
SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island

Preamble:

- The practice of spiritual direction recognizes that the Holy Spirit is the true director.
- The practice of spiritual direction recognizes that those engaged in this practice do so from varied backgrounds, personalities, types of formation and experience.
- The practice of spiritual direction recognizes that this is a sacred and serious ministry.

This document is offered as a reasonable standard to ensure quality of service to those seeking a "closer walk with God."

Principles

1. The Holy Spirit is the true spiritual director.
2. A "call" to exercise a ministry of spiritual direction is always at the invitation of the person seeking spiritual direction.
3. The potential for abuse of power which is inherent in the spiritual direction relationship must be avoided.
4. Confidentiality must be maintained.
5. A fee for service is not appropriate. If remuneration is offered, the director should suggest a mutually agreeable charitable organization.

The Director

It is essential that:

1. The director be a person of prayer
2. The director be under spiritual direction
3. The director be in a supervision relationship (individual and/or peer) for support and accountability.
4. The director be open to learning and growth in the area of spiritual direction.
5. The director have a reasonable grasp of the teachings of his/her own faith tradition and of Scripture.
6. The director honor the principles of spiritual direction.

7. The Director be prepared to recognize his/her own limitations in dealing with physical, emotional and psychological issues, and be prepared to refer the directee to the appropriate professional discipline. It is important for the director to "build bridges" to other helping professions.
8. The director recognize and maintain the appropriate boundaries: physical, emotional, touch, time, psychological, sexual, spatial, spiritual.

The Spiritual Direction Relationship

1. The focus of the spiritual direction relationship is on the directee and on the working of the Holy Spirit in the directee and in the direction relationship.
2. It is important that:
 - the director provide information about the process of spiritual direction in response to the directee's questions, and provide information about the director's experience and training.
 - The director discuss the place of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in spiritual direction, and provide information about, and opportunity for, the celebration of that sacrament.
 - The director respect the directee's traditions, experience and spiritual journey, while also offering challenges for the directee to explore and articulate possibilities for growth and deeper relationship with God.
 - The director be open with the directee about concerns or problems arising in the spiritual direction relationship.
 - The director maintain a supportive relationship with the directee. In instances where the directee has been referred to therapy or other professional care, a continuation of the spiritual direction relationship may be appropriate as well.
 - The director and the directee agree to honour scheduled appointments and to give reasonable notice if change is necessary.
3. The director and the directee agree to support each other in prayer.
4. The director or the directee may terminate the spiritual direction relationship, preferably after discussion, prayer and reasonable notice.
5. A covenant, signed by the director and the directee near the beginning of the spiritual direction relationship, is recommended.

The Covenant

This covenant should provide for periodic evaluation and may be modified from time to time by mutual agreement.

1. The covenant shall affirm a requirement for confidentiality on the part of both director and directee. If a situation arises where the director sees a need to consult another professional, pre-permission of the directee will always be sought. If the directee needs to consult another professional, it would be a courtesy, and in the best interest of the directee, to notify the director.
2. The covenant should set out the duration and the frequency of spiritual direction sessions, agreement to honor appointments and a provision for termination.
3. The covenant should include (if necessary) the nature and frequency of contact outside scheduled sessions (the spiritual direction relationship).