

North Park Theological Seminary--Center for Spiritual Direction
 Certificate in Spiritual Direction Program
 Year Two—Practicum 2—3 credits
 SPFM 7504-11 “Spiritual Directing: Listening to the Movement of God with Another”
 August 24, 2011-May 14, 2012
 Instructor: Helen Cepero hcepero@northpark.edu 907-602-5915

I. Course Description

Practicum 2 is designed to develop experience and wisdom in spiritual directing through receiving spiritual direction, giving spiritual direction to others, receiving supervision for spiritual directing, reading and dialoging with supportive literature and studying specific relevant issues in spiritual direction.

II. Course Objectives—the student will

- Grow in your sensitivity to the movement of God in your own life
- Learn to guide others in their spiritual discernment and growth through the practice of spiritual directing
- Understand the elements and dynamics of spiritual direction and explore this in a particular area that is relevant to the student’s own life and practice.

III. Course Requirements

Receiving spiritual direction: You are required to attend a minimum of nine sessions during the year. Finding a spiritual director and the cost of spiritual direction (if any) is your responsibility.

Giving spiritual direction: You are required to see two people for in-person spiritual direction in a one-on-one format for eight hour long sessions. Sessions with the first person should begin by October and by November it is expected that each student will be seeing two people for spiritual direction. Notes will be taken after each session. You are responsible for ‘finding’ the persons who will receive direction from you. Since this is an internship in spiritual direction directees need to be informed that you are in a training program and will be using anonymous material from sessions. (See form below) Ordinarily, student directors will *not* ask directees for payment.

Welcoming supervision: Four individual sessions with a supervisor with a verbatim and at least three peer supervision group sessions with at least one verbatim. You are responsible for finding and making arrangements with a spiritual direction supervisor and peer supervision group. Any payment or honorarium is paid by you. But you can be reimbursed at the end of the course for up to \$50/session for individual supervision and up \$20 for each peer group session facilitated by a supervisor by the Center for Spiritual Direction. Supervision may be more than this amount and the student will need to pay any additional amount. Some proof of payment may be required.

Reflecting on experience

1. **Monthly telephone or on-line reflection group** Each student will be assigned to a small group with two other students. The three students will decide on a time when they can all meet together on-line for a small group process. (see below for on-line format.) Groups will meet monthly from September-April. These groups will be facilitated by the students. The instructor will only check to see that the groups are meeting as planned. Groups can meet by telephone or in an on-line group by downloading the Pronto program on Blackboard.

2. **Reporting on your progress: Due November 18, 2011** Please make a Skype appointment with Helen Cepero: Skype account: hhcepero@gmail.com; name helen.h.cepero. Together we will discuss your plan to: hcepero@northpark.edu a statement that includes the following:
 - Spiritual direction to two directees—number of sessions
 - A. Offer spiritual direction to two directees
 - B. Receive supervision—individual and peer supervision
 - C. Receive spiritual direction yourself
 - D. Outline a topic for personal study

3. **Essay (4-6 pages double-spaced) Due March 30, 2012** Research and reflection in a topic that is relevant to spiritual direction and your own area of practicing spiritual direction. Please speak in a personal autobiographical and/or vocational voice in this essay—showing how this topic affects you personally and/or how it might be incorporated within your own ministry context. Topics could include aspects of male/female spirituality, spirituality in the second half of life, inner healing and spiritual direction, uses of scripture in spiritual direction, dreams, spiritual direction and family, imaging God, spiritual direction across gender or race or culture differences, understanding spiritual direction for a particular sub-group, i.e. recovery sponsors, homeless individuals, church dropouts, the dying, young adults, a racial/cultural group, or the use of spiritual direction within a congregational setting. (You are not limited to these ideas.) This essay will be posted by **March 30** so that the rest of the class can read them and offer comments, reactions, etc.

4. **Final reflection paper (4-6 pages double spaced) reflecting on my own experience as a spiritual director**
Due May 11 posted on-line in a confidential Assignment folder
 - What are my strengths as a spiritual director?
 - What are my growing areas?
 - In what areas do I see personal growth over the past months?
 - What are remaining frustrations for me regarding myself and spiritual direction?
 - Where do I see fruits in my own life that have come out of my spiritual direction practice?

