

THE LICHFIELD SPIRITUALITY AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION COURSES

Course in Spiritual Listening and the art of Spiritual Direction

Aims

- ❖ To develop participants' ability to notice the movements of the Spirit in their own lives, using the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola as our guide;
- ❖ To give participants experience of being heard, and insight into the history and practice of Spiritual Direction, including contemporary developments;
- ❖ To develop an already-recognised gift of enabling a person to attend to God's communication with them;
- ❖ To become a learning, praying community which supports participants in their growing awareness of self, others and God.

Approach

Praying community

Participants are asked to set aside regular time for prayer and reflection and to come with the intention of attending all sessions, with a willingness to share something of their experience with others.

Practice

This is a practical course, with significant time given to guided prayer, group work and supervised practice. Participants often report that this is where most learning occurs.

Reflection and evaluation

Learning also occurs through the process of reflection including the use of written or oral journals and other assignments given at the end of each session. Some of this is shared with peers and tutors and builds up a record of progress through the course.

Content

Each session will include some teaching on listening, discernment and spiritual direction, drawing on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises as well as other sources – see topic list below. Some reading on these subjects will also form part of the course and an indicative reading list is provided below.

Contact hours

60 hours

Assessment

Tutors will provide feedback on journals and assignments during the course to help participants' self-awareness. These records are compiled into a portfolio which is reviewed with a tutor during the course.

A written reference will be made available if required.

(Note: the process for joining the Diocesan list of Spiritual Companions is separate from this course).

Entry requirements

Participants need to have completed the Spirituality course ('Soul Food') as well as experience/training in Christian listening (e.g. 'Spiritual Listening' course) or have a similar awareness and are also expected to be in ongoing regular spiritual direction. Participants are also expected to be offering regular listening to at least one person.

Suitability is determined by an interview and a reference.

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Indicative topic list

Faith journeys
Images of God and how they affect spiritual health
Introduction to the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises
The idea of spiritual freedom and relation to 'persona' and true self
Growing awareness of the function and practice of reflection
Accurate recognition of feelings; their place in discerning the moves of the Spirit
Personality and prayer – recognising our own and others' preferences
The focus of listening in Spiritual Direction
Holding poise – 'allowing the Creator to deal with the creature'
Placing Spiritual Direction in the spectrum of prayer, counselling and therapy
Models of Spiritual Direction
Practicalities of Spiritual Direction
Psychological issues – transference/ counter transference, balance of power, resistance
Dealing with difference
The experiences of wilderness, mourning, loss, darkness
Spiritual discernment, call and decision
What will help now? Uses of scripture, art, poetry, prayer styles in Spiritual Direction
Ethics and boundaries
Supervision and care of self

Indicative reading list

Barry, W A and Connolly W J *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* revised ed (New York: HarperOne, 2009)
Fleming, D (trans) *Draw me into your friendship* (translation of the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola) (St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996)
Guenther, M *Holy Listening* (London: DLT, 1992)
Long, A *Approaches to Spiritual Direction* 4th ed (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2005)
Long, A *Reflective Practice for Spiritual Directors* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2006)
Pickering, S *Spiritual Direction* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008)
Ruffing, J K *Spiritual Direction – beyond the beginnings* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000)
Veltri, J *Orientations Vol 1 – A collection of helps for prayer* revised ed (Guelph: Loyola House, 1996)
Veltri, J *Orientations Vol 2 – For those who accompany others on the inward journey* revised ed (Guelph: Loyola House, 1998)