

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

OVERVIEW OF SESSIONS 6 Sessions of 1.5 Hours Each

Don't be offended! Session materials are written so a Leader can use them as a script if necessary. This is because the materials will be widely available and we recognize that not all interested parties have the same level of preparation. A Bibliography is provided for each Module for further study or clarification.

SESSION 1: What is Spiritual Mentoring?

Pre-Reading: Australian Code of Ethics for Spiritual Directors

Session: Introduces participants to the work and limits of peer companioning. Draws out its differences from Spiritual Direction, Counseling, and Therapy. Describes how different religious traditions name and use spiritual guides. Includes a review of ethics and issues of confidentiality.

Homework: Article on Spirituality and Mental Illness

SESSION 2: Active Listening, Styles of Questions, and Theological Thinking

Session: Introduces active listening and the styles of questions that move reflection forward. Introduces theological thinking/reflection. Draws the distinction between doing theology and psychological analysis; introduces theological categories and Theological Reflection.

Homework: Theological Autobiography

SESSIONS 3 & 4: Our Theological Autobiographies

Session: In groups of 6: Three participants take 15 minutes each to tell their theological autobiography from the prepared worksheet. Other participants are assigned to ask a specific style of question for each presentation. Feedback will take 10 minutes for each Storyteller. Over the course of the two evenings, every participant will do six things: Tell his/her story (once), practice each listening skill or ask each style of question of another participant (four times), and offer a summary impression of one story (once). *If you only have groups of 5, one question style is omitted from the tasks.*

Homework: Several options for practicing the art of careful description and distilling it into learning. Results of one option will be shared at Session 5.

SESSION 5: The Theological Reflection Circle

Session: Introduces the theological reflection method that will be used throughout the curriculum. Begins to play with the possibilities that come with a deliberative, but non-linear tool.

Homework: Diagramming a significant moment from one's personal life on the Theological Reflection Circle.

SESSION 6: Theological Reflection Conversations

Session: In groups of 3: Practice working with the Theological Reflection Circle. Each participant will have a chance to be the Listener, the Storyteller, and an Observer.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown, Daniel S. ed. *A Communication Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue: Living within the Abrahamic Traditions*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013.
Especially these articles:
Kenneth Danielson, "A Narrative Approach to Interfaith Dialogue: Explanations & Recommendations"
Elizabeth W. McLaughlin, "The Power of Living Parables for Transformative Interfaith Encounters"
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