What have you learned about God, and the people you have been with in direction? (3-5pp)

Outline the spiritual journey of one of the people that you met with—has the person moved toward or away from God? What was that process and how was the spiritual direction relationship part of that process? (1p)

5. **On-line Class Discussion Group:** There will be a moodle site to talk with other classmates about questions that come up or to make prayer requests. This will be on-going throughout the year and students can use this as needed. The instructor will be available to answer questions for the entire class, again, as needed and requested.

Required Readings:

Hart, Thomas, N. *The Art of Christian Listening* New York: Paulist Press, 1980

Phillips, Susan. *Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Harrisburg/NY: Morehouse Publishing, 2008 (to be read before the first spiritual direction session, if possible)

Silver, Anne Winchell, *Trustworthy Connections: Interpersonal Issues in Spiritual Direction*. Cowley Publications, 2003

Recommended Reading:

Buckley, Suzanne M., ed., *Sacred is the Call: Formation and Transformation in Spiritual Direction Programs*. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2005

Edwards, Tilden, Spiritual Director, *Spiritual Companion: Guide to Tending the Soul*, New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2001.

Additional materials—

1. Format for monthly on-line group
2. Supervision and writing a verbatim
3. Format for peer supervision
4. Permission to use information from the directee in the supervision
5. Reimbursement Form

Please note that all student communication will be on your Viking student email account

1. On line monthly group-beginning in September and ending in April

Format for monthly on-line group meeting

Meet at the agreed upon time (allowing for varied time zones) with one person agreeing ahead of time to be the presenter, another to be a timekeeper, this responsibility will rotate each month.

Greet one another

Mutual Prayer—each person reads aloud Psalm 131 as they come to the group

Silence for two minutes

Personal check-in—each group member answers

For what am I most grateful today?

For what am I least grateful today?

Keep the check-in limited to two or three sentences for each question—6-8 minutes

Telling the story (*ten minutes*) one person will tell a longer story about how it is with him or her. This might be from any part of their lives, an area of struggle or growth, joy or sadness, unknowing or anger. But it is always a personal experience and not only a ministry issue.

Silence for two minutes

Response to the story (*ten minutes*) the other two listeners may respond by reflecting back something they heard, an image that came up for them as they listened or a simple acknowledgement that they are with the person, i.e. “that sounds really difficult for you) A good, honest question can be asked. No advice is given; there is no fixing of someone or something, no sharing of your own story. Support the presenter in the place the person is alone with God, even if that is a place of pain, so that person can be grounded in God.

A moment of silence

The person telling the story responds to what she/he heard. (*5-8 minutes*) This can be done by responding individually or by simply acknowledging that they heard what was said to them. It is hoped that this will allow the presenter to go more deeply into his/her own experience.

Silence for two minutes

Everyone offers a one sentence closing prayer.

Mutual Prayer—each person reads aloud Psalm 121

Sign-off from one another

The suggested times are given as guidelines—it is expected that the group will last at least a half hour but not longer than an hour.

2. Supervision: a narrative format

Reflection on Spiritual Direction Practice

Directee's Code Name:

Director:

Date of conversation:

Supervision visit #:

Directee session #:

Supervision date :

1. In a prayerful and reflective way, think about the directees with whom you meet. Choose a direction relationship to reflect up on that you think might be helpful to you in some way.
2. Give a brief description of the life context and characteristics of the directee—those that particularly contribute to an understanding of the session upon which you are focusing, i.e., married, male, associate pastor, 40 years old, out-going, father of three children, recent surgery, etc.
3. Choose an area of the direction conversation that you feel drawn to discuss with your supervisor. Write up the story of this interaction in a narrative form limiting yourself to about 200-350 words. Only record the key part of the conversation. Write it from the perspective of what went on with you as a director. (see example below) This is less about remembering every detail, than truthfully reflecting your own experience.
4. As you reflect on this key part of the conversation what do you notice about your own feelings, your thoughts, your bodily responses?
5. What do you notice about yourself that is particularly striking to you?
6. Was there a time that felt particularly “graced” to you? How would you describe that experience for you?
7. What image or picture do you have when you reflect on the conversation?
8. What issue regarding you as a spiritual director do you bring to supervision and why do you bring this issue? The focus question concerns YOU and it lies at the heart of the supervision session.
9. At the close of the session, ask yourself what new awareness you might have about yourself and record this in a journal of spiritual direction notes and insights.
10. Are there any questions for consultation, i.e. “how could I have helped the directee stay with his or her experience more?” or “I sensed that I should refer the person for counseling, how might I do that?”

