

---

# Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

---



---

**U.S. Marine Corps**

PCN 144 000077 00

### **To Our Readers**

**Changes:** Readers of this publication are encouraged to submit suggestions and changes that will improve it. Recommendations may be sent directly to Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Doctrine Division (C 42), 3300 Russell Road, Suite 318A, Quantico, VA 22134-5021 or by fax to 703-784-2917 (DSN 278-2917) or by E-mail to **morgannc@mccdc.usmc.mil**. Recommendations should include the following information:

- Location of change
  - Publication number and title
  - Current page number
  - Paragraph number (if applicable)
  - Line number
  - Figure or table number (if applicable)
- Nature of change
  - Add, delete
  - Proposed new text, preferably double-spaced and typewritten
- Justification and/or source of change

**Additional copies:** A printed copy of this publication may be obtained from Marine Corps Logistics Base, Albany, GA 31704-5001, by following the instructions in MCBul 5600, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publications Status*. An electronic copy may be obtained from the Doctrine Division, MCCDC, world wide web home page which is found at the following universal reference locator: **<http://www.doctrine.quantico.usmc.mil>**.

**Unless otherwise stated, whenever the masculine or feminine gender is used, both men and women are included.**

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Headquarters United States Marine Corps  
Washington, D.C. 20380-1775

28 February 2000

FOREWORD

Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 6-12B, *Religious Lay Leaders Handbook*, provides guidance, techniques, and procedures for the Marine Corps' religious lay leader program.

MCRP 6-12B sets forth command responsibilities and standards for religious lay leaders in the Marine Corps. It describes the administration and procedures for religious lay leaders in the conduct of their ministry. This publication provides the authoritative basis for how religious lay leaders are incorporated into command religious programs to assist in the provision of religious ministry support for the free exercise of religion for Marines and Sailors. MCRP 6-12B describes the role, function, and responsibilities of religious lay leaders in accordance with the principles of religious ministry support defined in Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 6-12, *Religious Ministry Support in the U. S. Marine Corps*.

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

J. E. RHODES  
Lieutenant General, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding General  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command

DISTRIBUTION: 144 000077 00

## PREFACE

*A Guide for Religious Worship and Character Development in a U.S. Ship Without a Chaplain* (the first guidance published for religious lay leaders) was issued by Admiral Arthur W. Radford, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, on 1 July 1952. Prepared by the Pacific Fleet Chaplain George A. Rosso's Office, it was a brief document with only three pages of information. It noted that commanding officers on ships without chaplains could select a volunteer leader to lead worship. For Protestants the service had to be "commensurate with good taste and the spiritual needs of all worshippers."

—from *Navy Lay Leader Program, 1949-1958*

Since the days of World War II, sea services men and women have willingly filled the gap for their faith groups as lay leaders when chaplains were not available to meet the needs of their fellow Marines and shipmates. At the close of that war, there were only a dozen or so faith groups officially represented in the military. What a difference that was from over two hundred faith groups recognized today by our Armed Forces Chaplains Board. The exponential growth of religious groups in America bears witness to the expanding role that faith plays in the lives of our men and women.

As we sail into the uncharted waters of the next millennium, faith and hope will remain crucial elements in the personal readiness of our forces. The religious lay leader program is but another demonstration of the ongoing commitment and partnership of the Chaplain Corps and the Marine Corps in meeting the ever-changing religious ministry support requirements of our Marines and Sailors.

It is my hope that the *Religious Lay Leaders Handbook* will assist commanders, chaplains, and lay leaders as they provide for the free exercise of religion for their fellow Marines and Sailors. By your

intentional responsible leadership, we will safeguard for all this most basic American freedom.

May God bless you in your efforts to preserve and encourage religious liberty.

A. BYRON HOLDERBY, Jr.  
Rear Admiral, Chaplain Corps,  
United States Navy Chief of Chaplains

# Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

## Table of Contents

### **Chapter 1      Fundamentals**

1001	Introduction	1-1
1002	Definitions	1-1
1003	Background	1-2
1004	Requirement for Accommodation	1-3
1005	Need	1-4
1006	Responsibility	1-4

### **Chapter 2      Functions**

2001	Lay Leader Program	2-1
2002	Role and Character	2-3
2003	Accountability	2-4
2004	Duties	2-5
2005	Tasks and Standards	2-6
2006	Faith Group Requirements	2-8

### **Chapter 3      Appointment**

3001	Command Requirements	3-1
3002	Candidate Selection	3-2
3003	Ecclesiastical or Faith Group Approval	3-4
3004	Command Recommendation	3-6
3005	Training Requirement	3-7
3006	Command Chaplain Recommendation	3-7
3007	Command Appointment	3-7
3008	Recognition and Certification Renewal	3-8

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

### **Chapter 4      Training Program**

4001	Responsibility	4-1
4002	Requirements	4-2
4003	Curricula	4-2
4004	Command Support	4-3
4005	Faith Group Training Requirements	4-4
4006	Documentation	4-4
4007	Interim Training	4-5

### **Chapter 5      Field and Shipboard Devotional Services**

5001	Purpose	5-1
5002	Authority	5-1
5003	Planning	5-2
5004	Essential Elements of Devotional Services	5-4
5005	Faith Group-Specific Requirements and Services	5-14
5006	Resources	5-16
5007	Support	5-19
5008	Coordination	5-20
5009	Times and Locations	5-20
5010	Announcements and Publicity	5-21
5011	Limits	5-22
5012	Records and Reports	5-24

### **Appendices**

A	Activity Report and Key	A-1
B	Information Sheet and Chaplain's Interview Form	B-1
C	Faith Group Letter and Information/Verification Form	C-1

## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

D	Command Recommendation	D-1
E	Command Chaplain Recommendation	E-1
F	Appointment Letter	F-1
G	Training Certificate of Completion	G-1
H	Planning Checklist	H-1
I	Field Memorial Service	I-1
J	Glossary	J-1
K	References and Related Publications	K-1



## **Chapter 1**

# **Fundamentals**

### **1001. Introduction**

Religious lay leaders of various faith groups promote opportunities for worship, provide field devotional services, and offer prayers in the absence of a chaplain or clergy of a faith group. When empowered by a faith group and authorized by the command, religious lay leaders may also provide specific sacraments or ordinances and/or lead faith group services when a chaplain or ordained clergy of that faith group is not available. The religious lay leader's specific faith group provides the primary direction and guidance for specific faith group worship and religious practices and requirements. Chaplains and Religious Program Specialists (RPs) supervise religious lay leaders and coordinate direct support.

### **1002. Definitions**

Religious lay leader is defined as a command member appointed in writing by the commander to provide identified faith group requirements under the direct supervision of a chaplain. The role and function of religious lay leaders are delineated by this publication.

Command chaplain is the senior chaplain assigned to a command, or the chaplain that has been officially tasked by higher headquarters with the responsibility of providing religious ministry support to a unit without an assigned chaplain.

### **1003. Background**

The American notion of military chaplaincy was the first attempt in history to provide ministry in a context of religious pluralism. From the days of the French and Indian War, provision has been made for clergy of various faith groups to serve individuals in the military.

The structure of American government was solidified in the development and writing of our constitution and our religious diversity was carefully addressed. The First Amendment to the Constitution makes it clear that Congress could never pass laws for the establishment of, nor prohibition of, the free exercise of religion. This set the historic framework for religious impartiality. It assigned the boundaries for religious function and practice in a pluralistic society of which the military is a microcosm. Chaplains of various faith groups deploy with military units into harm's way as the primary means of our country's support of the free exercise clause of the constitution. Expecting chaplains or clergy to be readily available for every faith group represented in commands (while deployed or in combat) is unrealistic. Therefore, religious lay leaders assist commands in the fulfillment of the constitutional right to free exercise of religion.

Command appointment of lay leaders is not required to ensure one's right to the free exercise of one's religion. Personal prayer, devotions, participation in worship, faith group activities, study and reflection on doctrine and practices, dialog with other persons, and other activities related to faith practices are not predicated on the appointment of a lay leader. The lay leader program does not restrict personal expression and/or participation in one's faith. Lay leaders are one means that commanders have to provide for faith group requirements within the context of the Marine Corps when these requirements cannot be met by chaplains or civilian clergy.

## Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

---

The accommodation of one's personal freedom of expression and essential faith group requirements are not always the same. In this ever-expanding culturally diverse nation and military, the ability to accommodate or provide for every person's personal expression within the Marine Corps is limited by the operational parameters of the institution. In practical terms, persons serving in our volunteer force are limited in how, when, and where they can practice a faith. Secretary of the Navy Instruction (SECNAVINST) 1730.8A, *Accommodation of Religious Practices*, provides policy and guidance for the accommodation of religious practices within the Navy and Marine Corps. The lay leader program assists in implementing the Department of the Navy (DON) religious accommodation policy that is intended to meet the identified needs and requirements of our members whenever and wherever possible.

### **1004. Requirement for Accommodation**

*United States (U.S.) Code Title 10*, subtitle C, part II, section 6031, chapter 555, *Chaplain: Divine Services*, states, "an officer in the Chaplain Corps may conduct public worship according to the manner and forms of the church (religious body) of which he (or she) is a member." Chaplains are limited to providing sacraments and specific ministries that are commensurate with a faith group endorsement. Chaplains also provide religious ministry support for more than one faith group. In accordance with Department of the Navy and Marine Corps regulations, chaplains facilitate the provision of religious ministries for personnel of other faith groups, and commanders are responsible for providing appropriate command religious programs in support of the religious needs and preferences for all members of the Naval Service. Commands accommodate the religious faith practices of

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

individual members as outlined in SECNAVINST 1730.8 (series) and protect the free exercise of religion for all personnel.

### **1005. Need**

No single chaplain is able to provide for the religious and spiritual requirements of all personnel within a command. To ensure weekly religious services are provided, commanders identify from within the command qualified volunteers to assist with the Command Religious Program in accommodating the religious practices of command members.

Because Marine Corps forces (MARFOR) often deploy to the field, overseas, and aboard ship, religious lay leaders are often the most feasible means for providing weekly religious services in the field or onboard ship when a chaplain or clergy of a certain faith group is not available.

### **1006. Responsibility**

Establishing and supporting religious ministries in the United States Marine Corps is the responsibility of all Marine commanders. Commanding officers are authorized to appoint lay leaders to assist their chaplains in meeting the identified religious rights and requirements of their command members. Appendix K provides a listing of regulations, orders, and instructions applicable to the lay leader program.

