



## Kardia Companionship of Empowerment

We're excited to introduce Kardia's newest program, *Kardia Companionship of Empowerment*, designed for anyone seeking to deepen their spiritual wisdom, develop active listening skills, and explore life's sacred Mystery. This formation program offers three unique pathways:

- To become more spiritually aware undertaking spiritual formation, attending individual modules as desired.
- Be formed in spiritual direction and in giving the Spiritual Exercises - completing the [Heart Wisdom](#) components of the program.
- If you have already undertaken formation as a spiritual director, completing the [Grace upon Grace](#) components of the program to become a giver of the Full Spiritual Exercises.

*Kardia Companionship of Empowerment* is rooted in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, designed as an evolving Christian formation journey that integrates life's wisdom through every experience. The program features flexible, individual modules, available either as a complete series or as stand-alone workshops tailored to your interests. Each workshop runs from 10:00 am to 4:15 pm (AEST or AEDT depending on the time of year) and includes teaching, reflection, spiritual conversation, and experiential learning. All sessions are held online via Zoom.

You can download the application form for [Kardia Companionship of Empowerment Application 2024](#) here or [contact Kardia](#) for further information.

### Modules

We begin with an introductory module:

- Introduction to Companionship of Empowerment - 7 – 10 March 2025

The modules listed below comprise the coursework for the Heart Wisdom Program and Grace Upon Grace Program. You are invited to enrol in any or all of them as you choose.

- Module One – Reflecting on Love, Humility and Freedom: 20 - 23 June 2024
- Module Two – The Dynamism of Spiritual Formation: 19 – 22 September 2025
- Module Three – Theology and Pedagogy of Kardia: 21 – 24 November 2025
- Module Four – Graces of Encounter: 13 – 16 February 2026
- Module Five – The Architecture for Listening: 17 – 20 April 2026
- Module Six – Releasing Potential: Spiritual Direction as a Dynamic Instrument: 17 – 20 June 2026

- Module Seven – Becoming, Being, and Practicing as a Spiritual Direction: 18 – 21 September 2026
- Module Eight – Kardia Direction: 20 – 23 November 2026
- Module Nine – Grace upon Grace – Giving the Spiritual Exercises in our Expanding Consciousness of God

### Introduction to Companionship of Empowerment: 7 – 10 March 2025

To be conscious of your participation in the Kingdom of God is to be conscious of your participation in God's companionship of empowerment. Whether you're in ministry, preparing for it, or seeking personal and spiritual growth, this workshop is designed for you. It offers an introduction to spiritual formation at Kardia, providing you with an opportunity to enhance your listening skills and deepen your spiritual awareness.

For those interested in becoming a spiritual director or guiding others through the Spiritual Exercises, this workshop introduces you to Kardia's spiritual direction formation programs and can be applied as credit toward your chosen spiritual formation pathway including inputs by Marlene and Bernie, experiential learning, spiritual conversation and reflective practice.

The topics considered will include:

- **Encountering Gospel Texts & Imaginative Contemplation:** This topic explores the practice engaging deeply with Gospel narratives through imaginative contemplation. It involves envisioning oneself within the scenes of the Gospel, experiencing the sights, sounds, and emotions, which can make the texts feel more personal and alive.
- **Frameworks for Listening:** Frameworks for listening refer to structured approaches or models that guide individuals in truly hearing and understanding others. This includes active listening techniques, empathetic engagement, and reflective practices that foster deeper communication and connection.
- **Spirituality and the Arts:** This topic explores the intersection of spiritual experience and artistic expression. Art can serve as a medium for contemplation, transcendence, and connection with the Divine.
- **Listening to the Christ within:** This theme involves the practice of inner listening, seeking to connect with the presence of Christ within. By cultivating a quiet and reflective inner space, individuals can tune in to their inner voice and sense of divine presence, leading to personal guidance, insight, and a deeper spiritual connection.

If you are considering formation as a spiritual director and/or giver of the Spiritual Exercises, this workshop is an excellent introduction to the work of spiritual formation at Kardia and can count as credit towards your chosen pathway.

