



Module 2: We are Here for Animals and People

Jesus said, go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to all creation. Mark 16:15

Part one:

Usually and logically, someone who dedicates himself/herself to human ministry serves predominately humans. However, when you respond to the call to be an Animal Chaplain, you will embark on a very special and uniquely rewarding life experience, one that broadens your service to include animals.

As an Animal Chaplain, you will be administering to humans and their companion animals. Sometimes you will be attending to the needs of just humans, yet in many circumstances you will be present and assisting animals alone.

The obvious good news here is that such a rewarding life, serving God's creatures, will certainly not be tedious.

Let's begin with the opportunity to serve animals alone.

There are many animals in need of spiritual nourishment.

- The abandoned and alone in shelters
 - The feral that call home the streets
 - The factory farm victims (if you are a vegan)
 - The overworked, abused and exploited
 - Those in *all for profit* puppy mills
 - Those trained to fight for monetary benefits or entertainment
 - The hoarded and neglected
-

Part two:

Schedule and enjoy a Spiritual retreat.

This can be for a time frame of no less than 3 hours or up to an overnight, if you desire.

The retreat can be by yourself or with a friend or spouse.

It can be held in a quiet room where you live, a retreat house, or a “getaway” type place like a hotel room.

What you must leave behind:

1. Cell phones and all other technology
2. Any work issues or issues that are holding you back from time with God
3. Judgements, grievances, and all other distractions

What you may want to consider bringing

1. Pictures of animals
2. Prayer book/Bible
3. Any books that you believe will help you make a connection to God and animals
4. A journal
5. A welcoming attitude to receive God's love

What is the goal?

The goal is simply to dedicate time to spend time seeking God personally, making a deeper connection, through prayer and study. Seek to deepen your spiritual formation.

Module 2: Assignments

Assignment Number 1: Part One

Add any other animals to the above list that you feel need attention and spiritual assistance. Discuss ways you can help these animals now and in the future.

There may possibly be a species of animal you are called to serve that you may not have fond feelings for. As an Animal Chaplain, you are called to administer to all, regardless of breed or species. Personally, I am not a big fan of reptiles, but if a snake is brought before me, I will focus on its suffering and need, and not on the dreaded fear I have of these creatures. This is about the needy, not the Chaplain!

Humans only

This situation is rather uncommon except for Pet Loss Companioning. When this circumstance arises, it will require compassion and empathy and the patience to walk the grieving human from the devastation of loss to healing.

Humans and animals living together

There will be times when you are called to preside at an animal blessing or other service where the human/ animal dynamic is harmonious. When these situations are pleasant the service will go forward in a very serene and enjoyable atmosphere. However, this is not always the case. In the event

your presence is requested at the euthanasia of an animal unjustly subjected to this fate because of an un-adoptable or unwanted status, the script changes.

You could witness someone callously choosing euthanasia because they care not for their dog and want to make a point to that effect and offer this uncivilized deed as proof: Awful – yes, but sadly a reality.

These situations are not easy to digest, nevertheless as Animal Chaplains we are required to approach each case without judgment, with as calm a demeanor as possible, with diplomacy, and with the hope that we are venturing into a teaching opportunity that will save the animal's life and awaken the human to the sanctity of all life.

Reflect for a moment, then write how will you handle these different situations?

Assignment Number 2: Part One

Schedule a phone meeting with me to discuss your approach to the following situation: A Veterinarian requests your presence at the euthanasia of a sick cat belonging to a family who cannot afford the necessary medical treatment and procedures.

Assignment Number 2: Part Two

Write 2-3 paragraphs and share your experience. Consider sharing what you learned about yourself and your relationship with God.

Congratulations!

You have successfully completed Module 2

Please take some time to celebrate this accomplishment and refresh yourself before moving on to Module 3.