## Chapter 2

# Functions

### 2001. Lay Leader Program

The lay leader program is outlined in the Military Personnel Manual (MILPERSMAN) 1730-010, *Use of Lay Leaders in Religious Services*, as follows:

Lay leader appointments, in writing, help commands meet the requirement to provide for the free exercise of religion by all command personnel. These command appointments respond to identified religious requirements and convey no ecclesiastical status to the service members appointed. Appointment by the command also implies the authority to terminate such appointment and remove an individual from participation in a leadership role in the command religious program. The command invokes such authority when the conduct of an individual hinders accomplishment of the command religious program or reflects adversely on the command. Lay leader appointments are not transferable and remain in effect at the discretion of the commander. An appointment is terminated when no longer required.

Lay leaders primarily assist in obtaining the services of a chaplain or ordained civilian clergy, or, when this is not possible or practical, assist in arranging church parties to attend appropriate services in the vicinity. Lacking these opportunities, lay leaders provide devotional services consistent with their status as lay persons.

Lay-led services are not equivalent to divine services conducted by chaplains or ordained civilian clergy. Lay-led services are integral

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

to command religious programs and are subject to chaplain supervision. Lay-led services constitute temporary accommodation of specific religious needs.

Offerings should not be taken at lay-conducted services, except as authorized by the commanding officer. Any moneys collected will be part of the command religious offering fund and used for religious benevolence purposes only. Command appointment of lay leaders permits command supervision to ensure accountability for funds collected, disbursement under the intent of SECNAVINST 1730.7A, *Religious Ministries within the Department of the Navy*, and protection of the rights of donors.

Commands shall appoint lay leaders on the basis of volunteerism, high moral character, motivation, and religious interest. Commanding officers shall ensure that lay leaders are trained to serve effectively. RPs shall not be assigned as lay leaders.

Military chaplains and other clergy acquired under SECNAVINST 1730.3G, *Employment of Civilian Clergy*, shall be the only persons to administer sacraments aboard Navy ships or in Navy and/or Marine Corps activities. However, commanding officers may permit lay leaders or other service members, empowered by a specific religious body and coordinated by the command chaplain under that command religious program, to provide certain religious rites, administer sacraments or services to members of that religious body. A statement of certification or approval from that religious body must be provided by the lay leader. Although religious authority to administer may be granted to a lay leader by a particular faith group, permission to administer sacraments in a Navy vessel or Navy or Marine Corps activity rests solely with the commanding officer.

### 2002. Role and Character

The success of the lay leader program depends on several interrelated considerations: command support, chaplain supervision and oversight, the lay leaders' resources and preparation, and the lay leader's character. Character comes from within each individual and is demonstrated through observable actions. Although the Marine Corps does not dictate the character of individuals, it can and does prescribe behavioral limits and expectations for its members. Lay leaders are expected to act in accordance with their religious beliefs and are not asked to perform acts contrary to their conscience. Successful lay leaders are—

- | **Enthusiastic.** Enthusiasm fosters excitement. It strengthens communication by encouraging attention on the part of listeners and adds to the credibility of what is being expressed. Lay leaders should demonstrate enthusiasm for their faith.
- | **Prepared.** Being prepared engenders confidence in any setting. It is a key ingredient in developing competence. Lay leaders should be prepared and demonstrate confidence in their abilities to provide leadership.
- | **Examples.** It is imperative that a lay leader's personal behavior reflect the values and quality of life of the faith groups they represent. Perceptions are often based on the personal behavior and actions that others observe. The perception of our character has a direct bearing on the success of any religious program. Lay leaders should live their faith as an example for others.
- | **Responsible.** Responsibility starts with knowing your commander. The ultimate responsibility for the support of religious and moral life of the command lies with the commander. Chaplains and lay leaders assist commanders to meet this responsibility. The relationship between commanders and

their lay leaders communicates to command members the commander's level of support. Actions speak louder than words. Lay leaders should have a reputation throughout the command of possessing and demonstrating individual responsibility. They should be people who can be counted on to carry through with their assignments and tasks.

- 1 **Involved with others.** The success of a program is often in direct proportion to the number of persons involved. Lay leaders facilitate the free exercise of religion for other command members from similar faith backgrounds. Lay leaders do well to include other command members as much as possible in their lay-led devotional services (for example, reading scriptures and leading music). It is in the participation and involvement of other command members that the intent of the lay leader program is realized.
- 1 **Team builders.** Lay leaders are a part of the command's religious ministry team (RMT). Chaplains need to hear about lay leaders' successes, problems, ideas, and requirements. Lay leaders must include chaplains in the planning and delivery of their unique lay ministry. Chaplains should be present for lay-led services to support the efforts of lay leaders.

### **2003. Accountability**

Religious ministry support (RMS) is the responsibility of every commander. RMTs are commanders' primary providers for RMS by developing and implementing comprehensive command religious programs (CRPs).

Lay leaders are appointed by and accountable to their commanders to assist in CRPs. Lay leaders are supervised by chaplains.



## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

Free exercise of religion, including the ministry of lay leaders, cannot be so construed as to interfere with good order and discipline within the military.

### **2004. Duties**

As directed by the chaplains responsible for their units' RMS, and as authorized by their commanders, religious lay leaders—

- | Advise their chaplains and/or executive officers of all RMS-related requirements and activities.
- | Assist RMTs in identifying the religious requirements of their faith group.
- | Plan, prepare, coordinate, and assist RMTs in providing the logistic support required for faith group requirements and field or shipboard devotional services.
- | Plan, prepare, coordinate, and conduct devotional services, and administer faith group requirements on Sundays and other appropriate days when deployed or in the field.
- | Complete required command and faith group lay leader training and maintain required faith group relationship or status.
- | Plan, prepare, and coordinate visits of chaplains or clergy when in the field, and coordinate the required command support.
- | Publicize approved faith group programs.
- | Maintain direct communication with the chaplains assigned to support their commands or units and provide timely referrals for pastoral counseling and other ministries required by command members.
- | Submit required Lay Leader Activity Reports to the Commanding Officer and the chaplain responsible for RMS of their unit. Appendix A is provided as a sample.

Lay leaders responsibilities are assigned collateral duties. Collateral duties of lay leaders do not relieve them of their primary duties or responsibilities. Lay leaders should notify their chaplain immediately if lay leader tasking conflicts with primary duties.

### **2005. Tasks and Standards**

Lay leaders are not required to violate the tenets and practices of faith groups. The nature of religious ministry within the Marine Corps, however, does require support for the religious freedom of all. Lay leaders are expected to complete basic lay leader tasks to prescribed standards. Lay leaders are expected to model the core values of the Marine Corps—honor, courage, and commitment—and maintain exemplary personal performance and behavior records within their commands. In addition, the following are the baseline performance tasks for lay leaders:

- 1 Demonstrate dedication and responsibility to the faith, command, chaplain, and command members.
- 1 Demonstrate the ability to properly care for the religious equipment and supplies entrusted to their care.
- 1 Demonstrate a working knowledge of the logistic requirements for support of their ministry, to include religious supplies, inventory, and command requisitioning procedures.
- 1 Demonstrate the ability to properly set up for specific faith group and devotional services.
- 1 Demonstrate a working knowledge of proper procedures for publicizing approved faith group activities and distributing approved religious information and materials.

## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

- | Demonstrate a working knowledge of proper referral procedures for persons seeking religious or personal counseling.
- | Demonstrate a working knowledge of the parameters of the commander's responsibilities for the provision of religious ministry and the free exercise of religion as delineated in appropriate manuals, orders, and instructions.
- | Demonstrate the ability to plan, prepare, and lead field and shipboard devotional services.
- | Demonstrate the ability to distinguish between faith group-specific and shared religious traditions and practices.
- | Demonstrate the ability to support the free exercise of religion by command members of other faith traditions.
- | Demonstrate the ability to work closely and cooperatively with other lay leaders representing various religious traditions.
- | Demonstrate a clear understanding of the parameters of their faith group's expectations and limits.
- | Demonstrate the ability to identify and communicate the religious needs and requirements of command members.
- | Demonstrate the ability to complete and submit Lay Leader Activity Reports to the commanding officer and the chaplain responsible for RMS of their unit.
- | Maintain relationship with a faith group (as required by the faith group).
- | Study and represent the general teachings and practices of their faith group faithfully.
- | Demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and involve others in public worship.
- | Maintain a high state of physical, mental, and spiritual readiness.

## **2006. Faith Group Requirements**

Faith group requirements, practices, and teachings are established by each respective faith group.

Lay leaders are appointed to help commanders meet the requirement to provide for the free exercise of religion by all command personnel. Such appointments respond to identified needs and convey no faith group status to the lay leaders, but rather acknowledge such status and permit lay leaders to carry out a limited role in the commander's RMS mission. The Marine Corps is not empowered to establish or validate the requirements and practices of individual faith groups. Lay leaders are responsible for complying with the mandates, practices, and teachings of faith groups.

During the appointment process, lay leader candidates provide verification of current status, and the specific functions they are authorized to perform from the faith group. It remains the responsibility of each lay leader to maintain this status while serving under appointment by the commander. Details of the appointment process are provided in chapter 3.

Since Marine commanders have no authority to impart faith group status or credentials, the loss of a lay leader's recognized faith group status is cause for revocation of his or her appointment as a lay leader. Lay leaders must remain subject to their respective faith groups while serving in this capacity to ensure compliance with the tenets and practices of their faith and to maintain their credentials.

## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

In American society, persons from different faith groups often attend and participate in the worship services, prayers, and devotional services of faith groups with shared or common theological positions and compatible practices. Marines and Sailors are encouraged to attend and participate in worship and devotional services (conducted by chaplains and/or lay leaders) when such participation does not violate faith group tenets. Such mutual support and shared worship, prayers, and lay-lead devotional services become essential when Marines and Sailors are isolated and have no access to chaplains, other clergy, or their own faith communities.

## **Chapter 3**

# **Appointment**

### **3001. Command Requirements**

Lay leader appointments are predicated on identified needs within a command. Command operational tempo, mission, location, and projected schedule are considered when determining the need to identify and appoint lay leaders. The command chaplain (or chaplain assigned to provide RMS to the command) will advise the commander concerning the need to appoint lay leaders for the command. Lay leaders are normally appointed for denominational or faith group-specific requirements. Some faith groups have similar or equivalent practices or requirements. Command members of similar religious traditions often worship together and participate in common services.

