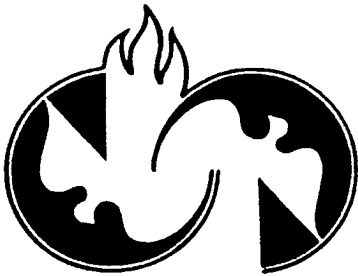


Introducing the newest faith formation program
from *The Institute for Christian Ministries*

Formation for Spiritual Companions

Building community and enriching
the spiritual lives of participants



Since 1977

For more information
visit the ICM website:

www.healingministry.org

or contact:

Institute for Christian Ministries

2551 NE 205th St

Shoreline WA 98155-1431

(206) 363-4394

icmcentral@healingministry.org

What participants gain...

- Learning how to share their spiritual journey
- Drawing closer to God
- Growing in gifts of listening and support

A sample of topics...

- Listening to God and one another
- Praying with a spiritual companion
- Reflecting on experiences of God
- Introduction to discernment

What the program offers...

- **One-day opening retreat**
- **6 weekly meetings that include:**
 - Worship
 - Teaching on being a spiritual companion
 - Small group experience
- **Training materials for program coordinators**

TO ORDER THE FSC PROGRAM

Formation for Spiritual Companions costs \$495 (U.S. currency).

It is shipped upon receipt of full payment.

To purchase the Formation for Spiritual Companions program, please phone ICM or use the form below to mail in your order.

The packet you receive will contain the following:

- A Coordinator Manual
- A Student Handbook
- A set of 4 DVDs containing 16 video presentations
- A Covenant Agreement describing your and our respective rights and responsibilities.

DETACH AND MAIL TO:

The Institute for Christian Ministries

2551 NE 205th, Shoreline WA 98155

Phone: (206) 363-4394

E-mail: icmcentral@healingministry.org

Fax: (206) 362-1969

Website: www.healingministry.org

Formation for Spiritual Companions Program (\$495 US)	\$ _____
Shipping and handling (\$30 within the US)	\$ _____
Subtotal	\$ _____
Washington residents, add 8.8%	\$ _____
Total enclosed	\$ _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO ICM.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Website: _____

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PREFACE

Origin of the program.

In the 1970s, Father Leo Thomas, OP, designed a program for the benefit of a fellowship of Christians who had banded together to support each other in their individual spiritual journeys. They wanted Father Leo to be their spiritual director, but he could not fulfill that task personally. Instead, he designed a program to help them learn some elements of spiritual direction and of prayer partnership. He called it *Companions for the Spiritual Journey*.

Formation for Spiritual Companions (FSC) arose from, and was inspired by, that earlier program. The Institute for Christian Ministries (founded by Father Thomas in 1977), created FSC because we believe it can benefit Christians who are seriously interested in growing spiritually.

The model of being a spiritual companion.

No other relationship is exactly the same as spiritual companionship. It has elements of spiritual direction, but is a relationship of peers. The relationship may also include activities outside the spiritual companion setting; e.g. social events, religious activities. Over a span of time, the relationship can bless companions in a number of ways as it gives them...:

1. Someone to **talk to** about spiritual things, which gives a sense of **being heard**.
2. A person to be **accountable to** for some or several areas of their Christian life.
3. A partner to **pray** with.
4. A person who provides **encouragement and support**.

An Overview of *Formation for Spiritual Companions*:

In addition to showing participants how to be companions, this program offers spiritual formation through worship times and some of its presentations. The latter teach elements of Christian spirituality and give a deeper understanding of the One we worship and trust.

Every class includes a *triad practicum*, a practice session to help participants experience the beginnings of being a spiritual companion. In real life this would ordinarily be a twosome, although a threesome can work. Some activities in the practicum are not ordinarily done in a real life setting. For example, the role of the Observer is for learning purposes only.

Worship times, presentations, and practicums: Together, these help participants grow in love of God and neighbor (Mt 22:37). Throughout his life as a Dominican, Father Leo dedicated himself to helping people experience God's healing love then pass it on to others. The Institute for Christian Ministries exists to carry out that same mission. We pray that during this program and beyond, you will experience the Lord's abiding love and grow in your ability to share that love with others.

SHARING WITH A SPIRITUAL COMPANION

Goals:

Describe the value of a spiritual companion and how to share with him/her.
Highlight the importance of accountability in the spiritual journey.

