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Leading Contemplative Gatherings



TRAINING IN RETREAT AND
SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP

**SEPTEMBER 2009
TO APRIL 2010**



OASIS MINISTRIES
For Spiritual Development
419 Deerfield Road
Camp Hill, PA 17011

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LEADING CONTEMPLATIVE GATHERINGS

Sponsored by Oasis Ministries, Camp Hill, PA
www.oasismin.org
in partnership with Spiritual Direction Colorado
www.spiritualdirectioncolorado.org

How can we create a safe environment for seasoned believers and youthful seekers to recount their sacred stories and find direction? If you feel called to lead spiritual retreats or short-term groups, this experience will provide skills for creating a contemplative ethos in limited time and for mining participant's gifts. As we model this meditative atmosphere, you will experience ways to build community, balance presentations with silence and conversation, and to incorporate prayer with music, movement, films, and art. Designing an event prepares the leader's own heart and mind; then the leader prepares the event out of this awareness of gifts and vulnerabilities.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND? Any who desire to integrate contemplative practices in group and retreat leadership and in personal life: lay leaders, pastors, youth ministers, educators, students, and those in specialized ministries.

DESIGN AND PROCESS: Between an opening retreat in September and a closing retreat in April each participant (or teams of two) will prepare and lead a 1-2 ½ day retreat or a 4-6 week group back home incorporating contemplative prayer practices. The October retreat will form Peer Groups of 4-5 (each with a trained facilitator) who will connect with each other between October and April by e-mail, phone, online or face-to-face to support each other and give feedback in planning and leading each participant's event.

DATES

Opening Retreat

September 18-19, 2009 - 3p.m.-9p.m. Friday (supper); 9a.m.-4p.m. (lunch) Saturday.

Closing Retreat

April 23-24, 2010 - 3p.m.-9p.m. Friday (supper); 9a.m.-4p.m. (lunch) Saturday.

COST: \$450 (Add \$50 after August 31).

Your application fee of \$150 (\$200 after August 31) must be received by September 15 and cannot be refunded after this date. A second payment of \$150 is due October 1; the balance of \$150 is due November 1, 2009.

APPLICATION: Early application due date is August 31; final due date September 15. Each applicant is asked to write a statement about why this program seems right at this time, and list one person who is supportive of this process of spiritual growth and ask the person to write a "reference" letter. The program is limited to 24 participants. (Limited scholarship assistance.)

LOCATION: Christ Presbyterian Church, 421 Deerfield Road, Camp Hill, PA. (The program was offered in Denver in 2008-09.)

LODGING: A local hotel will offer conference rates for those not commuting.

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Leading Contemplative Gatherings

Offered in Colorado in 2008-2009

Offered in Pennsylvania 2009-2010



LEADERSHIP:

Dr. Kent Ira Groff, founding mentor of Oasis Ministries and a graduate of Shalem Institute, is a retreat leader, spiritual companion, and writer poet in Denver, Colorado. An ordained Presbyterian minister, he has been

conducting contemplative retreats and groups at conference centers, seminaries, and campuses in the U.S. and abroad over two decades. Kent’s writings include *Active Spirituality*, *The Soul of Tomorrow’s Church*, *What Would I Believe If I Didn’t Believe Anything?* and *Writing Tides*. He describes his work as “one beggar showing other beggars where to find bread.” Kent is coordinator for continuing education with Spiritual Direction Colorado.

PEER GROUP FACILITATORS:

Keith Braucher, D. Min., is a pastoral counselor and spiritual director serving as pastor of Discipleship and Care at Hempfield United Methodist Church, Lancaster, PA and is a graduate of Oasis Ministries.

Linda Frank, a spiritual director and graduate of Shalem Institute, has directed Newcomer and Small Communities programs at St. John Neuman Catholic Church, Lancaster, PA.

Karen Hugo, a former English and writing teacher, is a graduate of Oasis Ministries and helped establish and pastor a micro-church network.

Crystal M. Lyde is a retreat leader and commissioned lay pastor of Port Royal and Mexico Presbyterian Churches in Juniata Co., PA, looking to ordination.

Todd Stavrakos, a Presbyterian pastor who has served churches in Cumnock, Scotland, Williamstown, N.J., and Gladwyne, PA, is a spiritual director with training from Oasis Ministries.

