Cognitive stimulation

Reminiscence and reflection

Social engagement
Contents
The Purpose and Benefits of Living Words ................................................................. 2
Guide to Creating a Living Words Workshop .............................................................. 4
   Workshop outline ........................................................................................................ 4
   Designing a new writing activity ................................................................................. 6
   On-site interest meeting ............................................................................................. 7
   Concerns and solutions ............................................................................................. 8
Living Words Writing Activities .................................................................................... 9
   Words of Wisdom ........................................................................................................ 10
   What did you do to stay cool before air conditioning? ............................................... 12
   Everyone’s an Expert on Something ........................................................................... 13
   Two People Seen From Afar ...................................................................................... 14
   Songwriting ................................................................................................................ 15
   Our Basket of Stuff .................................................................................................... 16
   Finding Your ‘Happy Place’ ....................................................................................... 17
   Teaching Others ......................................................................................................... 19
   A Child’s View of Adulthood .................................................................................... 20
   Rewriting the Past ...................................................................................................... 21
   An Important Meeting ............................................................................................... 22
   Choices ....................................................................................................................... 23
   A Memory of the Fourth of July ................................................................................ 24
   Growing Up ................................................................................................................ 25
   Switching Perspectives .............................................................................................. 26
   Comfort Rituals ......................................................................................................... 27
   Looking Back on Childhood ..................................................................................... 28
   Haiku ........................................................................................................................... 29
   Cannot Part .................................................................................................................. 30
   Faith ............................................................................................................................. 31
   Recipes ....................................................................................................................... 32
   The Philosophy of Life ............................................................................................... 33
   Easter ............................................................................................................................ 34
Extra Materials for Living Words .................................................................................. 36
   Mini Fliers ................................................................................................................... 36
   Survey forms .............................................................................................................. 37
The Purpose and Benefits of Living Words

Living Words offers a unique approach to creative writing. Originally, the program was created for individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia and caregivers. Currently, it has been adopted and developed for many other groups of people, especially normally aging older adults.

At the core of the Living Words program is an invitation for participants to experience creative writing in a unique way—in a group setting, often under the guidance of local writers, and with the intention of having fun.

Creative writing can be practical and enjoyable. It is also inexpensive, both monetarily and time-wise. Writing only requires something to write with, something to write on, and, of course, the willingness to write!

By engaging in creative writing in a workshop setting, participants are invited to explore unique ideas, emotions, insights, and memories, as well as to make beautiful things that did not exist before. The benefits of creative writing are straight-forward and invaluable at any age, and perhaps especially for older adults. Three of the most significant are:

1) Cognitive stimulation

2) Reminiscence and reflection on one’s life story

3) Social engagement

Cognition refers to any type of “thinking”, such as attention, memory, language, and problem solving. There is empirical support for the “use it or lose it” theory. It is necessary to work-out your brain, just as you work-out your body. Like physical exercise, you need to work different parts of your brain by thinking in different ways (e.g. verbal vs. visual), and the workout needs to be challenging. For the individual who completes a crossword puzzle every Sunday, they can increase the cognitive stimulation benefit by challenging themselves with new types of puzzles (e.g. change from words to picture games, such as Mahjong). Activities that are new and different are great forms of cognitive stimulation. The Living Words program has the attributes of a challenging and varied mental workout. In workshops we use of a variety of creative writing genres and approaches (such as poetry, fiction writing, personal narrative, non-fiction prose, etc.) that challenges the attendees to think in new ways. There is also a benefit of working to find words to match ones thoughts. We also believe the act of pen to paper is also a unique and an important component of the program.

Reflection and reminiscence are gained in the Living Words program during workshops that ask the attendees to remember a time in their past. The practice of remembering provides the opportunity to reflect upon stories that one may not have thought about for quite some time. At
any time in life, but especially as we grow older, time spent reflecting upon the past is necessary in order to give perspective and organize the themes of one’s life story. We all feel it is necessary to leave a legacy or a mark on the world. The Living Words program not only provides the opportunity for reflection, but also the opportunity to write down these stories so that they can be passed on to loved ones.

Unfortunately, stress, sadness and anxiety can accompany everyone’s life. Each person has their own reasons for stress, but the Living Words program may be helpful for anyone. There are benefits of socialization and having fun with others in the creative writing workshops. Time spent getting out of a stale routine at home, and instead, talking and writing with others can be fun, which can reduce negative emotional symptoms. At the end of each workshop, participants have the opportunity to share what they have written and most do. Listening to how others have responded to the prompt provides insight into that person. Sharing leads to a feeling of closeness and connection with the other members of the group. Writing about life events (especially stressful ones) has also been found to reduce depression and anxiety. The assertion that creative writing heals is not new; “writing therapy” has been found to be useful for many populations (from college students to individuals with different types of diseases). We are currently conducting research in order to gather empirical support for all of the above mentioned benefits of Living Words.