- I. Introduction: Our relationship with God. (Psalm 23)
 - A. A journey with the One who loves and cares for us.
 - B. A dynamic relationship that leads to fullness of life. (Jn 10:10)
 - C. We need spiritual companions on our journey.
- II. The value of a spiritual companion.
 - A. Enables us to see events from a different perspective.
 - B. Feedback helps us see experiences through eyes of faith.
 1. A friendship that consciously includes God as a third Friend.
 2. A relationship of equals.
 - C. Helps us stay focused on God's unique call to each of us.
 - D. Offers encouragement and support, a safe place to rest. (1 Kings 19)
 - E. Acceptance helps us know God as being loving, safe, and trustworthy.
- III. Sharing with a companion.
 - A. Build trust.
 - B. Be selective regarding what to share.
 1. Basic question: Where is God in my life?
 - a. God wants to be involved in *every* aspect of our life. (Mt 28:20)
 - b. Challenge: to recognize God's presence.
 2. Possible questions:
 - a. What am I concerned about right now?
 - b. Where is God in this situation? How am I experiencing God with me?
 - c. What does God want?
 3. Typical areas of concern.
 4. See homework questions in this handbook.
- IV. The importance of accountability.
 - A. Companion can motivate us to continue our journey.
 - B. Accountability: We do what we say we are going to do.
 1. Accountability may be broad, or for only one or two aspects of our life.
 2. Do not feel obligated to share everything.
- V. Conclusion: Jn 15:15. You are friend of God! One way to experience that friendship is with and through a spiritual companion.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This is a two-part bibliography. The first part describes the required reading for FSC. The second part is a list of resources for additional study. Listed alphabetically by title.

Required Reading

ARE YOU REALLY LISTENING?: KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION by

Paul Donoghue and Mary E. Siegel. Ave Maria Press, 2005.

A life-changing guide to improving listening skills. Reflection questions at the end of each chapter help readers evaluate and grow in the ability to listen deeply to people in their lives, including spiritual companions, friends, coworkers, bosses, and family members.

HEALING: STORIES OF FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE by Jan Alkire. Paulist Press, 2003.

Shows readers how to deepen their relationship with God and actively participate in God's healing. A "For You" section at the end of each chapter is designed to lead into experiences of God. The nine chapters on prayer are assigned homework.

"INTERCESSORY PRAYER" by Jan Alkire.

An article that describes the value of intercessory prayer, the essentials of how to do it, pitfalls to avoid, and options for reaching out to intercessors with needs.

Resources for Additional Study

AMAZING GRACE: A VOCABULARY OF FAITH by Kathleen Norris. Riverhead Books, 1998.

A poet's journey through language to faith, this book is indeed a source of amazing grace. The author's reflections on words such as fear, anger, God, Christian, and salvation bring them to life.

THE ART OF CHRISTIAN LISTENING by Thomas N. Hart. Paulist Press, 1981.

This book describes the role of helper (listener) in a Christian context. Tends to intertwine spiritual companionship with spiritual direction, but there is much valuable material here for the former.

THE ART OF FORGIVING by Lewis B. Smedes. Ballantine Books, 1997.

A road map for those who are trying to make peace with a past hurt or betrayal. It leads readers through the three stages of forgiveness in order to arrive at inner peace.

HEALING AS A PARISH MINISTRY by Leo Thomas, O.P. and Jan Alkire. Byron Books, 2000.
(Available through ICM and Amazon.com)

Rooted in the church's scriptural/sacramental tradition, this book emphasizes the

primary goal of healing ministry: bringing God to those in need. It expands on the how-to's of prayer ministry that are introduced in *Healing Ministry* (see below).

HEALING MINISTRY: A PRACTICAL GUIDE by Leo Thomas, OP with Jan Alkire. Sheed and Ward, 1994. (Available through ICM and Amazon.com)

Essential for anyone dealing with people who need healing. Includes self-reflection questions at the end of each chapter. In the words of one reviewer, "The chapter on natural gifts, virtues and charisms is material which every Christian should read."

THE HOLY LONGING by Ronald Rolheiser, OMI. Doubleday, 1999.

The author opens his preface by saying, "This is a book for you if you are struggling spiritually." How true! Covers what Christian spirituality means, how it impacts every aspect of human experience and how to apply it to daily life.

PRAYER & MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES: WHO I AM IS HOW I PRAY by Bernadette Stankard. Twenty-Third Publications, 2005.

"Multiple intelligences" basically means different giftedness, such as love of music, a gift with words, a strong attraction to nature. The author uses examples to offer ideas for how to pray using nine different God-given "intelligences"—to pray as we are and, in so doing, deepen our relationship with God.

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED: A NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF LOVE, TRADITIONAL VALUES AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH, by M. Scott Peck. Simon & Schuster, 1998.

Without giving simplistic answers, this excellent, readable book describes the process of becoming whole. Includes good material on discipline and love.

SACRED COMPANIONS by David G. Benner. Inter-Varsity Press, 2002.

Introduces readers to the riches of spiritual friendship and spiritual direction, explaining what they are and how they are practiced. Includes reflection questions.

TOUCHING THE HOLY: ORDINARINESS, SELF-ESTEEM, AND FRIENDSHIP by Robert J. Wicks, Ave Maria Press, 1992.

The author, a professor of pastoral counseling, unites psychology and spirituality to show readers how to appreciate the holiness of being ordinary. He emphasizes that a healthy self-esteem enables us to love others as they are. A section in the book explores friendship, including four types of friends and how each can be life-giving. Includes reflection questions.

WEEDS AMONG THE WHEAT: DISCERNMENT by Thomas Green, S.J. Ave Maria Press, 1984.

Father Green approaches discernment from his perspective as an experienced spiritual director. He draws on the wisdom of both scripture and St. Ignatius, founder of the Jesuits. "Discernment is where prayer and action meet," he writes. "The more deeply we know the Lord, the easier it will be to sense what he desires us to do."