CHAPLAIN COURSE
Department of Florida

Chaplain Course

By

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This book is dedicated to ALL who endeavor to enhance our organization through becoming an American Legion Chaplain
To you is given the spiritual leadership of the post, you will, I know lend dignity and respect to your office. You should be in close confidence with the commander and other officers of this post, and should attend all meetings of the post. You should be ready upon occasion to take your part in the Initiation of new members, the dedication of halls, Monuments or colors and the funeral services of a comrade.

All such ceremonies are made more commemorative by the use of our ritual. Into your keeping, we place the spirit of Comradeship of this post. May harmony and unity prevail.

The American Legion is comprehensive in nature embracing all Religions, faiths, and denominations within its ranks. The Chaplaincy being non-denominational and non-sectarian, Wishes to minister to the spiritual needs of all without regard to affiliation or non-affiliation.
History and Development

Chaplaincy is associated with the military the chaplaincy has a long and honorable history. For it is as old as the story of military operations. The term goes back to a legend of the fourth century about Martin of Tours. It is said that on his way home from battle he met a shivering beggar. He cut his cloak in two parts and gave one to the beggar. That night he had a vision of Christ wearing the part given to the one in need. His part known as a "cappa" was kept in a shrine called "cappella", becoming an object of veneration. French kings applied the term "chappelains", which meant "keepers of the cloak" to those clergy who ministered to them.
There are many types of chaplain services including The American Legion, hospitals, prisons and universities.

From 29 July 1775 the Continental Army recognized the chaplaincy as being part of the Army.

From that date the role and mission of the chaplaincy has grown.

The chaplain now plays an important role in all branches of service.

Our founding fathers established an office of chaplain the first chaplain was appointed by George Washington the chaplains role was to bring God to men and men to God.

From then until now the chaplain has been an integral part of the total program.

No program is complete without the services of the chaplain.
Purpose of Chaplains

Help people grow in their relationship with God and one another

Develop an environment within which legionnaires are encouraged in their personal and collective moral and spiritual growth

God is the source of all rights and privileges

Seek to administer to people whenever there is a need

Be alert to the physical and spiritual needs of his/her comrades

Be notified when there is death, illness, or special concern in the membership

To have open lines of communication with local clergy, hospital and school officials, funeral directors and other community organizations so they will be informed of what services and programs the post can and will provide when called upon.

He’s the one who has the calming effect and brings harmony to people and organizations
Qualifications of a Chaplain

The chaplain does not have to be a clergyman

Anyone can serve who is willing

Persons serving in the office should demonstrate a sense of spiritual maturity and be committed to the chaplaincy and a person of integrity.

Without this demonstration the chaplain will not provide the spiritual counsel needed by the commanders and members alike

Have a positive attitude toward himself/herself, spiritual matters, the unit served, and The American Legion

Willing to serve where there is a need. Can't be selective in their service for they have a responsibility to all, neither can they just serve because it is convenient. They should provide support as needed

Ability to keep things confidential which is an absolute necessity

Should never be political while serving as a chaplain
Qualifications of a Chaplain

Should not be appointed against his/her will
Should not accept the position just to hold an office
Should not be elected or appointed just to fill a spot on a roster
Should seek to be a model in matters related to the ethical and moral
Should be groomed, cleaned and dressed appropriately. Look like a chaplain, act like a chaplain and be a chaplain.
Should be cheerful, confident, and bring hope (not all the hurt of those in our care can be healed but they can be soothed) (being cheerful improves their health and gives them hope)
When there is a conflict between two legionnaires, the chaplain cannot take sides
The National Chaplain is appointed
Department, Area, District, and Post Chaplains are either elected or appointed
Work of a Chaplain

Chaplains teach no other lesson but that of courtesy (Rom 16:1-15) The chaplain must never forget that he/she is the one who serves.

There is a source of strength and power upon which you must call the power of God. Call upon him before all major decisions.

A chaplain has to be a good listener in order to interact with other people.