### Module One – Reflecting on Love, Humility and Freedom: 20 - 23 June 2024

Reflecting on *Love, Humility, and Freedom* invites us to explore the transformative powers of these virtues and their profound impact on our lives and relationships. Together, love, humility, and

freedom become a path to spiritual maturity, empowering us to live fully, serve others wholeheartedly, and deepen our connection to the Divine.

In this program, participants will reflect on their journey through the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, which guide individuals in recognizing the presence and work of God in their lives. By revisiting these Exercises, participants can identify the “graces” or blessings received—insights, healing, courage, or direction—that have unfolded through their experience. This deep reflection, coupled with spiritual conversations with others on a similar path, allows participants to recognize how love, humility, and freedom have taken root in their lives.

The retreat-style format of this program offers an atmosphere of contemplation and sharing, creating space for personal growth and transformation. Through daily reflection and open dialogue, participants may find that their understanding of these virtues deepens, helping them to embody these qualities more fully in their relationships, service, and spiritual journey. Ultimately, this experience aims to cultivate a way of being that is more aligned with Divine love, humility, and freedom.

Participants will have prayed the full Spiritual Exercises as a pre-requisite to this program.

## Module Two – The Dynamism of Spiritual Formation: 19 – 22 September 2025

In this module, following the transformative path of spiritual formation found in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, we will explore key topics central to spiritual growth and understanding:

- **Preliminaries:** We begin by examining the essence of spiritual direction in our contemporary world. What role does it play in our lives today? How does it invite us into a deeper relationship with God and a more purposeful connection with others?
- **Vision of Season One of the Spiritual Exercises:** Here, we dive into the initial movements of the Exercises, understanding the foundational graces of self-awareness and divine encounter. We explore how we are invited to see ourselves honestly and to recognize God’s loving gaze upon us.
- **Stages of Faith, Imagination, and Desire in Season Two:** This stage focuses on our faith’s evolution and the deepening of our spiritual imagination. Through reflection and desire, we learn to discern God’s call and the movements of the heart that guide us toward a life of meaning and alignment with our values.
- **Compassion and Passion in Seasons Three and Four:** In the later stages, we turn our attention to the themes of compassion and passion, as exemplified by Jesus in his life, suffering, and resurrection. These seasons invite us to cultivate empathy and courage, strengthening our resolve to live out a compassionate, love-filled response to the world’s needs.

Each topic offers a step on the journey, preparing us to walk with humility, courage, and grace as we engage in the life-changing work of spiritual formation.

## Module Three –Theology and Pedagogy of Kardia: 21 – 24 November 2025

*Kardia*, from the Greek meaning “heart” or “mind,” captures a holistic sense of self, integrating both intellect and spirit. Mentioned over 200 times in the New Testament, *kardia* encompasses a depth of meaning, including mind, soul, inner self, desire, and intention. It refers to the sacred space within us where we experience authenticity and centeredness—our true essence.

In this unit, we delve into topics essential to the journey of spiritual formation:

- **Graces of the Seasons of the Exercises:** We explore the unique gifts and insights that each season of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises offers, guiding us deeper into understanding ourselves and God’s call in our lives.
- **Ignatian Theology:** This topic introduces the theological foundations of Ignatius’s approach, examining how his spiritual vision illuminates the divine in our daily experiences and encourages a transformative relationship with God.
- **Discernment of Spirits:** We focus on Ignatius’s teachings about recognizing and discerning spiritual movements within us, helping us to distinguish between those that lead toward freedom and God, and those that draw us away.
- **Key Meditations in the Second Season of the Exercises:** Centered on the life of Christ, these meditations invite us into a closer imitation of Jesus, cultivating compassion, humility, and a deepened awareness of our vocation.

Each of these topics invites participants to journey inward, drawing upon the wisdom of *kardia* to align our intentions and desires with a life of purpose and spiritual depth.