EXAMPLE: REFLECTION ON SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Directee's Code Name: Ed Black

Director: Sam Smith

Date of conversation 4/10/10

Supervision visit #3

Directee session #4

Supervision date 5/6/10

Description: Ed is a forty year old male, married for fifteen years with three children—three, seven and ten years old. He became a Christian during college and now works as an associate pastor at a medium sized church. He has been in his current position for about five years. When he came to spiritual direction Ed said that he wanted to explore just who he is beyond being a husband, father and on a pastoral team at the church.

Narrative:

Ed began to talk about a conflict that he was having at work. I felt comfortable then, just curious. But when his eyes began to tear up and he talked about how he felt mocked and ridiculed by the lead pastor, I felt myself get uncomfortable. Last time he had spoken about experiencing the presence of God when he played with his daughter and I wished we were back there again. He talked some more detailing the specific instances of hurt that he had experienced in the church where he worked. But I felt myself getting more distant from him. I tried to sort of re-enter with a suggestion about what I saw, and how he might respond to the lead pastor. But that didn't feel very helpful or even accurate. At one point I even noticed that I pulled my chair back a little bit. Sometimes when I lean back I feel like I'm leaning into God's presence, but this felt different. Finally, Ed started to talk about his relationship to his kids and I remember feeling relieved. I could feel my whole body relax from the tension that had been there in me when Ed spoke about his own difficulties at the church. Even though we had a good interaction about the role of play in his life, and the way his kids lead him into this fun side of himself, I felt like I missed something. Ed thanked me for the time, but I'm still not sure what happened to me.

*please note that in the narrative the focus is on the feelings of the director, not the details of the directee.

Image: I remember playing soccer as a very young kid and I would get frightened that the ball would come my way. Sometimes I would turn away when I thought the ball would come to me. I felt a little of that same feeling when Ed was talking about his work troubles.

Focus Question: How can I stay present with someone when they are talking about something that makes me feel uncomfortable in some way?

Consultation Question: How do I help someone notice the presence of God in a conflicted situation?

3. Peer Group Supervision

Peer group meetings are a form of spiritual direction supervision and support. The members of the group should all be spiritual directors. The facilitator may be a trained or experienced supervision group leader or the facilitator's role may be rotated among the group members. The facilitator is never the presenter. The meeting is designed to be completed in about an hour when there is one presenter/director.

Intent for Presentations and Discussion:

This is spiritual direction for the presenter, therefore:

- Focus on the presenter rather than the directee
- Seek discernment of spirit rather than problem-solving
- Preserve anonymity of directee—use a pseudonym
- Keep peer group material confidential
- Presenters: seek spiritual direction for yourself as it relates to you as spiritual director, rather than presenting your directee as the subject of discussion.

Suggestions for Presenter:

- Your presentation must include a specific situation in your spiritual direction ministry, a brief verbatim account of a moment that seemed especially graced or especially problematic, and a focus question using the Supervision and verbatim wiring format

Group Presentation Process

It is strongly recommended that this process be followed and a facilitator be chosen or already available as time keeper. Suggested times are meant to keep the meeting within about an hour time frame.