Recommendations for lay leader appointments are made when specific faith group or denomination requirements of command members are identified and substantiated, or when a command or unit could be deployed for extended periods of time without access to a chaplain. In the absence of a chaplain or other contracted civilian clergy, lay leaders conduct field or shipboard devotional services for faith group members and others of similar faiths or traditions (e.g., Presbyterian lay leaders can conduct non-sacramental devotional field and/or shipboard services that can be attended by Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans). Volunteers do not require appointment as lay leaders to participate in and assist chaplains with worship and other programs. When it has been determined that the command has a requirement for a lay leader(s), the process of identification and appointment begins.

The common sense test for the appointment of a lay leader is summed up in these two questions: Is a chaplain or clergy of this faith group (or compatible group) reasonably accessible by command members? If not, does the free exercise of this person's faith require oversight or administration by an authorized representative of the faith group?

### **3002. Candidate Selection**

Chaplains assist commanders with the identification and selection of lay leaders. Marines and Sailors who seek to become lay leaders need to understand the process and criteria for appointment. Some prospective candidates may not wish to subject themselves to the close scrutiny that is required to be appointed. The appointment process for lay leaders includes the following:

- | Interview by command chaplain.
- | Approval and certification by the member's ecclesiastical body. (See paragraph 3003.)
- | Recommendation from a platoon leader and company commander (or equivalent members of the chain of command).
- | Completion of the lay leader training program.
- | Recommendation from the command chaplain to the commanding officer.
- | Letter of appointment signed by the commanding officer.

Lay leaders are volunteers selected on the basis of high moral character, motivation, and religious interest. Civilian credential or approval is not implied in the appointment by the commander. Likewise, command members with civilian ministerial and faith

## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

group credentials are not automatically appointed as lay leaders nor assigned the military responsibility or function of religious clergy, ministers or practitioners of faith groups in the military. The individual's right to free exercise of religion does not extend to one's desire to function as clergy. The role and responsibility of the administration and conduct of religious ministry within the Marine Corps are assigned to commissioned officers of the Navy Chaplain Corps and duly authorized civilian clergy. Members of the clergy are encouraged to seek a commission in the Navy Chaplain Corps if they desire to serve the Marine Corps in this capacity.

Command chaplains conduct initial interviews with command personnel to identify lay leader candidates. The following personal characteristics are evaluated by the interviewing chaplain when considering candidates. Appendix B is provided to assist in this evaluation. Lay leader candidates are—

- | Practicing and knowledgeable members of a faith group, regularly attending to the faith group's tenets and requirements.
- | Volunteers.
- | Willing to support the ministry of chaplains and command religious programs.
- | Willing to lead devotional services with like-minded members of the command.
- | Respected by peers for performance of duties, interest in helping others, and positive attitude.
- | Self-confident and demonstrate leadership qualities.
- | Models of the practice of religious, moral, and ethical standards that positively reflect the faith.
- | Sincere with a genuine interest in people.



## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

- | Open and approachable with a positive attitude in relationships with others.
- | Tolerant toward the religious beliefs of others.
- | Articulate and have clear communication skills.
- | Well groomed and maintain Marine Corps grooming standards.

When the interviewing chaplain is satisfied that the candidate meets these basic criteria, ecclesiastical or faith group approval is the next step in the appointment process.

### **3003. Ecclesiastical or Faith Group Approval**

Chaplains and other clergy acquired under SECNAVINST 1730.3G are the only persons authorized to administer sacraments aboard Navy ships or in Navy or Marine Corps activities. However, commanding officers permit lay leaders or other Service members, empowered by specific religious bodies, supervised by command chaplains, to provide certain religious rites or administer sacraments or services to members of that religious body. A statement of certification or approval from that religious body must be provided by the lay leader candidate. Although religious authority to administer may be granted to a lay leader by a particular faith group, permission to administer sacraments in a Navy vessel or Marine Corps or Navy activity rests solely with the commanding officer.

If the faith group appoints a person to specific responsibilities, a copy of this appointment should be provided to the command. (e.g., Roman Catholic Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist) Appendix C is provided as a sample form to follow for this step in

## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

the process. The candidate's faith group is asked to verify or provide the following information:

- | Is the candidate a member in good standing of the group?
- | Is the candidate of good moral character?
- | Is this candidate acceptable as a representative of your group?
- | Do you authorize this candidate to assist in organizing and/or leading a field or shipboard devotional service or prayer with persons of similar faith backgrounds? Any prohibitions?
- | What specific sacraments or requirements are regularly received by members of the faith group? How often? Can these be postponed until a member of your clergy is available or accessible?
- | Is this candidate authorized to provide or administer these sacraments or requirements in the absence of your clergy? What specifically is required for members of this faith group? What are the requirements for administration?

It is important to note that the verification or certification need not be complicated. Military chaplains or local civilian clergy can provide ecclesiastical or faith group verification for candidates. Some faith groups may not have formal mechanisms or procedures for the approval or certification of lay members for such responsibilities. When candidates need to verify or establish membership or relationship to a recognized faith group for the purpose of seeking appointment as a lay leader, chaplains or local clergy (by virtue of an ecclesiastical or faith group office) may act on behalf of the faith group to establish or verify the status of candidates. The interviewing chaplain may complete this verification or certification process by phone contact with a representative of the candidate's faith group (e.g., local clergy

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

person, denominational representative or official). Candidates who are members of those faith groups with established procedures and centralized approval authorities are required to use the appropriate channels (e.g., Roman Catholic Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist are appointed by the Military Archdiocese, Jewish lay leaders are recognized by the Jewish Welfare Board).

The purpose of faith group verification or certification is to ensure that the commander is not perceived as conveying ecclesiastical or religious authority to practice or represent a religion or faith group. This is also a safeguard to prevent persons from misrepresenting themselves as legitimate representatives of faith groups without the proper relationship to those groups. Protecting the right to free exercise of religion includes the responsibility to safeguard it for all. We all want to ensure that the tenets and beliefs of a faith are represented fairly by members in good standing.

When ecclesiastical approval or certification is completed, a command recommendation is sought.

### **3004. Command Recommendation**

Lay leader candidates are recommended by platoon leaders (or equivalent) and company commanders (or equivalent). Appendix D is provided to assist in this recommendation step.

The company commander understands that command support is required for the candidate to carry out lay leader responsibilities, if appointed. Such support could include allotting time for training and consulting with a chaplain. The company commander's recommendation attests to the candidate's character and

performance. In recommending the candidate, the company commander verifies that the candidate—

- 1 Demonstrates the required leadership characteristics.
- 1 Has no history of misconduct or marginal performance.
- 1 Understands that his or her collateral duties as a lay leader will not interfere with his or her primary duties.

### **3005. Training Requirement**

All lay leader candidates are required to successfully complete a basic course of instruction for lay leaders. This lay leader's training course will train potential lay leaders to the standards identified in chapter 2. Lay leaders who are seeking reappointment must complete any required lay leader recertification training. Chapter 4 provides details of lay leader training programs.

### **3006. Command Chaplain Recommendation**

The next step in the lay leader appointment process is forwarding the command chaplain's written recommendation to the commander. This recommendation verifies for the commander that candidates have completed all the requirements for appointment. Appendix E is provided to assist the process.

### **3007. Command Appointment**

Commanders appoint command religious lay leaders in writing for a specific period not to exceed one year. Appendix F is a sample lay leader appointment letter. These appointment letters are entered into the lay leader's service records with copies provided to the respective lay leaders.

Command chaplains maintain listings of all appointed lay leaders. Major subordinate command (MSC) chaplains maintain a data base of lay leader information to assist in the coordination of faith group coverage within and across commands.

### **3008. Recognition and Certification Renewal**

Lay leaders who successfully complete the terms of appointment should be officially recognized by commanders. The assistance lay leaders provide can be critical in meeting the RMS requirements of a command. Commanders should properly evaluate a lay leader's performance of this assigned collateral duty as a part of a periodic performance evaluation or fitness report. The value of the volunteer ministry to command readiness should be appropriately reflected in military evaluations.

When lay leaders have completed the terms of appointment, they may seek reappointment. Renewing the appointment of a command lay leader can provide continuity within a command religious program while providing consistency in meeting the ongoing command RMS requirements for specific faith groups. Reappointment is not automatic and will be contingent on current command requirements.

Renewal of lay leader appointment follows the same intentional process identified for initial appointment. Command chaplains can expedite the process because of the established working relationships with key persons involved in each step of the process. Ongoing lay leader involvement in the CRP is always encouraged.

## **Chapter 4**

# **Training Program**

### **4001. Responsibility**

Commanders are responsible for the lay leader training program. The command should facilitate lay leader training by a chaplain or other qualified clergy to ensure lay leaders can make the greatest contribution to the CRP.

The Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) is responsible for course content and quality assurance for training. As approval authority for all curricula, Training and Education Division (T&E) monitors course content and instructional methods. Standards Branch of T&E maintains curricula through development or revision of training materials. Standards Branch also advises appropriate commanders when curricula development and/or revision results in additional resource requirements. T&E operates in a relatively similar manner to a Chief of Naval Education and Training (CNET) Curriculum Control Authority.

The Religious Programs Officer, Training Programs Branch (TPB) is tasked by Standards Branch with the responsibility for quality control and maintenance of courses relating to religious ministry support. The officer initiates curricula development and training materials modification, conducts curriculum reviews and analysis of feedback, maintains course audit trail documentation, and develops curricula changes. Lay leader training is monitored by the Religious Programs Officer to ensure the prescribed

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

standards are met. The task list in paragraph 2005 of this manual is the basis for Marine Corps lay leader training standards and lay leader curricula.

Locally developed training courses will include the task list of paragraph 2005 until the Marine Corps standardized lay leader training curricula are developed and available. TPB, T&E, MCCDC monitors all locally developed lay leader training courses to ensure similar training standards are maintained.

### **4002. Requirements**

Training requirements, which include tasks, standards, and conditions, are developed from identified MARFOR requirements. TPB, T&E, MCCDC develops individual training standards (ITSs) from these validated requirements. This process is in the early stages for the Marine Corps lay leader training program. In the past, the development of lay leader curricula has been the responsibility of individual commands. Command chaplains have identified requirements and trained lay leaders to meet those requirements as appropriate. This has resulted in a wide range of training programs which vary significantly in the tasks trained, the quality of training, and the standards being met. With the establishment of the Religious Programs Officer billet, TPB, T&E, MCCDC, the quality, minimum standards, and effectiveness of all training programs related to religious ministry support will be standardized and monitored the same as all other Marine Corps training.

### **4003. Curricula**

TPB will follow the Marine Corps Systems Approach to Training (SAT) in developing and monitoring the Marine Corps lay leader

## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

training program. SAT includes required periodic review, validation, and updates of training requirements, standards, and curricula.