## Module Four – Graces of Encounter: 13 – 16 February 2026

The *Graces of Encounter* are the profound gifts and insights that arise when we truly meet others, ourselves, and the Divine with openness and presence. These graces are moments of deep recognition and transformation, where we feel seen, understood, and uplifted. In genuine encounter, we become aware of the sacredness within each person and situation, and this awareness expands our capacity for compassion, empathy, and love.

Encounter invites us beyond surface-level interaction, calling us to listen and respond with our whole selves. Through these encounters, we experience graces such as humility, as we recognize the uniqueness of another’s journey; gratitude, as we see how our lives are enriched by others; and courage, as we embrace vulnerability and openness.

Ultimately, the graces of encounter draw us deeper into connection—with God, with others, and with our own hearts—strengthening our sense of belonging and purpose. These moments become anchors in our spiritual journey, guiding us to a life lived in communion and love.

Topics include:

- **Images of God and Self:** This session explores how our personal images of God and our self-perception influence our spiritual journey and the way we engage in spiritual direction. Participants will reflect on how these images shape their relationship with the divine and their understanding of their own identity.

- **Spirituality and the Poetic:** This session delves into the intersection of spirituality and the poetic, exploring how poetry and metaphor open pathways to deeper spiritual understanding. Through poetic expression, participants are invited to connect with the mystery and beauty of faith, allowing them to engage with spirituality in a creative and contemplative way.
- **Metanoia and the Journey of Faith:** Metanoia, or a transformative change of heart, is central to the journey of faith. This session will focus on the concept of metanoia as an ongoing process of conversion and growth, encouraging participants to embrace personal transformation and deepen their commitment to their spiritual path.
- **Discerning the Call to Spiritual Direction:** In this session, participants will explore the discernment process of determining a call to spiritual direction. It will address the qualities, skills, and inner readiness required for this ministry, helping participants to recognize whether they feel called to serve as spiritual companions to others.
- **Consciousness and Awareness:** This session invites participants to deepen their understanding of consciousness and awareness, exploring how heightened awareness of oneself and the world around us is essential to the practice of spiritual direction.

## Module Five – The Architecture for Listening: 17 – 20 April 2026

This immersive program centers on developing the art of listening as a spiritual practice, exploring how intentional listening opens pathways to deeper understanding, empathy, and transformation. Participants will engage in guided sessions on:

- **Encountering Gospel Texts & Imaginative Contemplation:** Through imaginative contemplation, we'll encounter Gospel texts in a way that brings the scriptures to life, allowing the divine presence to speak to us personally and deeply.
- **Frameworks for Listening:** This session introduces essential frameworks for listening, exploring techniques and practices that cultivate openness and receptivity to both the divine and the individual stories of others.
- **Beginning in Spiritual Direction & Giving the Exercises:** Participants will explore the foundational steps in guiding others through spiritual direction and the Spiritual Exercises, gaining insight into this sacred practice of companionship.
- **Our Unforming:** In this reflective session, we consider “unforming” as a process of letting go—releasing limiting beliefs and attachments that hinder authentic connection with ourselves, others, and God.

Each component of this architecture for listening invites participants to engage in a holistic journey, equipping them with skills, insights, and spiritual depth for meaningful listening and presence.

## Module Six – Releasing Potential: Spiritual Direction as a Dynamic Instrument: 17 – 20 June 2026

This program examines the transformative potential of spiritual direction as a dynamic tool for personal and spiritual growth. Participants will explore key aspects that influence the depth, integrity, and efficacy of the spiritual direction relationship:

- **Ethics and Boundaries in the Spiritual Direction Relationship**

This session explores the ethical principles and boundaries essential for establishing trust and safety within the spiritual direction relationship, highlighting practices that safeguard the well-being of both director and directee.

- **Boundary Crossing: The Who of the Spiritual Direction Relationship**

Here, we look at the diverse roles and identities present within the relationship, considering how to navigate personal connections while maintaining the integrity and purpose of spiritual direction.

- **Interior Movements: Hooks, Blind Spots, and Their Origins**

This session focuses on recognizing and understanding internal dynamics, such as emotional hooks and blind spots, that influence how we interact within spiritual direction. Identifying these movements allows for greater self-awareness and depth in the practice.