1. Presenter/director is given an opportunity to share any additional information regarding his or her presentation which all of the group members have received **at least twenty four hours** before this group process via email. *3-5 minutes*
2. Two minutes of silence for all the group members to reenter the verbatim
3. Time is given for questions from the group to the presenter/ director for clarification purposes only *3-5 minutes*
4. Moment of silence
5. Group members can share (briefly) an image or feeling experienced after reading the verbatim keeping the focus on the director's experience and not the directee. The director's feelings are key. *5-7 minutes*
6. Allow time for the director/presenter to (briefly) respond to what he or she has heard, if he/she chooses to do so. *5-7 minutes*

7. Group discussion: group members focus on the Presenter/Director's Question for Supervision (see verbatim process) remembering that feelings are often key and keeping the focus on the presenter/director, not the directee with time for the director/presenter to respond to what she/he has heard. 20 minutes
8. Moment of silence
9. Group members ask: How has this process been for the presenter/director. How has it been for the other group members? What was learned? 5-7 *minutes*
10. Is there consultation a question/s remaining about concrete skills or technique (how to...?) 5-7 minutes
11. Closing moment of with silent, spoken or written prayer.

Reflection Questions for Processing Group Time

Reflect on whether the group honored its intent to provide spiritual direction for the presenters...

- How well did I/we stay focused on the presenter (rather than directee)?
- Were there places where I/we seemed to get off-track (problem-solving, overly analytical, etc.)?
- What was the quality of silence and attentiveness to God in the group?
- Did I sense real spiritual direction going on in the group? Did we encourage the presenter in her/his own discernment?

Spiritual Direction in Supervision Permission

I understand that the spiritual direction relationship and sessions with _____ during the period from September to May partially fulfills his/her requirements in North Park Theological Seminary's Certificate in Spiritual Direction program. I understand that my director, while preserving my anonymity and only within the confidential bounds of group and individual supervision, a part the this program's education, may describe aspects of our relationship for the purpose of better understanding his/her own self.

Signed _____

Reimbursement for Supervision

Check Request

Date_____

Number of supervision sessions group or individual _____

Amount requested _____

Pay to the order of_____

Send check to_____

Submit to:

Deidre Robinson, Administrative Assistant
Weborg Center for Spiritual Direction
North Park Theological Seminary
3325 W. Foster Ave.
Chicago, IL 60625

COVENANT FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Your name—telephone number—email address

Spiritual direction has been called “holy listening.” In spiritual direction, two persons pledge to journey together for a time in order to listen together for God’s voice in one of their lives. Through listening and reflecting, in a confidential setting of prayer and encouragement, we seek to discern God’s leading.

Spiritual direction assumes that God is at work in every area of our lives -- our relationships, our work, our leisure and quiet. God is present in our doubt and frustration and pain as well as in our certainty, our joy, and our healing. Sometimes it is difficult to discern the Spirit’s presence or movement, or to follow God’s call. God is the real Director of our lives, but an experienced companion (spiritual director) can often help you hear or notice what is real, and respond.

I pledge myself to listen with you for the voice of God and help you notice God’s movement in your life. I also promise to pray for you regularly.

Prayer is at the heart of our relationship with God. I ask you to commit yourself to regular prayer and reading of scripture between our visits. There are many ways to do this, and we can discuss possibilities that seem right for you.

Our conversations are always confidential. However, I ask your permission to share information (without using your name) with my supervisor. It is customary for directors to be in spiritual direction themselves, and to be in supervision as a part of our own spiritual and professional growth.

The goal of spiritual direction is well-expressed in these words: to see God more clearly, love God more dearly, and follow God more nearly in our daily lives.

A Few Practical Matters

Supervision: As a student in spiritual direction training I may describe aspects of our relationship anonymously and within the confidential boundaries of group/individual supervision for understanding myself.

Scheduling: Ordinarily we will meet for approximately 1 hour each month. It may be helpful, in the beginning, to meet more frequently in order to become acquainted. After 3 meetings, we will evaluate how well this is meeting your expectations and whether to continue. Every 6 months we will take time to evaluate again where we are being led.

Obligation to report: The only caveat to the promise of confidentiality mentioned above is if something arises which may endanger you or another person. Spiritual directors are required to report suspected cases of child or elder abuse. This is for the safety and well-being of all involved and would only happen with your full knowledge.

In agreement: _____ Date: _____

In agreement: _____ Date: _____

