

# The Academy for spiritual Formation®



*A two-year journey in Christ*





Bon Secours Retreat Center, Maryland

## The Pilgrim's Longing

*"The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."* — Lao Tzu

What is this longing that fills our hearts and minds, and sometimes leaves us restless for change? As Christians, we understand our deepest joy comes as we journey into the heart, mind and will of Christ. In times of transition, or when we are bored or tired, we need a sacred place to rest and to continue this journey. So where does one go? And who will guide us on this path?

*"The Academy fulfills a unique place in the lives of Christians reaching for deeper spiritual growth. I have never known a spiritual frontier which combines such a wide spectrum of Christian experience. Yes, it changes lives, including mine."*

—Flora Slosson Wuellner, author and teacher

## support for the inner & outer journey

Since 1983 Upper Room Ministries® has offered a place for spiritually hungry pilgrims, whether clergy or lay, through the two-year Academy for Spiritual Formation®. Participants spend forty days in residence (five days every three months), with the first year dedicated to deepening one's own life in Christ.

During the second year, as the focus begins to shift to more outward aspects of leadership, participants continue to engage in spiritual practices of body, mind and spirit in the context of a supportive community.

The Academy's commitment to an authentic spirituality promotes balance, inner peace and outer peace, holy living and justice living, God's shalom. Theologically the focus is Trinitarian, celebrating the Creator's blessing, delighting in the companionship of Christ and witnessing to the power of the Holy Spirit to transform lives, churches and the world.

*The daily rhythm of the Academy* restores a needed balance in our lives. Silence and conversation, rest and relationship – these open our hearts and minds to wisdom and Word.

Worship follows a modified daily office; daily eucharist (Holy Communion) feeds us as evening falls. Covenant groups provide a place to listen to our own life and in the sacred circle of trust, to enter onto holy ground. Night Prayer sends us to our beds. As we enter the great silence, we discover again a new hunger for listening to God.

This is the daily rhythm of the Academy.

# The Academy's Rhythm

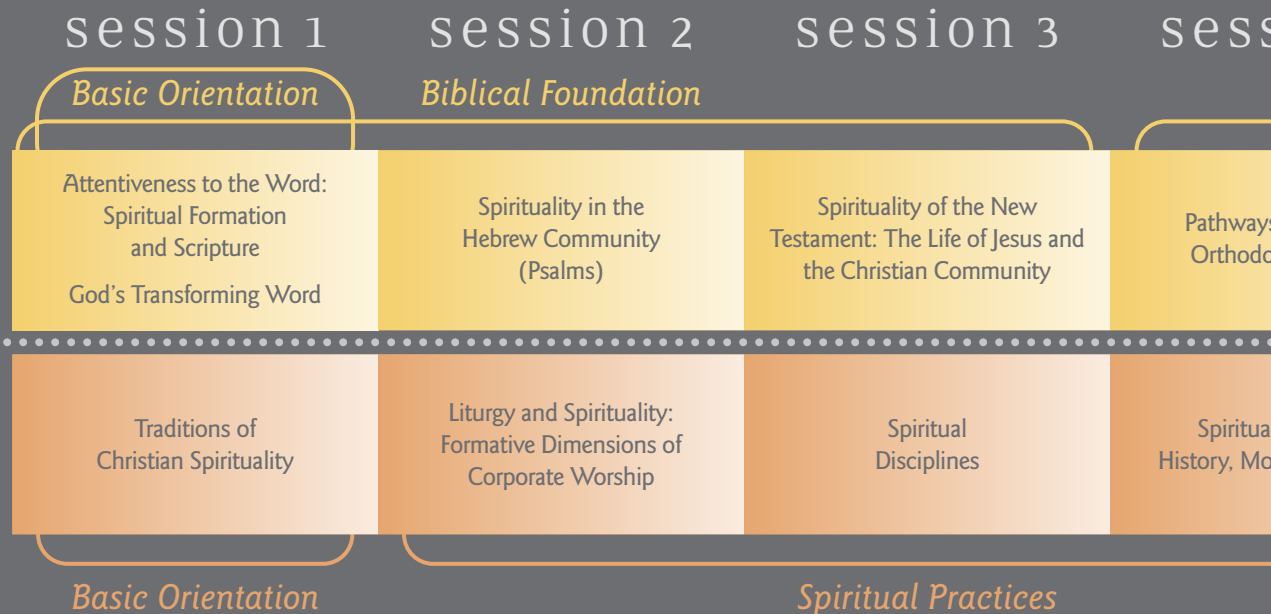
*The Quarterly Rhythm:  
Five-day sessions  
every three months*

