



Spiritual Direction Certification Program
– Final Project Descriptions –
Graduation

25-February-2023

<http://metageminstitute.org>



Pat Bills (Birmingham, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Research and Reflection Paper
- ◆ Title: “Embracing the Guidance of Spiritual Direction in Giving”
- ◆ Pat's final project is a research paper in which she explores ways to discern God's will in stewardship and giving. She looks at spiritual practices such as the examen, contemplation, scripture reading, and journaling as tools to discern not only ways to give but also where to give according to God's will for one's life. Pat used scripture such as Psalm 24 to remind readers that all that we have is God's and that God has no hands, feet, or eyes on the earth, except ours, as taught by St. Teresa of Avila.



Sabrina Evans (Mobile, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Research and Reflection Paper
- ◆ Title: “Has Spiritual Direction changed your understanding of Christian Formation, and if so, how?”
- ◆ For Sabrina's final project, she researched the connection between Spiritual Direction and a deeper understanding of Christian Formation. As a long-time Christian Formation Director for churches in the Diocese of Alabama, the Diocese of Tennessee, and the Diocese of Oklahoma, Sabrina designed and conducted surveys for two groups: (1) for those receiving spiritual direction and (2) for those who are practicing Spiritual Directors. She posted the survey invitation and instructions through various Christian Formation communication channels. The survey gathered information about spiritual disciplines that have been suggested, tried, used. Further the survey asked questions about what changes were observed in individual lives, and how the church has been enriched by persons practicing these spiritual disciplines .



Amanda Kiep (Huntsville, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Spiritual Direction Offering within a Community
- ◆ Community: Clergy in Small Parishes in The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama
- ◆ Amanda offered spiritual direction/spiritual accompaniment to clergy serving in small parishes. Amanda provided an overview on the ministry of Spiritual Direction and the practice of group *Lectio Divina*. After the completion of three individual sessions, a directee showed more curiosity and interest in Spiritual Direction, *Lectio Divina*, and the pursuit of other spiritual exercises. Amanda gained improvement and confidence in skills as a spiritual director with the realization of the need to have more spiritual practices in her toolbox, while balancing time constraints for a session. The additional spiritual practices could address the clergy/directee's expressed needs for their own spiritual self-care, refreshment, play, and discernment .



Sandra Malone (Tortola, British Virgin Islands)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Spiritual Direction Offering within a Community
- ◆ Community: Clergy in The Episcopal Diocese of the Virgin Islands
- ◆ Sandra is an Episcopal priest in a diocese where the geography makes it difficult for clergy to get together to offer mutual support. The lack of regular interaction has led to a lack of communication and sense of community. With the approval of the diocesan bishop, Sandra was able to offer group spiritual direction to several of the diocesan clergy in person and on Zoom. The aim was to use this practice to promote healing and to strengthen the intentional work of reconciliation, which is a recent initiative of her bishop. The sessions proved to be beneficial as participants were given the space to be vulnerable with each other and to offer spiritual support as colleagues facing similar challenges.



Mary Ellen McGuigan (Salisbury, MA)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Spiritual Direction Offering within a Community
- ◆ Community: A 12-Step Group
- ◆ Mary Ellen provided “Spiritual Tools for Recovery” to a local, closed 12-Step group of Alcoholics Anonymous. The purpose of the tools was to provide participants with a broader scope of contemplative and prayer practices to expand their daily working of the steps. The project was held at the United Methodist Church which is the location where this 12-Step group attends meetings daily. The sessions were conducted over a three-week period and consisted of instruction and practice in four spiritual disciplines which directly correlate to specific steps of the 12-Step recovery program. The group was attended by one spiritual director and twelve members of AA. The format of the group involved instruction, practice, and sharing. Written resources linking each spiritual discipline to the understanding of AA principles was provided to the participants to assist them in their ability to discern God’s will for their daily lives.



Janice Olson (Wethersfield, CT)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: “Summer Arts Program – Expressions of the Divine
- ◆ Applying her natural gifts of hospitality, creativity, and idea generation, Janice created an expressive arts program for the members of South Congregational Church in East Hartford, CT. Her program provided a way for spiritual seekers to use intuition, imagination, and creativity as a gateway to spiritual inquiry. Through the use of guided meditation, music, playing singing bowls, and periods of silence, attendees were guided to create mixed media images of the Holy Trinity: God the Father as Creation; God the Son as Incarnation; and God the Holy Spirit as Inspiration. Janice was given the opportunity to introduce her art program from the pulpit on Trinity Sunday as a lay preacher. The series of creative spiritual direction sessions culminated in a well-attended art show reception at the host church. Through the offering of this program, Janice has gained greater confidence in her calling as a Spiritual Director with a flair for thinking outside the box.



Amy Passey (Hoover, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: “Exploring Grief”
- ◆ Amy used a creative approach to exploring grief by applying spiritual practices, rituals, and readings to spiritual direction sessions. She met one-on-one with a directee, who was journeying through grief. Amy’s creative approach facilitated growth by wondering about dream interpretation and using journaling as a tool to discover a greater understanding around the loss of a loved one. By offering one-on-one spiritual companionship, Amy was able to not only encourage deeper expression and a sense of peace in her directee but was also blessed to realize how cathartic and healing the entire process was for herself, as well.



