

# Ethics and Standards Guidelines

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## INTRODUCTION

The Portland Spiritualist Church is committed to Spiritualism, it's Declaration of Principals, philosophy and traditions. To guide our workers (Platform Chairs/Moderators, Healers, Facilitators for Healing Services, Speakers/Mediums, and Greeters/Ushers) we have created this *Policy & Ethics Guidelines for Members & Workers*. This manual outlines specific expectations through various guidelines and policies for those individuals and members who represent our church and religion.

The way we present ourselves while serving any church is a reflection on the individual church and the religion. Workers are Spiritual representatives. We are dedicated to maintaining a high set of standards that clearly supports and promotes professional conduct and competence. As workers we are accountable for our ministry whatever the setting. NSAC, our National Organization, has also adopted a Code of Ethics (see Appendix A). Because we are a hierarchical society we look to NSAC's adopted practices to support and compliment our own policies and procedures.

The Portland Spiritualist Church would like to thank all those individuals who have served our church. Setting high standards and adhering to them will set a professional standard for our religion. We appreciate your part in upholding the professional ministry that this religion deserves.

Please see a member of the Pastoral Committee if you are interested in serving as a worker at the Portland Spiritualist Church in any of the roles outlined in this manual.

## DRESS CODE

As a platform worker you are representing Spiritualism to the public. The way you present yourself from the podium is a reflection on the church and the religion. Platform workers are spiritual representatives. Platform decorum (what we say from the podium, how we interact with the congregation, our attitude, and even how we dress) is extremely important.

We strive to present Spiritualism in a professional manner that reflects our high standards. Therefore, we have adopted a dress code. Proper dress may mean different things to different people. Each of us has a different idea of what looks good. Here are a few suggestions. What we have adopted are guidelines.

Platform Workers: Women are encouraged to wear dresses, dress pants, or professional wear. Things to avoid are noisy jewelry, chewing gum and slang words or phrases. Men are encouraged to wear dress shirts, ties, and jackets. Greeters/Ushers/Healers: Men and women are encouraged to wear casual or professional type clothing.

Jeans, tee shirts, flip flop shoes, low cut or off the shoulder dresses and clothing that is too short to cover respective body parts are not considered proper attire when serving the church.

Remember when you serve our church you are an Ambassador of Spirit. Your actions, mannerisms and dress are a reflection on our church and on our religion.

### PLATFORM CHAIR/MODERATOR

The Platform Chair/Moderator is the individual who will be in charge of the service overall, and responsible for keeping things going in an orderly and timely fashion.

Arrive at least twenty minutes to half an hour before the service starts to set up and take care of any unforeseen details. You will also be responsible for the duties of the Greeter/Usher if one has not been scheduled for that service.

An outline of our Order of Service has been included in the back of this Manual (see Appendix B).

#### Responsibilities of the Platform Chair/Moderator:

- Check all equipment, such as microphones, to make sure everything is in good working order.
- Place the NSAC Charter and the MSSAC Charter on the table in front of the Podium.
- Place the Bible and the Spiritualist Manual on the Podium.
- Place hymnals on the Podium chairs for workers.
- Place the tote with the piano light and special music hymnals behind the piano for the pianist.
- Decide on an Invocation. These can be found in the Spiritualist's Manual or you can write your own.
- If necessary, assign someone to facilitate the Healing/Meditation portion of the service.
- Invite individuals to serve as Healers.

- Invite an individual to light the Healing Candles.
- Invite an individual to take the offering. However, if you have a Greeter/Usher that would be their responsibility.
- Be sure that water is available for Healers and podium workers.
- Make sure the offering plate is accessible.
- Place a minimum of two healing chairs in front of the congregation facing the podium. More chairs can be added if there is a large congregation and available Healers.
- Have all your announcements in order so they may be presented in a brief and interesting manner.
- Get credentials and accomplishments of the Speaker/Medium who will be giving the inspirational talk/sermon. This information will be part of your introduction. Are they MPI students? What NSAC certifications do they have? Are they a Missionary? Are they affiliated with a specific church? Camp?
- Find out what hymns the Speaker/Medium would like to have sung and in what order in the service.
- Ask the Speaker/Medium if they would give the Benediction at the end of the service.
- If the Speaker/Medium is new to your church then spend a few minutes going over any details about the service that may be beneficial. Re: The layout of the service, continuity of life readings, what is acceptable, what is not (we do not give past life readings, we do not diagnose) etc.
- Two individuals (preferably church members) should count the offering at the end of the service and document that information in the collection book.
- Check over the sanctuary before leaving. Make sure the lights and any microphones are off, the candles are out, all cups, glasses, trash, etc. are removed. Make sure that all items such as hymnals, cushions, and podium materials have been returned to the closet.