Lay leader programs and curricula developed locally will continue to meet the needs while the standardized training program is developed and implemented. The Religious Programs Officer functions as the quality assurance (QA) monitor for religious ministry support training.

A copy of all lay leader training curricula and course materials is maintained at TPB.

Once developed, piloted, and approved by the Standards Branch, the Marine Corps lay leader training courses will become the basis for all lay leader training throughout the Marine Corps. Local commands will continue to supplement lay leader training with any unique tasks and specific training required by the command or area.

### **4004. Command Support**

As with all training, local commands are responsible for the provision of administrative and logistical support for lay leader training. Often support requirements can be shared between commands by establishing consolidated lay leader training programs.

MSC chaplains are expected to take the lead on developing coordinated lay leader training for the commands under their supervision. Commands preparing for deployments will continue to be the priority for lay leader training.

Command training support includes the provision of trained and knowledgeable instructors, adequate time, facilities, resources,



supplies, equipment, and personal involvement by the commander. To ensure command readiness and adequate support for lay leader training, each command is expected to include lay leader training in their annual training plan.

#### **4005. Faith Group Training Requirements**

When applicable, specific faith group training to meet faith group requirements is incorporated into the training program at the local training level. The Marine Corps does not establish or monitor training that is required by faith groups. Time for faith group-specific training is included in the lay leader training. Command chaplains or MSC chaplains identify specific faith group requirements and, when possible, incorporate faith group training into their training programs. Often chaplains or local clergy can provide the faith group-specific training required by lay leader candidates of their own faith. For example, Roman Catholic chaplains or local priests may provide their church's required Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist training for candidates preparing for appointments as Roman Catholic lay leaders. They would then certify that the training has been completed for the Military Archdiocese.

#### **4006. Documentation**

Command chaplains and MSC chaplains maintain records of all lay leader training. When candidates complete training at a consolidated lay leader training program, the command conducting the training provides certification of completion to the lay leader candidates' parent commands. A certificate of completion will be presented to all candidates who successfully complete lay leader

## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

training. Command chaplains ensure that a copy of the certificate of completion and the appropriate entries are made in the service record of all candidates who successfully complete the training. See appendix G for a sample.

Documentation that a candidate has completed the training will be included in the command chaplain's recommendation to his or her commander for appointment as a lay leader.

### **4007. Interim Training**

Command chaplains are responsible to commanders to ensure that anyone recommended for appointment as a lay leader receives adequate training before his or her appointment. When circumstances prohibit a candidate from completing a formal lay leader training program, the command chaplain will provide interim training that focuses on the essential tasks related to the immediate requirements.

## **Chapter 5**

# **Field and Shipboard Devotional Services**

### **5001. Purpose**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance to command appointed lay leaders for the conduct of devotional services in the absence of chaplains or authorized clergy. To aid in this process, portions of earlier chapters may be referenced or reproduced. Lay leaders should consult their command chaplain for further clarification, direction or assistance.

### **5002. Authority**

Lay leaders must remember that they primarily assist in obtaining the services of a chaplain or ordained civilian clergy, or, when this is not possible or practical, assist in arranging a church party to an appropriate service in the vicinity. Lay leaders provide services consistent with their lay status.

Department of the Navy policy is to accommodate the doctrinal or traditional observances of the religious faith practiced by individual members. These doctrines or observances should not have an adverse impact on military readiness, individual or unit readiness, unit cohesion, health, safety or discipline. Commanders and commanding officers may approve requests for religious accommodations.

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

Lay leaders never assume that the appointment carries with it the authority to conduct religious services of any kind. Only commanders can authorize the conduct of religious services within their commands. When authorized, lay leaders act as representatives of their commanders and/or commanding officers providing religious devotional services, prayers and faith-group specific leadership when the services of a chaplain or other civilian clergy are not available.

As they carry out responsibilities in the Marine Corps, lay leaders must remember they are not clergy—at least in the Marine Corps. Navy Chaplain Corps officers (and chaplain officers from other branches of the U.S. military) are the only personnel in the Marine Corps authorized to perform the functions of ordained clergy or designated faith group leaders. When authorized by appropriate military commander, lay leaders can meet essential faith group specific requirements for members of their faith group only. Marines and Sailors who are ordained civilian clergy or recognized religious leaders are encouraged to carry out their office within their civilian faith communities (in accordance with the parameters defined in the Joint Ethics Regulations). When military members believe they need to play a more comprehensive role in ministry to fellow Marines and shipmates, they are encouraged to explore other appropriate forms of ministry. Any Navy Chaplain Corps officer can assist interested personnel to explore the process of endorsement for active duty as a military chaplain.

### **5003. Planning**

Most people have heard the saying, “poor prior planning provides poor performance.” Lay leaders must remember that in the

## Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

---

Marine Corps seldom are there ideal conditions, excellent surroundings, abundant resources, or extra time. Planning will help make the best of every opportunity to provide the essentials of faith to fellow Marines in the absence of the chaplain or a local clergy. Appendix H provides a basic checklist to assist in the planning process. Five basic guides to assist lay leaders are—

- 1 **Pray for yourself.** You will have nothing to offer others if your spiritual life is empty.
- 1 **Prepare for your services.** It is always best to begin preparing for the next devotional or service at the completion of the current one. Critiquing is one of the most effective tools of the military leader and can be helpful when planning for your next devotional. What went well? What did others seem to appreciate most? Ask a few of your regular attendees to share their thoughts with you about the service. It won't take you long to develop a good system of jotting down the basic outline for the next service and then build on it as your work week continues. Collect a reference shelf of a few books (with the help of your chaplain and/or your faith group leaders) that you find most helpful that you can always turn to for good solid content. Stuff one in your pack when you head to the field or in your sea bag as you head out to sea. "I didn't have time to prepare for this week's service!" is not the way to start your weekly devotional service.
- 1 **Publicize your programs.** Tell your fellow Marines and shipmates about your field devotional or faith group service. Personal invitations remain the most effective means of getting the word out when you are aboard ship or in the field. Remember that you need authorization to post any information aboard ship and in the field you will be responsible for policing any litter. Your command chaplain

can assist you in deciding on the most effective means of getting the word out for your services.

- 1 **Provide the essentials.** Remember that lay services and devotionals are intended to provide the essentials for the religious life of your fellow Marines and shipmates from faith backgrounds similar to yours. Keep prayers, services, and devotionals short and to the point. In the field, a few small services are more practical than trying to get everyone together. Other Marines will respect your efforts when you honor the spirit of free exercise of religion by not abusing the time and space of those around you who may not share your faith or beliefs.
- 1 **Permit mistakes.** You will be conducting your field or shipboard devotionals, services, and prayers under less than ideal conditions. When things do not go as planned, do not lose sight of the objective. You are helping your fellow Marines and shipmates remember that they are persons of sacred worth in a less than perfect world. Learn from mistakes and move on. As you let God use you, your fellow Marines and shipmates will appreciate your willingness to stand in for the chaplain.

## **5004. Essential Elements of Devotional Services**

### **a. Defining Parameters**

Attempting to define essential elements of a devotional service for all faith communities seems to be an impossible task. For our purposes, we must define the basic parameters for lay leaders with expeditionary forces. The guiding principles and recommendations for lay-led services provided below form the functional parameters for lay leaders to carry out their operational role in command religious ministry support.

### **b. Guiding Principles**

Rather than providing specific formats or prescribed elements of field or shipboard devotional services or prayers, the guiding principles below are intended to help lay leaders as they design their devotionals and prayers. By keeping these principles in mind and following the methods and models provided during lay leader training courses, lay leaders should be able to meet essential needs while avoiding disputes about the content of their devotionals and prayers.

**1. Identity.** When publicizing, conducting, and soliciting involvement in their lay-led service, lay leaders have a responsibility to always introduce themselves and identify their own religious tradition or faith group. Just as the identity of chaplains and clergy are formed by their faith groups, so it is with lay leaders. Marines and Sailors of similar backgrounds can identify with a lay leader of a similar faith group or those that hold the same basic beliefs or tenets. Persons attending a service have the right to know who their leader is and his or her faith background.

The following is an example of an introduction that could be incorporated into a flyer, command announcement or the opening of a service:

Today's field devotional service will be led by Corporal James Jackson. Corporal Jackson is one of the battalion lay leaders and a squad leader in 2d Platoon. He is approved by the United Methodist Church which is a Trinitarian Protestant faith group. Today's devotional is open to all who would like to attend. This service will not include sacraments or other worship elements generally administered by chaplains. You do not need to be a United Methodist to attend.

**2. Simplicity.** In the planning section, the importance of sticking to the basics when preparing for field or shipboard devotional services and prayers was noted. Lay-led services are not intended to take the place of worship services, rituals, and/or sacraments conducted by chaplains and other clergy. Devotional services are intended to allow members to share in common religious practices that express their faith and beliefs. Creeds, common prayers, songs, acts of praise, scripture readings, and personal reflections usually form the core of lay-led devotional services. Lay leaders facilitate simple basic acts of corporate prayer and praise which allow command members to express common beliefs and affirm their faith together in community.

**3. Inclusiveness and Sensitivity.** Lay leaders will, of course, be guided by their faith, background and experience, yet take into account there will be a variety of religious traditions present in those gathered for the devotional service or prayer. In addition to different backgrounds, individuals may be experiencing personal crises, hardships, personal joys, or triumphs. The unit or command may have recently come through a traumatic event or a triumph. In short, the gathered community will be a diverse group, and each person will bring different expectations to the service. The use of inclusive language and selecting a relevant basic theme rather than specific doctrinal precepts for the service will go a long way in providing a service where those present are able to participate and feel they are included in the group. Allowing members to share their background and experiences, their joys, needs and concerns will help in forming a faith community (even if only for a few brief minutes) and enhance the meaning and impact of prayers and other acts of praise.

**4. Reverence.** Perhaps reverence best describes the goal of any act of worship. If one can experience “a feeling or attitude of deep respect tinged with awe” (Random House College



## Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

---

Dictionary) during a devotional service or prayer, most would agree that it had accomplished its purpose. A lay-led devotional service or prayer should seek to demonstrate this feeling in each element of the service. Lay leaders should ensure that each aspect of his or her devotional services and/or prayers is conducted with an attitude of reverence for Almighty God.

**5. Focus.** The focus of the lay-led service or prayer is to provide fellow Marines and shipmates with opportunities to experience the presence of God while gathered with a community of like-minded believers. The temptation to expand the focus of lay-led services may be great and, at times, fueled by the desires of others in attendance. Time, facilities, resources, and opportunities are at a premium when a Marine unit is deployed or in the field, so lay leaders must always be intentional in the use of the time a command willingly sets aside for religious life. Maintaining the focus of a devotional service will enable command members to receive the maximum benefit from attending the gathering while maintaining credibility with the command by living out the intent of the lay leader program in religious ministry support of the command.