A person can write anywhere at any time, alone or in a group, with the intention of sharing what he/she has written or not. But, for many of us, writing is the sort of the thing that we don’t do every day. In fact, we may even dread writing. We may need some encouragement and the structure of an on-going program. We may also need someone to show us where and how to start. And, we may enjoy the company of others while exploring this activity.

Whether you are in a position to start a creative writing program with a group or participate in one, Living Words will help you take full advantage of the benefits of creative writing.
Guide to Creating a Living Words Workshop

- The general outline and process of a Living Words workshop
- Designing a new writing activity
- Concerns, obstacles and their solutions
- Finding participants: On-site interest meeting

Workshop Outline

The outline of a workshop should be adhered to when creating a new workshop to maintain consistency in the program. The basic format is as follows:

Introduction (2-5 minutes)

Have the workshop mediator introduce him or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning (10-15 minutes)

Provide background information on the topic. This may be a story to lead into the writing activity or may be used to teach how to write in a particular way. Sometimes it is appropriate to cite sources to develop an interesting introduction. The writing activity is then explained during this time. Time during this section can also be used for conversation to ignite ideas or memories to write for the activity. The leader can write down basic writing prompt on a board or paper so that participants with hearing loss or memory loss can see the writing activity instructions. This is especially useful if there are multiple parts to the activity.

Writing (15-20 minutes)

This is quiet time that each participant typically works independently on writing a response to the prompt. The workshop leader should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals if they are struggling. The leader can also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, it is fine if they engage by sharing stories with one another before the writing time is finished. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (15-20 minutes)

Mediator can offer to share what they wrote first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing and framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do. All feedback should be positive. The goal is not to become better writers (although that does occur!), the goal is to write in new styles in each workshop and learn from others.
Other information about the process of a workshop is provided below.

- Writing is usually completed in notebooks (composition notebook or other wide-lined notebook) that are provided by the workshop leader. The notebook becomes a collection of their writing. Participants are encouraged to title and date each writing entry.

- Notebooks are often kept by workshop leaders and brought to each week’s workshop. This takes away the requirement for participants to have to remember to bring their notebook each week. However, if participants would like to keep writing in their notebook in between workshops, they are welcomed to bring it home with them. The leader has to determine the best method for their group of participants.

- There should be flexibility in the actual writing process. Each writer will interpret the writing activity prompt differently, and can take a different path to address the topic. There is no right or wrong way to respond to a prompt. That is the beauty of the program.

- Items to bring to each workshop: notebooks & pens. Optional: flip chart and marker (to write down writing activity in large print for group). Optional: snacks (e.g. cookies) and drinks (e.g. coffee).

- Welcome participants individually to each workshop and say ‘goodbye’ to each one at the end. Try to have a short conversation with at least one participant at the start or end of each workshop.
Designing a New Writing Activity

There are many paths to take when creating and planning a Living Words workshop and all are correct. The most important thing to keep in mind when planning a workshop is the flexibility of the program. *There is no right or wrong way to conduct a workshop!*

When designing writing prompts it is important to make sure that your topic:

- is relevant to all participants
- is not gender specific
- is not intimidating with its difficulty or abstractness
- can be completed in the allotted time

*Topics* can be serious, fun, creative, somber or personal. It may be helpful to get an idea of what your participants are interested in writing about by getting to know them. Adjust and create new writing prompts based on what you learn from participants in each workshop. Perhaps they are interested in writing about topics of a certain theme, or maybe they would like to learn something new in each workshop.

Many prompts ask participants to think back to their past and recover *memories*. Requiring participants to recall specific details from past experiences can be good mental exercise and help individuals reflect upon life themes. However, the workshop leader should be sensitive to participants’ frustrations that can occur when recalling past, especially remote or distant, memories. Autobiographical writing may include re-telling specific event stories or describe feelings of the past. Prompts can be designed to be flexible so that the participant has the option of telling a past story or instead telling a fictional story that resembles a time in the past. This takes the pressure of remembering off the individual.

Living Words also strives to bring out creativity with more abstract topics and ones that require thinking “outside the box”. More creative topics may involve an interpretation of a painting, an impromptu writing on a randomly selected object or even science fiction writing. In creating a more abstract writing prompt, be mindful to not craft something that has the potential to intimidate participants. One way is to provide an easier alternative that is similar to the prompt, or provide step-by-step instructions to lead to that more difficult end product.

Sometimes certain writing prompts will lead to very similar responses. It is more beneficial to the group when a topic is crafted in such a way that leads to a variety of responses. When you introduce a topic, you should reword it in several ways or pose several different questions on the topic. In doing so, the participants are more likely to interpret the topic in diverse ways and thus take various paths in responding.