Eight barriers to listening:
1. No desire for details
2. Conflicting agendas
3. Control issues
4. Distractions
5. Selfishness
6. A need to ‘fix’
7. In a hurry
8. Fatigue

Notes:
Work of a Chaplain

A chaplain must take care of themselves along with taking care of others. You must run on premium fuel by:

1. Proper care of your physical body, eat, exercise take aside time to rest and have recreation
2. Take care of cultivating the mind and life-long learning
3. Must develop a taste for reading
4. Absolutely he/she has to cultivate his/her own spiritual life. Work at a quiet hour of prayer and personal devotion

To serve/minister where there is need
Serve as spiritual advisor for all members of the post
Spirituality is defined as: having a life believed to be purposeful and meaningful
To be profoundly connected to oneself and others

*John 4:12* - *no man hath seen God at any time if we love one another God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us*

The chaplains presence is essential at all post events
Prayers

Prayer is talking with God
Prayer is not a speech or mindless rambling, but sincere, enjoyable conversation with God

The aspects of prayer are praise, thanks and ask.

A general pattern for prayer is :
1. Praise and thank God
2. Ask him for your spiritual needs (you need to clear your own soul first, in order to pray well for others)
3. Ask him for the needs of others
4. Ask him for your physical needs
5. Praise and thank him again
6. Pray to feel Gods love so we can love one another
Prayers

Give prayers such as the invocation and benediction at meetings. Give memorial prayers at memorials and post everlasting ceremonies. Can use your own providing they are appropriate for the occasion.

Prayer ought to be audible to all. Scripture reading should be selected and studied beforehand:

1. Write them out and memorize them
2. Keep them in a personal prayer book
3. Never say the same prayer
4. Always make your prayers personal
5. Read books about prayers
6. Know the power that prayers can do for an individual
7. Be enthused and pray loud
8. Bring God's presence into the room as you pray

Notes:
Chaplains should participate in......

Four Chaplains days and Religious Emphasis Week
Independence and patriotic day events
Veterans Day Memorials
Installations
Initiations
Funeral and memorials when requested
Visit the sick, bereaved, shut-ins, and the disabled
Never ask a patient what their illness is
Ask the patient if you can say a prayer or pray with them
All sick room prayers should be short
A good time to visit a patient is in the evening before an operation or major procedure
Send cards and make telephone calls as needed
Take part in all rituals and ceremonies of The American Legion
Mingle with the people. Make it possible for the members to easily contact you with their concerns and problems. Look sharp and be sharp. Properly wear a clean cap, wear it with pride because it is our uniform. The cap tells people who you are. Communicate with officers, members, and community organizations. Provide spiritual leadership through the Legions "Service to God and Country"
Chaplain’s Calendar

January
New Year’s Day; Viet Nam cease fire
Jan 27, 1973

February
Americanism Month; first Sunday - Four Chaplains; Religious Emphasis week

March
The American Legion birthday

April
Holy Seasons; Children and Youth month

May
Mother’s Day; Armed Forces Day; Poppy Day; Memorial Day

June
D-day -June 6, 1944; Flag Day; Father’s Day

July
Independence Day; Korean War ended - July 27, 1953

August
American Legion National Convention

September
V-J Day - September 2, 1945; Labor Day; Citizenship Day; Patriot Day

October
Columbus Day

November
Election Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving; Family Week

December
Pearl Harbor Day - Dec 7, 1941; Festival of Hanukkah and Christmas
Tools for Chaplains

There is a Department of Florida web-site that you can get the chaplains how to Manual: Go to membersfloridalegion.org, click on resources, click on guides and manuals, click on post manuals, click on chaplains manual. Or go to http://www.legion.org/publications/160900/chaplains-manual

The American Legion Post Officer Guide and Manual of Ceremonies – this guide provides a tool for post officers, district and county commanders, and serves as a Manual of Ceremonies. This publication contains many of the prayers that are helpful for special events

“Service to God and Country” Chaplain’s Handbook -here is found the purpose and work of the God and Country Program. It tells of our background, our heritage, the need for such an emphasis, and its objectives. A brief statement is found on why one should serve God. Additional information is found on Four Chaplains’ Day. There is a brief list of duties of the chaplain plus a few prayers to be used as
appropriate.

The chaplain’s prayer manual has invocations, benedictions, table graces, and prayers for most American Legion events. There are prayers for our organizations birthday, president’s month, the armed forces, memorial occasions, post everlasting ceremonies, building dedications and installations

Conclusion

Hopefully this course will answer some of your questions on what is expected of you to be a chaplain. I am only a spec in his services

look
read
listen
be on time
have patience

I am pro-a life time study for every chaplain

Practice mini-prayers the benefits are cumulative

Do not try to be perfect
Don't feel you have to do everything
Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or discouraged for the Lord God will be with you wherever you are jos1-9
Treasure what you learn and pass it on everyday, everyday

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