**6. Order.** As diverse as forms of worship may be, each faith community usually conforms to a customary mode or procedure when they participate in corporate acts of worship, devotion, or prayer. To be sure, not all forms are written or acknowledged, yet the order of service enables participants to know their part (what they can expect from the leader and what and when something is expected of them). Lay leaders should establish and follow a user friendly order for their devotional services. This enables their fellow Marines and shipmates to know what they can expect during the service and allows them to be at ease when they gather in community for a devotional or prayer service. Some people find

it extremely difficult to be comfortable and open to God's presence if they are trying to figure out where they are in the service, or what is coming next.

**7. Respect.** Just as lay leaders strive to demonstrate a genuine reverence for God in every aspect of a devotional service or corporate prayer, they also strive to be mindful of the worth of every person present. Respecting the differences of those gathered enables all to participate without hesitation or fear of intolerance. Respect must also be rendered to those Marines and shipmates who do not share the faith or belief system of those who gather for the service. Respecting another person's right to believe and practice his truth is perhaps the true test of one's religious virtues. The lay leader must always ask, "What will be the impact and unintended consequences of my actions?" when conducting a devotional service or leading prayers.

### **c. Basic Orders of Service for Devotional Services**

This section provides suggestions for orders of service for lay leaders to use for field and shipboard devotional services. When lay leaders conduct faith group-specific services for members of their respective faith groups, they will be guided by their faith group's particular religious requirements and practices. The orders of service for faith group-specific services should follow the format prescribed by the respective faith group. These requirements and services are addressed further in section 5005 of this chapter. The service suggestions below are intended to be used by lay leaders in developing formats for devotional services for fellow Marines and shipmates from faith groups that are similar to their own who share common religious practices, customs, backgrounds, beliefs and traditions.

## Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

---

**Weekly Field or Shipboard Devotional Service.** The foremost method of determining the best order of service for a field or shipboard devotional service is to seek input from the participants. The focus of the lay-led service or prayer is to provide others an opportunity to experience the presence of God while gathered with a community of like-minded believers. In keeping with the practical limits and purpose of a lay-led service, the question is, “Given the time allotted, location, available resources, and attendees, what corporate acts can we do that will enable us to bear witness to our common faith and remind us of our hope and our trust in God?” Listed below are some basic corporate devotional practices that can be included in the order of service. They are corporate acts practiced by many faith groups—not necessarily restricted to members—and may be adapted for a field devotional or prayer service.

Call to Prayer/Opening sentence

Hymn(s) of Praise

Opening Prayer/Prayer of Invocation

Collect Prayer, Adoration, Confession or Praise (responsively or in unison)

Passing or Sharing the Peace

Responsive Reading of Scripture or Litany

Hymn(s) of Witness

Personal Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People or Prayers of Intercession/Thanksgiving

Special Music/Expressions of Faith (Choir, solo, etc.)

Scripture Readings

Reading or Presentation of Prepared Devotional Meditation/Reflection

Personal sharing or reflection

Doxology

Prayers of Dedication or Commitment

Creed or Affirmation of Faith (responsively or in unison)

## MCRP 6-12B

---

Hymn(s) of Commitment

Parting Words or Benediction.

**1. Devotional Services for Special Occasions.** Chaplains and lay leaders use SECNAV Notice 1730, *Holy Days and Days of Religious Observances*, as starting point to identify the religious holidays and feasts that are recognized by the Department of the Navy. For such days, faith group-specific requirements can only be provided by chaplains, clergy, or (in unique circumstances) those lay leaders who are empowered by a faith group to meet such essential requirements. Commanders may set aside time for devotional services on certain civil holidays (e.g., Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving).

Other events, such as the death or loss of command members are also occasions when a commander may decide a devotional service is appropriate. For such occasions, if no chaplain or clergy is available, lay leaders should design a brief order of service which will meet commander's intent while respecting the diversity of the command. Lay leaders are always guided by the parameters of their faith. The service elements are appropriate for such special occasions. Prayers, meditations, personal sharing, scripture selections, etc., should be appropriate for the occasion. Attendance and participation in devotional services are always voluntary.

**2. Devotional Services Prior to Combat.** Marines are always preparing for combat. As combat becomes imminent, finding the time and space for a devotional service will become more difficult. Lay leaders must remember that the key to helping their fellow Marines and shipmates prepare spiritually for combat is to help them maintain spiritual lives. Just as a Marine's physical readiness is developed by training, (the more he trains, the more prepared the Marine becomes) so is a person's spiritual readiness. As time allows, lay leaders can provide brief devotional readings

## Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

---

and prayers for small groups of fellow Marines. If the Warning Order permits, a larger devotional service should be conducted. The basic elements of devotional services prior to combat should include prayers of confession, forgiveness, affirmation, and personal commitment, scripture reading, affirmation of faith or creed, and other acts of praise and faith that enable those present to renew their faith and recall their hope.

The following spiritual considerations for personal survival were extracted from Appendix A of the Air Land Sea Application Center (ALSA) publication, *Survival, Evasion, and Recovery*. Some may be translated into helpful suggestions to assist in preparing a pre-combat devotional service.

- | Collect your thoughts and emotions.
- | Identify your personal beliefs.
- | Use self-control.
- | Meditate.
- | Remember past inner sources to help you overcome adversity.
- | Pray for your God's help, strength, wisdom, and rescue:
  - n Talk to your God.
  - n Thank Him that He is with you.
  - n Ask for His help.
  - n Pray for protection and a positive outcome.
- | Remember scripture, verses or hymns; repeat them to yourself and to your God.
- | Worship without aid of written scripture, clergy or other people.
- | Have faith or trust in your God.

## MCRP 6-12B

---

- | Forgive yourself for what you have done or said that was wrong, and those who have failed you.
- | Give praise and thanks. Thank your God. He is bigger than your circumstances. Rejoice. No matter what happens He will see you through.
- | Give praise and thanks for heaven and/or eternal life.
- | Love your family and self.
- | Never lose hope.
- | Never give up.
- | When with other survivors:
  - n Identify or appoint an action religious lay leader.
  - n Discuss what is important to you.
  - n Share scriptures and song.
  - n Pray for each other.
  - n Try to have worship services.
  - n Write down scriptures and songs that are remembered.
  - n Encourage each other while waiting for rescue. Your God loves you.
  - n Praise your God.

**3. Devotional Services after Combat.** As with any service, the commander will determine the appropriate time for a devotional service after combat. When *authorized*, lay leaders should conduct brief devotional services in designated areas for fellow Marines and Sailors. The nature and tone of the services should reflect the serious nature of the circumstance and be ever mindful of the traumatic effect combat has on individuals. Each action

## Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

---

should be intentional and measured to ensure each aspect of the service is tempered with reverence and respect. Devotional services are not the forum for claiming victory, denouncing the evils of the enemy, or defending actions. The content should focus on thanksgiving, guidance, affirmations of faith, the providence and grace of God, and the identified needs and prayer requests of those present. These devotional services should be brief, respecting the operational tempo and requirements of the command. Remember, lay-led devotional services are not replacements for divine services conducted by chaplains and clergy. Lay leaders will be of great assistance to chaplains visiting the unit's position to provide sacraments and pastoral care by helping to identify the priorities and needs of their fellow Marines and Sailors.

**4. Memorial Services.** Chaplains normally assist commands in the conduct of memorial services. Due to the circumstances of combat, if it becomes apparent that it may be some time before a chaplain can get to the command's position, and the command has suffered casualties, the commander may determine that a lay-led memorial service is appropriate. Lay leaders are free to draw from faith group traditions during such memorial services. Lay leaders must always be sensitive to the religious diversity of the command and avoid language that may be offensive. Battalions or squadrons and higher-level commands should have an established standing operating procedure (SOP) for memorial services. Lay leaders will need to work with the chaplain to ensure they are prepared for these services if and when the need arises. Appendix I provides a sample order of service for a memorial service.

**5. Devotional Prayers.** Prayers are a universal element of spiritual life. In the absence of chaplains, lay leaders become the commander's primary resources for offering appropriate prayers for various occasions. Public prayers must be guided by the principles of inclusiveness, reverence, and respect. When time does not

permit a devotional service, lay leaders can often provide spiritual guidance and hope through earnest, sincere prayers that express the unspoken needs of fellow Marines and shipmates in the gathered community. Lay leaders can also be the catalyst for personal prayers and moments of silence for personal reflection and dedication. Calling those gathered to a time of silent reflection or offering a brief, well-formed prayer can sustain the faith of the listener and/or provide focus to his spiritual life. Praying for and with their fellow Marines and shipmates may be a lay leader's most effective ministry. Writing, learning, and remembering a few, well-formed prayers will serve lay leaders well in preparing for their duties and responsibilities.

## **5005. Faith Group-Specific Requirements and Services**

### **a. Limits**

When chaplains or local clergy are not available to provide for specific faith group requirements, commanding officers and/or commanders can authorize lay leaders to provide the basic requirements for the members of their faith group. During the appointment process, the specific requirements and limits for faith group practices are identified and validated by faith group representatives. In meeting faith group-specific requirements, lay leaders are guided by the requirements and practices defined by faith groups and the limiting parameters of the operational environment of the Marine Corps. Faith groups identify the specific resources required for their members. Maintenance of sacred or consecrated supplies, equipment, and materials become the responsibility of the lay leaders. Command chaplains are able to assist lay leaders in this responsibility. Command support,



## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

however, may be limited by the accessibility and uniqueness of faith group-specific requirements. Early identification and requisitioning of “sole source” requirements are essential to ensure timely delivery.

### **b. Necessity**

The Marine Corps is not a competent authority, nor empowered by any faith group or agency, to determine what are valid resources or requirements for the practice of faith. The Marine Corps does not publish faith group specific resources, nor is the Marine Corps technically competent to publish such resources. When validated faith group requirements are identified, the command can spend appropriated funds for those items required for the essential practice of one’s faith, within Marine Corps limits. Accommodation of a member’s religious practices cannot be guaranteed at all times but must depend on military necessity. Determination of necessity rests entirely with the commanding officer.