Sometimes it is important to stir-up *conversation* about the writing topic to get people thinking about the subject. A conversation among participants about the topic before writing begins can *spark ideas or memories*, and will help participants get an idea of what they are going to write about. If someone is stumped by the topic, casual conversation may ignite the thought process, if not the leader can work one-on-one with the individual.

After you have designed your own writing activity, please type it up using our format and submit it to our website (in survey section). The *Introduction, Writing* and *Sharing* sections are usually the same for each workshop.
Finding Participants: On-Site Interest Meeting

An on-site interest meeting is extremely important for drawing participants to the program. An informal information session is beneficial to all and sets the scene for the program as a relaxed and inviting environment to write and share together. If possible, a casual luncheon is a wonderful way to invite people to come learn more about Living Words.

Pamphlets and mini fliers (found at the end of the manual) can be distributed. This meeting should have the following sections:
- Offer a brief history of the program
- Explain the purpose and benefits
- Run through a general workshop outline
- Provide examples of past workshop topics
- Share samples of past participants’ writings

The meeting should be conversational. Make it known that questions are welcomed as they come up. Your enthusiasm for Living Words is contagious. The more excited you are about sharing our program, the more excited potential sites and participants will be to establish the program at their location.

Make clear your personal interest in the Living Words program and your desire to help spread the importance and beauty of written word. Share actual feedback from past participants to show that Living Words really makes an impact on participants.

“The Living Words group has been like a family… these classes give me such a good feeling.” – D.M.

“In the simple act of writing a poem or filling in the missing words of a song, I found myself… It has been a transformative and liberating, even healing, experience for me.” – S.W.

“Writing is definitely a useful activity! One of the benefits of the program is getting to know fellow writers better. Expression in the written word is very rewarding.” – R.W.

“Living Words allows me to recall memories and put them in writing for my descendants.” – W.D.

“Writing is a useful activity as it activates your brain cells, draws out forgotten memories, releases pent-up emotions and brings a sense of self to life” – N.B.

“Writing is as necessary as breathing and eating. It uses both sides of the brain, connects and grounds the airy aspects of the ruined into the more concrete aspects of reality. It gives us a channel of focus.” – E.W.

“My favorite [workshop] is the always the next one which will be a surprise and a new adventure.” – E.W.
Concerns, obstacles, and complaints: How to overcome them

Here is a list of issues that previous workshop leaders have dealt with in the past and the solutions used in each situation.

- One of the biggest challenges is to convince individuals to join the Living Words program. There is disinterest that it is going to be “like school”. There is fear associated with writing. There is no knowledge for why it could be a useful activity in their life. Try to find out the person’s reason for not wanting to attend, and attempt to undo that reasoning. Explain why it’s not “like school”, why they shouldn’t fear writing, and, especially, explain the benefits of the program.

- Some participants are concerned about attending every workshop. Each workshop is unrelated to the last, so participants should not feel pressure to attend every workshop. We don’t want participants shying away because of fear of commitment!

- Some participants will feel uneasy when asked to write “on-the-spot”. Many of us are used to thinking about a topic for a period of time before sitting down to write. During initial workshops you should reassure the participant that the task is possible and that you will help them through the process. After a couple of workshops that they have done this successfully the fear will ease.

- There can be concern about ability to participate due to physical or cognitive disabilities. In this case you should stress the flexibility of the program and how easily it can be tailored to fit participants’ needs. Workshops can be run with multiple helpers so that some one-on-one writing help is available if needed (e.g. a helper can write for a participant with arthritis or a tremor).
“Our lives are an accumulation of stories waiting to be told. *Telling* these stories can change us, heal us, and help us recognize emotions we have left unexamined. *Writing* these stories can help us shift our perspective on things or situations from the past.”

*Lauren Holland*  
Wofford College Student Representative  
2008-2010

The following section contains a collection of writing activities that can be used for Living Words workshops. They are not organized in any particular way (e.g. by genre). Choose them based on the interests and abilities of the participants in your group.

*After completing a workshop, please visit* [www.livingwordsprogram.com](http://www.livingwordsprogram.com)  
*and fill-out the “end-of-workshop” survey*  
*so that we can be updated regarding the use of the Living Words Program.*

*If you have any questions, please email us at: LivingWordsProgram@Wofford.edu*
Words of Wisdom

By Dr. Kara Bopp

Writing activity: “Words of Wisdom”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Everyone enjoys, yet also despises, giving and receiving advice from family and friends. We usually do so verbally, but today we will write down our words of wisdom. Each of you will choose a topic that you want to give advice about, such as friendship, marriage, parenting, etc.) and a particular person to whom you want to give that advice.

This writing exercise requires you to write sentences rather than extended prose. So, you will be working to find the correct words that you want to use in order to express your advice and to find ways to summarize your ideas.

