



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL

TRANSFORMING CHURCH. TOGETHER.



Sanctum

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION FORMATION & TRAINING

An online evening course with three in-person days

January 2027 to December 2027

What is Sanctum?

Sanctum is a 1-year formation and learning pathway for those exploring a call to the ministry of spiritual direction. Offered by the Bristol Diocese, the course is ecumenical welcoming both lay and ordained Christians—pastoral assistants, youth ministers, chaplains and parish leaders; along with those who notice that people naturally turn to them for attentive listening and spiritual support.

As more people from a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences seek spiritual accompaniment, Sanctum aims to offer high quality training through a part-time hybrid pathway which is intentionally designed to be accessible, supportive, and formational, encouraging a broader demographic of students to explore a vocation in spiritual direction.

The course seeks to:

- Explore the ministry of spiritual direction in the light of scripture and Church tradition, together with personal experience and the shared stories of others
- Develop practical skills, insight and resources for encouraging spiritual growth and human flourishing through the practice of spiritual direction
- Nurture a growing awareness of personal vocation within the Christian tradition of spiritual direction
- Foster supportive community with fellow students for the duration of the course

What does Sanctum offer?

Sanctum offers a rich formational experience through a combination of experiential, reflective, and theoretical learning, honed through discussion and the application of practical skills.

The course provides:

- Teaching sessions offering the background and context to the ministry of spiritual direction, drawing upon biblical, theological, and psychological perspectives, alongside a breadth of Christian spiritual wisdom
- Experiences of Christian prayer including poetry, music and art.
- Practical workshops exploring aspects of spiritual direction, with guided reflection, role play, and supervised practice in pairs and small groups
- Student support throughout the year with a personal tutor, peer reflection and both mid-year and end of year appraisals to support growth and vocational discernment
- Participants receive access to a dedicated Zoom link for online sessions and access to course materials and resources

When does Sanctum run?

Sanctum runs fortnightly, during term time from January to December, combining 20 online evening sessions with 3 in-person days.

Online sessions: Thursdays 6.30pm–9.30pm, from 14 Jan 2027 to 2 Dec 2027.

In-person days: Saturdays 10am–4pm, 24 April 2027; 12 June 2027; 6 November 2027.

What is the student commitment?

A Certificate of Completion will be awarded to those students who have engaged fully with the pathway by attending at least 80% of the course, settled all fees and completed all assignments.

An invitation to be included in the Bristol Diocese directory of spiritual directors will only be offered to those students who have:

- Obtained a Sanctum completion certificate
- Received tutor recommendation to practice as a spiritual director
- Completed all safeguarding requirements
- Have both a spiritual director and a supervisor
- Provided 2 references (one can be your personal course tutor)
- Agreed to minister within the Retreat Associations Guidelines for Spiritual Directors

What does Sanctum cost?

The cost for the full year is £600.

What funding might be available?

The Retreat Association:

The Trustees meet quarterly in March, May or June, September and December and applications should be received no later than 3 weeks preceding a meeting.

Apply here: www.retreats.org.uk/grantfundforspiritualdirection

The Society of Retreat Conductors:

Apply at least three months before the course begins. Please mention that Sanctum is grounded in the Ignatian tradition, as this helps the Society understand the focus of the course.

Apply here: The Society of Retreat Conductors

For enquiries, email: redingtonkathy@hotmail.com

The Women's Continuing Ministerial Education Trust:

Quarterly applications (February, May, July, October). Open to ordained and accredited lay women in the Church of England and Scottish Episcopal Church, including Church Army and religious communities.

Apply here: The Women's Continuing Ministerial Education Trust | The Church of England

For enquiries, email: wcmnet@churchofengland.org

Who are the course tutors?

Sanctum is led by experienced spiritual directors and occasional guest tutors offering specialised expertise.

Revd Joanna Gallant, Tutor

Joanna was ordained in 2002 and served in a variety of parish and chaplaincy contexts. She is now Adviser for Spiritual Direction for Bristol Diocese, and continues to minister in a broader context of Christian spirituality as a teacher, spiritual director, supervisor, retreat leader and guide for the Ignatian Exercises. Joanna has an MA in Christian Spirituality from Heythrop College, and is passionate about the provision of excellent and accessible training for spiritual directors to accompany the greater diversity of people seeking spiritual accompaniment.

Joanna loves walking pilgrimages, especially along wild, windswept coastlines, enjoys the arts, and delights in gathering people around a table. She is also an enthusiastic grandmother to her four grandsons.

Associate Tutor

TBC

How do I apply?

The closing date for applications and references:

Friday 2 October 2026, after which applicants may be invited for an interview.

For an application and reference form please email: mmsupport@bristoldiocese.org

Please email completed application and reference to: emma.snook@bristoldiocese.org

All applications received and supported by a reference will be acknowledged as soon as conveniently possible.

For further information please contact Revd Joanna Gallant, Adviser for Spiritual Direction, Bristol Diocese at: joanna.gallant@bristoldiocese.org



Course Programme

Online sessions: Thursdays 6.30 – 9.30pm | **In-person days:** Saturdays 10.00am – 4.00pm

Session	Date	Subject
1	Jan 14	Introduction to the Course
2	Jan 28	Images of Self
3	Feb 11	Images of God

HALF TERM HOLIDAY

4	Feb 25	The Art of Listening
5	Mar 4	Encountering the Divine
6	Mar 18	Ignatian Spirituality

EASTER HOLIDAY

7	Apr 15	Attending to Story & Spirit
8	Apr 24 (Sat)	Spiritual Discernment & Better Choices
9	Apr 29	Faith Development
10	May 13	Psychology & Spiritual Direction
11	May 27	Accompanying Brokenness & Resistance

HALF TERM HOLIDAY

12	Jun 10	Safeguarding & Spiritual Direction 1 - Mid-Year Reviews
13	Jun 12 (Sat)	My Pilgrim Path
14	Jun 24	The Body & Spiritual Direction
15	Jul 8	Working with Scripture and Images in Spiritual Direction

SUMMER HOLIDAY

16	Sep 9	Accompanying Vocational Discernment
17	Sep 23	Rule of Life
18	Oct 7	Creations' Gateways
19	Oct 21	Spirituality & Neurodiversity

HALF TERM HOLIDAY

20	Nov 4	Safeguarding & Spiritual Direction 2
21	Nov 6 (Sat)	Long Direction & Supervision
22	Nov 18	Direction Styles – Exit Appraisals
23	Dec 2	First Interviews – Endings – Next Steps – Closing Liturgy