Spiritual direction is, in reality, nothing more than a way of leading us to see and obey the real Director — the Holy Spirit hidden in the depths of our soul.

Thomas Merton

Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

Psalm 86:11

Spiritual direction is an interpersonal relationship in which we learn how to grow, live, and love in the spiritual life.

Richard Foster

He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

John 10:4

The spiritual director is concerned with the whole person, for the spiritual life is not just the life of the mind, or of the affections, or of the ‘summit of the soul’—it is the life of the whole person.

Thomas Merton

Spiritual direction is a discipline in which we seek the help of another to discern the presence and activity of God in our lives. It is often called “holly listening” because the director listens intently to the directee and the Holy Spirit. He or she asks questions to help uncover where God is moving.

The first disciples lived in the presence of Jesus. They walked with and learned from him in the midst of every day experiences. It is the same for us today. We are constantly in the presence of God. He is active, speaking to and teaching us in the ordinary events of the day. But it can be difficult for us to recognize his presence and voice.

A spiritual director helps us to recognize God’s presence in the highs and lows, the questions and struggles. He or she listens to our story and helps us see God’s hand. What is God doing in our lives? What is he teaching us? How is he forming us into the people he created us to be?

Receiving direction is a form of training. With the help of a director, we become more aware of God’s presence in ordinary events and better equipped to live in deeper relationship with God.

A director also helps us grow in specific areas of faith. If our prayer life feels dry, she can help us explore the dryness and make helpful suggestions to deepen our experience in prayer. Or if we are struggling in a particular area, he may suggest a specific discipline, and help us to practice it.
SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

How do I find a spiritual director?
The best way to find a director is through a recommendation.  
• Check with your friends or post something on social media.  
• Ask your church. Catholic or Orthodox churches will be able to point you to someone. If you are from a Protestant tradition and your church is unable to help, you might consider contacting a local Catholic church.  
• Is there a program nearby training spiritual directors? Check with a local Christian college or search for a local ministry.  
• Sdiworld.org is an online resource with a database of directors. This is not an exclusively Christian organization, so confirm the faith affiliation of any director you find here.

What questions should I ask a potential director?
Before you meet with a potential director, it would be helpful to ask some questions. These questions will help you begin to assess whether he or she might be a good fit. (adapted from sdiworld.org)
• What kind of training have you received both theologically and specific to the art of spiritual direction?  
• How long have you been offering direction and in what contexts?  
• What is your own experience in spiritual formation and the spiritual life?  
• How do you view the practice of spiritual direction?  
• What ethical guidelines to you abide by?  
• Do you charge for direction?

How should I prepare for the first meeting?
The first meeting will be more informational than a typical session of spiritual direction. Keep in mind you are looking for a director that suits you. Someone may be a great person and a fantastic director, but you may not have a good connection. Some people meet with more than one director before finding one who is a good fit. Be prepared to answer a couple questions.
• What has your journey of faith looked like?  
• Why are you seeking direction?

What will I talk about?
This will depend on what you want from direction. If it is growth in some area, be prepared to discuss what has been going well and what hasn’t in that area. If you want to further develop your practice of a discipline, be ready to talk about your experience with the practice. If you want help discerning God’s presence and direction, you may share a specific experience, perhaps a time of deep emotion. Whatever it is, come ready to share honestly. This may be the biggest factor in how much you benefit from this discipline.

WHY TO PRACTICE SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

A spiritual director helps us reflect and see how God is working in the ordinary and extraordinary experiences of life.

Spiritual direction trains us to discern the activity of God in the moment as we move through life.

A spiritual director can guide us through struggles and help us to lean into God.

We can find healing from past hurts and current sin with the help of a spiritual director.

A spiritual director can help us grow in a specific discipline like prayer or scripture.

RESOURCES

Spiritual Direction And Meditation
Thomas Merton

Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith
Henri Nouwen

Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship & Direction
David Benner and Larry Crabb

Spiritual Directors International director database
http://www.sdiworld.org/find-a-spiritual-director/seek-and-find-guide