

Spiritual Direction

Are you searching for a deeper connection to the Sacred or faith in your daily life? Have you been seeking a way to enhance your spiritual life or prayer, or draw closer to God? Perhaps you sense a desire to pay more attention to your inner life or grow spiritually? Do you want to discern a decision with the guidance of the Spirit? Or to talk with a trained minister, lay or ordained?

Spiritual Direction may be for you!

Spiritual Direction is an ancient tradition with foundational roots in the life of St. Ignatius Loyola. It is a ministry in which, along with the accompaniment and guidance of a trained spiritual director, one is able to explore a deeper relationship with God in everyday life. For many centuries, persons from a variety of religious and spiritual backgrounds have sought and found a deeper life of prayer, reflection, and intention through the practice of spiritual direction. By offering Spiritual Direction to our students, staff, and faculty, we hope to connect members of our community with a director who is able to reflect with you on your life and faith, and walk with you on your spiritual journey in a comfortable and inviting setting.

Spiritual Direction does not prescribe the “right way” to pray or live one’s faith. Instead, spiritual directors are trained and experienced in sacred conversation. Through attentive listening, storytelling, reflection, conversation, prayer, or silence, a spiritual director helps a directee come to better understand God’s movements, presence, and callings in one’s own life.

How do I begin Spiritual Direction or find a spiritual director?

- It is helpful to begin your search by considering what you might look for in a spiritual director. Would you prefer someone who is female or male, a lay or religious person, someone of a particular age, religious background, training, or experience?
- Review the biographical sketches provided in HSC Ministry to learn about who, on our campus, is trained and willing to offer Spiritual Direction. You can also talk with Ministry staff about other organizations or individuals in the area who offer spiritual direction.
- We suggest reaching out to two or three different spiritual directors – to share more about your expectations and what you are seeking through Spiritual Direction, and to ask any questions related to the director’s understanding and practice of Spiritual Direction. It is recommended that this conversation occur in person. In addition to sharing about your own spiritual journey, background, and desires for spiritual direction, you may wish to ask questions such as:
 - What is your experience as a spiritual director? How do you understand this ministry?
 - What is your personal experience tending your own life of prayer and reflection?
 - What spiritual formation and/or theological education have you received?
 - What are your practices of professional development?
 - What ethical guidelines do you follow?
 - How often are you available to meet with directees? What type of covenant or commitment makes sense for both director and directee?
- Pray over your options, noting whether one spiritual director resonates with you more than the other(s).
- After choosing a spiritual director, schedule your first session at a mutually convenient time.

What can I reasonably expect as I begin Spiritual Direction?

- Spiritual direction sessions last approximately 45-60 minutes.
- Sessions are usually scheduled at intervals of 3 to 6 weeks, depending on the needs of the directee and the availability of director and directee.
- The sessions may begin or end with a prayer, silence, or other ritual – depending upon the preferences of the spiritual directee.
- Each session is an opportunity for the directee to reflect on her or his experience of God in the ordinary moments of life.
- After about the third session, it is wise to discuss with your spiritual director what the experience has been like for you.
- Both spiritual directee and spiritual director must agree to continue the covenantal relationship.

For additional reading and resources:

- **IgnatianSpirituality.com** has a variety of great resources on prayer, Ignatian spirituality, decision making, and spiritual direction:
 - <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/>
 - <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/making-good-decisions/spiritual-direction/>
- **Spiritual Directors International (SDI)** has a host of information on Spiritual Direction, including blog posts and resources for finding a Spiritual Director:
 - <http://www.sdiworld.org/>
 - <http://www.sdiworld.org/find-a-spiritual-director/what-is-spiritual-direction>
- **HSC Ministry webpage** lists HSC Spiritual Directors, as well as other ways to access spiritual support, resources, and opportunities for connection:
 - <https://hsd.luc.edu/ministry/faithandspirituality/prayeropportunitiesspiritualsupport/>
 - "Anatomy of the Spiritual Direction Session" intro video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1hm9i-zot4>