

What do BeFrienders do?

BeFrienders (volunteer lay ministers) provide pastoral care to people in difficult and transitional situations. They embody the caring presence of God and of the community and serve as a living reminder of God's love.

BeFrienders are trained to provide a listening presence to others, not to be experts, in whatever situation they might encounter. The core concepts and skills learned enable a BeFriender to enter into any situation and provide compassionate, empathetic care. BeFrienders can be called upon in crisis situations just as they would be in non-crisis situations.

BeFrienders accept people as they are without telling them how they should be, listen with compassion without giving advice, and allow others to make their own decisions without trying to decide for them. By providing spiritual and emotional care, BeFrienders provide an opportunity for those they befriend to make choices and to grow.

For more information, please contact:

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BeFriender program leaders train and support BeFrienders in offering care, a nonjudgmental presence, and active listening.



BeFrienders are not able to accept gifts, but you are welcome to make a donation to the BeFriender Ministry Program.
Thank you.



**BEFRIENDER
MINISTRY**

A Listening Presence

**Saint John's of Little Canada
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A Ministry

That

Touches Lives

What is BeFriender Ministry?

BeFriender Ministry is a lay pastoral care program. Trained lay persons enter into caring relationships with those in need of pastoral care, providing emotional and spiritual support.

How do BeFrienders do this?

BeFrienders provide a nonjudgmental listening presence to those they visit.

How much counseling is involved in befriending?

BeFrienders are not counselors and do not give advice.

Are BeFrienders expected to solve problems?

BeFrienders listen; they do not try to solve problems or impose solutions. BeFrienders also discern with the people they visit whether referrals were appropriate to professionals or agencies are appropriate.

How long is the training?

A BeFriender candidate receives about 20 hours of training, and serves a short internship before becoming a BeFriender.

What topics are covered in training?

The training addresses issues such as grief and loss, spirituality, listening, and confidentiality. Many of the skills learned are applicable to any relationship in a person's life in addition to BeFriender relationships.

Being a friend seems natural, so why is training necessary?

Being a friend *does* come naturally to many people. However, skills such as active listening and offering respectful, nonjudgmental responses can benefit from training.

BeFriender Ministry training enhances gifts and qualities a person already has; and God always has more in store for us to learn!

Is there ongoing support for BeFrienders?

Yes. BeFrienders meet regularly in supervised small groups for reflection on their ministry and continuing education.

Does BeFriender Ministry provide opportunities for growth?

Yes. BeFrienders learn to appreciate both the commonality and individuality among people. Respect for others is deepened, as is awareness that we are called to be fully present to each other, not only in this ministry but in all parts of our lives. BeFrienders often gain a deeper understanding of unity in Christ by learning to more deeply value the experience and perspective of each person they encounter. Befriending demonstrates how Christ calls us to be together in our joy as well as our pain.

Quote from Mary (BeFriender)

"The BeFriender Ministry provides an opportunity to look for Christ in others, go outside of myself and focus on another's pain and suffering, receive more than I give."