### **c. Purpose**

Faith group-specific, lay-led services are intended for and provided solely to members of the faith group. Lay leaders must clearly identify such services and practices to ensure that they, or other Marines or shipmates, do not violate the privacy and practices of the faith group. Such lay-led services are restricted to faith group members, and therefore great care must be taken to respect the practices of the faith group and its members. Faith group-specific services are not intended as educational classes, indoctrination, or as a means of recruitment. They are intended to meet the faith group requirements and practices for members. The order of service, language, doctrine, rituals etc., are governed solely by the prescribed procedures of the faith group. Lay

leaders are responsible to their commanding officers and/or commanders to ensure that all faith group practices are within the limits established by SECNAVINST 1730.8A.

## **5006. Resources**

There are three categories of resources for lay leader support: equipment, materials, and supplies. The first two categories—equipment and materials—are items that lay leaders use personally in the performance of their tasks. Supplies include items that lay leaders use and provide to fellow Marines and shipmates.

### **a. Equipment**

Lay leader equipment includes non-expendable items used in the performance of devotional and/or faith group specific field or ship-board services. Such items are generally issued to each lay leader by the RMT or supply section using custody cards or records. Lay leaders are responsible for their care and maintenance. Since lay leaders serve in expeditionary forces and must function in the field or underway, their equipment will always be kept to a minimum. “What are the essential items I must have to provide the basic requirement of my faith?” is the guiding question.

During lay leader training, chaplains can assist in determining the essential requirements for each lay leader. Currently there is no standard Lay Leader Kit that is used by all lay leaders. Examples of lay leader equipment are: candle holders, crucifix, cross, ciborium, and pyx. Clergy or faith group leaders can also help in identifying the basic equipment required for lay leaders during faith group specific training. Whenever possible, the lay leaders’ equipment should be consolidated and incorporated into the

## Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

---

primary field pack. Lay leaders entrusted with custody of sacraments and/or elements will have to ensure that equipment or containers used for this purpose meet any faith group specific requirements (e.g., pyx for hosts). Some faith groups may provide equipment to their lay leaders directly.

Early identification of required lay leader equipment is essential to enable the command RMT to order and receive the items before deployments. Usually an inventory of lay leader equipment items can be identified and maintained by the RMT, ensuring the command is always ready to deploy. Lay leader training should include identification of this equipment and familiarization with custody, care, and maintenance procedures.

### **b. Materials**

Lay leader materials are those faith group resources, books, publications, etc. that assist in study (doctrine, practices, principles, etc.) and preparation of services. Materials are expendable items. They come from a variety of sources: faith groups, command and RMT purchases, training session materials, personal purchases, area clergy, local CRPs, etc. Early identification of required lay leader materials is essential to enable the command RMT to order and receive materials before deployments.

There are no standard resource materials for all lay leaders. During lay leader training, chaplains can assist in determining a good basic list of resource materials for each lay leader. Clergy or faith group leaders can also identify basic resource materials for lay leaders during faith group specific training. Lay leaders are encouraged to develop a reference shelf of user friendly materials for ready reference. From this reference shelf, lay leaders should select those few to keep with scriptures in the primary field pack when going to the field.

**c. Supplies**

Lay leader supplies are those faith group resources (e.g., song books, field devotionals, missals, prayer books, daily devotional guides) that lay leaders distribute to fellow Marines and shipmates and use during field or shipboard devotional services. Supplies are expendable items.

They come from a variety of sources: faith groups, command and RMT purchases, training sessions, personal purchases, area clergy, local CRPs, etc. Early identification of required lay leader supplies is also essential to enable the command RMT to order and receive adequate supplies before deployments.

There are no standard resource supplies. During lay leader training, chaplains can assist in determining a basic list of supplies for each lay leader. Clergy or faith group leaders can also help identify good resource supplies for lay leaders during faith group specific training. Lay leaders are encouraged to plan ahead and distribute devotional supplies to fellow Marines and shipmates prior to deployment. For extended deployments and exercises, lay leaders should work with their RMTs and the logistics or embarkation officers to develop a plan for carrying or stowing these supplies with other unit supplies.

**d. Primary Reference Resource**

The *Book of Worship for the U.S. Armed Forces* is the primary resource for field or shipboard devotional services. This book is published under the supervision of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board as a collection of hymns and worship resources for United States military personnel.

### **5007. Support**

Lay leader support comes from each level of command. Support for the lay leader ministry includes provision of time in the operational schedule, space (facilities or secured locations) in the field or aboard ship, and the required resources for the conduct of authorized lay-led services and prayers. Commanders make an intentional decision to support the ministry of lay leaders by appointing them to the task in writing. Lay leaders understand that they represent the commander as they provide opportunities for the free exercise of religion for fellow Marines and shipmates.

RMTs are the commander's primary means for comprehensive RMS for the unit(s) assigned. RMS is provided to units without organic chaplain billets by RMTs assigned by higher headquarters. Every Marine, Sailor and family member is supported by an RMT. Lay leaders assist in meeting this command RMS requirement. RMTs coordinate the required command support for the lay leader's ministry.

In recommending candidates for appointment as lay leaders, leaders willingly sign on to provide command support for lay leaders to carry out the additional duties and responsibilities.

The most basic level of lay leader support is provided by fellow Marines and shipmates. Their attendance, assistance, and participation in the lay-led devotional services and prayers, along with their mutual respect for and affirmation of their lay leaders ensure lay leaders are not laboring in vain.

## **5008. Coordination**

Planning sets the course for future action: coordination and execution determine its success. Lay leaders must intentionally coordinate every aspect of their ministry with the command. Key personnel with whom lay leader activities should be coordinated include: the Executive Officer, the RMT, the S-3, the S-4, and if deployed on ship, the ship's chaplain or lay leader. Continuous coordination is essential for the success of any program or effort in the operational world of Marine Forces. At each step of execution, the lay leader must ask, "Have I coordinated this with the appropriate players?" Incorporating the right people on the lay leader's planning checklist (Appendix H) will help in the coordination of the command's lay leader program.

## **5009. Times and Locations**

Times and locations for lay-led devotional services are approved by the commander. Lay leaders should work with their RMTs, S-3s, and small-unit commanders to determine the most feasible times and locations for their services. Aboard ship, lay leaders will also need to request authorization from the ship's commanding officer, through the proper chain of command (e.g., at the ship's Planning Board for Training). Marine commanders may choose to authorize lay leaders to use judgment in coordinating the times and locations directly with company commanders or other small-unit leaders. In all cases, lay leaders need to develop an intentional method and plan for identifying and coordinating the times and locations of services with the appropriate people within the command. Once the times and locations for lay-led services have been determined, getting the word out to Marines and shipmates is critical.

## **5010. Announcements and Publicity**

### **a. Passing the Word**

In the field, the primary means of communication is the spoken word. When the times and locations of the lay leader's devotional services have been determined, lay leaders should use every means of communicating the information to every Marine and Sailor in the command. In addition to briefing the RMTs and keeping the commanders informed concerning planned services, lay leaders should provide concise details about their services to their RMTs, Executive Officers, Sergeant Majors, S-3s, Company First Sergeants, and every unit leader possible.

### **b. Posting Flyers**

When deployed on ships, in rear areas, forward deployed, (Okinawa, etc.) in training areas, (Marine Corps Mountain Welfare Training Center [MCMWTC], Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center [MCAGCC], etc.) lay leaders may be able to publicize services by posting flyers in common areas (chow hall, messing areas, berthing area, barracks, etc.). Lay leaders should get proper authorization and comply with any restrictions when posting their materials. When aboard ship or at another command's facility, the commanding officer's permission is required. RMTs can assist lay leaders in identifying the proper procedures for posting announcements.

### **c. 1MC**

Aboard ship, lay leaders may request that their services be announced over the ship's primary public address system that reaches every compartment on the ship (called the 1MC). Lay

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

leaders should ask the command to request permission and clarification of the proper procedure for having announcements made.

### **d. Church Pennant**

Lay leaders are not authorized use of the ship's church pennant. A church pennant is flown only when divine services are being conducted by a chaplain or clergy person, not during a lay-led service.

## **5011. Limits**

Lay leaders are reminded that their ministry is restricted by the limits described in this handbook. The following paragraphs summarize these limits.

### **a. Faith Groups**

Faith groups define the religious and/or faith group functions and parameters for their respective lay leaders. It is the lay leaders' responsibility to ensure they function within the limits of their faith group's authorization.

### **b. Department of the Navy**

Lay leaders are not authorized to function as ordained clergy in the conduct of ministry within the Department of the Navy. The principles of religious accommodation as defined in SECNAVINST 1730.8 (series) do not include accommodation of a service member's desire to function in his capacity as clergy or religious leader while serving on active duty. Such official



## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

responsibilities are restricted to chaplains and authorized ordained clergy.

### **c. Command**

Lay leaders are appointed to assist chaplains with the CRPs. Lay leader appointments do not carry authorization to conduct services or prayers for other commands. Lay leaders, when authorized by their commanders, may assist other commands to meet specific faith group requirements and/or conduct faith group devotional services (e.g., aboard a Navy ship). Lay leaders are never authorized to conduct public devotional services for civilian personnel.

### **d. Primary Duties**

Lay leader responsibilities will not interfere with primary command responsibilities and duties.

### **e. On Foreign Soil**

When deployed on foreign soil, lay leader functions may be restricted by the status-of-forces agreement (SOFA). Where no SOFA exists, lay leaders should check with the legal officer regarding any religious restrictions before conducting devotional services.

## **5012. Records and Reports**

Lay leaders maintain records of the number, type, and attendance of the devotional services and prayers conducted. This

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

information is essential for planning, preparation, and maintaining the required resources for support.

Lay leaders submit periodic reports using the Lay Leader Activity Report (see appendix A for a sample) to the commanding officer and command chaplain to assist in this support. Lay leaders keep the command chaplain informed of their activities through such reports. These reports assist in planning and management of the command's lay leader program.

Lay leaders provide a quarterly (as a minimum) update of their ministry to the RMT responsible for RMS of the command.

