

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: SPIRITUALITY

### Creating a Spiritual Preference Engagement Book

1. Ask questions to assess the importance and areas of spiritual need. Various spiritual assessment tools are available. It is important to know what is important to the resident, their strength in faith in times of stress and their connection to a spiritual community. (see FICA Spiritual History Tool at <https://smhs.gwu.edu/gwish/clinical/fica/spiritual-history-tool>)
  - How important is it for you to pray before meals?
  - How important is it for you to read the Bible (or preferred book) daily?
  - How important is it for you to start your day or end your day with a prayer or verse?
  - How important is it for you to attend religious services?
  
2. Artifacts to use in a tool kit or engagement scrapbook
  - Symbols of faith from their religion (cross, star of David, Menorah, Torah, Bible, Koran, Communion, candles, hymnals, Crescent Moon) [www.religious-symbols.net](http://www.religious-symbols.net)
  - Daily devotions, favorite passages, well known religious figures/names
  
3. Engagement activities
  - Artifacts of different textures, sizes, materials (sensory discrimination activity)
  - Painting/coloring symbols, stained glass, holiday symbols (art activities)
  - Praying in color individual or group sessions <https://prayingincolor.com/>
  - Angel based discussions, art, writing
  - Tying prayer blankets
  - Hosting resident led prayer groups
  - Normalizing activities such as polishing candle sticks, placing candles in holders, folding/holding prayer blankets/shawls/rosary beads/cloth from baptism, wedding, religious celebrations
  - Biblical plants/gardening/flower arranging  
<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/spaces/biblical-garden-design.htm>
  - Holding hymnals/prayer books/turning pages
  - Reading versus/inspirational quotes
  - Music listening and singing
  
4. Cues and triggers for dementia
  - Pictures of churches (similar to the childhood church, this is my church in Massachusetts)



Stained glass windows

Religious service program to hold/read  
 Angels  
 Religious art  
 Alter pictures and artifacts  
 Music of their religious/cultural preference/church bells  
 Simplified activities using spiritual information such as crosswords, trivia,  
 matching, sorting religious based holiday cards, sorting or organizing candles, folding  
 programs, spiritual collages, flower arranging



#### 5. Resources

[https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/conditions/dementia/edge/forms/worship\\_services\\_forms\\_selectedreadings.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/conditions/dementia/edge/forms/worship_services_forms_selectedreadings.pdf)

A sample Christian service for dementia

[https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/conditions/dementia/edge/interventions/worship/worship\\_spiritual\\_box.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/conditions/dementia/edge/interventions/worship/worship_spiritual_box.htm)

Strategies for creating a spiritual sensory box

80% of the spiritual needs of residents are met by the activity professional

Older people turn to their faith to help face challenging times

Older people have spiritual needs

- **Fourteen Spiritual Needs of Elders**

- A need for meaning, purpose, and hope

- A need to transcend circumstances
- A need for continuity
- A need for support in dealing with loss
- A need for validation and support of religious behaviors
- A need to engage in religious behaviors
- A need for personal dignity and sense of worthiness
- A need for unconditional love
- A need to express anger and doubt
- A need to feel that God is on their side
- A need to love and serve others
- A need to be thankful
- A need to forgive and be forgiven
- A need to prepare for death and dying

*Source: Harold G. Koenig, Aging and God: Spiritual Pathways to Mental Health in Midlife and Later Years*