

# SPIRITUAL FORMATION

## EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Individuals seeking certification in Spiritual Formation in The United Methodist Church must meet the standards set by the DOM, GBHEM. These include successful completion of five (5) certification courses in Spiritual Formation. Persons are certified by the annual conference BOM in cooperation with the DOM, GBHEM.

Courses are designed to provide graduate academic experience for persons to qualify them for certification. Other requirements for certification include personal and church qualifications and experience in the area of Spiritual Formation as determined by the DOM, GBHEM.

The five (5) courses cover the biblical and theological foundations and are designed to include an understanding of The United Methodist Church, its structure, curriculum, and resources.

These courses must be offered for no less than two (2) semesters (or equivalent quarter) hours of graduate academic credit. In some instances, regular degree courses listed in the catalogue may be substituted for specially designed short-term courses with approval of the DOM, GBHEM.

Although candidates may participate in more than one area of study each year, thus completing the course of study as time and energy allow, four (4) years of local church experience or two (2) years following the studies are required for certification. A maximum of ten (10) years is allowed for the completion of the Certification Studies in Ministry Careers.

The DOM, GBHEM will post on its website, [www.gbhem.org](http://www.gbhem.org), a list of the special courses available at all UM graduate institutions.

## Core Competencies expected for certification in Spiritual Formation:

1. Regular practice of spiritual disciplines within their lives.
2. Ability to teach others diverse spiritual disciplines (including, but not limited to, *lectio divina*, various forms/types of prayer, confession and examination of consciousness, processes of discernment, leadership of worship, fasting and self-emptying, ways of hospitality).
3. Understanding of and engagement in the essential link between spiritual formation and congregational life (e.g. in worship leadership and preaching, Christian education, pastoral care, community outreach, mission and evangelism, church administration, ecumenical and interfaith dialogue).
4. Knowledge of and the ability to teach history and practices of Wesleyan spirituality.
5. Ability to lead retreats with persons of varying ages.
6. Ability to offer spiritual direction, both in one-to-one and in-group modes.

## CERTIFICATION COURSES

Satisfactory completion of the two-year “Academy for Spiritual Formation” of The Upper Room may meet the requirements for two (2) courses, *Teaching for Biblical Faith and Spiritual Disciplines for Personal and Parish Renewal (Prayer in Christian Ministry)*.

Completion of The Upper Room three-year Covenant Community may meet the requirement for the course: *Spiritual Disciplines for Personal and Parish Renewal*.

## **REQUIRED CORE COURSES FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

1. **Teaching for Biblical Faith:** The nature of the bible and its role in congregational contexts and processes which nurture Christian spiritual formation and discipleship; approaches to teaching the bible as the church's book of faith and life.
2. **United Methodist Studies: Wesley and Nineteenth Century:** Foundational contribution of John Wesley to the history, theology, and polity of emerging Methodism, including sermons, treatises, letters, class meetings. Introduction to the evangelistic thrust, formative spirituality, social concerns, theological shifts, and institutional development of the parent bodies of The United Methodist Church in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**OR**

**United Methodist Studies: Twentieth Century to Present:** Historical, theological, and missional developments of United Methodism in the twentieth century, as they affect ministry in a pluralistic church and world. A study of the evolution of polity, nature of ministry, formative spirituality, social justice emphases, evangelistic movements, and the ecumenical involvement of the denomination. (Either of the UM Studies courses may be taken for the certification, though if a choice must be made, we recommend the **Wesley and Nineteenth Century** courses.)

3. **Spiritual Disciplines for Personal and Parish Renewal**

**OR**

**Prayer in Christian Ministry:** An orientation to the history and practice of Christian prayer forms and spiritual disciplines as they may be applied for personal and parish renewal. Exploration of the relationship of prayer to other spiritual disciplines, such as corporate worship, prophetic witness, hospitable social service, processes of discernment and of spiritual healing.

4. **Spiritual Direction/Companionship:** Focusing on attentiveness to God, Listening skills, psychological awareness, personal spiritual disciplines, historical background (including formative Wesleyan spirituality), and ethical issues for fostering this supportive relationship of spiritual guidance. Includes readings in Christian classics, experiencing the practice of spiritual companionship, and training in ways of offering spiritual guidance in congregations.
5. **Practicum in Spiritual Direction/Companionship:** Supervised field Education in spiritual guidance of individuals and groups, extending at least over an academic year; requiring regular engagement in one's own spiritual direction, offering individual and/or group spiritual direction to others, participation in a monthly peer supervision group, personal written reflection, and occasional retreats. The practicum will take place through a training center or parish as approved by the seminary monitoring this course. (Prerequisite: Introductory course on "Spiritual Direction/Companionship".)

**The DOM, GBHEM may accept** the two (2) courses in Bible and Theology required for other areas of certification administered by the DOM, GBHEM as meeting the requirements for Spiritual Formation certification when these courses have been taken within the past six (6) years and a special assignment related to Spiritual Formation is completed.