#### Etiquette and Best Practice for the Platform Chair/Moderator:

- It may be beneficial to introduce the Speaker/Medium before announcing the soloist or hymn. This way the Speaker/Medium can step to the lectern since the vibration has been raised by the music.
- If there is a visiting dignitary, who is part of the congregation and not part of the service, acknowledge the person's office and name during the announcements. Such as... Rev. Earl Noble pastor of the \_\_\_\_\_ church is in our congregation. Welcome. It is not necessary to invite that person to the platform.
- Use the word "congregation" instead of "audience".
- Use the word "offering" instead of "collection".

- The title "Reverend" is only used with the person's full name. For example: The "Reverend Betty Brown is our guest speaker today" is correct. "Good morning, Ms Brown is correct when addressing the individual directly.
- The time allowed for the message portion of the service should be evenly divided between the mediums if more than one medium is serving. Cue the medium by quietly saying, "One more, please". This lets the medium know that their message time is ending and it helps keep the service on schedule.
- The Platform Chair/Moderator should be the LEAST heard. Prayers, introductions, announcements, etc. should be brief. The Platform Chairperson/Moderator should not read poems, or "give a lecture", this is to be done by the speaker.
- A good Platform Chair/Moderator is a facilitator who keeps the sequence and timing of the service moving in proper order. Make sure that each worker knows the order of the service, and the time allowed within that framework for the inspirational talk/sermon or messages.
- If compliments are in order, give them to your workers after the service. Always remember to say "thank you" for their help and participation.
- "Thanks for coming" should be included in the welcome given at the opening of the service. It is redundant and unnecessary to have this repeated from the platform at any other time. If they wish, members should express this to individuals either before, or after the service.
- Notify the Pastor (if your church has a Pastor) or the President (if your church does not have a Pastor) of the church as soon as possible if you have an emergency that prevents you from being the Platform Chair/Moderator. Do not switch with other workers or make arrangements without consulting the Pastor/President.

#### Dress Code

Please refer to the Dress Code on page 2-3 of this manual.

#### FACILITATOR OF THE HEALING SERVICE

Arrive at least twenty minutes before the service to allow yourself enough time to check the proper working order of all the equipment you will need for the healing service. For example: microphones, tape recorders, etc.

If a healing talk is given, it should relate to a healing topic and should be limited to approximately five (5) minutes in length.

The music for the healing service, if used, should be soft, quiet and not a familiar tune. When popular tunes are played people tend to keep time with the music or sing along instead of using the time for meditation. If played, the music should be a nice background sound that compliments the meditation. The music should not be disruptive or dominate the Healing Service.

Check with the Platform Chair/Moderator prior to the service for the names of the Healers.

Open with a warm welcome.

Invite the Healers to their chairs.

Let the congregation know when the healing chairs are open. Tell them they may sit in the healing chairs for themselves, or in proxy for another. Let them know that healing can be for health, financial situations, relationships, etc.

Open the Healing Service by reading the *Opening Healing Prayer* and the *Spiritual Prayer for Healing* found on the back inside cover of the Hymnal.

Read the names on the healing list before going into the meditation. Give the members in the congregation an opportunity to send absentee healing to all who are in need, including those names listed on the healing lists.

Ask the congregation to lay aside all materials and get in a comfortable position with their feet on the floor and hands in their laps.

Lead the congregation through a meditation of choice. Lead their thoughts to a peaceful place, where they can relax and feel the stresses of the day release from their bodies. A simple meditation have been included at the end of this section (see Appendix C).

Bring your meditation to a close making sure that you instruct the congregation to move their fingers and toes as they return from their meditation. Remind the congregation that all needed healing has taken place.

Read the closing Prayer for Healing found on the back inside cover of the hymnal.

Release the Healers with thanks. Remind the congregation that our Healers are students and need Healing Affidavits as they pursue their credentialing in our religion. Encourage those individuals who sat in a healing chair and received a

significant healing (aches and pains have disappeared, migraine has gone, etc) to make out an Affidavit.

Notify the Pastor (if your church has a Pastor) or the President (if your church does not have a Pastor) of the church as soon as possible if you have an emergency that prevents you from being a Facilitator of the Healing Service. Do not switch with other workers or make arrangements without consulting the Pastor/President.

#### Dress Code

Please refer to the Dress Code on page 2-3 of this manual.

#### HEALER

The Healer should be clean of body as well as clothing. Personal cleanliness of the Healer is very important. As we do our hands-on healing we are in close proximity to individuals who have come to us for healing. Body odor, stale tobacco smells on clothing, and the use of strong perfumes or shaving lotions should be avoided as some individuals may have allergies to certain odors and/or sensitivities to strong smells. Strong odors and smells could make a person who is not feeling well feel even worse.

Arrive at least twenty minutes before the service to allow yourself enough time for meditation and attunement. A period of meditation before healing helps to enhance attunement with healing forces.

Wash your hands before you do any hands-on healing.