Writing- Use the following order for the activity:

1. Choose a person for whom you want to give advice. Write down his or her name, a little bit of information about the person, and what type of advice you want to give. Try to be as specific as possible about what type of advice you want to give. For example: "I want to write advice to my niece who is getting married in four weeks. I want to give her advice about how to have a long, successful marriage." Take the time to write a list of people and types of advice then choose one. (5 minutes)

2. What three pieces of advice do you have for that individual? First, jot down as many ideas as possible, and then look at list to see what three themes arise. From these ideas, write your three pieces of advice. (5 minutes)

3. What are three things you do not advise them to do? Again, jot down your ideas, then look at list to find themes, and then work into three things you do not advise them to do. (5 minutes)

4. Re-read your previous responses (advice and what you don't advise). How do they fit together? Is there an overall theme that arises? If so, what is it? What are your words of wisdom? (5 minutes)

(Time permitting with #4 the following question can also be added.)

5. If you have a "motto" or "words to live by" what are they? Is it consistent with your advice? What are some of your favorite sayings?
Sharing (15-20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.

*You might find that not only will people share what they wrote, but that it will also spark other interests and questions that participants will share stories about. We found that allowing individuals the freedom to do this and not limiting conversation in any way worked very well.
What did you do to stay cool before air conditioning?

Writing Activity: “What did you do to stay cool before air conditioning?”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Introduce the writing activity by discussing how hot it is now-a-days, but say that perhaps the participants know better about being hot because they lived in a time without air conditioning. Ask participants how old they were when air conditioning became common in households. Ask if it’s strange now to imagine the times without air conditioning. Such discussion leads into the prompt, which is, “What did you do to stay cool before air conditioning?” Have the prompt displayed for participants to refer to throughout the writing process.

Writing (15 minutes)

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Writing should last about 15 minutes, giving enough time to write but ending before participants become idle.

Sharing (15-20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Everyone’s an Expert on Something

Writing Activity: “Everyone’s an Expert on Something”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Introduce the theme of the session by paraphrasing Will Rogers and saying, “We’re all ignorant but only on different subjects. On the same note, all of us are an expert in a bunch of things, so instead of discounting our knowledge, let’s think about something we’re good at.”

Maybe you’re great at Jeopardy, maybe you’re a good listener or just a good person in general! For this prompt, there is no right or wrong answer. Have the prompt displayed for participants to refer to throughout the writing process.

Writing: Part I - Writing a list of things he or she is good at (5 minutes)

Invite the participants to open their notebooks and write a list of things they are (or were at one time) good at. The directions are simple; just jot down a list of things to be expanded upon later.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing: Part I (5 minutes)

Participants should share some of the things they feel they are good at. Responses might range from being a good parent to being good wood refinisher.

Writing: Part II- Pick one response from the list and write a story about it (10 minutes)

For the second part of the writing exercise, invite participants to pick one of the things they included in their list and write a story about it. Tell the participants that “a story informs and entertains” to encourage participants to show how they are good at the chosen thing but also entertain the audience with a story.

Sharing: Part II (15 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Two People Seen From Afar
By: Jeff VanderMeer

Writing Activity: “Two People Seen From Afar”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Introduce the theme of the session by starting a conversation about body language. Speak about how oftentimes interactions between people are understood from far away, simply from interpreting body language. Interactive movements, gestures used in communicating and facial expressions between two people interacting can be observed from afar and interpreted by onlookers.

Have the prompt displayed for participants to refer to throughout the writing process.

Writing: Part I (10 minutes)

Two people are walking on the beach. You see them from afar. Have participants write down what the two people from afar are saying simply from their body language. In other words, don’t use any dialogue! Use your imagination.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Writing: Part II (10 minutes)

Have participants exchange the written scenes with a neighbor. Invite the participants to translate the described body language of their neighbor’s interpretation into dialogue.

Sharing Part II (15 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
**Songwriting**

**Writing Activity: “Songwriting”**

**Introduction:**

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

**Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:**

The following prompt should be displayed. Have the participants fill in the blanks in the lyrics and encourage sharing.

When we get to (fill in a place) this is what we’ll see:

We’ll see lots of (fill in thing 1) and (thing 2).

When we get to (same place as above) we’ll have lots of fun,

So won’t you come along with me?

The workshop mediator should tell the participants they will be writing a four line song. The songs can be happy, funny, sad, strange or make no sense at all. Tell participants to try to make the first and second lines rhyme as well as the third and fourth lines. Suggest that the participants look back through their notebooks to get ideas from previous writings.

**Writing (5-10 minutes)**

Writing should not take too long for this exercise, since it only consists of creating four lines. You may find that participants will continue writing after four lines. Some may write a second song.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

**Sharing (15 minutes)**

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Our Basket of Stuff

Writing Activity: “Our Basket of Stuff”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

The prompt for this workshop will be an object each participant selects from the basket(s) distributed around the room. Items might consist of trinkets such as a model car, paintbrush, candy, playing card, cow bell, small teddy bear, comic book or ribbon.

