presentation equipment, videos, computer for power point, microphones, etc.

Retreat Agenda Committee:

Reviews feedback questionnaire and keeps suggestions to pass along to any retreats that may follow.

Registration:

Someone needs to be in charge of registration before the retreat and keep track of people registering, confirming registrations and sending out any pertinent information a couple of weeks before the retreat. There also need to be several registration people at the retreat to register people as they come in, assign rooms, and collect retreat balances.

Facilitator for Introductions and Announcements:

This person gives a heartfelt, warm welcome to all. It is helpful to have someone who enjoys public speaking.

Clarifies retreat schedule and introduces presenters.

He or she:

- gives overview of the retreat.
- explains Soul Friending (temporary sponsors who can talk one on one to retreatants who have questions or just need to talk).
- explains the importance of the Retreat Evaluations.
- does a short icebreaker so everyone gets introduced opening night.
- clarifies silence vs talking time.

Retreat Center Liaison:

Works out meals, special equipment, handles contract—with 12 Step Outreach or local group, sleeping room etiquette and cleanliness.

Prayer Leaders:

- explains etiquette (don't come in if door is closed)
- explains the procedure of the CP session, the ringing of the gong, the reading, the time spent in silence, etc.

- explains ways to handle snoring and avoid interruptions during the prayer time
- chooses reading for the prayer period
- assigns someone to close the door at the beginning of the prayer period
- explains the meditative walk

Greeters:

People to greet retreatants and welcome them as they enter the facility.

Transportation:

Pick up people coming in from out of town.

Book Sales

Works with local Contemplative Outreach chapter or 12 Step Outreach to have books available for sale at the retreat. Sets up book table and keeps track of sales.

Ambiance:

Provide a non-religious alter in the prayer room with candles, rocks, flowers, etc.

Wake-up:

Someone to do wake-up in the a.m. either with a gong or with an intercom system.

Massage:

Massage therapist may be provided for retreatants for an additional charge. The massages should not be scheduled during the conferences.

What to expect:

12-Step Retreats CP are truly amazing experiences. The silence helps the group to bond and the deep level of sharing is a beautiful experience. It's the convergence of two transformational traditions.