

INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL DIREC- TION

Individual Spiritual Direction is available for seminary students and spouses on and off campus. Monthly, one-hour sessions often include conversation, silent reflection, prayer, and images from scripture. Participants may share “glimpses of God” from chapel worship, field education or class experiences, personal devotions, Sabbath practices, nature, interactions with others etc. Issues may surface such as forgiveness or grace, distance from God, the impact of changes in one’s theology, and discernment of call. Directors are trained in Christian faith formation and are valuable companions in the holy listening that nurtures staying centered and attending to God’s movement.

Articles about Spiritual Direction and the list of trained, local directors are available in the offices of the chapel, student counseling, field education, student relations, and multicultural relations. Participants in the Student Health Benefit Plan pay \$10-\$15/session and need a referral. Those not enrolled work out the fee with the director. Direction is beneficial by itself or as an adjunct to counseling. Many pastors find direction indispensable for thriving in ministry. It helps seminarians stay connected to the God who brought them to seminary as

they “navigate the currents” of theological study and formation for ministry.

You belong to God, and it is as a child of God that you are sent into the world.

You need spiritual guidance; you need people who can keep you anchored in your true identity.

The temptation to disconnect from that deep place in you where God dwells and to let yourself be drowned in the praise or blame of the world always remains. . .

*The more you come to know yourself—
—spirit, mind, and body—
as truly loved, the freer you will be to
proclaim the good news.*

*That is the freedom of the children
of God.*

-- Henri Nouwen, The Inner Voice of Love



DIRECTION GROUPS for Spiritual Compan- ionship and The Art of Discernment

Students, spouses, and couples are invited to participate in Direction groups facilitated by a trained Spiritual Director. Participants increase their capacity to notice, name and give thanks for God’s presence in the whole of life. They support each other’s faith journey without challenging or defending theological differences and hold as sacred and confidential all that is shared.

Groups of five individuals or three couples typically meet on campus every other week for six sessions of ninety minutes. Participants often decide to continue beyond one semester as their trust and joy deepen.

A copayment of \$10 per meeting is billed to each student’s accounts when the group starts. You may join an existing group or form your group and request a director. Financial aid is available.

Art of Discernment Groups have a special focus on practices for faithful decision-making and vocational clarity. Several will be offered this year. Please inquire.

To register for a group, contact the Office of Student Counseling in Scheide Hall.
609.497.7890

Comments about Individual Direction

Spiritual direction was a great blessing. My director sat with me in silence and guided me through questions which helped me to be more aware of God's presence and to get more clarity in spite of the hectic and demanding daily schedule at the seminary. My time with spiritual direction enhanced my self-understanding, self-care, stress-management, and vocational discernment. I would definitely recommend direction to anyone.

(An Alum)



Through direction I have learned about gifts of discernment and peace within myself that I did not even realize I had. Spiritual direction has been a healing journey back to what I was created to be, using materials from my everyday, normal life. I found that even when traditional methods of connecting with God did not seem to make sense, I was able to find a joyful center and be reminded about how deeply I am loved by God, all methods aside.

(An Alum)

Comments about Group Direction

Group Spiritual Direction is a lifeline for me at seminary. It is key to my formation helping me to integrate classroom learning, prayer life and fellowship.

(Current MDiv. Student)

My spiritual direction group provided a safe place for me to go to talk about doubts, fears, affirmations and joys regarding how God was working in my life with people who understood what it is like to struggle with a call. I had underestimated the sort of support others of like mind can give... In the context of spiritual direction, their viewpoints on any number of "issues" became less important than the beauty and pain tied up in their very human struggle to serve God the best way they knew how... The group was wonderful training in how to find and make use of support from colleagues.

(An Alum)

*The purest faith has to be tested by silence
in which we listen for the
unexpected,
in which we are open
to what we do not yet know,
and in which we slowly and gradually
prepare for the day
when we will reach out to a new level
of being with God.*

-- Thomas Merton

Spiritual Direction and Companionship

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