Memories are triggered in many ways. A song, a smell, a taste or a color can take us back to another place and time. Sift through the basket(s) and find an item that you can relate to, an item that reminds you of some instance in your life.

* It was important in running this workshop in the past to note that the stories did not have to be a memory or something that participants had to reminisce about. Participants were invited to make up their own story about the object.

Writing (15 minutes)

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (15 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Finding Your ‘Happy Place’

By Beth Brown

Writing Activity: “Finding Your ‘Happy Place’”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

The mediator should begin by talking briefly about how we all have stress, and one way to deal with that stress is to go to your ‘happy place’. Ask participants if they have ever heard the saying “I’m going to my happy place.” While it is usually said as a joke, it works! A ‘happy place’ is really a place in your mind that is stress free, calm and serene. It is a useful outlet when dealing with emotional or physical stress.

The goal of this workshop is to create or remember a safe, happy environment to use as an outlet when life gets stressful.

* It is important to not focus on the “stress” part of the exercise too much. While a ‘happy place’ is something to turn to in times of stress, the exercise itself is meant to be happy, peaceful, and uplifting.

Finding Your Happy Place: Focusing Exercise (10 minutes)

The mediator should lead participants through the following focusing exercise. Calming music can be played as well.

“We’re going to start in the quiet this morning. Everyone close your eyes. We are going to imagine the happiest place on earth – FOR YOU. This can be a real place or an imaginary one. I will walk you through it. First, imagine that you are in a blank place. There’s nothing there. It’s silent. Then you start to hear sounds that make you feel good. What are they? Birds chirping? Your friend calling? A cat’s meow? Listen to that. Then you see the things around you that make you feel the most comfortable. What do you see? A comfy chair? Books? A table spread with your favorite foods? A garden of flowers? Let yourself imagine all those wonderful things. Now breathe deeply. You smell something that calms you. Is it something baking? Fresh soil? The ocean? Wait. There’s someone coming. Who is that? It’s someone you love to be with. Is it your dog? A beautiful horse? Your child? A friend? They are with you now, enjoying this perfect place. This is your happy place: these sounds, sights, smells, and feelings. Look around one last time. Open your eyes.”
Ask participants to give that place a name and write down a few descriptors about the place. Tell participants to jot down their ideas to be expanded upon during the writing exercise.

*Writing (15 minutes)*

Write a story about your happy place. It can be a memory of something that happened at your happy place or something totally made up. It can be as fanciful as you would like.

Emphasize that the happy place may be completely made up. It does not have to be based in reality and should be whatever participants wish. Encourage participants to use as many descriptors as they can to make the best story.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

*This exercise is very representative of the creative writing nature of Living Words, because many of the participants will create a fictional place rather than writing down a memory.

*Sharing (10 minutes)*

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.

Thank the participants for their writing and willingness to open themselves to experience their ‘happy place’. Encourage the participants to reflect on their writing and think about their ‘happy place’ to become calmer and more relaxed when life gets stressful.
Teaching Others

Writing Activity: “Teaching Others”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Speak about the importance of learning new skills as well as teaching others new skills. Ask the participants about an important skill that someone taught them when they were young. This gives them the opportunity to talk about the person who taught them, how they used this skill, and perhaps obstacles and successes they encountered during the learning process.

Writing (15 minutes)

Ask the participants to write about a time they taught a skill to someone else, perhaps to a child, coworker, or colleague. They might discuss who they taught, when and under what circumstances, what the skill was, and how the person later used (or continues to use) that skill. They might also include advice or instructions about the skill.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
A Child’s View of Adulthood

Writing Activity: “A Child’s View of Childhood”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

The mediator may start with a funny anecdote about wanting to be a “grownup” as a child (perhaps dressing up in adult clothes, wanting to learn to drive, trying to apply makeup, wearing your mother’s jewelry etc.) The mediator can ask the participants if they had similar experiences, and what they looked forward to about growing up. Discussing these stories with others will help stir memories and give the participants ideas for the writing topic.

Writing (15 minutes)

Mediator should then ask the participants what they, as children, thought adulthood was like. They might write about hopes and fears they had about growing up, and how those feelings were resolved. Perhaps some things they looked forward to weren’t as exciting as they thought, or things they were afraid of weren’t nearly as stressful. Perhaps they discovered things about growing up that they had never imagined as a child.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
**Rewriting the Past**

*Writing Activity: “Rewriting the Past”*

**Introduction:**

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

*Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:*

A stack of old pictures from various eras should be placed on the table. The photos may come from the workshop facilitators, antique/thrift stores, or from the participants themselves, if possible. Each participant selects a photo from the stack. They can then discuss “clues” in the pictures, about the era in which it was taken, the people in it, and the occasion during which it might have been taken (they may judge by clothing, the paper on which it is printed, or appliances in the photo, etc.)