- **Defense Mechanisms:** Participants will learn about common defense mechanisms that arise in spiritual direction, exploring ways to identify and gently work through these responses, fostering openness and vulnerability in the spiritual journey.

Each topic provides tools and insights that support spiritual direction as a powerful instrument for releasing potential, nurturing authentic growth, and deepening connection with the divine and the self.

## Module Seven – Becoming, Being, and Practicing as a Spiritual Direction: 18 – 21 September 2026

In this program participants begin to integrate all aspects of their learning from the Kardia Companionship of Empowerment program. Beginning with an immersive exploration of the Contemplation to Attain Divine Love, we'll delve into practices of self-supervision, engage with apophatic and kataphatic experiences, and uncover the spiritual director within.

Through reflective practices and experiential learning, we will explore the foundations of Contemplation on Divine Love, the pathways of apophatic and kataphatic prayer, and the inner dynamics that shape a spiritual director's presence. Together, we'll examine the delicate balance of personal growth, professional boundaries, and the power of generative listening. With guidance in self-supervision and an awareness of psychodynamics, participants will emerge equipped to serve others with authenticity, compassion, and integrity. Whether you are beginning this journey or seeking to deepen your practice, this program offers a rich, supportive environment to cultivate the heart and skills of spiritual direction. Topics include:

- **Contemplation on Divine Love:** In this session we will look closely at the Contemplation on Divine Love and its relevance to our evolving understanding of God and the interconnectedness of our evolving universe.

- **Integration & Unveiling the Spiritual Director Within:** This integration process involves self-reflection, discernment, and inner listening, empowering individuals to trust their inner wisdom and connection with the divine for guidance.
- **Integration & Spiritual Direction and Self-Supervision:** This theme examines the role of self-supervision in the context of spiritual direction. Self-supervision involves being critically aware of one's own actions, motivations, and responses as a spiritual director.
- **Integration & Apophatic and Kataphatic Experience:** This topic explores the integration of apophatic (via negativa) and kataphatic (via positiva) spiritual experiences

## Module Eight – Kardia Direction: 20 – 23 November 2026

In this final stage of the Kardia Companionship of Empowerment program, participants are invited to integrate their understanding of the profound depth of God's empowering companionship. Together, we will explore the boundaries and possibilities of spiritual direction, discerning when it is appropriate and when it may not be. This program brings together the essential teachings from the Heart Wisdom Spiritual Direction Formation program, guiding participants in understanding what it means to offer Heart Wisdom spiritual direction—a practice rooted in compassion, discernment, and the transformative presence of divine love. Topics include:

- **Integration & Companionship of Empowerment:** To be conscious of your participation in the Kingdom of God is to be conscious of your participation in God's companionship of empowerment.
- **Integration & Is Spiritual Direction Always Appropriate?** This topic questions the appropriateness of spiritual direction in every context. It explores scenarios where spiritual guidance might be beneficial or potentially unnecessary, or even unhelpful. We will explore how spiritual direction aligns with an individual's journey or specific needs.
- **Integration & Kardia Direction:** In this session we offer a deep dive into the central aspects of offering spiritual Direction as a Heart Wisdom Guide.

## Module Nine – Grace upon Grace – Giving the Spiritual Exercises in our Expanding Consciousness of God (Date to be confirmed)

Are you seeking contemporary professional development in facilitating the Spiritual Exercises?

Would you value a collaborative conversation on the dynamics and content of the Exercises? If so, this four-day intensive is for you.

This module is designed for those who guide the Spiritual Exercises and wish to deepen their understanding of the dynamics within the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Each day will include presentations, reflections, and spiritual conversations on the following potential topics related to the Spiritual Exercises:

- A conversation with Ignatius on adaptation
- De-westernizing spiritual formation
- Offering the Exercises across sacred traditions
- Expanding consciousness
- Awareness – recognizing thoughts and emotions that enter the self
- The charism of Ignatius – dynamism of desire

- Architecture of oppression – exploring elements of the Exercises that may include, exclude, or oppress.