## Appendix A

<b>Religious Lay Leader Activity Report</b> <b>U.S. Marine Corps</b>		
<b>1. From:</b> _____ <b>To:</b> _____		
<b>2. From:</b> _____ <b>Rank:</b> _____		
<b>To:</b> Commanding Officer _____ <b>Via:</b> Executive Officer _____		
<b>3. Faith Group</b>	<b>4. Appointment Expires:</b> _____ <b>5. PRD/EAOS:</b> _____	
<b>Summary of Services</b>		
<b>6. Types of Service Conducted</b>	<b>7. Number Conducted</b>	<b>8. Total in Attendance</b>
Field/Shipboard Devotional Services		
Public Prayers		
Memorial Services		
Faith Group/Sacramental Services		
Other Services: (Provide Supplemental Information, as required. Use additional sheets, if required.)		
<b>Equipment Status</b>		
<b>9. Equipment Nomenclature:</b> (Name, Description)	<b>10. Condition</b>	<b>11. Location</b>

**MCRP 6-12B**

---

<b>Lay Leader Training</b>			
<b>12. Type of Training</b>	<b>13. Dates</b>	<b>14. Location</b>	<b>15. Instructor</b>
<b>16. Comments:</b>			
<b>17. Narrative Highlights: (Please provide a brief summary of your ministry during this report period.)</b>			

## Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

---

18. Name:	19. Command:
20. Ministry plan for the next six months: (Please provide a projected schedule for the next six months.)	
<b>Supplies and Resources</b>	
I request the following supplies and resources:	
21. Nomenclature:	22. Quantity
23. Date required	
<b>Support Requirements</b>	
24. Please define any additional requirement for the next 6 months. (Training, Assist visits, etc.)	
25. Signature:	26. Date:

### Religious Lay Leader Report Key

The following information should help in completing this report form. If you have any further questions, please contact your Command Chaplain. The form can be typed or printed clearly.

1. Complete the inclusive dates of this report. (e.g. From 1 Oct 98 To: 31 Mar 99)
2. From: (Last Name, First Name, MI) Rank: (Current Rank)  
To: Commanding Officer, (Your Unit)  
Copy to: Command Chaplain, (The chaplain that supervises your Lay Leader duties.)
3. Faith Group: (The complete name of your faith group)
4. Appointment Expires: (When your Command Lay Leader status expires)
5. PRD/EAOS: (When you will transfer or be discharged, whichever is first.)
6. Please describe any services that are not included in the categories listed. You should discuss special services with your Command Chaplain.
7. Accurate number from your log/record.
8. Exact count, if possible.
9. List the current lay leader equipment in your custody.
10. One of the following: Excellent, Good, Marginal, Needs replaced.
11. Where do you maintain/store this piece of equipment?
12. Brief name of the training session (s) you've attended during this reporting period. (e.g. faith group, regimental, division, supervisory chaplain, etc.)
13. Dates of the training sessions
14. Where was the training conducted?
15. Who conducted the training?
16. Comments on the training (e.g. Certificate awarded, added to your record, recommendations, etc.)
17. Provide highlights about your ministry. What worked? What didn't? What would be helpful? Etc.
18. & 19. Same as Block 2.
20. Looking ahead, what religious services do you expect to conduct during the next 6 months?
21. 22. & 23. What supplies do you need? Remember to identify your supply requirements in plenty of time to get them ordered and received.
24. How can your Command Chaplain / RMT assist you in the coming months?

## Appendix B

<b>Personal Information</b>		
<b>Name</b>		<b>Rank</b>
<b>SSN</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Date of Birth</b>
<b>Company/Squadron</b>	<b>Platoon</b>	<b>PRD/EAOS</b>
<b>Local Address</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Company/Squadron Phone Number</b>
	<b>Spouse's Name</b>	<b>Residence Phone</b>
<b>Notes/Comments:</b>		
<b>Faith Group Information</b>		
<b>Faith Group</b>	<b>POC Name</b>	<b>Faith Group Address</b>
<b>Local Membership</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	
<b>Reason for requesting Status as a Lay Leader.</b>		
<b>Notes, Comments, Etc.</b>		

## Candidate Information Sheet

Chaplain's Interview/Notes							
* Rate the lay leader candidate in each of the following: 0=lowest 5=highest	Rating						
This candidate is	0	1	2	3	4	5	
1. A practicing and knowledgeable member of his/her own faith group, adhering to his/her faith group's tenets/requirements.							
2. A volunteer							
3. Willing to support the ministry of chaplains and Command Religious Programs.							
4. Willing to lead devotional services with like-minded members of their command.							
5. Respected by their peers in terms of performance of duties, interest in helping others, and friendly attitude.							
6. Self confident, demonstrating leadership qualities.							
7. A Model of the practice of religious, moral, and ethical standards which reflect sincerely upon his/her own faith.							
8. Sincere, demonstrating genuine interest in people.							
9. Open and approachable, maintains a positive attitude in his/her relationships with others.							
10. Tolerant toward the religious beliefs of others that differ from his/her own.							
11. Articulate, demonstrate clear communication skills.							
12. Well groomed, maintaining Marine Corps grooming standards.							
<b>TOTALS</b> (Total columns, then add across)							
* REMEMBER: the rating is entirely subjective. Interviewing chaplain should determine his/her own rating system, and what is to be considered as a satisfactory rating for a candidate in the appointment process. (e.g. Out of a total of 60 possible points, a score of 40 or higher will be required for further consideration.) Notes, Comments, Etc.							



## Appendix C

### USMC LAY LEADER CANDIDATE FAITH GROUP LETTER (SAMPLE)

*(The following is a sample text for a letter to a faith group representative. It will need to be adapted to the unique requirements of the command.)*

From: Command Chaplain,

To: Faith Group Representative

(Command) does not currently have a chaplain of your denomination assigned. Candidate's name is seeking appointment as a religious leader for your denomination/faith group to assist the command in providing religious ministry support. Within the Department of the Navy, military chaplains and contacted clergy conduct divine services and provide sacramental ministry. When required to meet specific needs, religious lay leaders are appointed by commanders to provide field/shipboard devotional services and prayers when chaplains or clergy are not available or accessible. Lay-led devotional services are normally limited to singing, prayers, scripture readings, personal sharing, and corporate acts of worship. When specific faith group requirements are identified, lay leaders are authorized to administer these within the Department of the Navy restrictions on accommodation of religious practices. His/her ministry will be under my direct supervision as the Command Chaplain.

The information requested on the enclosed form will validate the status of this candidate and help me ensure we accommodate your faith group requirements. Please provide the specific requirements and doctrinal standards for your faith group that will direct the lay leader in carrying out his/her responsibilities. I would also appreciate any additional information, worship materials, homiletic readings, training requirements, and/or responsibilities that will assist me in monitoring his/her ministry on your behalf. Please feel free to contact me directly at the address below. If you would like to discuss this position and/or your faith group's expectations for this lay leader. The position of religious lay leader is normally a six month appointment.

Thank you for your assistance in this important process.

Name  
Command Chaplain  
Command  
Command Address

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE ENCLOSED FORM AND RETURN IN THE ENCLOSED  
SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.**

**USMC LAY LEADER CANDIDATE  
FAITH GROUP INFORMATION/VERIFICATION FORM  
(SAMPLE)**

Candidate's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Faith Group \_\_\_\_\_

Faith Group Representative \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Is the above candidate a member in good standing of this faith?      \_\_\_\_\_ YES      \_\_\_\_\_ NO
2. Do you believe the candidate to be of good moral character?      \_\_\_\_\_ YES      \_\_\_\_\_ NO
3. Is this candidate acceptable as a representative of your faith group?      \_\_\_\_\_ YES      \_\_\_\_\_ NO
4. Do you authorize this candidate to assist you in organizing  
and/or leading a field/shipboard devotional service or prayer with  
persons of similar faith backgrounds?      \_\_\_\_\_ YES      \_\_\_\_\_ NO
5. Are there any prohibitions? (If YES, Please describe)      \_\_\_\_\_ YES      \_\_\_\_\_ NO
6. What specific sacraments/requirements are members of your faith group required to regularly  
receive? How often? Can these be postponed until a member of your clergy is available/accessible?
7. Do you authorize this candidate to provide/administer these      \_\_\_\_\_ YES      \_\_\_\_\_ NO  
sacraments/requirements in the absence of your clergy?
8. What specifically is required for members of your faith group?
9. What are the requirements for their administration?

## Religious Lay Leaders Handbook

### page 2. USMC LAY LEADER CANDIDATE FAITH GROUP INFORMATION/ VERIFICATION FORM

Please provide any further details of the sacraments/ordinances/worship requirements required by your denomination/faith group that you are authorizing this candidate to provide military members of your denomination/faith group. (Also any limitations of this appointment.) (Please use any additional sheets required.)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, as \_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed or Typed Full Name) (Denomination or Faith Group Title/Office)

of the \_\_\_\_\_ verify that \_\_\_\_\_  
(Denomination/Faith Group) (Lay Leader Candidate)

is a responsible member in good standing of our denomination/faith group and is entrusted to provide the sacramental and worship requirements for members of our denomination/faith group and provide field/shipboard devotional services and prayers under the provisions defined above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix D

### USMC LAY LEADER CANDIDATE COMMAND RECOMMENDATION (Sample Letter)

From: Company Commander/Squadron Commander (or equivalent)  
To: Battalion/Group Commander

DATE

Subj: Religious Lay Leader Recommendation ICO (Candidate's Full Name, Rank, SSN)

1. I recommend \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate's Full Name, Rank, SSN) for the position of religious lay leader.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate's Name) has been a member of my company/squadron since \_\_\_\_\_. I believe this candidate demonstrates the required leadership character for the position. He/She has no history of misconduct or marginal performance.

3. I have counseled the candidate and he/she understands that his/her collateral duties as a lay leader will not interfere with his/her primary command responsibilities.

4. I further understand that command support is required for the candidate to carry out the responsibilities of a lay leader if appointed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## Appendix E

### USMC LAY LEADER CANDIDATE COMMAND CHAPLAIN RECOMMENDATION (Sample Letter)

From: Command Chaplain  
To: Battalion/Group Commander

DATE

Subj Religious Lay Leader Recommendation ICD (Candidate's Full Name, Rank, SSN)

Ref: (1) Faith Group Information Form  
(2) Command Recommendation  
(3) Copy of Lay Leader Training Completion Certificate  
(4) Lay Leader Appointment Letter

1. I submit the name of \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate's Full Name, Rank, SSN) \_\_\_\_\_ for a six month appointment to the position of command religious lay leader.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate's Name) \_\_\_\_\_ has completed the command requirements for appointment as documented by enclosures (1) through (3).

3. Your appointment letter, (enclosure (4)), is provided for your signature.

4. This appointment is in accordance with the reference. The appointment responds to an identified religious ministry support requirement and conveys no ecclesiastical/faith group status to the servicemember appointed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## Appendix F

### USMC Lay Leader Appointment Letter

(sample letter)

DATE

From: Battalion/Group Commander

To: (Candidate's full name, rank, SSN)

Subj: Religious Lay Leader Appointment

Ref: (a) MILPERSMAN 1730-010, 12 December 1997

1. You are hereby appointed to serve as a command religious lay leader.
2. This appointment is in accordance with the reference and responds to an identified religious ministry support requirement and conveys no ecclesiastical/faith group status. This appointment is for a period of six months or when the need no longer exists, whichever comes first.
3. This appointment implies the authority to terminate such appointment and remove you from participation in the command religious program. This appointment will be terminated if/when your conduct hinders accomplishment of the command religious program or reflects adversely upon this command.
4. The Command Chaplain will provide the direct supervisor of your lay leader duties and responsibilities.