*As some participants may have impaired vision, it is helpful to have larger copies of the photos, or a way of projecting them onto a screen.

**Writing (15 minutes)**

Mediator should ask the participants to write a story about what is happening in the picture they selected. They should be as creative as possible, using clues from the photo. Participants should also speculate about what happened before and after the photo was taken.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

**Sharing (20 minutes)**

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
An Important Meeting

Writing Activity: “An Important Meeting”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Ask the participants to think of someone they’ve met who has had a big impact on their life (a spouse, mentor, employer, best friend, etc.) Encourage participants to talk about the qualities they admire in that person and how that person impacted them.

Writing (15 minutes)

Introduce the writing topic by asking the participants to remember and describe the moment they met that important person. The writer should ask the participants to consider the circumstances under which they met, what they thought of the person initially and if that first impression changed. Ask participants to write about how they felt upon meeting the person, for instance, were they nervous, scared, put-out?

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Choices

Writing Activity: “Choices”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Encourage the participants to discuss important decisions they’ve had to make in their lives, and how they felt about making them. They might talk about the impact of these decisions, and how they feel about them in retrospect.

Writing (15 minutes)

Introduce the writing topic by asking the participants to choose one good decision they have made and one impactful mistake they have made. Participants can write about one or both of these topics. They should describe the circumstances of the decision or mistake, the impact resulting from it and perhaps what they learned or reaped from it.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
A Memory of the Fourth of July

Writing Activity: “A Memory of the Fourth of July”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Ask the participants about things they associate with the 4th of July (fireworks, ice cream, independence, flags, etc.) Perhaps also ask the sentiments evoked by such elements.

Mediator should speak about how he or she has celebrated the 4th of July in the past (maybe a story about being afraid of fireworks as a child, celebrating with family and friends, etc.)

Writing (10 minutes)

The mediator should then introduce the writing topic, a memory of the fourth of July. Encourage participants to use lots of sensory details in their writing.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Growing Up
By Martha Anne DeBerry

Writing Activity: “Growing Up”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Mediator should begin by talking about some of the responsibilities he or she has had to take on as an adult, for instance cooking meals, paying bills, etc. Invite participants to name some of the responsibilities they have now that they did not have when they were children. They may discuss how they felt about taking on those responsibilities, and perhaps times they’ve wished they didn’t have such responsibilities.

Writing (15 minutes)

Introduce the writing topic by asking the participants to think of a time when they first felt that they were “grown up.” This would be a time when they felt they no longer fit in the “child” role in their family, or first felt independent from their parents. They should write not only about the circumstances, but about their feelings associated with this time. They may reflect on whether or not they were truly “grown up” at that time.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Switching Perspectives

Writing Activity: “Switching Perspectives”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Mediator should begin by giving a funny example of a mild conflict he or she has had with a friend. Explain how the conflict was resolved. Mediator should then ask the participants how they deal with frustration with others. Do they walk away from it, or talk it out? Do they look for a compromise, or try to win over the other person?

Writing (15 minutes)

The guest writer should then introduce the writing topic by asking the participants to think of a person with whom they’ve been frustrated in the past. The person could be a friend, sibling, parent, or coworker. They should write about what they admire about the person as well as that person’s frustrating qualities. Then participants should write a description of themselves from the perspective of the other person.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Comfort Rituals

Writing Activity: “Comfort Rituals”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Life is oftentimes not a piece of cake. Often we are faced with troubling news, upsetting realities and frustrating situations. Ask the participants to remember times that they have felt frustrated, overwhelmed or upset. What made them feel this way? Do they feel this way often?

Writing (15 minutes)

Introduce the writing prompt by asking the participants to think about what they do when they feel this way. What ‘comfort rituals’ do they turn to during such times? Do they busy themselves with a favorite activity, talk to a friend or do they have another comfort ritual?

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Looking Back on Childhood

Writing Activity: “Looking Back on Childhood”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

It is always a treat to reminisce on fond childhood memories. For some people childhood was a carefree time with no responsibilities. Perhaps your only responsibility was to remember to share with others and not to whine. Or perhaps your childhood was characterized by the responsibility of helping your mother around the house, helping your father in the yard or helping raise your younger siblings. Ask participants about the nature of their childhood. Do they wish they could go back to being a child again?

Writing (15 minutes)

Mediator should instruct participants to write a story that comes to mind when they think about their childhood. The story could be about things they did for fun as children. They may write about a particular incidence they remember vividly or a day they shared with a good childhood friend.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Haiku

Writing Activity: “Haiku”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry and is the smallest literary form. A haiku contains three lines. The first and last lines each have five syllables while the middle line has seven syllables. Share with the participants the following examples of haikus.