Create an attunement with Spirit, yourself as the Healer, and the person sitting in your chair.

Prayers should be silent. Elaborate displays of motions and/or emotions are discouraged.

Unless the individual insists on telling you their problem, do not ask questions about their condition. Spirit will guide you for the proper healing that is to take place at this point in time.

If an individual sits in your healing chair and seems tense and/or nervous, a brief, kindly word to help them relax and sit comfortably is usually all that is needed.

Never let a recipient of healing think that spiritual healing should take the place of medical healing. Let the individual know that spiritual healing and medical healing work best together.

Secular laws do not allow prescribing, manipulation, massaging or rubbing, etc. Proper etiquette regarding touching should be limited to, and in compliance with, any local and state laws relative to the laying on of hands. Touching by the Healer may be done only on the head, neck and shoulders of the individual sitting in the healing chair. Never allow the hands to slide on the recipient, remove your hands without a stroking movement.

By placing the right hand (positive) lightly on the forehead and the left hand (negative) at the nape of the neck the Healer creates a circular force field. This is said to be a good starting point for the Healer. If you are left handed, hands should be reversed.

Have confidence and faith that healing does occur. Ask your healing guides for direction and assistance as you provide healing. Remember you are an instrument for healing and Spirit is working through you to provide healing to the individual in the healing chair. You may be guided to concentrate through intention your healing to certain areas of the body. You may find that Spirit instructs you to use or make available a specific color that would be of benefit to the individual at this point in time. Trust and have faith that you are being guided to provide the highest healing for the highest good. Be pleasant and show concern for each individual. We are all God's children.

If there is a time when your healing chair is vacant, the Healer should stand with their arms out and their palms up. This action acts as a battery for other Healers.

At the close of each healing session, give the person sitting in your healing chair some indication that the healing has come to an end. It can be a phrase such as "God go with you" or "Go in light and love" or "God Bless".

Vibrations may be broken between each healing session by rubbing your hands in a circular motion. Some Healers feel they need to release any attachment by flipping their hands away from their body.

Some Healers wash their hands and/or drink water at the end of a healing service. Some Healers simply rub palms clockwise against each other to break the vibration.

Give a prayer of thanks to Infinite Intelligence and your healing guides.

When the Platform Chair/Moderator dismisses the Healers, return the healing chairs to their previous location. Help yourself to a glass of water found on the table in front of the lectern.

Notify the Pastor (if your church has a Pastor) or the President (if your church does not have a Pastor) of the church as soon as possible if you have an emergency that prevents you from being the Healer. Do not switch with other workers or make arrangements without consulting the Pastor/President.

### Dress Code

Please refer to the Dress Code on page 2-3 of this manual.

### SPEAKER/MEDIUM

#### Hints and suggestions for the Speaker regarding the inspirational talk/sermon:

Choose a subject that relates to Spiritualism and is a reflection of our philosophy. The inspirational talk should leave the congregation with a feeling of upliftment. Check with the Pastor (if the church has a Pastor) or the Platform Chairperson/Moderator (if the church does not have a Pastor) if you have any questions regarding the content of the lecture you intend on using in the service.

Avoid political commentary and other controversial subjects.

Sharing a personal experience is good but do not give your life story.

Once you have decided on your subject, you may want to outline it in large print on file cards or write notes in a small notebook. Be sure to number the file cards or pages you will be using, this will help keep your thought process organized. If you are writing a complete sermon/inspirational talk, make sure it is organized. Rustling and turning pieces of paper during the lecture is distracting to the congregation. You will appear more knowledgeable and self-assured when you speak in a manner that flows and is not interrupted.

Whether your sermon is read, inspirational, or given from notes and outlines, know your subject and the point you wish to make to the congregation. Practice the lecture in front of a mirror. Time yourself so you remain within the 10-15 minute time limit.

Make eye contact with many members of the congregation as you speak. Never put your focus on just one person in the congregation.

Enunciate clearly and verify the pronunciation of words you plan to use in your lecture that are unfamiliar to you.

If you are using excerpts from books or the Bible as part of your inspirational talk/sermon, become familiar with the sections you are using. Marking the pages of the book you are using is a quick way of finding the section you need without rummaging through the book. Again be prepared and organized with your paperwork.

Do not apologize for yourself, your topic, or any difficulty you may have encountered as you prepared your lecture, etc.

Be aware of the attentiveness of congregation. Speak only as long as you have their attention and interest.

Stick to your subject, relating to your theme from time to time, and announce your closing with a statement relating to the original subject tying it all together. An individual who has been asked what you "spoke on" should have no difficulty in answering the question.

#### Best Practice for the Mediums who serve our church:

Allow time for meditation prior to serving Spirit and the congregation.

Never apologize for yourself, for an illness, for your spirit guides, or for your difficulty in becoming attuned.