Paul Rajan (Wantage, NJ)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: “Spiritual Care Clinic”
- ◆ With a background in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), Paul’s project involved creating a “Spiritual Care Clinic” based on the principles of CPE. In this interprofessional therapeutic model of Spiritual Direction, a church or other venue hosts a spiritual care clinic for walk-ins. A Spiritual Director offers spiritual accompaniment following a seven-step approach that includes: triage by holy listening; assessment of spiritual needs; further investigation of spiritual struggle; recognition of spiritual pain and agony; treatment via offering emotional/spiritual support; suggestions for spiritual disciplines to enhance wellbeing; and finally, scheduling a follow-up session. Medical field metaphorical language is integrated to address spiritual healing in the ministry of spiritual direction.



Andy Rickles (Pinson, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: “Creation as Partner in Spiritual Formation”
- ◆ For his project, Andy sought to explore how nature and the outdoors could function as a conversation partner in one's spiritual formation. Knowing that the outdoors has been an important part of his own formation, Andy sought to identify practices that would help directees learn to hear the voice of the divine through their experience of nature, to articulate their spiritual experiences, and to connect with the sacred. With inspiration from mystics such as St Francis of Assisi, and modern writers such as Victoria Loorz and Wendell Berry, Andy walked alongside his directees providing group spiritual direction sessions as well as individual sessions.



Wade Shaw (Owens Cross Road, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: “Shadow Work as a Spiritual Tool in Group Spiritual Direction”
- ◆ Wade created and facilitated a spiritual direction group focusing on each participant's unique shadow. He began each session with a bell, silence, and prayer to “center” the group. The group followed The Center for Courage and Renewal's Touchstones for Safe and Trustworthy Space in order to enter sacred space. Each member then briefly “checked-in” based on guidelines that Wade developed. In facilitating the group spiritual direction session, Wade encouraged each directee to look at their own shadow, to notice when they saw reflections of their shadow in others, and to become curious about how the divine is active in and through each of them. At the conclusion of the group spiritual direction, Wade stimulated discussion with directees on how to reflect and to integrate their dark and gold shadow through spiritual exercises, reflections, and blessings.



Sandi Simmons (Homewood, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: “The Enneagram as a Tool in Spiritual Direction”
- ◆ Sandi taught a twelve-hour course on the Enneagram. Participants were then invited into spiritual direction with her to reflect more deeply on their patterns of relating to God and to others. During the spiritual direction sessions, Sandi led the directees to self-identify—with the Enneagram as a tool—where they are on their spiritual path. Each session led to discernment of the spiritual gifts of their Enneagram type and uncovering any obstacles to the full expressions of their gifts and their relationship with God. Using various aspects of the Enneagram model, Sandi met with directees who ranged from a vibrant expression of their gifts, to directees that were in some spiritual distress and looking for greater peace and connection with God. Each session explored what God is doing in their lives and allowed directees to build trust in the spiritual direction process and move to uncover their own gifts and passions.



Robyn Smith (Moody, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Spiritual Direction Offering within a Community
- ◆ Community: Epiphany Episcopal Church in Leeds, AL
- ◆ Robyn facilitated an in-person Group Spiritual Direction session for a period of three months. This small group within a parish allowed the members to gather and learn to intentionally listen to God. None of the six participants in this group had ever participated in spiritual direction of any kind. By the end of the three sessions, they were very familiar with the process and discussed the importance of listening for the still, small voice of God in each other. All agreed that they would like to continue sessions and that they would participate if it was offered. They also all agreed that group spiritual direction would be beneficial to the parish at large. When asked what they took with them from the three sessions of group spiritual direction, some comments were: “It’s good to hear that others have difficulty in their life too”; “It’s good to learn to listen”; and “It’s good to give yourself permission to be vulnerable.”



Barbara White (Dothan, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Creative Approach to Spiritual Direction
- ◆ Title: “Using Audio Divina (or Sacred Sound) in Spiritual Direction”
- ◆ Deeply drawn to the arts and music as a portal to enter the wisdom of the heart and listen more deeply for the movement of the holy in the ordinary, Barbara felt drawn to creatively explore spiritual direction in a small group using *Audio Divina* combined with drawing mandalas. Music is a universal language and can be a transcendent experience. *Audio Divina* can be a doorway into prayer and to cultivate the ability to listen for God’s movement in one’s life. Creating mandalas can lead to insight, healing, and wholeness. The project involved three sessions with a small group exploring the concept of spiritual direction, practicing *Audio Divina*, and creating mandalas to express how God spoke to their life at this moment through the music.



Cindy Wiley (Birmingham, AL)

- ◆ Final Project Type: Spiritual Direction Offering within a Community
- ◆ Community: Young Adult Women at St. Mary’s on the Highlands Episcopal Church
- ◆ Cindy gathered seven young adult women parishioners at St. Mary’s on the Highlands over the course of four weeks to intentionally discern the presence and will of God in their lives and to engage in spiritual practices to establish and deepen the roots of a personal daily relationship with God through heart, mind, and soul. During each session, the participants committed to making time to share in the intentional practice of an awareness of God in the moment. Cindy began each session with a time of quiet followed by a spiritual activity to help each participant move inward to an embodied sense of the divine. During the session, Cindy provided an introduction and practice of the spiritual discipline for the week followed by silent prayer before reentering the world. The group continues to meet once a month with Cindy for a shared experience of moving into a deeper relationship with Christ through awareness, prayer, and reflection.



Please contact us for further information about any of these final projects
or for details about Metagem's formation programs.

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