So I will leave it
At bay; and hope for the best
This bitter new day

Falling to the ground,
I watch a leaf settle down
In a bed of brown

Haikus can describe almost anything but usually are centered on themes that are not too complicated given the length limit of just three lines. This type of poetry does not necessarily have to rhyme.

Writing (10 minutes)

Mediator should instruct participants to create a haiku of their own. It may be that they write more than one.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Cannot Part
By Martha Anne DeBerry
Inspired by Will Malambri

Writing activity: “Cannot Part”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Everyone has that one special item that perhaps elicits feelings from the past that they cannot part with. Such an item is treasured and could never be thrown away. Maybe the item you cannot part with is a gift from a special friend, a touching letter re-read a thousand times, a favorite book from which you draw inspiration, or perhaps a family heirloom. What is it about this item that is so special to you? What memories does it bring back? Why is that you could never bring yourself to throw it away?

Writing (15 minutes)

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Writing should last about 15 minutes, giving enough time to write but ending before participants become idle.

Sharing (15-20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.
Faith
By Martha Anne DeBerry

Writing Activity: “Faith”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Faith is an important thing to have while journeying through life. One can have religious faith in a higher power, faith in others as well as faith in oneself. Having faith that a higher power will provide a life after death gives people reassurance. Having faith in friends to be there for you is relieving and comforting. Having faith in yourself is important for success and confidence as you journey through life. Oftentimes incidences in life lead us to question our faith, trials come about that rock our faith.

Ask the participants to ponder how important faith has been to them over the years, whether it be a religious faith, faith in a friend or spouse or perhaps faith in themselves. (Do not yet ask participants to share thoughts as past participants were not keen on sharing such personal ideas right away. Instead, encourage them to ponder the idea.)

* Note that it is important to stress that this workshop is not only about religious faith, but also about faith in relationships, faith in yourself, faith in others.

Writing (10 minutes)

Give the following prompts for participants to use during the writing portion of the workshop.

1. What does faith mean to you?
2. How important is faith to you?
3. How have you demonstrated your faith in your life?

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcoming thing to do.
Recipes
By Martha Anne DeBerry

Writing Activity: “Recipes”

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

Everyone loves a good meal! Meal time gives people the opportunity to gather together for good food and the company of others. Dinner time is an opportunity for families to spend quality time together at the end of the day.

When children grow up and leave home, the thing they usually miss the most is their mother’s home-cooked meals. Ask participants to speak about their favorite meals they enjoyed as children or perhaps the meals they prepared that their own children enjoyed most.

Writing (15 minutes)

Instruct participants to write detailed instructions on how to prepare a favorite meal. Encourage them to write about the people who they shared this meal with and perhaps even conversational dinner topics that commonly arose.

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

Sharing (20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcoming thing to do.
The Philosophy of Life
By Martha Anne DeBerry

Writing Activity: “The Philosophy of Life”
Introduction:
Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.
Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:
Philosophical questions about life arise now and then. What is the meaning of life? Why do we exist? What purpose are we here to serve? What is it that actually makes life meaningful? Various theories proposed by philosophers aim to answer these questions. Supernaturalism is the philosophical view that the meaning of life is constituted by an individual’s relationship with a higher being, a heavenly power. The meaning of life is achieved and understood when one has fulfilled, to the best of their ability, the will of God. Another view is that of the subjectivists, who believe that the meaning of life is not consistent among individuals. But rather, what is a meaningful life to one person is meaningful because they believe it is. However another person may have a different idea of what a meaningful life is, and they too are correct because it is what they believe.
Today I pose the question to you, what is your personal philosophy of life? There is no wrong answer.

Writing (15 minutes)

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Writing should last about 15 minutes, giving enough time to write but ending before participants become idle.

Sharing (15-20 minutes)

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcomed thing to do.

http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/life-meaning/
Easter
By Suiter Coxe

Writing Activity: Using the 5 senses to describe Easter

Introduction:

Have the workshop mediator introduce him- or herself and give basic information about the Living Words workshop for new participants. Also encourage participants to meet each other if they have not yet already.

Give the following information about writing activity before beginning:

As you all know Easter is coming up this weekend. What are some words that pop into your mind when you think of Easter?

- Maybe you think about the whole Lent season: about giving up some bad habit or taking on a healthy activity
- Maybe you think of springtime: bunnies, flowers, eggs, and green grass…
- Maybe you picture the Easter bunny and baskets filled with candy
- Maybe you think about the Resurrection
- Maybe Easter reminds you of baptism, and the opportunity to be reborn or renewed
- Maybe you have a favorite Easter tradition, a favorite Sunday lunch, or a special family gathering.