Remember the purpose of spirit communication is to prove the continuity of life and to help those who are grieving.

Messages during the service should be short. This is a spirit "Greeting" not a spirit "Reading".

Speak loud enough to be heard by all present.

Be enthusiastic and positive as you are communing with Infinite Intelligence and the higher spheres.

The Medium should make known, without a doubt, which individual in the congregation they wish to come to. This can be accomplished by saying the following: "I would like to..." or "May I come to the women in the third row with the black shirt".

Get permission from the individual before giving the spirit greeting. If giving a reading to a child, make sure you get permission from the parent.

The Medium should refrain from asking questions.

Awkward or inappropriate information in a message should be held for a more private moment.

Never embarrass a member of the congregation with comments of your own.

It is not considered proper etiquette to give messages to fellow workers who are serving on the platform along with you.

Never give a past life reading from the podium as past lives are not supported by or recognized by our National Spiritualist Association of Churches teachings.

Never give a message predicting death. Messages should never be of a diagnostic nature. Avoid any messages that are of a negative nature. Avoid those messages that contain negative situations unless the message can offer information that would be helpful to the individual. Remember, the congregation is here to get encouragement.

If the individual does not understand the message, ask them to take it with them as the message may be confirmed at a later time.

Spirit greetings should stop about five minutes before the end of the service. The Platform Chair/Moderator is responsible for letting the Medium know when the message portion of the service is coming to an end. The Platform Chair/Moderator may say, "Time" or "One more please".

Thank your spirit guides when you are finished giving messages.

#### Etiquette and Best Practice for the Speaker/Medium:

Arrive fifteen minutes before the service to allow yourself enough time for proper attunement. Make any necessary arrangements with the Platform Chair/Moderator. This is the time to request any special hymns or music you wish to have sung prior to your inspirational talk/sermon. If you require more than the usual music, make arrangements days ahead of time and be certain everyone involved is aware of your needs.

Have a written introduction of your credentials and accomplishments available to give to the Platform Chair/Moderator. This should be given to the Platform Chair/Moderator as soon as you arrive at the church.

Check with the Platform Chair/Moderator about the layout of the church service. Some churches vary their Order of Service. Find out when you should go to the platform. Understand at what part of the service will you be introduced to give the inspirational talk/sermon or messages validating continuity of life.

During the time you are waiting to give your inspirational talk/sermon and while you wait for other workers to do their part of the service, do not whisper or write notes to other workers, do not speak aloud or under your breath to members of the congregation. Refrain from flipping through the hymnal or other books that may be near you. Sit up and pay attention, do not fall asleep, appear bored, or make faces at what other workers say or do. Do not make repeated adjustments to your hair or clothing while on the platform. Act in a professional manner. Remember you are an Ambassador for Spirit. What we say from the podium, how we interact with the congregation, our attitude, and how we act while on the podium are extremely important. Remember, podium workers are a reflection on the church and the religion. We strive to present Spiritualism in a professional manner that reflects our high standards.

When you have been presented or introduced to the congregation, walk to the lectern. Do not jump ahead or leap to the rostrum, do not hesitate for a long length of time.

Use the microphone at the podium if the church has one. Members in the congregation may have hearing difficulties and need you to speak into the microphone for them to hear what is being said.

Stand at the lectern, do not lean on or bend over the lectern. Refrain from "dancing around" or "jumping up and down" as you speak. Do not "play" with pens or other items on the lectern. Refrain from fussing with your clothing or jewelry and do not rub your face or adjust your hair or clothing during your lecture.

Respect the Platform Chair/Moderator, listen and follow their directions.

Notify the Pastor (if your church has a Pastor) or the President (if your church does not have a Pastor) of the church as soon as possible if you have an emergency that prevents you from being the Speaker. Do not switch with other workers or make arrangements without consulting the Pastor/President.

### Dress Code

Please refer to the Dress Code on page 2-3 of this manual.

### GREETER/USHER

#### Responsibilities of the Greeter/Usher:

- Set up refreshments downstairs.
- Check the sanctuary before the service to make certain the hymnals and chair pads are easily accessible.
- Greet people as they enter the church.
- Direct new-comers to chair pads and hymnals.
- Take the Healing List to the Podium just before the service starts.
- Keep the foyer quiet during the meditation portion of the service.
- Be available to individuals who may have questions regarding our religion, church, etc. Direct them to the Pastor, Platform Chair/Moderator, or President if you do not know the answer to their question.
- Direct individuals to literature and information located at the back of the church.
- Direct members of the congregation downstairs for refreshments and socializing at the end of the service.

Notify the Pastor (if your church has a Pastor) or the President (if your church does not have a Pastor) of the church as soon as possible if you have an emergency that prevents you from being the Greeter/Usher. Do not switch with other workers or make arrangements without consulting the Pastor/President.

### Dress Code

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