

THE CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION
The Ministry of Spiritual Direction

2025-2026 Year One Reading List

MSD Year 1 students are asked to purchase the following foundational text.

Teresa Blythe, (2018) Spiritual Direction 101, Apocryphile Press

This easy-to-read and accessible book is an excellent introduction and overview of the work of a spiritual director.

As part of this year's curriculum, we will have author Rev. Dr. Barbara Peacock making a guest presentation. That class session, scheduled for March, will include discussions based on the following book.

Barbara L. Peacock, (2020) Soul Care In African American Practice, InterVarsity Press

A journey of prayer, spiritual direction, and soul care from an African-American perspective. This book explores the history of Christian spirituality with its earliest roots in Africa; highlights key spiritual leaders in the African-American tradition; and explores the necessity of soul care as a means to sustain the work of repairing our communities and to cultivate faithful endurance leading to action against injustice.

The following required texts will be used for Common Reading Experience (CRE) discussions.

Focus Reading for group discussion in November 2025

William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, (2009, second revised edition) The Practice of Spiritual Direction, Harper Collins Publishers

A comprehensive and systematic exploration into the history, theology, and practice of spiritual direction, from the perspective of two priests in the Ignatian tradition. While the language in this book is somewhat dated (published in 1982), the underlying principles provide an excellent foundation for the "why" and the "how" of spiritual direction.

Focus Reading for group discussion in February 2026

Ineda Pearl Adesanya, editor, (2019) Kaleidoscope: Broadening the Palette in the Art of Spiritual Direction, Church Publishing

A collection of essays on the practice of spiritual direction, written by people of color, with wisdom relevant to all spiritual directors. This book is divided into four sections, addressing the history and foundations of spiritual direction, the art of spiritual direction, contemporary matters, and professional matters.

Focus Reading for group discussion in May 2026

Henri Nouwen, (2015) Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith, HarperOne

A collection of Nouwen's notes, sermons, and writings on the work of Spiritual Direction, edited and published posthumously by two of his students. This book focuses on spiritual direction from the perspective of a "wounded healer" – one who is living the journey while also companioning others.

ADDITIONAL CLASS SESSION READINGS

Any additional readings required for a particular session are provided as a PDF on the MSD website or as a link to an online article.