

Five Steps of Spiritual Direction



1. Welcome: *establish relationship; help the directee to feel safe and comfortable*

- Provide a comfortable environment (quiet, private, window, Bible, tissues, etc.)
- Use a simple prayer to start (e.g. ask the Lord to be present, to bless, to guide us)
- Use a simple open-ended question to start (e.g. How have you been lately?)

2. Listening:

- Allow the directee to express self (i.e. life experience, prayer experience, a question for discernment, feeling of joy, pain, etc.)
- Use active listening skills (e.g. use body language to show that you are following)
- Notice the main points of the directee's sharing
- **Reflect:** After the directee has shared, reflect the main points esp. a) experience and b) emotions (e.g. It sounds like caring for your mother is making you physically tired as well as angry since you are the sole care-giver)

3. Explore: *the director invites the directee to explore experience and emotions*

- After the main points have been reflected: The director asks a question to help explore. For example: Regarding the experience you just shared, how does it make you feel? Concerning the relationship you just described, what emotion is in your heart as you talk about it? Can you say more about that feeling of anger? What do you need most as you face this challenge (e.g. peace, wisdom, strength, to be loved)? etc.
- *Evocative approach:* Allow the directee time to express as he or she explores; the director does not need to give his or her opinion

4. Meaning and discernment:

- Help the directee to discover meaning of prayer or life experience—this relates to Jesus
- Invite the directee to examine the experience and emotions with Jesus (e.g. You mentioned a feeling of anger. Have you had a chance to tell Jesus about this anger? Regarding this question that you would like to discern, have you had an opportunity to ask Jesus which option he would like you to choose?)
- The evocative approach: the director does not need to find meaning for the directee, instead the director helps the directee to discover this meaning for himself or herself (by asking questions...the focus is on the relationship with Jesus)
- If a discernment is being made, a key question is - Which of the options inspires you with the *most* consolation?

5. Moving Forward:

If the directee is open to it, provide specific suggestions to move forward:

- Prayer suggestions: Are you willing to express that emotion to Jesus? (e.g. anger, helplessness, gratitude, etc.) Would you like to ask Jesus for what you desire? (e.g. peace, healing, strength, etc.)
- Reflection questions: How does Jesus view this situation? How does Jesus view you?
- Scripture passages: What would it be like to pray with Psalm 23 and ask Jesus to accompany you through this time of suffering?
- Repetition prayer: From the prayer experiences that you described, is there a moment to which you would like to return and savour? (e.g. an image, a word, an embrace, etc.) ?
- Close with a simple prayer

