

Pathways

Session 1
Spirituality



Resources for participants

What is spirituality?

'What we're talking about is the Christian life. It's following Jesus. Spirituality is no different from what we've been doing for two thousand years just by going to church and receiving the sacraments, being baptised, learning to pray, and reading the Scriptures rightly. It's just ordinary stuff'.

Eugene Peterson

'Being in the world without being of the world'. These words summarise well the way Jesus speaks of his spiritual life. It is a life in which we are totally transformed by the Spirit of love. Yet it is a life in which everything seems to remain the same. To live a spiritual life does not mean that we must leave our family, give up our jobs, or change our ways of working; it does not mean that we have to withdraw from social and political activities, or lose interest in literature and art; it does not require severe forms of asceticism or long hours of prayer ... What is new is that we are moved from the many things to the Kingdom of God. What is new is that we are set free from the compulsions of our world and have set our hearts on the only necessary thing. What is new is that we no longer experience the many things, people, and events as endless causes for worry, but begin to experience them as the rich variety of ways in which God makes his presence known to us.

Henri Nouwen

[Spirituality] is the lived dimension of faith. It is how faith looks in everyday relationships, attitudes, values and behaviours. It is the set of assumptions an individual lives out of, and where he or she chooses to locate meaning. For the Christian, this works on both a communal and personal level. The meaning of life is centred on a God who sent the Son and the Spirit to save his people and be with them. A personal spirituality emerges in the dialogue between this communal faith story and the concrete events of each individual's life experience.

Tuohy, David SJ

... by 'spirituality' I do not mean any kind of content-free, theologically-vacuous quest for transcendent experiences for their own sake. Rather 'spirituality' has to do precisely with the content, what fills abstract theology, mundane institutions, and the everyday life of the Christian with their real substance.

Veith, Gene Edward Jr

A spirituality is a lived faith plus a path.

Hanson, Bradley

... spirituality will be taken to mean intentional practice of the Christian faith, both corporate and individual, insofar as it seeks to build up Christian identity and nurture "life in the Spirit" in the multiple dimensions of personal existence.

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary

Important key words or phrases about spirituality

Spirituality

Bible readings to explore Christian spirituality

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Romans 5:1 (NIV)

'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me.'
John 14:6 (GNB)

'I have told you this while I am still with you. The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you.'
John 14:25-26 (GNB)

Since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, live in union with him. Keep your roots deep in him, build your lives on him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught. And be filled with thanksgiving.
Colossians 2:6,7 (GNB)

For the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, his Spirit fills us with power, love and self-control.
2 Timothy 1:7 (GNB)

Let the Spirit change your way of thinking and make you into a new person.
Ephesians 4:23, 24a (CEV)

And you also became God's people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. You believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised. The Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised his people, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory!
Ephesians 1:13, 14 (GNB)

This [God] did so that [people] would look for him, and perhaps find him as they felt around for him. Yet God is actually not far from any one of us.
Acts 17:27 (TEV)

Do not conform outwardly to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God – what is good, and pleasing to him, and is perfect.
Romans 12:2 (TEV)