**MCRP 6-12B**

---

5. You are responsible to maintain your relationship with your faith group. You are required to report any changes in your faith group status to this command immediately.
6. Thank you for your willingness to serve your fellow Marines and shipmates in this important role.

Commanding Officer

Copy to:  
Command Chaplain  
Servicemember's Service Record

## Appendix G

USMC LAY LEADER TRAINING CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION (Sample)	
This Certifies that	
<hr/>	
<i>has successfully completed</i>	
<i>the</i>	
<b>U.S. Marine Corps Religious Lay Leader Basic Course</b>	
<i>on this _____ day of _____ 1999.</i>	
Religious Programs Training Program Branch Training and Education Division MCCDC Quantico, VA	Command Chaplain Course Director MCB, Quantico, VA
Copy to: Command Chaplain Servicemember's Service Record	



## **Appendix H**

### **Lay Leader Planning Checklist**

The following checklist is a tool for assisting lay leaders in the faithful performance of their duties. It can be modified as necessary.

#### **Before Deployment**

1. Is my lay leader appointment current for time period of the upcoming deployment?
2. Do I have enough resources (equipment, materials, supplies) for the deployment?
3. Do I have enough faith group-specific resources?
4. Have I identified all members of my faith group?
5. Am I clear about what my faith group expects of me?
6. Do I know what faith groups share my beliefs and allow their members to participate in my devotional services?
7. Do my fellow Marines and shipmates know I am one of their lay leaders?
8. Do I know how and where to contact my Command Chaplain or RMT?

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

9. What religious or faith group special days will occur during the upcoming deployment?
10. Have I packed my resource materials where they are accessible?
11. Whom can I depend on to assist or participate in my devotional services?
12. Do I know the other command lay leaders? Have we discussed cooperating or coordinating with one another?
13. Am I clear on my Command Chaplain's expectations?
14. What personal support will I need during this deployment? What are my priorities?

### **During the Deployment**

15. Are the names of the chaplains and lay leaders publicized (command bulletin boards, plan of the day [POD], etc.)? Are posted materials checked frequently to ensure they are clean, neat and readable?
16. Are times of divine services or other religiously oriented programs publicized throughout the command? Are religious posters or bulletins used to announce services or encourage attendance?
17. Is the word concerning time and place of services passed the evening before scheduled services? Just prior to the services? At the commencement of the services?
18. Am I personally inviting fellow Marines and shipmates to attend programs and services?

## **Religious Lay Leaders Handbook**

---

19. When special programs are planned or when special guests are expected for services, is this announced or published?
20. Am I making sure that fellow Marines and shipmates know what type of service is being offered (e.g., devotional service, prayers, scripture study; a Catholic Communion service, choir, sing-a-long)?
21. Am I keeping in touch with my Command Chaplain or RMT?
22. Am I involving fellow Marines and shipmates in leadership of our devotional services? Do they get to participate or are they just watching and listening?
23. Am I making every effort to coordinate Chaplain and/or clergy visits?
24. Am I providing command approved religious literature when possible?
25. How am I planning and/or improving our field devotional services?
26. Am I regularly consulting the chaplain for ideas and assistance in preparing programs?
27. Am I keeping good records? Are the required reports given to the command and chaplain?
28. Am I coordinating my devotional services with the S-3 and/or the ship's RMT to overcome possible schedule conflicts?

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

29. Am I coordinating my schedule with the company to eliminate conflicts?

30. Am I supporting the other lay leaders?

31. Is reasonable provision made for personnel on watch to be relieved in order to attend devotional services or divine services when a visiting chaplain is in the area for services?

32. When services are not held in a deployed area, are suitable arrangements made for church parties to worship elsewhere?

### **After the Deployment**

33. What supplies need to be replaced?

34. What equipment needs repaired, replaced, eliminated, added?

35. Have I provided the completed required reports?

36. What lessons learned need to be passed on to others?

## **Appendix I**

### **A Field Memorial Service**

(sample service order)

Command Memorial Services are usually coordinated by the Command Chaplain. When the operational requirements and/or combat conditions dictate that the command cannot wait and must press on, the following brief order of service is provided to assist the lay leader in coordinating a brief field memorial service for fallen Marines and/or shipmates.

Lay leaders should consult their Command Chaplain for appropriate resources and recommendations for memorial services as well as familiarize themselves with their command standing operating procedures (SOPs) for memorial services.

#### **Post the Colors**

#### **Invocation**

(a brief prayer requesting and acknowledging God's presence.)

#### **Call to Remember**

(A command member acknowledges why we have gathered—to remember one of our own who has fallen in combat.)

#### **Hymn of Comfort**

(If possible, those gathered sing a familiar hymn that recalls God's mercy.)

#### **Scripture Readings**

(Appropriate passages which highlight God's promise of redemption and comfort.)

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

### **Naming and Witness**

(As time allows, command members, and fellow Marines and shipmates recall the life of their fallen comrade, providing a brief history and the impact he or she had on the command. This is sometimes called the eulogy.)

### **Command Remarks**

(The commander or designated representative provides remarks.)

### **Prayer and/or Benediction**

### **Taps**

(The standard music is played.)

### **Retire the Colors**

## Appendix J

### Glossary

#### Section I. Acronyms

ALSA .....	Air Land Sea Application Center
CNET .....	Chief of Naval Education and Training
CRP .....	command religious program
DOD .....	Department of Defense
DON .....	Department of the Navy
G-1/S-1 .....	manpower or personnel staff officer
G-2/S-2 .....	intelligence staff officer
G-3/S-3 .....	operations staff officer
G-4/S-4 .....	logistics staff officer
G-6/S-6 .....	communications and information systems officer
ITS .....	individual training standard
MARFOR .....	Marine Corps forces
MCAGCC .....	Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center
MCCDC .....	Marine Corps Combat Development Command
MCMWTC .....	Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center
MCO .....	Marine Corps order
MCWP .....	Marine Corps warfighting publication
MCRP .....	Marine Corps reference publication
MILPERSMAN .....	Military Personnel Manual
MSC .....	major subordinate command

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

POD ..... plan of the day  
QA ..... quality assurance  
  
RMT ..... religious ministry team  
RMS ..... religious ministry support  
RP ..... Religious Program Specialist  
  
SAT ..... (Marine Corps) Systems Approach to Training  
SECNAVINST ..... Secretary of the Navy Instruction  
SOFA ..... status-of-forces agreement  
SOP ..... standing operating procedure  
SSN ..... social security number  
  
TPB ..... Training Programs Branch  
T&E ..... Training and Education Division  
T/O ..... table of organization  
  
U.S. .... United States  
USMC ..... United States Marine Corps



## Section II. Definitions

**The Chaplain, U. S. Marine Corps.** The senior chaplain assigned to the staff of the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) is known as The Chaplain, USMC. The Chaplain, USMC, advises the Commandant of the Marine Corps and Headquarters staff agencies on all religious ministry support matters throughout the Marine Corps.

**Clergy.** The term as used in this publication refers to all professionally qualified religious leaders or representatives endorsed by religious faith groups for chaplaincy.

**Command Chaplain.** Command Chaplain is the senior chaplain assigned to a command or the chaplain who has been officially tasked by higher headquarters with the responsibility of providing religious ministry support to a unit without an assigned chaplain.

**Lay leader or religious lay leader.** Lay leader or religious lay leader is a command member appointed in writing by the commander to provide identified faith group requirements under the direct supervision of a chaplain.

**Lay-led religious service.** A religious/faith group service conducted by a command appointed religious lay leader. Lay-led services are not equivalent to divine services conducted by chaplains or ordained civilian clergy. Lay-lead services are integral to command religious programs and are subject to chaplain supervision. Lay-led services constitute temporary accommodation of specific religious needs.

**Operational religious ministry.** Whereas RMS includes the entire spectrum of tasks and activities required to accomplish the

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

Marine Corps religious ministries mission, operational religious ministry includes those tasks and functions performed by the religious ministry team (RMT) in direct support of the Marines, Sailors, family members, and other authorized personnel of the command to which they are assigned. It includes, but is not limited to, such RMS activities and programs as divine services, sacraments, rites, ordinances, pastoral counseling, visitation, religious and morals education, ethics education, critical incident debriefings, and advising the commander on religion, ethics, morals, morale and indigenous religions and customs.

**Professional.** The term “professional” as used in this publication refers to those aspects of a chaplain’s role which are determined not by the Marine Corps, but by the chaplain’s identity as a member of the clergy whose profession is the ministry of religion.

**Religious ministry support.** Religious ministry support (RMS) is the entire spectrum of professional duties to include providing or facilitating essential religious requirements and practices, pastoral care, family support programs, religious education, volunteer and community activities, and programs performed to enhance morale and moral, ethical, and personal well being. Religious Program Specialists assist chaplains in providing religious ministry support.

**Religious ministry team.** The religious ministry team (RMT) consists of the chaplain(s), Religious Program Specialist(s), and other designated command members (e.g. chaplain’s assistants, civilian staff, appointed lay leaders). The composition of each command’s RMT will be determined by the command’s mission and table of organization (T/O). Each RMT will have a minimum of one assigned chaplain.

## **Appendix K**

### **References and Related Publications**

#### **Statutory Material**

United States Code Title 10, subtitle C, part II, section 6031, chapter 555, Chaplains: Divine Services

#### **Department of Defense Directive (DODD)**

1300.17 Accommodation of Religious Practices within the Military Services

#### **Air Land Sea Application (ALSA) Center**

Survival, Evasion, and Recovery (Also known as MCRP 3-02H)

#### **United States Navy Regulations**

1990, Article 817, Observance of Sunday

1990, Article 820, Welfare of Personnel

## **MCRP 6-12B**

---

### **Secretary of the Navy Instructions (SECNAVINST)**

1730.3G Employment of Civilian Clergy

1730.7A Religious Ministries within the Department of the Navy

1730.8A Accommodation of Religious Practices

### **SECNAV Notice**

1730 Holy Days and Days of Religious Observance

### **Military Personnel Manual (MILPERSMAN)**

1730-010 Use of Lay Leaders in Religious Services

### **Marine Corps Order (MCO)**

1730.6D Command Religious Programs in the Marine Corps

### **Miscellaneous**

Book of Worship for U.S. Armed Forces

Random House College Dictionary