PREPARATION: Participants are asked to start preparing by August for the opening retreat. 1. Begin readings with a bibliography that will be sent; 2. Have a spiritual director relationship in place; 3. Secure approval of a church or other community in which to offer a retreat or short-term group. You may lead either (or both if desired) in your local setting or at a retreat center or site of your choice.

FORMAT: Beginning and ending retreats, Friday through Saturday will create a spiritual laboratory. Built into the program are community-building and connective pieces:

PEER GROUPS. Participants will be in established peer groups at the opening retreat. These will be one of the on-going touchstones between retreats.

ON-LINE FILES. Folders will be established at www.box.net for the class so that participant retreat designs and reflections can be uploaded/downloaded and reviewed.

CURRICULUM. A bibliography will be given to each participant upon registration. The interpersonal curriculum will include due dates of when participant-led retreat/groups will occur so that participants can hold one another in prayer and offer feedback. Blogs may be used to encourage conversation about various leadership topics through the year.

FEATURES: There will be built-in evaluation. After the opening retreat, each participant will write a **design paper** (1-3 pages) outlining their goals and plans for leading their group or retreat, and submit it to his/her peer leader and peer group for feedback, then lead the event. Afterward, each participant will write a final **integrative paper** (3-6 pages) reflecting on their learnings and integrating their leadership experience with the readings.

Outcomes: You will take away methods to facilitate community building; to balance silence and interactive presentations; to foster meaningful sharing in limited time; to harvest learners’ own insights; to incorporate creative use of music, art and movement; to create retreat days in and contemplative practices in the ongoing life of their organization.

LEADING CONTEMPLATIVE GATHERINGS

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Note: Naturally we urge you to support your local bookstore, which may order these books for you. Perhaps you have a Cokesbury Bookstore in area. Or order online and get them slightly used and inexpensively. (Also, all books authored available at the retreat – see www.kentiragroff.com.)

We encourage you to begin reading, especially required ones.

Core Reading (five basic books)

Jane E. Vennard, *Be Still: Designing and Leading Contemplative Retreats* (Bethesda, Maryland: The Alban Institute, 2000).

Heather Webb, *Small Group Leadership as Spiritual Direction: Practical Ways to Blend an Ancient Art into Your Contemporary Community* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005). Forward by Eugene H. Peterson

Parker J. Palmer, *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey toward an Undivided Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004). Welcoming the Soul and Weaving Community in a Wounded World.

Gerrie L. Grimsley and Jane J. Young, *Contemplative by Design: Creating Quiet Spaces for Retreats, Workshops, Churches, and Personal Settings* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2008).

John Heider, *The Tao of Leadership: Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching Adapted for a New Age* (Lake Worth, Florida: Humanics Publishing Group, 1986) – best if you can get it. or any version such as: Stephen Mitchell, *Tao Te Ching: A New English Version* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991).

Optional

Exercises for use in contemplative gatherings: Anthony de Mello, *Sadhana: A Way to God: Christian Exercises in Eastern Form* (New York: Image Books, 1984 and updates).

Kent Ira Groff, *What Would I Believe If I Didn’t Believe Anything?: A Handbook for Spiritual Orphans: A Spiritual Compass to Point You Home* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004). The book is listed here for personal growth and for the 50 Reflection Exercises adaptable to groups, and it will be available at the opening retreat.

Jacqueline Syrup Bergan & Marie Schwan, *Taste and See: Prayer Services for Gatherings of Faith* (Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary’s Press, 1996).

See www.oasismin.org for additional related material.

APPLICATION FOR LEADING CONTEMPLATIVE GATHERINGS

Please send the following information to: Oasis Ministries, 419 Deerfield Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011 E-mail: oasismin@oasismin.org

Name _____
Day ph _____ Eve ph _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____
E-mail: _____

Religious affiliation _____

Application Fee:

My check for \$150. is enclosed—payable to Oasis Ministries: Marked LCG

Visa/MC/Discover:
Card # _____ Exp. date _____
3-digit security # on back _____

Request CEU Certificate (Continuing Ed Units pending approval by your professional group)

*Mail this application with your check or credit card information. Call 717-737-8222 to process over the phone.

***Complete this application and attach a short statement** (app. one page, single-spaced) **answering:**

1. What draws you to participate in this program? Describe a setting where you might lead an event.
2. How does contemplative experience matter in your life right now?
3. Describe briefly person(s), reading(s) or experience(s) that have shaped you spiritually.
4. Include name, address, phone # and e-mail of a person who will companion and support you during this program, and ask her/him to write a brief statement about how LCG is a fit for you (e-mail above).