## Morning

Historical/Institutional  
*(How spirituality is organized)*

## Afternoon

Practical/Theological  
*(How spirituality is done)*



*The quarterly rhythm* — gathering back to the same retreat center every three months — has its own wisdom. At home between sessions, participants engage in spiritual disciplines, complete reading assignments and test new attitudes and behaviors.

Over the course of the two years, this rhythm of gathering and returning home encourages participants to integrate what they are learning. The mantle of spiritual leadership comes as a joy and delight.



Sinsinawa Mound Center, Wisconsin





*Sumatanga Conference Center, Alabama*

7:30–8:00	Morning Prayer
8:00	Breakfast
9:00–10:00	Morning Curriculum
10:00–11:00	Silence and solitude for prayer & reflection
11:00–11:30	Plenary discussion with faculty
11:30	Community Time
12:00	Lunch



*Oblate Renewal Center, San Antonio, TX*

## A typical day at the Academy



*Worship at the Academy*

2:30–3:30	Afternoon Curriculum
3:30–4:30	Silence and solitude for prayer & reflection
4:30–5:00	Plenary discussion with faculty
5:15–6:00	Evening Prayer/Eucharist
6:00	Dinner
6:45	Option
7:45–9:15	Covenant Groups
9:30–9:45	Night Prayer



*Faculty Loyd Allen and Hazelyn McComas*



*Mercy Center, California*

*Between sessions*, participants covenant to deepen their spiritual lives through journaling, spiritual direction, directed readings and care of one's physical body. First and second year covenant commitments provide a focus for one's spiritual growth and a basis for one's engagement with the world.

## The spiritual community

*In surprising and delightful ways, the Academy means relationships.*

Worship, silence, reflection, covenant groups – all lead deeper and deeper into the struggles and joys of communal life. We begin as individuals, seeking to find a place for our own soul's journey. Along the way, we discover there are other pilgrims who share our longing. We are reminded how much God loves community, how much God is community! Ecumenically and theologically diverse, participants in the Academy discover the joy of our differences. Diversity is encouraged; not suppressed.

Loving, spiritual guidance for the community is offered by the leadership team. These are persons who have completed the two-year Academy, and they are there for you as servant leaders. Two faculty presenters offer guidance at each session; they are authors, seminary professors, monks, spiritual directors and pastors, carefully chosen for both their knowledge and their wisdom.



*Academy Community in Alabama*

*“The Academy has been a gift of time and space to learn how to be sustainable in ministry. There I could drink deeply from the well and be filled and discover once again that God’s grace is sufficient.”*

– Cindy Gregorson, participant

## spiritual leadership for the Church and the World

The Church and the world long for spiritual leaders of all kinds: extroverts and introverts, lovers and dreamers, builders and thinkers. The Church and the world need passionate, persistent, authentic, well-grounded people of faith, centered in the love of God. Spiritual leaders who return to the Source of their call bring fresh energy and new life to the world that needs them. The Academy is a proven place for renewal and call. We welcome your application.

## who we are

The Academy for Spiritual Formation® was developed by Upper Room Ministries® in 1983 after more than five years of research, study and prayer. Upper Room Ministries publishes books and periodicals for the spiritual life, including *Weavings*, *Alive Now!* and *The Upper Room Devotional Guide*. Ecumenically oriented, Upper Room Ministries is accountable within the United Methodist Church; it is a Division of the General Board of Discipleship located in Nashville, Tennessee.

## For more information



*The Academy for Spiritual Formation*  
*Upper Room Ministries*

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A 20-page prospectus including application is available on the website or by contacting us.

[www.upperroom.org/academy](http://www.upperroom.org/academy)