

What to Bring to Spiritual Direction

You do not need a perfect question to begin.

NO NEED TO ARRIVE POLISHED

People sometimes wonder what they are supposed to bring to spiritual direction. The answer is simple: bring what is actually present.

You do not need a refined theological question, a stable prayer life, a clear spiritual identity, or language that sounds impressive. Spiritual direction does not require spiritual performance.

Sometimes the most honest beginning is, "I do not know what I believe anymore," or "I feel dry," or "Something is changing," or "I miss prayer but do not know how to return."

POSSIBLE MATERIAL

You might bring many kinds of experience:

- A question about prayer, practice, silence, or meditation.
- A longing for meaning, belonging, God, mystery, nature, or depth.
- A dream, image, symbol, poem, song, or recurring phrase.
- A transition, loss, illness, caregiving season, retirement, or vocational question.
- A faith transition, religious wound, doubt, anger, grief, or desire for freedom.
- A sacred or unusual experience that needs grounding and discernment.
- A desire to develop a rhythm of contemplative practice.
- A sense of dryness, absence, confusion, or spiritual restlessness.

The material does not need to be obviously spiritual. Often the sacred is hidden in ordinary experience.

WHAT IF I HAVE NOTHING TO BRING?

Not having anything to bring can itself be material. Emptiness, boredom, fog, fatigue, or silence may be part of what needs attention.

Spiritual direction can make room for seasons when nothing seems to be happening. Sometimes the deeper movement of a life is quiet, hidden, or not yet available to language.

WHAT IF I AM ANGRY, DOUBTFUL, OR UNCERTAIN?

Anger, doubt, uncertainty, and disappointment are welcome in spiritual direction. They do not disqualify a person from spiritual work.

For many people, honesty is more spiritually alive than forced certainty. A direction session can hold questions that do not yet have answers and wounds that should not be explained away too quickly.

A SIMPLE WAY TO PREPARE

If you want a gentle preparation before a session, you might pause and ask:

- What feels most alive or unsettled in me right now?
- Where do I feel longing, resistance, grief, gratitude, or confusion?
- What question has been following me?
- What practice, image, dream, or encounter has stayed with me?
- What do I hope we will make room for today?

These questions are optional. They are simply ways to begin listening before the session begins.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Bring the real material, not the impressive material. Bring the question, the ache, the silence, the longing, the resistance, the gratitude, the uncertainty.

Spiritual direction begins where life is actually unfolding.