Easter is a special and joyous occasion in many different ways. It is always interesting to learn how others celebrate holidays. When you think of Easter, what pops in your mind? Do bright pastel colors illuminate a picture in your mind? Does the smell of fresh flowers: tulips and daffodils create a beautiful memory? No matter how you choose to describe Easter, let the colors, smells, images, and memories tell the story. Let your senses be the guide....

Everyone has senses they utilize in everyday life. Describing something by using your senses can help an old memory or story come alive.

- **Sight:** Provides the most detail. Words become our reader’s eyes, giving us a blank canvas to paint a picture to tell our story.
- **Sound:** Without ones sight, sounds becomes more acute. It helps you narrow in on the questions: “Where am I?” or “What was that?”
- **Touch:** Provides us with the opportunity to use many creative adjectives to describe a story, setting, or object. By describing the way something feels-we often form a reaction to our touch. These reactions add to a readers imagination, while adding to the picture your words are painting.
- **Smell:** Smells help bring back a familiar taste. Smells might refer to hand-baked cookies or apple pie. Smells can also help identify a location and establish a setting. For instance, some people or even homes as a whole have a distinct smell. You can recognize it from a mile away.
- **Taste:** Taste and smell are often linked together. Tasting some specific food may induce particular feelings or thoughts—maybe it’s a taste you love—or maybe a taste you hate.

**Writing (15 minutes)**

Mediator should mingle with participants as they write and help individuals write if they are not able to. Mediator should also feel free to participate in the writing activity. As participants write, expect them to share stories with one another. Participants should be given enough time to write but not so much that they become idle.

**Sharing (20 minutes)**

Mediator should offer to share first if he or she has participated. If not, prompt sharing by saying, “Who has something they would like to share?” Compliment people as they share to encourage individuals to share their writing by framing it as a comfortable and welcoming thing to do.
Extra materials for Living Words
- Advertising program: Mini Fliers
- Feedback survey after each workshop
- New writing activity survey
- End of program evaluation form

Mini Fliers

Join the Living Words Writing Program!
Our mission is to improve the lives of older adults through the process of creative writing.

Attend one workshop, or all workshops!
We look forward to meeting you!

Date: X, X, X
Location: X

“In the simple act of writing a poem or filling in the missing words of a song, I found myself… It has been a transformative and liberating, even healing, experience for me.” – S.W.
Feedback survey

Please fill-out the following survey on our website (www.livingwordsprogram.com) after each workshop. It is provided here so that you can prepare your responses.

1) What is the name of your location or group?
   ____________________________________________

2) On what date was your workshop completed?
   ____________________________________________

3) How many people attended the workshop?
   ____________________________________________

4) Please list the names of everyone who attended the workshop (optional).
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

5) Please provide any additional information about the participants (e.g. were there any new participants?)
   ____________________________________________________________________________

6) What was the topic? (Please indicate both the writing activity you used.)
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

7) Who was the writing activity leader? If there was a guest writer, please indicate his or her title (Example: Wilson Casey, a nationally syndicated trivia columnist).
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

8) On a scale from 1 to 10, overall, what was the level of enjoyment by all of the participants for your workshop, where a 1 is did not enjoy at all and a 10 is very much enjoyed the workshop?
   If you selected other, please specify
   ____________________________________________________________________________

9) Do you have any comments or notes about the workshop? (ex: how successful you thought the writing prompt was, how well the writer interacted with the group)
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

10) Is there a writing sample (or more) you would like to share with us? (If so, please provide any information about the participant, such as their age. You can provide name of individual or initials if they so wish.)
    ____________________________________________________________________________
New writing activity survey

Please fill-out the following survey on our website (www.livingwordsprogram.com) when you have created and used a new writing activity. It is provided here so that you can prepare your responses.

1) Please provide a name for your writing activity.
   ______________________________________________________________

2) What information should be given before beginning the writing activity? What is the introduction to your activity?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

3) Approximately, how many minutes should be allowed for the introduction?
   ______________________________________________________________

4) Describe the writing activity. Provide steps or parts if necessary.
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

5) Approximately, how many minutes should be allowed to describe the writing activity?
   ______________________________________________________________

6) Is there any other information you would like to share about this writing activity? Are there any obstacles? If so, what are the steps that can be taken as a solution to that issue?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
End of Program Evaluation Form

You can use the following evaluation form at the end of a series of workshops (e.g. after a series of 12 workshops). Please type-up your own version with additional questions specific to your Living Words program (e.g. “How many workshops out of the 12 did you attend?”).

We are constantly trying to better the Living Words program and greatly value your feedback. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

Do you think writing is a useful activity? What are the benefits of writing?

What was your favorite Living Words workshop? Why?

Was there a workshop you did not enjoy? If so, why?

Do you have suggestions for future workshops?

What changes would you make to improve the Living Words program?